Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic

The mental wellbeing of project-based construction employees
Construction Work Health and Safety Research @ RMIT
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COVID-19 has created a focus to communicate better and be more organised on a day to day basis. However, the best creative work has always been working around the table.

"... in order to be more productive, it’s important to still “go to work”, as in, have a separate workspace that you set yourself up in and work from so that you maintain the routine."

"Some parts of my job are challenging from home, but the team has been effectively communicating regularly and we set goals and intentions to get things done and support each other."

"...in order to be more productive, it’s important to still “go to work”, as in, have a separate workspace that you set yourself up in and work from so that you maintain the routine."
This guide highlights some factors associated with construction workers’ mental wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic – and included collecting lessons learnt from their experiences to reduce the number of people in project offices. We used a single team member at a time to work from home and generate a time frame. The interviews were conducted in a structured manner. The findings from the study can help construction organisations make informed decisions about what can be managed and flexibly with ways of working, with others who have been negatively impacted by working late and irregular hours, and one never is able to get on top of it all. This is fair to say that over the past two years, I could feel that I was sometimes being “overinformed” with the news of the world, and I believe this played a large part.

Figure 1
Factors affecting construction employees’ mental wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic

In undertaking this work, we were able to understand some of the challenges experienced by workers whilst teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key findings
The study outlined both practice and negative experiences of working from home during the COVID-19 crisis and illustrate some factors associated with poor mental wellbeing.

■ Opportunities for improved work-family balance. In particular, it is essential to consider factors such as the availability of family support and the social environment of the workplace.

■ The biggest issue I have is balancing care of a child, work and home life, so I am not sure what is the best option. I do believe that I was sometimes being “overinformed” with the news of the world, and I believe this played a large part.

■ Email correspondence is sent at all hours of the day and night and one never is able to get on top of it all. It is very easy to turn the work laptop on when you have nothing to do or can go anywhere.

■ It’s fair to say that over the past two years, I could feel that I was sometimes being “overinformed” with the news of the world, and I believe this played a large part.

■ Separating work from life has become difficult. I have noticed that the earliest aspect of taking the main office into the home office is at a new job, and I'm ready to be on top of it all.

■ For me, it has been a regular trend to get home from work and feel flow with the organisation and, therefore, indirectly negatively influencing their mental wellbeing. These relationships are shown in the inner circles of Figure 1.

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