# Info Services FAQ

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1) How do I stay connected to status updates from the Observatory:
   a. info.nrao.edu has the latest updates on the [front page](#), plus the [COVID-19 page](#).
   b. Regular E-mail updates are being issued by the Director and Management (see FAQ below to ensure you have E-mail access).
   c. Site status phone numbers:
      i. Charlottesville, VA: 434-296-0200
      ii. Green Bank, WV: 304-456-2330
      iii. Socorro, NM: 575-835-7100
2) How do I access JD Edwards to fill in my timecard?
   a. The preferred mechanism is to use an Observatory managed computer using the Cisco AnyConnect VPN.
   b. If you don't have access to an Observatory computer, visit [https://vpn.cv.nrao.edu](https://vpn.cv.nrao.edu), log in with your Active Directory credentials (just your username, not AD\username). Once you're logged in, click on "Web Applications" on the left, and then click on "Oracle JD Edwards" under the Web Applications group. This should work with Internet Explorer 11, Firefox, and Chrome but there may be issues using Edge. This should also work on smart-phones and tablets.
   c. ETK codes during IDOS have been [posted to the info site](#).
3) How do I access E-mail?
   a. The preferred mechanism is to use an Observatory managed computer.
   b. To access Webmail, visit [https://webmail.nrao.edu](https://webmail.nrao.edu) and follow the instructions.
4) How do I communicate my phone contact information when working remote?
   a. The [Observatory phone book](#) lists the alternate phone information. Open a [helpdesk](#) ticket if you need this information updated.
   b. [Update your work Voicemail](#) message to reference your alternate phone number.
   c. We recommend including your preferred phone number in your E-mail signature.
   d. We do NOT recommend forwarding your work phone to your personal phone since this ties up two phone lines during the call, and results in work messages rolling to personal voicemail.
5) How can I check my voicemail messages?
   a. You can [call in to check your voicemail](#) remotely.
6) How should I check my work paper mail delivered to my Observatory mail box?
   a. Please contact your supervisor so a member of the Skeleton Staff can check for important mail like invoices and bills and get you a copy.

7) Can I request a loaner laptop and/or monitor?
   a. Yes, with approval from your supervisor, via a helpdesk ticket.  Bear in mind our supply is very limited at the moment, but more laptops are on order.
   b. Please coordinate site access and Property Loan Agreement with your manager and CIS.
8) If I don't have an Observatory laptop, can I take my desktop system home?
   a. Yes; desktop systems can be taken home with manager approval, but we only support this for Windows and Mac desktop systems (not Linux) and require that the Cisco AnyConnect VPN client be installed.
   b. The lack of WiFi on most desktops will require that an RJ-45 Ethernet cable be included and physically connected to your home Internet system.
   c. Please coordinate site access and Property Loan Agreement with your manager.
9) If I need to reserve a meeting with multiple people, what are my options?
   a. You can book an NRAO conference room, and call into the Polycom hub (from PC/Mac/Phone) as normal, even though there may be no-one actually in the host room.
   b. For Zoom reservations; visit the same room booking site and select "All Videoconferencing" under Room Group. There are now six Zoom virtual rooms available, but these are NOT password protected and should only be used for internal Observatory meetings. Please open a helpdesk ticket if external participation is needed.
   c. MyMeetings accounts are available upon helpdesk request and provides US and International toll-free voice conference services as well as WebEx for screen sharing.
   d. As usual, please do NOT post meeting information on the public Internet/on an NRAO web site that does not require authentication.
10) Will my work system be patched when I'm working remote?
   a. Any system in work will be patched, provided it is powered on and connected to the network.
   b. Your Windows system at home will need to be connected to the VPN to receive patches.
   c. Mac system just needs to be connected to the Internet.
11) Can I access Halogen from home?
   a. Yes, this is accessible without needing VPN at pep.aui.edu using your normal username/password.
12) How should I print at home?
   a. For obvious reasons, paper printing should be avoided: Printing to PDF files is available on all platforms and these can then be digitally signed then shared as needed.
   b. Configuring your home printer on a work computer can require the installation of drivers, which in turn may need admin assistance on Windows (open a helpdesk ticket). This will be supported on a best effort basis.

13) How do I share files with others when working remote?
    a. Please refrain from sending large (>5Mbyte) attachments via E-mail, especially when it's to a large number of recipients as this consumes storage on the central mail resources as well as the receiving clients.
    b. Use the site-based filers (this requires the VPN and an Observatory system).
    c. Use AstroCloud (accessible without VPN).
    d. Use SharePoint (also allows for concurrent authoring but requires the VPN or WebVPN).
    e. Using these central file sharing options really helps with version control and reduce the impact of corrections since staff will always have the most current version when they access the link.

14) What on-line Instant Message/group chat options are available?
    a. We recommend Mattermost for group chat and topic specific discussions.
    b. There is an NRAO hosted XMPP-based IM solution which requires Pidgin (Win) or Adium (Mac) client.
    c. For external collaborations, Slack, Google Hangouts, and Microsoft Teams are popular, among many other solutions, but these will all require the management of membership lists, personal logins, and an invitation by the moderator.
    d. SMS calling groups may be considered if everyone has access to a smartphone with a texting service enabled.

15) If my home bandwidth is limited, what can I do?
    a. Using VNC or remote desktop (RDWA) to access Observatory systems can alleviate bandwidth constraints by limiting the amount of data transmitted to just screen updates.
    b. We encourage you to work with your ISP to improve your bandwidth, or evaluate options for investing in a 4G hotspot if you have good cellular coverage.
    c. Inform your manager if you lack sufficient bandwidth to work productively from home.

16) Can the NRAO VPN be installed on my personal system?
    a. This would allow persistent access to the Observatory secure network from a system that may not be fully patched, and potentially used by other family members, so is not encouraged.
    b. We do allow VNC, WebVPN, SSH tunneling and remote desktop access (see above).
    c. If no alternative can be found, a non-NRAO computer access request form can be found at: https://info.nrao.edu/computing/guide/network-access.

17) Is my personal system approved for Observatory work?
    a. If you need to use a personal computer for access to internal Observatory resources (e.g. protected by a username/password) it is important that they be receiving automatic updates from the OS vendor and have an anti-virus solution installed.

18) What's the best way to obtain information services help?
    a. All Information Services are documented on the Observatory Information site.
    b. If you have questions, E-mail helpdesk@nrao.edu or log onto the web interface for the Helpdesk to create as support request ticket.