RISK SIMPLIFIED

Remote Worksite Health and Safety Guidance

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Teleworking offers incentives for both employees and employers, such as flexible schedules, decreased commutes, and the ability to continue agency operations from anywhere at any time. Thanks to advancements in technology, many employees are no longer tied to their office computers. However, with these advancements, also comes challenges with ensuring ideal alternative worksite conditions for employees.

As stated in the CA Labor Code section 3600, an employer is liable "for any injury sustained by his or her employees arising out of and in the course of the employment." Therefore it is likely that liability for an injury sustained by an employee while working remotely would be treated no differently than if the employee had sustained the injury while working at your agency's location.

So how do you reduce the risk of injury to employees when they are not under direct supervision? One way this can be done is to ensure that your organization's telework policy outlines expectations for the employees to maintain a safe working environment at their alternative worksite, just as an employee would be expected to maintain a safe working environment while working at your agency's location.

The policy should include language that outlines the overall safety of an alternative worksite, how to identify common worksite hazards, as well as give employees direction on setting up their alternative worksites so that employees are not at an increased risk for an ergonomic injury.

There are various ways to ensure an employee's alternative worksite complies with health and safety expectations, including, but not limited to, one or more the following:

- Require that each alternative worksite be inspected by an agency employee. During the inspection of the alternative worksite, the employee conducting the inspection would also ensure that the teleworker has a functional workspace that complies with ergonomic standards.

PRISM

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- Establish a self-certification checklist. This checklist would be utilized by teleworkers to ensure their alternative worksites comply with policy expectations. Employees may be requested to submit pictures of their alternative worksite along with their completed checklist. Minimally, employees would self-certify compliance on an annual basis. (Please see below for a sample)

- Include the health and safety expectations in the telework policy. Employees would be required to review and acknowledge receipt.

If a checklist is utilized for self-certification, we've provided a sample (see next page) that could be used as a starting point to build your process. NOTE: It is important to include bargaining groups as well as legal counsel in the process of putting a remote work program and policy together.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the PRISM Risk Control department.

Alternative Worksite Health and Safety Self-Certification Checklist

Environment	Yes	No
1. Does the workspace area have adequate lighting and ventilation?		
2. Is the workspace reasonably quiet and free of distractions?		
3. Are the aisles, doorways, walkways, and corners free from obstructions and hazards?		
4. Is all equipment such as file cabinets or storage secured and free from the danger of falling?		

Electrical	Yes	No
1. Are all electrical cords intact and free from any frays or damage?		
2. Are all electrical outlets permanent in nature and adequately grounded?		
3. Are extension cords being used as a permanent source of electricity?		
4. Is all electronic equipment connected to a surge protector to guard equipment against damage from a power surge?		

Fire Protection	Yes	No
1. Is there a fire extinguisher readily available near the workspace?		
2. Is there a working smoke detector located near the workspace?		

Workstation Arrangement	Yes	No
1. Is your chair adjustable?		
2. Does the backrest of the chair fully support your back?		
3. When seated, are your thighs parallel to the floor?		
4. Do your feet rest flat on the floor when seated at your workstation? * If no do, you use a footrest?		
5. Do you have adequate legroom underneath your workstation?		
6. Is your monitor placed directly in front of you?		
7. Can you view your monitor with your head in an upright position and your shoulders relaxed?		
8. Is the top of the monitor slightly below eye level?* Those with prescription glasses may need to adjust the monitor differently		
8. Is the top of the monitor slightly below eye level?* Those with prescription glasses may need to adjust the monitor differently		
9. Is your computer screen free from noticeable glare?		
10. Are your elbows bent at a 90-degree angle when your hands are resting on the keyboard?		
11. Is the mouse positioned close to the keyboard at the same level?		
12. Are your arms and elbows close to your body while typing?		
13. Are documents placed next to the monitor and at the same height as the screen?		