



Republic of Mauritius

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE,
ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS**

FAQs

on

**WORK-FROM-HOME
SCHEME**

FAQs on Work-from-Home Scheme

1. What is Work-from-Home Scheme (WFHS)?

Work from home is a working arrangement involving people undertaking work primarily in their homes or who travel extensively but are primarily based at home.

The WFHS was announced as a measure to promote work from home to raise productivity beyond the traditional workspace.

2. Why is there a need to implement the WFHS?

Implementing the WFHS will result in the following benefits, among others:

- (i) Improvement in service delivery;
- (ii) Lesser hours are spent in traffic jams and commuting costs;
- (iii) Work-life balance is improved;
- (iv) The spread of infectious diseases can be contained;
- (v) Saving on fixed office costs;
- (vi) Staff will be motivated to work in an innovative environment with less stress and more job satisfaction, improving their efficiency and effectiveness; and
- (vii) More flexibility to organize tasks.

3. Is WFHS and flexitime similar?

No. Flexitime is an arrangement whereby employees can vary their starting and finishing times to suit their work and personal commitments in office. WFHS, on the other hand, pertains to work carried out according to an agreed schedule from an officer's residence.

4. What are the conditions for the successful implementation of the WFHS?

- **Agreement between Officers and Supervising Officer of the Ministry**

Supervising Officers should agree in advance on tasks to be performed by members of their team together with delivery outcomes. Records should be kept of all tasks performed,

hours put in by officers concerned and endorsed by the Head of Section.

The Head of Departments/Divisions/Sections will have to submit a report on the performance of each officer working under this scheme for Performance Management purposes.

- **Judicious use of Government Property**

Officers should ensure that Government property under their responsibility is used appropriately and responsibly and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent damage and theft.

- **Safety and Health Arrangement**

Officers benefitting from the scheme and the Supervising Officer authorising their participation in the scheme shall comply with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

- **Trust between Heads of Departments/Divisions/Sections and officers**

The scheme is reliant upon there being trust between Heads of Departments/Divisions/Sections and officers concerned. This is so fundamental that any breach of trust will be treated very seriously with appropriate action, including putting an end to the agreement to work from home.

- **Costs for Home Working Arrangements by an officer**

The Government will not be liable for any additional household costs as home working arrangements is to be of mutual benefit. Whilst working from home, officers must take responsibility for their work during office hours.

- **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

WFHS will not affect the existing terms and conditions of employment of public officers.

- **Adhere to Laws on Data and Information Security**

Officers working from home must ensure that they adhere to

the Official Secrets Act, Data Protection Act and Government Security guidelines.

5. What are the safety and health requirements for officers on the WFHS?

- (i) The officers shall ensure compliance with safety and health legislations;
- (ii) Officers are required to have a dedicated work area free from safety and health hazards;
- (iii) The tools and equipment being used shall comply with the organisation safety and health norms and does not lead to any safety and health issues;
- (iv) Cords and electrical equipment should be properly maintained;
- (v) The proposed workstation should be isolated from other distractions;
- (vi) Officers should maintain cleanliness and personal hygiene; and
- (vii) Any other significant risks/hazards that need elimination or minimisation should be identified.

6. Who is eligible to apply for WFHS?

The scheme may cover:

- (i) Technical/departmental grades as well as other categories of staff, depending on the nature and requirements of their jobs; and
- (ii) Officers who are assigned projects/assignments/tasks such as Engineers, Project Manager, Architect.

Note:

- Grades of essential services, for example, Doctor, Police Officer, Nursing Officer, Fire Officer, Teachers, etc, are not covered under this scheme. Those officers whose immediate physical presence are required at office/site of work within very short notice are also not eligible for the WFHS; and
- WFHS depends on exigencies of the service, degree of interaction required with other parties, general nature and

requirements of the officer's duties, ability to work autonomously and the need for physical presence in the office.

7. Who decides if an officer is eligible for WFHS?

Supervising Officers, in consultation with the immediate Heads of Sections/Units/Divisions, will decide whether an officer can work from home under the WFHS.

8. How will an officer apply for WFHS?

The officer has to fill in an **Application Form** which will be examined and approved by his/her Supervising Officer. The Application Form is available at:

<http://civilservice.govmu.org/English/Documents/circular32.pdf>

9. What will be the hours of work, attendance and availability for work of officers?

- (i) The contractual weekly hours of work of officers, i.e. 33¾ hours weekly would remain unchanged;
- (ii) Officers shall be available within a core time of 08.45 hrs - 12.00 hrs in the morning and 12.30 hrs - 16.00 hrs in the afternoon, respectively to respond to any call or email;
- (iii) Officers will have the flexibility to arrange their working hours with their immediate supervisor provided they put in the required number of hours;
- (iv) Officers will be expected to be available to come to the office on any working day, should the need arise; and
- (v) The duration of the WFHS will depend on the nature of tasks allocated and as approved by the Supervising Officer.

10. What is the minimum work duration per day that would qualify an officer to work from home?

A minimum of three hours per day for the task assigned would qualify an officer to WFHS. It is understood that the remaining balance of working hours would be carried out in office or on site.

11. Are officers entitled to claim overtime payment when working from home?

In principle, they will not be entitled to claim for overtime allowance, unless prior authorisation has been obtained.

12. What if an officer is sick on the day he/she has agreed to WFHS?

The officer will have to inform the Head of Department/Division/Section and apply for sick leave.

13. Can an officer take a casual leave during the period of WFHS?

Yes. The officer can apply for a casual/urgent casual leave and seek approval from the Head of Department/Division/Section of the respective Ministry/Department accordingly.

14. Can the WFHS arrangement be cancelled/reviewed?

The WFHS arrangement can be cancelled by the Supervising Officer in cases such as unsatisfactory performance, non-compliance to the WFHS agreement etc.

The Supervising Officer may also review the WFHS in line with exigencies of service.

15. What facilities does the officer get to work from home?

- (i) He/she should make use of official IT equipment already provided; and
- (ii) He/she may use his/her own computer/laptop/smart phone.

16. What is the minimum number of hours an officer should work from home to be eligible for the allowances?

The officer will be granted a monthly Cell Phone and Internet Allowances as follows:

- **Cell Phone Allowance** - Rs 300 (subject to a minimum of 9 hours per month on the WFHS)
- **Internet Allowance** - Rs 300 (subject to a minimum of 9 hours per month on the WFHS).

17. What is an officer expected to deliver when working from home?

The officer will need to agree on the task(s) that he/she will be performing and the time by which the tasks will be completed with the Supervising Officer. He/she will need to report on the progress of the task as agreed between the officer and the Supervising Officer.

18. Does the officer have to submit a report?

Yes. The Officer must submit a return of all tasks performed and hours put in.

A sample of details of tasks performed is at the table below:

Task No.	Description of the Task	Hours Needed to Complete the Task	Performance Target	Date	
				Started	Completed

19. What if the IT equipment provided get damaged at home?

Any damage or theft of Government property must be reported to the Supervising Officers immediately.

20. How will the Supervising Officer contact the officer?

The officer may be contacted through phone/mobile, email or video conferencing. Regarding the means of communication and the time of availability, it is recommended that these be discussed and agreed mutually.

21. Will the Ministry/Department provide desks, office chairs or any other items of furniture?

No. It is recommended that the officer creates a dedicated space at home.

22. Can personal tasks e.g house chores, looking after kids be mixed with official work while WFHS?

The idea behind WFHS is to enable flexible work and also to have a work-life balance. Whilst working from home, you must

take responsibility for your work during official hours. The scheme is reliant upon there being trust between your Head of Department/Division/Section and you. This is so fundamental that any breach of **trust** will be treated very seriously with appropriate action, including putting an end to the agreement to work from home.

23. How do an officer overcome work from home failures?

In case of any problem being encountered, you should promptly liaise with your immediate Supervisor for guidance and advice.

24. What are the potential risks under WFHS?

- (i) Risk of technical failure of IT equipment;
- (ii) Unavailability of appropriate data for use; and
- (iii) Lack of face-to-face contact with colleagues and other Departmental Heads of Sections.

25. What skills will be required to work remotely?

- (i) Should know your job perfectly;
- (ii) Capacity and capability to work remotely and under minimum supervision;
- (iii) Capacity to take decision;
- (iv) IT conversant;
- (v) Highly collaborative and ready to take responsibilities;
- (vi) Ability to be autonomous; and
- (vii) Trust/integrity/responsibility.

26. What will be the duration of WFHS?

The WFHS will be applicable on a pilot basis for an initial period of three months. The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms will gather feedback on the scheme and should it be favourable, necessary arrangements will be undertaken to further enhance the scheme for its continued applicability in the Public Service.

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