

## **Guide to Supervisors Regarding Flextime**

### **What is flextime?**

Flextime is a way to redesign or restructure traditional work schedules so the employee works daily hours different from regular office hours or works a full schedule in fewer days. Employers can use this option to accommodate the changing workforce and business needs. Employees can use innovative scheduling to fulfill a variety of personal needs, including family responsibilities, routine health appointments, educational activities, and volunteer and wellness activities. This type of scheduling is flexible enough to be used on an ongoing or as-needed basis. For example, the employee may take two hours to attend parent-teacher conferences and then make up the time during the same workweek. Flextime allows an employee to manage personal and work activities without lost work time.

### **Flextime Options**

The most common form of flextime is a fixed schedule where the employee works the same set hours each day but it varies from the regular core business hours of the office, e.g., 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in an office that is normally open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Other flextime options include the following.

- Daily Flex-schedule -- a flexible schedule where the employee is free to set his/her own work hours within limits established by management.
- Compressed workweek -- a flexible schedule where a full workweek is completed in fewer than five days by increasing the number of hours worked per day. The more common examples are the four-day (10 hours per day) or three-day (12 hours per day) workweeks.
- 5 x 4 workweek -- a flexible schedule where four days are worked in one week and five in the next for a total of 80 hours. There are variations on this type of schedule. The key is working 80 hours over a two-week period. This arrangement may require the redefinition of a workweek for employees who are eligible for overtime (two 40-hour weeks).

### **Is flextime allowed by the state personnel system?**

Several Executive Orders endorse flextime as an appropriate and beneficial employment practice and urge managers to use the concept as business needs permit. An Executive Order also establishes the state's employer policy on work-related family issues. This policy promotes flexibility and innovation in job design and work hours. Managers are expected to make every reasonable effort to deal with work-life issues equitably, flexibly, and compassionately without adversely affecting the mission of the agency. By increasing awareness and use, the state can maximize the benefits from these creative, flexible arrangements.

### **Who is eligible?**

Any employee is eligible; however, not every job lends itself to flextime. It will depend on the nature of the job and the business needs of the work unit. Flextime is voluntary. Only the employee with an identified, documented performance problem should not be offered this option. Also, the manager may exclude an employee whose presence is

critical during standard work hours, e.g., assembly line operations or small offices where no alternate coverage is available. Because of the requirement to pay overtime to employees in overtime-eligible jobs, flextime schedules for these employees should be developed carefully. Flextime is not a right but a business arrangement. No employee is entitled to flextime and approval of the arrangement is the sole discretion of the employer.

### **What are the drawbacks of flextime?**

- It takes planning and adjustment to set up flextime initially. Thought must be given to supervisory arrangements, adequate staffing, communication, and coordination and completion of work assignments and performance management.
- The nature of business and characteristics of a job or employee may not be appropriate for flextime.
- Without clear and adequate communication, there is a possibility that flextime may come to be viewed as an entitlement.

### **How is a flextime schedule created?**

Flextime requires planning. The more carefully planned, the more likely all involved will see the benefits and the better the chances for success. Employee involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation is strongly encouraged as it can lead to better business decisions for the work unit.

1. Develop a plan. Consider all aspects and potential impacts on the work unit. Create a plan that outlines the specific arrangement for the work unit. What is gained by using flextime? Define the objectives and the benefits or impact to the work unit, manager, employee, co-workers, and customers. Examine the work culture, nature of business, and operational needs for the work unit to determine if flextime is feasible, e.g., level of trust, level of management support, nature of services and jobs, amount of “face time” required as opposed to results, other flexible practices already in place. How will processes be used to document hours worked and results achieved? What about accessibility in case of a business emergency or when the employee needs to be physically present? Consider the appropriateness of flextime for the jobholder, e.g., performance record, level of independence, demonstrated self-discipline and motivation, desire or ability to work longer days.
2. Develop selection criteria. The manager determines what factors to consider when making decisions on requests but primary is always operational needs in relation to job assignments and then the jobholders. These factors should be worked out ahead of time and be part of the written plan.
  - a. Establish criteria for approving requests. Some ideas include possible benefits to the organization, potential drawbacks, requests by others in the work unit, duties of the job and if they can be effectively performed with the new schedule, the level of staffing and supervision needed at various times, the level of service that would be provided to customers, the schedules of other employees outside the work unit with whom the job must coordinate, etc.

- b. Establish a way to break ties for requests. Some ideas include performance, seniority, draw lots, or rotation.
  - c. Establish sanctions for abuse. Under what circumstances will the schedule be terminated? Examples of abuse include inaccurate time sheets or a continuing decrease in productivity that indicates an employee is not working during flexible hours. Remember, even in cases where there is no abuse, the arrangement may be discontinued at any time.
3. Submit a written request. The employee submits a written request to the manager detailing the specific schedule desired. It should be submitted well in advance of the desired start date for the new schedule. The employee should be prepared to discuss the details of the request and participate in resolving any issues.
4. Communicate and decide. The key to success is mutual trust and respect. The employee and manager should meet to discuss any concerns, jointly resolve differences, and reach an understanding on the terms of the arrangement.
5. Document. It is advisable to document the specific arrangement. Remember that flextime is a privilege, not a right, and may need to be modified for business reasons. Both should remain flexible because both have an interest in making the arrangement work. Both are also accountable for responsible use of flextime.
6. Deliver signed flextime Agreement to Human Resources and keep copies for employee and supervisor.

Please contact Human Resources if you have questions about creating a flextime agreement.