

Working from Home: Tips and Best Practices for Employees

The Manitoba public service is continuing to update its policies and procedures for employees to work temporarily from home as part of measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Working from home requires individuals and their managers to work in a different way, communicate closely, and connect regularly. The following guidelines provide support to employees working from home.

Set up your workspace and speak with your supervisor about expected work hours, productivity tracking, and scheduling.

- ✓ Designate a suitable environment for your work and ensure you have the appropriate computer equipment, network connection, phone and electronic or paper files you need for your work.
- ✓ Let your manager know about any additional resources you might need
- ✓ If you do not have access to a work laptop or phone, ensure you have made alternative arrangements with your manager to get your work done.
- ✓ Set clear expectations with the people around you to help avoid interruptions during your working hours, and plan for how you will manage distractions when they happen. If possible, chose to work in a space that allows you to close a door, and let others know not to interrupt you when it is closed.
- ✓ Create a routine around your designated space and working hours, including time for meals or breaks. Ensure people around you, as well as your manager and work colleagues, are aware of your routine.

Be intentional about connecting with your supervisor and work colleagues:

- ✓ Maintain regular contact with your supervisor. Be as responsive as you can to their communications, and be deliberate about providing them with updates on your work as appropriate.
- ✓ Let your supervisor know about anything that impacts on your work schedule (e.g. if you are sick and need to use sick leave, if you need to be away to attend a medical appointment, or to request vacation leave).
- ✓ Pencil in periodic calls to catch up with colleagues (no need for a fixed agenda).
- ✓ Remember that your colleagues are there to help support you, and they will need your support too.

Ensure your work complies with requirements of confidentiality, conflict of interest, IT/file security and all other standard procedures and policies of the public service.

- ✓ If you are not sure about something, err on the side of caution and discuss any security or policy questions with your manager first.

Additional safety and set-up considerations:

- ✓ Make sure that you have enough light to work without straining your eyes, and get up to move around and stretch to avoid sitting for extended hours or repeating motions.
- ✓ Install all of your furniture securely, and adjust your workstation properly so that you are comfortable and prevent strain or injury. For ergonomic advice, please consult the attached guide.
- ✓ Arrange electrical cords carefully so that they are not a tripping hazard, in a safe outlet that is not overloaded.
- ✓ Ensure that your smoke detector is working, that you have appropriate ventilation in your workspace, and keep paper away from any heat sources.
- ✓ Have first aid supplies on hand, communicate any safety concerns or injuries to your supervisor, and check that your emergency contact is updated.

Remember to take care of your mental health:

- ✓ Be sure to take steps to handle stress appropriately, and to access resources and counselling services as required such as [EFAP](#).

To ask questions about working from home or read about what your colleagues are experiencing, please visit [EngageMB](#) for more information.