

Want to Go Green? A New Study Says Full-Time Remote Workers Slash Their Greenhouse Gas Emissions By Half



Working remotely? You could be helping the environment.

A recent study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that those who work from home full-time generate less than half the greenhouse gas emissions than their office-based counterparts. Employees working exclusively from home in the U.S. were estimated to reduce their emissions by 54%, the study found.

Working remotely one day a week only resulted in a 2% emission decrease, largely due to increased non-commuting travel on remote workdays. On the other hand, those working remotely two

to four days a week saw emissions reductions of up to 29% compared to on-site workers.

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The study analyzed various datasets, including Microsoft employee commuting and teleworking behavior, and was conducted by researchers from Cornell University and Microsoft. The primary contributors to emissions reduction among remote workers were decreased office energy use and fewer emissions from daily commutes.

While remote work has the potential to reduce carbon footprints, the study underscores the need for a balanced approach, carefully considering commuting patterns, energy consumption, vehicle ownership, and non-commute-related travel to fully maximize the environmental benefits of remote work.

“People say: ‘I work from home, I’m net zero.’ That’s not true,” Fengqi You of Cornell University, a report co-author, told The Guardian. “The net benefit for working remotely is positive but a key question is how positive. When people work remotely, they tend to spend more emissions on social activities.”

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