

Flexible Work Location Guide

A companion to Interior Health's Flexible Work Location policy for
employees and managers



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Flexible Work Location Guide

Promoting Flexibility at Work

The intent of our Flexible Work Location policy is to foster an environment where eligible employees can safely carry out their assigned duties and responsibilities away from their designated IH worksite, while also having influence over their work-life balance.

This guide summarizes key aspects of the Flexible Work Location policy and contains information and resources to support both managers and employees, including processes, tips, and cultural values that help make flexible work location arrangements successful. There is no intention to override or change any Interior Health (IH) policies; in the case of a conflict, the IH policy will prevail.

Why offer flexible work location options?

The IH Flexible Work Location policy recognizes that offering flexibility in where and how people work supports a more inclusive, engaged, and healthy workforce, and makes IH a more accessible destination where people want to join, grow, and stay to facilitate safe, high-quality service, and compassionate care. To ensure a sustainable adoption of this new way of working, IH has taken a thoughtful and intentional approach to flexible work locations by continually assessing the need for adjustments to existing policies and processes, and to experiment with new approaches on how we work together. As new virtual tools are introduced, new opportunities are presented to enable some employees to work away from traditional department workplaces. Work may be performed at different IH locations, or from a home office location.

Flexible work locations can improve employee work-life balance, reduce workplace stress and health-related symptoms, reduce absenteeism, and increase job satisfaction. The ability to consider flexible work locations may also support wider recruitment options, retention of staff who may consider moving, support operational efficiencies, and improve morale, collaboration, and overall well-being of staff.

Trust and accountability

Our IH values of Compassion, Quality, Safety, and Integrity are reinforced by the trust managers and employees share in performing to their utmost ability and working together productively and efficiently to meet IH work expectations. The foundation of flexible work location options is based on trusting relationships. Managers need to trust that employees will do the work they need to do, when and where they can best do it. Team members

need to trust each other, continuing to meet their manager and team's expectations. Employees need to trust that their managers will continue to recognize their achievements, provide coaching and feedback, communicate business strategies, and treat all team members with the same respect and consideration.

Flexible Work Principles

Who is eligible?

The policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual, and term-specific IH employees. However, not all positions are suited for these agreements and not all alternative locations are appropriate as flexible work locations. Managers are responsible to review operational requirements, the nature of work and services provided, as well as the performance of employees to identify the best work location option. Additionally, flexible work locations must meet specific health, safety, security, and connectivity requirements to be appropriate workspaces.

Where can I work?

Employees who are covered by a Collective Agreement may request a flexible work location arrangement within the IH region. IH may employ non-contract individuals who reside within the boundaries of British Columbia (B.C.) but outside of the IH region after the completion of an assessment to ensure that all job functions are able to be completed remotely and the employee is able to travel, where required. There may be some circumstances where IH may employ non-contract individuals who temporarily reside out-of-province in order to provide flexibility while planning their relocation to B.C.

Most flexible work locations will be requested for an employee's home office. There may be times where an employee has the option to work in ad hoc locations, such as hotels and coffee shops; however, these are not recognized as official flexible work locations but may be used temporarily if an employee is in transit for work purposes. Please be aware of [privacy and security](#) considerations if working from these ad hoc locations.

Employees who have a flexible work location arrangement in place are typically expected to cover the cost of travel between their flexible work location and designated IH worksite. If an employee resides in a community that is beyond a reasonable commuting distance to their designated worksite within the IH region (typically greater than a 2-hour drive), they must discuss any required travel with their manager to ensure it is relevant to the employee's roles and responsibilities.

Non-contract employees who reside within the boundaries of B.C., but outside the IH region, may be required to travel at the request of the employer from their flexible work location (e.g. home) to an IH site or alternate location (e.g. ministry office, union

headquarters, etc.) for work purposes. To support requests that are relevant to the employee's roles and responsibilities, pre-approved travel allocations per calendar year may be applied:

- Executive level (Range 13 and above): up to 6 instances
- Senior level (Range 10-12): up to 5 instances
- Managers and Leads (Range 8-9): up to 4 instances
- Professional and Technical (Range 5-7): up to 3 instances
- Administrative Support (Range 2-4): up to 2 instances
- Additional requests may be granted at the discretion of the portfolio-specific Vice President

All other travel is covered under the [Travel & Expense Policy](#) and/or relevant collective agreement.

What Options are Available?

There are currently two available options supported by the flexible work location policy: hybrid flexible/in-office and fully flexible.

Hybrid flexible/in-office

A hybrid flexible/in-office work location arrangement allows employees to work at their designated IH worksite with a **shared assigned workstation** and work at a different location, such as their home. Hybrid flexible/in-office work location arrangements typically have set schedules for which days an employee works in the office vs. their flexible work location. For example, an employee in a hybrid flexible/in-office model may work Monday to Wednesday at their designated IH worksite and Thursday to Friday at home. In a hybrid flexible/in-office model, workspaces may be shared with another employee who uses the office workstation on the alternate days.

Fully flexible

Fully flexible arrangements are when an employee works from their flexible work location for the majority of the time and **does not have an assigned workstation** within an IH facility. Fully flexible does not mean that an employee never comes to an IH office, but more likely, they have an unpredictable schedule so may come in different days throughout the week or be away from the office for longer periods of time. These employees will have access to Flex Workstations, meeting rooms, or touch down spaces, which can be booked on demand or on a first come, first served basis when they require office access.

Think about the benefits...	Also consider...
<p>Employees may be more productive due to fewer disruptions.</p> <p>Increased job satisfaction.</p> <p>Shorter commuting times.</p> <p>Increased connections to decentralized teams.</p> <p>It gives employees a chance to demonstrate responsibility and self-management capabilities.</p> <p>Employees can organize their work day around their personal peak productivity periods and core operational hours while still accommodating personal and family needs.</p>	<p>Should it begin on a trial basis?</p> <p>Does the employee have access to the appropriate technology and resources?</p> <p>How would you address loss of productivity due to technology failures and timelines to resolve (e.g. time to ship a replacement device if the employee is outside of the IH region)?</p> <p>What impact will a flexible work location option have on other team members?</p> <p>How will productivity be monitored?</p> <p>Is there space available at another IH location?</p> <p>What communication strategies and expectations should be agreed upon in advance?</p> <p>Are there clear expectations on the flexible work location and the days it will occur?</p> <p>Will the employee be available to come into the office if necessary?</p>

Requesting a Flexible Work Location

Determining if a flexible work arrangement is appropriate

Flexible work location arrangements should be beneficial to both the position and the employee. It may be a good option for positions that:

- Consist of work that can be done away from the designated IH worksite (e.g. analysis, writing, preparing reports, editing)
- Do not rely on frequent face-to-face communication
- Have a high level of autonomy and work is more independent
- Do not require extensive on-site equipment (including technology) or complex software programs
- Benefit from uninterrupted work time and a quieter workspace

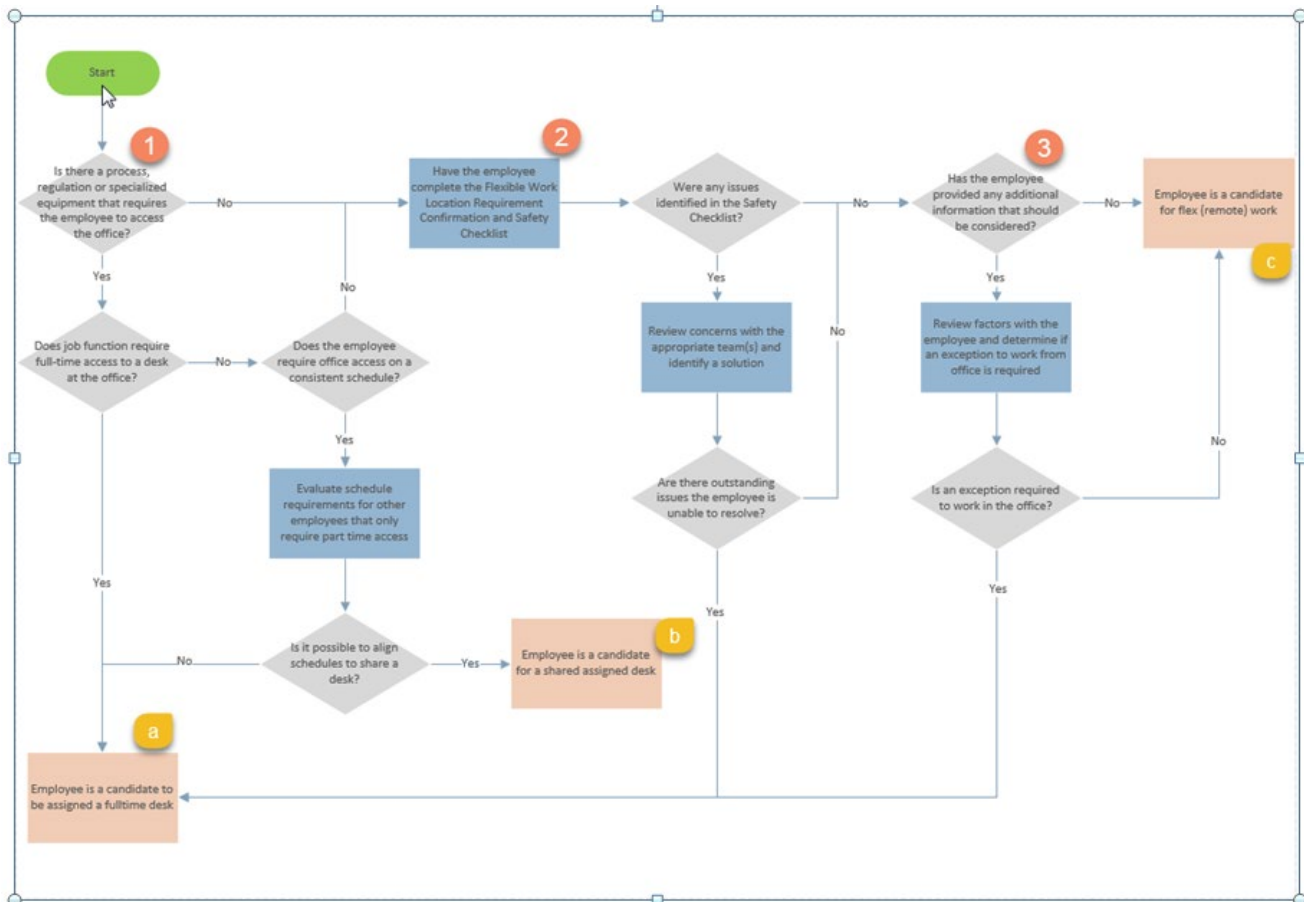
There are many characteristics of an employee who will work effectively at a flexible work location. Some examples may include:

- Proven capability reflected in past performance reviews, where available

- Self-motivated, highly engaged, responsible and comfortable setting deadlines and priorities
- Able to work independently with minimal supervision
- Effective communicator who takes initiative
- Adaptable to changing routines and environments
- History of reliable and responsible completion of work duties
- Good time management skills
- Established trust with manager and the team

Employees should have a conversation with their manager before submitting a formal request. Once a request is received, the manager will evaluate the request using the Employee Work Location Assessment tool below. The assessment is intended to ensure transparency, establish consistent considerations for flexible work location approvals, and guide decision making

Figure 1. Employee Work Location Assessment



Reference

1. Process Regulation nor specialized equipment does not include basic computer packages (laptop, monitors, phones, headsets). An example may be a cheque printer, access to physical records, or non-standard equipment.
2. [Flexible Work Location Requirement Confirmation and Safety Checklist](#)
3. Considerations are to be given for individual circumstance. Some examples may include adequate/safe home workspace, privacy concerns or medical reasons.
 - a. Assigned Full-time Desk: Employee works 100% of time in office and requires an assigned desk
 - b. Assigned Shared Desk: Two or more employees work on a rotation and will required an assigned desk to share.
 - c. Flex work: Employee will work in office as needed and can book a flex desk for the time in the office.

How to request a flexible work location

1. Contact your manager to discuss the possibility of a Flexible Work Location arrangement and review the [Flexible Work Location Policy \(AU-1300\)](#).
2. The manager will review and discuss the Flexible Work Location request and determine eligibility, employee requirements, availability of technology, and job requirements.
3. If the employee is requesting a temporary flexible work location outside of BC, the manager must submit a special request to the portfolio-specific Vice President (VP) for their review and endorsement. Once approved by the VP, they must submit the recommendation for final approval to the VP, Human Resources & Professional Practice.
4. If Managers have any questions prior to proceeding with the Flexible Work Location request, discuss with your assigned Employee Relations Advisor.
5. If a Flexible Work Location arrangement is deemed appropriate, an employee must submit a *Flexible Work Location Request* via iSite – under 'Change my Information'. This request includes both the [Safety at Home Checklist](#) and the [Flexible Work Location Technology Agreement Form](#).
6. Once received, the manager will approve or decline the *Flexible Work Location Request* in e-Staffing.
7. The employee will receive an email with the outcome of the decision. If approved, the employee can begin remote work as discussed with their manager.

**Note – the Flexible Work Location Request must be submitted and approved BEFORE the employee begins remote work.*

Discussing the outcome of a flexible work location assessment

Once a flexible work location request has been discussed and the manager has completed the assessment, the manager will discuss the final decision with the employee. If a request is not approved, a manager is expected to offer the employee a detailed rationale

as to why their request was not approved. If possible, the employee and manager can work together to discuss alternative options that may be available to the employee.

Test it out!

Employees and/or managers that are new to working or managing a flexible work location should consider approving the request on a trial basis, up to 6 months. Once the trial period has ended, the manager and employee can discuss whether to continue the arrangement or to pursue an alternative solution that is more suitable.

Making changes to a flexible work location arrangement

Once a flexible work location arrangement is in place, the employee and manager must discuss any future changes required. Any request to change the arrangement should include reasonable notice of at least 4 weeks' minimum for both the employee and manager.

When a change to the arrangement is approved (e.g. an employee has moved and their physical location has changed), the manager should ensure a new *Flexible Work Location Request* is completed for proper record keeping and tracking purposes.

If an employee participating in a flexible work location arrangement changes roles, teams and/or departments, the existing arrangement is non-transferable. Flexible work location arrangements are between the employee and manager, and the employee will need to reapply for approval if their circumstances change.

Terminating a flexible work location arrangement

Prior to terminating a flexible work location arrangement, the employee and manager should discuss the rationale for ending the arrangement as well as a timeline to make the necessary changes.

There may be times, at the manager's sole discretion, when participating employees are required to adjust or terminate their flexible work location arrangement to meet operational needs. Managers will review any terminations to a flexible work location arrangement on a case-by-case basis and will determine an appropriate timeline for a return to office, in consultation with the employee. Factors to consider when determining appropriate timelines include, but are not limited to: availability of a dedicated workstation, space utilization, ability to commute, availability of childcare, relocation requirements, etc.

An employee can request to terminate the flexible work location arrangement for any reason by providing their manager with appropriate notice. Notice of termination of the flexible work location arrangement by the manager or employee must be in writing and can take the form of a hard-copy letter or an email. The manager is responsible for reviewing space availability at the employee's designated IH worksite and may need to

discuss these changes with their leader. Upon completion of the notice period, the employee will be required to attend work at their designated IH worksite. If the employee was previously located outside B.C., it is the manager's responsibility to inform payroll to make any necessary changes to the worker's compensation coverage for that employee.

Abuse of the flexible work location policy, or failure by an employee to comply with the policy, may result in the flexible work location arrangement ending immediately.

Working Safely and Effectively in a Flexible Work Location

Once a flexible work location has been approved, there are specific requirements that need to be in place to ensure the employee has a safe and effective work environment. Managers or supervisors should set time aside to talk with employees about the types of risks outlined in the '[Safety at Home Checklist](#)' and ensure employees take any steps necessary to bring their flexible work location in line with the safety requirements.

Health and safety

WorkSafeBC states that a workplace refers to any place where a worker is or is likely to be engaged in any work and includes any vessel, vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in work. A flexible work location is considered a workplace of the employee under the [Workers Compensation Act](#). When a flexible work location is within an employee's home, the area dedicated to work, such as an office, is considered the flexible work location, not the entire home.

All IH policies and procedures continue to apply to employees working in flexible work locations.

Setting up a flexible workspace

Ergonomics

Employees participating in a flexible work location arrangement are often working in non-traditional workspaces, which makes it easy to fall into poor ergonomic practices. For example, if you are working on a laptop, you may experience neck and shoulder pain due to poor posture. When in a flexible work location arrangement, employees should continue utilizing proper workspace ergonomic practices to decrease chances of experiencing discomfort and/or strain as a result of work-related tasks. These practices will also help employees prevent musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs). Completing the [Office Ergonomics Independent Learning Package \(ILP\)](#) in combination with the '[Safety at Home Checklist](#)' will support employees to have a safe work environment.

Employees who are working from their flexible work location more than 50% of their scheduled work hours are eligible for a one-time stipend up to \$500 to be used towards equipment that enables an ergonomic set up. Employees must confirm eligibility with their

manager and provide proof of purchase for reimbursement. Receipts can be held for up to one year and employees can make one submission for all equipment purchased with manager approval. After 12 months, the purchased equipment will become the property of the employee; however, if an employee leaves IH within 12 months, the employee must repay the amount of ergonomic stipend on a pro-rated basis.

For more information on MSIs and setting up your workstation, refer to the [Flexible Work Location – Office Ergonomics](#).

Temperature

When working from home, ensure that your workspace can be maintained at a comfortable temperature. If you are unable to maintain your home at a comfortable temperature, take appropriate measures to ensure health and safety, including wearing appropriate clothing, moving to a cooler/warmer area, using approved air conditioners/heaters, etc. If it is not possible to maintain a comfortable temperature in your flexible work location, it may be necessary for you to work at your assigned office until comfortable temperatures can be attained.

Psychological health and safety

In addition to maintaining employees' physical health and safety, it is very important to maintain your mental health when working remotely. Psychological Health & Safety is about safeguarding the psychological health of employees. A psychologically safe workplace is defined as a workplace that promotes psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health. Interior Health recognizes that a variety of personal, behavioral, or health factors may affect your experience in the workplace. To help, the [Employee Psychological Health and Wellness](#) resources provide an assortment of tools and programs that you and your immediate family can access whenever needed. You are encouraged to seek guidance and counselling before your relationships, health, or work performance is negatively impacted.

Workplace injuries and reporting

If a work-related injury occurs during the course of work at a flexible work location, the employee must follow IH's injury and incident reporting procedures outlined below, just as they would do at an IH worksite.

If you suffer an injury, incident/near miss, or exposure occurs during business work time, follow the IH [Incident Reporting Process](#)

- Seek first aid or medical attention as required
- Report any injury/incident, report only, or exposure to your manager/supervisor as soon as possible
- Report any injury/incident, report only, or exposure to the Workplace Health Contact Centre (WHCC) at 1.866.922.9464 as soon as able

- Participate in the investigation to assist with the identification of hazards/risks, contributing factors, and corrective actions as required

IMIT equipment and tools

Employees who work at their flexible work location more than 50% of their scheduled work hours will be provided the core equipment required for their job at their flexible work location. Employees must review the [Flexible Work Location Technology Agreement](#) to determine the appropriate equipment for their particular IT requirements, which may include:

- Laptop
- Docking station
- Monitor (depending on job requirements)
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Headset
- IH Anywhere for a personal computers

There are specific network considerations for the flexible work location to optimize performance such as:

- Broadband Internet with a minimum of 50Mbps download and 10Mbps upload
- A wired network connection or suitable Wi-Fi, recommended to be no further than 5 meters from laptop
- Wi-Fi secured and utilizing WPA2 encryption with complex pre-shared key

While wireless connectivity can be used for convenience, it is recommended that employees use a wired network connection on their device to provide the best possible experience with limited technical difficulties. Should your wireless connection not perform adequately, practical steps include contacting your Internet Service Provider to determine if your Wi-Fi equipment is performing properly or possibly requires updates. An Internet Service Provider or qualified contractor may be able to assist with updating equipment, installation of new data cabling or similar solutions. IH will not provide any subsidy to have this work performed. A wired connection is required if Wi-Fi does not perform adequately after attempting improvements.

IH is not responsible for any costs incurred by the employee for their network connectivity, including home internet, data, and/or personal cell phone costs.

Although recommendations on internet speeds are provided above, certain roles may still require additional performance or may not be suited to remote work. In this case, it is the expectation that the employee discusses with their manager to come to an agreed upon requirement for working remotely. Digital Health technicians may make recommendations

to increase home internet speed due to other in-home factors like how many users in the home, media streaming use by family members, gaming by family members, etc. Digital Health technicians may help but are not responsible for troubleshooting performance related issues in the home.

Hardware and software support

If you experience hardware or software problems you should **contact the IHA Service Desk at 1-855-242-1300**. The Service Desk will record your issue and attempt a remote fix, if possible.

Hardware support for these devices will be done on-site within an IH facility. Although remote support will be attempted, employees may need to go on site to receive technical support at the request of an IMIT Technician. For employees that are outside the IH region, if your computer cannot be repaired remotely, a replacement computer will be sent to you. A shipping label will be provided, with the replacement computer, to return the broken computer for repair. The replacement computer will become your new device and your original computer **will not** be returned. Please note that IH will attempt to send you a replacement computer as soon as possible, but please expect a few days that you will be without a functioning computer.

As such, managers and employees should consider establishing a contingency plan in the event of an extended equipment or technology failure such as any prolonged home network connectivity issues, power outages or equipment failures.

Privacy and security

All employees are responsible for taking reasonable precautions to secure and protect the physical and digital information assets of Interior Health; this includes when in transit and when working from home. Workplace requirements for confidentiality of information extend to the flexible work location and any other location at which Interior Health work is being performed.

Employees must take appropriate steps to protect the Confidential Information of Interior Health, employees, and patients/clients/residents. A confidential space must be created to prevent unintended disclosure of Confidential Information to others.

Interior Health [Acceptable Use Policies](#) apply to all IH computers and notebooks regardless of where they are used and to all personal computers when they are being used in the performance of work for Interior Health. If any media containing data (e.g. hard drive/CD/DVD/USB key etc.) is lost or stolen, a [Report Lost/Missing or Stolen Hardware form](#) must be completed and the employee's manager must be notified immediately. Refer to [AR0450 – Managing Privacy & Security Breaches / Violations policy](#) for additional guidance.

Employees must not use an IP-forwarding or a proxy service that re-directs their home network traffic outside Canada (e.g. Unblock-Us, Private Internet Access (PIA)).

Employees using their personal computers to access IH resources should consider the following [Tip Guide](#) from the Province of BC for protecting their device.

Printing

IH does not currently support printing at flexible work locations. Anyone participating in a flexible work location arrangement should plan to print at an IH location when needed.

Administrative Procedures

Check-ins and working alone

When employees work at a flexible work location they are often working alone. Working alone in some circumstances can increase the employees' health and safety risk. IH recommends that all employees confirm their safety on a daily basis while working offsite (e.g. a daily email, IM to their manager).

Refer to the '*Safety at Home Checklist*', [Violence Prevention Policy](#), and [Working Alone or in Isolation Policy](#) for more information.

Office location

All IH employees have a designated worksite. Employees should reference their designated IH worksite in their email signature and other printed material and should not share their home address or personal phone number. In-person meetings may not take place at an employee's personal residence.

File storage

All IH files should be maintained on IH's work premise if possible. Employees will need to take the proper precautions to ensure confidentiality and security of information if taking information outside an IH facility. When the work is completed, files should be returned to the appropriate IH site.

Supplies

Employees with a flexible work location arrangement should try to organize job responsibilities into tasks they can complete remotely and tasks that must be attended to at an IH facility. Basic supplies (e.g. notebook, pens etc.) that an employee would utilize during their regular work will be supplied at their designated IH worksite. Supplies paid for by IH remain the property of IH. If an employee works fully remote, they will be responsible for covering the cost of their own office supplies.

Other considerations

Childcare

Flexible work location arrangements may be used to address ad hoc issues such as a sick child; however, they are not an appropriate substitute for ongoing care for a child, elder or other dependents. Employees participating in flexible work location arrangements will need to ensure they are able to meet work expectations.

Tax implications

It is the employee's responsibility to seek independent financial or other advice pertaining to potential tax implications arising from or related to flexible work location arrangements.

Making it Work for You and your Team

When an employee, or multiple members of a team, are working from flexible work locations, everyone needs to consider their role, new approaches to building relationships, managing interactions, facilitating collaboration, and providing feedback so the team can communicate and work effectively. This may take some time to establish and get used to. Here are a few tips to help everyone adapt to the new ways of working together.

Effective communication

Various types of communication have their own benefits, and multiple methods may be necessary to achieve results. Individual personalities, the organizational work structure, work processes, and the type of work will drive the interaction and collaboration needs of teams. Employees and managers should ask team members what works best for them and consider the length of typical interactions, the frequency, and the time frame/urgency of interactions.

When planning for meetings, decide whether the meeting should be in-person or conducted virtually (e.g. using video conferencing or teleconferencing). Consider the following:

- What is the desired outcome of the meeting?
- Will it be effective with both face-to-face and virtual participation?
- Is it critical for people to attend in-person?
- Do you need to share information or documents before or during the meeting?

The right tools

Selecting the right tool or forum is essential for enabling effective communication. Always consider:

- Matching the speed and efficiency of the tool to the communication needs (e.g. Microsoft Teams chat to address quick concerns or questions, or a make a phone call for longer conversations)
- Clearly marking messages as urgent when using emails or text messages
- The communication preferences of the person you are contacting – do they prefer chat or email?

Virtual meetings are a core method of team interaction when some or all employees are working in flexible work locations. To ensure a successful outcome, utilize well-understood procedures and protocols to govern these types of meetings:

- Be clear in the meeting’s purpose, agenda and process for capturing minutes or notes
- Agree to meetings norms in advance, such as when videos are required
- The host knows and leverages facilitation options, as appropriate (e.g. chat, whiteboards, etc.)
- Participants know and follow proper meeting procedures
- Time is used effectively
- Desired outcomes are achieved

Additional planning and consideration is required when virtual meetings include a mix of individuals in the same room and online. The meeting host should be clear on how all participants will be engaged to ensure meeting effectiveness and engagement from everyone.

Employee Tips

Flexible work locations can work well for some employees and they may even find they are more productive; however, working away from others can also be isolating, especially when problems or crises arise. It may be tempting to work independently and do things alone, but employees should remember they always have support available.

Employees working in flexible work location arrangements need to consider their role within the team, how to approach building relationships, facilitating collaboration, and providing feedback so they can communicate and collaborate effectively with their team.

Establishing trust with leaders

Trust is fundamental to the success of a flexible work location arrangement, especially trust with leaders. When working from a flexible work location, employees should build a solid foundation of trust by:

- Working with leaders to set clear goals, outline project responsibilities and clarify expectations
- Communicating proactively and providing frequent updates on progress
- Following through on commitments
- Meeting goals and expectations in a timely, professional manner

- Asking for feedback on deliverables and progress, being clear on how progress will be measured

Remain an active team member

Teams must be able to rely on one another to move work forward and achieve team goals relying on relationship and collaboration. Consider the following:

- Be an active contributor in meetings and on team projects
- Remain reliable and consistent by meeting all team commitments and deadlines
- Be aware of responsibilities and workload to maintain your credibility and avoid transferring work to others
- Schedule regular meetings to check in or to discuss projects
- Make use of video conferencing during 1 on 1 meetings with colleagues
- Be proactive and regularly make time for collaboration and idea-sharing
- Review calendar visibility options so to share priorities for the week and enable efficient meeting scheduling
- Actively cultivate connections with team members and the larger organizational community to stay visible and engaged

Planning and scheduling work

A key element to performing well when working from a flexible work location is meticulous planning and scheduling of work process. Successfully managing a complex work process will go a long way toward consistent performance and career advancement. Effective planning and scheduling involves:

- Establishing a management work schedule
- Using a 'to-do' list to track important tasks and action items
- Using a calendar to schedule and avoid over-committing
- Incorporating time for upcoming vacations or schedule changes
- Sharing achievements and progress updates

Leader Tips

The transition to a flexible work location arrangement can lead to confusion on expectations and impact team dynamics if not properly managed and supported. Leaders should consider the following tips and strategies to create a positive experience for the whole team.

Building trust with the Team

Integrity builds trust and trust is the essential element for effective teams. Trust means freeing people to do their jobs and make decisions and assures the team that members can rely on each other to achieve goals, meet deadlines, and produce results.

- Cultivate open and transparent communication to encourage team members to reciprocate

- Proactively discuss flexible work location options and the potential impacts with the team
- Refer to the eligibility criteria in the policy when evaluating requests for a flexible work location arrangement
- Remain accountable to assess operational requirements, the nature of the work to be performed, and to determine if requests are appropriate
- Ensure any flexible work location arrangement makes sense for the department and is a good match for the employee
- Ensure the employee remains connected, engaged, and participates in programs and/or functions that encourage teamwork

Stay connected

Teams that successfully have employees working in flexible work locations make it a priority to stay connected.

- Set up check-ins with whole team to discuss work priorities and build team rapport
- Make time for 1 to 1 connections that focus on social connections and mental health support
- Set expectations on how each meeting or communication will be managed, video conference vs. teleconference vs. instant messages
- Encourage the use of video conference regularly, even if it's just for the first 5 minutes of a meeting
- Clearly identify how to access workspaces in IH facilities for the employee, as needed
- Encourage all teams to experiment and learn the various capabilities of collaboration tools

Goal-setting and expectations

Employees working in flexible work locations may need additional support delivering to expectations, while adapting to working more independently. Leaders may need to spend more time up front managing teams to get work going to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and expectations. A few guidelines can help you get started:

- Be concise about the work task, breaking it down into smaller goals and priorities for each team member
- Clarify the timeline for completion and any review processes required to meet deadlines
- Write it down – consistently taking meeting minutes and sharing them via email will ensure everyone is clear on actions, decisions and deadlines
- Be explicit on how questions should be submitted and how quickly team members can expect a response
- Take time to establish goals for the team as a whole and for individual team members that can align to their individual performance plans

- Recognize success, even small wins, as a team and by individuals. Tools such as [RAARs](#) (Random Acts of Appreciation and Recognition) build engagement, encourage continued dedication to work, and show the value of everyone's contribution!

Resources

[Breach Report](#)

[Flexible Work Location – Office Ergonomics](#)

[Flexible Work Location – Psychological Health and Safety](#)

[Incident Reporting Process](#)

[Office Ergonomics – Independent Learning Package](#)

[Office Ergonomics: Laptop and Tablet Considerations](#)

[Ergonomic Stipend Program: Approval/Employee Acceptance Form](#)

[Flexible Work Location Technology Agreement](#)