



Guidance for employers



Employers' duties extend to workers working from home or remotely, and they must take steps to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their workers.

There are a range of ways managers and supervisors can help workers:

- make working from home a productive, safe and healthy, digitally connected experience
- overcome challenges associated with working from home
- ensure team success by providing structure and clear expectations.



PRACTICAL TIPS

Create a communication structure

- **1:1 daily check-in** – provides a routine for each team member and a way in which team members can consult with you and raise any issues or concerns. The check-in can be delivered by email, phone, SMS, video conference meeting or instant message.
- **Daily team meetings** – will foster team collaboration. Morning meetings can assist home-based workers to transition from 'at home' mode to an 'at work' mode. It is important to consider team members individual requirements—for example, caring responsibilities or part time arrangements.
- **Weekly 1:1 meetings** – enable you to check on an individual's work progress, challenges and mental health. Managers should listen to workers' to alleviate any issues or concerns and offer encouragement and/or link to other support tools such as your Employee Assistance Program.
- **Get the balance right** – if your team members work more independently from one another, a daily 1:1 and a less frequent team meeting may be more appropriate.
- **Video conferencing** – 'face-to-face' meetings via video conferencing allow for visual cues, which improves communication and reduces a sense of isolation. Video conferencing is particularly useful for complex or sensitive discussions, as it feels more personal than audio or written communication.

Set clear expectations

- **Output** – discuss standards, deadlines, key priorities and methods for tracking performance.
- **Milestones to achieve deadlines** – have a 'how's it going?' call well before the deadline, so you can spot any potential delays.
- **Dependencies** – how does an employee's work contribute to other teams and projects? What is required from them and when?
- **Potential obstacles** – schedule a group call to discuss strategies to address any obstacles.



Working from HOME



Support work-life balance

- **Workspace** – talk to your team about finding a suitable space in their home for working and if possible, separate from communal areas.
- **Talk flexibility** – maintain a dialogue with your team about flexibility and how works hours or tasks may be adjusted to support home life or other demands.
- **Taking regular breaks** – encourage your staff to take lunch breaks, and regular stretching breaks throughout the day.

Create a digital workplace

Introduce a range of digital collaboration tools in addition to phone and email, such as:

- Team chats
- Instant messenger
- Video conferencing
- File exchange.

Determine with your team how these tools should be best used to support their work.

For example: instant messages are best suited to short status updates.

Ensure a safe and healthy working environment

Working from home can introduce additional risks, and you have an obligation to support healthy and safe work. To understand if an injury arises from the course of employment during home-based work, employers and workers can:

- Define the workplace
- Establish the hours of work
- Set expectations for daily work activities
- Use the [Working from Home checklist](#) it provides employers and workers with minimal guidance and measures on how they can meet their respective work health and safety obligations.

Build community and provide opportunities for remote social interactions

- **Maintain social interaction** – emphasise the importance of maintaining social interaction within virtual team meetings.
- **Share health strategies** – encourage workers to share their strategies for building mental and physical health at work such as: meditation, indoor activities and sharing podcasts.
- **Virtual events** – consider using technology for celebrating special days and achievements or to hold virtual morning teas and lunches. Create interesting visual backgrounds to make the event more engaging.

Remember: employers and workers' work health and safety duties still apply in home-based work. For further information on your obligations, view Comcare's [working from home checklist](#) and [Office Safety Tool](#).