Working from Home: Considerations for Managers

Effective remote working is about maintaining connections, establishing a framework for mutual support, and being intentional about where, when and how work is performed. Employees will be looking to you for leadership and it is important to move quickly on decisions, empower your team, and communicate every step of the way.

This guide provides a quick checklist to help maintain productivity and to provide sufficient connection and guidance among peers and supervisors.

- ✓ Get a list of contact information for all your employees (personal/business numbers and email addresses)

- ✓ Get a list of all equipment that employees require or have taken home, record asset tags on computer equipment like laptops, monitors, docking stations, etc.

- ✓ Ensure employees have laptops and/or VPNs and/or required information and tools

- ✓ Review and reinforce the VPN policy to limit VPN use to essential services only

- ✓ Ensure employees have necessary documents at home. Review confidentiality policies for document storage.

- ✓ Gain an understanding of your team's family needs, be compassionate and flexible with accommodations

- ✓ Establish working hours with your employees and regular check-ins to keep everyone on track and connected

- ✓ Confirm with staff that their intended remote work space and set up are appropriate according to safety and health legislation, including having suitable ergonomics and electrical safety, being free of hazards, and having proper emergency procedures in place

Many of your employees will be new to remote working and will have a lot of questions and possibly some anxiety about it. You want to help get them up and running as quickly and easily as possible.

Employees with VPN access:

- ✓ Make employees aware that they have access to VPN for services like email, network files, MBGPS, intranet, SharePoint sites, Skype for Business, and other resources within the Manitoba government's managed environment.

- ✓ Currently, VPN services limit the number of individual users accessing the network at the same time. As such, VPN users will need to manage and moderate their use so that access is prioritized for critical functions. VPN users are encouraged to review these guidelines for further information on how to manage their VPN access while working from home.

For All Employees

Provide simple, free, accessible communication tools for non-confidential conversations – Texting, WhatsApp, and Slack are easy to use on any mobile device.

- ✓ Consider your team's needs and the appropriate tools for the Section level, Branch Level and Department level.

- ✓ Provide a regular stream of news and updates to your employees – especially for those who are not able to access the network.

- ✓ Consider establishing a group communication with other managers in your area, or peers that you usually connect with for support. Share best practices, troubleshoot, and lean on each other as everyone adapts. To ask questions about working from home or read about what your colleagues are experiencing, please visit <mark>EngageMB</mark> for more information

Provide orientation on working from home and direct employees to our online <mark>Guide for Employees and Developing a Work Plan.</mark> Cover things like:

- ✓ How to set expectations with your family (such as having a "closed door policy" when at work), how to set working hours and take breaks.

- ✓ How to get started in department/branch/section communication channels and stay up to date with government news and updates.

- ✓ Where to get help when you need it.

- ✓ How to set up your office, adjust your desk and chair, and get connected.

- ✓ Set out clear expectations about providing regular updates, how often you will be checking in, and any productivity tracking you decide to use.

Expect (and support) a period of adjustment

- ✓ Managers should have regular contact with employees to understand their remote working needs and resolve any issues

- ✓ Empower your team to shape how your remote working environment is established and can be regularly improved as you encounter issues and challenges. Invite employees to provide feedback to improve tools, platforms, and communication channels. Ask teams to suggest initiatives to simplify and ease remote working.

- ✓ Ask your team to identify work that they might like to work on at home.

- ✓ If you are also working from home, please review the <mark>Guidelines for Employees</mark> for your own workspace considerations.

Check in on their Mental Health

- ✓ Be sure to check-in with employees to ensure they are handling the stress of the situation appropriately and offer resources and counselling services as required, such as EFAP.

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Recent articles on working remotely from home

You may find these articles helpful to review for additional strategies, or want to share them with your team.

1. [How to Switch To Remote Working Quickly, For both Employers And Employees by Jono Bacon](#)
   This recent article from Forbes addresses remote work arrangements pertaining to the current COVID-19 crises. It describes how these arrangements could be made to work effectively.

2. [Resources to Effectively Lead Amid COVID-19](#)
   Harvard Business Publishing has developed information and resources for leaders to help manage their teams and communicate effectively during these challenging and uncertain times. Here you will find articles, videos and other resources to assist you and your leadership teams on maintaining productivity, collaboration and working remotely, as well as tips on responding to the specifics of COVID-19.