

Research Service Telework Policy

1. **Research Service employees may be eligible for permanently scheduled and/or ad-hoc part-time telework.** *Permanently scheduled* telework is regularly occurring work from a remote site, which is approved on a predictable schedule as part of a regular tour of duty. *Ad-hoc* telework is remote work done on an unscheduled, intermittent basis as need arises. In either case, telework will only be approved if certain conditions are met:

- a. Position duties must be compatible with telework;
- b. Employee must meet eligibility and training requirements; and
- c. Supervisor must formally approve telework.

For purposes of this SOP, "Supervisor" is defined as the supervisor of record (e.g. for administrative employees in Research PSL) or the lead investigator on a funded project (e.g. for employees hired on grant funded positions), as applicable.

2. **Compatibility of position duties:** Due to the nature of employment, not all research positions or duties assigned to an individual may be compatible with telework.
 - a. The supervisor is responsible for determining the suitability of telework for each individual employee. This evaluation must consider job duties and functions, employee performance history, and other factors as stipulated in VA Handbook 5011/5 (II) Ch 4 §6b.
 - b. Employees are reminded that per Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a and VA Directive and Handbook 6210, no physical records containing PHI/PII may be brought offsite, and any access to such records while teleworking must occur solely via VA remote access gateway.
3. **Employee eligibility and training:** To request permission to telework, the employee must complete required **training**, complete the **telework request form**, and request **remote access** to VA resources.
 - a. **Training:** Prior to requesting telework, employees must complete three trainings in TMS:
 - i. "VA Telework Training Module for Employees" (TMS course VA1367006)
 - ii. "VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior" (TMS course VA10176)
 - iii. "Privacy and HIPAA Training" (TMS Course VA10203)
 - b. **Telework requests** are made using VA Form 0740 "Telework Request/Agreement" (https://www.oit.va.gov/resources/remote-access/_media/VA0740.pdf).
 - i. When filling this form, employee should complete Sections I-IX, and digitally sign in the Employee Signature field in Sections VIII (page 5) and IX (page 6). *See Appendix for guidance on specific sections of this form.*
 - ii. Completed telework request forms, including training certificates, should be forwarded to the supervisor for review and approval.

- c. **Remote access:** Employees requesting telework must also request remote access using the *Remote Access Self-Service Portal* from a VA computer (<https://vaww.ramp.vansoc.va.gov/Pages/Dashboard.aspx>).

- i. **If using a VA-furnished computer:** Employee should request Cisco VPN access (RESCUE).
- ii. **If using a personally owned computer:** Employee should request Citrix Access Gateway (CAG) access. *A PIV card reader will be required for CAG access.*

It is possible to request both CAG and VPN, if backup solutions for remote access are desired. For assistance and setup guides, refer to the *VA Remote Access Information website* (<https://www.oit.va.gov/resources/remote-access/>).

4. **Supervisor approval of telework:** Supervisors must complete **training** prior to submitting telework requests for employees. For each employee requesting telework, the supervisor must approve both **telework** and **remote access** requests.

- a. **Training:** Supervisors must complete “*VA Telework Training Module for Managers*” (TMS course VA1366994). Submission of telework requests cannot be completed unless this training is completed.
- b. **Telework requests** are approved by reviewing and signing the completed VA Form 0740 “*Telework Request/Agreement*”. Supervisors should carefully review the training, requested telework arrangement, schedule, and the safety and technology checklists.
 - i. **If approving**, supervisor should digitally sign Supervisor Signature fields in Section VIII (page 5) and Section IX (page 6). Ensure “Approved” box is checked on Page 6. The signed form and supervisor training certificate will be required for submission.
 - ii. **If disapproving**, supervisor should mark “Disapproved” box on page 6, complete and sign Section XI, and return the form to the employee.
- c. **Remote access** is approved using the *Remote Access Self-Service Portal*. Employee requests for remote access must be reviewed and approved in this system.

5. **Service line approval of telework:** Telework requests, including signed forms and applicable training certificates, are submitted by the requesting employee in the VA LEAF system. Telework requests will be reviewed in VA LEAF system by the Research AO, Deputy ACOS, or ACOS. Requests with missing or incomplete components are subject to denial. Requests for full-time telework will not be considered for approval.

6. **Responsibilities:**

- a. **Satisfactory performance** is a required element for telework. Employees who receive a rating below “Fully Successful” on annual performance reviews are ineligible for telework and subject to disapproval of existing telework agreements.
 - i. Because demonstration of satisfactory performance is a required element, telework requests for newly-onboarded personnel cannot be approved until at least three months after onboard date, to allow training and supervisor evaluation of performance.

- b. **Ad-Hoc telework** may be used at the discretion of the supervisor only.
 - i. Employees who are granted this privilege must obtain permission from their direct supervisor for each instance in which the employee wants to use ad-hoc telework.
 - ii. Employee and supervisor must ensure that Timekeeper is alerted to each use of ad-hoc telework, including specific date and hours worked, so that accurate entry is made into VA payroll system.
 - iii. Supervisors who have approved ad-hoc telework for employees are responsible for monitoring employee use of this privilege.
7. **Schedule:** Due to limitations on employee desk space at the Minneapolis VA, Research Service encourages employees approved for telework to share workstations when possible.
 - a. Supervisors should consider whether alternating schedules will allow desk sharing to reduce space needs.
 - b. It is Research Service policy that employees who work on site less than 3 days per week will not be guaranteed a private assigned workspace. Space needs may instead require these employees to share workspaces.
8. **Revocation:** Abuse or suspected abuse of telework privilege is grounds for immediate revocation of telework approval. Revocation of this privilege may be initiated by the direct supervisor, ACOS/R, deputy ACOS/R, or ISSO.
9. **References:**
 - a. VA Remote Access Information website (<https://www.oit.va.gov/resources/remote-access/>)
 - b. VA Remote Access Self-Service Portal (<https://vaww.ramp.vansoc.va.gov/Pages/Dashboard.aspx>)

Appendix: Guidance for VA Form 0740 “Telework Request/Agreement”

1. **Section II:** In box 2, note that “Regular & Recurring” and “Ad-Hoc” should both be checked, if both options will be requested. Box 3 lists requested telework codes. Most commonly approved telework codes are:
 - a. “A”, Ad-hoc telework;
 - b. “R”, regularly scheduled, 1-2 days per pay period; or
 - c. “P”, regularly scheduled, 3 or more days per pay period

A combination of regularly scheduled plus ad-hoc telework may be requested if desired. **Note: “W” and “M” requests, for 100% telework, will not be considered for approval.**

2. **Section III:** Include both “Regular & Recurring” and “Ad-Hoc”, if both are desired.
3. **Section IV:** Enter desired work schedule. Ensure tour of duty matches your current approved tour. Enter “ODS” for days working on-site, and “AWS” for days in which regularly scheduled telework will be requested. *(If requesting ad-hoc telework only, list “ODS” for all days.)*
4. **Section VII:** Ensure safety review of alternate duty station is completed. Address any identified safety concerns prior to returning this form.
5. **Section VIII:** Read terms and sign Employee Signature section at bottom of page 5.
6. **Section IX:** Complete technology checklist and sign Employee Signature section at bottom of page 6.