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## Teleworking tips for employees

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you get to work while at home.

### 1. Define your workspace.

Experienced teleworkers will tell you that it's often difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our normal home routines. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. Wearing attire that you may wear to the office even if it is your "casual Friday" attire may cue the brain. You should remain capable of reporting to work if your presence is requested by your supervisor.

### 2. Master the basics.

- Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.
- Know how to remote into the John Carroll University network and other online tools you use regularly.
- Use Google Meet, Zoom, or another instant messaging client to stay connected to colleagues.
- Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.

### 3. Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.

You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

### 4. Eliminate distractions.

Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the noise.

## 5. **Prioritize privacy.**

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone stand behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there is anything around you that you would not want visible during a video conference with your boss or colleague.

## 6. **Continue to employ security best practices.**

Situations like this are prime phishing opportunities. As with any crisis, there are many who will try to take advantage of the situation and trick you into giving them your credentials or other valuables. Please remain vigilant to phishing attempts and other unusual requests. **Contact the IT Service Desk at 216-397-3005 or [servicedesk@jcu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@jcu.edu) to report any suspicious activity.**

- It should be noted that caution needs to be taken when dealing with personal health information (“PHI”) and HIPAA matters while working from home or another off-site location. If you have questions, contact the Privacy Officer, Ryan Armsworthy at 216-397-1576.
- VPNs can also allow you to safely connect to a remote network of computers as if you are there. If you are dealing with sensitive information and want to explore VPN, you can learn more at <https://jcu.edu/its/services/wireless-and-phones/vpn>.
- You are expected to follow the expectations outlined in the university’s [Sensitive Data and Security policy](#).
- If you have a security incident, reach out to [servicedesk@jcu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@jcu.edu).

## 7. **Stay connected.**

Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don’t want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home. You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site.

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## **Tips for departments with widespread telework**

With many teams moving to telework quickly, departments may want to adopt the following suggestions:

- 1. Consider designating a telework task force.**

Depending on the size of your unit, consider implementing a task force to manage telework protocols and procedures for your department.

- 2. Engage your team.**

Setting up a group to work remotely is different than setting up an individual employee to telework. Effective remote teamwork requires entire units to embrace technology and proactive communication in ways that may be new and challenging to traditional ways of working. Support the success of your team by:

- Scheduling a conversation about what it may look like for your team to work remotely.
- Identify needs and tool preferences of team members for remote work.
- Document and share telework practices/plans.

- 3. Enable and encourage ongoing communication.**

Ongoing communication is the most important part of effective remote teamwork. Working online can be isolating without regular contact with supervisors and colleagues. By creating the expectation that an entire team will communicate regularly with one another, members will feel connected regardless of where they are.