



KEEPING REMOTE EMPLOYEES SAFE

*Prepared by Chief Executive Office, Risk Management Branch
Loss Control and Prevention Section*
Contact LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov for additional information

In recent years, the trend of working from home has gained widespread popularity. While remote or hybrid work schedules offer numerous benefits, they also present risk since they are not controlled workplace environments.

The following information can assist Departments with developing policies, procedures, and best practices for employees working remote or hybrid schedules.

Telework Program

Before allowing employees to work remotely, a written department-specific telework program should be developed to provide instructions on the qualification process, management and employee responsibilities, and training requirements and should include a checklist for employees to complete for verification of proper workspace setup and equipment use. The Department of Human Resources has developed the Los Angeles County Telework Program to assist Departments and employees in allowing employees to work remotely.

The Los Angeles County Telework Program can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Ergonomic Training and Self-Assessment

Departments should require employees to complete the online ergonomic training and self-assessment available through the County's TalentWorks platform. The online ergonomic training and self-assessment tool helps Departments comply with California's Ergonomic Standard by providing introductory ergonomic training, immediate feedback to employees to help adjust their computer workspace, a means for employees to report potential risks, and a documented record that a workstation evaluation was completed.

Identification of Workspace by Employee

Employees must designate a dedicated area to function as their home workspace. The designated area should be clean and free of distractions, obstructions, and safety hazards. The environmental conditions at the designated workspace (light, ventilation, temperature, etc.) should be conducive for performing productive work throughout the employees' assigned shift.

Reporting Injuries

Employees must immediately report work-related injuries or illnesses that have occurred while working remotely. According to Cal/OSHA, injuries or illnesses occurring while working remotely are recordable if they are directly related to the performance of work, rather than the general home environment or setting.

Tools and Resources

The Joint Labor-Management Committee on Office Ergonomics and Chief Executive Office Risk Management Branch websites provide tools and resources to assist employees set up home workspaces and help Departments develop best practices for employees working remotely. Here are some helpful resource materials and tools available on the Joint Labor-Management Committee on Office Ergonomics webpage:

- Principles of Ergonomics Webinar
- Office and Telework Ergonomic Training Webinar
- Guidelines for Sit-and-Stand Workstations Webinar
- Chair Adjustment Video
- Tips for Using a Computer Mouse
- Minimizing Eye Strain
- Guidelines for Selecting Computer Workstation Furniture
- Office Ergonomics Self-Assessment Tools

The Office Ergonomics webpage can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Safety Tips for Remote Workers

Understanding and implementing safe ergonomic practices can help reduce discomfort and prevent injuries while working from home. Here are some safety tips to help maintain a safe work environment at home:

Workspace Ergonomics

Chair Selection:

- Choose a chair that supports the natural curve of your spine.
- Look for adjustable features, including height, backrest, and armrests.

Desk Setup:

- Position desk so elbows are at or greater than a 90-degree angle when typing.
- Ensure the top of the monitor is at eye level to reduce neck strain.

Keyboard and Mouse Positioning:

- Keep the keyboard and mouse close enough to avoid overreaching.
- Use wrist supports if necessary to maintain a neutral wrist position.
- Use a separate full-sized keyboard, monitor, and mouse when using a laptop to prevent discomfort and potential musculoskeletal injuries.

Maintaining Good Posture:

- Sit upright with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest to promote stability.
- Ensure monitor height is at eye level.
- Avoid crossing your legs to maintain proper blood circulation.

Implementing Breaks and Movement:

- Take regular breaks to stand, stretch, and move around.
- Utilize simple stretches or exercises to relieve tension in your muscles.
- Incorporate movement and shifts in posture into the workflow of the day.

Preventing Falls, Trips, and Slips

- Organize and secure cords and cables to prevent tripping hazards.
- Clear the floor of any obstacles. This may include toys, boxes, books, or loose or dangling cords.
- Repair any loose carpeting and secure lifted corners on rugs. Frayed or torn carpeting and unsecured rugs can easily cause trips if the loose areas are caught underfoot while walking. Be sure to repair any worn patches to avoid tripping.
- Watch your step. Stairs are another place where slips, trips, and falls can occur. If your workspace requires you to go up or down flights of stairs, be careful not to carry too many items in your hands while on the stairs. One hand should be always free to hold onto the railing.
- Keep walkable areas tidy and don't string electronic device wires across the floor.
- Keep stairs free of clutter, carry little to nothing, and hold on to a handrail when walking up or down steps.
- Close filing cabinet and desk drawers, and any other cabinet doors or drawers at floor level.
- Clean up any spills immediately to avoid slipping and falling.