

SUPERVISOR'S TELEWORK ASSESSMENT

It is important for supervisors to consider the effect of their supervisory and communication styles on the teleworking arrangement. Some supervisors require more interaction with staff members, while others prefer to let employees pursue their work with little direct supervisory input.

Either of these styles can work in a teleworking situation, if teleworking plans and procedures are established that respond to these style issues. While there is no "one best style" of management for teleworking, it is important to include style considerations as you plan for teleworking. Your sensitivity to and patience with everyone's adjustment (*including yours!*) to a new teleworking arrangement will contribute to its success.

Answer the following questions to begin to assess your own supervisory style and expectations. Think about your answers and determine what, if any, actions you should take to ensure that your style and expectations facilitate the teleworking program for the employees in your unit.

1. In general, how much autonomy do your staff members have -- whether they are teleworking or not?

2. How important to you are changes that may occur in the teleworker's morale and interactions with co-workers?

3. What is your likely reaction if changes occur in other staff members' job performance, morale, and coordination with the teleworker? Do you expect others will want to participate? Is this a concern?

4. What effect will teleworking have on the teleworker's assigned projects and/or chances for advancement?

5. Considering the nature of your staff member's work, what is the maximum amount of time you would want the employee to telework?

6. What changes do you expect you will have to make to manage your teleworker effectively?

Adapted from Maryland's Department of Budget and Management
<http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/employees/telework/Pages/TeleworkHome.aspx>

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUPERVISOR MANAGING TELEWORKERS

- Do trust your employees.
- Do be certain that you and your employees complete any surveys, feedback forms, or other evaluations tools that is requested.
- Do use your telework agreement as a new way to optimize your managing skills.
- Do manage by results. Results are what is important, not face to face time.
- Do, when you have the opportunity, telework yourself. The experience will give you insight on the benefits and challenges of the arrangement.
- Do try to see things from a teleworker's perspective.
- Do keep your telework staff in mind when setting program goals.
- Do delegate work fairly in daily activities. Keep an eye out for teleworkers who feel isolated.
- Do encourage communication between teleworkers and non-teleworkers.
- Don't make curfew checks.
- Don't check on teleworkers every hour for status updates.
- Don't ignore your teleworkers.
- Don't set up unrealistic deadlines.
- Don't ignore problems.
- Don't neglect teleworkers.
- Don't set unreachable goals.
- Don't expect perfection-adjustments to your telework program is inevitable.
- Don't allow one unsuccessful teleworkers experience to give the program a bad reputation.
- Don't expect everyone to be successful at teleworking.