

Telecommuting and Flextime



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Telecommuting

History

US Legislation

The [Telework Enhancement Act](#), signed into law on December 9, 2010, is the Congressional law requiring agencies to increase workforce flexibility via telework. The Digital Government Strategy was created to enable workers to telework and to access high-quality digital government information and services anywhere, anytime, and on any device.

SF Legislation

In addition, January 1, 2014 marked the beginning of the [Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance](#), a new ordinance put in place by San Francisco Mayor, Edward Lee.

- The ordinance applies to employers with 20 or more employees in San Francisco.
- Parents and caretakers have the right to request modified work schedules, such as a change in start times, part-time and part-year schedules, telecommuting and schedule predictability.

National Growth of Telecommuting

[Source Site](#)

There are many sources that have reported the amount of telecommuters in the U.S. From these sources we can assume that the amount of telecommuters is anywhere from three to ten percent nationally.

Telework Grew Nearly 80% since 2005— The number of employees telecommuting multiple days per week increased 79.7% from 2005 to 2012, though the rate of growth slowed during the recession.



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Advantages to Telecommuting

[Source Site](#)

Telecommuting is changing the way we work. Between three and ten percent (3% - 10%) of our workforce works from home and remains on the company payroll. A [research study](#) conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and published by the National Communication Association compared the experiences of telecommuters and office-based employees. They found that “employees who telecommute the majority of the work week are more satisfied with their jobs compared to those working mostly in the office because working remotely alleviates more stress than it creates.” Some benefits of telecommuting may include:

- Increased productivity, removes any office distractions.
- Cost efficient, minimal expenses.
- Fewer sick days and reduced attrition.
- Increased happiness within job.
- Increased satisfaction with personal lives.
- Flexible schedule.
- No commuting, reducing CO₂ emission.

Other Considerations to Telecommuting

[Source Site](#)

While telecommuting programs have been highly successful for many businesses of all shapes, sizes, and industry orientations, there are potential difficulties associated with them. Commonly cited drawbacks include the following:

- Lack of oversight
- Isolation
- Impacts upon corporate culture
- Morale, legal, and security issues

San Francisco Telecommuting Work Centers

San Francisco certainly has an abundance of coffee shops. But despite an increasing amount of telecommuters flocking to the Bay Area, it can be surprisingly difficult to find a **comfortable cafe where the Wi-Fi is free-flowing**. [San Francisco's Eater](#) presents a map of the best cafes in town that meet all of the proper conditions for buckling down: reliable internet connections, decent coffee, snacks, ample outlets and seating, and a certain standard of cleanliness.





How to Implement a Telecommuting Program

[Source Site](#)

Implementing a successful telecommuting program requires more than simply providing a high-speed connection and a laptop. Significant amount of planning that must take place to accommodate policies and procedures, technology selection, training, installation, technical support, and cost and budget management to ensure employee satisfaction.

Begin by carefully planning and documenting the key phases of the project. Build a policies and procedures manual that includes:

- Selection criteria for participation and enrollment procedures
- Participation expectations and requirements
- Pre-program training
- Telecommuter agreement and contracts
- Home office and software setup guide
- Technical equipment, policies, and support
- Administrative support policy
- Accounting and expense submission/reimbursement policy
- Office supply policy
- Mail and overnight package procedures
- Program termination policy
- Accounting and expense submission/reimbursement policy

Legal Responsibilities of Employers

[Source Site](#)

Workers' Compensation

Work-related injuries incurred at a remote worksite during agreed-upon working hours are covered by Workers' Compensation. The supervisor should advise the employee that injuries will be handled in the same manner as reports of injuries at the primary worksite.

Equipment

Providing all office equipment (computers, copiers, printers) for employees who work at home not only gives you more control over that equipment, but also helps your organization avoid responsibility for damages to the employee's personal equipment. It's important to check with your IT team to make sure your telecommuting employee has a secure connection to your organization's network.





Legal Responsibilities of Employers (Cont'd)

[Source Site](#)

Cyber-risk

Your organization may face an increased risk of intellectual property loss and/or disclosure of customer information. Make sure you have clear rules in place regarding the use of proprietary and personal information, the value of that information and the consequences of disclosure.

Third Party Risks

There is no public liability for an employee working from their home, provided they are not using the premises to engage the public. However, if your employee receives visitors for work-related matters, you may be liable in the event that they are injured.

Auto exposure

Regardless of workplace location, if an employee has an accident while driving on business, or what could be construed as business, your organization could be a target for a claim or lawsuit. Ensuring that any employee who you allow to telecommute has sufficient auto liability coverage is essential if there is any possibility that they will be driving in the course of their work.

Other Considerations



For more information on telecommuting in San Francisco please visit [our website](#) or [The City website](#) where you can find the *Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance* and other resources that can help you determine if telecommuting is the right option for you.

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Flextime

January 1, 2014 marked the beginning of the [Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance](#), a new ordinance put into place by San Francisco Mayor, Edward Lee. The ordinance applies to employers with 20 or more employees in San Francisco. Parents and caretakers have the right to request modified work schedules, such as a change in start times, part-time and part-year schedules, telecommuting, and schedule predictability.

Flexible work schedules, also known as **flextime**, offers benefits for work, commute, and community.

Flextime Benefits

- Reduced absenteeism and tardiness.
- Extended hours of operation.
- Varying work schedule based on personal needs.
- Lower overhead cost, shared work spaces.
- Increased morale, engagement, and commitment within a company.
- Reduced consumption of commute time.



For more information on flextime in San Francisco please visit [our website](#) or [The City website](#) where you can find the *Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance* and other resources that can help you determine if one of these work options is right for you.



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Additional Resources

Flextime

Context

- [Flexible Work Options Guide](#)
- [Flextime Schedule Variations](#)

Models of Successful Programs

- [MIT Flextime Program](#)
- [SHRM Case Study](#)

Legal Considerations

- [Managing Workplace Flexibility in California](#)
- [Employer Best Practices for Workers with Caregiving Responsibilities](#)
- [Samples of Schedule Change Request Forms](#)

Advantages and Drawbacks

- [EPA: Benefits for the Commute](#)
- [Advantages and Disadvantages in the Workplace Integrating Work and Family Life](#)

Telecommuting

Context

- [Definition](#)
- [Telecommuting Policy and Program](#)

Advantages and Drawbacks

- [Advantages and Drawbacks of Telecommuting](#)
- [Statistics: Cost and Benefits](#)
- [Telecommuting Myths](#)

Legislation

- [Telework Enhancement Act](#)
- [Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance](#)

Commute Alternatives

- [A Guide to Commute Alternatives](#)

Visit our website for more [Working Smart](#) resources!

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