



Langley Research Center

LPR 3900.1

Effective Date: September 2, 2004

Expiration Date: September 2, 2008

Telecommuting Program

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Office of Human Resources

PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

This procedural requirement sets forth the instructions to ensure that the Langley Research Center's (LaRC) Telecommuting Program is conducted in accordance with Agency and Center management requirements.

P.2 APPLICABILITY

This procedural requirement is applicable to LaRC civil servant employees.

P.3 AUTHORITY

- a. National Telecommuting Initiative dated January 1996.

P.4 REFERENCES

- a. NPR 3530.1, "Pay Policy and Allowances."
- b. NPR 4200.1, "NASA Equipment Management Manual."
- c. LAPD 1700.1, "Safety Program."
- d. LAPD 1460.1, "Mail Management."
- e. LAPD 2810.1, "Appropriate Use of NASA Langley Research Center Information Technology Resources."
- f. LAPD 3630.3, "Attendance and Leave."
- g. LPR 1620.1, "Information Security Program Management Procedures and Guidelines."
- h. LMS-CP-2712, "Employee Property Loans."
- l. Langley Form 120, "Telecommuting Agreement."
- j. ODIN, "Property Offsite Agreement."
- k. Langley Form 141, "Employee Loan Agreement."

P.5 CANCELLATION

None

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government has taken a lead in promoting telecommuting. This LPR establishes NASA Langley Telecommuting program. The Administrator has determined that NASA will be a leader in the implementation of programs that improve the quality of life of NASA employees. One of these approaches, advocated during the Clinton administration was a strategy for reinvigorating government. In support of this strategy, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management recommended that all Federal agencies use telecommuting. Telecommuting, also known as work-at-home, and flexiplace, is a program that pays for an employee performing official government business away from the traditional duty station.

Potential Benefits of Telecommuting:

- Improves the quality of work life.
- Can lead to improved employee job performance.
- Potential increase of the Center's productivity.
- Extends or continues employment opportunities to people with disabilities, including employees who have partially recovered from work-related injuries who can do the job from an on-site location.
- Accommodates employees who may have temporary or continuing health problems or who might otherwise have to retire on disability.
- Potentially enhances recruitment and promotes diversity by expanding the geographic recruitment pool.
- Decreases traffic and parking congestion, energy consumption, and air pollution.
- Reduces absenteeism
- Allow employees to balance work and family demands.

2 SCOPE

The LaRC Telecommuting Program is designed to provide flexible work situations that can benefit the Center as well as its employees.

The following information defines the Center's Telecommuting Program and provides administrative procedural requirements to implement the program here at LaRC.

2.1 Telecommuting Options

a. Ongoing

Work at an alternate worksite on an ongoing basis, 1 or more days per week for 1 year. Telecommuting Agreements, Langley Form (LF) 120, shall be renewed annually upon review and approval of the first and second level supervisors. Ongoing telecommuting shall not be done on a full-time basis, except when a reasonable accommodation is required for a disabled employee or an employee with a work related injury or other special need.

Telecommuting occurs at the discretion of the supervisor consistent with mission, office needs and requirements. Supervisors retain final authority to terminate or revise telecommuting agreements at any time during the course of the agreement.

b. Temporary

Work at an alternate work site 1 or more days a week for a limited period of time (less than 1 year in length) for a specific reason. Temporary Telecommuting Agreements are established to meet specific employee or organizational needs (i.e., to accommodate an employee recovering from an injury/illness (if medically able to work), or to meet special project demands.)

2.2 Size of the Program

The actual number of participants will be determined by the employee interest, the number of the work assignments that are suitable to be performed at an alternate worksite, and the assessment of the first and second level supervisors as to the mutual benefits to be achieved.

2.3 Employee Participation

The program targets current employees whose primary duties can be performed away from their LaRC workplace. Participation is voluntary, and requires supervisory approval and oversight.

2.4 Selection Criteria

Selection of participants for the program is a critical activity from both individual and organizational standpoints. The criteria used to select participants depends upon a number of interrelated issues including, but not limited to:

- Work effectively performed away from the Center.
- Clearly defined performance requirements that are measurable and results oriented.
- Benefit to the Center.
- Supervisory approval for participation.
- Both supervisor and employee sign and abide by the Telecommuting Agreement (LF 120).
- Adequate home/other work site work environment including necessary equipment (e.g. computer, modem, fax, phone). Equipment generally provided by employee at no cost to NASA.
- Security of data, including privacy act, sensitive, or classified data concerns
- Willingness to participate in any training, surveys, or program evaluations that the Center may require.
- Assignment commensurate with employee's grade and skill level.

Positions that require extensive face-to-face contact or access to materials or equipment that cannot be removed from the worksite do not lend themselves to telecommuting. **Exception.** There may be situations where it makes sense to allow employees in these types of positions to telecommute on a "temporary" basis to accommodate specific employee or Center needs.

2.5 Telecommuting Agreement

Participating employees must complete and sign a Telecommuting Agreement (LF 120) that covers the terms and conditions of the Telecommuting. The employee must adhere to program procedural requirements and policies. The form covers such items as the voluntary nature of the arrangement; work schedule; hours of duty; provisions for childcare/eldercare; responsibilities for time keeping, leave approval, and requests for overtime and compensatory time; standards of conduct; and proper use and safeguards of Government property and records. This form is the means where management documents approval.

3 WORK SCHEDULES

Employees must work a regular schedule or follow an alternative work schedule and are responsible for meeting a 5-day/40-hour workweek. The agreed upon work schedule is set in the Telecommuting Agreement (LF 120),

Work away from the LaRC office is normally limited to 2 days per workweek. This ensures that the employee is available in the office during the workweek for face-to-face meetings, access to facilities, etc. Special exceptions may only be made upon complete concurrence of the employee and the first and second level supervisors. Supervisors should carefully consider employee's requests for special exception to ensure employees with special circumstances are offered the opportunity to telecommute. The alternate work schedule may be changed as work dictates with supervisory approval.

4 POSITION AND PERFORMANCE

4.1 Position Description

Changes in position descriptions are seldom required for employees participating in Telecommuting. Position Description changes will not be made without Human Resources approval. However, minor modifications may be made to reflect the supervisory controls or work environment factors.

4.2 Performance Standards

Critical elements and performance standards must have clearly defined performance requirements that are measurable and results-oriented. The standards must provide a reasonable basis for measuring performance. Performance standards with quantitative or qualitative measures are required. Explicit and objective “norms” for work output must be based on experience with those required and sustained in the office and monitored through scheduled progress reports. Supervisors will use the same measures for employees telecommuting and employees who perform similar tasks in the regular office setting.

5 TIME AND ATTENDANCE (T&A)

The existing rules for hours of duty, absence, leave, overtime, and time and attendance reporting apply to employees telecommuting (see LAPD 3630.3, "Attendance and Leave").

5.1 Hours of Duty

A participating employee must work a regular schedule or follow a variable work schedule depending upon the agreement between the employee and his/her supervisor. Completely unstructured arrangements where employees work at will are **not permitted**.

The standard work shift at Langley includes starting and quitting times between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Within established Center policy and supervisory approval, the Telecommuting Agreement must establish hours that the employee is to be available. The core hours are between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. with one-half hour lunch period.

5.2 Leave

The policies for requesting annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay remain unchanged for employees telecommuting. An employee is responsible for requesting leave in advance through WebTADS for supervisory approval, and posting the leave in WebTADS.

5.3 Certification and Control of T&A

Proper monitoring and certification of employee work is critical to the success of the Telecommuting Program. Each employee working under a telecommuting agreement shall indicate in their Webtads comment section the number of telecommuting hours worked and the projects or actions worked while telecommuting. Adjustments to the approved work schedule are permitted, with prior supervisory approval.

Federal policies and procedures governing certification of T&A require agencies with employees working at remote sites to provide reasonable assurance that they are working when scheduled. Reasonable assurance must include occasional supervisory telephone calls, supervisory visits to the worksite, and supervisory determination of work output for the time spent off-site.

5.4 Excused Absences, Administrative Dismissals, Emergency Closings

The principles governing excused absences, administrative dismissals, and closings remain unchanged for employees telecommuting.

5.5 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Governing Overtime

The existing rules in Title 5, United States Code, and in the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 United States Code 201, governing overtime also apply to the program. Overtime is all time worked at official duties in excess of the scheduled tour of duty. All overtime must be authorized and approved in advance. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to regulate and control the use of overtime. Employees are responsible for requesting, in advance, approval to work in excess of their normal hours of duty.

5.6 Worker's Compensation

Employees telecommuting employees are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) and may qualify for continuation of pay or worker's compensation benefits for on-the-job injury. Employees must report any injury sustained while performing official duties at the alternate worksite to their supervisor. Employees must contact the Compensation Claims Officer (CCO) at 757-864-3194 as soon as practicable. Employees must notify their supervisor/CCO that an injury has occurred in order to claim all the benefits available under the FECA. Upon first day back on the Center, following an injury sustained at the alternate worksite, employee must report to the Clinic for a follow-up evaluation.

6 PAY

6.1 Duty Station

The official duty station is LaRC for pay purposes such as special salary rates, locality pay adjustments, and travel.

6.2 Premium Pay

The normal rules apply for night differentials, and Sunday and holiday pay whether work is accomplished at the LaRC office or offsite. Official work schedules, as authorized by the supervisor, determine the entitlement to premium pay.

7 FACILITIES

7.1 Workplace

Employees participating in the Telecommuting Program must have a designated workspace or workstation for performance of their alternate worksite duties. Requirements will vary depending on the nature of the work and equipment needed to perform the work. Participating employees working from home will certify that the alternate worksite meets the safety standards by completing the Telecommuting Agreement. An employee must be able to easily communicate by telephone with his/her supervisors and organization management during time offsite.

7.2 Home Utility Expenses

Employees working under telecommuting agreements are responsible for all residential utility and telephone costs incurred at an employee's personal residence in the course of working under a telecommuting arrangement. Exceptions apply where the personal expense directly benefits the Government; e.g. business-related long distance calls on the employee's offsite phone. Supervisors have final authority to approve for reimbursement long-distance telephone expenses the employee submits as having incurred in the course of working under a telecommuting arrangement. Government credit cards may be provided for official calls only, with supervisor approval.

8 TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND EQUIPMENT

8.1 Telephones

Installation of residential telecommunications equipment, including but not limited to computer systems, telephone systems and lines, and fax machines, remains the responsibility of each employee.

8.2 Owned Equipment

The employee is required to complete a LF 141, "Employee Loan Agreement," for any Government-owned equipment (see NPR 4200.1, "NASA Equipment Management Manual") that is borrowed, and ODIN Property Offsite Agreement for ODIN owned equipment. The loan agreements must be properly approved before equipment can be removed from the Center. The employee must certify that the equipment will be used only in the conduct of official NASA business and must assume responsibility for proper safeguarding of such equipment. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action and/or pecuniary liability for any loss, damage, or destruction of equipment resulting from the employee's negligence, misuse, dishonesty, or wanton and willful misconduct. The employee must promptly report any property loss, damage, or destruction to the appropriate Property Custodian, and in no case later than 10 working days from the employee's discovery thereof.

Should any Government-owned equipment need maintenance; the employee is required to return the equipment to NASA LaRC for such maintenance (ODIN contract). Use of personally owned equipment is at the employee's own risk. NASA will not be responsible for maintaining such equipment.

9 OTHER ISSUES

9.1 Privacy Act, Sensitive, or Classified Data

Within applicable regulations, decisions regarding the proper use and handling of classified and sensitive data, as well as records subject to the Privacy Act, are delegated to supervisors who permit an employee to participate in the Telecommuting Program. Offsite access to classified data is not permitted. Information that is sensitive or subject to the Privacy Act should be identified as such, and employees must be counseled on proper use and safeguarding of the documents. Questions concerning classified material must be addressed to the Center's Security Office (see LAPD 1460.1, "Mail Management," and LPR 1620.1, "Information Security Program Management Procedures and Guidelines").

9.2. Liability

Advice and assistance regarding official matters involving legal claims or other liabilities must be referred to the Office of Chief Counsel. Employees telecommuting are covered and must file claims under the Federal Employees Compensation Act and the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act. Employees are responsible for proper safety practices at all times, which include maintaining a safe work environment and familiarity with the Center's safety documents (see LAPD 1700.1, "Safety Program").

9.3 Termination of Telecommuting Agreement

Supervisors may verbally terminate a telecommuting agreement at any time necessary to address employee performance or misconduct concerns or to ensure mission needs are accomplished. Supervisors must then follow-up the verbal termination with written termination of the agreement. Otherwise the supervisor may terminate a telecommuting agreement by notifying the telecommuting employee, in writing, 2 weeks prior to the termination date. Likewise, the employee may terminate the telecommuting agreement by notifying the supervisor, in writing, 2 weeks prior to the termination date. In either case, it is required that the supervisor and employee discuss the circumstances that are causing the termination.