

## **Flexible Work Arrangements** *A Guide for Supervisors*

### **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 supervisors with information about flexible work arrangements and guidance on how to effectively manage such arrangements.

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 office/district/division for reporting purposes. For example, an employee is assigned to Central Office, but physically works at a district office or other location.

### **Benefits**

When and where appropriate, flexible work arrangements offer significant benefits to employees and to the department:

- Decreased commuting time, expenses, and stress for employees
- Greater employee flexibility in balancing personal and professional responsibilities
- Longer blocks of time for employees to really focus on a project
- Increased employee productivity
- Increased employee job satisfaction and department loyalty because of the benefits to the employee
- Increased flexibility to provide extended customer service hours
- Greater flexibility and resilience to get the work done in the face of inclement weather, floods, pandemics, etc.
- Valuable recruitment/retention tool for high quality employees
- Possible reduction in utility and energy costs
- Possible reduction in office space/supplies
- Greater flexibility to "transfer" employees as work priorities shift, without providing relocation expenses

- Possible reduction in employees' need for time away from work to address personal issues/schedule appointments due to the flexibility offered

### **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 in a compressed workweek, 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 Supervisors**

The more prepared you are for a flexible work arrangement, the more successful the arrangement can be. For flexible work arrangements to be effective, the supervisor must be involved and committed to the process.

- **Review the related policies**
  - Ensure that you fully understand the procedures and guidelines for a flexible work arrangement
  - If your district/division/office has developed additional criteria for flexible work arrangements, ensure that you are considering that criteria as well

- **Assess your situation**
  - Evaluate your work unit's responsibilities – Do you have work that could be performed on a different schedule or at a different location without diminishing the level of service to your customers/partners? Does the work your unit is responsible for require a lot of unpredictable face-to-face interaction on a daily basis, and how would flexible work arrangements affect your work unit coverage? Are the same resources needed to carry out the work of your unit available with a different schedule/work location? Do you have any positions within your work unit that would be eligible for flexible work arrangements?
  - Evaluate your employees – Do your employees in positions that would be eligible for flexible work schedules possess the traits that would make the arrangement most effective? Are these employees self-starters? Are they dependable, trustworthy, strong performers? Have they proven the ability to manage time and work effectively? Do you have employees who are interested in flexible work schedules, or do their personal situations/preferences limit these opportunities (extended child care hours, personal commitments, or a preference for their current schedule/work location)?
  - Consider your options – What flexible work arrangements could work for your unit? Is telecommuting an option? How much time could be spent telecommuting and how much should be in the office? If flexible schedules (such as 4x10s) are an option, how will you stagger schedules to ensure coverage?
  - Evaluate your current management methods – How do you measure employees' performance? How do you typically communicate with employees (phone, email, face-to-face)? Would you be comfortable managing people you cannot see (if employees work a different schedule than you, or work from a different location)? Is this possibly similar to supervising your employees who travel or have field assignments? What methods do you use to ensure communication and monitor progress in those situations?
  
- **Reduce barriers that are within your control**
  - Adjust your methods of communication and supervision if necessary
  - Manage perception by involving employees in the process and defining your expectations so that your entire work unit (not just those with flexible work arrangements) can support this; assure your employees that while the work may now be accomplished during different work hours or at different locations, the work will still be completed and each employee is still held the expectations you have defined
  - Provide timely and constructive feedback to ensure that the arrangement remains as effective as possible
  - Trust and empower your employees – remember that physically observing individuals does not necessarily enhance the quality of their work nor ensure that a project is completed on time
  
- **Manage by results**
  - Focus on the results of the employees' work since you may not be able to monitor the work process

- Establish clear, measurable objectives and desired results
- Discuss performance expectations and have a clear understanding of how performance will be assessed (employees with flexible work arrangements are still expected to perform at the level of a similarly situated employee without such an arrangement)
- Review actual versus expected performance regularly
  
- **Be flexible**
  - Encourage and accept feedback about ways to improve flexible work arrangements
  - Understand (and ensure your employees understand) business needs change and flexible work arrangements may need to be modified or ended as responsibilities of your work unit change
  
- **Distribute work effectively**
  - Evaluate the distribution of assignments to ensure that certain employees are not being given more/less work due to flexible work arrangements within your work unit
  
- **Manage work schedules**
  - Ensure that coworkers, customers, and partners are aware if a flexible work arrangement results in different hours of availability (hours agreed by you and the employee that do not diminish the current level of service) – you may wish to utilize electronic calendars or other forms of communication to address this
  - Ensure that employees are aware of your expectations related to any overtime and compensatory time accrual (the flexible work arrangement should not result in an increase of such and the employee must still obtain supervisor approval in advance of any additional hours worked)
  - Ensure that employees are aware of your expectations related to leave usage. Examples: What do you require of employees requesting annual leave? What is your process if an employee needs sick leave (who should be called and when, as well as addressing telecommuters responsibilities if they are sick on a day they normally work from home, etc.)?