

The DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

This message is intended for all DOL employees and contractors.

Dear DOL Colleagues,

President Joseph R. Biden released the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness on January 21, 2021. The National Strategy initiates a coordinated pandemic response that not only improves the effectiveness of the country's fight against COVID-19, but also helps restore trust, accountability, and a sense of common purpose in the Federal response to the pandemic. As a part of this enhanced strategy, the President issued Executive Order 13991: Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing instructing agencies to immediately require masks and physical distancing measures in all Federal buildings consistent with current U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and directed agencies to develop tailored COVID-19 workplace safety plans. The Department's paramount concern in crafting the COVID-19 workplace safety plan is the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce.

DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

In response to the Administration's guidance and the President's *National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness*, the Department has developed, with input from agency leadership and DOL unions, the DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. The Workplace Safety Plan provides minimum mandatory safety guidance for the Department's workforce and facilities, keeping the health and safety of all DOL employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the DOL workforce as the Department's highest priority.

We encourage you to review and familiarize yourself with the DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. Some key provisions include:

- **Telework:** DOL will continue to maximize the use of telework. For now, all DOL employees who are telework eligible are expected to telework, unless they are directed to do otherwise by their supervisor for essential business needs.
- **Mask Wearing:** All DOL employees, onsite contractors, and visitors to DOL buildings and offices must wear a mask (also called a face covering) that covers their nose and mouth, and is in accordance with current CDC and OSHA guidance. Individuals not wearing appropriate masks will be denied entry to DOL-controlled spaces.
- **Physical Distancing:** To the extent practicable, individuals will maintain a distance of at least six feet from others at all times, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal workspaces. It is important to note that distancing is not a substitute for wearing masks.
- **Virtual Work:** Virtual meetings must be employed wherever possible, even for employees located at the same worksite.
- **Essential Onsite Work:** DOL recognizes that certain program functions may require onsite work. DOL employees and contractors may not perform on-premises work without supervisor approval, and supervisors may only approve onsite work that is essential as determined in consultation with the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team. Supervisors with questions about approved essential onsite work functions should consult with their Agency Administrative Officers for direction.

- **Occupancy Limits:** Occupancy in DOL workplaces should be no more than 25% of normal capacity. This capacity limit must be used in combination with other controls including cohorts, physical distancing, and the use of masks.

Additionally, DOL agencies should continue to make available the full range of workplace flexibilities for use by DOL employees to help sustain their work day while managing their dependent care responsibilities. These flexibilities include, but are not limited to: alternative and compressed work schedules, expanded work bands, mid-day flex breaks, waived core hours, Emergency Back-Up Dependent Care services, and accrued and/or advance leave options. A comprehensive list of these flexibilities can be found on LaborNet.

Reasonable accommodations may be provided to employees working from home. The DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan provides more information on accommodations related to COVID-19, or unrelated to COVID-19, that impact an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their position. For more information, employees can contact rarc.info@dol.gov or visit: Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities webpage.

The DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan will continue to evolve as additional guidance is provided by the White House, CDC, and our other Federal partners. However, this guidance supersedes any conflicting information in any previously published DOL guidance on COVID-19. Additional and supplemental implementation guidance is available on LaborNet.

DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team and Workgroups

The DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan establishes a core COVID-19 Coordination Team to serve in an advisory role to the Secretary of Labor and Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management in leading the Department's ongoing efforts to update our COVID-19 protocols, and develop supplemental guidance and resources for DOL agencies, managers and supervisors, and employees in the coming weeks. The Workplace Safety Plan also establishes workgroups comprised of subject matter experts with representation from across DOL agencies to support and inform the work of the COVID-19 Coordination Team. DOL will continue to engage with our unions, through appropriate channels in the DOL Office of Human Resources, in this important effort. The Department and the COVID-19 Coordination Team are committed to providing open, transparent, and regular communication to the DOL community on our efforts to ensure the health and safety of the DOL workforce during the pandemic.

Wellness Resources

We recognize employees may be experiencing increased anxiety, stress, depression, or other mental health conditions during this time. Accordingly, DOL continues to promote WorkLife programs and resources to help employees balance and manage daily home and work responsibilities or deal with life challenges. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free service available to help DOL employees manage life challenges, through confidential counseling and coaching with experienced, licensed counselors — including legal and financial consultation. EAP is available 24 hours a day/7 days per week/365 days per year by calling 800-222-0364. In instances where in-person sessions are limited phone consultations are available. Employees are encouraged to reach out to EAP for help on coping with difficulties that they may be experiencing. Additional information regarding the EAP program and other helpful WorkLife programs and services can be found on LaborNet.

For More Information

As a reminder, we encourage you to visit the [COVID-19 Guidance and Resources page](#) located on LaborNet, which includes information and resources on how employees can protect themselves during the pandemic. You will also find frequently asked questions and information on the various human resources flexibilities available to DOL employees. The Department will continue to update the information and resources on this page as needed.

If you have questions regarding the DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan or the Department's policies and practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please reach out to: [REDACTED]

Again, thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Department and your tireless work during this challenging period. We appreciate your service to our nation, and all you are doing to keep each other and your communities safe.

Al Stewart

Acting Secretary

U.S. Department of Labor

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