



LEAFLET 41
MANAGING STAFF REMOTELY
(formerly Homeworking)

AMENDMENT RECORD

Amd No	Date	Text Affected	Authority and Date

REVISION NOTE:

This leaflet was previously titled Home Working and has been rewritten with a broader scope to reflect changes in working practices.

HISTORICAL RECORD:

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Revised in April 2010.

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Foreword

This leaflet is published under the authority of the Defence Occupational Health and Safety Board (OHSB). This leaflet is for application across all areas of MOD and the Armed Forces and reflects any recent changes in legislation and/or MOD practices.

1. SCOPE

1.1 This Leaflet provides guidance to all staff and line management both Service and civilian on the health and safety issues related to staff habitually working at locations that are remote from their line management/chain of command and parent organisation, whether it be working on the move, working from home or working from satellite locations (MOD or otherwise).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Modern technology allows staff to balance home life commitments with work commitments and the MOD to be flexible in meeting its business needs and as a result more people are working remotely from their line management/chain of command and peers. These changes in working patterns bring benefits to both staff and the MOD as well as potentially introducing additional hazards that need to be managed.

2.2 MOD owes a duty of care to staff regularly working at locations that are remote from the parent organisation (e.g. home or a workplace based at another site) and have restricted contact with their line management or peers.

2.3 Flexible working patterns that require staff to be managed remotely are often referred to as: working from home, homeworking, telecommuting, teleworking, e-commuting, e-work, remote working, mobile working etc.

2.4 Further information and guidance on flexible working patterns and other associated information (e.g. security, working patterns, flexible working requests) can be found within Service Personnel Policy – Service Conditions documents (for Service personnel), and Policy, Rules & Guidance (PRG) documents (for civilian personnel), Defence Instructions and Notices (DINs), site instructions etc which are available on the Defence Intranet.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Line Manager

3.1.1 Line managers have the same responsibilities for ensuring the health and safety of staff irrespective of the location at which they work (at home or other locations) and shall ensure that appropriate furniture, equipment and services are provided to staff who work remotely. The requirements contained within JSP 375 apply equally for managing staff working remotely as to those working within the parent organisation's main location.

3.1.2 Line managers shall ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and recorded for the working conditions and activities at the remote workplace to ensure that those staff working at satellite locations are not placed at greater risk compared to those staff working at the parent organisation's premises. The findings of the risk assessments and any necessary control measures to be implemented (e.g. the provision and use of appropriate furniture, special equipment, supplies, services such as primary health care/medical insurance for over seas activities) shall be explained and copied to staff, the line manager must be satisfied that the control measures are understood. Arrangements, appropriate to the residual risk, shall be put in place to provide assurance that control measures are effective and being complied with and monitored. Local Health and Safety Advisors (at parent organisation and host location) should be consulted to provide help and guidance on the best way to manage assessments, assist with training and provide advice on specific issues.

3.1.3 Arrangements shall be put in place to ensure that remote workers continue to feel involved in the business of the organisation with regular contact with line management and peers. Regular contact is essential to maintain knowledge of organisational developments and personal development whilst minimising the likelihood of little or no contact leading to social isolation (stress and depression).

3.1.4 Line managers have a duty to ensure that periodic health and safety inspections of the workplace (see leaflet 21) are carried out, these shall include remote locations regularly occupied by staff in the course of their duty to monitor working practices and provide assurance that the workplace and

work equipment is maintained in a safe condition. Where possible a formal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place for their staff based at another MOD site, or in commercial premises, detailing who has what responsibility to ensure suitable reporting takes place and that any problems can be addressed effectively. Arrangements shall be put in place to monitor the safety and wellbeing of staff who have a formal homeworking agreement where the majority of their work is conducted away from the office, this may include a visit by their line manager to review risk assessments and ensure that the workplace remains safe and that security requirements are being maintained.

3.1.5 As the control that can be exercised over a member of staff working from home and/or on other sites is limited, those individuals have a more prominent role in the management of health and safety than they would for office-based staff. Line managers shall take this into account before agreeing that individuals are permitted to work remotely.

3.2 All Staff

3.2.1 Staff operating a flexible way of working arrangement have the same duties under HSWA as all other employees and are required:

- a. To take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their acts or omissions;
- b. To co-operate with their management as necessary to allow it to comply with statutory obligations; and
- c. Not deliberately or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

3.2.2 Staff lodging in a satellite office/workplace must ensure that they comply with all host organisation health and safety arrangements. Staff shall co-operate with their line managers, bringing to their attention any concerns that they may have about any workplace health and safety issues, as the line manager may not have regular sight or knowledge of hazards where they exist.

3.2.3 To minimise the potential for viral or bacterial contamination e.g. passing on of colds, flu, etc. official equipment should be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition, this should be achieved locally via the local office procedures for cleaning. However it may be necessary for staff to use cleaning equipment themselves where there are shared workstations or for homeworkers, etc. and the provision of antiseptic wipes or similar supplies may be required.

3.2.4 When working from home, staff must also ensure that they and other persons, who may be affected, including other residents and visitors, do not interfere with, and are not endangered by, work activities undertaken using MOD provided equipment. MOD equipment provided for homeworkers to

undertake their work flexibly is to be used for that purpose only and shall not be used by family members of other residents or visitors to the home.

4. INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

4.1 For staff working remotely from their line management, enhanced training will often be needed in many aspects of work. This should include health and safety training, particularly in understanding good DSE workstation set-up, safe practices for manual handling, risk assessment and personal safety issues e.g. lone working. The 'softer aspects' of working remotely or in isolation also need to be addressed, for example being self-disciplined, planning the day, managing time, communicating with line managers and peers; without training and support all are issues that could lead to increased work-related stress problems.

4.2 Training methods should also be considered; it could be difficult for those with caring commitments to attend full-time training courses, so the availability of suitable on-line or e-courses may need to be sought (for example see Defence Academy latest training information). It may be more practical to train staff who work remotely to conduct their own risk assessments, workstation assessments, manual handling assessments etc. so that they become the competent assessor. Such assessments should be presented to the individual's line manager for agreement and action in the same way as those of an office based worker.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The risk assessments required at 3.1.2 should consider the staff, all aspects of the work environment as well as the activities but limited to the immediate work area, furniture and equipment and the way it will be installed, used, maintained and disposed.

5.2 If the business need requires a member of staff to work from multiple locations, the risk assessment must identify suitable equipment and provision of manual handling requirements including any ancillary equipment e.g. when frequently using a laptop at a location, a docking station may be required linked to a full size separate monitor, keyboard and mouse.

5.3 Where the member of staff's workplace is located in domestic premises, the risk assessment should not include normal household areas or functions (e.g. kitchens and making refreshments). It shall however include safe access and egress, the potential of harm to any other residents, family and visitors both social and official as well as any hazard posed by pets to official visitors or within the designated work area.

5.4 Staff working at home are not expected to be carrying out hazardous processes or using specialist equipment that would require provision of fire fighting equipment or first aid equipment. Before Line Managers agree to

remote working on anything other than 'low risk' activities, a formal risk assessment shall be completed and any necessary control measures implemented.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

JSP 375 Vol 2:

- a. Leaflet 4 – Manual Handling
- b. Leaflet 21 – Conducting Health and Safety Inspections of the Workplace
- c. Leaflet 24 – Display Screen Equipment
- d. Leaflet 25 – Stress at Work
- e. Leaflet 26 – Lone Working
- f. Leaflet 39 – Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Legislation and Guidance:

- a. The Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSAW) Regulations
- b. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
- c. The Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations
- d. Health and Safety Executive Guidance INDG226 - Homeworking
- e. Service Personnel Policy – Service Conditions documents
- f. Policy, Rules & Guidance documents (civilian personnel)
- g. INDG 73
- h. HSE L23 Manual Handling Operations Regulations & Approved Code of Practice