

LEADING THE WAY

Utah Encourages State Employees to Telework on Bad Air Quality Days

Mobile vehicle emissions are a significant contributing source of pollutants along the Wasatch Front and have been estimated by the Division of Air Quality (DAQ) to be as high as 42% of the total pollution during the winter time. During times of poor air quality, reducing emissions by getting vehicles off the road can make a big impact. The state is adopting a new policy to do its part to improve the air. On action forecast and [red air quality days](#), the state encourages employees to work remotely in an effort to reduce the number and duration of red air quality forecast days.

This new policy is complementary to *A New Workplace* program, which trains employees to be productive working from an alternate work site and also tracks productivity. See *A New Workplace: Modernizing how, where and when Utah Works - Utah Works Pilot Report for productivity results*. One of the benefits of the program is the reduction in the number of people commuting to and from the office. Working from home or an alternate work site close to home reduces emissions from commuting vehicles.

Applying Remote Work During Bad Air Quality Days

Having the proper structure, culture and procedures in place allows remote workers to increase the number of remote workdays in cases of mandatory action and/or red air quality days. In departments with mature *New Workplace* practices, employees not participating in remote work regularly may be able to participate temporarily to help prevent air quality from worsening.

Agencies can utilize the three-day forecast published by DAQ daily to help determine when remote work might be needed. The forecast is available [online](#), which is also where interested parties can sign up to receive a daily email of the forecast or download the UtahAir app for Android and iOS. The three-day forecast should allow regular remote workers and other employees enough time to arrange their work schedule for increased remote work.

Key Steps for Success

1. Develop a structure and policies for remote work on red air quality days
2. Assign the program to a single owner within the agency
3. Communicate the program start and operations to employees
4. Plan ahead by keeping abreast of the DAQ three-day air quality and action forecast by signing up for its [daily email](#)
5. Communicate upcoming red air quality days to allow employees to effectively plan for remote work



Policy Suggestion

A New Workplace Approved Remote Workers

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to allow these employees to work from home on actual red air quality days in Salt Lake County or their home-base county. Supervisors may also allow these employees to work from home on mandatory action days when it does not negatively affect productivity or business needs. The employee must agree to the following:

1. To not to use a vehicle during regular work hours
2. To record only actual time worked on his/her timesheet

Employees Not Yet Approved for Regular Remote Work

Supervisors are encouraged to allow these employees to work from home on actual red air quality days in Salt Lake County or their home-base county under the following circumstances:

1. The employee and supervisor agree on the work the employee will do at the alternate work site that day
2. The employee has the necessary tools at the alternate work site to do his/her work
3. The employee only records the number of hours actually worked on his/her timesheet that day
4. The employee agrees not to use a vehicle during regular work hours

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