

Supporting successful remote work arrangements

Making remote work arrangements successful requires the cooperation of senior leaders, supervisors, and employees. Remote work can have benefits for employees and the Yukon government and can ultimately support the ongoing delivery of high-quality services and programs to Yukoners. However, it may also require us to adapt and change the way we work together. Thinking carefully about the potential challenges that may arise in remote work and how to address them is an important part of supporting successful remote work arrangements.

The table below outlines some potential challenges and possible strategies that employees and supervisors can use to make remote work effective. When entering into a remote work agreement, employees and supervisors are encouraged to use this document to discuss ways to ensure the remote work arrangement will be successful.

Potential Challenge	Strategies for success
<p>Communication</p> <p><i>Supervisors and employees may need to adjust their communication styles to enable remote work.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation about communication between the employee and supervisor before entering a remote work agreement. The conversation may also include other members of the work unit, as needed. Consider questions like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How often will we be in touch? (for example, a daily check-in or weekly update meeting) ○ What methods of communication will we use? (for example, phone for urgent requests, email for important but not urgent updates, instant messaging or texts for “quick questions”) • Ensure that others, such as colleagues or clients, know how to reach the remote employee when they’re not in the official workplace. This may include strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making sure email signature lines, the Global Address List, and information provided to clients include an up-to-date phone number at which the employee can be reached.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using collaboration tools like Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams for the employee to indicate where they are working that day. ○ Forwarding the desk phone to the remote employee's cell phone or updating the desk phone's voicemail message to indicate how the employee can be reached when not in the official workplace. ○ Using a team calendar to indicate team members' remote work schedules, so everyone knows how best to reach their colleagues. ● Some types of work are best suited to in-person communication, such as branch meetings, collaboration on a specific project, brainstorming, and team-building activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If possible, supervisors and employees should consider adopting part-time remote work arrangements, in which employees work in the official workplace for at least one day a week, to maintain the benefits of in-person work. ○ Schedule in-person meetings for days that a remote employee will be in the official workplace.
<p>Managing a remote employee</p> <p><i>Some managers may be concerned about how to manage an employee they don't see in person.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervisors across the public service are expected to measure employee performance in terms of outputs or results. When supervising a remote employee, it is even more important to manage based on results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, when assessing a remote employee's performance, a supervisor may consider questions such as: Does this employee complete assignments within expected timeframes and meet deadlines? Is the employee meeting expected standards for work quality? ● Supervisors should consider what outputs or results they need to see from their employee to know that they are performing. Before entering the remote work

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	<p>arrangement, the supervisor should discuss performance expectations with the employee and ensure the employee understands how performance will be assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some supervisors may wish to use tools such as spreadsheets or workflow apps to track workloads and progress on assignments for an employee or a work unit. However, supervisors should weigh the potential benefits of these tools with any additional administrative and reporting work they may create for employees. • Communication is a critical component of managing a remote employee. See the section above for communication strategies to support successful remote work. • Providing employees with current and ongoing performance feedback is one of the most important responsibilities of supervisors, whether the employee works from the official workplace or a remote workplace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For more information and tips on performance management, including how to address performance issues, see Helpful tools and techniques for conducting the Personal Performance Plan on Yukonnect or the Application Guideline Series on Performance Development, Support and Management from the Public Service Commission's Labour Relations branch.
<p>Isolation or disconnection</p> <p><i>Some remote employees may feel isolated or disconnected from their supervisor and colleagues.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person connection can be an important part of building team culture and overcoming potential isolation related to remote work. If possible, supervisors and employees should consider a part-time arrangement in which the employee works some of the time remotely and some of the time in the official workplace. • The remote work policy states that the employee and supervisor must maintain regular contact during the remote work arrangement. This is important for communicating work duties and expected results, but it is also important for maintaining a sense of connection and supporting the employee's wellbeing. • Supervisors and work units should consider how to include remote team members in team-building and other activities. This may include scheduling such activities for a day

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	<p>that the remote employee will be in the official workplace. (As noted in the remote work policy, employees must also attend the official workplace for meetings or other work that must be done in person, as required by their supervisor with reasonable notice.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors should ensure that remote employees are aware of the mental health resources available to them through the Employee and Family Assistance Program.
<p>Virtual meetings</p> <p><i>Meetings with remote participants may require adapting regular meeting methods.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When scheduling virtual meetings, consider leaving time between virtual meetings (for example, ending the meeting five minutes before the hour) and scheduling breaks in virtual meetings longer than an hour. Consider varying the meeting medium to avoid video fatigue. For example, a supervisor and employee may agree to conduct their one-on-one meetings by phone if they attend many video meetings. If a meeting has both in-person and virtual participants, consider how to structure the meeting so that all meeting participants feel included. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to limit in-person side conversations in a boardroom that virtual participants can't hear. Use appropriate videoconferencing equipment (cameras and microphones) in the meeting room that ensure the virtual participants can see and hear. Coordinate break-out rooms or discussion groups in a way that allows everyone to contribute, whether they are in person or virtual.
<p>Impact on employees in the official workplace</p> <p><i>Team members in the official workplace may be concerned about how the employee's remote</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stated in the criteria set out in the remote work guidelines, remote work arrangements must enable the employee and the work unit to meet operational requirements and avoid any negative impacts on colleagues and the work unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A remote work arrangement that creates significant extra work for team members remaining in the official workplace would not meet this criterion.

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work arrangement may affect them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors should be aware of their employees' workloads and their processes for assigning work, to ensure that new tasks are not only assigned to those employees they see in person regularly. In teams where several employees have or request remote work arrangements, supervisors and employees should consider staggered schedules for remote work so that operational needs in the official workplace are met. Team members in the official workplace should know how to reach a remote employee when they are not in the official workplace. See the section above for specific communication strategies to support successful remote work.
<p>Maintaining work/life boundaries</p> <p><i>Some employees may find it difficult to establish boundaries between work and personal life while working at home.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees are encouraged to consider the following practices when working remotely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a routine in the morning to start the workday. Consider a walk around the block to replace your commute as a way to start your day. Take regular breaks to stretch and move, and eat lunch away from your computer when possible. Set up your remote workplace in a place free of distractions, and consider how to communicate to other members of your household that you should not be disturbed (for example, putting up a sign when you are in a meeting). Follow your work hours and unplug at the end of the workday. Supervisors can help employees maintain healthy boundaries between work and personal life by modelling healthy behaviours and by checking in with the employee about their wellbeing.