

WORKING FROM HOME (COVID FOCUS) POLICY

TT-FOA-12

Standard Operating Policy – Finance,
Operations & Administration

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1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1.2. Approvals

The signatures below confirm that the reviewers agree with the content of the document and that this document is approved for implementation within Tshiamiso Trust.

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Dr May Hermanus	Chairman of the Board		
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Daniel Kotton	Chief Executive Officer	<i>Daniel Kotton</i>	05/10/2021

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2. POLICY SCOPE

2.1. What is Working from Home?

Working From Home (WFM) is a working arrangement in which a worker fulfils the essential responsibilities of his/her job while remaining at home, using information and communications technology (ICT).

For this guide and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the term “working from home” is used to refer uniquely to home-based teleworking as a temporary, alternative working arrangement.

It requires a shared responsibility and commitment by both employers and workers to ensure business continuity and employment.

3. JOBS SUITABLE FOR WORKING FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS?

3.1. Practical Application of WFH

When worksites and premises are closed across the Trust as a precautionary measure or because of a government directive (COVID Levels), companies may be able to implement WFH arrangements to achieve continuity of service, maintain productivity, and preserve jobs while safeguarding the safety and health of workers.

The responsibility for WFH arrangements is shared, and it requires the commitment of both employers and employee to make it successful. Both employers and workers should be practical, flexible, and sensible to each other's situation when implementing WFH arrangements.

Before rolling out WFH arrangements, employers should first assess if it is possible and practical for the job functions and the jobholder, as follows:

- Identify the job functions and tasks that can be done off-site. This may involve innovation and creativity to do things differently from the norm.
- Assess mechanisms for connectivity such as regular videoconferencing calls and other means.
- Assess the infrastructure, facilities, and tools available for WFH, such as Internet connectivity and the availability of reliable power supply.
- Assess the legal requirements, obligations, and potential liability, taking into consideration the worker's situation and the job functions, equipment, and tools needed⁵.

- Assess the worker's situation in terms of safety and health in his/her domestic environment and actual ability to carry out the tasks required at home.
- Consider the potential impact of the worker's living arrangements. For example, workers may have child or dependent care responsibilities, relationship strain or domestic violence, long-term health conditions or disabilities.
- Assess any mental health concerns or possible future concerns that could arise through a work from home arrangement.

It is important to note that not all job functions and tasks can be done outside the employers' premises or the specified workplace.

Employers need to explore and implement an alternative plan for job functions and tasks that cannot be performed remotely, or for workers who have limitations at home or health and safety issues that prevent WFH.

3.2. Are workers obliged to observe the company's directive to work from home?

Normally, WFH arrangements are implemented on a voluntary basis between employers and workers, often accompanied by a signed agreement setting out terms and conditions. In the current situation, however, WFH has been come mandated as a temporary public health measure.

Therefore, when WFH is required to minimize the spread of a pandemic, workers must cooperate and comply fully with preventive measures or directives, take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others, and observe company policies.

Responsibility of employer

It is important to note that temporary WFH arrangements do not require any permanent adjustment to the terms and conditions of employment. The arrangements can change in response to updated directives and the evolving needs of the company.

Even though it may be difficult for employers to carry out traditional health and safety risk assessments at a worker's home in the current context, it remains the employers' responsibility to check that:

- the work asked to be performed is one that can be safely performed from home.
- adjustments are made to the tasks, if needed, to ensure that they are safely doable when WFH.
- workers have the right equipment and tools to work safely at home, including the required protective or safety equipment, where applicable.
- arrangements are made to ensure the company's equipment, if taken home to facilitate WFH, is accounted for and returned in the condition it was provided.
- workers have relevant information, instruction, supervision, and training, including measures to deal with emergencies.

- reasonable accommodations are made for workers with disabilities in relation to the work they are required to perform from home.
- arrangements are made for workers' physical and mental welfare.

Tools, equipment, supplies, and technology

Employers should provide workers the specific tools, equipment, supplies, and technology needed for performing the required tasks when implementing WFH arrangements unless the terms and conditions of employment,

Additionally, employers should see to the repair of such tools and equipment if necessary. The type of equipment and set-up required depends on the business and work involved. This may include a laptop, computer monitors, software, phone, access to the Internet, headset, access to host applications, and other applicable equipment as deemed necessary.

In other situations, it may include the delivery of equipment and the installation of technical devices required for the job.

Responsibility of the Employee

There shall be arrangements at the level of the undertaking under which—

- workers, while performing their work, co-operate in the fulfilment by their employer of the obligations placed upon him and or her.
- representatives of workers in the undertaking co-operate with the employer in the field of occupational safety and health.

3.3. How to measure workers' productivity when working from home

Five elements to consider in measuring remote workers' productivity include:

- Set and communicate clear goals and deadlines in the same way with workers in a physical workspace.
- Form plans to increase accountability.
- Analyse important tasks and track progress on a time bound basis.
- Evaluate quality and quantity instead of time worked – shift the metrics to "tasks accomplished and their quality" versus "hours spent".
- Track achievements.

The responsible manager shall then institute a prompt investigation to take appropriate action. All actions taken to investigate and resolve any complaint must be conducted confidentially to the extent that it is practical and appropriate. The investigator shall gather information and interview the appropriate individuals including the complainant, the employee subject to the harassment (if such individual is not the complainant), the alleged offender and witnesses (where applicable).

Upon completion of the investigation, the immediate supervisor will then decide as to whether the complaint warrants action and if so, whether the matter should proceed by way of formal or informal discipline. The investigator would communicate the outcome of the investigation to the complainant and the alleged offender and indicate whether a formal disciplinary enquiry in terms of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure will be convened.

The investigation must be handled with sensitivity and with due respect to the rights of both the complainant and the alleged offender. Care should be taken to ensure that the career and reputation of the parties are not unjustly affected. Employees are expected to co-operate fully with the investigation. Co-operation includes maintaining the confidentiality of any information provided in connection with the complaint and not discussing the complaint or the investigation with other employees.

3.4. Staff management and possible abuse of WFH arrangement

Issues of trust often advance to the forefront of workplace this is because WFH can impact the trust equation between employee and employer and managers because the task of management is more challenging.

If workers do not feel a sense of belonging during WFH, they may also distrust their managers. This may lead to the manager's loss of control, and certain workers may abuse the WFH arrangement. Hence, employees' self-discipline and mutual trust and confidence between employers and employee are essential in this working arrangement.

Furthermore, the effective management of WFH requires a results-based management approach. This involves identifying objectives, tasks, and milestones, and then monitoring and discussing progress without overly burdensome reporting requirements.

Build mutual trust and shared responsibilities.

The "glue" that holds WFH arrangements, together is trust. Managers, employees, and their colleagues need to trust each other. WFH cannot be effective without it. Employers should build mutual trust and establish shared responsibilities with workers through open and transparent discussions about expectations and outputs, including:
when workers will be available and be responsive.

- how they will keep in touch, such as online and telephone contact.
- how work-life balance will be managed, for instance through regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of the day.
- how performance and reporting will be managed, taking into consideration worker's circumstances where necessary.
- who workers should contact if they have any work-related issue.

Managers must also recognize some employees may find it hard to motivate and organize themselves when working from home. If this happens, the manager and employee should talk about practical steps to overcome those obstacles.

3.5. Promote awareness and ensure compliance.

the Trust should do the following:

- provide information and training on health and safety issues particularly relevant for workers in WFH arrangements.
- ensure that workers are aware of or provided with relevant information about their general obligations with regards to safety and health including taking care of their own health and safety and the safety of others.
- ensure that workers are aware of and comply with the company's safety and health policy, if any, including the procedures for reporting work-related accidents and ill health or any health and safety concern.
- review the company's safety and health policy, if any, and ensure it has provisions covering the worker's home when WFH arrangements are in place.
- ensure workers are aware of the company's liability under the applicable national laws and regulations and their liability insurance for injuries that occur in the worker's home during the WFH hours.
- provide on-going evaluation of offsite workers' workstation and offer guidance and monitoring of ergonomic conditions.