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Working from Home:
The Legal Framework
in Egypt

Working from home (WFH) is no longer a privilege; it's already a standard operating mode for employees and companies globally and becoming essential for an increasing number of local entities. Bill Gates once predicted that as competition for talent gets tougher, "companies that give extra flexibility to their employees will have the edge."

The option of flexible work is not about working less or working more. There are different types of working from home. There is a flexi hours during the working days or flexi weeks to work remotely from home or flexi place with the option to work outside the company. The current global shift toward remote-friendly workplaces requires businesses to establish clear and consistent frameworks for working from and implementing a strategy that keeps everyone aligned, supported, and engaged.

Setting the Terms

• Fortunately, Egypt enacted Labor Law No.12 in 2003 to support private sector companies, as they move to flexible forms of employment, and introduce diverse type of customized contracts that accommodate emerging business needs.

• This legal framework helps companies' structure policies and procedures to provide flexible working hours and define the workplace in consultation with the employee to perform his/her assigned tasks.

• "The workplace" is defined by the employer in an agreement mutually accepted by the employee to work from home based on the nature of assigned tasks.

• Terms and conditions regulating the WFH relationship are increasingly spelled out in employment contracts, even though all aspects of routine work under the Egyptian labor law still apply to telecommuting.

Control Tools

To effectively supervise home employment, managers can deploy four major control tools that are integral to quality control and ensuring effectiveness: drafting inclusive employment contracts, inserting a WFH job description as annex for employee contracts, and implementing internal policy and regulation alongside labor law regulations.

Boon for Disabled

A recent, relevant development is the 2018 enactment of law No. 10 for people with disabilities and its executive regulations, which take into consideration the requirements and rights of special needs employees, as more of these Egyptian workers create value in WFH situations. Consequently, the new law has permitted employees with disabilities to receive extra flexibility in workplace designation, including the facilitation of the work from home option under the company's internal policy and procedure.

Managers need to consider a range of policy modifications as they implement the WFH model:

• Stated hours of work may need redefinition.

• Specifying core times when an employee undertakes to work or be contactable.

• New duties or responsibilities may need to be assigned in addition to those already agreed.

• The contract may state that the business will supply and insure any equipment necessary while stipulating it not be used for personal purposes.

• The contract may specify what payments the company will make to reimburse the employee for expenses incurred while WFH.

• Procedures may need to be put in place if the employee wishes to end the home working arrangement.

• The employment contract should include specific job responsibilities along with stating penalties should the employee not abide by agreed upon terms.

• The company's formal regulations validated by the Egyptian government labor office should be amended to include new forms of employment after adding the required changes.

Thus, it is highly recommended to update the company's internal policies and regulations to adjust to new employment trends, including full time salaried WFH arrangements, temporary telecommuting jobs, and part-time employment.

Companies should make sure the staff knows where to turn if they ever feel isolated, and give teams the tools they need to communicate effectively. After all, in the digital age, it's easier than ever to get in touch with people whether they're in the workplace or at home.