

Flexible Work Options and Telework Agreements

Guidance for MIRR Supervisors

Background

In July 2021, the Head of the BC Public Service and Deputy Minister to the Premier provided direction to all BC Public Service staff about sustaining flexible work options as the province moves beyond the public health emergency and into communicable disease management.

Aligning with the anticipated date for transition to Step 4 of the provincial Restart Plan, all employees who wish to continue working from home must have a new telework agreement in place by Tuesday, September 7, 2021, otherwise they are expected to return to their physical workspaces.

Employees and supervisors pursuing flexible work arrangements must use the template provided by the BC Public Service Agency (PSA). There are specific criteria that must be met in order to complete a telework agreement, including new direction regarding executive approval, mandatory training and physical work space considerations (see Additional Guidance below).

Guiding Principles

As MIRR implements this broader corporate direction, the following guiding ministry principles will assist in consistency of approach and support across the ministry. Supervisors should use these principles when considering remote work arrangements requests from their team members.

- **Flexibility:** MIRR has a long history of flexibility in the way we work. Flexible work should be considered in how it supports our organizational effectiveness, our obligations to the communities we serve, and opportunities to enhance work/life balance for employees. Decisions on remote work arrangements should consider how flexible work arrangements achieve this balance.
- **Strong Teams and Organizational Culture:** Strong connections amongst teams and positive organizational culture is important to all of us. Maintaining strong teams requires ongoing commitment by leaders and supervisors, including dedicated face-to-face time within and across teams, and ongoing communications about the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements.
- **Engagement and Accountability:** Our ministry is shaped by our unique mandate, priorities and operations, and all staff are accountable in achieving our organization's goals. The extent to which each employee is accountable and engaged is a significant consideration in telework arrangements.
- **Vision-focused:** Supervisors should ensure that flexible work arrangements support continued progress towards the ministry's reconciliation mandate, including maintaining and enhancing MIRR's role within government as an organization of credible, culturally agile leaders, and in building relationships with Indigenous communities and negotiating partners.

Note: While these principles are specific to MIRR and our ministry's culture, they also align with broader corporate direction.

Expectations for Remote Work Arrangements

In addition to the ministry's guiding principles above, there are specific criteria for remote work arrangements set out by the PSA.

- Telework is a voluntary privilege not an entitlement nor a term of employment.
- The employee is regular full-time or part-time.

- The employee's work performance history is fully satisfactory.
- The arrangements are operationally feasible* and practical given the specific circumstances.
- Service standards and employee performance are expected to be maintained or improved.
- Home office facilities are adequate and meet safety/security/confidentiality requirements.
- Remote work should not generate any additional net costs for the employer.
- Completion of a signed telework agreement is mandatory, and it must be reviewed annually.
- The telework agreement may be terminated by either the employer or employee provided written notice is given within 30 days.
- Telework results only in a change to the work location of an employee. Other aspects of the employment relationship – including employee benefits, entitlements, responsibilities, salary administration, and the application of terms and conditions of employment, collective agreements and workplace policies – remain unchanged.

What Does Operationally Feasible Mean?

*Operationally feasible means:

- the employee can fulfil the responsibilities of their job, including interactions with teams, ministry partners, and Indigenous partners
- the impact on service delivery and productivity has been considered
- the impact to team dynamics, engagement, and organizational culture has been considered
- the ability of other members in the employee's work group to fulfil their duties has been considered (i.e., the individual's work is not offloaded onto another team member because that individual isn't in the office)

Approvals and Additional Guidance

- **MIRR Approvals:**
 - **Up to two days per week of telework:** Supervisors have the discretion to approve up to two days per week of telework without executive approval.
 - **Three days or more per week of telework:** Requests for remote work three days or more per week require approval by the Assistant Deputy Minister as well as supervisor approval. The process for these approvals is being managed within each division. Contact your ADMO for more information.
- Supervisors are accountable for assessing each request using the ministry's guiding principles and PSA telework criteria.
- Supervisors are expected to engage in discussions regarding flexible work arrangements with team members requesting such consideration.
- Mandatory corporate training prescribed by the PSA must be completed before a telework agreement can be approved. This includes IM 117 and the Annual Review of the Standards of Conduct and Oath of Employment (these courses can be found in the Learning Centre).
- If an employee is approved to work remotely three or more days a week, they may be expected to forego a dedicated desk or workspace in their regular workplace, and/or need to share a location as determined by workspace planning requirements.
- For teams working in offices that are co-located with other ministries, considerations must be made for current and future MIRR staffing needs. As a result, any substantive impacts to cross-ministry co-location workspace agreements because of MIRR telework arrangements must be brought forward to the attention of your ADMO to be reviewed and endorsed by division ADMs.

Note: *In order to address specific operational needs, additional guidance may be provided to supervisors within each Division, as a companion to this Ministry-wide guidance.*

Resources

The PSA has extensive resources to support supervisors in conversations regarding flexible work and decision-making, including a manager's checklist. Please consult the links below.

[Updated Telework Agreement Template](#)

[PSA Flexible Workplace Resources](#)

[Flexible Work FAQ](#)

[MyHR - Criteria for Flexible Work](#)

Additional Questions

- **I only telework from home on a very occasional basis and not according to a strict schedule. Do I still need to have a formal telework agreement signed by myself and my supervisor/manager?**
 - A telework agreement must be in place for all employees with regularly scheduled telework arrangements, whether they work from home part-time or full-time. This ensures proper approvals are obtained, costs and expenses are pre-authorized and both employee and employer have a clear understanding of all aspects of the telework arrangement.
 - A telework agreement should ideally also be in place for employees who work from a BC Public Service office full-time, but on rare occasions work from home.
 - Employee travel or field work are not considered telework situations and an agreement is not required for these circumstances.
 - Telework agreements are about the location an employee works and not used to address hours of work.
- **If an employee on my team already has an approved telework agreement that pre-dates this updated approach do I need to approve a new agreement?**
 - Yes. All telework agreements must use the corporate telework agreement template provided by the BC Public Service Agency. If the existing agreement does not use this template, the employee will need to complete a new agreement using the proper template and have it approved.
 - Telework agreements should be reviewed annually. If an existing agreement is more than one year old, you should review it with your employee and confirm it can continue. If the existing agreement was established in the last year, you must confirm that you still support continuing that arrangement after September 7.
 - If the existing agreement allows for working from home three or more days a week, you need to have the request approved by your Assistant Deputy Minister.
- **If an employee works fewer than three days per week from home, do they need a telework agreement?**
 - Yes. Telework agreements are required for any BC Public Service employee who works from home, regardless of the number of days per week.
 - The telework agreement ensures supervisors and employees agree on responsibilities and confirms the expectations for both parties.

- **What about situations where a supervisor is managing the performance of an employee and that employee wishes to pursue flexible work options?**
 - These requests must be considered on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the circumstances and the nature of the performance issue being managed.
 - Employees must be performing satisfactorily prior to being approved and must maintain their performance.
- **Do work days involving travel (e.g. to meetings) count towards the number of days in/out of the office?**
 - Work days requiring travel are considered 'in office'. For example, if an employee worked three days a week in the office (Monday-Wednesday), and two days/week at home, work-related travel between Monday and Wednesday would not be considered as 'at home' for telework arrangement purposes.
- **Is using the WestHills ShareSpace considered in office or working remotely?**
 - Using the ShareSpace is considered a remote working day. You should have a telework agreement in place to work from the Shared Space location.
- **Who do supervisors speak with regarding accommodation-related questions?**
 - Questions regarding formal accommodations should be directed to MyHR.

Bi-Weekly Tracking Data

Report – November 13

KEY NOTES

1. **Includes** members of staff who have worked *on average 2 days or more* per week - i.e. 14 hours per week, 28 hours per fortnight
2. **Includes** members of staff who would normally work in the office, but may temporarily be absent due to vacation, leave or sickness
3. Each reporting date provides information for the **previous 2 weeks** (i.e. the 9 days prior plus the Friday when reporting is due)
4. **Jutland TOTAL safe capacity = 172 (70 enclosed desks + 102 open plan desks)**

Tracking Data: By Division

		02-Oct			16-Oct			30-Oct			13-Nov		
Number of staff working 2 days or more per week	Total number of staff normally working in the office per division	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks
Number of MIRR staff	213	72	34%	n/a	61	29%	-5%	110	52%	23%	107	50%	-1%
Number of DMO staff	21	15	71%	n/a	14	67%	-5%	18	86%	19%	18	86%	0%
Number of NRD staff	110	19	17%	n/a	20	18%	1%	56	51%	33%	45	41%	-10%
Number of SPID staff	67	30	45%	n/a	18	27%	-18%	21	31%	4%	28	42%	10%
Number of RTSD staff	18	8	44%	n/a	9	50%	6%	15	83%	33%	16	89%	6%

Jutland (2957 + 2955 4th floor) - Breakdown of Spaces

Jutland (2957 + 2955 - 4th floor) - Breakdown of Spaces					
Floor	Not safe (red)	Safe (green)	Safe and Vacant (Pink)	Not safe and vacant (X)	% safe seats
5th floor 2957 Jutland	0	29	0	0	100%
4th floor 2957 Jutland	8	28	4	4	73%
4th floor 2955 Jutland	7	36	1	0	84%
3rd floor 2957 Jutland	4	64	9	3	91%

MIRR office locations – Breakdown of Spaces

Office Location	Number of staff assigned to this location	MIRR Staff Safe Capacity (as per Office Work Place Assessment) *see building capacity on Master copy	02-Oct	% change from previous 2 weeks	16-Oct	% change from previous 2 weeks	30-Oct	% change from previous 2 weeks	13-Nov	% change from previous 2 weeks
Jutland 2957 - 5th floor	26	29	16	n/a	17	6%	18	6%	18	0%
Jutland 2957 - 4th floor	34	32	7	n/a	7	0%	22	214%	22	0%
Jutland 2957 - 3rd floor	63	73	25	n/a	16	-36%	31	94%	29	-6%
Jutland 2955 - 4th floor	38	37	15	n/a	15	0%	15	0%	20	33%
Nanaimo	13	12	0	n/a	0	#DIV/0!	6	#DIV/0!	5	-17%
Prince George	4	3	1	n/a	0	-100%	3	#DIV/0!	2	-33%
Fort St. John	5	6	1	n/a	1	0%	3	200%	1	-67%
Smithers	7	8	1	n/a	1	0%	3	200%	1	-67%
Kamloops	8	8	1	n/a	0	-100%	3	#DIV/0!	2	-33%
Cranbrook	3	2	1	n/a	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Haida Gwaii	1		0	n/a	0	#DIV/0!	1	#DIV/0!	1	0%
Williams Lake	4	4	3	n/a	1	-67%	3	200%	3	0%
Surrey	7	15	0	n/a	1	#DIV/0!	1	0%	1	0%

Bi-Weekly Tracking Data

Report – November 27

KEY NOTES

1. **Includes** members of staff who have worked *on average 2 days or more* per week - i.e. 14 hours per week, 28 hours per fortnight
2. **Includes** members of staff who would normally work in the office, but may temporarily be absent due to vacation, leave or sickness
3. Each reporting date provides information for the **previous 2 weeks** (i.e. the 9 days prior plus the Friday when reporting is due)
4. **Jutland TOTAL safe capacity = 172 (70 enclosed desks + 102 open plan desks)**

Tracking Data: By Division

				02-Oct			16-Oct			30-Oct			13-Nov			27-Nov		
	Total number of staff normally working in the office per division	Number of pending or approved accommodations	Number of staff expected in the office (not including accommodations)	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks	Total Number of staff working 2 or more days per week	%	% change from previous 2 weeks
Number of MIRR staff now working in the office for 2 or more days per week	214	20	194	72	34%	n/a	61	29%	-5%	110	51%	23%	107	50%	-1%	56	29%	-21%
Number of DMO staff now working in the office for 2 or more days per week	22	1	21	15	68%	n/a	14	64%	-5%	18	82%	18%	18	82%	0%	10	48%	-34%
Number of NROD staff now working in the office for 2 or more days per week	110	13	97	19	17%	n/a	20	18%	1%	56	51%	33%	45	41%	-10%	20	21%	-20%
Number of SPID staff now working in the office for 2 or more days per week	67	5	62	30	45%	n/a	18	27%	-18%	21	31%	4%	28	42%	10%	19	31%	-11%
Number of RTSD staff now working in the office for 2 or more days per week	18	1	17	8	44%	n/a	9	50%	6%	15	83%	33%	16	89%	6%	7	41%	-48%

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Jutland 2957 - 4th floor	34	32	7	n/a	7	0%	22	214%	22	0%	5	-77%
Jutland 2957 - 3rd floor	63	73	25	n/a	16	-36%	31	94%	29	-6%	18	-38%
Jutland 2955 - 4th floor	39	37	15	n/a	15	0%	15	0%	20	33%	10	-50%
Nanaimo	13	12	0	n/a	0	#DIV/0!	6	#DIV/0!	5	-17%	0	-100%
Prince George	4	3	1	n/a	0	-100%	3	#DIV/0!	2	-33%	0	-100%
Fort St. John	5	6	1	n/a	1	0%	3	200%	1	-67%	1	0%
Smithers	7	8	1	n/a	1	0%	3	200%	1	-67%	0	-100%
Kamloops	8	8	1	n/a	0	-100%	3	#DIV/0!	2	-33%	2	0%
Kelowna				n/a		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
Cranbrook	3	2	1	n/a	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Haida Gwaii	1		0	n/a	0	#DIV/0!	1	#DIV/0!	1	0%	1	0%
Williams Lake	4	4	3	n/a	1	-67%	3	200%	3	0%	3	0%
Surrey	7	15	0	n/a	1	#DIV/0!	1	0%	1	0%	0	-100%