

FAQs on Return to In-Person Work Implementation Questions

Note: This guidance supersedes and cancels any previously issued OPM telework guidance that is inconsistent with this guidance ([5 U.S.C. 6504\(b\)\(2\)](#)).

Mobile Workers

Question: Are mobile workers covered by the requirements of return to in-person work?

Answer: No. Mobile workers are not teleworkers or remote workers. Mobile workers are characterized by routine and regular travel to conduct work in customer or other worksites as opposed to a single authorized alternative worksite.

Question: Can OPM provide examples of the type of work mobile workers perform?

Answer: The type of work mobile workers perform include site audits, site inspections, law enforcement and other investigations, property management, and work performed while commuting, traveling between worksites (firefighters and other first responders, park and forest rangers, and border patrol agents), or on Temporary Duty travel (TDY).

Telework Agreements

Question: Is it necessary to have a written telework agreement with an employee if the employee will only be engaged in situational telework?

Answer: Yes. A written telework agreement is a requirement to perform situational telework. (See [5 U.S.C. 6502\(b\)\(2\)](#).)

Question: Are agencies required to have a written telework agreement for those employees permitted to telework due to a disability, qualifying medical condition, or other compelling reason certified by the agency head and the employee's supervisor?

Answer: Yes. For those employees, excused from performing in-person work at an agency worksite, a written telework agreement is a requirement by law (See [5 U.S.C. 6502\(b\)\(2\)](#).)

Question: What is the definition of a "telework-eligible" employee?

Answer: The eligibility of a position for telework should be based on a determination that the position's duties and responsibilities may be performed at an alternative worksite without diminution of employee performance or agency operations (including availability of any equipment and internet needed to perform work at the telework site). Eligibility criteria under [5 U.S.C. 6502](#), as may be supplemented by agency policy, also apply.

Regular Telework

Question: Are there any circumstances under which employees will be allowed to engage in telework on a regular and recurring basis?

Answer: President Trump's Presidential Memorandum of January 20, 2025 ([Return to In-Person Work](#)) stated that agency heads could make exemptions to the return-to-in-person-work requirement as they deem necessary. A [guidance memo](#) issued jointly by OMB and OPM on January 27, 2025 advised that agency heads could make exemptions based on disability, qualifying medical condition or other compelling reason certified by the agency head. That memo further stated that agency plans must describe criteria for determining "other compelling reasons" for exemptions, including any limited, discrete categories where categorical or indefinite exemptions may be granted.

Situational Telework

Question: Can an agency require a telework eligible employee to sign a telework agreement to work during weather emergencies?

Answer: In general, an employee must enter into a telework agreement voluntarily. However, an agency may require telework without a telework agreement for a period that the agency is operating under a continuity of operations plan.

Question: Can an agency provide weather and safety leave to an employee, with a situational telework agreement, during weather-related emergencies or office closures?

Answer: Generally, an employee with a situational telework agreement must use either unscheduled telework or take unscheduled leave or other time off during weather-related emergencies or office closures ([5 CFR 630.1605\(a\)](#)).

Question: Can an agency require an employee without a written telework agreement to perform telework during weather-related emergencies or office closures?

Answer: Generally, an agency cannot require an employee without a written telework agreement to perform telework during weather-related emergencies or office closures. Employees who do not have a telework agreement may be provided weather and safety leave if a weather or other safety-related event prevents an employee from safely traveling to or from an agency worksite or performing work at an agency worksite.

Question: When should agencies authorize situational telework?

Answer: Supervisors should only authorize situational telework where it meets a compelling agency need. One example would be a weather-related emergency. In addition, situational telework should be intermittent and not authorized as a substitute for routine or recurring telework. Each agency should ensure that all situational telework requests are appropriately

reviewed by managers; that judicious discretion is exercised in authorizing situational telework; and that all situational telework approvals are consistent with both [President Trump's memorandum](#) and [OPM's memorandum](#).

Question: Can an agency require an employee to purchase an internet connection to ensure the employee's ability to perform situational telework?

Answer: If an agency requires an employee to purchase an internet connection, the agency would be responsible for the cost of such service. (Section 620 of the [Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations Act, 1996](#) (Public Law 104-52, November 19, 1995).)

Work Schedules

Question: How many work hours and workdays must an employee work at the agency worksite?

Answer: An employee must work all work hours and workdays of the employee's established work schedule at the agency worksite unless on approved leave or time off as appropriate or excused from in-person work due to a disability or qualifying medical condition or other compelling reason certified by the agency. Situational telework may not be used to reduce the number of hours an employee works at the agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis.

Question: Can agencies continue to allow the use of alternative work schedules for employees returning to in-person work?

Answer: Agencies can approve the use of alternative work schedules if they are able to ensure delivery of uninterrupted full-time services/mission delivery for all days during the work week. Agencies should not approve any work schedule that would allow employees to work any part of the workday at a location other than the agency worksite, unless telework is approved due to a disability or qualifying medical condition or other compelling reason certified by the agency or the employee is officially authorized to work at an alternative worksite while performing mobile work, on travel, during training or other authorized agency work.

Official Worksites for Location-Based Pay

Question: Under what circumstances does an agency need to update the official worksite of an employee who is returning to the office?

Answer: Under the locality pay rules, when an employee returns to in-person work, the agency must change the employee's official worksite to the agency worksite location if his or her official worksite had previously been documented as the location of his or her telework or remote worksite. (See [5 CFR 531.605](#).)

Question: Do agencies need to adjust the pay of their employees following the return to the office?

Answer: An employee's locality rate, special rate, or non-foreign area cost of living allowance may need to be adjusted to reflect the location of the new official worksite. This may result in no change in pay or a pay decrease or increase for employees. If an employee's pay rate is reduced, pay retention provisions under [5 U.S.C. 5363](#) and [5 CFR part 536](#) do not apply.

OPM Operating Status Announcements

Question: Can employees perform telework during an agency or OPM operating status announcement (e.g., a closure, unscheduled telework, delayed arrival, or early dismissal announcement)?

Answer: Employees may perform telework during an agency or OPM operating status announcement only with an approved written telework agreement and if authorized under the agency's telework policy.

Question: When an agency or OPM operating status announcement provides for a delayed arrival with an option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework, how does this apply to those employees not approved for telework?

Answer: Employees not approved for telework are permitted to arrive to the worksite for up to the provided number of hours in the announcement or take unscheduled leave. Employees reporting to the worksite will be provided weather and safety leave for the delayed arrival.

Question: When an agency or OPM operating status announcement provides for a delayed arrival with an option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework, how does this apply to those employees approved for telework?

Answer: Employees approved for telework are permitted to arrive to the worksite for up to the provided number of hours in the announcement. Such employees reporting to the worksite will be entitled to weather and safety leave for the delayed arrival. Alternatively, these employees may also request to perform unscheduled telework, take unscheduled leave (or other time off), or a combination of both as permitted by agency policies and procedures as permitted by agency policies and procedures.

Question: When an agency or OPM operating status announcement provides for an early departure, how does this apply to those employees not approved for telework?

Answer: Employees not approved for telework are permitted to depart the worksite early for up to the provided number of hours in the announcement and will be provided weather and safety leave for the remainder of the workday.

Question: When an agency or OPM operating status announcement provides an early departure, how does this apply to those employees working at the affected worksite who are approved for telework?

Answer: Employees approved for telework are permitted to depart the worksite early but will only be provided weather and safety leave for any time spent commuting between the worksite and home and must complete the remainder of the workday through telework, leave (or other time off), or a combination of both as permitted by agency policies and procedures.

Military and Foreign Service Spouses Working Remotely

Question: Are military spouses, working remotely, exempted from any return to the office plans?

Answer: Generally, military spouses, working remotely, are exempt from any return to the office plans.

Question: Are military spouses working remotely within 50 miles of an agency worksite (“local remote”) covered by the exemption from any return to the office plans?

Answer: No. Military spouses working remotely within 50 miles of an agency worksite are expected to return to the office unless covered by exceptions based on disability, qualifying medical condition, and/or other compelling reason. Note: An agency head retains the discretion to provide additional employee exemptions from return-to-office requirements for “other compelling reasons” which could include on case-by-case determinations for military spouses working remotely within 50 miles of an agency worksite.

Question: Who is considered a military spouse for purposes of exemptions from return to the office plans?

Answer: The term military spouse includes the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty or a spouse of disabled or deceased member of the Armed Forces. (See [5 U.S.C. 3330d\(b\)\(3\)](#) and [5 U.S.C. 2108](#).)

Question: Are spouses of U.S. Foreign Service members who are on overseas assignments, working remotely, exempted from any return to the office plans?

Answer: Yes. Spouses of U.S. Foreign Service members who are on overseas assignments, working remotely, are exempt from any return to the office plans.

Question: Are spouses of other federal employees who are working remotely exempt from any return to the office plans?

Answer: Although not directly covered by OPM’s memorandum “[Guidance on Exempting Military Spouses and Foreign Service Spouses from Agency Return to Office Plan](#)”, agencies can

make limited exceptions to allow for spouses of other federal employees to remain in a remote posture since it meets the spirit of OPM's memorandum.

Additionally, certain spouses of civilian employees of the U.S. Department of Defense and spouses of members of the Intelligence Community may be eligible for an exemption (See [5 U.S.C. 3330d](#) as amended by Section 6612 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159, December 23, 2024) and are advised to contact their HR offices for further guidance.