

Author:	Paul Roberts/Alicia Simmons	Revision #:	New
Approved By:	Amanda Oliver	Date:	June 2021

Teleworking

SPP# A-7

Quick Reference

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this safety policy and procedure is to provide safety guidelines and a safety checklist for Teleworking within North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

2.0 Scope and Applicability

There may be conditions where Teleworking for NCDOT employees may be required such as a Pandemic.

This safety policy and procedure provides guidelines and a checklist to assist NCDOT personnel to safely Telework from home or another remote location.

This document applies to those employees who may Telework for NCDOT and must adhere to HR Teleworking Policy and Program Guidelines.

3.0 Reference

This safety policy and procedure is established using best practices for Teleworking.

4.0 Policy

It is the policy of NCDOT to provide a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that cause or are likely to cause injury or serious physical harm to employees. Therefore, all NCDOT Teleworking sites will be assessed for life, fire safety and good office ergonomic practices.

5.0 General Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each manager/unit head, supervisor, and employee to ensure implementation of NCDOT's safety policy and procedure for Teleworking. It is also the responsibility of each NCDOT employee to utilize the Teleworking Safety Checklist for evaluating safety whether working from home or another remote location.

6.0 Procedure

This section provides guidance and a Teleworking Safety Checklist that employees should use to evaluate their workspace whether working from home or another remote location other than the office.

6.1 Definitions

Teleworking

Telework is a flexible work program in which approved North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) employees can work at home or a qualifying alternate location other than their assigned duty station on a regular schedule or on a situational basis. It is not an entitlement, it is not an agency wide benefit, and it in no ways changes the terms and conditions of employment with the NC Department of Transportation.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)

Injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD) are conditions in which: The work environment and performance of work contribute significantly to the condition.

6.2 General Provisions

This section details the provisions of this safety policy and procedure with each provision discussed in a separate subsection. These provisions are:

- Teleworking Safety Guidelines
- Teleworking Safety Checklist
- Office Ergonomics

6.2.1 Teleworking Safety Guidelines

As conditions necessitate, NCDOT units may be required to Telework as in the case of a Pandemic to protect the safety and health of all employees. In other cases as determined by Management, Teleworking for certain individuals may be in the best interest for the Unit or employee. The following guidelines should be followed.

1. Most individuals should be able to Telework using their NCDOT laptops for short periods of time.
2. Working remotely may pose a risk for potential injuries or lead to Musculoskeletal Disorders over a period of time. Musculoskeletal injuries such as neck or back pain may occur with remote workers if good office ergonomic practices are not followed.
3. For extended Teleworking, it may be in the best interest for the employee to allow additional NCDOT computer related equipment to be taken home or another remote location upon approval of your supervisor such as:
 - a. External Monitor(s)
 - b. External Keyboard
 - c. External Pointing Device (mouse, etc.)
4. Select the best chair available that allows good posture, adequate back support, and comfort. Your feet should rest flat on the floor or a suitable footrest. If the chair you have does provide you with adequate support and you start to experience pain or discomfort, when teleworking for extended periods of time contact your supervisor for assistance.
5. **Employees are required to complete the NCDOT Teleworking Agreement and submit to their immediate supervisor for approval.**
6. Any employee injured while Teleworking, should notify their supervisor as soon as possible. If medical treatment is required, use a Workers Compensation preferred provider which includes most Urgent Care facilities.

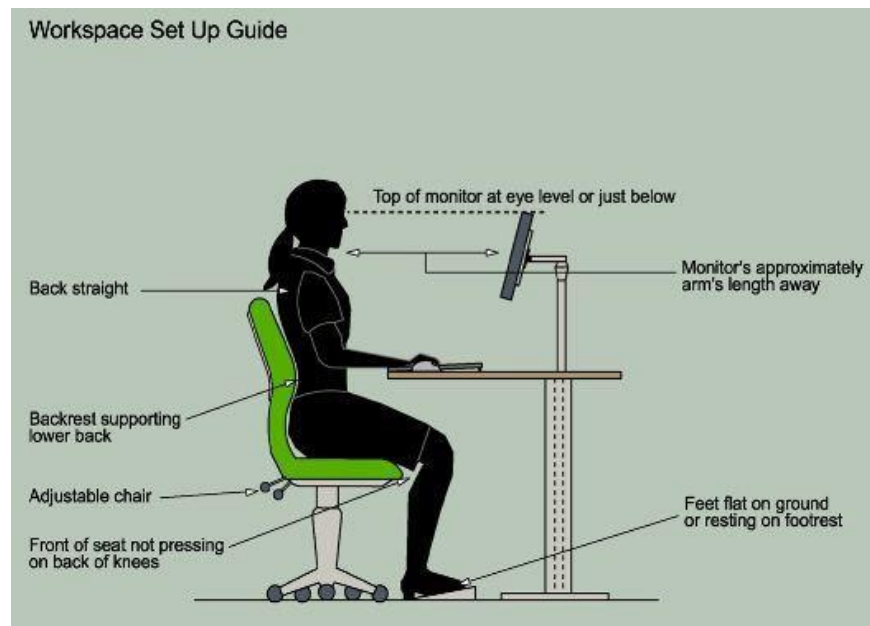
6.2.2 Teleworking Safety Checklist

Teleworking Safety Checklist		
#	General	
1	Workplace is away from noise, distractions, and is devoted to your work needs?	
2	Workspace accommodates workstation, equipment, and related material?	
3	Floors and hallways are clear and free of trip hazards?	
4	File drawers are not top-heavy and do not open into walkways?	
5	Phone lines and electrical cords are located under a desk or along wall to eliminate trip hazard and away from heat sources?	
6	Temperature, ventilation, and lighting are adequate?	
7	Carpets are well secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?	
#	Fire Safety	
8	There is a working smoke detector near the workspace area?	
9	A home multi-use fire extinguisher, which you know how to use, is readily available?	
10	Walkways aisles, and doorways are unobstructed?	
11	Workspace is kept free of trash, clutter, and flammable liquids?	
12	All radiators and portable heaters are located away from flammable items?	
13	You have an evacuation plan so you know what to do in the event of a fire?	
#	Electrical Safety	
14	Sufficient electrical outlets are accessible?	
15	Computer equipment is connected to a surge protector?	
16	Electrical system is adequate for office equipment?	
17	All electrical plugs, cords, outlets, and panels are in good condition? No exposed/damaged wiring?	
18	Equipment is placed close to electrical outlets?	
19	Extension cords and power strips are not daisy chained and no permanent extension cord is in use?	
20	Equipment is turned off when not in use?	
#	Computer Workstation	
21	Chair with casters (wheels) are secure or the rungs and legs of the chair are sturdy?	
22	Ergonomic Chair is adjustable?	
23	Your back should be adequately supported by a backrest?	
24	Your feet are on the floor or adequately supported by a footrest?	
25	You have enough leg room at your desk?	
26	There is sufficient light for reading?	
27	The computer screen is free from noticeable glare?	
28	The top of the screen is at eye level?	
29	There is space to rest the arms while not keying?	
#	Other Safety/Security Measures	
30	Files and data are secure?	
31	Materials and equipment are in a secure place that can be protected from damage and misuse?	
32	You have an inventory of all equipment in the office including serial numbers?	

6.2.2 Ergonomics

Good ergonomic practices allow workers to maintain a more neutral position when working at their Computer Workstations minimizing stress and discomfort on the body.

- Choose the right space. An ideal workspace should have adequate lighting to avoid eye strain; an appropriate work surface, such as a desk or table; and is set apart from busy areas in the home to allow for optimal focus during work hours.
- Choose the right chair. When seated, your knees should not be higher than your hips. This will help avoid lower back pain and reduce the pressure on your spine while seated.
- Keep an eye on your monitor. When setting up your computer screen, make sure the top of the monitor is at eye level. This will avoid neck and eye strain. Position the monitor directly in front of you to keep head straight. For dual monitors position monitors to minimize head twist.
- If working on a laptop, try plugging in a wireless keyboard and mouse and prop the laptop up on some books to make the top of the screen level with your eyes.
- Check your posture. Your shoulders should not curve inward or forward, and your head should not bend so that your ears are at shoulder-level. To keep yourself from slouching, pretend there is a string attached to the top of your head, pulling you upright. This will help to avoid back and neck pain.
- Get up and move. To reduce muscle soreness and pain, try to change your posture frequently. Do not sit or stand for extended periods of time.
- An Office Ergonomics Awareness video is available in LMS (Beacon NC Learning Center) for your review.
- Use the Workspace Set Up Guide to assist your workstation setup.



6.3 Specific Responsibilities

6.3.1 Managers/Unit Heads

Managers/Unit Heads are responsible for identifying Teleworking as necessary if conditions necessitate.

Managers/Unit Heads are also responsible for addressing Teleworking safety related issues for their employees.

6.3.2 Supervisors

Supervisors will assist as requested by their employees for Teleworking safety issues.

Supervisors shall require any of their employees performing Extended Teleworking for more than (60) working days, to provide them with a completed copy of the Teleworking Safety Checklist Sign-Off found in Appendix A.

6.3.3 Employees

Employees shall utilize the Teleworking Safety Checklist for evaluating safety whether working from home or another remote location.

Employees shall report any Teleworking safety concerns to their immediate supervisor.

Employees engaged in Teleworking are required to complete and submit a signed copy of the NCDOT Teleworking Agreement (Appendix A) to their supervisor for approval. .

6.3.4 Safety and Risk Management

Safety and Risk Management will provide prompt assistance to managers/unit heads, supervisors, or others as necessary on any matter concerning this safety policy and procedure.

Safety and Risk Management Safety Engineers will provide safety guidance to personnel related to Teleworking safety.

6.3.5 NDOT HR

NCDOT Human Resources will provide Teleworking Program Guidance and Policy requirements. The NCDOT Teleworking Agreement is attached below as Appendix A.

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Teleworking Agreement

Effective July 1, 2021

This Teleworking Agreement should be used in all instances in which management (with approval from agency leadership) has determined that an employee may telework as a flexible approved work arrangement. Covered Employees include all full-time, part-time permanent, temporary, and time-limited employees.

This Agreement is between NCDOT and _____ (“you”) and must be approved by the employee’s manager and/or supervisor, division director, Telework Program Manager (or other HR designee). Electronic signature approval will be accepted if written signatures are not possible to obtain quickly.

This Agreement supersedes any prior Teleworking Agreement in place between you and NCDOT. When management decides to end this teleworking arrangement, any prior Teleworking Agreement will NOT be reactivated. Note that having successfully engaged in teleworking pursuant to this Agreement does not require management to agree to any future teleworking.

- A. We (NCDOT and you) agree that you will telework in accordance with your normal work schedule unless written modifications are made by your manager or supervisor.

You understand that this agreement is a “trial measure” only and will be reviewed during the timeframes as outlined in the NCDOT Telework Program Guidelines. Accordingly, NCDOT at its discretion, may alter this schedule or end the teleworking agreement at any time.

- B. You agree to maintain a presence with your Division/Section while teleworking. Presence may be maintained using the NCDOT “approved” technology available such as by laptop computer, mobile phone, email, messaging application, videoconferencing, instant messaging and/or text messaging during your work hours (as listed in your Telework agreement). You are expected to maintain the same response times as if you were at your designated central workplace. You agree to make yourself available to physically attend pre-scheduled work meetings as requested or required by the Agency.
- C. This teleworking arrangement will begin with *written or electronic approval* from your manager or supervisor, division director and Telework Program Manager commencing on the date of approval of this agreement; and will remain in effect unless altered or terminated at any time as described in paragraph A above (under the guidelines as outlined in the Telework Program Guidelines-Termination of Participation).
- D. This Agreement does not change the basic terms and conditions of your employment at NCDOT. You will perform all your duties as set forth in your job description, as well as and/or different duties that NCDOT may assign from time to time. Further, you remain obligated to comply with all state and NCDOT policies and procedures.

- E. If you are a non-exempt employee, all hours beyond your agreed work hours must be PRE- APPROVED in writing by your Supervisor or Manager. You are entitled to take your rest and meal breaks while teleworking.
- F. You will be solely responsible for the configuration of, and all of the expenses associated with your teleworking workspace and all services unless NCDOT expressly agrees otherwise. This includes ensuring and maintaining an ergonomically appropriate and safe teleworking worksite.
- G. All injuries incurred by you during work hours and all illnesses that are job-related must be reported promptly as prescribed by the Workers' Compensation Administration policy.
- H. Generally, you are required to use mobile devices (for example, laptops, tablets, and, if approved or required by the Agency, a mobile phone) owned and issued by NCDOT. If your Agency has approved you to use a personal mobile device while teleworking, you must consult with your local IT support team to arrange appropriate set up of the mobile device(s). You are prohibited from tampering with any software, firmware or hardware provided by NCDOT or loaded onto your personal mobile devices to enable you to perform NCDOT work. Regardless of whether using personal or NCDOT-owned mobile devices while teleworking, you are always responsible for the access, use and security of those mobile devices. Approval to use non-Agency issued mobile devices can be revoked at any time.
- I. By signing this Agreement, you are also confirming you have read, understood, and will comply with all provisions listed above, as well as the provisions of the Telework Program Guidelines. You acknowledge that if your manager or supervisor determines that the teleworking arrangement described in this Agreement is not working effectively or as envisioned, management may at any time adjust or end the teleworking arrangement.

J. Check the days you are requesting to telework and be away from your primary duty station:

___Monday ___Tuesday___Wednesday___Thursday___Friday

Insert Your Proposed Work Schedule Here: _____
(Must Occur Between 6:30a to 6:30p)

Insert Lunch Period Here: _____
(Must Occur Between 11:30a and 2:30p, Per DOT Policy)

UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED:

Employee Signature

Print Name/Title

Division

Date

APPROVED BY:

Manager/Supervisor Signature

Print Name/Title

Division

Date

APPROVED BY:

Division Director or Designee

Print Name/Title

Division

Date