



STATE OF COLORADO

FLEXTIME

Maximizing Human Capital

Prepared by the Division of Human Resources in the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration. Revised October 2006.

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. Reduced work time (e.g., job sharing) and flexible work sites are also forms of alternative work arrangements and can be used in conjunction with flextime, but the focus here is on restructured work schedules.

What Flextime options are available?

There are several flextime options listed below. All share three common concepts in designing flexible schedules.

- *Core Period* -- the hours in a workday when all staff are needed, e.g., 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., when meetings are likely to be scheduled, customer contact is heaviest, etc.
- *Bandwidth* -- the identified hours during which managers allow flexible scheduling (includes the core period). It defines the earliest time employees may arrive and the latest time they may leave, e.g., 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- *Flexible Hours* -- the hours an employee is approved to work. Under one approach, work schedules can vary daily within the band without prior approval as long as the full workweek is completed. A variation is *staggered work hours* where employees begin and end at individually based, fixed times that do not change daily but may periodically change on specific dates. The arrangement can be used on a permanent or temporary basis, e.g., to make up missed time.

Regular flex schedule -- the most common form of flextime 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.

Daily flex-schedule – a schedule where the employee is allowed to set his or her own work hours within the parameters set by management, e.g., schedule can change daily as long as the employee works the core hours and at least 40 hours per week.

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. A common example is the four-day (10 hours per day) workweek.

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 re-defining the employee's workweek for those eligible for overtime (two 40-hour weeks).

Is flextime allowed in 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 organization. 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 or employee is appropriate for flextime. It depends on the nature of the job and the business needs of the work unit or organization. Employees with an identified, documented performance problem should not be offered this option. In addition, the manager may exclude an employee whose presence is critical during standard work hours, e.g., reception operation or small offices where no alternate coverage is available. Because of the requirement to pay overtime to FLSA non-exempt employees, flextime schedules for these employees should be developed carefully.

It is cautioned against starting new employees on a flexible schedule, due to the absence of an established employee-employer relationship and any documented performance history. However, this would not preclude new employees from being eligible with careful planning and evaluation. At a minimum, it is recommended that a flexible schedule start at the beginning of a full workweek.

Flextime is not an employee right but a business arrangement that should benefit the employee and the employer. No employee is entitled to flextime, and approval and continuation of an arrangement is the sole discretion of the employer.

What are the benefits of flextime?

- *Improved service and image.* The work unit or organization may be able to keep the office open to the public for more hours, giving greater access to services and an improved image of the agency.

- *Reduced congestion in traffic and parking lots.* Employees may reduce the number of commuting trips and often when they do commute, it is during non-peak hours.
- *Competitive edge.* It can increase the pool of qualified job applicants who otherwise might not be available or willing to consider State employment. It also helps retain valuable employees because they can adjust their hours to meet personal needs instead of having to use personal leave or resign. Studies show that one of the top demands from today's workforce is the flexibility to deal with personal and career needs. This research also shows that increasing numbers of employees have turned down "better" job offers (more money) in favor of a less rigid or more flexible working environment.
- *Less use of paid leave.* Employees have more time to schedule personal matters during convenient non-work times instead of having to take personal leave. For example, appointments can be scheduled during non-work hours or missed work time can more easily be made up. The employer does not lose productivity due to an absence.
- *Better use of equipment.* Congestion at office machines can be relieved, thus avoiding delays and even help alleviate additional purchasing needs.
- *Better organization of work.* Workflow and scheduling must be carefully planned to fit the workforce to the workload. Periods of peak activity and idle time are better managed so that more work can be done in the same number of hours.
- *Better management practices.* Productivity is more validly judged by measuring results or contributions versus watching time clocks. Time is scheduled more effectively. For example, meetings, visits and phone calls can be scheduled during core hours. More "quiet" time can be created to tackle work that requires concentration. The result is better time management practices.
- *Improved productivity.* Employees feel more control over part of their work environment so they are more satisfied with their work. With improved satisfaction and morale comes more productivity. Flextime can result in greater efficiency and quality of service, e.g., more continuous time to work with a 4x10 schedule. Studies report that employees who are satisfied with their work environment and supervisory relationship deliver better customer service, resulting in improved customer satisfaction.
- *Better managers.* In an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation, managers can become more effective through improved relations, greater employee participation in the management of the unit, increased productivity and quality of service, etc. A manager has an opportunity to practice skills and enhance his/her personal reputation as a good manager.
- *No cost option.* The workplace can be improved at no cost. In some cases, overtime costs can be reduced or eliminated through improved work planning and scheduling while increasing hours of coverage or service.

What are the drawbacks of flextime?

- It takes initial planning and adjustment to set up flextime. Thought must be given to supervisory arrangements, adequate staffing, communication, and coordination and completion of work assignments, along with performance management.
- The nature of the organization's business and the characteristics of a job or employee may affect flextime appropriateness. This means that some employees within the same work unit may not be eligible, while others may.
- Without clear and adequate communication, there is a possibility that flextime may come to be viewed as an entitlement.
- Flexible work schedules may create special considerations for FLSA non-exempt employees. The supervisor needs to be accountable for any possible overtime exposure through careful scheduling and planning. The HR office should be involved if questions arise.

Does flextime affect an employee's paycheck?

A properly planned flextime arrangement should have no impact on the total number of hours an employee works in a pay period, thus, no impact on their paycheck. It is strongly recommended that flexible schedules start at the beginning of a workweek or pay period in order to mitigate the impact on FLSA non-exempt employees. Since compressed or 5 x 4 work schedules often have employees working more hours in a shorter period of time, the exposure to possible overtime liability should be considered when implementing flexible schedules.

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 phases is strongly encouraged as it can lead to better business decisions for the organization.

1. **Develop a plan.** Consider all aspects and potential impacts on the organization and work unit. Create a plan that outlines the specific arrangement for the work unit. Identify what is gained by using flextime and define the objectives and benefits or impact to the work unit, manager, employee, co-workers, and customers. If the employee is FLSA non-exempt, be sure to document the impact, plan the schedule accordingly, and be prepared to address overtime liability issues.

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, and other flexible options 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, then the jobholders. These factors should be worked out ahead of time and be part of the written plan.
 - *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, and the schedules of other employees outside the work unit with whom the job must coordinate.
 - *Establish a way to break ties for requests.* Some ideas include performance, seniority, draw lots, or rotation.
 - *Establish sanctions for abuse.* Under what circumstances will the schedule be terminated? Examples of abuse include inaccurate time sheets or a continual decrease in productivity. 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.** Be sure to document the specific arrangement. Remember that flextime is a privilege, not a right, and may need to be modified for business reasons. Both employee and management should remain flexible as both have an interest in making the arrangement work and are accountable for responsible use of flextime.

Hint: Try a pilot or trial run to test one or more options for a few months and address issues as they come up. Expect some adjustments along the way.

SAMPLE FORM A

FLEXTIME REQUEST/AGREEMENT

I. *(Employee completes this section.)*

Name: _____ Date: _____
Class/Title: _____ Exempt: _____ Non-Exempt: _____
Division: _____

List your current schedule and the requested schedule.

| Current Start and Stop Times | | Requested Start & Stop Times | |
|------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| Sunday | _____ | Sunday | _____ |
| Monday | _____ | Monday | _____ |
| Tuesday | _____ | Tuesday | _____ |
| Wednesday | _____ | Wednesday | _____ |
| Thursday | _____ | Thursday | _____ |
| Friday | _____ | Friday | _____ |
| Saturday | _____ | Saturday | _____ |
| Total Work Hours | _____ | Total Work Hours | _____ |

How will your proposed schedule sustain or enhance your ability to get the job done and the ability of the work unit to maintain production and service?

What potential challenges, including potential additional costs, could your changed requested schedule raise with:

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| External Customers | _____ |
| Internal Customers | _____ |
| Co-workers | _____ |
| Your Manager | _____ |

How do you suggest overcoming any challenges with these groups?

What reasonable measurements would you propose for you and your manager to constructively monitor the flextime schedule and assess how your performance (e.g., productivity and service) is meeting or exceeding expectations? Are there measurable outcomes to use? Be as quantitative as possible.

II. *(Appointing authority or designee completes this section.)*

Request for flextime is _____ approved. Effective date of flextime: _____ Ending date if temporary _____
Request for flextime is _____ declined. If declined, please describe why:

III.

We understand that prior approval is required, including any subsequent change to a different flextime schedule. Approval is the sole discretion of the Division Director or designee and, if approved, may be modified or discontinued at any time. The employee may also request to discontinue an approved flextime schedule at any time.

Date: _____ Division Director's (or designee's) signature _____

Date: _____ Employee's signature _____

SAMPLE FORM B

FLEXTIME REQUEST/AGREEMENT

I. Employee

Name: _____ Date: _____
Class/Title: _____ Exempt Non-Exempt
Division: _____ Work unit/section: _____

II. Workweek

| Current Schedule | Start/Stop Times | Proposed Schedule | Start/Stop Times |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday | | Sunday | |
| Monday | | Monday | |
| Tuesday | | Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | | Wednesday | |
| Thursday | | Thursday | |
| Friday | | Friday | |
| Saturday | | Saturday | |
| Total work hours | | Total work hours | |

III. Suitability

How will the proposed schedule affect the ability of you and your work unit to get the job done? Please note to what extent your work depends on customers or other staff, requires the presence of a supervisor, how productivity can be measured, the impact on co-workers, and the impact on customer service.

IV. Approvals

Flextime is a management tool and the primary consideration is always business need, and approval of an alternative work schedule is at the sole discretion of the appointing authority. It is a privilege, not a right or benefit, and an approved schedule may be discontinued or modified at any time.

Employee signature: _____
Appointing authority signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved. Effective date: _____ End date (if temporary): _____

Declined. Reason: _____

Please file a copy of this document with the Human Resources Office

SAMPLE FORM C

FLEXTIME REQUEST/AGREEMENT

Date: _____

Name: _____

Current Work Hours: _____

Requested Work Hours: _____

Supervisor Approval: _____

Basis for Request:

Describe the basis for your request as it relates to the compatibility of your job with an alternate schedule and the impact on the business needs of your work unit, such as your workload, responsiveness to customers, impact on co-workers, and staff coverage in the unit.

Supervisor: Submit completed request form to manager if outside 7:00 to 6:00, Monday through Friday.

Original to human resources office for personnel file. Copies to employee and supervisor.
Revised: 10/06

SAMPLE FORM D

FLEXTIME REQUEST/AGREEMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Division: _____ Exempt: ____ Non-Exempt: _____

Current Work Hours: _____

Requested Work Hours: _____

Supervisor Approval: _____

Basis for Request: describe how your job is suitable for flextime and the impact on the business needs of your work unit, such as your workload, responsiveness to customers, impact on co-workers, staff coverage, etc.

_____ Request is approved and effective on _____

_____ Request is declined

Appointing authority (or delegated authority) _____ Date _____