

Google Introduces New Restrictions to Its Popular 'Work From Anywhere' Perk

Key Takeaways

- Google introduced its "Work from Anywhere" policy in 2021 as a way for employees to work away from their main office for up to four weeks per year.
- Now, Google is telling staff that "Work from Anywhere" weeks cannot be used to work from home.
- The perk specifically applies to significant, distant travel within a country.

Google established its "Work from Anywhere" (WFA) policy during the pandemic as a way for employees to work fully remotely from any location for up to four weeks per year.

Now, the tech giant is clarifying that the policy allows staffers to work remotely, but not at home, effectively turning the program into a benefit for significant, distant travel. According to internal documents obtained by CNBC on Wednesday, Google specified that WFA weeks "cannot be used to work from home or nearby."

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Google first set up WFA weeks in May 2021 as a way for Googlers to temporarily work from a location other than their main offices. The perk applies to remote travel, but employees

cannot use WFA to work in a different country due to the “legal and financial implications of cross-border work,” according to the documents.

The documents also show that WFA will also be deducted in weekly increments; logging one WFA day means that the entire week counts as part of the four-week total.

“Whether you log 1 WFA day or 5 WFA days in a given standard work week, 1 WFA week will be deducted from your WFA weekly balance,” the documents read.

“The goal here is to give everyone more flexibility around summer and holiday travel,” Google CEO Sundar Pichai wrote in a blog post at the time.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai. Photo by Mateusz Włodarczyk/NurPhoto via Getty Images

WFA days operate separately from Google’s current hybrid work setup, also established during the pandemic, which permits employees to work from home two days a week.

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In a town hall in September 2024, Google leaders assured employees that the company would stick to its hybrid work policy and not mandate that employees return to the office five days per week. Still, the company has brought back in-person interviews, signaling a shift away from fully remote recruitment.

Pichai told “The Lex Fridman Podcast” in June that Google is reintroducing “at least one round of in-person interviews for people” to ensure that candidates have mastered “the fundamentals.”

A slew of major companies have moved to fully in-person work this year, including Amazon, JPMorgan, and AT&T, despite employee pushback.

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