



# REMOTE WORK GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

FOR CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS IN BC

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JUNE 2023

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## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

### **Red text**

Use these areas to customize information pertaining to your organization.

### **Green text**

Use these areas as instructions, if applicable to your organization.

### **Blue text**

These are hyperlinks to resources or specific sections of this document.

## OVERVIEW

Ongoing labour shortages, skyrocketing operational costs, and high demand for construction services are putting employers in BC's construction industry under a lot of pressure.

On the HR side, intense competition for talent is driving the need to provide more benefits, higher wages, and even the option for full-time or hybrid remote work.

While most construction jobs need to be done in-person and on a worksite, there can be an opportunity to offer more flexibility for some positions in order to attract and retain the talent you need.

More organizations in competing industries are offering remote work options, (including the provincial government), so it's becoming an important benefit to consider.

BCCA is pleased to provide these guidelines to help construction employers understand their options when it comes to offering remote work.

## GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

To help determine if a remote work option makes sense for your construction organization, start by asking the following questions:

- **Is remote work feasible for the job?**
  - Can the jobs reasonably be carried out remotely?
  - Does the work require regular in-person interactions?
  - Does the work use equipment and resources that only exist at the office?
  - What tasks must take place in person? How often do those occur?
- **What level of support will be possible for managers and team members?**
  - How supported will remote employees be by their managers?
  - How available will they be to the rest of the team?
  - Are employees trusted and empowered to work autonomously?
  - Will workers get the necessary level of administrative and IT support when they need it?
- **How strong is the company connectivity, collaboration, and communication infrastructure?**
  - Are managers and team members reachable and accessible by a variety of methods (e.g. email, text, Teams, Slack, phone, video)?
  - Do you have the necessary infrastructure set up to make sure ongoing communication is easy (e.g. can you host meetings where some of your team are in the office and some are remote)?
- **Are you confident in the productivity and performance of your employees?**
  - Are employees who could work from home performing well, and will they be able to be productive when not in the office?
  - Will working remotely make it easier to get work done, or harder?
- **Are the necessary resources in place?**
  - Do employees have what they need in terms of technology, equipment, and tools to perform all their functions remotely?
  - If not, will you provide all the tools and or allowances needed?, If so, will those resources be standardized or decided on an as-needed basis?
  - Are you willing to support remote work with company IT and other support? Or will employees be on their own in terms of ensuring connectivity set-up and troubleshooting?
  - Can employees meet general guidelines when working from home, such as maintaining confidentiality of documents and discussions?

- **Can your current company health and safety policies accommodate working virtually?**
  - Will employees be able to work in a safe, productive manner free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and hazing?
  - Will employees have a physically and mentally safe remote work environment?
  - Are there specific, known and disclosed mental or physical health circumstances that will impact an employee's ability to work remotely or in the office?
- **Can you guarantee fairness?**
  - Will having some employees working remotely while others need to be onsite negatively impact company culture? Will there be perceptions of unfairness?
  - Will working remotely be a transparent and defensible benefit? For those who could potentially work from home (e.g. admin staff), do they typically have longer commutes, have more dependent care responsibilities, or make less money than those who need to be onsite? Each of these situations is potentially a reason for allowing a team member to work from home.
- **Will a work-from-home policy help your company attract and retain talent?**
  - Providing hybrid or full-time remote work arrangements help you attract and retain critical positions.

**If you decide to develop remote work policies as part of your benefits package, here are some additional details that you'll need to consider:**

- **Will the remote work be fully remote or hybrid?**
  - If hybrid, decide if there will be set days when employees need to be in the office, or if each worker can set their own schedule with their manager.
- **Can introducing a remote option reduce operational expenses for your organization? Can it change the way the office is arranged?**
  - If a number of employees work remotely on a full-time or hybrid basis, that can reduce the need for office space.
  - Will those working hybrid have their 'own' desks or workspaces in the office, or will they simply use an available desk? If they share, you'll need to set up a booking solution and process.
- Consider an initial trial term of one year, setting clear expectations and making sure your team understands that the option for remote work could end if performance, productivity, or other business needs require it. Let them know you'll give a reasonable notice of XX months, but that the decision will be at the discretion of management.

## ONLINE WORKSAFEBC/OHS RESOURCES

As circumstances will differ from company to company and role to role, below are additional resources related to working remotely.

- [\*\*CCOHS Guide to Remote Work\*\*](#)
  - Addresses a variety of topics including ergonomic tips for home offices, safety/security issues, what constitutes an appropriate home office from a health and safety perspective, home office safety checklist, etc.
- [\*\*WorkSafeBC Roles, Rights & Responsibilities\*\*](#)
  - Addresses the responsibilities of both managers and employees with respect to workplace health and safety, which apply regardless of where the employee is working
- [\*\*WorkSafeBC Working from Home Guide\*\*](#)
  - Tips and resources to help ensure the health and safety of employees.
- [\*\*WorkSafeBC Guide for Employees\*\*](#)
  - Guide for employees in how to set up, organize, and work comfortably in their home workspaces

## Remote Work Policy

One of the best parts of working at is the collaboration and energy we bring when working together. We have worked hard to create a comfortable and accessible work environment for everyone, and in order to support the diverse needs of our employees, we support a flexible work environment for some positions. We know that circumstances that make it difficult to come to work may occasionally come up, (such as extreme weather or traffic conditions, childcare realities, home emergencies) and we are open to supporting remote work when necessary.

## Approval Process

If you want or need to work remotely on an occasional 'one-time' or on an ongoing basis you must make arrangements with your manager in advance. Keep in mind that the nature of your role may not be conducive to a regular or ongoing remote arrangement, and this decision is at the discretion of your manager.

If you currently reside within the area but would like to relocate outside the area, you must consult with your manager in advance to determine if a fully remote arrangement will be possible for your role.

## General Remote Work Guidelines

Regardless of where you work, we expect that you:

- Keep in mind that a regular workday is Your commute to and from the office doesn't constitute work time. Work your normal expected hours and be reasonably accessible at any time during the workday.
- Have an adequate internet connection and either have the materials you need to do your work or have remote access set up and ready to go.
- Have a workspace where you can work effectively without major interruptions or ongoing distractions.
- Work in a designated, pre-approved remote space (e.g. your home office). If you travel for personal reasons and continue to work, be sure to have it approved in advance.
- Set appropriate boundaries with others in your remote location, including family members and housemates.
- Recognize that, while unexpected family care needs may on occasion be the reason for working remotely, doing so should not be an ongoing substitute for child or dependent care. If you're unable to effectively carry out the responsibilities of your position, we expect that you take a vacation day, family responsibility (ESA),

- Are well enough to work a regular workday. While we appreciate that you may still be able to work when you have a cold (for example) but don't want to get others sick, if you should be resting to recover, please take a sick day.
- Can comply with [occupational safety standards](#) and ensure your workspace is as safe/healthy as possible; *refer to and complete the associated Working from Home Checklist for Occupational Health & Safety*. We maintain WorkSafeBC coverage for our employees which allows for coverage while working remotely during approved business hours.
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## Confidentiality and Security

Regardless of where you're working, you must protect our equipment, documents, and materials against unauthorized access, use, or destruction. Always manage information in accordance with our

report any actual or potential security breaches to your manager immediately. To help facilitate confidentiality and security, observe the following:

- Always
  - as opposed to saving documents on your desktop.
- Maintain required password requirements on phones, laptops, and other devices.
- Secure both electronic and hard copies of confidential information when not in use and dispose of/shred documents as needed.
- Take care with confidential conversations when others are sharing your workspace.

## Setting Parameters and Communication

To ensure your work arrangement is as successful as possible, discuss and set parameters with your manager (and teams, where applicable), including the following:

- Clarify your technology needs and secure the tools to ensure productivity.
- Establish performance and productivity goals and expectations.
- Discuss the concerns and potential challenges of your specific work arrangements, and ways to address these issues from the outset.
- Determine a process for regular check-ins and meetings and be proactive with regular communication.
- Ensure your project status, outcomes and deliverables are visible to your manager and team/co-workers as required and appropriate.
- Update your email, calendar, and  status with your availability and contact information if applicable; check and respond to your messages regularly.
- Be accessible, responsive, and reliable.

## Equipment and Resources

*Use the following content if you will expect employees to use their own equipment*

Our office is equipped with the resources required to effectively perform the duties in your role. If you've been approved to work remotely, you will be required to use your personal equipment to access work documents and resources. We don't provide additional computers or laptops solely for remote work arrangements unless you would normally require one for your position.

*Use the following content if you will provide employees will some equipment to work remotely*

If we provide you with a laptop (and associated accessories) and/or cell phone, although the equipment will be in your possession, it remains the property of and as such, may only be used for business purposes. You may not install any software, apps, games, or other components unless expressly instructed by

You will be expected to return all company-provided equipment and associated accessories if you are no longer working remotely, if your employment ends for any reason, and/or if you go on an extended leave for longer than

## In Person Practices

Wherever possible, the following practices should ideally take place within the office, or otherwise in person.

- Initial orientations, onboarding and training as required by your manager
- Regular and occasional team meetings
- Social events
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If you have any additional questions about working remotely, speak with your manager.



*Add the following as applicable*

## **Permanent, “Hoteling” and “Hot” Workspaces**

Permanent workspaces are those that will always be available to a specific employee unless specific arrangements are made with that individual by their manager. Permanent workspaces are usually assigned to employees who:

- Are required to be in the office on a regular, ongoing basis (i.e., 3 or more days per week)
- Require a confidential, secured space with specific resources (e.g., HR and Finance)
- Prefer to be in the office on a regular, ongoing basis

“Hot” workspaces are used on the day-of only (i.e. upon your arrival to work). Whether you reserve a hoteling workspace or use a hot workspace, please observe the following:

- “Hoteling” workspaces are reservable up to two weeks in advance using a booking process.
- Be sure to reserve your hoteling workspace in advance by
  
- Reserve or use your workspace based on your work requirements first (as opposed to preferences).
- Follow the posted protocol to clean the workspace before you leave.
- Leave the hotelling workspace promptly in line with your booking.
- Be mindful of those you’re working beside, as they may differ from time to time.

Wherever possible, hoteling and hot workspaces will be equipped with monitor, keyboard, mouse, and any associated connectivity tools. When applicable, you will need to bring the laptop provided to you whenever you work at the office.

## **Trial Period/Evaluation**

This remote work model is on a trial basis of \_\_\_\_\_ At a minimum of three months prior to the end of the trial period we will evaluate its effectiveness. The evaluation will take into consideration key aspects including performance and productivity; employee health and wellness; collaboration and connection; tools and resources; and overall cost/benefit ratio.

## ADDITIONAL TEMPLATES & FORMS

Depending on the circumstances in your organization, you may wish to use the following additional templates and forms.

- [Working from Home Checklist for Occupational Health & Safety](#)
- [Hybrid Work Approval Form](#)
- [Remote Work Agreement](#)

# WORKING FROM HOME CHECKLIST FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

## Employee Information

Name

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Position

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Department

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Manager

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In compliance with WorkSafeBC,

is required to ensure that all employees working from home have an effective, safe, and ergonomic home office. Employees are required to follow safe work procedures while working from home, including having an evacuation route planned to a safe location in case of an emergency.

**Should you have a work-related incident or injury while working at home, please notify as soon as possible.**

This checklist is to be completed upon the start of a remote work arrangement and subsequently reviewed annually in January every year thereafter. All boxes must be ticked in order to work from home.

- Tick the box for each statement below
- Note any issues that require further attention at the end of the checklist
- Both employee and manager must sign document
- Schedule next review
- Email electronic copy of completed form to

## 1. Work Environment

Level of illumination and location of lighting fixtures are suited to the activity. Lighting level should be sufficient for visual tasks to be completed without eye strain.

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There is sufficient ventilation and thermal comfort, regardless of the season.

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Location, height and other physical characteristics of furniture and computer are suited to the task and take into consideration emergency exit, light sources, etc.

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Path to the exit is reasonably direct. Path to the exit is sufficiently wide and free of trip hazards and obstructions to allow unimpeded passage.

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Walk-ways and work areas are clear of clutter and trip hazards such as trailing electrical cords.

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Work area is segregated from other hazards; e.g. hot cooking surfaces in the kitchen.

## 2. Electrical Safety

Power outlets are not overloaded with double adapters and power bars.

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Electrical equipment used for work is properly tested and safe.

## 3. Physical Activity

Repetitive movement is not continued for long periods without appropriate breaks.

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Breaks involve stretching and changing of posture, and possibly alternating activity.

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Posture is comfortable and in accordance with setting up your workstation; [refer to WorkSafeBC](#).

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**4. Ergonomic Considerations**

Desk, chair, and other accessories are of comparable, or equal quality, to that in the office.

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Chair allows for proper posture, [refer to WorkSafeBC](#).

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Work surface, keyboard, mouse are adjusted properly; [refer to WorkSafeBC](#).

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Monitor(s) is adjusted to proper height, [refer to WorkSafeBC](#).

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Proper accessories, such as a document holder, keyboard tray, wrist support, foot rest and telephone headsets or earphones are available if normally required.

**5. Safety and Emergency Equipment**

Phone and other suitable devices are readily available for effective communication in an emergency situation. Emergency contact numbers and details are known – 911, doctor, family, and work contacts.

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Basic first aid kit is stocked and accessible.

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Basic emergency preparedness kit for earthquake, fire, power outage, flood etc. including supplies and response procedures is stocked and accessible.

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Smoke detectors and fire extinguisher(s) are present and operational.

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Home office offers the same level of security as workplace.

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Contact is made with your manager and/or colleagues at main office periodically each day.

**6. Notes and Action Items**

List actions or equipment required to work from home and specify steps to be taken

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**Acknowledgement and Approval Signatures**

Employee Date

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Employee Date

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# HYBRID WORK APPROVAL FORM

## Employee Information

Name & Position

Manager & Department

Effective Date

## Requested Work Schedule

Further to the Remote Work Policy, my preferred work schedule is (select one): *The following options to be updated as applicable for your company*

Working at the office 3 or more days per week and require and/or prefer a permanent desk/office space (indicate reason below)

Working at the office 3 or more days per week and don't require and/or don't prefer a permanent desk/office space

Working at the office 1 to 2 days per week and will use a hoteling or hot desk

### Select the following if applicable:

I work on confidential matters and will require a permanent desk regardless of how often I'm in the office

Comments/details associated with above:

## Employee Confirmation and Signature

I have read and understand the Remote Work Policy and have agreed on the above schedule with my manager and team. I understand that the terms of the policy are subject to change and that I may request a change to this schedule at any time.

Signature

Date

## Manager Review and Approval

Approval

Yes

No

Comments

Signature

Date

# REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT

Dear

## Re: Remote Work Agreement

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Following your discussion with your manager related to working remotely, we are pleased to confirm the following arrangements with effective on

arrangement within following the start of the remote work arrangement and determine if this agreement will be continued, by mutual agreement, We will evaluate the success of the

### Work Arrangement

It is agreed that your remote work arrangement will be as follows: *Outline whether it's full-time, mixed schedule, certain days per week, etc.*

### Home Office Location

Your work location will be at your place of residence at:

### Guidelines and Expectations

You acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to comply with the guidelines and expectations outlined in our Remote Work Policy.

### Equipment and Technology Requirements

*Use the following content if you will expect employees to use their own equipment*

Further to the Remote Work Policy, as our office is equipped with the resources required to effectively perform the duties in your role, you will be required to use your personal equipment to access work documents and resources. We don't provide additional computers or laptops solely for remote work arrangements unless you would normally require one for your position.

*Use the following content if you will provide employees will some equipment to work remotely*

Further to the Remote Work Policy, as we have provided you with

although the equipment will be in your possession, it remains the property of and as such, may only be used for business purposes. You may not install any software, apps, games, or other components unless expressly instructed by

You will be expected to return all company-provided equipment and associated accessories if you are no longer working remotely, if your employment ends for any reason, and/or if you go on an extended leave for longer than

Should there be regular technical related issues which take away from productivity, this remote work agreement will be reviewed to determine if it is in the best interest of both parties.

### **Resources and Costs**

The costs associated with working remotely are your responsibility. I will not be responsible for any of the following:

- Costs associated with setting up your work space (including furniture, lighting, repairs)
- Costs associated with complying with WorkSafeBC OH&S requirements (e.g. first aid kit, fire extinguishers, etc.)
- Repairs to and maintenance of your personal equipment
- Commuting between your home office and our office/worksite
- Household costs for your remote work space (e.g. utilities, rent, increased internet connection)
- Changes to insurance premiums

Please let us know if you have any questions related to this remote work agreement.

Sincerely,

### **Acceptance of Remote Work Terms**

Please sign below and return to me as confirmation of your acceptance of the terms and conditions of this Remote Work Agreement.

*I agree that I will follow all the terms and conditions outlined within this Agreement, the Remote Work Policy, and WorkSafeBC in order to both maintain productivity and ensure my personal safety. I understand that this arrangement for remote work may be revoked at any time, with up to 30 days' notice, and my position will revert back to an in-office position. I further understand that notice to terminate this agreement may require less than 30 days if termination is associated with my inability to set up a reliable system which allows for regular productivity and completion of my daily activities.*

*Finally, I confirm and understand that working remotely is neither a benefit nor an entitlement and in no way changes the terms and conditions of my employment with*

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Employee Name

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Date