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To: [Orange County](#)
Subject: FW: Telecommuting Strategies/Training
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Hello Fellow County Employees,

Yesterday the entire State received a new Executive Order from the Governor's Office. Our County Family has already been taking important steps to increase telecommuting and now telecommuting will be an even more important strategy to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Several departments have reached out regarding ways to support communication in this new and difficult environment. Below are ways to make this working arrangement more productive.

Additionally, Learning & Organizational Development has created series of playlists (training paths) and access to free training for these situations which will be deployed to employees later today. These trainings will be perfect for those telecommuting and include a wide variety of training in the following categories: working from home, wellness at home, improving your skills, communication, leadership, and technology. As always, managers should work with their employees to determine whether these available trainings are an appropriate option during their workday.

Strategies for Ensuring Effective Telecommuting Performance

Define Work Schedules

- Set expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule including breaks and lunch time
- Review your communication plan for unscheduled absences, long lunches, etc.

Early Define Work Expectations

- Set results-oriented standards
- Make tasks "do-able" at a distance
- Develop action plans with timeframes
- Communicate how quickly you expect a response to call or emails
- Identify tracking required or expected work product to be completed

Plan communication and engagement activities

- Keep telecommuters involved in day-to-day updates
- Schedule regular conference calls
- Indicate how often employee must communicate with supervisor
- Use video conferencing (if available) to facilitate face-to-face interactions
- Provide feedback and recognition

Tips for Telecommuting Employees

Define Your Workspace

- Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, it gives your brain a cue that it is time for work.
- Eliminate Distractions. Be sure your workspace is quiet so you can focus on your task.

Dress for Work

- Dressing casually is definitely a perk of working at home but getting "ready for work" is a suggested way to get you in work mode

Set A Work Plan

- Focus on performance and results
- Identify your priority tasks and how much time you will spend on each task
- Make sure you are on track with the timeframes set by you and your supervisor
- If you are unable to complete something remotely, be accountable and transparent about it

Communication

- Be accessible and responsive during your scheduled work time
- Communicate any changes to your schedule to your supervisor in advance
- Interact with your supervisor and co-workers just like you would in the office
- Video conferencing and talking on the phone helps convey tone of the message and can be more effective for more serious work challenges
- Communicate any problems with your supervisor

Work Schedule

- Don't work beyond your set work schedule
- Schedule your break times

HRS remains committed to supporting our employees throughout this process. Please feel free to reach out to HRS staff if you need any assistance. Thanks.

Tom Hatch
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COUNTY OF ORANGE COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

SAFETY AND LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM *WORKING SAFELY FROM HOME*

HOME SAFETY FOR TELCOMMUTING

When working from home, one should assess their workspace to ensure that as many hazards as possible are removed to prevent injury. Remember that slips, trips and falls are some of the biggest exposures in the workplace and is just as relevant when working from home. In addition, there are several other hazards that can cause injury. Below are some helpful reminders that will assist you in making your home workspace as safe as possible.

Checking Your Environment:

- When using stairs within your home, ensure to use the handrails;
- Make sure your phone lines, electrical cords and power strips are secured under your desk or alongside a baseboard to prevent tripping;
- Keep floor surfaces clean, dry, level and free of worn or frayed seams;
- Confirm hallways, doorways and corners are free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement; and
- Ensure file cabinets and storage closets are arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways.

Checking for Fire Safety:

- Ensure your home is equipped with a readily available fire extinguisher;
- Verify your office space is neat, clean and free of combustible material (this includes lit candles and hot coffee pots);
- Use appropriate electrical cords, such as power strips, and ensure to not overload your electrical outlets.
- Electrical equipment must be free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (e.g., frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through walls, exposed wires to the ceiling, etc.); and
- Ensure your workstation equipment is turned off and unpowered when not in use (*safest practice is to unplug the equipment from the wall outlet).

Setting up Your Workstation:

- When possible, use an adjustable chair that will allow you to work in a neutral (ergonomically correct) position;
- Ensure to use a chair that provides full back support;
- Use a chair with rungs and legs that are sturdy;
- If you are unable to work in a position where your feet are flat and fully supported on the floor, use a footrest or anything that will safely provide the needed support;
- Ensure the top of your monitor screen is at eye level;
- Position your monitor so it is roughly an arm lengths away from your face;
- When keying, ensure your forearms are close to your body and parallel with the floor; and
- Keep wrists as straight as possible when keying.