# Office of Human Resources

# COVID-19 Temporary Remote Work Guidelines

Delgado Community College commitment to safely and effectively meeting the challenges presented by COVID-19 extends to ensuring employees may work from home, where determined appropriate, or another remote location whenever necessary in the coming weeks. Remote working arrangements are not new, but because they may be unfamiliar to employees and supervisors who have never done so, this resource will help you and your team navigate potential remote working scenarios. These arrangements must be approved by the department head.

Included in these remote working resources, you will find guidance for supervisors, employees, and departments designed to help set up temporary remote work arrangements quickly and successfully.

1. **What is remote work?**

Remote work is a work arrangement in which some, or all, of the work is performed from home or another off-site location. In general, regular office hours are worked and deviations from that schedule require supervisor approval. Please refer to COVID-19 Remote Work Agreement.

1. **Which factors should departments consider when determining if remote work is possible?**
   1. Operational requirements
   2. Security of work data
   3. Technological capabilities and equipment necessary to perform job duties
   4. Productivity
   5. Accuracy of records reflecting time worked by employees
2. **Which jobs are suited for remote work?**

Remote work is easiest to implement for jobs or tasks that require reading, writing, research, working with data and talking on the phone. In general, and at leadership’s discretion, a job is suited to work remotely if the job or some components of it can be done off-site without disruption to the flow of work and communication.

1. **Which jobs are not as well suited for remote work?**

It is not uncommon to require employees in positions needing in-person contact/customer service or that rely upon specific equipment or supplies to work on site.

1. **What is most important for starting a productive remote work arrangement?**

Clearly outlined and executed remote work arrangements can prove beneficial to employees and supervisors alike. Supervisors should articulate clear procedures regarding check-in times and hours of availability. With proper planning, communication problems can be minimized

**Supervisor checklist for supporting remote work**

Working remotely works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help you establish a foundation for effective remote working, continued productivity, and service.

1. **Review technology needs and resources.**

Identify technology tools employees use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working remotely. Also, ensure employees know how to access the appropriate technical support, should they need assistance. Confirm that employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access their voicemail remotely.

* + Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability, test and confirm everyone has access to and proficiency with the technology tool(s) such as Zoom, Microsoft Team and Conference calls. Your department may have additional tools or resources.

1. **Review Work schedules**

Be clear about expectations with employees maintaining their current work schedule and submitting their timesheet as normal.

1. **Draft a work plan**

Review the questions below with employees and work through answers together.

* + What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce any identified impacts?
  + Are there cross-training opportunities to identify backup employees who can do essential work within and/or interdepartmental? Plan for employee absences.
  + What key processes have been identified for each area/or department? Will there be specific platform access necessary to fulfill these processes?
  + What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each other to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
  + Are there critical work activities that are vulnerable to the absence of a small number of key employees?
  + Identify which teams or individuals have limited or no experience with remote work.
  + What training will be necessary for remote work tools and technology?
  + Identify and agree on priorities during this time.
  + Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while working remotely. Are there any special projects, tasks, or online training that you can suggest while working remotely?
  + What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary remote working arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology?
  + What follow-up should occur due to postponements or cancellations? What circumstances require on-site attendance?
  + Identify employees who may need special requirements or currently have work accommodations, and plan accordingly.
  + Identify employees who will have access to the building, labs, or facilities.
  + Provide resources or the process for technical support.

1. **Make a communication and accountability plan**

Supervisors should communicate to employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely. Current performance standards are expected to be maintained by employees.

* + If you normally visit employees at their desks, you can give them a call during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check- ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.
  + Conduct regular check-ins. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption, and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly check-ins may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.
  + Prepare an emergency communication plan. Identify key contacts (with backups), chains of communications for tracking business and employee statuses.

1. **Be Positive**

A positive attitude and a willingness to trust employees to effectively work remotely is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Working remotely presents an opportunity for supervisors to become better managers. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The employee’s completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the employee’s work product, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

**Tips for employees working remotely**

Employees often learn working remotely is different than they expected, and it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help employees get to work while at home:

1. **Define your workspace.**

Employees who are experienced in working remotely will tell you it is often difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our normal home routines. Establishing a workspace, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. You should remain available to report to work if your presence is requested by your supervisor.

1. **Master the basics.**
   * Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home, if available. Know how to log in remotely into the DCC network and other online tools you use regularly.
   * Use Zoom, Microsoft Team or Conference calls to stay connected to colleagues. Additional support for campus employees can be found at by contacting the OIT department.
   * Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer’s camera (if available) and microphone and being aware your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.
2. **Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.**

You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Consider starting each day of remote work by writing down what you need to accomplish and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Update your email/voicemail/ location/calendar, etc. to indicate your work situation.

1. **Eliminate distractions.**

Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a “do not disturb” sign so your family members don’t interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the noise.

1. **Prioritize privacy.**

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone see your computer screen? Are your windows open so that your neighbor can hear your phone calls? What information need to be secured when away from your workspace? Also, your personal privacy matters, make sure there is not anything visible during a video call you don’t want others to see.

1. **Remember Public Records Law.**

Keep in mind the work employees do while working remotely, even on their personal devices is subject to the Public Records Act and other applicable regulations.

1. **Continue to employ security best practices.**

Situations like these are prime phishing opportunities. Remain vigilant for security concerns and be sure to report suspicious emails as recommended by the DCC OIT Security Team.

It should be noted that caution needs to be taken when dealing with HIPAA information while working remotely.

# COVID-19 Emergency Remote Work Agreement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Employee Name:** | **Supervisor Name:** |
| **Employee (L#) ID:** | **Employee Classification:** |
| * Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Full time ☐ Part Time ☐ Other |
| **Division/College:** | **Department:** |
| **Current Position Title:** | **Official Work Location:** |
| **Remote Location:** | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To be Completed by Supervisor:** | **Y/N** |
| Job duties can be performed fully or partially remotely. |  |
| Supervisor has discussed with the employee what job duties are to be performed remotely and  planned for any duties that must be performed on site. |  |
| **Estimation of Anticipated Hours per Week:**  Remote Work Hours: On-site Hours: Leave Hours: | N/A |
| Employee has appropriate remote space, equipment, telephone and internet access. |  |
| Employee can ensure that remote work will not create an information security risk. |  |
| Supervisor can provide adequate supervision and accountability for the remote work. |  |

**Signatures:** *Acknowledgement signature may be given via electronically or physically.*

# Employee Acknowledgement:

I request approval for an emergency remote work arrangement and agree to adhere to all applicable guidelines and policies. I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the COVID-19 Emergency Remote Work Procedures and Agreement.

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# Employee Signature Date

**Supervisor Approval:**

I approve this emergency remote work arrangement and agree to adhere to all applicable guidelines and policies. I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this COVID-19 Emergency Remote Work Procedure and Agreement and will ensure adequate supervision and accountability for my employee at all times and work locations.

# Supervisor Signature Date

**Department Head Date**

Please forward completed form to Human Resources Natasha Wedley, Assistant Director of Human Resources via email or adobe sign