



# HEALTHY AND SAFE TELEWORK

TECHNICAL BRIEF — GENEVA, 2021



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Healthy and safe telework: technical brief

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Key messages</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Definition of telework .....	1
Prevalence of telework .....	1
About this document .....	1
<b>Health impact of telework</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Physical health outcomes .....	3
Mental health outcomes .....	3
Health behaviours .....	4
<b>Protecting and promoting health, safety and well-being while teleworking</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Physical environment and ergonomics .....	5
Psychosocial risk factors .....	7
Health behaviours and well-being .....	9
<b>Roles and responsibilities of employers, workers and governments</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Roles of occupational health services</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Annex: Methods</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Review of the scientific literature .....	22
Development of technical content .....	22

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## Key messages

- Telework – the practice of working remotely using informational and communications technology has an important and growing role in the workplace, and has a potential impact on workers' health, safety and well-being.
- When organized and carried out properly, telework can be beneficial for physical and mental health and social well-being. It can improve work-life balance, reduce traffic and time spent commuting, and decrease air pollution, all of which can, indirectly, improve physical and mental health. Telework can also have public health and social benefits.
- Telework settings may fail to meet the occupational safety and health standards available at traditional worksites.
- Poor physical environment and workplace design and inadequate equipment and support can result in musculoskeletal disorders, eye strain and injuries.
- Working within a digital environment in physical isolation from co-workers, coupled with potential difficulties in managing work-private life balance in premises outside the direct control of the employer, can result in mental health problems and unhealthy behaviours.
- Protecting and promoting health and well-being in teleworking requires a comprehensive set of measures to provide a healthy and safe work environment, including adequate organization of the work.
- Governments, employers and workers all have a role in protecting and promoting health and safety while teleworking, including ergonomics, mental health and well-being, as defined by the ILO Convention on Occupational Safety and Health, 1981 and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006.
- Those employing teleworkers should develop programmes to promote healthy and safe telework. Such programmes should provide assistance for assessing and managing the risk factors for health and safety; workstation, computer and peripheral equipment, and remote ICT support.
- Occupational health services can offer ergonomic, mental health and psychosocial support.
- Workers should collaborate with employers on the implementation of these measures, cooperating with their employer and fulfilling their own health and safety duties to ensure decent and safe conditions for telework.



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