

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND



CLERK'S OFFICE
TELEWORK POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025

Signed: 
George L. Russell, III, Chief Judge

I. Purpose

This Telework Policy establishes the conditions and requirements for employees to perform telework consistent with the requirements of the Guide to Judiciary Policy, Volume 12 (Human Resources), Chapter 10 (Telework).

Telework is a voluntary agreement for employees to work off-site during regular business hours, either on a regular basis or for a specific occasion. Telework may also be required of all employees to ensure the continuity of court operations in the event of natural catastrophe, inclement or unsafe weather conditions, or other situation that closes one or more of the court's locations.

II. Applicability

This plan applies to all employees of the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland.

III. Categories of Telework Authorized by Plan

This Plan authorizes the following categories of telework at the discretion of the supervisor, manager, and Clerk of Court:

- **Regular Scheduled Telework:** Unless otherwise stated herein, all full-time, non-probationary employees, except for employees subject to ad hoc telework, are permitted one scheduled telework day per week. Scheduled telework days are fixed to a particular day of the week and may not be changed (flexed) to another day of that week absent advance supervisor approval and based on the needs of the Court. In the event an employee's regularly scheduled telework day falls on a day when the court is closed, either due to a court holiday or situationally, or when telework is suspended for all staff, the employee's regular scheduled telework day is forfeited for that week.
- **Ad Hoc Telework:** Certain full-time, non-probationary positions, as designated by the Clerk of Court, are permitted occasional flexible telework days subject to advance supervisor approval and based on the needs of the Court.
- **Specialized Telework:** The Clerk of Court reserves the right to designate certain non-public facing specialized positions that are particularly suited to telework to additional Regular Scheduled Telework days on a case-by-case basis.
- **Temporary Telework:** Teleworking may be permitted on an occasional basis (including intermittent or temporary full-time telework) based on extenuating employee circumstances such as medical appointments or medical recuperation periods, as approved by the Clerk of Court.

- **Situational Telework:** Teleworking may be required for all employees by the Clerk of Court or designee during declared emergencies or days when the courthouse is closed due to inclement weather.

Regular, full-time telework is not permitted under this Plan.

IV. Requirements

- a) Telework is permitted only at management's discretion and is not an employee entitlement.
- b) Employee participation in telework is generally voluntary, although the Clerk of Court or designee may require all employees to telework as needed during a continuity of operations event, inclement weather, or similar situations.
- c) Employees scheduled to telework may be required to come into the office based on coverage needs. Employees will be given as much notice as feasible given the circumstances. Employees will be given a reasonable amount of time to report to work without requiring the use of leave. If an employee experiences a power failure or other loss of ability to telework, the employee must report to the courthouse unless during situational telework.
- d) Employees scheduled to telework will rarely be permitted to change their scheduled telework day to a different day. Changes in a scheduled telework day must be approved by the Clerk of Court and based on the needs of the Court. Employees are not guaranteed telework days, and under no circumstances may missed telework days be rescheduled for a subsequent day.
- e) Before beginning to telework, an employee must sign a Telework Agreement (Appendix 1). All staff must have a signed Telework Agreement on file in the event telework is required by the Clerk of Court. Staff will be required to complete a Telework Agreement during the onboarding process.
- f) The use of telework does not change the terms and conditions of employment. Specifically, employees are subject to, and must continue to comply with, the Work Schedule, Leave & Outside Employment Policy and maintain their assigned work schedule. Employees may meet the requirements for a full workday with a combination of leave and teleworking hours. During telework hours, employees must remain available through Teams and must forward their office telephone line either to a landline at their telework location or to a mobile phone.
- g) Telework may give some employees more flexibility to meet family responsibilities, but it is not a substitute for dependent care (e.g., child or elder care). Employees may not use duty time for purposes other than official duties.

Minimal personal activity is permitted on breaks and to the extent otherwise permitted as if the employee were in the office.

- h) Telework is subject to continuous management approval and monitoring.
- i) In the event of a courthouse closure due to inclement weather, teleworkers will be required to work for at least one-half of their regularly scheduled hours or as otherwise directed by the Clerk of Court or designee.
- j) At a supervisor's discretion, telework may be suspended during any pay period with two or more holidays.
- k) Employees must limit telework to the approved telework location on file. Employees may telework from an alternate location with advance approval from their supervisor. When making such a request, employees must certify that the alternate worksite has the necessary equipment, supplies, and services to telework.

V. Eligibility

To be eligible for telework, the Clerk of Court, in consultation with the employee's supervisor and manager, will determine whether an employee and the employee's position are appropriate for telework. Employees may be asked to specify what duties have been or will be performed during a scheduled telework day. Failure to demonstrate what duties have been performed may result in loss of telework eligibility.

VI. Travel

Travel is not authorized for any commute between a teleworking employee's home and official duty station.

VII. Termination of Telework Arrangement

- a) Termination of a telework arrangement is at the discretion of either the Clerk of Court, manager, supervisor, or the employee.
- b) Telework will be terminated if the Clerk of Court, manager, or supervisor determines that it interferes with the operations of the court, or adversely affects the performance or development of an employee who teleworks or of their co-workers.

VIII. Government-Owned Equipment and Supplies

- c) Government-owned equipment may be placed at an approved telework site, at the discretion of the Clerk of Court. Government-owned equipment placed at an alternate work site is for official use only and subject to the appropriate

use policy. See Guide, Vol 15, § 525 (Personal Use of Government-Owned Office Equipment). The government retains ownership and control of hardware, software, and data. For guidelines on responsibility for maintenance and liability for government-owned equipment, see Guide, Vol 12, § 1020.60. Employees are prohibited from using their own equipment for telework purposes. See Personal Device Policy.

IX. Remote Network Access

For guidelines on remote network access, see End User IT Security Policy and see Guide, Vol 12, § 1020.75.

X. Workers' Compensation

Judiciary employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (5 U.S.C. § 8101 et seq.) for personal injuries that occur while performing official business at an alternate work site.

XI. Alternate Work Site at Employee's Residence

For expenses and government liabilities at an employee's residence, see Guide, Vol 12, § 1020.80.

XII. Required Documentation

Except when authorized following a continuity of operations event, inclement weather, or other emergency by the Clerk of Court or a Chief Deputy Clerk, an employee must sign a Telework Agreement before the employee may begin to telework.

Clerk's Office Telework Agreement

1. The employee has read and agrees to adhere to the Guide to Judiciary Policy (Guide), Volume 12, Chapter 10, Telework, and any additional requirements imposed by the Clerk's Office Telework Plan. The supervisor concurs with the employee's participation in telework as outlined by the terms of this agreement.
2. The employee agrees to limit telework to the approved telework location on file. In the event the employee needs to temporarily change the telework location, the employee must receive supervisor approval in advance.

3. Attendance and Leave

Telework hours must be documented on the employee's time sheet and must be entered prior to the telework day. The employee agrees to comply with the Work Schedule, Leave & Outside Employment Policy while teleworking and maintain their assigned work schedule. During telework hours, employees agree to remain available through instant messaging and to forward their office telephone line either to a landline at their telework location or to a mobile phone. Information about telephone forwarding is available on Embark.

4. Information Technology (IT) Security

Policies and procedures covering the protection of judiciary records and data from unauthorized disclosure or damage have been discussed and are clearly understood. The employee certifies that the requirements are met, including the following:

- ☐ The employee will protect government records and data from unauthorized disclosure or damage. The employee agrees to maintain a VPN connection to the judiciary's network while teleworking.
- ☐ The government maintains ownership of its records, data, and any hardware or software the government provides for use by employee.
- ☐ The employee agrees to report immediately any unauthorized access to government records or data.
- ☐ The employee has completed the court's initial and periodic IT security training and understands his or her responsibilities regarding protecting access to the networks and systems as well as keeping sensitive and sealed information secure.
- ☐ Up-to-date antivirus software has been installed on the computer at the telework site (including procedures for when and how to update virus signatures) by the IT staff, or by the employee if an employee-owned computer is used for telework.

- ☐ The government will not be liable for damages to the employee's personal or real property during telework. (For liability exceptions, see Guide, Vol 12, § 1020.80.20(b).)

5. Safety

Requirements for a safe and adequate telework space and area have been considered and the employee certifies that the following requirements are met: (1) adequate temperature, ventilation, and lighting; (2) aisles free of obstructions; (3) space free of noise hazards; (4) handrails for stairs; (5) labeled circuit breakers and/or fuses; (6) grounded electrical equipment free of recognized hazards (e.g., frayed, loose, or exposed wires); (7) surge protector installed at the telework site; (8) telephone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard; (9) office space free of excessive amounts of combustibles; (10) carpets secured to the floor and free of worn or frayed seams; (11) satisfactory placement of the monitor and keyboard; (12) enough leg room at the desk; and (13) chair adjustable with adequate support.

In appropriate circumstances, the employee agrees to permit inspections of telework site during official work hours to ensure proper maintenance of the government-owned property and work site conformance with safety standards.

6. Accident or Injury

Any job-related accident or injury occurring to the employee at the telework site must be brought to the immediate attention of the supervisor. Because a job-related accident sustained by an employee while teleworking will occur outside the premises of the court, the supervisor must investigate any report immediately following notification. The employee may be covered under the Federal Employees Compensation Act if injured in the course of performing official duties at the telework site. (Guide, Vol 12, § 1020.55)

7. Either management or the employee may terminate participation in telework at any time.

Employee's Signature

Date

Print Name

