U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTION	NUMBER: DA-400
SUBJECT: Teleworking	ORIGINATING OFFICE: Office of Human Resources Management
REPLACES:	DISTRIBUTION: All Departmental Administration Offices
APPLIES TO: All Departmental Administration	EXPIRES: When superseded or canceled
APPROVED BY: Lou Gallegos, Assistant Secretary for Administration	EFFECTIVE DATE:

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1 PURPOSE

This regulation sets forth the authority, policy, and responsibilities for managing teleworking programs within Departmental Administration (DA) as required by Departmental Regulation 4060-3 dated January 2, 2002.

2 INTRODUCTION

DA supports programs that improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, reduce the cost of office space, and assist employees in managing their work and family life. Teleworking has been shown to have a positive impact in all these areas.

3 POLICY

a Employees, to include managers and supervisors, who perform duties that are suitable for teleworking and meet other established eligibility requirements, must be afforded the opportunity to telework.

b Telework should be considered in providing reasonable accommodations for disabled employees and for addressing short-term agency or employee needs. Short-term uses could include allowing an employee to telework while the employee recovers from a minor injury affecting his/her mobility, or while working on a special work-related project with identifiable time frames and deliverables. In addition, teleworking may be considered for an emergency situation that involves safety concerns at the office. As a result, employees may be required to work temporarily at alternative worksites.

c Employees may be approved both to telework and to work an alternative or compressed work schedule. Telework may be approved on a regular and reoccurring basis for a minimum of one day a pay period to a maximum of three days a week. Exceptions for longer periods of time may be appropriate based on reasonable accommodations for disabled employees and for addressing short-term agency or employee needs.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

a The Director, Human Resources Service Division (HRSD) will:

Serve as the Telework Program coordinator for DA;

Manage the telework programs within DA;

Provide DA staff officials and serviced agencies with training, technical assistance, and consultative services regarding teleworking; and,

Consolidate and report the information identified in 2c to the Director, OHRM, by November 15th of each year.

b DA Staff Office Directors will:

Implement a teleworking program in accordance with applicable public law, guidelines, and this regulation. The program shall:

(a) Identify specific job tasks, which are suitable for teleworking;

(b) Establish supervisory and employee responsibilities and require written agreements (Appendix B). In addition, safety checklists (Appendix D) are required for work at home arrangements; and,

(c) Ensure managers/supervisors and employees are trained prior to the implementation of a Telework program (Appendix E and F).

Report the following information annually, on a Fiscal Year basis, to the Chief, HRSD by October 31st of each year:

(a) Total number of employees in staff office;

(b) Total number of employees participating in Telework (based on teleworker definition – Appendix A);

(c) Statistical data pertaining to program participants with respect to race, sex, national origin, and disability; and,

(d) Percentage of increase or decrease in teleworkers since the last report.

Provide DA staff officials and serviced agencies with training, technical assistance, and consultative services regarding teleworking; and,

Consolidate and report the information identified in (2) c to the Director, OHRM, by November 15th of each year.

b DA Staff Office Directors will:

Implement a teleworking program in accordance with applicable public law, guidelines, and this regulation. The program shall:

(a) Identify specific job tasks, which are suitable for teleworking;

(b) Establish supervisory and employee responsibilities and require written agreements (Appendix B). In addition, safety checklists (Appendix D) are required for work at home arrangements; and,

(c) Ensure managers/supervisors and employees are trained prior to the implementation of a Telework program (Appendix E and F).

Report the following information annually, on a Fiscal Year basis, to the Chief, HRSD by October 31st of each year:

(a) Total number of employees in staff office;

(b) Total number of employees participating in Telework (based on teleworker definition – Appendix A);

(c) Statistical data pertaining to program participants with respect to race, sex, national origin, and disability; and,

(d) Percentage of increase or decrease in teleworkers since the last report.

Maintain documentation for all teleworking program participants; and,

Fulfill any labor-management relations obligations prior to implementing a teleworking program.

d The Director, Information Resource Division (IRD), Office of Operations (OO) will:

Provide teleworkers at alternative worksites with technical guidance and support related to; help-desk support, desktop configuration and configuration guidelines for each individual teleworker, network access by providing username and password, equipment configuration, etc.; and,

(2) Resolve security issues related to teleworking.

5 REFERENCES

a Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies; Subject: Expanding Family-Friendly Work Arrangements, dated July 11, 1994.

b Public Law 104-52, Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Act of 1996.

c Public Law Number 106-346, Section 359, Department of Transportation Appropriation Act of 2001.

d Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Chapter 23.

e OPM Memorandum to Executive Heads of Agencies, subject: Establishing Telecommuting Policy, dated February 9, 2001.

6 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

a Telework Arrangements:

Participation in a telework arrangement is not an employee entitlement. An employee may participate in the program if the responsible supervisor or designee decides that the employee's job duties are suitable for offsite work, and the employee meets the eligibility requirements of section 6b.

(2) The telework arrangement under which an employee will perform work must be clearly set forth in a written agreement and signed by the respective supervisor and employee. The agreement must, at a minimum, address the location and requirements of the alternative worksite, the telework schedule, security of official information, protection of Government-furnished equipment, applicable standards of conduct, liability and injury compensation, work performance, right to require employees to report to the traditional worksite on scheduled telework days, based on operational requirements, and Government access to the alternative worksite.

(3) Once the telework agreement is approved, the employee must contact his/her IRD network administrator to discuss network access for their particular staff office, and to answer questions regarding setting-up or supporting a remote workstation. After the discussion, the employee will complete, if applicable, a Remote Access Request Form (Appendix C) and submit to OO, IRD.

Current Federal guidelines provide that agencies may authorize payment for the following in order to support teleworking; installation of a second phone line and/or a data secure line in the employee's home; the services of an internet provider at the employee's home; and payment for the use of a USDA or GSA teleworking center. Teleworking employees must be provided with a Federal calling card when needed to make official long distance calls from the teleworking site.

Also, Staff Offices may either provide employees teleworking from their home with computer equipment, printers, and/or fax machines; or require them to provide their own.

DA Staff Offices will provide Teleworking employees who incur long distance phone charges in the normal conduct of their duties with the required Federal calling card. Determinations on all other authorized equipment and expenditures will be based on the individual Staff Office's ability to provide.

(6) A telework arrangement does not alter the terms and conditions of the appointment. However, an employee's official duty station may change if he or she does not regularly commute into the agency office.

See definition of official duty station at Appendix A. All pay, leave, and travel entitlements must be based on the employee's official duty station. The telework arrangement must not affect other conditions of employment (e.g., hours of work, unless otherwise specified in the Telework agreement).

Upon appropriate notice, the manager or designee has the right to inspect the home or alternate worksite and equipment to be used by an employee to ensure that the workspace is safe, and all equipment is properly installed and functioning.

(8) The Telework arrangement may be terminated by either management or by the employee. Advance written notification of termination of the teleworking relationship must be provided except in emergency situations. An employee's teleworking arrangement may be terminated if performance or productivity declines, or if the arrangement no longer benefits the organization's needs.

The Telework arrangement shall be for the performance of official duties and shall not be treated as an opportunity to conduct personal business.

(10) Telework may not be used to replace appropriate arrangements for dependent care. However, this does not preclude a teleworker from having a caregiver working in the home while he/she teleworks.

(11) Management reserves the right to require employees to report to the traditional worksite on their scheduled telework days as the need arises.

b <u>Determining Eligibility</u>:

(1) Positions eligible for telework are those involving tasks and work activities that are portable, do not depend on the employees being at the traditional work site, and are conducive to supervisory oversight at the alternative worksite.

(2) Tasks and work activities generally suited for telework include, but are not limited to: thinking and writing; policy development; research; analysis (e.g., investigating, program analysis, policy analysis, financial analysis); report writing; telephone-intensive tasks (excluding receptionist duties; computer-oriented tasks (e.g., programming, data entry, word processing, web page design); and data processing.

Positions not generally eligible for telework are those positions involving tasks that are not suitable to be performed away from the traditional worksite, including tasks that:

(a) Require the employee to have daily face-to-face contact with the supervisor, colleagues, clients, or the general public in order to perform his or her job effectively, and which cannot otherwise be achieved via email, telephone, fax or similar electronic means;

(b) Require daily access to classified or highly sensitive information; or

(c) Are part of trainee or entry-level positions.

An employee suitable for telework is an employee whose demonstrated personal characteristics are considered well suited to telework by the supervisor. These characteristics include:

(a) Demonstrated dependability and ability to handle responsibility;

(b) A proven record of high personal motivation; good time management skills; and,

(c) A proven or expected minimum performance Rating of "fully successful" or "equivalent".

Probationary status employees "generally" would not be eligible for telework because probationary status periods are established to allow supervisors an opportunity to personally observe and evaluate employee performance.

7 INQUIRIES

Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources Management; Safety, Health and Employee Welfare Division; Room 3027 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone number (202) 720-8248.

-END-

APPENDIX A
Glossary

Official Duty Station	Consistent with current law, regulations, and OPM The *official duty station* is the city or town, county, and State in which the employee normally works. For most employees, this will be the location of the employee's worksite, i.e., the place where the employee normally works, or at which the employee's activities are based, as determined by the supervisor. For example, an employee's official duty station would continue to be the agency office from which he or she teleworks as long as the employee regularly commutes into the agency office **at least once a week**. However, if the employee does not regularly commute into the agency office, his or her official duty station would be changed to the alternative worksite from which the employee performs his or her duties. Exceptions for short-term situations. There may be unusual situations in which an agency should not change an employee's official duty station even though the employee rarely commutes to the agency office (e.g., in the case of an employee who works **temporarily** from home while recovering from an injury or employees who are required to work **temporarily** at alternative worksites in emergency situations).
Telecenter	A General Services Administration (GSA), USDA, or other approved facility established by state, local, or county governments or private sector organizations for use by teleworkers. Payment for use of GSA telecenters is made annually using GSA's "Telecommuting Facility Reimbursement Information Sheet".
Teleworker	An employee who works at an alternative work location (i.e., home, telecenter, or other satellite work location) either on a regular and reoccurring schedule for a minimum of one day a pay period or on a temporary basis in those situations identified 2d and with a written agreement.

Teleworking	(Also known as flexiplace, flexible workplace, and teleworking). Performance of official duties at an alternative worksite (i.e., home, telecenter, or other satellite work location).
Telework agreement	A written agreement, completed and signed by an employee and appropriate official(s) in his or her Staff Office that outlines the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement (Appendix B).

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE TELEWORKING AGREEMENT

The following constitutes the terms and conditions of the telework agreement between:

Employee:

Last Name First Name Middle Initial

Title Pay Plan/Series/Grade

Departmental Administrator Staff Office

Days in Biweekly Pay Period Employee is Authorized to Telework

The employee is approved to work at the approved alternative worksite specified below in accordance with the following schedule:

DAY	PER WEEK	PER PAY PERIOD	WORK SCHEDULE Fixed or Alternative	WORK SCHEDULE FWS or CWS	DUTY HOURS (Specify hours of work and lunch break)
MON					
TUES					
WED					
THURS					
FRI					

Alternative worksite

The employee's alternative worksite is:

Home office or work area

Address:

Location of home office or work area:

_____

Phone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____

GSA Telecenter

Address: _____

Phone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____

Other approved alternative worksite

Address: _____

Phone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____

TRIAL PERIOD (Optional)

Employee and agency agree to try out the teleworking arrangement for at least (specify number) months unless unforeseeable difficulties require earlier cancellation.

1 Changes to Telework Arrangement

Employees who telework must be available to work at the traditional worksite on telework days on an occasional basis if necessitated by work requirements. Requests by the employee to change his or her scheduled telework day in a particular week or biweekly pay period should be accommodated by the supervisor wherever practicable, consistent with mission requirements.

A permanent change in the telework arrangement must be reflected in a new Telework Agreement.

2 Work-at-Home Telework

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained while teleworking.

Work-at-home teleworkers must complete and sign a safety checklist that proclaims the home safe for an official home worksite, to ensure that all the requirements to do official work are met in an environment that allows the tasks to be performed safely. The employee agrees to permit access to the home worksite by agency representatives as required, during normal working hours, to repair or maintain Government-furnished equipment, and to ensure compliance with the terms of this telework agreement.

For work at home arrangements, the employee is required to designate one area in the home as the official work or office area that is suitable for the performance of official Government business. The Government's potential exposure to liability is restricted to this official work or office area for the purposes of telework. The employee acknowledges that telework is not a substitute for dependent care.

The Government is not responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the employee using his or her personal residence as an alternative worksite, including home maintenance, insurance, or utilities.

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3 Official Duty Station

The employee's official duty station for such purposes as special salary rates, locality pay adjustments, and travel is _____. The official duty station corresponds to that found on the most recent SF 50, Notification of Personnel Action.

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4 Time and Attendance, Work Performance and Overtime

Time spent in a teleworking status must be accounted for and reported in the same manner as if the employee reported for duty at the traditional worksite.

The employee is required to satisfactorily complete all assigned work, consistent with the approach adopted for all other employees in the work group, and according to standards and guidelines in the employee's performance plan.

The employee agrees to work overtime only when ordered and approved by the supervisor in advance. Employees who work overtime without such prior approval may be subject to administrative or disciplinary action.

5 Security and Equipment

No classified documents (hard copy or electronic) may be taken to an employee's alternative worksite. For regular and recurring telework, sensitive unclassified material, including Privacy Act and For Official Use Only data, may only be used by teleworkers provided with Government-furnished equipment. The employee is responsible for the security of all official data, protection of any Government-furnished equipment and property, in carrying out the mission of USDA at the alternative worksite. Government-furnished equipment must only be used for official duties and family members and friends of teleworkers are not authorized to use any Government furnished equipment.

Where the employee has been approved by the agency to use his/her personal computers and equipment for telework on non-sensitive unclassified data, remote access software must not be loaded into employee's personal computers for official purposes. The employee is responsible for the installation, repair and maintenance of all personal equipment.

The agency is responsible for the maintenance of all Government-furnished equipment. The employee may be required to bring such equipment into the office for maintenance. The employee must return all Government-furnished equipment and materials to the agency at the conclusion of teleworking arrangements or the agency's request.

6 Liability and Injury Compensation

The Government is not liable for damages to the employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternative worksite, except to the extent the Government is held liable by the Federal Tort Claims Act of the Military and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

The employee is covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) when injured or suffering from work-related illnesses while conducting official Government business. The employee agrees to notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at the alternative worksite while performing official duties and to complete any required forms.

7 Standards of Conduct

The employee acknowledges that he/she continues to be bound by the Department of Agriculture standards of conduct while working at the alternative worksite and using Government-furnished equipment.

8 Mileage Savings

The employee estimates that the telework arrangement will result in a reduction of approximately _____miles traveled in commuting per week.

9 Termination of the Telework Agreement

This telework agreement can be terminated by either the employee or the supervisor by giving advance written notice. Management shall terminate the telework agreement should the employee's performance not meet the prescribed standard, or the teleworking arrangement fails to meet organizational needs.

10 Date of Commencement

The telework arrangement covered by this Agreement will commence on:
_____(date)

Signatures:

_____

Employee Date

_____

Supervisor Date

APPENDIX C
REMOTE ACCESS REQUEST FORM FOR TELEWORK

In order to receive authorization to have direct computer access to the Departmental Administrations Remote Access Telecommunications System to keep the employee in contact with co-workers, review and return e-mails, and share files while working at an alternative worksite, the employee must do the following:

1. Contact his/her network administrator to discuss network access for his/her particular staff office. Also to answer questions regarding setting-up or supporting a remote workstation.

2. Meet the specific minimum remote access requirements established by Information Resources Division. The requirements are:

    a. Minimum PC Configuration – Pentium II or better CPU and 64 MB of memory for Windows 95 & 98;

    b. Minimum PC Configuration – Pentium II or better CPU and 128 MB of memory for Windows 2000;

    c. Minimum Modem Speed – 28.8KB or higher;

    d. Operating System – Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 2000 and above, with security patches applied;

    e. Current Anti-Virus program;

    f. PPP Dialer – Windows dialer supplied with 95, 98, and 2000. Update to DUN 1.2 or higher is required for Windows 95;

    g. E-mail Client – Depending on the type of e-mail server used by the office, the employee will need Outlook Desktop Applications – Microsoft Office;

    h. Desktop Applications – Microsoft Office; and,

    i. Optional Software – For Mainframe applications, one or both of the following may be required:

        (1) TN3270 – Used to access The NFC Mainframe.

        (2) TN5250 – Used to access The NFC ADS-400.

(3) BRIO – Used to access FFIS.

(4) Secure Remote – Required to access NFC and FFIS programs.

(3) After the above is accomplished, the approved teleworker will complete the attached Remote Access Request Form and submit it to the Office of Operations, IRD.

Office of Operations
Information Resources Division
Remote Access Request Form

Staff Office Name

Office Address

Applicant Name (PRINT):

Last First M.I.

Applicant's Home Office Address

E-Mail Address Work Phone Number

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

Modem Speed

Applicant Signature Date

Authorized By Phone Number Authorization Signature

Type(s) of Access: (please check the type of access requested)

Dial-Up Access (for users with no ISP) ☐ NEW ☐ UPDATE ☐
REMOVE

VPN Access (for users subscribed to an ISP) ☐ NEW ☐ UPDATE ☐
REMOVE

For IRD Administrative Use Only

Date Received: _____ Date Completed: _____ Username Assigned: _____ Group Assigned: _____

Please fax completed Remote Access Request Forms to (202) XXX-XXXX
Or
E-mail completed Remote Access Request Forms to DAHelpdesk@USDA.GOV

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE SAFETY CHECKLIST

USDA TELEWORK PROGRAM

The following checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of the home worksite. The participating employee should complete the checklist, sign and date it, and return it to his or her supervisor (and retain a copy for his or her own records).

1. Are temperature, noise, ventilation, and lighting levels adequate for maintaining your normal level of job performance?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
2. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires or fixtures, exposed wiring on the ceiling or walls)?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
3. Will the building's electrical system permit the grounding of electrical equipment (a three-prong receptacle)?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
4. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
5. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and door do not enter into walkways?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
6. Are phone lines, electrical cords, and surge protectors secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard?	Yes [ ] No [ ]
Employee's Signature:	**Date:**

NAME:_____

AGENCY:_____

POSITION:_____

ADDRESS:_____

LOCATION OF DESIGNATED HOME OFFICE OR WORK AREA:

_____

HOME TELEPHONE:_____

SUPERVISOR'S NAME:_____

APPENDIX E
GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS PRIOR TO AN EMPLOYEE TELEWORK PROGRAM

1. Identify which tasks performed by staff are suitable for teleworking.

2. Identify the characteristics an employee must possess to be eligible to telework.

3. Determine if the organization will:

   a. Establish a Trial Period for each telework arrangement;

   b. Provide computer equipment, printer, fax or require the employee to provide these items if working from home alternative worksite;

   c. Pay for installation of a second phone line at the home alternative worksite;

   d. Pay for Internet Service (i.e. AOL, Earthlink, etc.);

   e. Pay for Data Secure Line (if employee needs access to any data files while at home an alternative worksite); and,

   f. Pay for an employee to work at a GSA or USDA Telecenter.

4. Arrange with the operating personnel office work/life coordinator to train management staff and employees on teleworking.

5. Discuss teleworking with the entire staff and discuss:

   a. Items 1 – 3 above;

   b. Office coverage when teleworker is not physically present;

   c. Transfer of teleworker's office phone to the alternative worksite;

   d. Scheduling meetings, when possible, when teleworkers are normally present in the main office; and,

   e. Considering expanded use of conference calls for meeting with teleworkers.

6. When eligible employees request to telework:

   a. Discuss items 1-3 above;

   b. Discuss the teleworking agreement with the employee;

   c. Have the employee sign an agreement;

   d. Complete and sign a Safety Checklist if employee will be working from their home alternative worksite; and,

   e. Complete a GSA Telecommuting Facility Reimbursement Information Sheet if employee will be working from a GSA Telecenter.

7. When the teleworker arrangement is approved:

   a. Contact agency Resource Manager to: (1) obtain authorization to transfer office phone to home or telecenter number; (2) obtain Federal calling card for employee; (3) make arrangements for any authorized items in 3 above; (4) and, provide completed GSA Telecommmuting Facility Reimbursement Information Sheet Form that he/she will send to appropriate office in GSA.

   b. Provide copy of approved agreement to the employee, resource manager, and Timekeeper.

APPENDIX F
GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES WHO TELEWORK

1. Discuss teleworking arrangement with manager/supervisor.

2. Prepare a memo to manager/supervisor requesting to telework. Include the following in the memo:

   a. Reason for requesting the teleworking arrangement;

   b. Benefits to the organization and the employee;

   c. Day(s) for teleworking;

   d. Location for alternative worksite;

   e. Equipment that will be needed or will provide own; and,

   f. Effective date to begin teleworking.

3. When teleworking arrangement is approved:

   a. Discuss teleworking agreement with supervisor;

   b. Determine what the organization will provide and not provide to the teleworker;

   c. Sign the teleworking agreement;

   d. Contact IRD and complete and submit a Remote Access Request Form, when applicable.

   e. Sign a Safety Checklist if the alternative worksite will be at the employee's home;

   f. Complete a GSA Telecommuting Facility Reimbursement Information Sheet if the alternative worksite will be at a GSA Telecenter;

   g. Must know who is going to be responsible for transferring and retrieving office phone on teleworking day(s). Discuss the arrangements with the individual; and,

   h. Contact resource manager to ensure the authorization to transfer office phone, the Federal calling card, and any authorized equipment, etc. has been approved.

4. Responsibilities of teleworker:

a. Ensure customer service is maintained;

b. Send a reminder to manager/supervisor of the work location for that day;

c. Ensure arrangements are made to transfer and retrieve the office phone on teleworking day(s);

d. Ensure materials needed to perform work assignments are taken to alternative worksite.

e. Keep in contact with office colleagues to keep informed and updated;

f. Check voice message every hour and return telephone calls, if phone is not transferred;

g. Check e-mail every hour and respond, when appropriate;

h. Ensure Federal Calling Card is used to make long distance phone calls;

i. Change teleworking schedule if he/she is needed at the main office on regularly scheduled teleworking day; and,

j. Immediately notify the manager/supervisor if an emergency should arise while teleworking at the designated alternative worksite.