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# **Guideline for Working From Home (WFH)**

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**Version 2**

**September 2020**

# Guideline for Working From Home (WFH) in Civil Service during the “new normal”

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### **1. Objective of WFH**

This guideline for WFH is for all Civil Service Agencies as a default means to:

- Continue to deliver services during and post lock-down period
- Maintain safe physical distancing in the workplace after easing of the lockdown to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The guideline is to help Agencies outline the protocols of official communications and reporting, fixing accountability, protocol on document movement and protocol on use of government resources while WFH. WFH can be for the entire staff during the lock-down phases and for split teams and primary caregivers such as staff who have breastfeeding babies, children below age of one and those who have serious health issues after the reopening.

Every Agency has its own requirements, processes and practices, therefore they must customise this broad guidelines by adding details that are specific to their own requirements. The following steps must be initiated to be prepared for WFH after mapping out tasks and people:

## **2. Set ground rules for WFH**

This should help to set expectations between managers and team members.

### **2.1 WFH Schedule for Divisions/Services**

- Document the default expectations in a shareable document.
- Managers to sit with their team to come up with an agreed "WFH Hours and rules of engagement" document. This must be shared through a common folder that everyone can easily refer to.
- Develop WFH Schedule to include the list of activities with deadlines by Divisions/Services/Sectors and activities allocations for staff on a weekly basis. This would be applicable for those WFH and working in Split teams.

### **2.2 Set ground rules for team communication**

Setting ground rules for team communication goes a long way in making sure your team is productive and happy. Communication is critical for effective coordination and operationalising any plan in a short span of time and at any hour of the day. When operating WFH, we need to keep in mind that the kinds of nuanced communication you get in an office setting doesn't translate online. Therefore, setting up communications protocols in advance is most critical and preparedness is key to keeping communication lines live and active.

As such it is critical to identify what are the best tools to use and when to use it? Is the information time sensitive? Why is it important? It helps to set expectations between managers and team members.

On the choice of communication tools, please Refer to the WFH Toolbox section of this document (in Section 5.2 ).

The communications plan shall include :

- A file(s) that contain the communication details which the HRD/HRS shall compile and share in common folder with viewing rights to all in the organisation:

Name	Designation	Mobile No	Email	TrueConf ID/Skype/Google meet/Email	WhatsApp /Msg	Emergency Contact other than Employee

Identify the Primary communication channels and applications. It must be decided in advance what will be the primary channels of communication. While multiple communication channels can be explored, a primary means of communication is important.

**3. Set management procedures**

**3.1 Task management procedures**

Document the steps that employees need to follow to complete a certain task. Divisions/Teams can make their own *internal protocol* and understanding.

**3.2 Motivation and guidance**

Provide tools to help employees to make WFH comfortable and accessible.

Supervisors should make themselves available for virtual hangouts, the frequency decided according to their respective needs– to guide, coordinate and motivate team members, provide a conducive environment to brainstorm and make work from home productive.

**3.3 Weekly 1-on-1s** – with team members to chat about how work is going.

### **3.4 Role of Tech Teams**

ICT Teams should make themselves available to support the other team members and provide technical support. ICT teams can support to make:

- Fix ICT System user rights and accountability for WFH
- Protect information and documents for common/shared services.
- Make the manual processes to fit the WFH as far as possible
- Generate daily system user reports and share with supervisors

### **3.5 Document movement protocol**

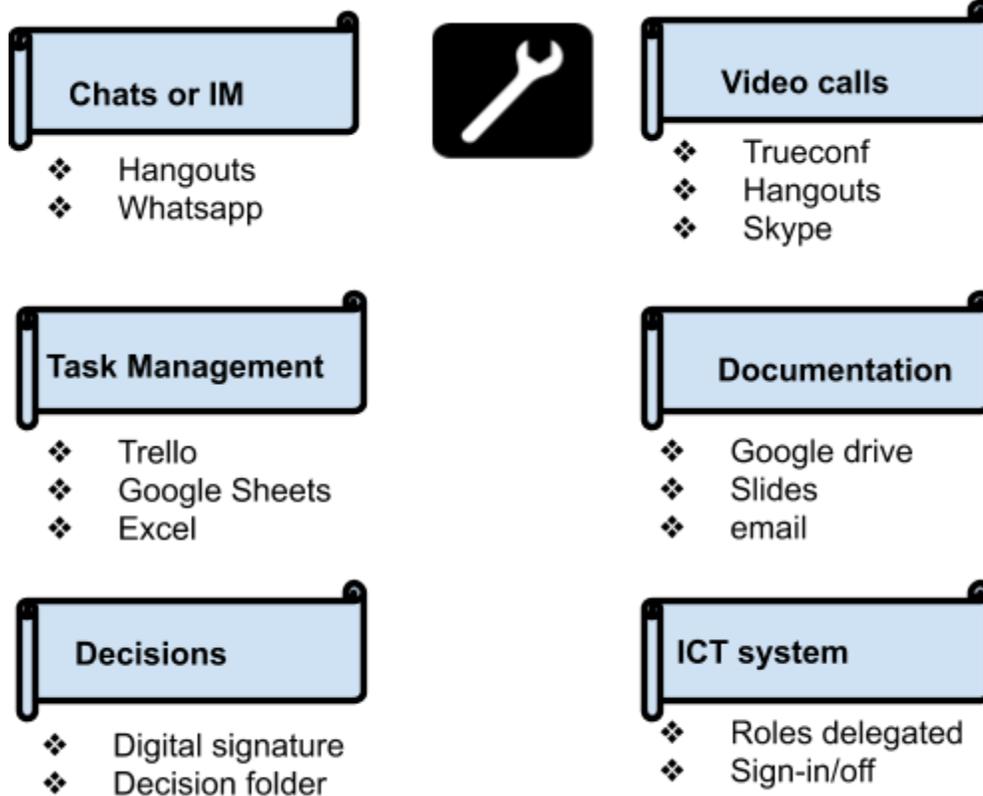
Agencies should institute protocol for document movement between the office and home. If possible one person among a team/division should be identified for maintaining the records of document movement and proper accountability. In our efforts to facilitate WFH, we must not forget to prioritise proper management of documents and files.

Agency should also classify those documents that cannot be taken home.

## **4. WFH Toolbox**

In a remote team, you'll need the right tools to make sure everyone stays on the same page and can continue to execute efficiently.

Identify tools that your team is familiar with. Some handy tools that make WFH successful are listed for your reference:



- Use official group chats for seeking common clarifications or cross-platforms with mobile apps
- Set-up accountability for outgoing official decisions
- Create channel of communication for queries and client response mechanism
- Establish protocol for how and when teams will coordinate and meet.
- Remote yet collaborative working
- Data security-It has been possible to build a network of apps tailored to our workflows using the best tool for each job with Google authentication for single sign-on (only one login to Google Chrome to access them all) and integrations between the services. This allows for a single point of entry for data while allowing access to it from wherever it is relevant.

- Create a simple online dispatch number system so that there is no disruption in outgoing mails.

Assess the comfort level with specific applications, such as video conferencing and other collaboration/communication platforms. Where you find gaps, provide training and opportunities for practice before people need to use them to reduce inefficiency. Identify devices owned by the organization that people could use and clarify acceptable "bring your own" phone and laptop options.

### Safety and Security Considerations

**Safety and Security Considerations**

**Do(s)**

- Review privacy policy and settings when using new applications
- Enforce use of multi-factor authentication (MFA) to secure your credentials
- Keep your antivirus up-to-date.
- Maintain offline backup of your important work.
- Ensure to turn on your AV when downloading files. Pay extra attention to what you are downloading (Some files could be malware).

**Don't(s)**

- Do not share your personal information or credentials online.
- Do not click on unverified links shared by friends or colleagues especially related to CoVID-19 as it could be a phishing email.
- Do not forward misinformations related to CoVID-19. Fact check with reputable sources such as the Ministry of Health, or the WHO.
- Do not visit unnecessary websites.

*Agency may refer to the RCSC Technical Guideline for WFH, attached with this document for setting up your own Remote Tools.*

## 5. Accountability and productivity management

**5.1 Accountability System** – develop accountability metrics that align with your team's priorities and values. This helps your team to focus on the right things. Set

out- Check-ins & Check-outs time, Pre-empt a set time for calls – E.g., every 2 hours, be available for a phone call.

## 5.2 Staff's WFH Schedule

In line with the WFH Schedule drawn by Divisions/Services/Sectors, every staff shall be required to list tasks to be completed with a deadline and can be verified by the supervisor as shown below.

Task	Work progress	Deadline	Means of verification
Email & messages	Eg. Responded to 5 emails		
Meetings	HRC		
Desk review/proposals	Completed the draft and shared by email		

## 5.3 Jot-down meeting minutes

Have your meeting minutes in a shared doc. that the team can refer to. In the event if a team member couldn't sit in for an important virtual meeting, you can use Zoom's/Google Hangouts auto-record feature so they can playback to keep themselves in the loop.

## 5.4 Communicate and document tasks

Keep your teammates and supervisors updated of your daily activities either by sharing them in the assigned task management tool or sharing the above WFH Schedule.

## 6. Resources for WFH

Agencies in discussion with their staff must ensure that they have the necessary facilities like computers/laptops to work from home.

## 7. General Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Stay Home and limit the number of visitors coming into your space to only very essential visitors.	Organise or attend social gathering like dinner parties, meeting up with friends or make unnecessary visits to hospitals and other public places
Plan gainful engagements or pursue hobbies like reading, listening to music, writing or giving time to family and children.	Get into alternate employment/engagements like operating businesses, driving taxis, manning shops or working in any commercial establishments etc.
Maintain at least 6 feet distance from others when going out to do essential errands such as buying food, get necessary health care, take care of relatives, etc.	Engage in contact sports like playing football, volleyball, or other group games like Khuru/Archery etc where there is possibility to come into close contacts with others
Maintain personal hygiene like washing hands frequently for at least 20 seconds and using hand sanitizer	Leave the duty station without informing immediate supervisor
Keep yourself healthy through exercise like solitary walks or jogs and having a balanced diet.	Change contact addresses or contact numbers without prior information to your immediate supervisor
Keep updated about organisational activities and be ready to be called to duty at any time.	Use public transportation (Bus, Taxis) unnecessarily
Update yourself with the news and follow BBS, the Ministry of Health Facebook page and website and PMO's facebook page and twitter handle for updates on Covid 19 outbreak.	Spread rumours and fake news which might lead to unnecessary fear and panic amongst the public.
Seek appropriate medical assistance if you develop flu like symptoms	

***Note: Every Agency is required to draw up a Staff Engagement Plan which ensures that the Agency is in the state of preparedness for future lockdowns and subsequent reopenings. Should you require a reference or sample, we can share RCSC's Staff Engagement Plan.***