

Flexible Work Arrangements *A Guide for Employees*

Introduction

MoDOT will be flexible because we believe one size does not fit all. Flexible work arrangements can provide benefits to both employees and the department. This guide is intended to provide employees with information about flexible work arrangements and suggestions for being effective in such an arrangement.

Flexible work arrangements allow employees to complete their work in some other manner than the typical five 8-hour days at their normal work location. Flexible work arrangements can vary and are subject to management approval. Several identified options that can be utilized at MoDOT are:

- **Flexible Work Schedules:** Work schedules that are different than the normal five 8-hour days, Monday through Friday. For example, an employee could work four 10-hour days, four 9-hour days and one 4-hour day, or other flexible hours.
- **Telecommuting:** A work arrangement that allows employees who normally report for work at a department office building to complete part or all of their work assignments from a different location on a regular basis. For example, an employee may work four days a week in his/her assigned location and one day from home.
- **Remote Work Location:** Working at a location that is not considered the employee's permanent assigned district/division/office for reporting purposes. For example, an employee is assigned to Central Office, but physically works at a district office or other location.

Basic Ground Rules for Implementation

- May be limited to non-managers/supervisors at the discretion of the district engineer/division leader/state engineer
- Must be a One Team effort supported by management
- Must be operational with all services to be offered 5 days a week or 24/7, if appropriate
- Must not result in increased overtime or compensatory time accrual
- Each district/division/office must still be able to respond 24/7 in the event of an emergency
- Must not decrease our ability to achieve our Tangible Results
- Participants must embrace our Values and Preferred Employee Qualities
- If critical meetings are scheduled, the appropriate staff must be present, regardless of flexible work arrangements
- Must not increase operational costs
- Must not decrease the level of services offered by the department

Due to the nature of the work, some positions will not be eligible for flexible work arrangements. Based on the job requirements and the needs of the work unit, supervisors and managers will determine if a specific position within a work unit is eligible for some type of

flexible work arrangement. Some jobs can be performed offsite or with a flexible schedule, while others require onsite availability on specific days and at specific times.

In the same respect, not all employees will be eligible for flexible work arrangements and not all employees will be interested in the options available to them in their position. Candidates for flexible work arrangements should be employees with a history of good work performance and proven ability in their position. Employees considered for flexible work arrangements must be dependable and trustworthy, with a demonstrated ability to manage their own time and work. These employees must also have an interest in the flexible work arrangement. Some flexible work arrangements may not be appealing to certain employees for various work-related and/or personal reasons.

In order for flexible work arrangements to be effective, management and employees must support the arrangements. Care must be taken to ensure the proper selection of candidates for flexible work arrangements. Ongoing and effective communications among management, employees with flexible work arrangements, customers, and coworkers must be a priority for everyone. Ultimately, flexible work arrangements should be a benefit, but must not diminish the current level of service provided by the department, nor increase operational costs.

Related Policies and Resources

Personnel Policy 0513, "Telecommuting/Remote Work," outlines the process for employees to obtain approval from the district engineer or division leader/state engineer to telecommute or work from a remote location.

If it is determined that telecommuting may be an option, employees and supervisors will work through an evaluation process and come to an agreement on the terms of the arrangement. A Telecommuting Evaluation and Telecommuting Agreement are available to assist supervisors and employees with this process and they can be modified as necessary to reflect requirements/expectations of the respective district/division/office/work unit. A Telecommuting Worksite Safety Checklist will also be utilized to review any health and safety concerns of a proposed telecommuting worksite. Employees are responsible for ensuring their designated workspace is clean and free of obvious hazards. The department will not pay for home utility costs associated with employees telecommuting from their personal residence. The department also will not pay for additional phone lines (installation or monthly fees) or for Internet access in employees' homes or other locations not on department property. The department will not reimburse charges for phone calls made on personal home and/or cell phones as a result of a telecommuting arrangement. Supervisors must work with the Information Systems Telecommuting Coordinator to ensure the appropriate technology is available for a telecommuting arrangement. Employees may use department-owned property in their private residences, including computers and other telecommunications equipment, provided the equipment is used for official business only. The department is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment.

Personnel Policy 3000, "Working Hours and Overtime," outlines the process for employees to obtain approval to work a flexible schedule with the supervisor's approval.

Personnel Policy 3002, "Holidays," explains how time sheets are to be coded for a holiday when employees are on a 4X10 work schedule. Since holiday pay is eight hours for each holiday, employees will need to code the remaining two hours (to complete their 10-hour day) to either annual leave or comp time. Holiday pay cannot be approved for more than eight hours, but coding two hours to paid leave in order to be on a 4X10 schedule is not a bad trade-off for being able to have three days off each week. Sometimes employees may be able to work at least two extra hours during the week of the holiday, which could be used to FLEX for these two hours on the holiday. However, the only way this will work in the SAM II System is if these extra hours are worked on some day that week other than the holiday. The SAM II System will not accept any time worked on a holiday to be used to code as FLEX on that holiday.

If it is determined that some form of 4x9s schedule is appropriate, please refer to the Timesheet Coding of a Four Nines Schedule located on the HR Intranet site, <http://wwwi/intranet/hr/>.

Tips for employees

The more prepared you are for a flexible work arrangement, the more successful the arrangement can be.

- **Review the related policies**
 - Ensure that you fully understand the procedures and guidelines for a flexible work arrangement

- **Assess your situation**
 - Evaluate your work responsibilities – Could your tasks be performed in a flexible schedule, without diminishing the level of service to your customers/partners? Does your job require a lot of unpredictable face-to-face interaction on a daily basis? Are the same resources needed to carry out your job available to you with a different schedule/work location?
 - Evaluate your characteristics/traits – Are you a self-starter? Are you dependable and a strong performer? Have you proved the ability to manage your time and work effectively?
 - Evaluate your personal obligations – Is a flexible work arrangement appropriate for you and your family/other personal commitments? Are the resources available to support you in a flexible work arrangement (extended child care hours, transportation, a telecommuting workspace, etc.)?

- **Understand your obligations**
 - A flexible work arrangement does not change your responsibility to comply with department policies and practices (including overtime and leave usage approvals), nor your responsibility to complete the work you are assigned
 - A flexible work arrangement may be altered or ended at any time if business needs change, it is no longer time/cost effective, or you are no longer meeting the expectations of the arrangement
 - You may still need to be available for onsite meetings as necessary, even if the meeting must occur during a time you are not normally scheduled to work or be at your assigned work location

- **Work with your supervisor**
 - You and your supervisor will need to define the details of the flexible work arrangement and revisit them as often as needed so that you both know what is expected and can effectively manage the expectations

- **Maintain ongoing communication**
 - You must communicate with and be accessible to your supervisor and coworkers, and understand that it may take time for all to get accustomed to the new arrangement
 - Ensure that your supervisor and coworkers stay informed and up-to-date on your projects as you may have less “face-to-face” time with them
 - Keep your supervisor informed of any issues you encounter and be sure to meet the expectations of the arrangement

- **Create a flexible work arrangement that is conducive to productivity and efficiency**
 - You must consider whether you can be effective for extended hours or at a telecommuting/remote work location
 - Take steps to make your arrangement more conducive – What steps can you take to ensure productivity for extended hours? How can your telecommuting/remote work location better support your efficiency (appropriate resources available, limited distractions/temptations, etc.)?

Additional tips specific to telecommuting employees

Telecommuting can be beneficial to employees and to the department, but only if the arrangement is managed effectively. Once you have selected the separate workspace at your telecommuting location (such as a home office that is clean, safe, and free from distraction) there are several things you can do to make the most of your new arrangement.

- Ensure the workspace is set up with easy access to all the supplies you will need – Are your computer, phone, files, pens, paper, etc. all within your reach in your designated workspace?

- Achieve the office frame of mind – How will you shift into “work” mode? Since you are not reporting to the office, you must create some mental cues to put you in that frame of mind (perhaps you still dress as if reporting to the office, or carry out some other routine that helps get your mind to switch from home to “the office”)

- Get organized (ensure that the materials and resources you need are at the work location where you need them) – Did you leave your only copy of a report on your desk in the office and now you really need it on the day you work from home? As a telecommuter you must get organized so you are adequately prepared for each work day

- Anticipate distractions and decide how you will address them – What is your plan if a neighbor stops by to visit? How will you handle the workday if your child is home from

school that day? Know that there will be distractions for you as a telecommuter (just as there are in the office), ask your friends/family/neighbors to respect your scheduled work hours and let them know you are not available to visit, care for others, etc.

- Separate work from home – have a schedule, know when your work day begins and when it ends; you may be tempted to keep checking in since “the office” is now just a few steps away, but you need to be able to separate work from home
- Make adjustments as necessary – Recognize that it may take a while to get comfortable with your new work arrangement; as you learn that something is not working for you, try a new method; if you discover telecommuting will not be the most effective use of your time, let your supervisor know—it’s not for everyone