

# The Road to Success for Employees: Best Practices for Teleworkers





We cannot hear or see you



Post questions in the Q&A box



Slides and a recording will be emailed out after

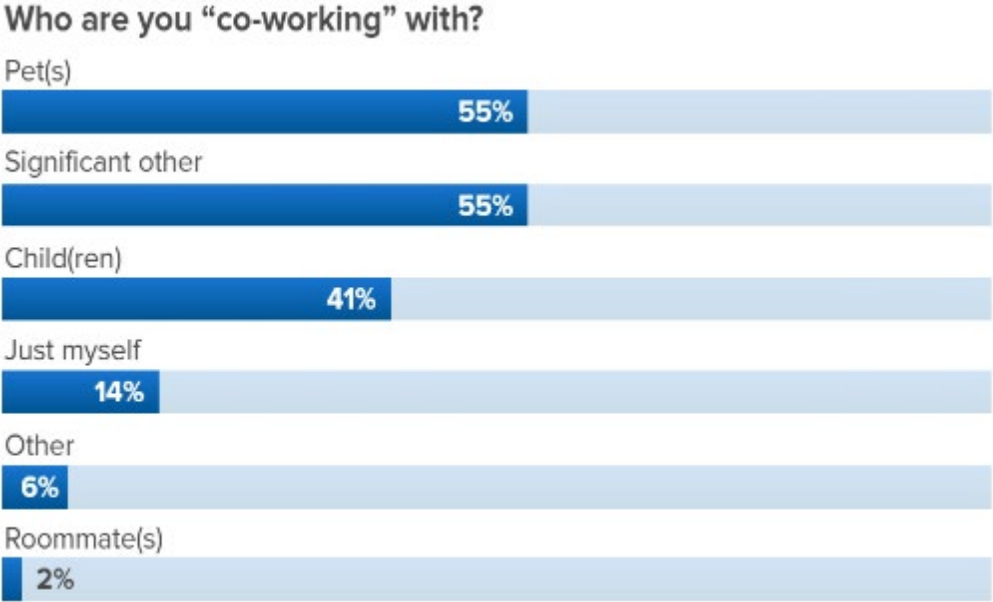


**Elham Shirazi**  
WorkSmart Program  
Lead Consultant

## Teleworking during COVID-19

- Extreme teleworking...not the normal situation for teleworking
- Everyone in the household under one roof
- Working
- Home Schooling
- Providing Childcare
- Cooking
- Baking
- Stressed by the pandemic

# Teleworking in the time of COVID-19 conducted first week of April 2020 SHRM



Notes: These results are based on 660 responses collected as of Monday, April 6, SHRM

# Teleworking in the time of COVID-19 conducted first week of April 2020 SHRM

How many times a day are you interrupted by others in your household?



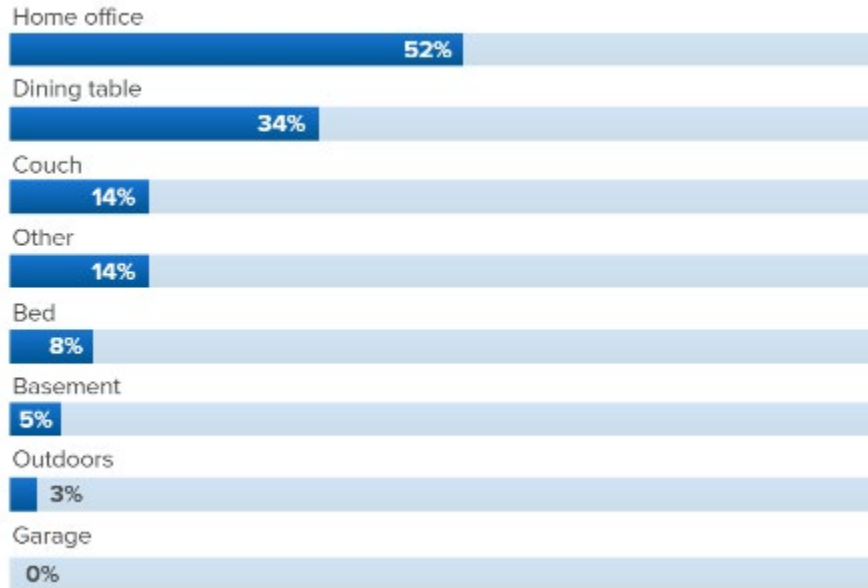
Do you show your face on videoconference calls?



Notes: These results are based on 660 responses collected as of Monday, April 6, SHRM

# Teleworking in the time of COVID-19 conducted first week of April 2020 SHRM

## Where are you set up to work at home?



Notes: These results are based on 660 responses collected as of Monday, April 6, SHRM

# Take the Time to Prepare



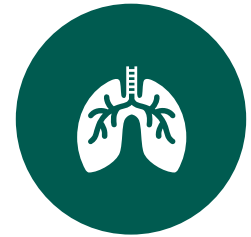
*PLAN DAILY  
ACTIVITIES*



*MANAGE  
DISRUPTIONS*



*STAY CALM  
AND RELAXED*



*BREATHE!*

# Teleworker's Role

“Creating a safe, calm and productive work environment given the existing trust in the workplace, established relations and communications strategies.”





# Adjustments for Employees

- Impact on teamwork?
- How will my manager know that I am working?
- Increased isolation from co-workers
- Developing good organizational skills
- Dealing with distractions in the home environment

# Teleworking through Goal-Setting with Managers



# Telework Task Schedule

Template deliverable-based form. This can keep you accountable and managers aware of the work that is being done for the period of the emergency.

<b>1.Task</b> <b>Deliverable</b> <b>Accomplishment</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<b>Estimated hours</b> _____ <b>Actual Hours</b> _____
<b>2. Task</b> <b>Deliverable</b> <b>Accomplishment</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<b>Estimated hours</b> _____ <b>Actual hours</b> _____
<b>3. Task</b> <b>Deliverable</b> <b>Accomplishment</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<b>Estimated hours</b> _____ <b>Actual hours</b> _____
<b>4. Task</b> <b>Deliverable</b> <b>Accomplishment</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<b>Estimated hours</b> _____ <b>Actual hours</b> _____



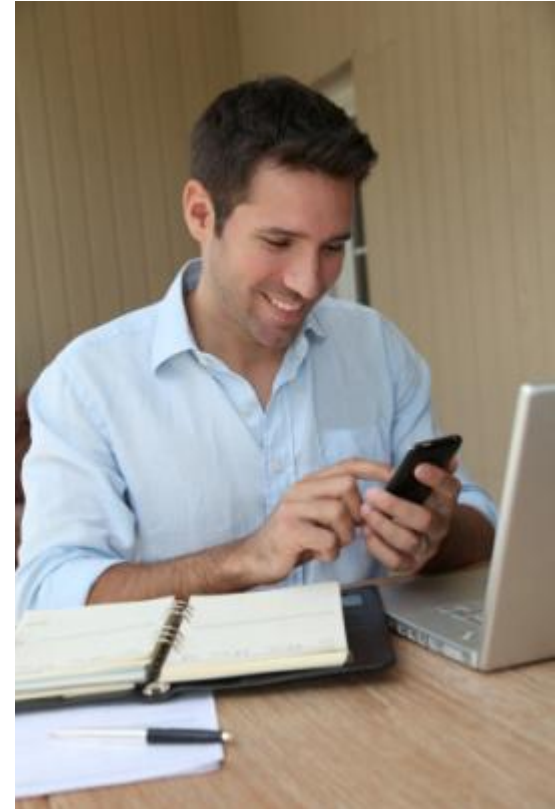
## Helpful Tips to get Started

- Have a morning ritual
- Get dressed, not dressed up
- Schedule virtual breaks with coworkers
- Take breaks to get up and move around
- Eat lunch away from your desk
- Go for walks
- Meditate if possible
- Stay away from the news and radio while working
- Have an end of the day ritual
- Take vacation or personal time off

# Teleworkers: Getting Organized

Employees should (if possible, given the nature of the emergency):

- Pick a dedicated workspace at their home that provides a safe environment for working
- Establish a routine – start at the same time, take breaks, lunch, and end at the same time (this may vary from employee to employee)
- Organize their work schedule and tasks based on organizational needs



# Ergonomic Guidelines

## Employees would have:

### Desk

- Ensure a comfortable height

### Chair

- Adjustable seat, both for height and angle to provide support. An ergonomic chair is preferable (prevents injury)

### Lighting

- Light should be directed toward the side or behind line of vision
- Direct sunlight should not be used on work surfaces

# Ergonomic Guidelines

## Employees would be conscious of:

### Safety

- Electrical support needed for equipment when configuring workspace
- Cover interconnecting cables to avoid tripping
- Place equipment close to electrical outlets
- Use surge protectors
- Place heavy items on sturdy stands close to walls
- Provide enough air space around computer. Keep out of direct sunlight and away from heaters

### Noise

- Work quality and perceptions may be impacted by the sounds of crying children, barking dogs, vacuum cleaners, etc.

## Teleworkers: Training Family and Friends

- The message to family and friends is that you are at home **working!**
- Decide what interruptions are OK – emergencies, etc., typically they are the same as those OK in the office
- Set rules for office materials
- Understanding that many employees will have children home during this time, agree upfront how your staff can balance time during the day





# Teleworkers: Managing Work

- Maintain contact with coworkers
- Follow company protocol for security of information
- Stick to deadlines
- Keep managers informed of problems and progress
- Attend scheduled meetings by phone or electronically
- Schedule meetings with coworkers and others as needed



# Establishing Communications Standards



Assess current communication practices - How might teleworking change communications?



Impromptu communications will have to happen by phone or electronically



It's OK to interrupt!



Expect more e-mails, IMs, texts, and calls



Assess if flexing the beginning and end of the day is possible



Define to the degree what are the core hours



## Impact on Teamwork

- Get clear direction from management: when attendance is required by phone, electronically, or through videoconference
- Conduct 15-minute team huddles as needed
- Make sure that you are adequately trained on collaborative technology
- Use tutorials and ask for time to learn the tools

# Teleworkers and Communication

- Be accessible
- Call or contact manager if needed
- Make sure that your electronic calendar is updated
- Work & meetings
- Personal non-available time



# Working from Home Burnout

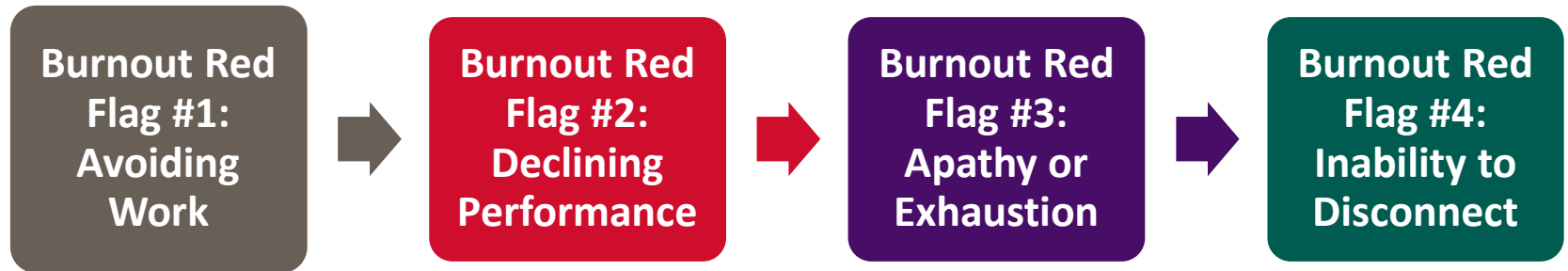


# Harvard Business Review Research Indicates

- Millions around the globe have made a sudden transition to remote work amid the COVID-19 pandemic. What employers should be concerned about is a longer-term risk: employee burnout.
- Research has shown that workers often unintentionally make it hard for their supervisors, colleagues, and employees to maintain boundaries. In five studies involving more than 2,000 working adults, we found that senders of after-hours work emails underestimate how compelled receivers feel to respond right away, even when such emails are not urgent.

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/3-tips-to-avoid-wfh-burnout>

# Red Flag Warnings



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurelfarrer/2020/05/29/the-dangerous-reality-of-wfh-burnout-and-how-to-treat-it/#21ce53bd2487>

# What can Employers, Managers, and Coworkers do to help one another cope?



**Maintain physical and social boundaries**



**Maintain temporal boundaries as much as possible**



**Focus on your most important work**

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/3-tips-to-avoid-wfh-burnout>



# Burnout Busters

- **Set Office Hours** -Implement office hours by silencing notifications and activating an out-of-office response outside of certain time blocks. This way, no matter if you're on the road or on the couch, your brain (and your clients or coworkers) knows that it's time for you to relax.
- **Take Time Off** -A little counteraction goes a long way. Refresh your clarity and enthusiasm for work by stepping away from it for a little while. Whether you decide to travel or just enjoy some time at home, make sure that you completely unplug. Turn off all notifications (or even your entire device – gasp!), forward your inbox and tasks to a co-worker or virtual assistant while you're away, and make a rule to not talk or think about work at all. After a few days, you'll feel recharged and ready for action.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurelfarrer/2020/05/29/the-dangerous-reality-of-wfh-burnout-and-how-to-treat-it/#21ce53bd2487>

# Burnout Busters

- **Have a Hobby** Intense work needs to be balanced with intense play. If work is the only thing that you feel passionate about, it's time to discover other parts of your personality.
- **Update Your Job Description** If you're feeling stuck in a rut, steer yourself out of it. Schedule a meeting with your supervisor or mentor to discuss what you do and don't like about your current role, and brainstorm ways that it could be updated to better cater to your strengths and interests.
- **Tell Your Team** Hiding your concerns will only make them worse. If you're feeling burned out, tell your boss and coworkers as early as possible.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurelfarrer/2020/05/29/the-dangerous-reality-of-wfh-burnout-and-how-to-treat-it/#21ce53bd2487>

# Zoom Fatigue is Real

If you're finding that you're more exhausted at the end of your workday than you used to be, you're not alone. Over the past few weeks, mentions of "Zoom fatigue" have popped up more and more on social media, and Google searches for the same phrase have steadily increased since early March.

Zoom fatigue is sneaky and can be triggered in people just like you who spend copious amounts of time on virtual meetings, trying to compensate for the loss of face to face interaction.

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue>

# Why are Video Calls so Draining?



In part, it's because they force us to focus more intently on conversations in order to absorb information.



The problem isn't helped by the fact that video calls make it easier than ever to lose focus.



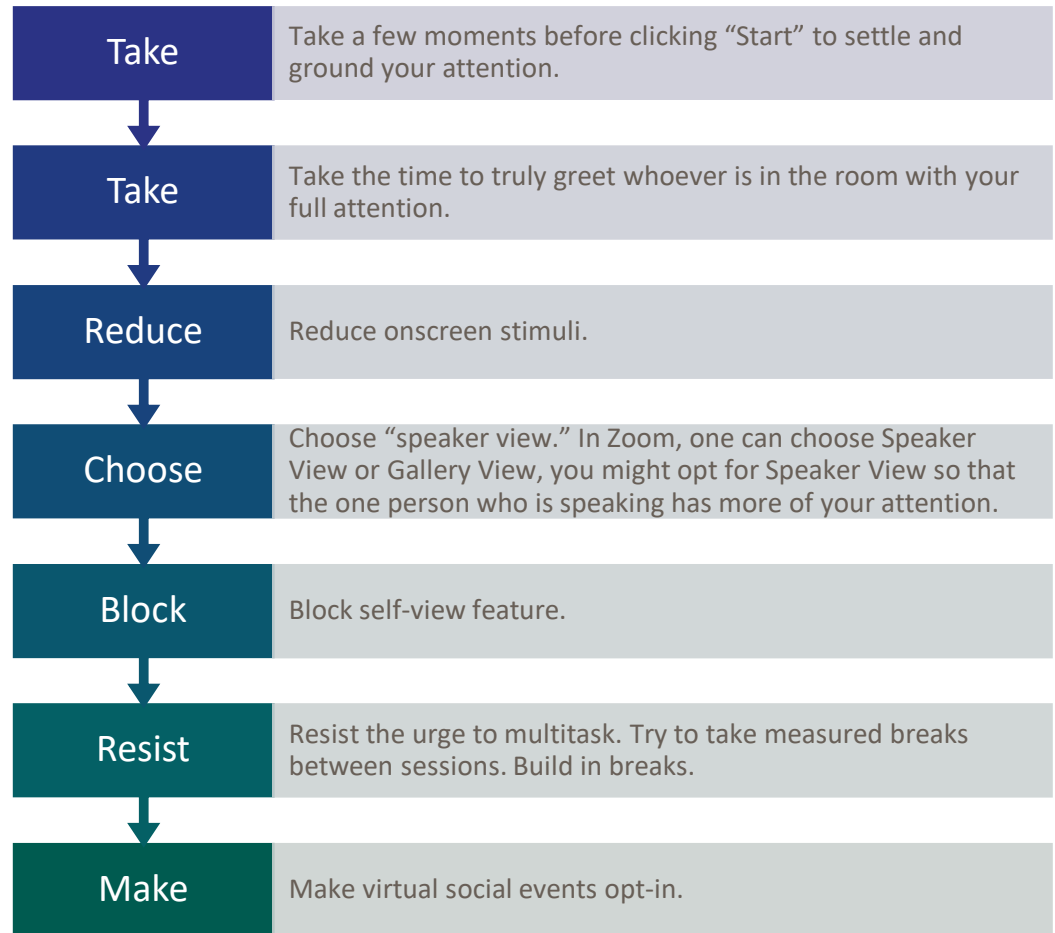
“Zoom fatigue” stems from how we process information over video. On a video call the only way to show we're paying attention is to look at the camera.



If we are with several people online at the same time, we are simultaneously processing visual cues from all of those people in a way we never have to do around a conference table.

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue>

# Techniques to Combat Zoom Fatigue

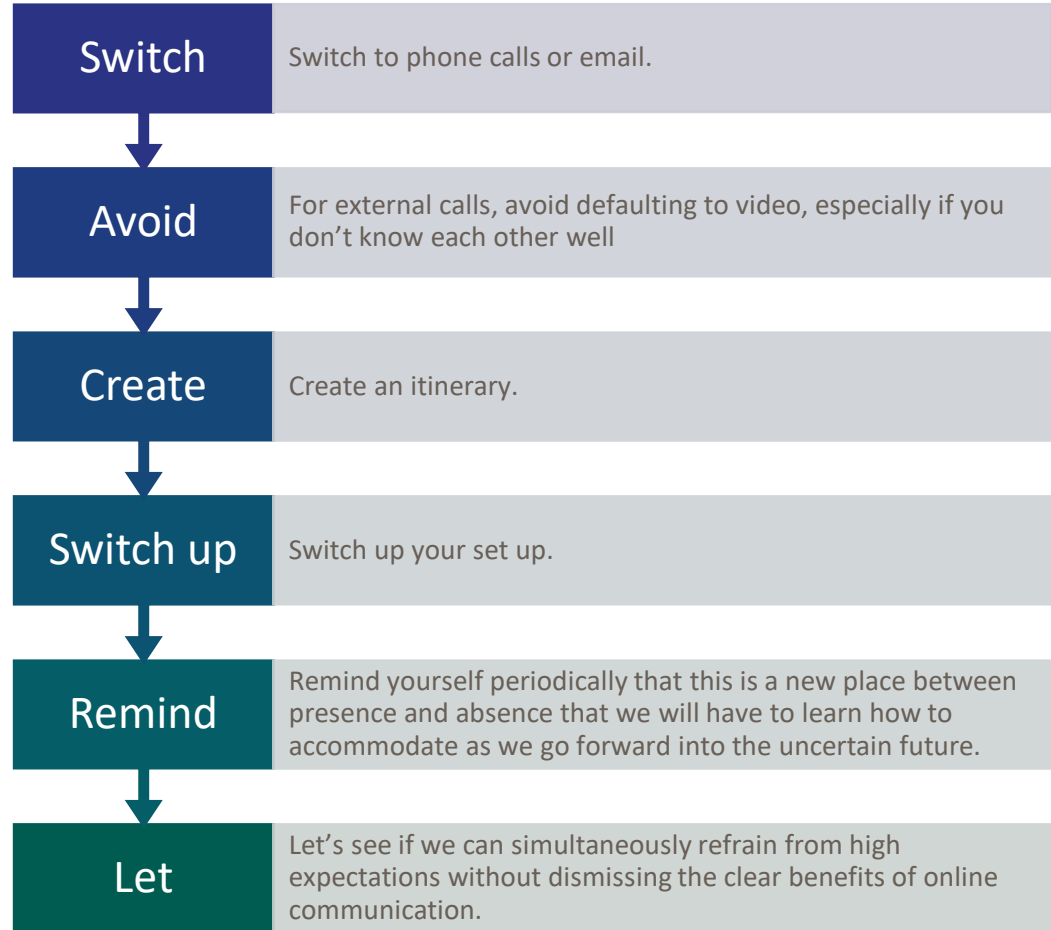


<https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue>

<https://www.mindful.org/zoom-exhaustion-is-real-here-are-six-ways-to-find-balance-and-stay-connected/>

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351091#:~:text=To%20combat%20the%20Zoom%20fatigue,smoothly%20as%20the%20last%20one.>

## Techniques to Combat Zoom Fatigue (cont.)



<https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue>

<https://www.mindful.org/zoom-exhaustion-is-real-here-are-six-ways-to-find-balance-and-stay-connected/>

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351091#:~:text=To%20combat%20the%20Zoom%20fatigue,smoothly%20as%20the%20last%20one.>

## Communication



Integrate your coworkers in innovation exchanges such as brainstorming exercises using technology



Face time helps build relationships

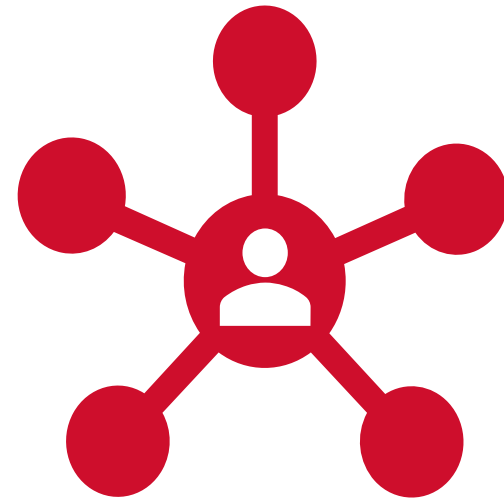


If you have access to videoconferencing, once a week try to schedule video meetings with your manager to have a more personal and fruitful exchange

## More Tips for Employees



Consider conducting short team meetings and share personal experiences



Build trust through interactions so that you and your manager can talk about problems, and find solutions



# Tips for Teleworkers



Avoid burn out



Make sure that you have work  
life balance



Ensure that you are problem-  
solving issues as they arise

# Ideas for to Boost Morale and Collaboration

- Birthday celebrations
- Water cooler get togethers
- Virtual ice-breakers
- Virtual Town Hall, detailing same and having a Q and A
- Weekly small group chats, communication weekly with company personnel
- Managers check in, happy hours, pet days, and more virtually
- T-shirts, Incentive PTO, remote worker games, remote happy hours, weekly leadership team meetings, regular employee communications, saying thank you very often and being visible

\* Survey of over 150 executives, in-house attorneys, and HR professionals from clients of the law firm Blank Rome. The responses came from C-Suite executives, in-house attorneys, and human resources professionals from a diverse array of businesses across various industries and geographies conducted from April 18 to April 24, 2020.

# WorkSmart Free Services –One on One Consultation

- Lead you through every step to put a program into place
- Assess potential and necessary steps for customized program delivery
- Assist with overcoming concerns
- Develop custom presentations and marketing materials
- Consult on technology needs
- Develop policies, procedures and agreements
- Train managers and employees
- Provide evaluation guidelines and strategies
- Help meet CTR goals

# Contact

- Elham Shirazi
- [www.kingcounty.gov/worksmart](http://www.kingcounty.gov/worksmart)
- [elham@e-planning.com](mailto:elham@e-planning.com)
- 213.248.0030
- [www.e-planning.com](http://www.e-planning.com)
- [worksmart@kingcounty.gov](mailto:worksmart@kingcounty.gov)

