

CERTIFIED HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL
**WORK FROM HOME
OR REMOTE
WORKING POLICY**
HR POLICY TEMPLATE



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WORK FROM HOME OR REMOTE WORKING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines and outline the rules and regulations about how employees can work remotely, instead of physically coming to office; in general and especially during any unforeseen, emergency or pandemic situation like COVID-19 outbreak.

SCOPE

The policy applies to *all* employees of this organisation and we require everyone to read the plan of action carefully and make sure it's understood in its entirety.

POLICY STATEMENT

We at _____ (Company's Name) believe in our company's values of hardwork, collaboration and teamwork and our culture which promotes autonomy, innovation and flexibility. We believe in valuing our employees. Considering ourselves as an Equal Opportunity Employer and firmly believing in our company's core values and culture; this Work From Home policy offers our employees flexibility while working and aims at improving their value proposition by enhancing their individual experience at our company.

POLICY COVERAGE

This policy covers the following grounds: (to be followed in general and especially during any unforeseen, emergency or pandemic situation like COVID-19 outbreak).

- Eligibility & Conditions
- Prerequisites/Work Expectations for WFH
- Requesting WFH & Approval Process
- Code of Conduct
- Communication
- Confidentiality & Data Security
- Infrastructure Support
- Compensation & Benefits
- Onboarding New Employees while WFH- Esp. during current COVID-19 pandemic situation (Directions for HR Dept.)
- Annexure: WFH/Remote Working Employee Form

ELIGIBILITY & CONDITIONS

- An employee may be eligible to work remotely if they have proven to be trustworthy, disciplined and self motivated and have been granted permission by the company.
- To offer our employees flexibility while working, each employee is allotted 3-5 work from home days, per calendar month. (during normal circumstances)
- Employees should use discretion while scheduling their remote days so that they do not miss important in-office meetings and events. (during normal circumstances)
- Due to COVID-19 outbreak, the employee can work from home (for the period specified by the company) and this may apply to some or all employees based on organizational requirement & business needs.
- If you have recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases (based on government announcements); you can work from home for 14-28 calendar days.
- An employee needs to submit relevant reports after 14 days to the organization so that a further plan of action can be taken (as per the organization).
- Return to the office only if you have no symptoms concerned to COVID-19 along with doctor certification and also must not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- Once back to office premises, refer to our back to work policy template for guidelines.
- Work from home/remote working policy may be revoked or extended during pandemic or after pandemic-depending upon the situation/goal achievement by individuals or based on organisation decisions.
- Any such change in policy is complete discretion of organisation & management and its mandatory for employees to follow such changes.

PRE-REQUISITES/WORK EXPECTATIONS FOR WORK FROM HOME

- **Working Hours** - Employees who prefer to work from home will be working for 9 hours (normal working hours; irrespective of the start time) or employees and managers will determine working hours on a case-by-case basis given the employee's responsibilities and manager's preference,
- Employees are expected to dedicate their full attention to their job duties during working hours.

- **Attendance** – Every employee working from home is required to maintain their attendance (through web login/maintaining excel sheet manually) and take breaks as agreed after discussion with their respective reporting managers.
- Every employee planning to work from home is required to choose a quiet place and set up their workspace. (In case of any construction work going on near the work space, employees are expected to consider investing in noise cancelling headphones. (**Apple's AirPods Pros**).
- Employees are expected to plan their workflow and follow the work schedules provided to them.
- **Performance/Work Standards** – Every employee should be sure to meet their work deadlines, while upholding high quality performance standards and are mandated to update their manager or concerned person about their work progress and submit daily reports.
- Employees are expected to invest/acquire quality technology (Internet connectivity, required software's, VPN activation from the organization).
- If working on an important project where coordination is highly required, check with your fellow employees and keep them updated regarding the tasks regularly.
- If any employees fail to keep up with the above norms, the organization has the authority to take necessary actions.

REQUESTING WORK FROM HOME & APPROVAL PROCESS

- Employees can apply for work from home by having a conversation with their respective managers or HR and filling & submitting a “**Remote Working Form**” (**Attached as Annexure**) accordingly.
- Possible reasons an employee may need to work from home include:
During normal circumstances –
 - Parenting responsibilities
 - An illness
 - Unsafe weather conditions
 - Any appointments during workdays
 - Home or personal emergencies
 - Commuter delays
 - Work-life balance
 - Any other reasons discussed with and approved by their managers/supervisors.
- Employees must also understand that there are certain days during which remote work is not permissible and hence won't be granted; during the first & last week of the month and during all-hands meetings or as specified by the company.
- Employees are expected to keep the above in mind while requesting work from home.

- Employees should understand that the reasons listed above do not guarantee approval; employees must still submit a request for work from home.
- The work from home requests approval is subjected to a fair case to case evaluation, done by the Reporting Managers or HR.
- **During COVID-19 Pandemic; Employees can work from home, if;**
 - Company specifically expects their employees to work remotely. (subjected to the rules and regulations of the company)
 - They are instructed to hold back from work by a public health official.
 - They are caring for someone who is COVID-19 positive.
 - They have travelled for work/ personal reasons and need to be in quarantine as per government order or organization policy.
- Manager/HR can approve WFH if,
 - The employee has symptoms of flu
 - The employee has to take care of their unwell family member.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- While working remotely, employees must adhere to all the conditions in the Employee Handbook.
- **All company policies around conduct, confidentiality, leaves (sick leaves) etc. continue to apply, regardless of location.**
- **Meeting Etiquette-** If the employee is working from home and has to attend a visual meeting/conference the following protocols are to be maintained;
 - Wear formal attire
 - Turn on the camera during the discussion
 - Make sure the background looks formal
 - Clear and crisp audio is mandatory (In case of usage of headphones/earplugs; Employees can request the organization to provide them)
 - While any meeting is in progress, employees are expected to keep their mic on mute, (while others speak); It can be unmuted only when they need to speak something.
- Disciplinary actions will follow if any employees fail to keep up with the above norms.

COMMUNICATION

- Team members and managers should determine long-term and short-term goals and for that collaborative team meetings should be conducted frequently. (in person or online depending upon the situation) and same should be monitored to discuss progress and results.
- Virtual meetings (**Zoom or Google Meet**) should be conducted thrice a day (At 9.30 am; 2.30 pm and 6.00 pm) on a daily basis to track the progress of goals and work completion. (Attendance is mandatory for everyone)
- Every employee while working from home is expected to be online during their respective work hours and any communication regarding work should be done via emails, telephonic conversations or conducting virtual meetings on **ZOOM & Google Meet**.
- Apart from regular meetings, employees should be present for any such meeting at a given time (during working hours), as per organisational or departmental needs.
- Employees are expected to use **Google Hangouts, Whatsapp and Skype**; if their job involves making long distance or international calls.
- Employees are further expected to use company intranet for getting any information with regard to company policies, HR Resources or frequently asked questions.
- Employees should ensure that their schedules overlap with those of their team members for as long as is necessary to complete their job duties effectively.
- Any correspondence from a co-worker or client must be answered immediately.
- Messages stored and/or transmitted by voice mail or e-mail must not contain content that may reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive to any employee. Offensive content would include, but not be limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments or any comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of his or her age, religious or political beliefs, national origin or disability.
- **Open Door Policy** – We at (Company's name) follow an open door policy with regard to communication & are open to an employee's questions, complaints, suggestions, etc. The objective is to encourage **open communication**, feedback, and discussion about any concerns employees may have.
- Employees are expected to reach out to their respective managers or HRs in case of any doubts/queries related to work or for any such matter.

CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA SECURITY

- While working from home; securing data and company information should be every employee's top and utmost concern. (As per the confidentiality policy in Employee Handbook & Confidentiality Agreement signed by the employee upon employment).
- Every employee will be given access to a **Virtual Private Network (VPN)** to secure connections with company servers and networks.
- The VPN must be used at all times during work hours and under no circumstances may the VPN be used outside of work hours.

- Cybersecurity measures have been put in place, and the software will be made available to everyone working remotely or within office premises.
- Every employee is expected to;
 - Lock or secure confidential information at all times.
 - Make sure they only view confidential information on secure devices.
 - Only disclose information to other employees when it's necessary and authorized.
- While working from home, employees should avoid;
 - Using confidential information for any personal benefit or profit.
 - Disclosing confidential information to anyone outside the company.
 - Replicating confidential documents and files and storing them on insecure devices.
- In case any confidential information may have to be disclosed for legitimate reasons as specified under;
 - If a regulatory body requests it as part of an investigation or audit;
 - If the company examines a venture or partnership that requires disclosing some information (within legal boundaries)
 - In such cases, employees involved should document their disclosure procedure and collect all needed authorizations.
- Any breaches in security protocol will lead to strict disciplinary or possible legal actions like termination or as specified by the company.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

- Every employee availing working from home (under normal circumstances) is expected to arrange for their own device & internet connection with the minimum/maximum speed required to perform their work effectively.
- The company would also provide “Work From Home Kit” (including laptop, data card, earphones, headphones, mouse and other accessories to employees. (in case of pandemic or as otherwise applicable). In case work from home kit is not provided, (BYOD/UYOD policy will apply).
- The internet facility provided by the organisation should not be misused and only be used for official purposes. Using these services for personal, non-business, purposes is prohibited.
- The employees are expected to use the equipments provided by the company properly and in good working order.
- In case an employee is arranging for their own infrastructure, they are eligible to apply for reimbursements. In such cases, employees are expected to submit the exact bills to claim reimbursements (As per the reimbursement policy of the company)
- Employees should use their official phones for communicating as much as possible. In case of use of personal mobile/telephones for official purpose; e-mobile bill **reimbursement** can be done on approvals.

- In case an employee experiences any technical difficulties while working from home, they are expected to bring the matter to company's remote desktop tech support representatives who will provide solutions to any such concerns by accessing an employee's computer remotely.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- No changes will be made to an employee's salary if said employee works from home, full time.
- Salary deductions (LOP) will be computed on the basis of the number of unpaid leaves taken.
- Employees working remotely remain eligible for promotion and skills development programs.
- Salaries increments are subjected to company policy and on successful performance reviews.
- Employees working remotely will still receive full company benefits, including health insurance (including special corona cover protection especially for the pandemic times) and worker's compensation.
- **Reimbursements** - The organization will provide reimbursements with the following structure; (Actual bills mandatory to claim reimbursements) (Refer Reimbursement Policy for details).
 - Personal Internet
 - Laptop
 - Telephone

ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES – DIRECTIONS TO HR DEPT.

- Hiring managers involved in onboarding of new employees(during COVID-19 pandemic) are expected to conduct interviews virtually via video conferencing using different apps and platforms like Skype, Google Meet, WebEx, Zoom etc.
- HRs are required to conduct structured interviews and optimal number of selection tests to reduce the turnaround time in hiring new employees to increase efficiency.
- New hires can be introduced to their team members via video conferencing or by sending “**Welcome New Employee**” e-mails, by the Reporting Managers or HRs.
- Hiring managers are also required to conduct big video conference classes for orientation and induction of newly joined employees.

- HRs are required to get all the important documents (aid in doing background verification) from the newly joining employee as soft copies via email.
- Offer Letter, Appointment Letter, Employee Handbook and other important documents/paperwork needs to be securely e-mailed through DocuSign or other e-signature platforms. (decided by the company)

WFH/Remote Working - Employee Form

(To be filled and submitted to The HR Dept.)

1. Employee Information:

Name _____

Job Title _____

Job ID _____

Department _____

Reporting Manager _____

2. Remote Work Area Details:

Address _____

Phone Number

Work Space

3. Equipment Required:

Request:

4. Any other issues, (Specify)

5. Declaration & Authorization:

I have read, fully understood and accepted the terms and conditions mentioned in this Policy document. I hereby declare that I agree and will abide by all the duties, rules & regulations, obligations, expectations and responsibilities mentioned & discussed in this Policy document.

Employee Signature: _____

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

Approved/Rejected By:

Reporting Manager's Name: _____

Reporting Manager's Signature: _____

WFH Request Granted: YES NO

If NO, Reason for Rejection:

Disclaimer:

This policy template is designed to provide the employees of an organisation with the general guidelines with regard to WFH and should be used as a reference. This is not a legal document and can be customised suiting the needs and requirements of any particular organisation.