

Government of Saskatchewan

Working from Home: Tips and Best Practices for Employees

The Government of Saskatchewan is continuing to update its policies and procedures for employees to work temporarily from home as part of measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Working from home requires individuals and their managers 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.

- ✓ 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 manager know about any additional resources you might need.
- ✓ Ensure employees have laptops and/or VPNs and/or required [information and tools](#). **Make sure you log into VPN (laptop and desktop) before they leave the workplace.**
- ✓ Set-up up your [IBC phone](#).
- ✓ 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, chose 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 manager and work colleagues, are aware of your routine.
- ✓ Employees working from home should use equipment and supplies provided by the employer in accordance with the [Government of Saskatchewan's Information Technology Acceptable Usage Policy](#).

Privacy and Security

Employees working from home must ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to protect confidential information, including personal information and personal health information as per their obligations under [The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (FOIP) and [The Health Information Protection Act](#) (HIPA)

- ✓ Review the [Clean Desk Security Policy](#) and [Workstation Checklist](#).
- ✓ Take [Access and Privacy in the Government of Saskatchewan](#) training available on Learn if you have not done so in the last two years.
- ✓ Choose a working space where laptop screen viewing by others is minimized and log out of computers when not in use.

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- ✓ 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.

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.

Additional 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. For ergonomic advice, please consult the [guide](#).
- ✓ Arrange electrical cords carefully so that they are not a tripping hazard, in a safe outlet that is not overloaded.
- ✓ Make sure your home has clear and unobstructed hallways, walkways, stairs and exits.

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- ✓ 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 our [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#).
- ✓ Find mental health resources at worklifehealth.com (Search 'Government of Saskatchewan' as your organization and select your ministry).

For more information about working from home, visit [Taskroom](#).