DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC

20 MAR 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR AFCAT

FROM: AF/A1
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

SUBJECT: Telework Flexibilities in Response to COVID-19

References: (a) 5 U.S.C. § 6504(d)(2)
(b) Office of Management and Budget Memorandum, Updated Guidance on Telework Flexibilities in Response to Coronavirus, dated March 12, 2020.
(c) Office of Management and Budget Memorandum, Updated Guidance for the National Capital Region on Telework Flexibilities in Response to Coronavirus, dated March 15, 2020
(d) Department of Defense Memorandum, Updated Civilian Personnel Guidance in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019, DCPAS Message 2020024

Purpose. Consistent with Office of Management and Budgets telework guidance released on 12 March 2020 and it's follow up guidance for the National Capital Region on 15 March 2020, leaders in Federal agencies should be taking similar steps in areas across the country that are experiencing community spread of the coronavirus that have resulted in school closures, etc.

Policy. If community spread of the coronavirus has been determined based on consultation with local public health officials and CDC, or as mission and threat dictate, commanders should take steps to:

1. Maximize telework flexibilities to all current telework eligible employees, consistent with operational and mission requirements.
2. Use all existing authorities to offer telework to additional employees, to the extent their work could be telework enabled.
3. If employees are not eligible for telework, local commanders (G-series orders) have the discretion to offer weather and safety leave, including for employees who may not have been considered "at higher risk" under OMB M-20-13 (see below).
4. An operational plan should be developed that maximizes resources and functional areas to most safely and efficiently deliver mission-critical functions and other Government services (including but not limited to staggered work schedules and other operational mitigation measures).

Maximizing Telework. OPM has recommended "maximizing telework." Consistent with mission requirements, commanders should maximize the use of telework for the entire civilian force where feasible and practicable :

1. **Telework employees**. All telework employees should be placed on telework consistent with mission demands. Telework should be broadly extended to all telework eligible employees, to include reevaluation of telework eligible positions. While telework *eligible* employees are highly encouraged to enter into an agreement, it cannot be mandated. As such, telework eligible employees *who do not have /do not want to enter into an agreement* must continue to report to work unless it is determined that there is a condition that prevents the employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or performing work at an approved location. In this situation, Safety and Weather leave can be approved by the installation commander on a case-by case basis (as outlined in the OPM Government Wide Dismissal and Closure Procedures https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/dcdismissal.pdf.) See OPM Memorandum dated March 7, 2020, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Additional Guidance https://www.chcoc.gov/content/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-additional-guidance. Situations include:

    a. They are in a high risk group as defined by the CDC Special Populations including pregnant women, older adults and individuals who have chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or compromised immune systems. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html

    b. There is another situation that prevents the individual from safely travelling to or performing their work on-site (e.g., local spread of virus; localized worksite had incident and is potentially contaminated).

2. **Non-telework employees**. Non-telework eligible employees must continue to report to work unless they are in a high risk group or there is a situation that prevents the individual from safely travelling to or performing their work on-site (see above). As with telework eligible who have not signed an agreement, these individuals will be placed on Safety and Weather leave as authorized / appropriate.

Mandating Telework. In extraordinary situations, DoD federal employees can be mandated to telework regardless of their telework eligibility or status. Commanders should not mandate telework without first consulting with their local SJA. Telework can be mandated under the following situations:

1. Law, or Presidential directive mandating federal workforce telework
2. DoD or Air Force emergency / continuity plans: The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 provides for the incorporation of telework into the continuity of operations plan (COOP) of the agency. Per 5 U.S.C. 6504(d)(2), Agency COOP plans supersede telework policy. Specifically, an employee can be mandated to telework when the DoD or Service COOP plan mandate telework. For the Air Force, this is when the Air Force or a respective location has implemented COOP level 3.
3. A pandemic has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the DoD Component issues an evacuation order to an alternative worksite (e.g. home). Note: The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a pandemic. Local commanders (normally

installation commanders) who have directed an alternate worksite can mandate telework for all civilian employees under 5 CFR 550.409.

Employees that are telework eligible (regardless of having entered into a telework agreement) will be required to telework IAW their standard or modified work schedules.

As appropriate, Commanders may authorize any combination of weather and safety leave / telework for non-telework eligible individuals based upon mission requirements and the availability of work (e.g., individual has insufficient work as normally they work on classified systems; requires access to equipment on site etc.). If telework is mandated, government furnished computers should be provided to the employee.

Mission Critical Employees. At all times, employees designated as mission-critical ***may*** be required to work either onsite or via telework consistent with mission requirements in the event of an emergency or pandemic.

This policy memo is intended to provide overarching direction IAW established guidance from OMB, OPM and DoD with respect to the implementation of telework. It is not intended to address every aspect of telework guidance. Please refer to DoDI1035.01_AFI36-816 on routine telework guidance as well as subsequent guidance on telework flexibilities specific to COVID-19 issued by the above organizations at https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/emergencyPreparedness, to include the most recent DCPAS guidance Reference C - Q&As for Civilian Personnel Novel Coronavirus, 15 Mar 2020 also located at that site.

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