

PHC Working Remotely Toolkit for Staff & Managers

An Implementation Guide to PHC’s Working Remotely Policy

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Introduction

This toolkit provides information about Providence Health Care's (PHC) [Working Remotely Policy](#), and gives a step-by-step guide on how to set up a Working Remotely Agreement.

This toolkit includes information on:

- The Working Remotely Situations Covered By PHC's Policy
- Why Make a Working Remotely Agreement? - The Benefits of Working Remotely
- The Guiding Principles of Working Remotely Agreements
- How to Determine if an Employee is Eligible for a Working Remotely Agreement
- The Working Remotely Agreement Request and Decision-Making Process – Step by Step Guide
- At-a-Glance – Process for Making a Working Remotely Agreement

The Working Remotely situations covered by PHC's Policy

Please Note - This Policy does not apply to situations where an employee works remotely as a requirement of their job or as a condition of employment. If you have questions about whether the Working Remotely policy applies to your situation, contact your HR Advisor.

The PHC Working Remotely Policy applies to situations where an employee routinely works from home – or from some other non-PHC location within British Columbia – for part of or all of their regular work schedule, and does so on a voluntary basis by developing a Working Remotely Agreement with their manager.

Here are two examples:

Satwinder developed a Working Remotely Agreement with her manager, so that she works from home two days per week and is on-site three days per week. She values being able to work from home because on those two days, she does not have to do her hour-long commute. This saves her money and means she can volunteer at her children's school.

Frank retired last year, and has come back to work part-time as a project manager. Because Frank now lives in Nanaimo, he has made a Working Remotely Agreement with his manager to work from home, with the commitment that he will come on-site when required.

Exclusions:

Out-of-province Working Remotely Agreements are generally not an option. Managers must contact their HR Advisor for a consultation prior to considering developing an out-of-province Working Remotely Agreement with an employee.

Out-of-Canada Working Remotely Agreements are not an option, due to information privacy and security requirements.

Why make a Working Remotely Agreement? – The Benefits of Working Remotely

Working remotely has benefits for PHC staff, the organization and the communities where we live and work.

- Remote work meets the need for more flexibility in our work lives and daily schedules. It can improve work-life balance, particularly for those with long commutes, young families or aging loved ones. According to a May 2020 survey of more than 600 PHC staff, our employees want the option to work remotely for a portion of their work time.
- Offering staff the option to work remotely supports PHC recruitment and retention efforts. It's a vital strategy for Providence to remain an employer of choice in our rapidly changing and tight labour market.
- Research shows that employees entrusted with working remotely are more engaged and productive; this can lead to more creativity and innovation.
- Working remotely, particularly from home, supports environmental sustainability and healthier communities.

The Guiding Principles of Working Remotely Agreements

Integrity, Trust and Respect

The foundation of how we approach remote work is grounded in our [Mission, Vision and Values](#) of integrity, trust and respect. Whether working remotely or on site, managers trust employees to do their work. Employees trust their managers to recognize their achievements, provide coaching and feedback, and to communicate operational strategies with respect, inclusion and consideration.

Shared Responsibility

Working Remotely Agreements are a shared responsibility. Together, the manager and employee are responsible for developing, monitoring and modifying the Agreement to ensure that PHC operational needs are met.

Adaptability and Innovation

The success of working remotely requires a commitment to adaptability and innovation. Teams with staff working remotely may need to adapt their team practices, such as using remote communication tools, virtual white boards or other electronic collaboration tools so all team members can participate effectively.

How to determine if an employee is eligible for a Working Remotely Agreement

Eligibility for working remotely is determined by asking three questions. If the answer to all three questions is “yes,” then the employee is an eligible candidate for a Working Remotely Agreement.

What are the employee’s job duties and where is the best place for them to be performed?

This first question assesses the work that needs to be performed, in order establish if the job can be performed in a remote work location. Some jobs can only be performed on-site; while other jobs can be accomplished effectively and efficiently remotely. Some questions to consider are:

- Can the required work duties and interactions happen over the phone or other virtual platforms?
- Can the required equipment, technology, software or data be accessed remotely?
- Can private and confidential information be handled securely from a remote work location?
- Will having the work done remotely require other team members to take over some of the job duties?

Does the employee’s demonstrated performance indicate that they will be successful working remotely?

Not every employee has the aptitude or skills to work remotely. This question assesses whether the employee has demonstrated that they can be successful working remotely. Some questions to consider are:

- Does the employee have a demonstrated history of reliable and responsible completion of work duties?
- Is the employee self-motivated, highly engaged, responsible and reliable?
- Is the employee results-oriented and comfortable setting priorities and meeting deadlines?
- Is the employee able to work independently with minimal supervision?
- Has the employee established trust with their manager and their team?

Is the proposed remote workspace suitable?

This question assesses whether the proposed remote workspace is a suitable space in which to perform the job duties in a safe, secure and effective manner. Considerations include:

- **Workspace Safety, Health and Wellness**

The remote work space must support the employee’s health and safety. The workspace must have proper heat, ventilation and light. It must be free of hazards. It must have separation from ongoing domestic activities and allow for unimpeded work. It must accommodate an ergonomically correct work surface and chair, and laptop/computer with ergonomically correct screen/monitor, keyboard and mouse. [Click here](#) for more information about workspace ergonomics.

- **Information Privacy and Security**

The remote workspace must be set up to protect the privacy and security of PHC health information, data, assets and technology, as outlined in the [PHC Information Privacy & Confidentiality Policy](#).

- **Use of a PHC-issued laptop or use of a personal computer**

If an employee has a PHC-issued laptop, it must have Citrix Gateway VPN installed. If the employee is using a personal computer, it must have the Citrix Workspace App, there are important security controls that need to be in place. For more information about using a PHC-issued laptop or personal computer while working remotely, go to the IMITS Info Centre's [Remote Work Resources](#) page.

A Note on Eligibility

Being eligible for a Working Remotely Agreement is not a guarantee that a Working Remotely Agreement will be approved. The manager's decision to approve an employee to work remotely will be determined on a case-by-case basis with the primary consideration being operational feasibility.

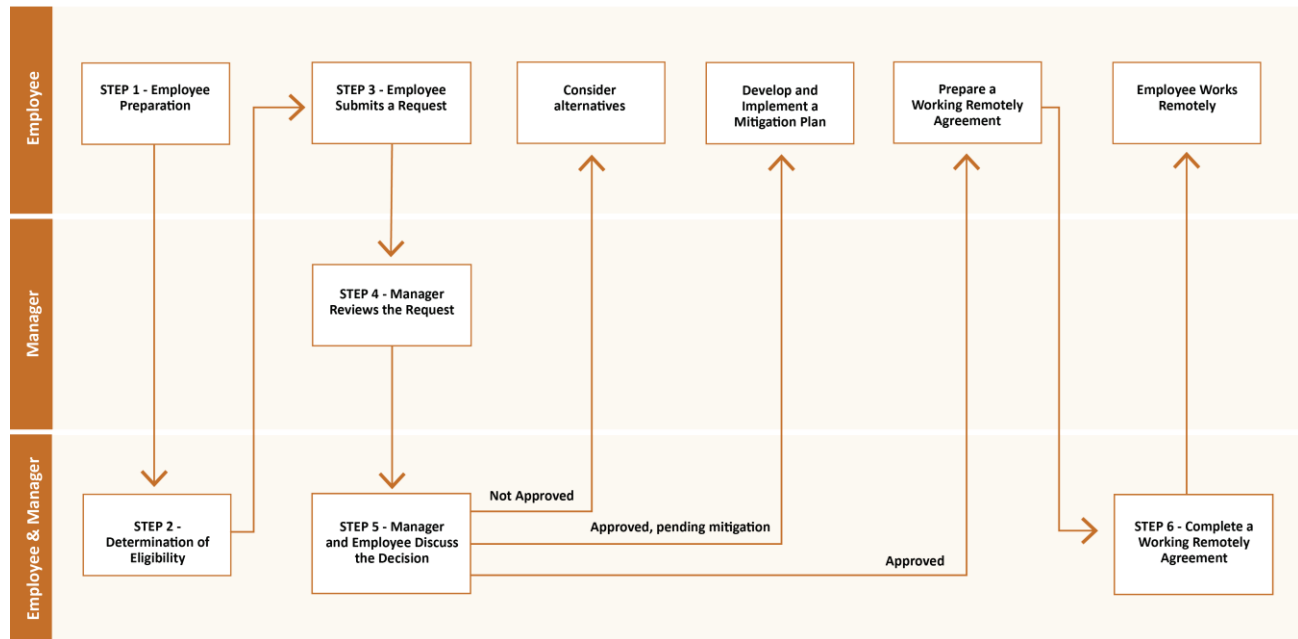
Providence Health Care has the right to refuse to make a working remotely option available to an employee.

The Working Remotely Agreement Request and Decision-Making Process – Step by Step Guide

An employee can work remotely if they have a Working Remotely Agreement. A Working Remotely Agreement is a formal document that is completed and signed by both the employee and their manager.

To ensure fairness and equity, the Working Remotely Agreement request and decision making process shall be consistent and transparent. This diagram illustrates the process that all employees and managers will follow:

Working Remotely Agreement Request and Decision-Making Process



Step 1 – Employee Preparation

Before making a request to work remotely, the employee reviews the following:

- The [PHC Working Remotely Policy](#) and this Toolkit
- The [PHC Terms & Conditions for Working Remotely](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ)

If the employee is new to remote work, it is recommend that the employee also complete the [Working Remotely Self-Reflection for Employees](#). This form is for self-reflection purposes only and is not part of the application process. The purpose of the form is to assist employees who are new to remote work in determining whether working remotely would be a good fit for them.

Unionized employees are encouraged to also consult with their union representative before requesting to work remotely.

Step 2 – Determination of Eligibility

The employee and the manager review the employee’s job duties, the employee’s performance and the employee’s proposed remote work space.

Three questions guide the determination of eligibility for a Working Remotely Agreement (see pages 3-4 of this Toolkit for additional information).

These questions are to be answered sequentially. If the answer to the first question is “yes,” then the manager and the employee proceed to the second question; if the answer to the second question is

“yes,” they proceed to the third question. If the answer to all three questions is “yes,” the employee is eligible to make a formal request.

What are the employee’s job duties and where is the best place for them to be performed?

To guide this discussion, the manager completes the [Working Remotely Position Assessment](#) prior to meeting with the employee, and together they discuss the results.

If the manager determines that the employee’s job can be performed remotely, then the manager and employee review the employee’s demonstrated performance.

Does the employee’s demonstrated performance indicate that they will be successful working remotely?

To guide this discussion, the manager completes the [Working Remotely Employee Performance Assessment](#) prior to meeting with the employee, and together they discuss the results.

If the manager determines that employee’s job can be performed remotely and that the employee’s performance demonstrates that they would likely be successful working remotely, then the manager and the employee review the employee’s proposed remote workspace.

Is the employee’s proposed remote workspace suitable?

To guide this discussion, the manager and the employee review the [Remote Workspace Assessment](#) form and pages 3-4 of this Toolkit. At this step, the employee does not need to complete the form. This form will be completed by the employee in Step 3. However, reviewing the form will help the manager and employee determine if the proposed workspace will likely be suitable.

Step 3 – Employee Submits a Request

To make a formal request for a Working Remotely Agreement, the employee completes the employee portion of the [Working Remotely Request](#).

The Employee also completes the [Remote Workspace Assessment](#).

The employee takes a photo showing how their remote workspace meets the ergonomic requirements detailed in the [Remote Workspace Assessment](#).

The Employee submits the Working Remotely Request, the Remote Workspace Assessment and the photo to their manager.

Step 4 – Manager Reviews the Request

The manager reviews the documentation provided by the employee and either approves, approves pending mitigation, or does not approve the Working Remotely Request.

Step 5 – Manager and Employee Discuss the Decision

Once the review is done, the manager will complete the manager portion of the Working Remotely Request and meet with the employee to discuss the outcome.

Not Approved - If not approved, the manager will provide a detailed rationale as to why the employee's request was not approved, and, if possible, discuss alternatives that may be available to the employee.

Approved Pending Mitigation - If any issues requiring mitigation are identified, they shall be discussed with the employee, and an action plan will be documented. The mitigation plan must be completed prior to finalizing a Working Remotely Agreement.

Approved - If approved, the manager and employee complete and sign a Working Remotely Agreement.

Step 6 – Manager and Employee Complete a Working Remotely Agreement

If approved, the manager and employee complete and sign the [Working Remotely Agreement](#).

The manager stores the signed Agreement along with the completed Working Remotely Request form and attachments in the employee's personnel file and provides a copy of the signed Agreement to the employee.

In addition, the manager forwards a copy of the Agreement along with the completed Working Remotely Request form and attachments to Employee Records and Benefits (employeeRBsupport@phsa.ca)

Unionized employees are encouraged to share the details of the working remotely arrangement with their union representative.

Step 7 – Operationalizing Working Remotely

Working remotely is guided by these [Terms and Conditions](#). It is the employee's responsibility to be familiar with and abide by these terms and conditions.

Tracking Remote Time

Remote Working staff continue timesheet tracking as per their regular process, using the code WOS (Working Offsite) for the hours they work remotely.

Downtime Processes

Staff members experiencing any connectivity issues or application issues when working from home will follow the process below.

Staff members are responsible for contacting the Service Desk to try and resolve the issue.

Should the connection issues last for more than 60 minutes, it is the responsibility of the staff member to contact their Manager to determine a work plan and whether it is required for them to go onsite for the work day.

Step 8 – Monitoring a Working Remotely Agreement

A Working Remotely Agreement will have an initial trial period of three months.

At the end of the trial period, the manager and employee complete the [Working Remotely Evaluation](#).

Thereafter, the Working Remotely Agreement will be reviewed annually and be updated as necessary.

Step 9 – Modifying or Cancelling a Working Remotely Agreement

Any change in the employee’s job requirements, the employee’s performance or the employee’s remote workspace may require a modification to or cancellation of a Working Remotely Agreement.

Any request to modify a Working Remotely Agreement – whether by the manager or the employee – will be communicated and agreed upon within a reasonable notice period prior to the modification being made.

An employee or manager may cancel the Working Remotely Agreement and every effort should be made to provide reasonable notice prior to the cancellation.

PHC has the right to unilaterally cancel a Working Remotely Agreement.

To cancel a Working Remotely Agreement, use the [Working Remotely Agreement Cancellation](#) form.

At-a-Glance – Process for Making a Working Remotely Agreement

Step		Required Documentation
1	Employee Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working Remotely Self-Reflection for Employees
2	Determination of Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working Remotely Position AssessmentWorking Remotely Employee Performance AssessmentRemote Workspace Assessment (for review only)
3	Employee Submits Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working Remotely RequestRemote Workspace Assessment plus photos
4	Manager Reviews Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As above
5	Manager and Employee Discuss Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As above
6	Manager and Employee Complete a Working Remotely Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working Remotely Agreement

7	Monitoring a Working Remotely Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Remotely Evaluation
8	Modifying or Cancelling a Working Remotely Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Remotely Agreement Cancellation
9	Operationalizing Working Remotely	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None required