



Vol. 5 | September 2021

## Message from Leadership

On September 9th, President Biden signed an [Executive Order](#) requiring vaccinations for all Federal employees, stating that it is essential for Federal employees to take all available steps to protect themselves and avoid spreading COVID-19 to

Vaccines are available at no cost to everyone age 12 and older living in the United States.



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[vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

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code to 438829

Call  
1-800-232-0233

their colleagues and members of the public. This direction will help decrease the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and protect our employees and their families during this continuing public health emergency. Requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for our workforce will also increase productivity and our ability to deliver our mission of serving our nation's workers.

Pursuant to the Executive Order, all DOL employees must be fully vaccinated (i.e., two weeks past your final shot) **no later than Monday, November 22, 2021**, unless you have a reasonable accommodation for a qualifying medical condition or a religious accommodation based on a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. This requirement applies to all DOL employees, including 100% remote workers and those who are not currently performing onsite or in person work. Please get vaccinated as soon as possible, for yourself and for others.

To meet the November 22, 2021, timeframe to be fully vaccinated, an employee must:

- Obtain the first dose of the Moderna vaccine no later than October 11, 2021, and the second dose of the Moderna vaccine no later than November 8, 2021;

- Obtain the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine no later than October 18, 2021, and the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine no later than November 8, 2021; or
- Obtain the single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine no later than November 8, 2021.

The President signed [another Executive Order](#) that will require certain federal contractors to be fully vaccinated.

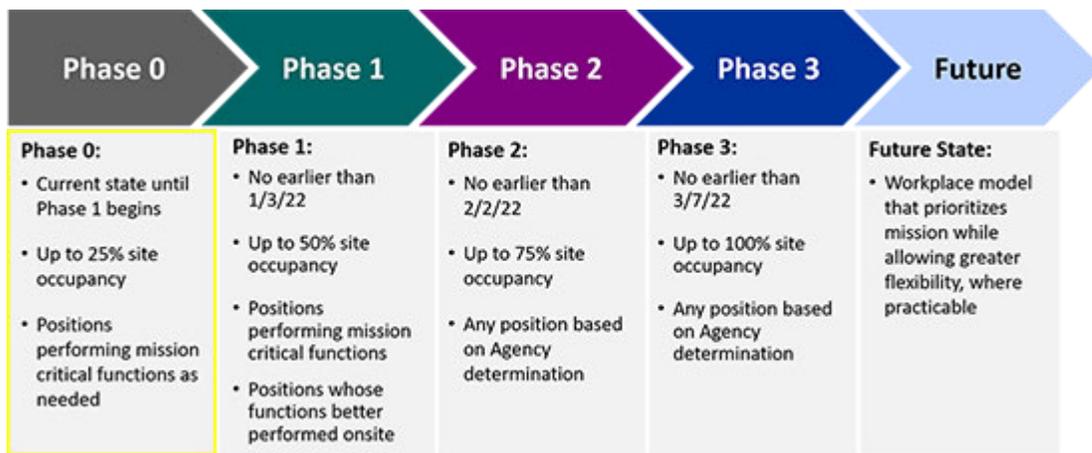
The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team will continue to communicate with you all as we implement both Executive Orders. As always, please ask questions as we continue on this journey. Please check the [COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#) page for more information and send your questions to

— Rachana Desai Martin, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management

## Workplace Safety Plan Updates: Reentry Phases

After reviewing various factors, including President Biden’s Executive Orders requiring COVID-19 vaccination for Federal [employees](#) and [contractors](#), the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team is adjusting the timeline for increasing the return of Federal staff, onsite contractor staff, and visitors to DOL workspaces.

Phase 1 reentry will now begin **no earlier than January 3, 2022** (rather than the previous planned reentry date of October 7, 2021). Our phased approach and occupancy limits for each of the reentry phases, as detailed in the [Internal DOL Reentry and Post-Reentry Future of Work Plan](#), are presently unchanged. Mission critical onsite work will continue. Thus, employees performing essential work that cannot be completed from an approved telework site should continue to work onsite as determined by their agency under the [DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#).



## In Case You Missed It

Here is a quick recap of the latest COVID-19 information and guidance sent to all DOL employees:

- [Ending Soon American Rescue Plan Emergency Paid Leave](#)
- [Executive Order on Requiring COVID 19 Vaccination for All Federal Employees](#)
- [Launching VaxTrak for Collecting Information About Vaccine Status](#)
- [Updated Vaccination Information and Resources](#)
- [Use of Administrative Leave for COVID 19 Vaccination Purposes](#)
- [Masking Requirements by DOL Location](#)



Additional information, including [Employee Messages](#), are posted on the [DOL COVID 19 LaborNet page](#). If you have questions, please visit the [FAQ page](#), or contact us at: [REDACTED]

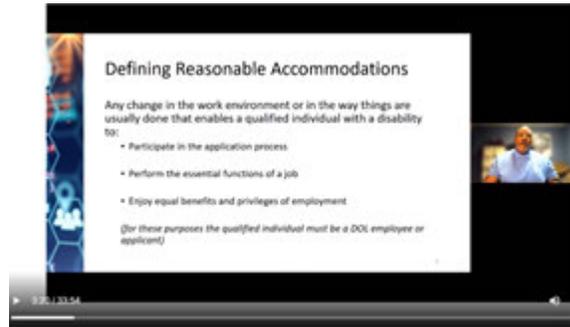
## NEW: COVID-19 Video Resources for Employees

The DOL COVID 19 Coordination Team knows that pandemic response guidance has been changing rapidly across the nation, the Federal Government, and the Department in response to evolving circumstances. Our goal is to help YOU understand what you need to know about DOL's policies as they relate to pandemic response. To that end, we've put together the following videos on hot topics. Take a look to see if these videos help answer

any questions you may have! These videos can also be found on the COVID-19 Guidance and Resources LaborNet site.

## Reasonable Accommodations

Earlier this month, DOL's Civil Rights Center (CRC) and the OASAM Workforce Equality Compliance Office (WECO) hosted a highly attended open forum for DOL employees regarding reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The session provided a

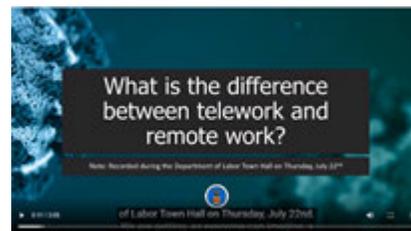


brief overview on reasonable accommodations, the Department's process for requesting and approving reasonable accommodations (including roles and responsibilities for employees, as well as supervisors and managers), and some frequently asked questions that have been received in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. You can view the [recording on LaborNet](#), where the slides and meeting transcript are also available.

While **none of the steps in the reasonable accommodation process have changed as a result of COVID-19 or reentry**, DOL understands the anxiety that employees may be feeling given the many uncertainties that we have faced and continue to confront due to COVID-19, especially among those who may now be facing new or exacerbated medical disabilities and those pursuing the reasonable accommodation for the first time. This video can be a helpful resource for employees seeking an accommodation for the first time or for those who need a refresher. **CRC and your agency WECO are here to work with you!** Feel free to reach out to the [Reasonable Accommodation Resource Center](#) or your servicing [WECO](#) for additional information and assistance.

## Telework vs. Remote Work Arrangements

The DOL Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Sydney Rose gave a great explanation of the difference between telework and remote work at the last DOL Town Hall. We encourage you to watch her [part of the presentation](#) if you have any questions about this topic.



## Employee Spotlight

Brenda Padilla, an Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) Investigator from the Los Angeles EBSA Regional Office, began fostering dogs during the pandemic as a way to offer a safe "in between" space for dogs in search of their forever home. Many of the dogs Brenda has fostered have difficult pasts that make their initial adoption challenging. Although she had not fostered dogs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Brenda has found fostering dogs a fruitful journey. It has provided her with a lot of laughter and fun memories to lean back on what was otherwise a stressful year. Due to Brenda's work and loving home, at least three of her foster dogs have found their homes: Birdie, Moose and Ginger, pictured here.



## VaxTrak Reminder

The deadline for submitting an initial response in VaxTrak was September 17th, but employees **must update their response if their vaccination status changes**. This will help the Department ensure the health and safety of our workforce. You can access [VaxTrak](#) from [LaborNet](#), where you'll find additional user information for [employees](#) and [supervisors](#). Please contact the Enterprise Service Desk via [Service Central](#) or call [REDACTED] with any system issues.



## Asked & Answered

You asked, and we answered!

**Q: Can fully vaccinated employees commence non mission-critical travel after September 7, 2021?**

**A:** No. While the Department is in Phase 0 (prior to the start of Phase 1) of the [DOL Internal Reentry and Post-Reentry Plan](#), only mission-critical activities that cannot be completed virtually may be performed onsite. Therefore, in Phase 0, only travel for mission-critical activities that cannot be completed virtually may be conducted, regardless of the employee's vaccination status. During Phase 0 and subsequent phases, agencies must make travel decisions consistent with the guidelines for onsite work associated with a particular reentry phase. More information about DOL's reentry phases can be found on the [DOL Reentry Information page](#).



**Q: Is it a violation of privacy or HIPAA to request vaccination status?**

**A:** No, DOL is authorized to collect the information requested on the [VaxTrak](#) form pursuant to [Executive Order 13991](#), Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing (January 20, 2021), [Executive Order 12196](#), Occupational Safety and Health Program for Federal Employees (February 26, 1980), and 5 U.S.C. chapters [11](#), and [79](#). Additionally, the Department of Labor is not a [covered entity](#) under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

**Q: I am a 100% remote employee. What should I list as my duty station address in VaxTrak?**

**A:** If you are a remote employee, please select the regional (or national) office address that you would be most likely to report to based on your position.

**Q: Are new employees who recently onboarded to DOL able to access VaxTrak?**

**A:** VaxTrak imports employee data from HRConnect. New employee data is delayed in VaxTrak because it must first be processed by HRConnect and then sync with the VaxTrak application. New employees who cannot enter the VaxTrak system and supervisors who do not see their newly hired direct reports in the system should expect this issue to be resolved within a couple weeks. If new employees need to go onsite before they can complete the VaxTrak form, please fill out the [employee certification form](#) in the interim.

**For more FAQs, visit the [DOL COVID-19 FAQ LaborNet page](#)!**

**Want to Learn More?**

We have a number of helpful resources available for you on the [DOL COVID-19 LaborNet page](#)! Information is updated daily — visit some of the most popular links below:

- [DOL Workplace Safety Plan](#)
- [DOL Reentry and Post-Reentry Plan](#)
- [Masking Requirements by DOL Location](#)
- [Telework](#)
- [Benefits & Wellness](#)
- Training

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Questions? Please email us at 