



Coast Guard Flag Voice 15

TELECOMMUTING

Telecommuting means voluntarily working at an alternative site, such as an employee's home, a satellite facility, or mobile offices, at least one day every two weeks.

A recent ALCOAST reaffirms ADM Loy's support for the National Telecommuting Policy and strongly encourages local commanders to join him by supporting programs for their units. Commandant Instruction 12630.1, Coast Guard Telecommuting Program, contains program information.

I ask all commanding officers and supervisors to seek ways to use telecommuting as an alternative approach to accomplishing work as applicable to their workplace conditions. The key to making this happen is meeting with your people and mutually exploring innovative telecommuting methods.

Telecommuting is an effective, short-term solution for completing difficult or special assignments. Most importantly, it also has long-term value as a strategy for the 21st Century workforce. Telecommuting enables us to accomplish work more efficiently and effectively. It also is more flexible for our people who balance work and family needs, such as child and dependant care. Our Diversity Advisory Committee recently highlighted the need for this flexibility as a high priority issue in its out-brief to ADM Loy. Studies of successful public and private sector organizations show higher productivity and retention as common benefits of telecommuting.

A recently completed 'quick study' revealed a participation rate of between .02 and 15 percent among the five public and private sector agencies surveyed. The last quarterly report to OST, in October 1998, showed the Coast Guard's participation at 0.1 percent of civilian employees and one military participant. We have a long way to go to meet the Coast Guard's goals of 3 percent of suitable civilian positions and 3 percent of the active duty military billets performing administrative work.

It shouldn't be a surprise the Department of Transportation is the lead Federal agency for telecommuting, and Secretary Slater seeks the Commandant's support to make the program work. In turn, ADM Loy is asking his senior leaders to set an example and help their leaders at all levels to develop opportunities for home-based or telecenter arrangements for their people.

We are interested in how we can make this work and especially in removing barriers that may prevent us from doing so. Please send your recommendations for Internet and SW III users to j.leung@uscg.mil; for CTOS/SW II users: jleung@uscg.mil/mailgatehq.

Regards, FL Ames



[Flag Voice Contents](#)

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