



Office of State Human Resources

ROY COOPER  
Governor

BARBARA GIBSON  
Director, State Human Resources

**Memorandum**

TO: All Agency Human Resources Directors  
CC: Agency Heads and Chief Deputies  
FROM: Barbara Gibson, State Human Resources Director  
RE: Telework for Non-Mandatory Employees  
DATE: April 5, 2020

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Thank you for everything you are doing to make it possible for as many of your employees as possible to telework and to abide by Governor Cooper's order for North Carolinians to stay at home to help fight the spread of COVID-19. On March 10, following the advice of public health experts and at the directive of the Governor, we formally asked all agencies to have state employees telework to the greatest extent possible.

Today, we need you and your agency management to work together to take even more action immediately to get non-mandatory state employees out of state agency facilities (including shared or leased facilities) and working from home to the greatest extent possible. This applies to all agencies under the Governor's direction and is strongly encouraged for all other entities.

Allow non-mandatory employees (with supervisory approval, as always) who need to gather items needed to telework to schedule a time to return briefly to their usual worksite, preferably on a staggered schedule. They also may take small personal items that can be transported in a single visit. If employees need technology support, send them home now while you work on IT solutions. Likewise, how to manage State of Emergency Leave or related pay issues can be decided while the employee is at home. Work with your management to deal with concerns that may arise.

Human Resources Directors are also strongly encouraged to work with Agency Leadership to assess which job roles are mandatory to work onsite during this public health emergency in the context of the [Communicable Disease Emergency Policy](#), which was updated on March 30. This should not include employees whose work largely can be completed offsite via telework, where there is a reduced demand for programs and services, or where a reduced level of service can be provided during the emergency. We have also extended additional leave options that agencies can provide to their employees during this time, as detailed in memos provided on March 27, 31 and April 3. As a reminder, this and other HR-related resources are available on

the COVID-19 Resources page in SharePoint (<https://ncconnect.sharepoint.com/sites/COVID-19Resources>).

To protect the health and safety of our workforce – and by extension, their families and the greater community – determine if all work deemed mandatory by your agency under normal circumstances absolutely must continue during this fast-evolving pandemic; and if so, if work can be performed from home or continue at a reduced level to minimize the number of employees who must report to the worksite. If a choice can be made to reduce services temporarily and protect our employees, make that choice in the interest of public health.

As discussed in our HR weekly calls, you will want your communications to leave open the option to reassign employees from roles that are not mandatory during this public health emergency, as well any underutilized employees, to other areas of your operation or in state government where their skills and experience maybe needed during the emergency. However, your goal today should be to help management get employees out of the workplace now if at all possible. If reassignment or redeployment is feasible, you can work with your management to address that at the appropriate time. As always, OSHR will be available to help you work through details as needed.

Continue to encourage all supervisors to maintain contact with their employees and engage in the telework process fully. Above all, be compassionate and honor employees that self-identify as “high risk.” If “high risk” employees are needed at the worksite, please work with your management, and call OSHR as needed on a case-by-case basis, to determine how to manage the situation.

For those mandatory employees who must remain onsite, you can review appropriate compensation changes. As we have discussed, and as described in the memos referenced above, many options exist, to include extra pay, comp time, a combination of these, and potentially bonuses for those who are still required to report to the worksite, as your agency deems appropriate and funds allow.

When you communicate with your employees and managers about telework and leave options, please be sure you are customizing the message for your specific agency. You may need one message for management and one for employees, depending on your organization and your culture, to ensure that everyone has needed information provided in a useful context.

Thank you for your continued proactive attention to this urgent matter and your flexibility in guiding your managers as they reassess roles at your agency. Compassion must direct our actions as the rate of infections continues to rapidly escalate statewide. We must carry on critical missions within state government while also protecting our employees’ health and safety.