

Working from Home Tips and Best Practices for Employees

Working from home requires individuals and their supervisors to work in a different way, communicate closely and connect regularly. The following guidelines provide support to employees working from home.

Getting Started

Set up your workspace and speak with your supervisor about expected work hours, productivity tracking and scheduling.

- ✓ Ensure you and your supervisor have reviewed the Working from Home Guide together.
- ✓ Designate a suitable environment for your work and ensure you have the appropriate computer equipment, network connection, phone and electronic or paper files you need for your work.
- ✓ Let your supervisor know about any additional resources you might need.
- ✓ Ensure you have a laptop and/or VPN access and/or required information and tools.
- ✓ Set clear expectations with the people around you to help avoid interruptions during your working hours, and plan for how you will manage distractions when they happen. If possible, choose to work in a space that allows you to close a door, and let others know not to interrupt you when it is closed.
- ✓ Create a routine around your designated space and working hours, including time for meals or breaks. Ensure people around you, as well as your supervisor and work colleagues, are aware of your routine.
- ✓ Employees working from home should use equipment and supplies provided by the employer.

Privacy and Security

- ✓ Employees must ensure that their obligations under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) and BC Privacy Protection continue to be met while working from home.
- ✓ Choose a working space where laptop screen viewing by others is minimized and log out of computers when not in use.
- ✓ Company documents and records created in the course of telework are subject to your company's records management requirements.
- ✓ Passwords should be used on all devices.
- ✓ When not in use, documents should be placed in folders and put away so that they cannot be easily viewed by others.
- ✓ Minimize the use of paper at home. Do not put work-related confidential information into your home recycle bins and garbage cans.
- ✓ Employees must ensure that their obligations under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) and The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) continue to be met while working from home.



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Communication

Be intentional about connecting with your supervisor and work colleagues.

- ✓ Maintain regular contact with your supervisor. Be as responsive as you can to their communications, and be deliberate about providing them with updates on your work, as appropriate.
- ✓ Use the technology tools for working from home (e.g., Skype, teleconferencing, email online).
- ✓ Let your supervisor know about anything that impacts on your work schedule (e.g. if you are sick and need to use sick leave, if you need to be away to attend a medical appointment, or to request vacation leave).
- ✓ Pencil in calls to catch up with your colleagues (no need for a fixed agenda). Use free, accessible communication tools for non-confidential conversations – texting or WhatsApp are easy to use on any mobile device. Please note that it is more difficult to retain text messages. Communication between employer and employee should primarily occur over work email or phone calls.
- ✓ Remember that your colleagues are there to help support you, and they will need your support too.

Workspace safety and set-up considerations

- ✓ Work from home must be in a designated space, appropriate to the nature of the work, and meet occupational health and safety requirements.
- ✓ Make sure that you have enough light to work without straining your eyes, and get up to move around and stretch to avoid sitting for extended hours or repeating motions.
- ✓ Install all of your furniture securely and adjust your workstation properly so that you are comfortable and prevent strain or injury.
- ✓ Arrange electrical cords carefully so that they are not a tripping hazard and are plugged into a safe outlet that is not overloaded.
- ✓ Make sure your home has clear and unobstructed hallways, walkways, stairs and exits.
- ✓ Ensure that your smoke detector is working, that you have appropriate ventilation in your workspace, and keep paper away from any heat sources.
- ✓ Have first aid supplies on hand, communicate any safety concerns or injuries to your supervisor, and check that your emergency contact is updated.

Mental Health

Working from home can be an adjustment for many employees. Make sure you are taking care of your mental health.

- ✓ Be sure to take steps to handle stress and anxiety by accessing resources and counselling services through your Employee and Family Assistance Program.
- ✓ Find mental health resources at www.bcforestsafesafe.org/node/3460.



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