

STATE OF UTAH REMOTE WORK GUIDE

UPDATES TO A *NEW WORKPLACE* AND
POST-PANDEMIC IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES





INTRODUCTION

Government rarely leads the way on innovation, but with the introduction of the A New Workplace program, Utah led the way in forging a new way to conduct work. The 2019 pilot program began as a leap of faith for 136 state employees and became one of the largest programs in Utah. We hoped that taxpayers and employees would experience benefits, and ended up wildly underestimating its success.

In March 2020, we were grateful for our remote work head start when practically overnight, thousands of our dedicated state employees had to learn how to maintain services for customers without sacrificing the safety of their families and neighbors in the middle of a global pandemic.

Here's what we now know about remote work—employees like it, taxpayer dollars are saved when we use it, it's good for our air, it makes us more resilient, and it makes us more productive.

As our lives return to normal, let's not forget the lessons we learned and the successes we experienced. This guide contains new goals for remote work, questions to ask, and improvements to consider as we implement remote work in a post-pandemic environment.

We led the way on this innovation together—and it worked. Thank you for your efforts to support employees, improve services for customers, and increase the efficiency of the work you do. To achieve our One Utah dream, we're going to need to keep innovating.

Let's go.

Governor Spencer J. Cox

GOALS AND TARGETS

SUCCESSSES

When a large number of employees participate in remote work, it allows for improvement in five key areas:

- Air quality
- Jobs in rural Utah
- Maintaining and recruiting talent
- Employee productivity
- Building use and cost

As we learned last year, a qualified and trained remote workforce can quickly adapt to constraints created by emergencies so that services are consistently provided. High levels of remote work also lead to cultural shifts that embrace streamlined and virtual services and work processes, easier access to colleagues, less time spent traveling to and from meetings, more employee flexibility, and a shift to managing performance—not presence.

While individual contributions may be difficult to recognize, our collective action is making a difference as reflected in the items below.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 8,600 employees worked remotely, saving 2.79 tons of tailpipe emissions per month from April 2020 through May 2021. Those savings equated to 39 tons of pollution kept out of our air.
- As of December 2020, more than 200 additional employees are working from rural Utah. These employees diversify and benefit local economies without negatively impacting the quality of life in our small cities and towns.
- In the December 2020 *A New Workplace* report published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB),

agencies self-reported that 135 employees were retained because of remote work.¹

- Employee productivity continues to be maintained and, in many cases, improved thanks to the flexibility and training which remote work provides.
- Thanks to remote work, the state's Master Space Plan has been revised. If fully implemented, this plan will save the state more than \$500,000,000 over the next 50 years, even after an initial investment in needed remodeling, renovation, and relocations.

Our remote work success has also led to further innovation. During the 2021 General Session, Sen. Dan McCay and Rep. Mike Winder sponsored legislation to direct 90% of our surge remote work eligible employees to remote work on days where particulate matter in the air poses a risk to sensitive groups. This policy will keep thousands of cars off our roads and improve air quality. During other emergent conditions, such as heavy snowfall, remote work will allow the state to maintain business services while keeping employees safe.

Remote work doesn't just benefit taxpayers and fellow Utahns who share our air. As reported in *Governing Magazine*, within the first two years of the state of Tennessee's telework program, "...participating agencies have recorded a 37 percent reduction in sick leave use, and the state estimates that the average employee is saving \$1,800 a year on gas."²

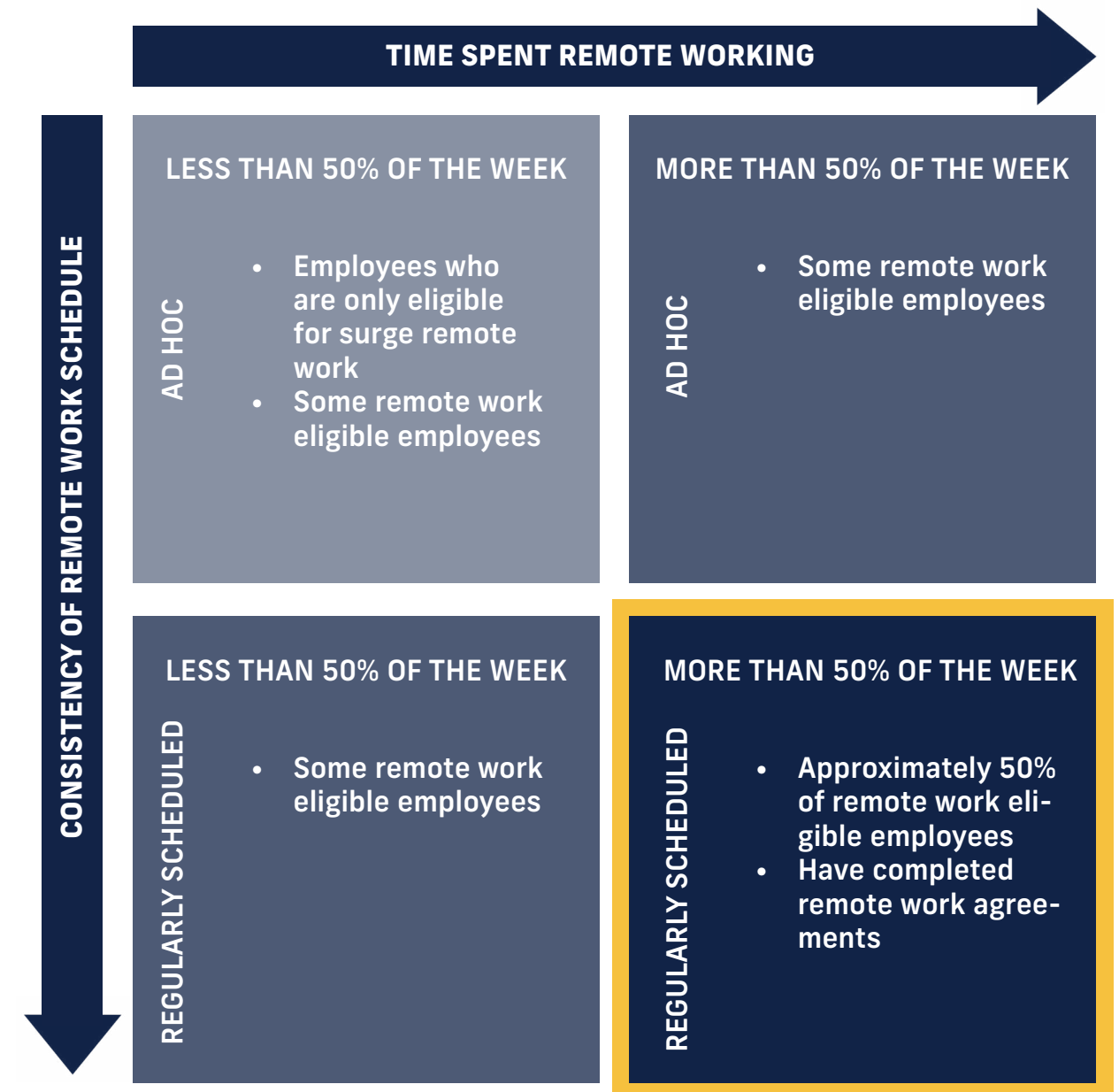
The state is committed to investing in innovative solutions to save taxpayer dollars and invest in our employees. Remote work is a key piece of that vision.

When agencies do not participate in remote work or do not encourage needed cultural shifts, remote work is less successful and benefits to taxpayers, employees, and customers are reduced. This guide, including the following goals, will help agencies successfully implement remote work programs which serve customers and employees well.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

To make remote work successful, agencies are expected to achieve the targets and outcomes described in this section.

The most efficient remote work model is an employee who participates in regularly scheduled remote work for more than 50% of the week. Each agency's goal should be to have 50% of their remote work eligible employees participating in this model. Other remote work eligible employees should participate in one of the three remaining remote work models listed below.



1 The percentage of eligible remote workers participating in scheduled remote work more than 50% of the time by September 1, 2021.

Measurement: Calculated by the number of employees who have completed a remote work agreement compared to the number of remote work eligible employees as reported by the agency and the Department of Human Resources (DHRM). **Target:** More than 50% of remote work eligible employees participating in scheduled remote work more than 50% of the time.

2 The percentage of eligible remote workers participating in scheduled remote work less than 50% of the time, or unscheduled remote work more than or less than 50% of the time.

Measurement: Calculated by the number of employees participating in more than 50% unscheduled or less than 50% remote work compared to the number of remote work eligible employees as reported by the agency and DHRM. **Target:** 90% of remote work eligible employees participating in remote work in some way, particularly on surge remote work days.

3 Increase in the percentage of positions that have been made eligible for remote work.

Measurement: Measured as a year over year increase after one baseline measurement in calendar year 2021. This number will be reported by DHRM each year by July 1. **Target:** Agencies should identify barriers to remote work and solutions to create internal targets for this measure.

4 The number of remote work eligible position recruitments that could be filled by rural job seekers.

Measurement: The number of positions filled that are eligible for remote work and could be filled by rural job seekers. **Target:** Agencies should identify barriers to rural job seekers as well as barriers to remote work and solutions to create internal targets for this measure.

5 The annual increase in employees residing in rural Utah.

Measurement: Measured as a year over year increase by the home zip code of the employee against a baseline taken in 2019. This number will be reported by DHRM, with the help of the Utah Geospatial Resource Center (UGRC) if necessary. **Target:** Agencies have been asked to work to identify positions, departments, functions, and offices which could be moved to rural Utah in Executive Order 4. Agencies should identify barriers to these movements, barriers to rural job seekers, and barriers to remote work to create internal targets for this measure.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

3C's - COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND CULTURE

Three main categories have been identified as important to the overall success of an enterprise-wide remote work program—communication, collaboration, and culture. A short presentation with additional detail about the 3 C's can be found [here](#). Utah has led the way in creating a culture for remote work. After learning lessons from our remote work experience over the past two years, it's time to elevate practices in these three areas.

COMMUNICATION - Communication in a dispersed environment like remote work should be intentional and regular. Communication in office settings has historically been organic and spontaneous. People assumed that close physical proximity would create communication events— such as chance meetings in the hallway and “water cooler” conversations. Whether employees are in the office or working remotely, the best practice is that managers, supervisors, employees, and colleagues communicate deliberately and frequently. State employees should capitalize on technological innovation to improve communication skill sets.

With so many communication channels available, some employees may be overwhelmed by the amount of information coming from multiple directions and sources. It may also become difficult to maintain a work-life balance and still manage expectations for response timelines. One possible solution is a communication charter.³ Communication charters have been employed by many companies to successfully define an agency's use of communication channels.

An effective communication charter could include the following:

- When people need to reply to emails and when they don't
- When people should “Reply All” to emails and when they should avoid it
- How to organize regular team meetings, who should attend, whether people will “dial in” remotely, what to include in the minutes, who will take them, who will circulate them, etc.
- How your organization communicates with clients, customers, and the public
- How team members interact on social media
- When making a video or audio call is appropriate
- When to use instant messaging, texts, phone calls, and other forms of instant communication
- What the expected response timelines are for different channels of communication

Some steps to follow when developing a communications charter:

- Define the purpose
- Develop a plan for how you will create your communications charter and who should be involved
- Gather input from remote employees, supervisors, and managers
- Decide what the communications charter will cover and what the scope will be
- Create a list of the channels used by members of your organization
- Set guidelines for differing channels
- Seek feedback to understand any potential drawbacks
- Find solutions
- Implement and follow the charter at each level of the organization

Once a team, program, division, or department has at least one remote worker, the organization itself must become a remote worker so that processes, management, and meetings are accessible. Below are some ideas to elevate your entity's virtual meetings:⁵

- **Embrace virtual meetings.** Without sophisticated technology, meetings where a few employees are gathered in a room and others attend remotely does not create an effective work environment for each participant.
- **Love the technology.** Whatever technology is being used for the meeting has an array of features and tools that can be used to facilitate communication and make meetings more interesting. Embrace, learn, and use the features.
- **Set expectations.** Have an agenda that includes the order and timing of items, outlines the roles and responsibilities of those in the meeting, and covers any special meeting rules and etiquette.
- **Focus on one or two objectives.** Make sure you understand what the meeting needs to accomplish prior to starting the meeting.
- **Rely on the agenda.** The best meetings have a carefully planned agenda which can help the meeting flow. Agendas can even encourage participation.
- **Choreograph participation.** Find ways to stimulate participation for all participants, even if not everyone speaks. Tools like polls, chats, whiteboard apps, and excellent facilitators who call on team members or prepare them beforehand can motivate comments.

COLLABORATION - For some, collaboration has been difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic. To help agencies overcome this hurdle, the Department of Technology Services (DTS) has entered into enterprise contracts to provide all state employees access to excellent tools.

G-Suite tools such as Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, and Google Jamboard

are available to each state employee. These applications are collaborative, entirely digital, and sync seamlessly with employee email accounts.

For more information on available IT tools, security, and how to serve your employee and customer needs most effectively, please reach out to your agency's IT Director or visit the following links:

- [DTS Enterprise IT Tools](#)
- [DTS Telework Guide](#)

CULTURE - For any enterprise-wide remote work program to be successful, there needs to be a corporate culture that reinforces remote work. Communication and collaboration both rely on a supportive culture. For example, if a communications charter discourages employees from having conversations outside of work topics, the charter will harm rapport between team members and may diminish the efficacy of teamwork.⁵

The following are other examples of a non-supportive culture:

- Requiring meetings to be in person.
- Investing in business processes that require hard copies rather than moving to electronic documents and filing systems.
- Not embracing technology by holding hybrid (some in-office and some virtual) meetings with suboptimal technology that excludes remote workers from side conversations, presentations, or meeting materials.
- Not allowing remote workers to advance in the organization.
- Not encouraging "video-on" participation in virtual meetings.
- Maintaining stricter communication expectations for remote workers than for in-person employees.
- Not protecting work-life boundaries for all employees.

As part of the state's remote work culture, the following best practices for online meetings should be encouraged:

- Employees should follow department dress code policies even when working from home. At a minimum, employees should understand they are representing the state. Dress should be professional and appropriate for the work they are performing and the customers they are serving.
- "Video on" should be the default for virtual meetings. Exceptions can be made, but they should be rare. "I didn't comb my hair this morning" or "I'm still wearing my pajamas" should not be an excuse to keep the video off.
- Be aware of your background. Make sure that it is professional and appropriate.
- Background noise happens, even during in-person meetings. Remote employees should do their best to reduce or eliminate it. All employees should stay on mute in meetings until it is time to speak.
- Stay present in meetings. Just as it is rarely acceptable to get up and walk out of the room or begin multitasking during an in-person meeting, it is rarely acceptable to do so in a virtual meeting— even with the video off.
- Understand etiquette surrounding food and drink. During a virtual meeting, it may be appropriate for employees to eat lunch and is likely appropriate for employees to have a drink with them. There should be consensus on these protocols, and professional guidelines should be maintained.

Agencies with mature remote work programs have found that it is unnecessary to reimburse employee expenses for home internet or provide a stipend for remote employees. Until such a time when a clear business case is presented for such expense, agencies should not provide additional incentives for participation in this popular program.

INVESTING IN EMPLOYEES

The One Utah Roadmap is clear—all agencies should seek to invest in the success of their employees. As stated in Executive Order 3, "... where appropriate, prepare and assist agency employees and supervisors to participate when a remote work opportunity becomes available."⁶

Each agency should be actively engaged in providing opportunities to develop its employee workforce. GOPB, with the help of the Department of Transportation, has put together two trainings to develop remote worker skills such as effective communication and employee performance improvement. The trainings are available in the state's Learning Management System (LMS) and can be accessed at the following links:

- [Best Practices - Effective Communication](#)
- [Best Practices - Achieving High Performance](#)

Additional resources for employees and managers are provided by the Rural Online Initiative (ROI)— a state-sponsored initiative through Utah State University Extension. Each course is delivered virtually and includes remote instruction and homework. Upon completion with passing grades, students receive certificates of completion. ROI provides these courses to state employees at a discounted rate of \$20 per student. For more information, please follow the links below and contact [Jeff Mottishaw](#) for the state employee discount code.

- [Master Remote Work Professional](#)
- [Master Remote Work Leader](#)

The state is investing in employees who cannot remote work as well. Both remote and in-person workers benefit from environments that support productive work. The Division of Facilities and Construction Management (DFCM) has been working with a group of consultants and architects to revise the state's

space standards and account for the way work is done in 2021. For example, employees no longer require the file cabinets and bookshelves that used to take up space in offices, nor do desks need to fit binders and printed spreadsheets. These changes to the way we work are reflected in the state's new Master Space Plan.

While the plan's realization will save taxpayer dollars, it also calls for investments in employees through renovations and remodels to state-owned spaces that will bring them up to current standards and invest in coworking space for rural employees. Employees working in newly designed state workplaces will have access to many different types of space that follow principles that benefit each employee. New spaces will use natural light, noise filtering, call and collaboration rooms, and technology to increase employee productivity and provide a better environment for hardworking public servants.

Full implementation of the Master Space Plan would cost \$245,000,000, and the investment is estimated to save the state an additional \$500,000,000 over the next 50 years.

RECRUITING AND HIRING FOR WORK IN RURAL UTAH

Remote work makes it possible for state agencies to successfully recruit talented employees across the state. This plan also allows current state employees to take their jobs with them as they move off the Wasatch Front. Flexible remote work plans enable state government to compete with diverse economic industries for talented employees and encourage economic growth in rural areas of the state. This benefit is key to the Executive Order 4 goal to "develop and implement a plan to actively recruit in rural Utah."⁷

Each agency should analyze jobs, offices, divisions, and functions that would better serve customers if they were located in rural Utah. Additionally, agencies should identify and re-

solve barriers to recruiting rural employees. DHRM is available to consult and assist with remote and rural recruitment and is currently working on training material to help recruit for remote positions in rural areas. More information will be available from DHRM upon completion.

ELIGIBILITY

As remote work becomes a key part of how we do business, agencies should evaluate how to resolve barriers to increasing the number of remote work eligible employees. Barrier resolutions may include digitizing case files, changing how services are delivered to customers, and adjusting agency policy, administrative rules or state statutes. Consider the following lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Instead of asking if an employee could be remote work eligible, ask why they can't?
- What services are provided in-person or on-paper that could be updated?
- Are there outdated statutes, codes, rules, or policies that should be updated to allow for more remote work options?
- Are there technology solutions available that would allow additional remote work eligibility?
- Could some job duty sharing occur to allow more employees to participate in at least part-time remote work?
- Does the agency have directors, managers, or other leadership that are resistant to allowing remote work? What can be done to alleviate their concerns?
- Does your agency require in-person services from other supporting departments like DTS or DHRM that could be accomplished virtually?

Rule R13-4, which goes into effect on July 1, 2021, sets the fundamental condition that work performed for the state needs to be performed in the state for the purposes of pro-

viding employment opportunities to citizens of the state, keeping income tax within the state, and minimizing costs borne by the state to provide workers compensation and liability coverage for out-of-state employees. Remote work should not be used as an opportunity to hire individuals whose primary residence is out-of-state outside of the bounds of rule R13-4.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

REMOTE WORK - Remote work provides a qualified employee in an eligible position the opportunity to work at a place other than a regularly assigned office location, such as the employee's residence or an alternate location approved by the employee's supervisor. On days the employee is not scheduled to work remotely, the employee will report to their regularly assigned office location. Employees who remote work more than 50% of the time will work in an unassigned shared workspace (also known as free addressing). Employees who remote work less than 50% of the time may be assigned office space. Employees may occasionally be required to report to and work in the office location as requested by management.

MOBILE WORK - Mobile work arrangements provide workplace flexibility for employees whose responsibilities require them to be away from the office. A mobile worker will be assigned to a regular office location but will likely not be assigned a permanent workspace. Instead, mobile workers will utilize free addressing workspaces when reporting to their regularly assigned office location. Employees may occasionally be required to report to and work in the office location as requested by management.

ADAPTABLE WORKERS - Adaptable workers are employees whose primary place to conduct work is in a regularly assigned building, but whose work functions require them to be mobile within their facility for the majority of their day. Remote work eligible employees who choose not to participate in a remote work agreement may be considered adaptable workers when appropriate. Adaptable employees utilize free addressing workspaces as necessary.

RESIDENT WORKERS - Resident workers are employees whose work is primarily conducted at a single space in a regularly assigned office location. Resident workers spend the majority of a regular work day at their workspace. Resident workers are assigned a primary workspace within their regularly assigned office, though they may use free addressing spaces as needed within their assigned office building or when in other state buildings.

APPROVED ALTERNATE WORK LOCATION - An approved alternate work location is a location approved for a remote work eligible employee participating in a remote work arrangement to work outside of the employee's assigned state office building. An example of an approved alternate work location could be a designated workspace in an employee's home, free address space at a state building nearer to the person's home, or even a privately owned co-working space. Requirements for and approval of an approved alternate work location is subject to agency discretion and the requirements of each remote work eligible job.

REMOTE WORK ELIGIBLE - A remote work eligible position is a job that has been identified by the employing department as eligible to work remotely as defined by "Remote Work". An employee under formal disciplinary action, on a Performance Improvement Plan, or with other Employee Code of Conduct issues may be ineligible for remote work.

SURGE REMOTE WORK ELIGIBLE - Surge remote work eligible employees are all employees in remote work eligible positions, and those in other job positions which may not be remote work eligible, but are suitable for temporary short term remote work whenever a Mandatory Action Forecast or Special Circumstance Day is declared by GOPB and in accordance with SB15 from the 2021 General Session.

FREE ADDRESS SPACE - Free address space is unassigned office space available for remote workers, mobile workers, adaptable workers, resident workers, and, in some cases, persons not employed by the state. This may include but is not limited to vendors, contractors, and others working with state employees. Free address space should include multiple types of space, such as offices, cubicles, open office, collaboration, and drop-in spaces. Departments should provide sufficient space to accommodate the number of employees who may need free address space. DFCM is available to consult on proper ratios and space types.

SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY - Schedule flexibility includes a variety of allowable work schedules, such as 4-10s, 5-9s, and early/late start and end times. It can also include some flexibility on when and how much a person remotely works, and whether or not the employee is a scheduled or unscheduled remote worker. Flexible schedules should be approved by an employee's supervisor.

+50% REMOTE WORKER - A +50% remote worker is an employee who is in a remote work eligible job and who works in their regularly assigned office space no more than two days per work week. Remote work can be on a scheduled or unscheduled basis but is consistent week to week.

-50% REMOTE WORKER - A -50% remote worker is an employee who is in a remote work eligible job who works in their regularly assigned office space more than two days per work week. This can be on a scheduled or unscheduled basis but is consistent week to week.

SCHEDULED REMOTE WORK - Scheduled remote work is when an agency and the employee agree to a remote work schedule and generally maintain the schedule. This arrangement allows for flexibility as needed to maintain appropriate service levels, but may also accommodate the employee or the agency. Scheduled remote work can be more than 50% or less than 50% of the work week, so long as it's scheduled and generally maintained. Employees may occasionally be required to report to and work in the office location as requested by management.

UNSCHEDULED REMOTE WORK - Unscheduled remote work is when an agency and the employee agree that an employee may remote work at the employee's discretion generally. This arrangement allows for more flexibility for the employee, but the same expectations of providing appropriate service levels, work product, and coverage exist. Unscheduled remote work can be more than 50% or less than 50% of the work week. Employees may occasionally be required to report to and work in the office location as requested by management.

MANDATORY ACTION DAY - Mandatory Action Day - Mandatory action day means a day where notice has been issued at least 48 hours in advance by the director of the Division of Air Quality that the concentration of air pollutants measured in a county are predicted to reach or exceed levels of air pollution that are unhealthy for sensitive groups. Notification will be sent from GOPB as soon as is practicable. Surge remote work eligible employees in executive branch agencies should surge remote work as per SB15 in the 2021 General Session. The Air Quality Forecast can be found at air.utah.gov.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE DAY - Special Circumstance Day means a day where predicted heavy snowfall or other situations pose a risk to employee safety or employee health as determined by the GOPB or a designee of the GOPB. Notifications will be sent from GOPB as soon as is practicable. Surge remote work eligible employees in executive branch agencies should surge remote work as per SB15 from the 2021 General Session.

COMPENSABLE TIME - Compensable time applies to remote work employees as it does to in-office employees. When an in-office employee is required to travel to an offsite location for a meeting during the normal work day for that employee then the time is compensable, or in other words, compensated. When a remote work employee is required to travel to an offsite location for a meeting during their normal work day it is also compensable. In the case of a regularly scheduled remote work day, an offsite location for a remote employee may be the state office space the employee is regularly assigned to work from when in the office, so if they need to travel to the office space during their normal work day hours it's compensable. However, time spent traveling to any work location before the employee's normal work day starts is considered

a commute for both in-office and remote work employees. For more information please contact your Human Resource Management representative.

WORK SCHEDULE - Work schedule is the schedule an employee generally follows. For most employees, a work schedule includes start time, end time, and days of the week working. For some employees, this will also include days in the office and days working remotely. An employee's work schedule does not prevent accommodations and flexibility at the discretion of an employee's supervisor. For example, an employee may be required to begin work before their normal start time, end work later than their normal end time, come into the office instead of work remotely, or work remotely instead of the office. A work schedule may exclude days in or out of the office if an employee is an unscheduled remote worker. Work schedules inform office management, free address space planning, remote work program compliance, and compensable time.

RURAL - For this program, rural applies to all state of Utah counties except for Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah.

ENDNOTES

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