

Working from Home

Frequently Asked Questions



Employers transitioning their teams to working from home can be challenging and at times, difficult. Employers are in uncharted territory. Here are a few considerations when transition staff to work from home.

Why Work from Home?

Working from Home (WFH) is an option for employees who are at risk of either contracting or carrying COVID-19. Working remotely is appropriate solution for workplaces to continue running as per usual, in order to mitigate OHS risks and support employees during this time.

Who should work from home?

- People over 50+
- Pregnant women
- Parents with children or elderly living at home
- Employees who do not require working on-site i.e. Data Analyst.

How can employers effectively transition to WFH for their workforce?

- Acknowledge this is a challenging time and support employees to voice their concerns and external responsibilities
- Reassure your workforce and review workplans
- Establish a process and implement/review your Working from Home policy
- Identify what resources are available to support this transition, such as VACCHO tip-sheets, checklists.

Questions Employers need to ask when transitioning employees to WFH?

- What assets will employees need to be compliant with OHS requirements? i.e. Laptop, internet access, desk, chair.
- What system and process does your organisation have in place to record and register equipment taken off-site?
- What support services are available, such as Employee Assistance Program, mentoring and debriefing, IT Phone contact number?
- How will you manage staff remotely? i.e. Microsoft teams, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype.

How can employers manage leave whilst WFH?

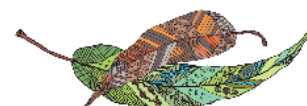
Ask yourself, how would I manage this if it was business as usual?

Sick leave: If they are not feeling well enough to WFH, please advise to contact their manager as per normal to advise them they are not well enough to work.

Annual leave: If an employee decides to take or change annual leave, please ensure your staff to follow the correct channels to notify their manager as per normal.

Please refer to 'Managing Leave FAQ' for more information on leave.

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Looking after employees working remotely

Occupational Health and Safety:

- Ensure you are meeting your OHS obligations and make OHS recommendations where required
- Enact additional well-being activities and measures – frequently check-in with staff

Psychological Safety:

- Check in with your Aboriginal employees, isolation from Community and other Aboriginal employees can take its toll on morale and connectedness
- Encourage employees to debrief
- Frequently reach out to employees who might need additional support

How can employers support parents during the school holiday period whilst WFH?

If employees are finding it challenging to WFH during the school holiday period, employers can assist them to either set up an action plan to structure a daily routine around working hours, home schooling, lunch breaks or reducing working hours to best suit their individual needs. For employees with sole caring responsibilities, they should consider taking some leave.

If employers are considering reducing an employee's hours, they must adhere to the employees Contract of employment and the organisations Working from Home policy.

WFH can be an isolating experience for some. Employers are encouraged to:

- Facilitate a yarnning circle on a video call
- Check in with their teams
- Implement a buddy system
- Spend the first 10 minutes of your weekly meeting checking with each other.

A few things to consider:

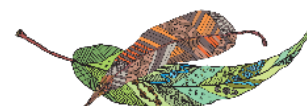
- Be mindful that some employees may not be comfortable showing you their homes via Zoom. Be mindful and discuss prior if necessary
- Due to school holidays and the nature of this situation, some people's schedules are different. Check in what time is most appropriate and that your meeting isn't scheduled in at the kids nap time.

What other information should employers provide employees?

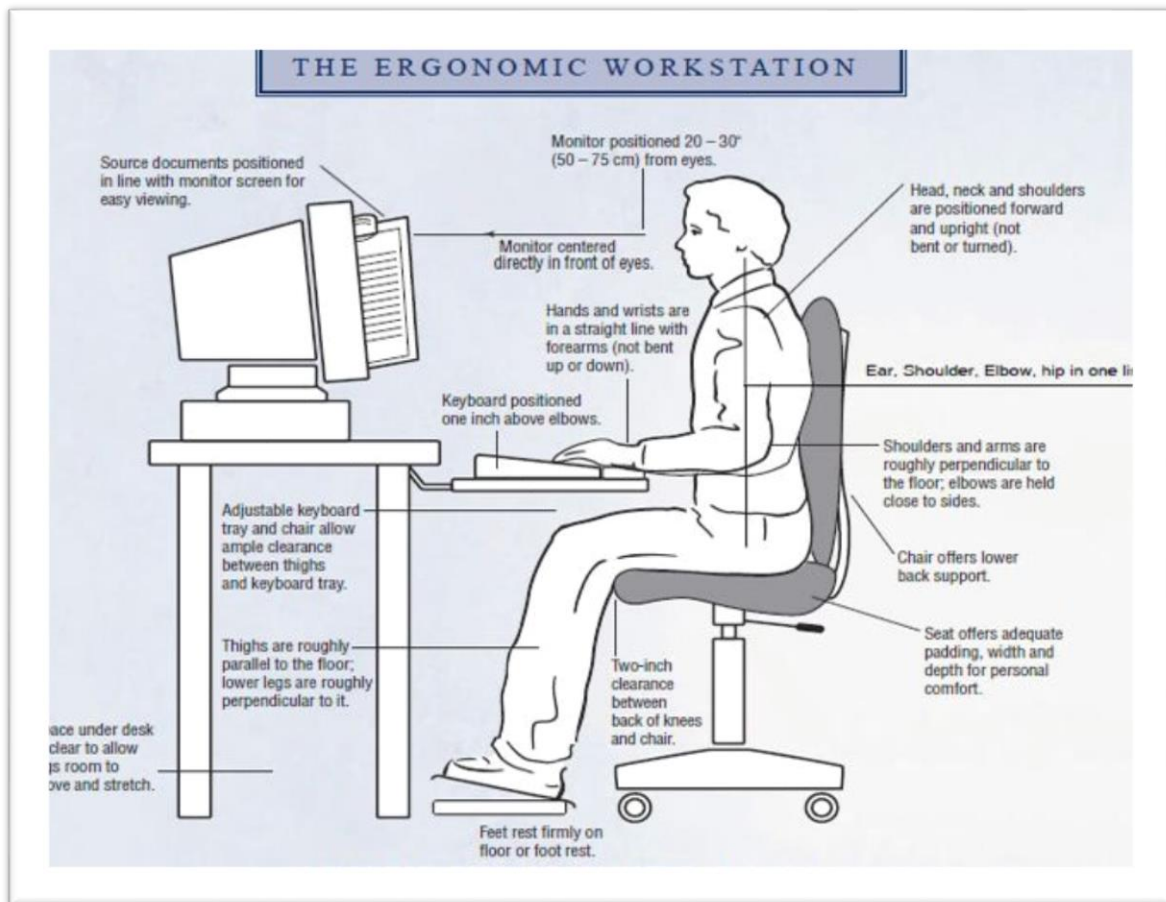
- Employee Assistance Program details,
- Provide workstation OHS recommendations,
- Relevant Working From Home Policy and/ or tip sheets to support your staff.

For more information, please refer to Safe Work Australia webpage [here](#). Employers can find other templates, resources and tips on VACCHO's website.

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