

Remote Working Policy Guide

Dealing with crises in the workplace and the optimal application of remote working policies



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We strive at Mercer to ensure that our clients apply leading practices in their workplaces at all times, and due to the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) around the world, Mercer has developed this policy guide to support organizations in developing / updating their remote working policies.

This policy guide aims to provide the necessary support to organizations in the application of remote working policies in times of crisis and emergency situations. It also includes policies related to the permanent application of the remote working policies to selected jobs within the organization.

The guide has been developed according to leading practices of the global labour market, and requires organizations to review and ensure that the policies mentioned in the guide are aligned with their work environment, current policies and relevant local regulations.

The policies and practices mentioned in this guide are not considered to include all means of dealing with crisis and emergency situations, nor does this guide represent a substitute for the instructions and regulations issued by the relevant government agencies in ways of dealing with these circumstances.

We hope that you realize the outmost benefit from applying these policies in your organization, through enhancing the productivity and satisfaction levels of your employees.

Contents

Objective

1-1- Special Cases to activate remote working system

1-2- Form a Crisis Management Team

1-3- Considerations related to activating the remote working system

1-4- Employee attendance during the remote work period

1-5- Application of working hours, weekends, public holidays and overtime policies

1-6- Mechanism for determining remote working (outside of crisis times)

1-7- The effectiveness of remote working

Objective

This policy aims to set the standards and guidelines for all activities related to remote work in times of crisis and special situations, as well as the activities related to the permanent remote working.

Policy Application

This policy applies to all Function Units within the organization.

1-1 Special Cases to Activate the Remote working System

1-1-1 The organization is keen to maintain the safety of its employees and the provision of a safe work place to perform their work. Therefore, in times of crisis or when an emergency occurs, a remote working system for its employees shall be activated. These cases are summarized as follows:

- In the event of disease and epidemics
- In the event of natural disasters (earthquakes, tornados, floods, etc.)
- In the event of wars and crises

1-1-2 In the event of any of the abovementioned crises or emergencies, the organization shall follow the necessary steps to ensure the safety of its employees and business continuity. The main steps to be followed are:

- Reducing face-to-face meetings as much as possible, and urging staff to hold remote meetings using the organization's remote working systems
 - Urging employees who show symptoms of infectious diseases to visit one of the health centers to receive the necessary health care, and ensure that they do not report to the workplace until they recover and the possibility of transmitting the disease to others is eliminated
 - Canceling or postponing events that require a large number of attendees until the crisis has ended and until potential danger to the audience is eliminated
 - Inform employees and external parties about restrictions imposed on travel or gatherings inside or outside the work environment, and ways to deal with them
 - Providing continuous infection control supplies in the event of disease or epidemics, as directed by relevant authorities and increase the cleaning of public facilities and door handles
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1-2 Form a Crisis Management Team

- 1-2-1 In the event of one of the abovementioned crises or special cases, the Human Resources Department shall coordinate with the Risk and Compliance Function, if any, to form a temporary team to manage the crisis.
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- 1-2-2 The Crisis Management Team members shall consist of:
- Head of Organization
 - Human Resources General Manager
 - Risk and Compliance General Manager (if any)
 - Sector Heads (Direct reports to Head of Organization)
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- 1-2-3 The responsibilities of the Crisis Management Team are summarized in the following:
- Take decisions about the measures to be taken to maintain employee safety and ensure business continuity
 - Continuously communicate with the relevant government entities to take the necessary precautions and procedures to be followed in the work environment during the crisis
 - Ensure that agreed procedures are applied across all sectors of the organization
 - Discuss situations of employees affected by the crisis and provide them with the necessary support
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1-3 Considerations Related to Activating the Remote working System

- 1-3-1 The organization shall activate safe remote communication systems and ensure that the employees are trained to use them.
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- 1-3-2 The organization shall ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of data is maintained while employees work remotely, by providing privacy screens for their electronic devices, and ensuring the secure connection to the organization's local network using the VPN service.
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- 1-3-3 The organization shall adopt the tools and practices necessary to continuously track and monitor the performance of employees working remotely, including:
- Establishment of specialized systems for goal setting and monitoring
 - Applying performance indicators compatible with the nature of remote working
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- 1-3-4 The employee shall be allowed to work remotely from his/her home after ensuring that the designated workplace is aligned with the rules and guidelines for safe work set by the Information Technology Department. The employee is prevented from performing his/her work from any other place without notification and taking the approval of the Information Technology Department.
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- 1-3-5 Employees working remotely must be able to visit the organization's headquarters at any time within a short period (no more than one hour) of the requested meeting. Likewise, the employee must attend the periodic meetings of his/her department at the organization's headquarters whenever required.
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1-4 Employee attendance during the remote work period

- 1-4-1 The line manager is responsible for managing the productivity of his/her remote workers and maintaining business continuity in his/her concerned department
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- 1-4-2 All employees working remotely are required to complete a report of their working hours through the organization's online attendance system.
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- 1-4-3 After submitting the working hours report, the direct manager reviews and approves the report using the various performance tracking and monitoring tools approved by the organization.
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1-5 Application of working hours, weekends, public holidays and overtime

- 1-5-1 Remote workers are subject to the organization's approved policies related to working hours, weekends and official holidays.
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- 1-5-2 Remote workers working for additional working hours shall be compensated according to the organization's approved overtime policies.
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- 1-5-3 Employees working remotely are not permitted to perform other jobs, or provide health care for their family members, or to run their own businesses during business hours. The HR Department shall take the necessary disciplinary measures whenever any of these cases is proven
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1-6 Mechanism for Determining Remote working Jobs (Outside of Crisis Times)

- 1-6-1 The HR Department undertakes an annual study that involves reviewing the possibility of activating the remote working system across the organization, resulting in a list of remote working jobs.
- 1-6-2 The HR Department shall study the dependencies of applying the remote working system, in coordination with the concerned departments, by looking into the following:
- Business continuity
 - Impact on overall productivity
 - Overall impact on employee engagement
- 1-6-3 The following cases form the most common reasons for activating the remote working system for selected jobs:
- The job consists of field work, limited by field visits / inspections
 - The work related to the job is done on a seasonal basis (e.g. the work is concentrated in one quarter of the year and not the others)
 - The work related to the job is performed on shifts basis
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1-7 The effectiveness of remote working

- 1-7-1 The HR Department, in coordination with the concerned departments, shall study the effectiveness of applying the remote working system by measuring the following:
- The effect of remote working on the employee's overall productivity
 - Ability to deal with changes in business needs (slow and peak times)
- 1-7-2 After applying the remote working system to the organization's jobs, the level of employee satisfaction shall be measured by sending a survey directed to remote workers to measure their level of engagement and enhance their level of loyalty to the organization.
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About Mercer

At Mercer, we believe in building brighter futures.

Together, we're redefining the world of work, reshaping retirement and investment outcomes, and unlocking real health and well-being. We do this by meeting the needs of today and tomorrow. By understanding the data and applying it with a human touch. And by turning ideas into action to spark positive change.

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