

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

Remote Work Newsletter

Preparing for Open Enrollment This Year

Open enrollment will be here before you know it—and it'll likely differ than those held in years past, especially for remote employees. Benefit offerings may be changing, and you may be enrolling virtually as a remote employee. As such, it's essential to come prepared. To avoid last-minute headaches, familiarize yourself with the enrollment process to make informed benefits decisions.

According to a MetLife survey, 48% of employees said that last year's open enrollment was more important than previous years. The main driver of those responses was the COVID-19 pandemic. There's a good chance those feelings remain.

Open enrollment shapes your benefits for the upcoming year, so it's crucial to be prepared. Consider the following tips:

- **Look at your current benefits.** Now is the right time to discuss options and personal needs with all relevant individuals. To determine if you need more—or less—coverage, ask yourself these questions. Are you supporting more dependents? Have you developed any chronic health conditions? Has

the pandemic changed your life in any way?

- **Thoroughly read the descriptions for this year's offerings.** Some benefits may have changed, so don't assume your coverage remained the same without reading over everything first. Pay close attention to details and the fine print as well.
- **Seek digital materials or educational opportunities.** Take advantage of employer resources, such as virtual enrollment fairs, webinars, benefits and enrollment websites, and digital benefits guides.
- **Understand virtual open enrollment technology.** Some or all of your open enrollment process is likely digital, so get familiar with the required technology and speak up if you have any questions or password issues.

You won't want to miss enrolling in the right benefits this year. If you have further questions about open enrollment, request an informational meeting with your HR representative.



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Redefining Etiquette in a Remote Workplace

With remote work becoming a permanent option for many organizations across the country, the importance of proper online etiquette has never been greater. That means certain behaviors and natural aspects of your workday may need to be more intentional.

Nonverbal cues can be tough to pick up on, written items may be taken out of context, and you might be communicating with people you only just (virtually) met. If you aren't spending much (or any) time with co-workers in person, behavioral expectations may not have been established. For those reasons, remote work etiquette is even more crucial.

Fortunately, some preparation and thoughtfulness can help you effectively communicate and connect with remote co-workers. Consider the following ways to maintain or improve your virtual workplace interactions:

- **Set and understand communication expectations.** Ensure you're setting clear and reasonable communication expectations and understand what to expect from your peers—such as response times and use of videoconferencing.

- **Choose the appropriate communication method.** Email is ideal for detailed or concise information. Video calls are geared more toward urgent or time-sensitive messages. Additionally, video can humanize conversations with nonverbal cues, making it a good choice for sensitive discussions.
- **Be considerate of your tone and timing.** It can be hard to gauge someone's tone in a remote setting via email or chat. Be thoughtful with your language and wording so you come across as intended. It's also important to be self-aware about your timing.
- **Reach out to co-workers.** It can be hard to build solid relationships with your co-workers from behind a screen. Maintaining casual conversations is key, but that can involve proactive efforts, particularly as virtual happy hours or chats may have fallen off calendars by now. Don't be afraid to connect with your team.

Although the environment is virtual, etiquette matters. Set yourself up for success with these remote work tips.

