



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

VA Central Office  
Washington, D.C.

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## **OFFICE OF THE CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER (OCHCO) BULLETIN**

### **SUBJECT: Return to In-Person Work Implementing Guidance**

This OCHCO Bulletin provides guidance for implementing President Trump's January 20, 2025, Presidential Memorandum (PM), "[Return to In-Person Work](#)." All telework and remote work guidance contradicting or conflicting with the PM and this Bulletin is rescinded. This information should be widely distributed to all VA supervisors and employees.

On January 24, 2025, VA issued a memorandum titled "[Revisions to VA Handbook 5011, Telework and Remote Work Arrangements](#)," which revised VA's telework policy. These revisions will be codified in VA Handbook 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave, to require employees to work full time at their respective duty stations (agency worksites) unless excused due to a disability, qualifying medical condition, military spouse with existing and new remote work arrangements<sup>1</sup>, spouses of U.S. Foreign Service members on overseas assignment, employees on current and new Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (DETO) arrangements, or exempted for other compelling reason. Employees who applied for the Deferred Resignation Program and were deemed eligible are also excused from in-person work.

### **Key Dates and Required Actions**

By February 24, 2025, all Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Executive Service Equivalents (SES EQV), Senior Level (SL), and Scientific and Professionals (ST) remote work and telework agreements will be terminated, except for ad hoc telework (also known as situational telework).

No later than February 24, 2025, all remote work and telework agreements for all supervisors on telework arrangements and supervisors on remote work arrangements with current official duty stations within 50 miles<sup>2</sup> of a Federal office space will be terminated, except for ad hoc telework.

<sup>1</sup> The term "military spouses" includes spouses of members of the Armed Forces on active duty, performing full-time National Guard duty, and members of Reserve components on active duty, and spouses of disabled or deceased members of the Armed Forces. See OPM Memorandum, "[Guidance on Exempting Military Spouses and Foreign Service Spouses from Agency Return to Office Plans](#)" (February 12, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> The 50-mile distance only applies to remote work arrangements. The distance from the duty station is not a factor for telework. A telework employee may live anywhere within or outside 50 miles, but the duty station is the agency worksite.

By May 5, 2025, all remote work and telework agreements for all employees (bargaining and non-bargaining unit) on telework arrangements and all employees on remote work arrangements with current official duty stations within 50 miles<sup>2</sup> of a Federal office space will be terminated, except for ad hoc telework.

No later than July 28, 2025, all remote work and telework agreements for all employees (bargaining and non-bargaining unit) on remote work arrangements with current official duty stations outside 50 miles of a Federal office space will be terminated, except for ad hoc telework.

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials may approve temporary extensions of time necessary to comply with the above actions on a case-by-case basis, such as, when an office space cannot be procured for an employee. Each administration and staff office will develop procedures for receiving and approving extension requests.

## **Responsibilities**

### Telework and Remote Work Agreements

Supervisors are responsible for terminating telework and remote work agreements and informing employees of in-person reporting requirements. Responsibilities include:

- Consulting with their servicing HR Office to verify the telework or remote work status of employees and confirm the required reporting date (i.e., February 24, May 5, or July 28, 2025, or other date authorized by an Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or Other Key Official).
- Confirming the availability of office space in consultation with their Administration or Staff Office space point of contact (POC). Space must be identified before terminating a current telework or remote work agreement.
- Notifying employees that they are required to report on a full-time basis and communicating / coordinating requirements related to return to in-person work (e.g., date, worksite location, schedule and hours of work, badging / access, furniture, IT equipment, and other pertinent information etc.).
- Terminating telework and remote work agreements in the same manner the current agreement was established (i.e., by signing the VA Form 0740 and providing a copy to the HR Office or using the electronic equivalent in the Talent Experience Platform; TXP). An employee's refusal to sign the termination does not invalidate the requirement to return to in-person work. Supervisors should annotate the refusal to sign on the form.
- Contacting the servicing HR office for guidance if the employee fails to report in-person to the assigned worksite as directed.
- Approving requests to establish ad hoc telework arrangements. Approval of these requests requires a new agreement to be completed and signed. Employees who wish to establish an ad hoc telework agreement for occasional and situational telework from an alternative worksite following the termination of their existing telework agreement may submit their request in [Employee Self Service](#) or on [VA Form 0740](#) for approval.

- Notifying timekeepers to update timecards in the VA Time and Attendance System to remove telework or remote work codes and ensuring timesheets are updated.
- Coordinating with HR offices regarding any required location-based pay actions due to a change in official duty station.

It is expected that leaders have already communicated the intent to terminate agreements to SES, SES EQV, SL, ST, and supervisors whose remote work and telework agreements must be terminated by February 24, 2025. Receipt of the VA memorandum issued on January 24, 2025, titled “Revisions to VA Handbook 5011, Telework and Remote Work Arrangements,” may be considered notification. If not communicated previously, leaders must immediately notify these employees and proceed with the actions required to comply with this Bulletin’s implementation guidance.

HR Offices are responsible for providing guidance and assistance on terminating telework and remote work arrangements. Responsibilities include:

- Responding timely to data calls on telework or remote work arrangements and coordinating with the appropriate management officials to assist in implementing return to in-person work requirements.
- Updating employee records in HR Smart’s “Maintain Teleworkers” page to reflect either a non-telework status for terminated agreements or an ad hoc/situational telework status for employees who complete a new agreement. For telework and remote work agreements terminated electronically via TXP, HR personnel must review the terminations to ensure the information is correctly reflected in HR Smart.
- Reviewing remote work employee duty stations to determine whether reporting to the specified agency worksite will impact an employee’s locality pay and working with the supervisor to initiate action to update the information effective the beginning of the pay period the employee reports to the new worksite. If an employee’s return to office would decrease their overall rate of pay, consult with District Counsel (or Office of General Counsel, for VA Central Office) before proceeding.
- Note: HRSmart is implementing a duty station enhancement that will be included in the March release. This enhancement will allow users to identify the physical location by description and where the position location is aligned. No HRSmart PAR action changes for Change in Duty Station/Pay should be processed prior to March 3, 2025.
- Processing all HR actions related to return to in-person work.
- Providing guidance to supervisors on appropriate steps to take if an employee refuses to sign the agreement to terminate telework and remote work arrangements and/or fails to report in-person to the agency worksite as directed.

#### Completing VA Form 0740, Telework Request/Agreement

Supervisors are responsible for completing Section X, *Notice of Telework Arrangement Termination*, and must include the following information:

- Block 1: Mark box initiated by supervisor.
- Block 2: Insert the termination date, which will be no later than the day prior to the employee's full-time reporting date. For example, for a start date of February 24, 2025, the termination date will be no later than February 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Block 3: No response required.
- Block 5: Mark box labeled "Involuntary Withdrawal."
- Block 6: Mark box labeled "Other (please specify)" and annotate the following in the comment box below:
  - o "Presidential Action. Presidential Memorandum, Return to In-Person Work, dated January 20, 2025."
- Insert signature (employee and supervisor) and date at the bottom of the page.

A sample termination form may be found on the [Return to In-Person Work SharePoint](#).

When using TXP, follow the Telework for Managers Job Aid process, Section 2, Terminate a Telework Agreement, at the following link: [Job Aid](#). Supervisors should use the same information provided above for completing VA Form 0740.

### Office Space

VA is conducting a comprehensive assessment of facilities and workspace to ensure office (or equivalent) space is available for employees. Once the assessment is complete, each Administration and Staff Office will communicate their procedures for identifying and assigning space. Supervisors are responsible for confirming office space availability in consultation with their Administration or Staff Office space POC. Space must be identified before terminating a current telework or remote work agreement.

### **Temporary Extensions**

A temporary extension is a time-limited delay in reporting in person full-time. This means the employee is still expected to report in-person, but the reporting date would be delayed.

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials are authorized to grant time extensions to comply with the in-person reporting requirement on a case-by-case basis. Extensions will be time-limited and may be considered for situations such as a lack of available office space or delayed IT readiness (e.g., insufficient bandwidth and network capacity). Approval of temporary extensions must be recorded each month following the procedures outlined in *Reporting*, below.

Administrations and Staff Offices are responsible for establishing internal guidance on submitting requests for temporary extensions. A sample template memo is provided.

### **Policy Exceptions**

A policy exception is a limited category identified in the January 24, 2025, VA memorandum or guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The following categories of employees with telework remote work arrangements will not be modified unless there is a basis for revisiting or revising the arrangement: 1) military spouses with existing and new remote work arrangements; 2) spouses of U.S. Foreign Service members on overseas assignment; 3) existing and new DETO arrangements; and 4) employees with remote and telework arrangements approved as a reasonable accommodation, including interim accommodations, due to a disability or qualifying medical condition.

Exceptions apply to current and new DETO arrangements and extensions of DETO arrangements. Position suitability determinations should follow the procedures in VA Handbook 5011 for telework and remote work arrangements for military spouses and DETO arrangements. Questions regarding military spouses and DETOs should be directed to servicing HR offices.

Requests for reasonable accommodation regarding telework or remote work agreements will be addressed through the agency's reasonable accommodation process, which may include consultation with the Office of General Counsel.

### **Agency Head Exemptions**

An agency head exemption is permanent and does not require a particular organization, work unit, or position to report in-person.

The Secretary or designee must approve exemptions. A limited number of requests is expected to rise to the level of an exemption. Requests for exemptions must include a strong business case describing the "other compelling reason" for not complying with the PM. The exemption may be submitted for an individual or a group. The business case should address the following:

- The cost of complying with the PM;
- The type of work performed by the employee or the operations of the organization, including the structure and functions of the workforce, the geographic separateness to the agency;
- The impact of the exemption on the mission;
- How approval of an exemption is in the best interest of the VA, the Veterans VA serves, and how approval would outweigh the benefits of in-person work (i.e., negative impacts to provision and/or quality of direct patient care);
- If an exemption is approved, how will performance and productivity be monitored to ensure the level and quality of output meet or exceed standards; and
- Are there any long-term space issues that cannot be overcome by relocating the employees to another facility?

Requests must be submitted by the head of the Administration or Staff Office and be routed following the process outlined in Appendix A in the Veterans Affairs Integrated Enterprise

Workflow Solution (VIEWS). Administrations and Staff Offices must follow the process outlined in Appendix A to this Bulletin for routing requests for exemption. At a minimum, the following documents must be included in the request package:

- [VA Form 4265](#), Concurrence and Summary Sheet
- [VA Form 0907](#), Executive Summary
- Justification Memo: Request for Approval for Permanent Exemption

### Reporting

Each Administration and Staff Office must submit a report to HRA/OSP each month documenting the number of extensions granted by the Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or Other Key Official and the steps taken to address the issue(s). Each Administration and Staff Office must provide two points of contact (POC) (i.e., a primary and secondary POC) to the Worklife and Benefits Service at [vaco058worklife@va.gov](mailto:vaco058worklife@va.gov) no later than Friday, February 28, 2025. A link to submit monthly reports will be provided to the POCs.

The first report is due on Friday, March 14, 2025, and should include all exceptions approved from January 24, 2025, through February 28, 2025. Future reports must be submitted on the first business day on/after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and include exceptions approved during the prior calendar month. Negative responses are required if no exceptions were approved.

### **Next Steps**

Additional guidance and resources may also be found on the [Future of Work SharePoint](#), which will be updated as needed to meet changing requirements.

Employees and supervisors with questions regarding this guidance should contact their servicing HR office.

HR offices with questions regarding this bulletin should contact the Worklife and Benefits Service for assistance at: [vaco058worklife@va.gov](mailto:vaco058worklife@va.gov).

**Issued by: VA OCHCO/Worklife and Benefits Service**

**Process for Exemption Requests Requiring Secretary Approval:**

The chart below outlines the procedures for requesting Secretary Approval for exemption of a particular organization, work unit, or position to reporting in-person.

Step	Responsible Office	Action
1	Admin/Staff Office	<p>Assemble package. Package must contain the following: justification memo, VA Form 4265 VA Form 0907, and supporting documentation why the organization, work unit, or position should be exempted from in person work.</p> <p>Create a VIEWS case, upload attachments, and create case task for concurrence by the Administration or Staff Office head.</p> <p>Organizational concurrences by the Admin/Staff Office head must be shown on the VA Form 4265, Concurrence and Summary Sheet.</p>
2	Admin/Staff Office	<p>Once request package is complete, create a case task for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP), to review and concur. Due date is 10 calendar days from the date assigned in VIEWS. <b>Case assignment should be made to: “HRA/OSP-006 Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness.”</b></p>
3	HRA/OSP	<p>Create case task for technical review to Worklife and Benefits Service (WLB). Due date is 7 calendar days from the date assigned. HRA/OSP will provide concurrence on the VA Form 4265 after WLB technical review is complete.</p>
4	WLB	<p>Completes the technical review. Exemption requests that are not compliant with this policy will be returned to the requesting office for correction. The package may then be resubmitted to WLB with a new case task due date of 7 calendar days from the date of resubmission.</p>
5	Admin/Staff Office	<p>After HRA/OSP concurrence is received the Administration/Staff Office creates a case task for the respective Senior Advisor to review and concur. Due date is 5 days from the date assigned in VIEWS.</p>
6	Senior Advisor	<p>Senior Advisor reviews the exemption request for compliance with VA policy. Concurrence will be documented in the VIEWS case task. The case is then returned to the</p>

		Admin/Staff Office so it may be tasked to OGC.
<b>7</b>	Admin/Staff Office	After HRA/OSP concurrence is received the Administration/Staff Office creates a case task for OGC to review and concur. Due date is 10 calendar days from the date assigned in VIEWS. <b>Case assignment should be made to: “OGC-02 Office of General Counsel.”</b>
<b>8</b>	OGC	OGC reviews the exemption request for compliance with Federal law, regulation, and VA policy. Concurrence will be documented in the VIEWS case task. The case is then returned to the Admin/Staff Office so it may be tasked to the Office of the Executive Secretariat (Exec Sec) for Secretary (or his designee) approval.
<b>9</b>	Admin/Staff Office	Updates the VA Form 0907 to list concurrences from offices and creates a new case task for the Office of the Executive Secretariat (Exec Sec) in VIEWS, with a due date of 10 calendar days from the date the task is assigned. <b>Case assignment should be made to: (OSVA-001)</b>
<b>10</b>	Exec Sec	The Secretary issues a final written decision on the justification memo and returns case to the Admin/Staff Office to finalize the recruitment package. If the request is denied, the reason for the denial will be noted on the request memo and provided to the Admin/Staff Office.