



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies
FROM: Charles Ezell, Acting Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management
DATE: January 22, 2025
RE: Guidance on Presidential Memorandum *Return to In-Person Work*.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is providing the following guidance to agencies regarding President Trump’s Presidential Memorandum (PM), *Return to In-Person Work*.

I. Authority

OPM is issuing this guidance under the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, which requires agencies to consult with OPM in developing telework policies¹ and tasks OPM with providing policy and policy guidance,² as well as assisting agencies with establishing teleworking goals.³ This guidance also implements OPM Director’s statutory duties to “secur[e] accuracy, uniformity, and justice in the functions of the Office” and “execut[e], administer[], and enforc[e] . . . the civil service rules and regulations of the President and the Office and the laws governing the civil service.”⁴

II. Background

President Trump was elected with the mandate to increase the efficiency and accountability of the federal workforce. A glaring roadblock is that most federal offices presently are virtually abandoned. The vast majority of federal office workers have not returned to in-person work, even though the COVID-19 pandemic ended years ago.⁵ Many federal office workers never show up to

¹ 5 U.S.C. § 6504(a).

² *Id.* § 6504(b)(1).

³ *Id.* § 6504(b)(2). This guidance supersedes entirely and cancels OPM’s August 7, 2024 Memorandum entitled “Guiding Factors for Designing Remote Work Policies and Programs,” the OPM Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies dated February 9, 2001, and any conflicting sections of OPM’s *2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government*.

⁴ 5 U.S.C. § 1103(a)(1) and (a)(5).

⁵ Report of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority Staff, *The Lights Are On, But Everyone Is at Home: Why the New Administration Will Enter Largely Vacant Federal Offices* (Jan. 15, 2025), https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/011525_Telework-Staff-Report_FINAL.pdf.

the federal worksite at all.⁶ Federal office buildings sit mostly empty, particularly Washington, D.C.-area agency headquarters offices, devastating the local economy and serving as a national embarrassment.⁷ Virtually unrestricted telework has led to poorer government services and made it more difficult to supervise and train government workers.⁸

Fairness requires that federal office employees show up to the worksite each day like most other American workers. In addition, during the Biden Administration, federal unions attempted to abuse the collective-bargaining process to guarantee full-time telework into the indefinite future and forestall any requirement to return to the office.⁹

The President's PM directs agency heads to "take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis" "as soon as practicable." It allows agency heads to "make exemptions they deem necessary" and directs that the directive "be implemented consistent with applicable law."

The PM reflects a simple reality. The only way to get employees back to the office is to adopt a centralized policy requiring return-to-work for all agencies across the federal government.¹⁰ Seeking to cajole individual agencies to try to get employees to return to the worksite has not succeeded.¹¹

III. Steps for Agencies to Return to Workers to the Office

In light of the PM, agencies should take the following steps to return workers to the office.

No later than **5:00 pm EST on Friday, January 24, 2025:**

1. The agency head or acting agency head should revise their agency's telework policy issued under 5 U.S.C. § 6502(a)(1)(A) to state that eligible employees must work full

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Testimony of Tom Davis, President, Federal City Council to the Committee on Government Oversight and the Workforce (January 15, 2025).

⁸ Report of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority Staff, *The Lights Are On, But Everyone Is at Home: Why the New Administration Will Enter Largely Vacant Federal Offices* at pp. 27-30.

⁹ *Id.* at 15-16, 36-38.

¹⁰ Such a centralized approach by the Washington, D.C. succeeded in getting government workers back to the worksite. By contrast, President Biden's attempts to convince individual agencies to have employees return to work failed to achieve a meaningful return to office work. See Report of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority Staff, *The Lights Are On, But Everyone Is at Home: Why the New Administration Will Enter Largely Vacant Federal Offices* at pp. 18-20.

¹¹ *Id.* at 31-36.

time at their respective duty stations unless excused due to a disability, qualifying medical condition, or other compelling reason certified by the agency head and the employee's supervisor.

2. The agency head or acting agency head should email all employees notifying them of President Trump's PM *Return to In-Person Work*, attach a copy of the PM, and notify employees of the agency's intention to fully comply with the PM. (A copy of the PM is attached as Appendix 1).
3. The agency should notify OPM of the agency's Telework Managing Officer, and assign that individual responsibility for complying with the guidance herein.

Agencies should advise OPM of the date that the agency will be in full compliance with the new telework policy. If an employee's official duty station is more than 50 miles from any existing agency office, the agency should take steps to move the employee's duty station to the most appropriate agency office based on the employee's duties and job function. OPM recommends that agencies set a target date of approximately 30 days for full compliance with the PM, subject to any exclusions granted by the agency and any collective bargaining obligations.

Please send all reports requested by this document to tracking@opm.gov.

Do not hesitate to contact OPM if you have any questions regarding these matters by email to tracking@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, and Human Resources Directors

Appendix 1: President Trump's Presidential Memorandum *Return to In-Person Work*.

Heads of all departments and agencies in the executive branch of Government shall, as soon as practicable, take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis, provided that the department and agency heads shall make exemptions they deem necessary.

This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law.