

# Work from Home Program Toolkit for Employees



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The Work from Home Program is supported by all Manitoba health service delivery organizations. It should be noted that the application of the program may differ in each service delivery organization based on the core program foundations of operational requirements, performance and role eligibility.

The employer reserves the right to review and amend the terms and conditions of the Work from Home Program, including participation and continuance. Participation in this Program does not form a term and condition of your employment.



## Introduction

This toolkit is designed for employees who want to learn more about our **Work from Home Program** and explore opportunities to participate in the program.

Starting in March 2020, over 2,000 health-care workers in Manitoba started working remotely.

96% of staff agreed or strongly agreed they can perform their job duties at home.

60% of staff would like to continue working from home indefinitely.

37% stated they would like to work from home some of the time.

4% indicated they would like to return permanently.

# Work from Home Program Overview

## Principles

Work from home arrangements must adhere to the following principles:

- Ensure the work environment is safe.
- Ensure services continue to be provided fairly, reliably, competently and in a timely manner.
- Ensure there are no negative impacts to other employees, patients, residents or clients.
- Ensure sensitive information is handled appropriately and discreetly, and measures are in place to protect confidentiality, privacy and information security related to storage, retention and destruction as required by the employer policy and legislation.
- Must not add additional expense to the organization.
- Support continued teamwork, collaboration and professional learning and development.
- Be flexible and adaptable to changes in priorities and needs.

# Applying a Successful Work From Home Program

This toolkit provides the information you need to formalize your application, including step-by-step guidelines to help your transition to working from home be successful.

## 1. [Complete the Work from Home Safety Checklist](#)

**2. Foster continued teamwork, collaboration and learning** by participating fully in team building exercises and professional development opportunities.

**3. Learn more about productivity software and tools.** The productivity software and tools you are provided with have powerful functions for communicating and collaborating with your coworkers. There are a number of [training videos](#) available to help you and your team get the most out of this software.

**4. Stay on top of technical issues.** Technical issues are more likely to occur when individuals work from home. Ensure you have a back-up plan (e.g., a nearby employer designated work location) in place to ensure continuity of service and completion of work assignments if, for example, your internet access or power goes down.

The Shared Health Service Desk is available 24/7 for technical issues.  
Phone: 204-940-8500  
Toll-Free: 1-866-999-9698  
Email: [servicedesk@sharedhealthmb.ca](mailto:servicedesk@sharedhealthmb.ca)

## Application Process

Employees should fill out the Application/Agreement to Work from Home Form and submit it to their manager. Their manager will review the form and determine if the employee is a suitable candidate to work from home.

The manager will consider:

- Is the arrangement operationally feasible?
- Will it maintain or improve service and productivity?
- Will it result in any additional costs for the organization?
- Can the employee successfully perform their full scope of job functions from home?

The manager will use a standard assessment tool to determine the employee's suitability for the Work from Home program. If the application is approved by the manager, the employee must fill out the Work from Home Safety Checklist. This list ensures the employee's intended work location meets the required standards, including being safe and secure. If an application is denied, the manager will provide the rationale for denying the request in writing.

If the manager declines the Work from Home Application and the employee is not satisfied with the rationale, the employee may contact their Human Resources representative.

A remote work arrangement may be ended with 4 weeks' notice by either party or immediately if there are performance, safety, operational or other concerns that require the employee to

immediately return to work at an assigned work location.

Each work from home agreement will be reassessed annually and employees are required to fill out the renewal form and provide to their manager for approval. The work from home agreement is not transferable to another position. The employee must reapply if they change positions.



## Employee and Manager Responsibilities

### Employee responsibilities

Employees are to provide periodic updates to their manager on how the arrangement is working and discuss any challenges.

Employees are expected to maintain and provide for adequate homeowner or tenant insurance to cover theft or damage, a data plan that meets the specifications set out by Digital Health (2 Mbps), heat, electricity and maintenance, desks, chairs and lighting. The employer assumes no responsibility for any costs for home renovations to establish a home-based work environment.

Office supplies purchased by the employee will not be reimbursed.

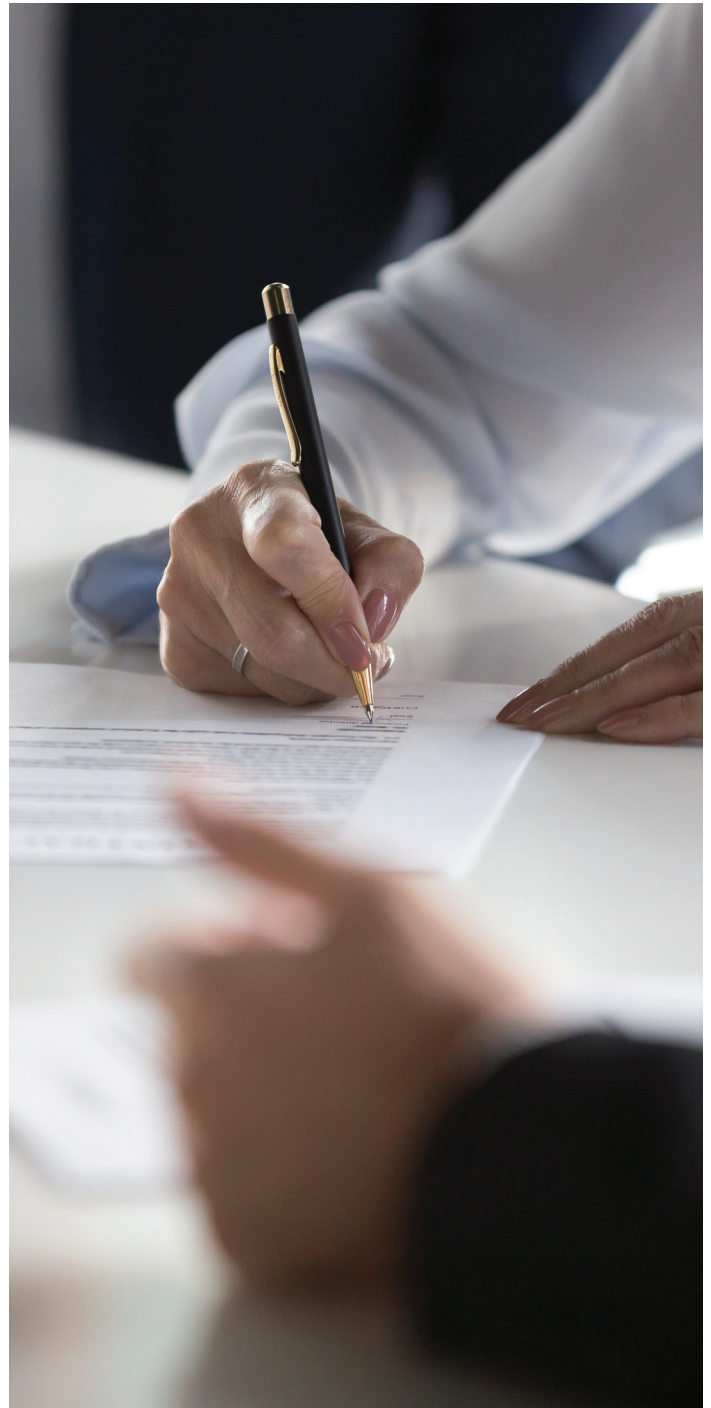
Employees must ensure all electronic and hard copy files are maintained in accordance with both FIPPA, PHIA and employer policies.

Employees must ensure sensitive information is handled appropriately and discreetly and measures are in place to protect confidentiality, privacy and information security related to storage, retention and destruction of information as required by the employer policy and legislation

Employees working from home will be expected to attend in person at their assigned work or other locations as requested for meetings, training or at the employer's request.

Employee's must maintain their workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee and equipment.

Employees must return all equipment as per policies and/or upon the request of the employer.



## **Manager Responsibilities**

Your manager will ensure performance expectations, accountability measures and parameters for a work from home arrangement are clearly defined and confirm the work from home arrangement is reviewed with you annually.

Your manager will continue to foster teamwork, collaboration and professional development from the work from home environment and will schedule regular meetings with you as a check-in.

## **Meetings**

### **Video**

Studies have shown staff feel more connected in meetings when they can see the other participants. Best practices state employees should have their cameras turned on at the start of meetings and for introductions, and speakers should remain on camera. Use of appropriate backgrounds to maintain privacy within the home are permitted. To collaborate with coworkers in smaller groups, it is appropriate to maintain video to allow for effective non-verbal communication; however, there may be times when data transfer limits use of video.

### **Video conference backgrounds**

Staff are welcome to use backgrounds; however, backgrounds must be appropriate for the workplace. Staff and managers are asked to use their discretion in deciding what is appropriate.

### **In person meetings**

In-person meetings with staff may occur from time to time and you are required to participate in person if requested.

## **Employment and Compensation**

### **Work Responsibilities and Compensation**

Compensation, applicable benefits, work status and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in the Work from Home Program. The amount of time the employee is expected to work will not change as a result of participation in the Work from Home Program, nor will it alter the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

Changes to work locations or previously agreed upon hours of work must adhere to applicable collective agreement provisions and employer policies and legislation. Work from home arrangements are not transferable and must be reviewed if the employee assumes a different position.

This program does not address flexible work hours arrangements and is not intended as a substitute for making a request for an accommodation.

## **Workers Compensation Coverage**

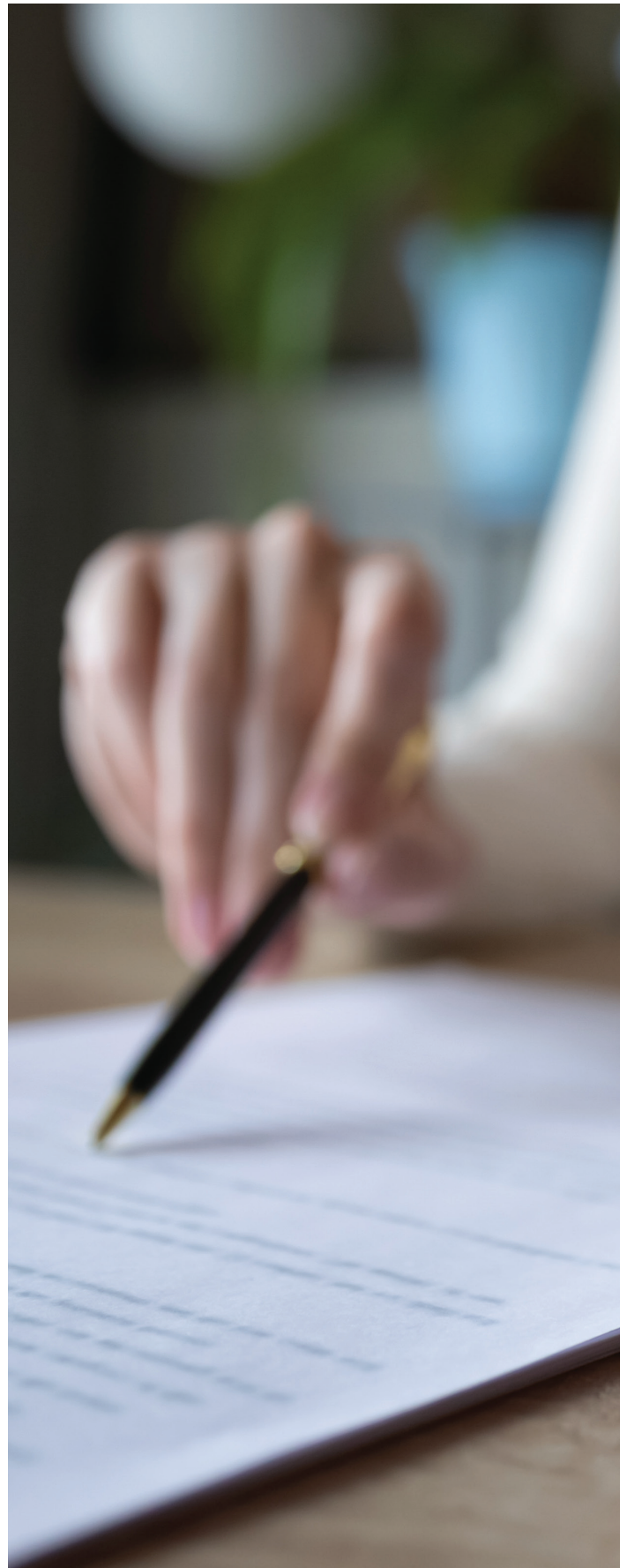
The employee's home workspace will be considered an extension of the employer's workspace. Therefore, the employer continues to be liable for job-related accidents that occur in the employee's home workspace during the employee's working hours.

The Work from Home Program is applicable to employees who are residents of Manitoba, where they will continue to be eligible for Worker's Compensation insurance if an injury or medical condition arises from their work duties. If you believe your injury or medical condition arises from your work, you must notify your manager and you may file a claim with the Worker's Compensation Board (WCB), and they will assess your claim.

The employer assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's home workspace outside the agreed-upon work hours. The employer is also not liable for loss, destruction, or injury that may occur in or to the employee's home. This includes family members, visitors or others who may become injured within or around the employee's home.

## **Insurance**

Employees in a work from home arrangement should notify their home insurance broker and adjust their coverage accordingly for both increased risks for property damage or theft. If company equipment is damaged or stolen, the employee will be expected to cover the cost of replacement through their home insurance or out of pocket.





## **Employee Expectations**

### **Dependent Care**

Working from home is not a substitute for making appropriate arrangements for dependent care, such as child or elder care. Time off to devote to dependent care must be taken in accordance with employer policies.

### **Communication**

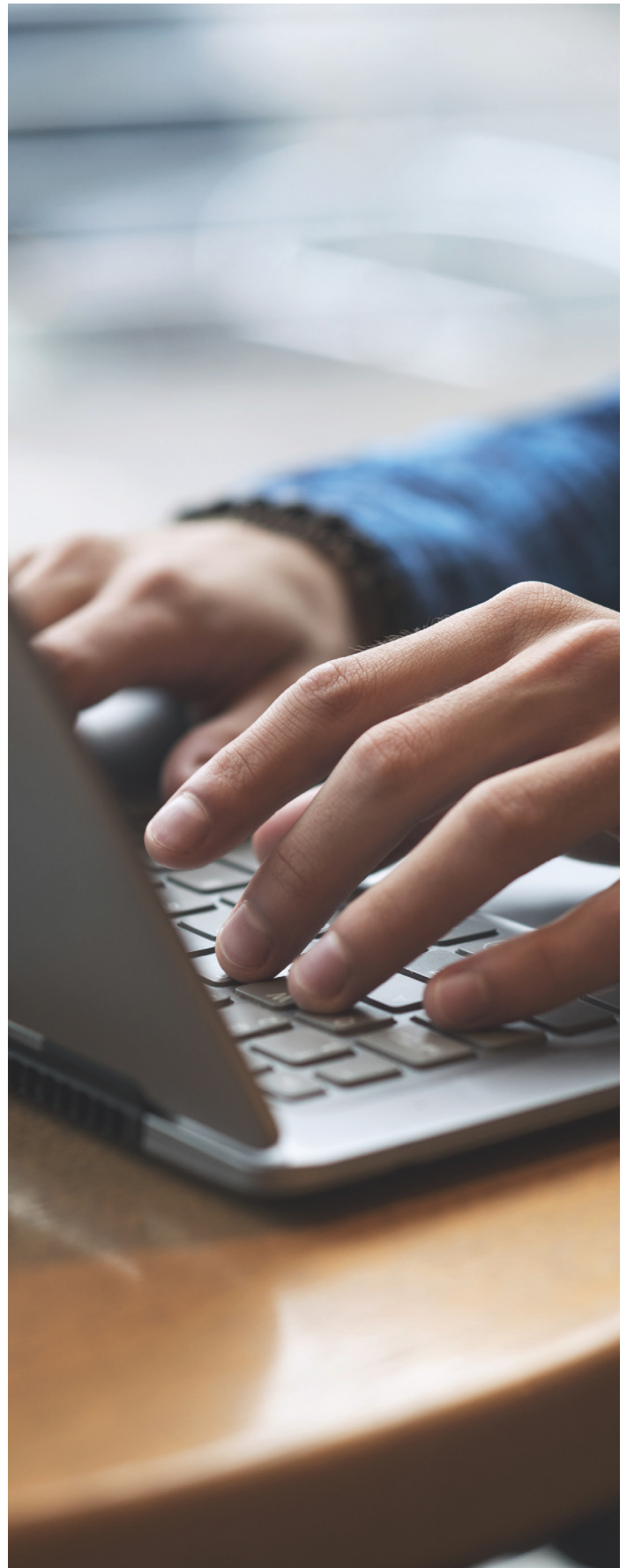
Employees must be available through telephone, email and/or video meetings, required chat tools and other assigned tools during work hours. Employees must be available for staff meetings and other meetings deemed necessary by management.

### **Taxes**

Employees are responsible for determining any tax implications of maintaining a home office area. The employer will not provide tax guidance nor will it assume any additional tax liabilities. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss tax implications. T2200 are available through the finance department.

### **Evaluation**

Employees must agree to participate in all studies, inquiries, reports and analyses relating to this program. Employees remain obligated to comply with all employer rules, practices and instructions.



## **Equipment, Travel and Administrative Responsibilities**

### **Printing and Faxing**

Any printing or faxing from home (i.e., an approved work from home location) must comply with privacy policies and practices. Printing and faxing are highly encouraged to be performed only at the employer-designated primary-assigned work location.

All home printing and faxing are at the employee's expense. Printers and related printing supplies will not be provided by the employer.

### **Mileage & Parking Reimbursement**

If the employee is required to attend meetings at their employer-designated primary-assigned work location or is participating in a hybrid work from home and employer work location model, parking expenses are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed. If a parking subsidy program is offered at the employer-designated primary-assigned work location, the employee may choose to participate in the program. These arrangements are the responsibility of the employee.

If a meeting is scheduled at any location other than the employee's employer-designated primary-assigned work location, parking and mileage reimbursement will be provided in accordance with the organization's mileage and expense policies. Mileage reimbursement begins at the employer-designated primary-assigned work location and not from the

home-based work location (some exceptions apply depending on employment details).

### **Equipment and Supplies**

The employer will provide basic tools/equipment for employees use to perform their work duties. This may include computer hardware, computer software, smartphones, connectivity to host applications and other applicable equipment as the employer deems necessary.

The use of equipment, software and supplies, when provided for use at the work from home location, is for the sole use of the authorized employee and for the purposes relating to the employee's role. Employee's using their own equipment are responsible for maintenance and repair of equipment.

### **Ergonomics**

Please review the Work from Home Safety Checklist. As well, this document will assist in setting up an ergonomically friendly home-based work space: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ergonomics-and-working-from-home.pdf>.

Additionally, [Safe Work Manitoba](#) and [occupational health](#) have a number of useful resources.

If you wish to schedule a virtual home ergonomic assessment, please contact your local occupational health supports.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How does this Work from Home Program differ from our current practices in place since April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

A: Those currently working remotely are doing so as part of COVID response plans. As we have seen success with remote work arrangements and received requests from staff to continue to work in this manner, we are now offering this as part of a longer term opportunity to continue this work arrangement.

**Q: I have a job that requires me to attend several different locations. Am I still able to participate in the Work from Home Program?**

A: Yes. As long as it does not interfere with your ability to perform your job duties (including attending all appointments and locations external to the home based workspace), you can participate in the Work from Home program.

**Q: What if I don't have a space where I can close the door to protect the personal health information or personal information I access to do my job?**

A: Privacy legislation and policies related to personal health and personal information remain critical. If you are unable to follow your employer's policies, you may not be a successful work from home candidate.

**Q: What if I get another position?**

A: If you change positions, the work from home arrangement does not follow you. If you wish,

you can re-apply to work from home.

**Q: What locations can I work from as part of this program?**

A: You can work from any residence in Manitoba. The location(s) you're planning on working from must be included in the Application and Agreement to Work from Home document. As well, you must ensure you are following all program requirements and policies, including those related to safety, privacy and confidentiality, and maintain appropriate homeowner or tenant insurance and follow all municipal zoning requirements.

**Q: Can I work outside of Manitoba on an extended or permanent basis?**

A: Not as part of the Work from Home Program. There are many reasons why working from other Canadian or international locations is not permissible, including personal safety, insurance and privacy risks.

**Q: If I live outside of Manitoba, can I apply to the work from home program?**

A: The work from home program is applicable only to residents of Manitoba.

**Q: When working from home, can I make my own work hours?**

A: No. If you would like to change your work hours, please speak directly with your manager to ensure operational feasibility and the appropriate process and scheduling codes are applied, as per HR. A change of work location

does not mean that core hours of work are also to change.

**Q: What if a get hurt while on a break?**

A: Get any medical help you need first, then inform your supervisor/manager as soon as possible of any injury, illness or near miss. If your injury occurred while you were taking a scheduled break, you may need to make an insurance claim on your home or tenant insurance or another insurance provider or through your employer.

**Q: What if I find I am working longer hours?**

A: Work with your supervisor or manager to maintain your schedule. In keeping with policy, if you are paid for overtime, your manager must approve any overtime hours in writing in advance. This does not apply to those who are overtime exempt.

**Q: Can I take care of my child(ren) or other dependents while working from home?**

A: No. This program requires you to fully attend to your work duties during all your scheduled work hours. You will need to continue to make appropriate arrangements for your dependents in accordance with the employer's policies..

**Q: What if I am called away to attend to an urgent personal issue?**

A: Just as if you were at the employer's location, you need to maintain ongoing regular communication with your supervisor, manager and work team. If you need time off to deal

with an urgent personal issue, you will need to contact your supervisor/manager to ensure they are aware and the time is coded properly in your timesheet.

**Q: What about my commute and parking expenses when I need to be working at an employer or client location?**

A: Consistent with current practices and policies, you will not be reimbursed for your commute to a location identified by your employer as your designated principal location. Other business meetings will follow the employer's mileage and expense policy. Mileage begins from the designated principal location and not from your home office location (some exceptions apply depending on employment details).

**Q: How long does an approval to work from home last?**

A: The program allows managers to approve a work from home arrangement for up to one year at a time. The application will be reassessed annually. Employees are required to fill out the renewal form and send to their managers.

**Q: What if my power goes out or my internet connection fails?**

A: If you lose power or your internet connection, you may be required to come into your employer designated principal location or to another nearby employer location, as the work we do is critical to the health of the patients, residents and clients we are here to serve. Please speak with your manager if you are experiencing any issues.

**Q: Will I have to buy anything?**

A: If you participate in this program, you are responsible for the costs associated with keeping a productive work environment. You will be provided a basic set of technology tools, which may include a laptop, additional monitor, full sized keyboard, computer software, smartphone (if applicable), connectivity to host applications and other applicable equipment as the employer identifies necessary. You are responsible for all other costs, such as internet, furniture or appliances, office supplies, printing and other peripherals if appropriate to your position. As well, you are responsible for maintaining the proper home/tenant insurance, your home utility costs, any renovations that may be required to maintain a safe, productive work environment and continuing to follow all employer policies.

**Q: What if I want to participate in the Work from Home Program, but I find out it isn't productive or healthy for me?**

A: It's okay to change your mind. Your health is of the highest importance and if you find working from home does not work for you, we will arrange to have you return to an employer-provided work location. Please talk with your manager and give your employer four weeks' notice if possible so that an appropriate work environment can be arranged.

Similarly, if you or your manager find your productivity declines, your manager will give you reasonable notice (usually four weeks unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as safety, operational or performance

issues) of when you will be returned to an employer-provided work location.

**Q: If I choose to work from the office part time, will I have a designated work space?**

A: If you choose to work from the office part of the time, please discuss available work space options with you manager and follow all site health protocols.

**Q: What if my Work from Home Program application is denied?**

A: If you are concerned your manager has not made their decision based on all the relevant information, we encourage you to bring your concerns to them for discussion. If you are unable to come to an agreement, we encourage you to speak with your Human Resources representative.

**Q: What if I have deficiencies in the Work from Home Safety Checklist?**

A: Please work with your manager to address these deficiencies to help ensure your safety. If the deficiencies cannot be addressed, the Work from Home Program may not be suitable for you.

**Q: How will my application be assessed?**

A: A standard assessment tool for managers has been created to ensure all applications are reviewed using the same criteria.

If you have any questions about this program, please reach out to your Human Resources department.



Winnipeg Regional Health Authority  
*Caring for Health*

Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg  
*À l'écoute de notre santé*