

Information for Remote Work Office Set-Up during COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated June 4, 2020

McMaster University is committed to supporting employees who are required to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information is being provided to support employees and supervisors enable a healthy and safe remote work environment. In addition to this material, the University has a number of other resources available with respect to [Information for Supporting Remote Work Arrangements](#).

Procedure

As the University continues to require many employees to work remotely, it is recognized that needs may arise for appropriate tools and resources to support health and safety in the remote work environment.

The [McMaster Ergonomics Safety Program \(RMM 405\)](#) requires supervisors to consider ergonomics in the design of work tasks and work locations. Employees with ergonomic questions are encouraged to contact their supervisor for further discussion. The following staged approach may be considered by employees and supervisors:

1. Review tips/strategies for remote workstations that support ergonomic best practices

Tips/strategies with respect to arranging your office environment and utilizing available resources are available online and can be accessed through the [Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services website](#) including:

- [Home Workstation: Self - Assessment Safety Checklist](#)
- [Working from Home Ergonomics Video](#)

2. Retrieval of office equipment and accessories

If after reviewing tips/strategies that support ergonomic best practices, additional equipment needs exist, employees are encouraged to retrieve items that may be available on campus. Individual supervisors must pre-authorize the retrieval of items from campus and coordinate with on campus or McMaster site specific resources (security services etc) to ensure health and safety is maintained through the retrieval process. Please review the University COVID-19 [guideline for retrieving supplies and equipment from McMaster office spaces](#).

3. Purchasing of office equipment and accessories

After fully exploring all opportunities to utilize or retrieve existing resources, office equipment and accessories may be purchased by the department at the discretion of the supervisor, where necessary for a healthy and safe remote work experience.

Considerations for this decision may include:

- Is this equipment necessary for the health and safety of the employee in their remote work environment?
- Length of employee's workday and time spent performing work tasks throughout the day (for example, part-time or casual hours may not require extended work periods or specialized equipment with appropriate break periods throughout the day).
- Type of work – is specialized equipment appropriate and necessary to achieve requirements of the position?
- Is there flexibility in the employee's schedule to support breaks or alternate work times that could support a healthy and safe work environment (sharing equipment or office space with those in the home, allowing for more physical activity throughout the day with extended work hours)?

Departments and/or supervisors are encouraged to contact [Strategic Procurement](#) for additional information regarding appropriate ergonomic and cost effective office equipment/accessories that can be purchased through MacBuy if needed for employees' remote work environments. A program has been developed, in partnership with Grand and Toy, to purchase and deliver the necessary equipment to an employee's home. This equipment will be McMaster property and consideration should be given to how equipment will be returned following the remote work arrangements period. Contact macbuyhelp@mcmaster.ca for access and assistance.

Additional Information

- [RMM 405: Ergonomics Safety Program](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19](#)
- [Workplace and Environmental Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Reimbursements to Individuals for University Business \(AP-01\)](#)
- [Strategic Procurement Policy \(SP-01\)](#)