



SECRETARY OF WAR
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

JUN - 1 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Delegation of Authority to Approve Exemptions to Return to In-Person Work Policy

Reference: Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Initial Department of Defense Implementation Guidance, Return to In-Person Work," January 31, 2025

In the reference I set clear expectations for the Department's implementation of Return to In-Person Work (RTIPW). The policy provides exemptions for employees with an approved deferred resignation request, employees for whom telework or remote work is an approved reasonable accommodation pursuant to applicable law, employees who are military spouses, employees for whom the Component head has determined there is no suitable office space at the Agency worksite, and employees for whom applicable law or collective bargaining obligations require an exemption. I retained the authority to approve other exemptions permitting recurring telework or remote work.

To streamline the consideration of requests for exemption, I hereby delegate authority to the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness to approve RTIPW temporary exemptions, not to exceed 1 year, for employees serving in mission critical positions such that a sudden vacancy would jeopardize strategic goals and mission success, employees serving in hard-to-fill positions requiring rare or highly specialized skills, and employees with exceptional circumstances involving temporary personal hardship. I remain the approval authority for all other RTIPW exemption requests.

It is critical that we comply with the President's agenda and restore lethality and readiness to our Force. I expect approved RTIPW exemptions to remain the exception.

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