



## Fact Sheet – Telework and Travel by Exempt Staff Members

Telework contributes to achieving a better balance between work and personal lives when exempt staff members can work from home or from alternate locations away from the usual workplace. There are no provisions in the *Policies for Ministers' Offices* (Policies) pertaining to telework. Exempt staff members in telework situations will continue to be subject to the terms and conditions of employment and applicable policies and legislation, such as: the *Policies for Ministers' Offices*, *Open and Accountable Government*, and the *Guidelines on the Code of Conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, Exempt Staff and Public Servants during an Election*. As per section 6 of the Policies, ministers can request to be accompanied by exempt staff for travel related to departmental business. During such travel, provisions of the *Travel Directive* apply to exempt staff members while on travel status.

### Telework

**As per the *Telework Policy*, the following considerations should be observed:**

- approval of each telework request is on a case-by-case basis
- ministers and exempt staff members must ensure that application of a telework arrangement does not negatively impact productivity
- telework arrangements are made where it is economically and operationally feasible
- no additional costs are incurred as a result of a telework arrangement
- terms and conditions of employment and application of policies, rules, regulations and legislation will continue to apply in telework situations, such as:
  - *Policies for Ministers' Offices*
  - *Open and Accountable Government*
  - *Guidelines on the Code of Conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, Exempt Staff and Public Servants during an Election*

**Telework Arrangement**

Formal written arrangements are strongly recommended. Such arrangements should stipulate the duration, the specific dates the exempt staff member will telework, and hours of work. The telework arrangement should also include an attestation from the Chief of Staff stating that the work being carried out by the exempt staff member is for official departmental business and no partisan activities will be undertaken during “normal hours of work” which is interpreted to mean the hours the minister’s office is open. “Normal” being regular office hours as if the House of Commons was sitting. For advice on developing a telework arrangement, consult with your departmental HR Advisor.

### Travel

**As per section 6 of the Policies, the following considerations should be taken into account when travelling:**

- all travel requests outside of the National Capital Region (NCR) must be pre-approved by the Prime Minister’s Office
- at any one time, only two exempt staff members can travel with the minister outside the NCR
- all travel expenses must be proactively published as per legislative requirements
- no travel expenses related to political or partisan events or meetings can be charged to the ministers operating budget

The National Joint Council (NJC) *Travel Directive* applies to parliamentary secretaries and exempt staff members when the travel is for official departmental business and not for partisan activities. Although ministers are excluded from those requirements, ministers should refer to the NJC *Travel Directive* for expenditures which are considered appropriate for program-related business travel.

As per the *Guidelines on the Conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, Exempt Staff and Public Servants during an Election*, only one exempt staff member may, at public expense, accompany their minister at all times in order to ensure that appropriate contact and liaison with the department is maintained. Should a minister request to be accompanied by an exempt staff member during his or her travel, to ensure the continuance of necessary government business, provisions of the NJC *Travel Directive* will apply.

### Working in Ministers' Regional Offices

Ministers' Regional Offices (MROs) provide secure office accommodation to all ministers and their exempt staff members, while conducting official government business, outside the NCR. MROs are not intended to duplicate the functions of the constituency offices or other support provided by the House of Commons. MROs are staffed and operated by Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC). In addition to accommodations, MRO staff provide secure document transmittal and secure communications, administrative support, protocol advice, and off site logistical support for events. Ministers and exempt staff members are welcome to use the MRO for short term visits by simply contacting the office directly. Long term residency in an MRO may require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between PSPC and the department. A MOU is in effect as soon as it is signed, and becomes null and void once a minister ceases to be the minister of the department under which the MOU was signed.