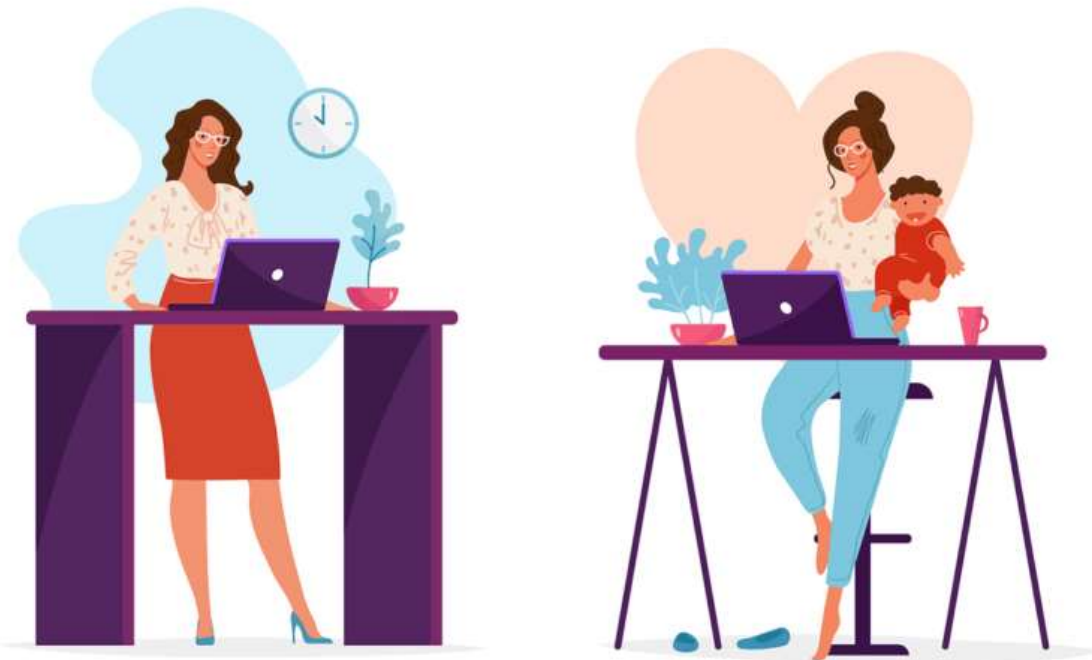# WORK FROM HOME

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH IT?

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Introduction

- Reducing face-to-face contact is an important action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

- According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), around 68 per cent of the world's total workforce, including 81 per cent of employers, are currently living in countries with recommended or required workplace closures.

- Many companies are exploring working from home (WFH) as a temporary or alternative working arrangement.

What is working from home?

- working arrangement which workers fulfil their responsibilities of their job while remaining at home, using information and communications technology (ICT).

Are all jobs suitable for WFH?

Before rolling out WFH arrangements, employers should assess :

- Identify the job tasks that can be done off-site.
- Assess mechanisms for connectivity ➡ video conferencing calls and other means.
- Assess the infrastructure, facilities and tools available for WFH ➡ Internet connectivity and reliable power supply.
- Assess the legal requirements, obligations and potential liability

Are all jobs suitable for WFH?

Before rolling out WFH arrangements, employers should first assess :

- Assess the worker's situation in terms of safety and health in domestic environment
- Consider the potential impact of the worker's living arrangements.
- Assess any health concerns or possible future concerns that could arise

Main Challenges

Difficulty Transitioning Between Roles

- the distinction between one's work life and family life deteriorates

Communication

- Communication should be quicker and much more frequent when WFH arrangements are in place.

ICT equipment and workstation set-up

- Staff may experience technical challenges, such as connectivity problems, if WFH arrangements were deployed quickly and possibly in an unorganized fashion

Main Challenges

**Technology, data protection and security**
- The use of technology for WFH can present higher risks of cyberattacks and confidentiality breaches as well as increased risk of cyberbullying

Occupational safety and health
- Ergonomic risks can be exacerbated as workers may not have access to the same ergonomically-friendly equipment as inside the company's premises

Work hours
- Employees find it difficult to exit the work role and shut work "off" in order to transition to their family role.
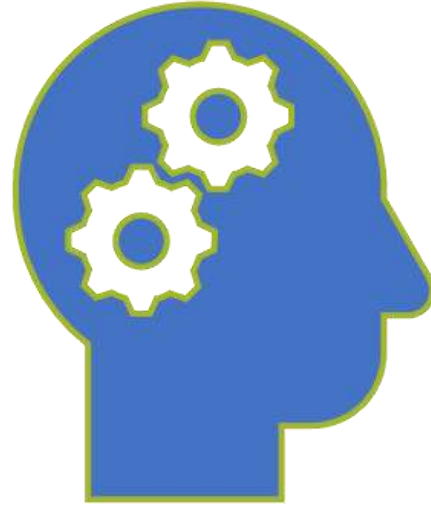
MANAGING THE CHALLENGES

Communication

Communicate often, openly and allow for flexibility when necessary.

- Designated Communication Channel
- Keep up to date registry of contact details of all workers
- Communicate with all workers regularly
- Hold periodic virtual meetings to update workers on the situation

ICT Equipment and Workstation set-up

Workers may have limited resources for WFH

Seek cooperation, ideas and commitment as a team to address and overcome challenge

Establish shared responsibilities, commitment, and mutual understanding

Build Mutual Trust and Shared Responsibilities

Build mutual trust and establish shared responsibilities through open discussions about :

- When workers will be available and be responsive;
- How they will keep in touch
- How work-life balance will be managed
- How performance and reporting will be managed
- Who workers should contact if they have any work-related issue;
- Who workers should contact if they have an emergency situation

Occupational safety and health

Promote awareness and ensure compliance

- Provide information and training on health and safety issues particularly relevant for workers in WFH arrangements (e.g. ergonomics, working in isolation, general fire and electrical safety issues);
- Provide on-going evaluation of offsite workers' workstation and offer guidance and monitoring of ergonomic conditions (however, managers will need to respect workers' home privacy);
- Offer ergonomics and safety training or resources to change work habits and improve the physical home-based work environment.

Workstation at home

Company's guidelines and requirements concerning home-office setup, equipment installation, safety and cost should be taken into consideration when designing a WFH policy.

The worker shall designate a workspace at home for placement and installation of equipment to be used in a safe condition.

The worker is responsible for following the instructions given by the company on establishing and maintaining a designated workplace in a safe, healthy, professional and secure manner.

For reimbursement of expenses incurred, such as remodeling, electrical modifications, or other improvements to the home office workspace must obtain prior approval of the company

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INNOVATIVE ERGONOMIC SOLUTIONS

Is your desk ergonomically set up?

Use our Workstation Setup Checklist to ensure that you're set up for success.
Use the diagram to see what factors we consider when setting up your desk.

1. **Monitor Height**
Set the top of screen to eye level.

2. **Monitor Distance**
The monitor should be 18-36" from your eyes. Single monitors should be positioned closer, and dual monitors should be positioned farther.

3. **Keyboard & Mouse**
Keyboard and mouse are beside one another, at the same height, and close to the front edge of the work surface. The desk or keyboard tray is adjusted to your elbow height.

4. **Desktop Arrangement**
Frequently used items are positioned within an arm's reach of your seated position.

5. **Shoulders**
Shoulders are low and back. No reaching forward. Armrests are adjusted to your elbow height (elbows bent to 90 degrees).

6. **Backrest**
Backrest is adjusted to provide lumbar support in the lower back. Backrest angle is adjusted between 90 - 110 degrees.

7. **Knees**
Knees are bent at 90-120 degrees. There is 2-3" of space behind the knee and the front edge of the seat.

8. **Feet**
Feet are fully supported either on the floor or on a footrest.

9. **Break**
You have taken a microbreak in the last 30 minutes.

10. **Postural Break**
You have taken a short walk around your work area within the last hour.

Ergonomic Tips for Proper Laptop Use

REMEMBER
TAKE BREAKS & STRETCH REGULARLY

0° - 30°

ELBOWS BENT TO 90°

TIPS FOR LAPTOP USE ON THE GO
✓ Bring an external mouse and keyboard to use when possible.
✓ Avoid prolonged use.

1. Elevate laptop with an adjustable laptop stand, or stack of books, so top of screen is at eye level. Position laptop screen approximately arms length away.

2. Use an external keyboard and mouse and position them at elbow height on the same surface.

3. Adjust keyboard angle to promote straight wrist postures.

4. Maintain relaxed shoulders; with elbows positioned below the shoulder joint.

5. Position the chair's lumbar support in the small of back.

6. Adjust seat height so knee angle is approximately 90°.

7. Ensure there is sufficient leg room under the work surface.

8. Place feet flat on the floor or on a foot rest.

Health and Mental Well-Being

Remember : Physical distancing does not require social isolation!

Regularly contacting workers to make sure they feel supported and being available

Creating opportunities for team communications by using online tools or apps to establish teamwide chat groups

Providing workers with appropriate control and flexibility over how they do their work;

Offering information and practical tools to support positive mental health, including access to the employee assistance program;

Appropriately responding to signs of workers' distress and providing workers with a point of contact to discuss their concerns;

Raising awareness of workers' responsibility to take care of their own physical and mental wellbeing during WFH

Work-Life Balance

Set clear expectations of work hours and encourage and empower workers to set boundaries on his or her work schedule;

Promote a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance, including regular breaks and rest, exercise and fresh air;

Provide mental well-being support to workers who experience work-life conflict;

Work-Life Balance

Spatial Boundaries

- Remote workers who work only in a home office are much better able to transition between their work and family roles than those who work in the dining room or bedroom.

Temporal Boundaries

- it is commonly advised that remote workers follow the hours of their typical workday (i.e. 9:00 – 5:00) and stop working and transition to family and personal time at the end of their workday.

Social Boudaries

- Able to devote specific time, energy and resources to individuals in one's work and family roles with minimal overlap

Data protection and security

Protect cybersecurity and privacy

- Always maintain Company Data Security
- Use a robust information technology system
- Use proper software installed → anti-virus protection, secured virtual private networks or firewalls against cyber threats
- Always aware of the company data protection policy
- Workers have the required skill to use the ICT in accordance with company policy.

Conclusion

Communicate often and openly

Know the limitations and adjust expectations, responsibilities and tasks accordingly

Build Mutual Trust and Shared Responsibilities

Designate a workspace at home for placement and installation of equipment to be used in a safe condition

Set spatial, temporal and social boundaries

Promote a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance

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THANK YOU