



Remote Work

What do I do if an employee wants to work remotely?

As the Manager, you will need to review the [Remote Work Guidelines](#) and have a discussion with your employee about the potential remote work.

Here are some questions to consider for your discussion:

- What type of remote work arrangement is the employee proposing?
- What hours is the employee proposing to work remotely?
- Where is the employee planning to work remotely?
- Does the employee have dependents to care for in the remote work location?
- Are there any factors to consider in the remote work location that would affect the employee's ability to have a productive workday? If so, how would they be minimized? (e.g., Animals needing to be let out, excess noise pollution, etc.)

The employee is required to complete the [Remote Work Application](#) and submit for approval.

Are there different types of remote work?

There are four different types of remote work arrangements that an employee can apply for:

1. Full-time Remote Work is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties away from their Designated Workplace for their entire work week.
2. Hybrid Remote Work is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties away from their Designated Workplace for part of their work week on a specific schedule, with the remainder of the work week spent at the Designated Workplace.
3. Long-Distance Remote Work is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties at a singular work location within the NWT, or within the NWT and Nunavut for employees of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC), which is outside of the community where their Designated Workplace is located.
4. Out-of-Territory Remote Work is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties away from their Designated Workplace, at a location within Canada that is outside of the jurisdiction of the NWT, or for WSCC employees, outside of the NWT and Nunavut.



Is there a minimum and maximum length of time for a Remote Work Agreement?

A formal Remote Work Agreement is required for remote work over 21 business days and the duration of an individual Remote Work Agreement shall not exceed two (2) years. Employees working under a Remote Work Agreement may apply for another Remote Work Agreement to begin upon conclusion of their existing agreement, however if the cumulative duration of the Remote Work Agreements is in excess of two (2) years, approval from the Deputy Minister of Finance is required.

A Remote Work Agreement must be evaluated in accordance with the schedule outlined in the Remote Work Application.

How do I assess whether remote work is suitable?

There are specific approval criteria that the employee must meet to be considered for remote work:

1. Job Suitability

Here are some things to consider when assessing if an employee's job is suitable for remote work:

- Are the job position and duties compatible with an offsite location and where applicable, alternate/flexible work schedule?
- Does the nature of the job require the employee to have daily face-to-face contact with a supervisor, other employees, clients or the general public?
- If the job involves the review, analysis, creation or processing of documents, records, or files, are they able to be securely transmitted or transported between the Designated Workplace and the Remote Work Site?
- Does the nature of the job require the employee to have a secured storage location for files, documents or records at the Designated Workplace or Remote Work Site?
- Will the nature of the job result in the GNWT or the employee incurring any unreasonable costs?

2. Employee Suitability

Here are some things to consider when assessing if an employee is suitable for remote work:

- Does the employee have a history of strong job performance?
- Is the employee capable of working independently with minimal supervision?
- Is the employee reliable, responsible, flexible and trustworthy?
- For the purposes of Remote Work, does the employee have the organizational and time management skills in order to work effectively and efficiently remotely?



- Is the employee comfortable and efficient with technology and computer applications, and are they able to troubleshoot technology issues with minimal or remote support?
- Has the employee completed relevant training such as Information Security training or Access to Information and Protection of Privacy training?

3. Remote Work Site Suitability

Here are some things to consider when assessing if an employee's proposed remote work site is suitable for remote work:

- Does the site have appropriate furnishings (adjustable office chair, table/desk etc.)?
- Does the site meet security requirements (e.g., storage of hard copy and electronic materials)?
- Does the site meet the GNWT's workplace health and safety requirements?
 - Smoke alarm
 - Fire extinguisher
 - First aid kit
 - Surge protection
- Does the site have secure, reliable internet access so the employee is able to perform their regular work functions?
- Does the employee have any dependents to care for at the Remote Work Site?
- If yes, does the employee have alternate care arrangements in place for their dependents or has the employee provided adjusted proposed hours or a work plan to incorporate care requirements for the dependents?

How does a remote work request get approved?

Here are the steps required to have a request for remote work approved.

1. The employee completes the Remote Work Application indicating their suitability for a Remote Work arrangement, including their proposed hours.
2. The employee submits the completed Remote Work Application to their supervisor, who determines whether the position and the employee are suitable for a Remote Work Agreement, based on the existing criteria and appropriate supports required for Remote Work.
3. If Remote Work is determined to be a suitable arrangement for the employee, the supervisor and employee develop an agreement outlining specific considerations for Remote Work including effective dates, scheduled hours for Remote Work, as well as what equipment is necessary for the arrangement.



4. A Remote Work Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist must also be completed with the Application, or within 30 days of receiving conditional approval, to identify any potential health and safety concerns, including appropriate ergonomic set-up at the Remote Work Site. Photographs of the Remote Work Site must be provided with the Remote Work Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist.
5. Once the Agreement is completed, with all supporting documents attached, and signed by the employee and supervisor, the supervisor submits the package to the Deputy Head for final approval. Remote Work Agreement approvals are made at the discretion of the Deputy Head, in consultation with the employee's direct supervisor(s).
6. Applications requesting Out-of-Territory Remote Work are submitted to the Deputy Head, who reviews the application package and makes a recommendation to the Deputy Minister of Finance. Out-of-Territory Remote Work Agreement approvals are made at the discretion of the Deputy Minister of Finance, in consultation with the employee's Deputy Head.
7. Once an application package is approved and signed by the applicable GNWT personnel, a copy of the Remote Work Agreement is shared with the employee who then signs the Agreement and the completed Agreement is shared with an HR Representative for storage in the employee's personnel file.
8. Remote Work Applications submitted without a completed [Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist](#), including photographs, may be conditionally approved. In such cases, the employee has 30 days to provide the completed Checklist and photographs for consideration for the Agreement to be approved. If, based on the Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist and photographs, the Remote Work Site is deemed inappropriate, the conditional approval may be revoked.
9. For unionized positions, a copy of the signed Remote Work Agreement is also provided to the UNW.

What if a remote work request is not suitable?

If the department is unable to approve the Remote Work request for operational reasons, the department may propose modifications to the request to better meet the needs of both parties. If the case involves an emergency situation, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the employee's Remote Work arrangement.

When a formal request for Remote Work is refused, the department will provide the employee with a written notification outlining the reason(s) for the refusal.

How do I manage an employee who is working remotely?

Here are some tips for managing remote employees: [Tips for Managers - Managing Remote Employees](#).



What are my responsibilities as a Manager when an employee is approved for remote work?

General

- The department must ensure that the employee understands the terms and conditions of Remote Work, and that they have read and understand the appropriate related Policy, guidelines, and associated documents.
- The department must ensure that all appropriate factors have been addressed prior to approving Remote Work Agreements, and that processes and procedures are in place for employees who wish to request a Remote Work arrangement.
- The department must ensure that any Remote Work arrangements lasting longer than 21 business days are formalized with a Remote Work Agreement, signed by the employee, supervisor and Deputy Head.
- The department must execute proper judgment to evaluate the case for Remote Work and must ensure that Remote Work is not used where existing policies that address time away from work are more appropriate, such as sick leave, vacation leave or any other leave provisions.
- The employer's insurance covers work and work activities carried out in good faith, and equipment owned by the GNWT.

Health and Safety Considerations

- The department must ensure that the Remote Work Site meets health and safety standards by reviewing and evaluating the [Remote Work Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist](#) and photographs submitted by the employee.
- The department must ensure that the Remote Work Site conforms to the *NWT Safety Act*, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and the GNWT Occupational Health and Safety Policy.
- The department must ensure employees receive appropriate health and safety training suitable for their work prior to a Remote Work arrangement being initiated.
- The department must also ensure, if applicable, that the employee is familiar with the WSCC Codes of Practice *Working Alone* document as well as any department-specific OHS program. In such cases, the supervisor must also, in conjunction with the employee, prepare written procedures for ensuring the employee's safety when working alone.
- The supervisor will review the employee's regular Remote Worksite Health and Safety Inspections and forward them to the appropriate Occupational Health and Safety representative.
- The department may need to coordinate an OHS committee inspection of the Remote Work Site in the event one is required following a serious incident, a near miss, or as directed by a WSCC Safety Inspector.



Security of Information and Confidentiality

- As part of the Remote Work Agreement, the supervisor and employee must establish safeguards to protect the confidentiality of government files, documents, and materials, both hard copy and electronic. This includes provisions for the appropriate storage, transport, return and disposal of confidential materials and electronic and physical records, as required.
- The department must ensure that the employee has read and understands the *Internet Use Policy*, *Email Use Policy*, *Recorded Information Management Policy*, and *Management of Electronic Information Policy* before allowing them access to GNWT networks, programs, and government records.
- The department is responsible for maintaining an inventory of all government information (records) that are located at the Remote Work Site and, in conjunction with the employee, ensuring that they are returned to the Designated Workplace upon the completion of the Agreement.

Equipment and Furniture

- While other requirements may vary, the department must provide the employee with a dedicated GNWT-owned computer (and applicable computer accessories), as configured and maintained by the Technology Service Centre (TSC).
- All other equipment (such a mobile phone or printer) will be determined by the department, based on the requirements of the position and must be pre-approved by the Deputy Head.
- Access to GNWT-owned equipment and property is to be limited solely to the Remote Work employee for the purposes of conducting GNWT business.
- The employer will assume the responsibility for normal maintenance and repair of GNWT-owned equipment.
- The department is responsible for maintaining an inventory of all GNWT-owned that is located at the Remote Work Site and, in conjunction with the employee, ensuring that it is returned upon the completion of the Agreement.

Costs and Expenses

- The department is responsible for covering the costs of standard issued electronic devices required for Remote Work.
- The department is responsible for paying all reasonable expenses, as determined by the department, and as required of the position.
- The department must ensure that the Remote Work Agreement does not generate ongoing additional costs that would not be created in the employee's Designated Workplace.
- Employees are required to present themselves on their own time, at their own expense to their Designated Workplace. If the employee is required to report to a location away from their Remote Work Site or their Designated Workplace, the



department is responsible for covering any costs associated with travel. Costs are not to exceed the Duty Travel requirements, as outlined in their terms of employment, from their Designated Workplace.

Technical Considerations

- The department will coordinate the installation, upgrading, maintenance and removal of hardware, software, virus protection and peripheral equipment, as necessary.
- Technology support services will be provided remotely or may require the employee to bring the electronic device to a government location for service.

Performance Development

- The supervisor must ensure transparency and consistency when carrying out Performance Development. Performance Document manager evaluations shall not differ solely on the basis of the employee's work location.
- The department must regularly review and evaluate the Remote Work Agreement to ensure continued operational and employee compliance and to address any work-related problems.
- It is recommended that performance reviews take place on a more frequent basis at the beginning of the Remote Work Agreement, and more periodically thereafter. A supervisor may require more regular performance reviews, should they decide that it is necessary.
- It is recommended that the supervisor and employee establish an open line of communication and set weekly check ins to monitor progress on current projects.
- If the supervisor notices a decline in the employee's productivity or work quality, they should address their concerns with the employee, so that they work together to identify any barriers and develop strategies and solutions. If the employee's work quality declines below an acceptable level, the department will reevaluate the Remote Work Agreement to determine if changes can be made or if the Agreement needs to be terminated.

How do I determine what a reasonable expense is?

A reasonable expense is one that would be incurred if the employee was working at their Designated Workplace (i.e., purchase of notebook, pens, stapler, etc.).

If the Remote Work Site is located near the Designated Workplace, it might make more sense for the employee to continue to use consumable office supplies from the Designated Workplace.

Except in Accommodation situations, employees are responsible with furnishing their Remote Work Site.

Is there a limit to how many employees can work remotely at any one time?



The number of employees able to work remotely will differ across business units and will be based on operational requirements, in addition to the approval criteria for remote work – Job Suitability, Employee Suitability, Remote Work Site Suitability.