



Homeland Security

March 13, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

FROM: R. D. Alles *R D Alles*
Deputy Under Secretary for Management

SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus Workforce Guidance 05 – Expanding Use of
Telework and Maxiflex Hours

Due to the continued spread of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, OMB has issued additional guidance (attached) encouraging the maximum use of telework as operationally feasible. Across the country, we have employees who may be in high-risk groups for the virus, may be caring for a loved one who is in a high-risk group, or they are dealing with locality-based issues such as school closures and community spread of the virus.

To ensure this Department has maximum operational readiness, standard telework restrictions should be waived, including for example, the prohibition of performing child care while on telework or having been in the position for a minimum length of time. Supervisors should work with each employee on a case-by-case basis to understand the employee's situation and ensure maximum operational readiness. This may entail teleworking split shifts or non-standard hours, or mixing telework and leave within a shift, but DHS will have more success achieving its overall mission as well as employee confidence by being flexible versus being overly stringent in this particular situation.

For those individual workers who at high risk for contracting COVID-19 or complications from the virus but perform location-dependent duties or work that is not appropriate for telework, or cannot travel to work safely without increased exposure (due to a "condition that prevents the employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or performing work at an approved location"), these high-risk employees may be provided Weather and Safety Leave. Medical certification of high-risk conditions is not required. This leave is limited to high-risk employees in these circumstances only, this is not for parents dealing with school closures or community spread of the virus.

As a reminder, you may need to work with your labor relations staff to ensure any collective bargaining agreements are considered. Please also ensure your supervisors are familiar with what the high-risk factors are for COVID-19 and what the leave flexibilities are that permit staying home to care for themselves or a sick family member (see [*DHS HR Guide for Employees Pandemic and Emergency Reference*](#) and [*DHS HR Guide for Managers and Supervisors, Pandemic and Emergency Reference*](#)).

Human Resources Offices may direct questions on human resources policy and flexibilities to compensation-benefits@hq.dhs.gov. Please direct medical questions regarding novel Coronavirus to MedReviewdhshq@hq.dhs.gov.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

March 12, 2020

M-20-13

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Russell T. Vought
Acting Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Vought", written over the printed name.

SUBJECT: Updated Guidance on Telework Flexibilities in Response to Coronavirus

In light of the evolving situation concerning the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”), including emergency declarations in multiple States and the District of Columbia, the Administration wants to ensure that department and agency leaders assertively safeguard the health and safety of their workforce.

All Federal Executive Branch departments and agencies are encouraged to maximize telework flexibilities to eligible workers within those populations that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 ([CDC High Risk Complications](#)) and to CDC-identified special populations including pregnant women ([CDC Special Populations](#)). These CDC-identified populations include older adults and individuals who have chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or compromised immune systems. Agencies do not need to require certification by a medical professional, and may accept self-identification by employees that they are in one of these populations. Additionally, agencies are encouraged to consult with local public health officials and the CDC about whether to extend telework flexibilities more broadly to all eligible teleworkers in areas in which either such local officials or the CDC have determined there is community spread. Agencies are also encouraged to extend telework flexibilities more broadly to accommodate state and local responses to the outbreak, including, but not limited to, school closures.

Departments and agencies are further encouraged to approve leave for safety reasons to employees who are at higher risk as identified by the CDC and not telework-eligible. Federal Executive Branch departments and agencies may also grant weather and safety leave due to a “condition that prevents the employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or performing work at an approved location” (5 U.S.C. § 6329c(b)). Because COVID-19 prevents employees who are at higher risk from safely travelling to or performing work at an approved location, agencies may grant these employees safety leave under 5 U.S.C. § 6329c(b) at the agencies’ discretion.

In determining their telework and leave decisions, agencies should consider the mission-critical nature of their work.

For further information please consult the Office of Personnel Management’s guidance at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/covid-19/>.