

The development of information and communications technology has made it possible to work at varying places, and remote work has grown in popularity the last years. By remote work is meant work at home, at varying work places offered by the employer, at the customer's place or during travel. Remote work is independent of a fixed workplace and working hours, and it includes three elements: flexibility regarding time and place as well as technical equipment in order to perform the work and be able to communicate with co-workers.

Remote work and occupational safety legislation

Remote work is subject to occupational safety provisions. However, appliance of the occupational safety legislation on work at home is limited, since the employer's possibilities to affect and supervise the working conditions are restricted. Therefore, the employer's duty of disclosure is emphasized. Remote workers shall be informed of procedures relating to remote work, e.g. regarding communication and contact with co-workers as well as the ergonomics. In addition, remote workers shall be informed of disadvantages and risks in remote work, and how to minimize the disadvantages and risks.

When the employee and employer agree on remote work, the employer's possibilities to check the working conditions and equipment shall be taken into account. Without a separate contract, the employer is not allowed to perform such checks in the employee's home.

Risks in remote work

- Difficulties to stop working, too long workdays, mixing working time and leisure time, stress.
- According to research, loneliness and
- isolation from the work community are the most significant risks of remote work.
- Difficulties to perform managerial duties remotely.
- Insufficient premises.
- Remote work does not suit all employees.

Remote work safety and risk management

- Remote workers shall be invited to regular meetings and unofficial gatherings in order to ensure working social relations as well as engagement in the work community.
- Clear rules for remote working.
- It can be good to agree on a more precise workload than the workload in normal work.
- The ergonomics of the work place shall be
- sufficient and breaks must be taken. Breaks are especially important when working during travel since it may be impossible to adjust the ergonomics.

Remote work and workers' compensation insurance

The workers' compensation insurance is valid during remote work. In remote work, the insurance only covers accidents occurred in direct action relating to the agreed remote work.

In remote work, the insurance does not cover accidents occurred during lunch or caused by other actions during breaks. When working at home there is no commuting, and therefore the insurance is not valid during so called acceptable diversions from the usual way to and from work.