

Responding to work-related information and communications outside of work hours

Greater flexibility in how and where work is undertaken, supported by technological advancements, can be beneficial but requires careful management by both employers and employees. Clauses 52.15 to 52.19 of the new agreement are intended to assist by establishing boundaries for work-related communication outside of work hours.

Working hours requirements are defined in clause 22 of the Agreement and remain the primary Agency policies and procedures that apply to public service and/or government officers must be consistent with the provisions of this sub clause.

Implementation

Clause 52.15 clarifies that for the purposes of this clause, communication that does not constitute “genuine welfare and safety matters” or “business-critical matters” is classified as “work-related communications”. Both employers and employees are encouraged to minimise work-related communications after working hours. Employees are not required to access or respond to work related communication outside their ordinary or rostered hours unless the communication is for one of the following reasons:

1. Business critical matters (as defined at 52.15a)
2. Genuine welfare and safety matters (as defined at 52.15b)

This expectation does not apply if an employee is in receipt of an ‘out of hours contact’ allowance under clause 23, undertaking overtime, or has made themselves available for contact to cover available casual or overtime shifts.

Open communication and work culture

Employers are encouraged to create a working environment that supports separation between work and non-work life. Managers, supervisors and other employees in leadership roles can reinforce this message this in team meetings, incorporate this in induction activities, and restrict necessary out of hours contact to only [written communication](#) (i.e. email).

Similarly, employees are responsible for managing their use of work systems to maintain work life balance, both in terms of accessing and sending work related communications outside working hours. Turning of notifications for all work-related platforms can assist: [Outlook](#) [Microsoft Teams](#).