

FEBRUARY 2021



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN



INTRODUCTION

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 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but also helps restore trust, accountability and a sense of common purpose in the Federal response to the pandemic.

The President issued [Executive Order 13991: Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#) (January 20, 2021) 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. The Executive Order (EO) states that:

It is the policy of the Administration to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures. Such measures include wearing masks when around others, physical distancing, and other related precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Put simply, masks and other public health measures reduce the spread of the disease, particularly when communities make widespread use of such measures, and thus save lives.

On January 24, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance, [M-21-15 COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles](#), to assist Federal agencies in developing tailored COVID-19 workplace safety plans. The Federal Government is committed to addressing essential work requirements consistent with best public health practices. **The Administration's paramount concern in crafting COVID-19 workplace safety plans is the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce.**

The Administration's paramount concern in crafting COVID-19 workplace safety plans is the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to provide minimum mandatory safety guidance for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the DOL agencies.

The health and safety of all DOL employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the DOL workforce is the Department's highest priority.

Approximately 94% of the DOL workforce has been teleworking since the implementation of a maximum telework posture in March 2020. Some DOL agencies perform enforcement as well as facilities and infrastructure activities that cannot be accomplished from home. Those employees who have conducted work onsite during the pandemic have been and will continue to be provided appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to perform their work.

DOL recognizes that COVID-19 is a highly contagious infectious disease. This document is primarily focused on application of CDC guidelines at all DOL facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. These guidelines apply to buildings wholly managed by DOL as well as those buildings (or areas within buildings) controlled by DOL, in combination referred to as "DOL facilities." These guidelines also apply to lands under DOL control.

This document is not meant to be comprehensive. This guidance supersedes any conflicting information in previously published DOL guidance on COVID-19. Additional and supplemental implementation guidance will be provided as necessary.

DOL will consult with the inter-agency Safer Federal Workforce Task Force to discuss special circumstances or higher-risk work environments, in order to provide DOL agencies with specific guidance for those environments and circumstances.

The purpose of this document is to provide minimum mandatory safety guidance for the U.S. Department of Labor and the DOL agencies.

COVID-19 COORDINATION TEAM

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) will continue to serve as lead for the Department's COVID-19 planning, response, and management as it relates to the protection of the DOL workforce and those with whom we come in contact.

DOL has established a core COVID-19 Coordination Team (Team) to serve in an advisory role to the Secretary of Labor and Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (ASAM) in resolving matters that are crucial to the development and implementation of these guidelines and other supplemental guidance. The Team is chaired by the ASAM and consists of seven standing members, as described below. The Secretary or ASAM may also direct others from any part of DOL, including its component agencies, to participate as a member of the Team, or to provide information and assistance.

- **The Secretary**, or designee
- **The Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (ASAM)**, or designee
- **The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Emergencies and Pandemics**, or designee
- **The OSHA Deputy Director of Standards and Guidance**, or designee
- **The Chief Human Capital Officer**, or designee
- **The Director of the OASAM Business Operations Center**, or designee
- **The Solicitor of Labor**, or designee

Any Team member may designate members of their staff to represent or assist them during work of the Team.

The Team is responsible for advising the Secretary on matters including, but not limited to:

- Assessments to establish, implement, and monitor compliance with: (a) occupancy limit requirements; (b) safety protocols for physical space and masking; and (c) determinations of onsite and telework/remote work;
- Revisions to the COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols;
- Outreach strategy for communicating with the DOL workforce and DOL unions that is regular and transparent and complies with DOL's obligations under Federal labor management relations law and existing agreements;
- Compliance issues and procedures for remediating them; and
- Exceptions to policies and procedures for reviewing requests.

Where appropriate, the Team may consult with the General Services Administration (GSA), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and OMB. For privately owned and Federally-leased spaces, the Team will coordinate through the OASAM Business Operations Center, OASAM Regional Administrators, and Regional Executive Committees, along with GSA and the Facility Security Committees. The Team will also participate in the sharing of best and promising practices across government.

The Team shall meet as needed and may form subgroups, or workgroups, with representatives from DOL agencies to support and inform the work of the Team.

- The Team shall select a chairperson to lead each workgroup.
- Members of the Team may serve on workgroups to assist in researching and addressing specific Departmental initiatives or time-sensitive issues.
- The Team shall provide guidelines governing the operation of workgroups, including participation, scope, mandate, and time frames for decision making.
- The Team shall review and monitor the work of the workgroups and the Team has final approval authority over all workgroup guidance, documents, and other work products.
- The Secretary of Labor or ASAM may direct the Team to create additional workgroups as needed.

WORKGROUPS

Workgroups will be formed to advise on and manage the implementation of specific policies within these guidelines.

Workgroups should be comprised of subject matter experts (SMEs) with representation from across DOL agencies.

- The chairperson of a workgroup may designate additional leads for specific projects or deliverables assigned to the workgroup.
- Additional SMEs or representatives from impacted DOL agencies may be added to workgroups or consulted by members of the workgroups when appropriate.

Workgroups shall engage with DOL unions, through appropriate channels in the DOL Office of Human Resources, and with DOL agencies and regional staff to inform their work in the pre-decisional stages.

Workgroups are expected to support and inform the work of the Team by:

- Completing deliverables as assigned by the Team;
- Updating the Team on new guidelines for COVID-19 mitigation (including updates from CDC, GSA, OPM, OMB, and other authorities);
- Advising the Team when new guidelines from COVID-19 mitigation necessitate changes in DOL guidance, implementation status, and other operations;
- Advising the Team on priorities and policies;
- Advising the Team on strategies for engaging with employees and agencies; and
- Serving as SMEs for DOL agencies on topics related to the workgroup.

Workgroups shall engage with DOL unions, through appropriate channels in the DOL Office of Human Resources, and with DOL agencies and regional staff...

Workgroups should meet regularly and as needed.

While the number and focus of workgroups may change, the following are the initial workgroups:

- **Employee Communications Workgroup:** This group will advise on an outreach strategy that provides regular, transparent communication to DOL managers and supervisors, employees, and unions regarding the Department’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help DOL comply with its obligations under Federal labor management relations law and existing union agreements.
- **Worker Safety and Health Workgroup:** This group will advise on the policies and implementation of worker safety and health protocols including, but not limited to:
 - » Use and distribution of masks;
 - » Purchase, storage, and use of hygiene supplies;
 - » Facilities guidance, such as cleaning and physical distancing policies, signage;
 - » Exposure notifications, including contact tracing where appropriate;
 - » Travel safety and policies;
 - » PPE and other guidelines specific to field work; and
 - » COVID-19 training for employees, contractors and supervisors.
- **Human Resources Workgroup:** This group will advise on the policies and implementation of human resources, labor/management, and related issues including, but not limited to:
 - » Workplace flexibilities;
 - » Essential work determinations;
 - » Wellness considerations;
 - » Pay and leave considerations;
 - » Union engagement and bargaining obligations;
 - » Disciplinary and other corrective actions; and
 - » Recruitment and hiring in support of COVID-19 response.
- **Vaccine Distribution Workgroup:** This group will develop a roster of employees who are essential for the purposes of the COVID-19 vaccine. This group will recommend criteria that may include, but is not limited to:
 - » Amount of time spent doing work in the field/office to qualify;
 - » Willingness to be vaccinated and return to the workplace after vaccination;
 - » Priority based on criteria such as amount of public contact, required travel, etc.;
 - » Documentation necessary to identify employees’ vaccination eligibility and priority status to state providers; and
 - » Accommodation, if appropriate, for employees who cannot be vaccinated.

TELEWORK AND REMOTE WORK

As a general principle, every effort will be made to maximize the use of telework during widespread community transmission. For now, DOL employees and contractors may not perform on premises work without prior supervisor approval, and supervisors may only approve onsite work that is essential as determined in coordination with the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team.

During the current maximum telework posture, 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. Until the current level of threat of COVID-19 transmission sufficiently improves, DOL will continue to apply the working guidance that only work that cannot be effectively performed from home will be considered essential onsite work on an exception basis. Such activities include, but are not limited to: investigations, inspections, litigation, paper records and documents, mail processing, and facilities maintenance. This maximum telework posture will be assessed continually, and employees will be informed in writing of any changes.¹

As a general principle, every effort will be made to maximize the use of telework during widespread community transmission.

Telework eligible employees should confirm their current telework status with their supervisor and coordinate telework arrangements as appropriate. Supervisors should identify opportunities to re-designate staff who are not currently telework-eligible over to telework-eligible status. Information about Telework, including a *Telework Resources Guide and Telework Readiness Checklist* may be found on the DOL Intranet at <https://labornet.dol.gov/me/worklife/telework.htm>. Employees who remain ineligible for telework and whose presence in the workplace is contraindicated, because of the level of risk of infection as described by CDC, may be granted weather and safety leave by their supervisor. Until directed otherwise, weather and safety leave should continue to be granted to employees who are not eligible for telework who fall within vulnerable populations² as defined by CDC. To date, DOL has been flexible in defining and identifying members of “vulnerable populations” and include employees who have caretaking responsibilities for and/or reside with at-risk individuals. For now, DOL will continue to permit employees to self-certify their medical and residential circumstances relative to COVID-19.

The Team will develop guidelines for intermittent onsite access and facilitate any policy revisions or exceptions that may be required. DOL agencies will plan for employee safety and health considerations, especially with regard to, but not limited to, employees (including managers and supervisors) and contractors who are within those populations that the CDC has identified as being at **higher risk** for serious complications from COVID-19 (CDC High Risk Complications) and CDC-identified special populations including pregnant women (CDC Special Populations). Where practical, telework may be used to mitigate individual employee situations for telework-eligible employees. In addition, to the extent possible, DOL agencies are encouraged to consider telework options for telework-eligible employees with vulnerable household members. DOL managers and supervisors are further encouraged to take into account the status of schools and caregiving facilities for employees with children and other dependent care obligations.

¹ On October 6, 2020, DOL entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department’s three labor unions that provides for a minimum 14-day notice for employees directed to return to the workplace.

² The terms “vulnerable populations” and “high risk populations” have changed over time, but are used in this plan to describe the conditions that CDC believes warrant special protection and risk reduction controls.

...DOL agencies should continue to make available other flexibilities for use by DOL employees...

In addition to maximizing telework, DOL agencies should continue to make available other 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 and elimination of Core Hours requirements;
- Mid-day flex; and
- Emergency Back-Up Dependent Care services.

A comprehensive list of these flexibilities is posted for employees on the DOL intranet at <https://labornet.dol.gov/highlights/DOL-Workplace-Flexibilities-Options.htm>.

Unless it is physically impossible, generally speaking, occupancy in DOL workplaces should be no more than 25% of normal capacity during periods of significant or high community transmission.

Levels of community transmission can be established by consulting CDC's [COVID Data Tracker County View](#). Exceptions to this policy must be cleared by the Secretary of Labor as advised by the Team and in consultation with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Exceptions to this policy must still allow for physical distancing in the workplace.

PERFORMANCE

In accordance with the Department's collective bargaining agreements with AFGE Local 12, NCFLL, and NULI, and Departmental Personnel Regulations (DPR) 430, Section 7 (e) (1), performance ratings of record must take into account factors outside the employee's control impacting the results achieved. In other words, employee ratings will not be affected by the work an employee could not perform due to COVID-19 restrictions. Likewise, managers will not unlawfully discriminate or retaliate against any personnel (including other managers and supervisors) in performance appraisals, resultant ratings, or other covered personnel actions, for any reason, including, but not limited to, identifying themselves as members of a vulnerable population, raising operational concerns due to COVID-19 conditions, exercising flexibilities, or requesting reasonable accommodations.

Supervisors who need assistance in addressing employees who are not following Departmental COVID-19 safety protocols including, but not limited to wearing masks, practicing physical distancing, or adhering to required screening procedures, should contact the DOL Branch of Employee Relations.

DETERMINATION OF ESSENTIAL ON-SITE FUNCTIONS

DOL recognizes that during this time, certain program functions may require onsite work. Essential personnel are expected to continue to report to their worksites as previously instructed by their supervisors, unless otherwise directed by their supervisor or manager.

As DOL agencies and the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team make essential work and personnel determinations, adjustments can be expected to occur.

DOL agencies will document their existing staffing plans that list which employees will work onsite full-time, onsite occasionally, or fully remote. DOL agency plans will describe program functions that are essential to the mission of the agency and that must be performed onsite or in DOL facilities. For each function, the DOL agency will describe the amount of close physical contact that is required with others, and the type of worksite involved (e.g., a DOL office will raise different risks than a visit to a mine or retail business).

DOL agencies will submit their plans to the Team, which will provide a department-wide framework around essential onsite functions and work with agencies to prioritize functions that are worksite-dependent, mission-critical, and public-facing. Prioritized functions may include DOL investigators, inspectors, and other field personnel. As stated above, the type of work activities that will be considered essential and cannot be performed from home include, but are not limited to: investigations, inspections, litigation, paper records and documents, mail processing, and facilities maintenance. The Team will apply CDC and OSHA guidance in its work.

DOL investigators, inspectors, and other field personnel should receive from their supervisor or manager further instructions on these and other matters relating to DOL's efforts to protect the workforce from COVID-19. DOL contractors should reach out to their Contracting Officer Representatives for further guidance.

Employees currently teleworking on a frequent or regular basis will be given reasonable advance notice and guidance before being required to return to the physical workplace.³

³ Under the terms of the current MOU with DOL's three Labor Unions, "Wherever possible, DOL will provide at least 14 calendar days' notice to employees who are operating in a maximum telework posture or on weather and safety leave, when they are ordered to resume on-premises work."

Essential personnel are expected to continue to report to their worksites as previously instructed by their supervisors, unless otherwise directed by their supervisor or manager.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

MASKS

Federal employees, onsite contractors, and all visitors to DOL buildings must wear a mask (also called a face covering)⁴ that covers the nose and mouth, and is in accordance with current CDC and OSHA guidance. CDC recommends the following: Non-medical disposable masks, masks made of 2 or more layers of breathable fabric (such as cotton) that is tightly woven (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source). Masks must fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face). DOL does not permit novelty/non-protective masks, including neck gaiters and bandanas, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for masks. DOL will seek to provide masks to employees, contractors, and visitors, in accordance with OSHA and CDC guidelines, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations and resources. DOL communicated this mask requirement to DOL employees and contractors by email on January 28, 2021.

Wearing masks may be difficult for some people with sensory, cognitive, behavioral or other medical issues. If DOL employees and onsite contractors are unable to wear a mask properly or cannot tolerate a mask, they are encouraged to notify their supervisor and OASAM's Civil Rights Center and discuss whether telework or other appropriate arrangements should be considered.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may rely on reading lips and may have difficulty communicating while wearing a mask. If possible, employees should consider wearing a clear mask or a cloth mask with a clear panel when interacting in person with people who are or may be deaf or hard of hearing. Alternatively, ensuring written communication, closed captioning, or decreasing background noise to make communication possible while wearing a mask that blocks lips should be considered. Accommodations will be made for

individuals in accordance with existing Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance.

Exceptions to the Department's mask requirements must be issued in writing by a member of the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team or their designee. The Team and the Civil Rights Center will accomplish this in accordance with DOL's existing reasonable accommodation policy. As long as masks are required in DOL buildings and facilities, employees who are unable to wear a mask may be prohibited from entering the building or facility and self-certification may be permitted for requesting to continue teleworking. By leveraging technology and modifying work processes, DOL is able to provide most product and services virtually and without requiring members of vulnerable populations to come onsite.

Appropriate masks must be worn consistently and correctly. **Masks must be worn in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms).** DOL agencies, in coordination with the Team, must plan for how to grant exceptions consistent with CDC guidelines, such as when an individual is alone in a room or office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door, completely alone in a workspace, or for a limited time when eating or drinking and maintaining at least 6 feet of distance in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Federal employees, onsite contractors, and all visitors to DOL buildings must wear a mask...that...is in accordance with current CDC and OSHA guidance.

⁴ As of now, DOL's plan uses the term "mask" to be consistent with E.O. 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, and with CDC guidance as of publication of this plan. CDC COVID-19 guidance recommends wearing of a "mask" in public settings (CDC guidance "[Your Guide to Masks](#)"). Note that CDC previously used the term "cloth face cover" or "face covering" for these items.

Individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.

Masks do not provide the same level of protection as respirators and should not replace personal protective equipment (PPE) required or recommended for specific job functions. It is important to

...the use of masks is not a substitute for physical distancing practices.

note that masks are different than PPE (such as surgical or N95 respirator masks) as defined by OSHA. If such PPE is needed by a DOL employee to perform their duties, it will be provided by the agency just as it would be in a non-pandemic environment. It is also important to note that **the use of masks is not a substitute for physical distancing practices**. DOL will enforce mask policies in all DOL-controlled spaces whether owned or leased. Signs or notices will be posted prominently at the entrances to DOL controlled spaces to inform employees and visitors of the requirement.

If an employee knowingly attempts to enter a building without a mask and is turned away, they will not be entitled to weather and safety leave or agency approved administrative leave. DOL has a delegation to manage its headquarters in the Frances Perkins Building (FPB) and any individual attempting to enter the FPB without a mask will be provided a mask, if available or turned away by the security guards at the building entrance. Likewise, admittance will be denied to unmasked individuals attempting to enter the DOL-occupied space in other buildings.

In addition to abiding by these guidelines for wearing masks in Federal buildings and DOL-occupied space, DOL employees are expected to follow CDC guidelines on wearing masks, as well as those regarding physical distancing and hygiene while discharging their official duties in other locations (for example, when entering a location to conduct an investigation).

SYMPTOM MONITORING

All employees share in the responsibility for limiting the spread of COVID-19. One of the best ways to limit the transmission of the virus is to stay home if you are sick. **If Federal employees, onsite contractors, or visitors are not feeling well, they should not enter the Federal workplace.**

Federal employees and contractors working onsite will be asked to regularly complete symptom screening (e.g., a symptom questionnaire, an exposure history questionnaire, a temperature check), on a daily basis or upon entry to the workplace. Visitors will also be asked to complete symptom screening before entering a Federal facility. These tools may be updated based on CDC guidance.

All employees share in the responsibility for limiting the spread of COVID-19.

All DOL employees are required to conduct a health screening at home each day prior to traveling to their worksite as specified on DOL's intranet. This is designed to reduce the risk of exposure to known or potential infection in DOL's workplaces. In order to conduct this screening, employees should take their temperature and answer a series of questions based on current CDC guidelines on COVID-19. In addition to conducting DOL's required health screening at home, DOL employees, contractors, must adhere to directions provided by Facility

Security Committees and building owners concerning screening procedures. These questions are posted at the entrances of the FPB with current list of symptoms (per the CDC) and prohibition on entering. They will also be posted at the entrances of DOL controlled spaces in the field.

DOL's required health screening questions will be based on factors that may indicate a higher risk for COVID-19 including questions about current health and symptoms, exposure to positive cases, and travel history. Here are the questions that currently comprise the screening questionnaire and that employees, onsite contractors, and visitors may be asked to answer:

1. Are you currently experiencing any **symptoms consistent with COVID-19**?
2. Have you taken any medication today to treat these COVID-19 symptoms?
3. In the past 14 days, have you been diagnosed with, or do you believe you have had COVID-19?
4. In the past 14 days, have you been directed to self-quarantine, self-observe, or self-isolate by any medical professional or public health authority due to contact with an infected person, symptoms, or travel history?
5. Have you had in-person contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, tested for COVID-19, or who may have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, within the past 14 days?

If a DOL employee answers “yes” to any of the screening questions during their home health screening, they must stay home and notify their supervisor for further information and instructions. If an employee, contractor, or visitor cannot successfully answer yes to the screening questions upon arriving at any DOL worksite, they must not enter the building. Employees and contractors are instructed to contact their supervisor in a way that limits contact and potential transmission of the virus, preferably by electronic means, or phone, to let them know that they have been denied entry and to get further instructions. Visitors are instructed to contact the DOL office that scheduled their appointment in a way that limits contact and potential transmission of the virus, preferably by electronic means, or phone to let them know that entry has been denied and to ask for further instructions.

Any individual who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at their worksite must immediately isolate, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace as soon as they can safely do so. The DOL Office of Human Resources is equipped to provide advice and support to supervisors on any related reporting or HR requirements. Additionally, supervisors should consult with their servicing HR Office regarding the appropriate use of leave, as well as, administrative remedies in the event that Departmental COVID-19 policies and practices are not followed. Finally, DOL agencies must comply with existing procedures for required reports of cases involving COVID-19 exposure or illness. These procedures and reports are posted on DOL's intranet. Failure to follow Departmental COVID-19 policies and practices may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Federal service.

All DOL employees are required to conduct a health screening at home each day prior to traveling to their worksite...

IN CASE OF EXPOSURE OR ILLNESS

Because all employees and contractors should be conducting daily health screenings prior to departing for their worksite, there should not be many instances where an employee or contractor is in a DOL office when they learn of their exposure or when they fall ill. In the rare instance where that occurs or the more common instance where someone becomes ill and was in the workplace prior to developing symptoms but while they could transmit the disease, it is important and required that the employee or contractor notify their supervisor or management immediately in order to follow the notification and cleaning protocols put into place by the DOL Office of Worker Safety and Health.

As noted above, an employee or contractor who is sick or has been in contact with someone who is sick—**must stay home**. It is important and required that as soon as anyone in a DOL workplace begins feeling sick or becomes aware that they have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they isolate and notify their supervisor. **Employees and contractors who have been placed in quarantine or instructed to isolate are expected to remain away from the workplace for their entire period of quarantine or isolation. Employees in quarantine or isolation may be permitted to telework.**

COVID-19 can be transmitted by asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals which means that DOL needs to gather information about the employee's symptoms and exposures such as the date that an employee or contractor became aware of potential COVID-19 illness or exposure, the date of a positive test, the date that an affected employee or contractor was last in the office, those that they have had close contact with, etc. Employees and contractors must provide the requested information to their supervisor so the supervisor can confer with the DOL Office of Worker Safety and Health on whether anyone should be notified of potential exposure or positive case, whether the office needs to be temporarily closed, and what type of cleaning needs to be done in accordance with CDC guidelines. DOL Agencies must ensure they discuss with the DOL Office of Worker Safety and Health (OWSH), whether and how a contractor, employee or visitor will be notified in each situation.

DOL will safeguard the privacy of all DOL employees, onsite contractors, and visitors while also discharging its responsibility to protect the safety and health of all employees by notifying them when they may have had an exposure at work. The Department will also clean office suites, where appropriate, to mitigate viral transmission.

Additionally, disclosures to local public health officials will be made as required or necessary to provide for the health and safety of all DOL employees, contractors, and visitors, in accordance with local public health mandates. If a member of the public has been exposed to a potentially infected DOL employee performing their official job duties, notification to local public health will be performed as authorized and appropriate. Notifications of public health authorities will only be conducted by, or with approval of DOL OWSH, and under the oversight of the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team.

The Team will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases, as appropriate and in accordance with CDC guidance.

Employees and contractors who have been placed in quarantine or instructed to isolate are expected to remain away from the workplace for their entire period of quarantine or isolation.

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

Any individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection will be advised to isolate, pursuant to CDC guidelines, their healthcare provider's instructions, and in compliance with local laws/regulations. Personnel who have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow CDC and local guidance for quarantine. Employees and contractors who are in isolation or quarantine should not return to the workplace until their supervisor or contractor supervisor approves, based on recommended CDC guidelines and the individual's physician or local public health authority. Employees are permitted to self-certify that they have completed all conditions of isolation or quarantine and are permitted to return to work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All medical information collected from personnel, including test results and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel and manage COVID-19 procedures. Agencies should identify a point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical data. Medical information requested and provided pursuant to a request for reasonable accommodation (discussed below) will be handled consistent with the Department's DLMS on Reasonable Accommodation (DLMS 6-Chapter 200). All other medical information collected from DOL employees, contractors, and visitors to DOL facilities, will continue to be maintained and safeguarded as confidential medical information.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A "reasonable accommodation" under the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act includes modification to a workplace policy due to a disability-related need of a DOL employee.

Reasonable accommodations may be required and provided to employees working from home. Accommodations may relate to COVID-19 itself if the employee acquires the illness and needs modifications in order to perform the essential functions of their positions. Additionally, accommodations may relate to other medical conditions, unrelated to COVID-19, but which impact an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their position. These may be the same accommodations as those provided in the office setting or they may differ based on the office setting or other circumstances. The manner in which employees are accommodated may vary depending on the office setting or other circumstances. Employees should engage their supervisors and the Civil Rights Center to engage in an interactive process to determine whether, and what, accommodations may be provided.

Reasonable accommodations may be required for employees working onsite as well as at home. Accommodations may relate to COVID-19 or other medical conditions. Employees should engage with their supervisors and the Civil Rights Center in an interactive process to determine whether, and what, accommodations may be provided.

Some DOL employees with disabilities may need a reasonable accommodation to workplace policies concerning the COVID-19 response. Under DOL's policy on reasonable accommodation, employees with non-apparent underlying disabilities that may cause their immune system to be compromised (such as cancer) or put them at higher risk if they acquire COVID-19 (such as underlying respiratory conditions) may be eligible for a reasonable accommodation to return to work policies. A reasonable accommodation to a return to work policy could include additional telework that is needed due to the DOL employee's disability. This type of reasonable accommodation must be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the employee's needs and the essential duties of the position. An accommodation may be needed by an employee with a disability in order to navigate the physical changes to facilities and buildings for safety and health (such as signage, physical barriers, or social distancing requirements). Please contact rarc.info@dol.gov for more information or go to <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/internal/Reasonable-Accommodations-for-Employees-and-Applicants-with-Disabilities>.

DOL agencies should also ensure that we are providing for effective communication with individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, have low vision, or have speech disabilities.

For additional information and resources please see the HHS Office for Civil Rights in Action Civil Rights, HIPAA, and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Bulletin (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-bulletin-3-28-20.pdf>).

WELLNESS RESOURCES

The Department recognizes employees may be experiencing increased anxiety, stress, depression, or other mental health conditions during this time. Accordingly, DOL consistently promotes WorkLife programs and resources through Department-wide internal communications to help our employees balance and manage daily home and work responsibilities or deal with life challenges.

Employees can reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help on coping with stress and anxiety that may result from this public health crisis.

This free, confidential, and professionally-staffed service is available to all DOL employees. EAP is a professional resource available to help employees resolve 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 access at 800-222-0364.** In instances where in-person sessions may be limited phone consultations will be provided right away.

Employees can reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help on coping with stress and anxiety that may result from this public health crisis.

WorkLife4You is another resource and referral program designed to help DOL employees and their dependents better manage daily responsibilities and life events. Services include expert guidance from WorkLife specialists, personalized referrals to helpful resources nationwide, and online tools to help with topics such as child care and parenting, adult care and aging, education and career development, financial and legal, health and wellness, and other everyday needs. For additional information regarding the WorkLife4You program, employees may visit the DOL intranet at <https://labornet.dol.gov/me/worklife/WorkLife4You.htm>.

TRAVEL

Federal employees should adhere strictly to CDC guidelines before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business.

The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team will review existing guidance and consider the need for developing supplemental protocols for evaluating the risks from travel associated with mission critical work. At this time, these include the following precautions: carefully assessing travel risk prior to travel, wearing a mask during all portions of a trip, maintaining physical distance from non-household members, maintaining good hand hygiene by regularly washing hands with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, and getting tested and staying home for prescribed periods of time after higher-risk travel before returning to the workplace. The CDC has [extensive guidelines](#) for both domestic and international travel, and Federal workers should consult these resources carefully before deciding to travel. Additional resources for official travel can be found on the [GSA COVID-19 Information Site](#).

Federal employees should adhere strictly to CDC guidelines before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business.

Employees should be aware that they may be required to stay at home for a period of time after official or personal travel (typically allowing the employee to request personal leave when it results from personal travel, if an employee is unable to telework or is otherwise expected to be present onsite) before they are allowed to return to the workplace, as well as following any testing guidance once issued. OMB guidance has stated that private transportation for official travel is preferred to the use of public or other communal transportation, in combination with other safety/security guidance. DOL agencies will factor this into their plans for employee official travel.

Given currently high levels of transmission in the United States, official domestic travel should be limited to only mission critical trips. International travel should also be avoided if at all possible, unless it is mission critical. DOL Agency Heads continue to have delegated authority to determine what travel meets the mission-critical threshold. When making these determinations, agency heads or their designee must consider information available on the Department's Novel Coronavirus Guidance and Resources page and the CDC information page, limiting official travel as much as possible.

WORKPLACE OPERATIONS

OCCUPANCY

As previously mentioned, **unless it is physically impossible, generally speaking, occupancy in DOL workplaces should be no more than 25% of normal capacity during periods of significant or high community transmission.** This capacity limit must be used in combination with other controls including cohorts, physical distancing, and the use of masks. DOL agency heads are responsible for ensuring that workplace flexibilities and design are used in tandem to maintain safe workspaces. With the creation of the COVID-19 Coordination Team, agency heads will work with the Team to ensure that all of these controls are used correctly to mitigate the potential for COVID-19 spread. Levels of community transmission can be established by consulting CDC's [COVID Data Tracker County View](#).

...generally speaking, occupancy in DOL workplaces should be no more than 25% of normal capacity during periods of significant or high community transmission.

The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team will review the process for monitoring compliance with occupancy requirements. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared by the Secretary of Labor as advised by the Team and in consultation with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Exceptions to this policy must still allow for physical distancing and mask wearing in the workplace.

VENTILATION AND AIR FILTRATION

While most of the DOL workforce occupies buildings owned or managed by GSA, to the extent feasible, DOL facilities will make changes to their heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in order to optimize indoor ventilation by increasing the proportion of outdoor ventilation, improving filtration to a filter rated at least MERV-13 (or the highest efficiency filter that the HVAC system can handle), or reduce/eliminate recirculation. CDC provides additional guidance on [ventilation in buildings](#).

The HVAC system at the DOL FPB headquarters, the only delegated building under DOL direct control, has been modified to maximize the mix of outside air and to run continuously to increase circulation of fresh air.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

To the extent practicable, individuals will maintain distance of at least six feet from others at all times, consistent with CDC guidelines, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and work spaces. Note that the minimum six foot distance will be affected by the passage of time. Physical distancing is not a substitute for wearing masks. Individuals should maintain distance and properly wear masks. One-way walkways, reconfiguration of workspaces or office assignments, and other mitigation strategies should be implemented to minimize in-person interactions. Physical distancing should be imposed on common areas in a number of ways – through signage that notes appropriate distance where lines may form, by placing markers in elevators to note where occupants can stand while maintaining appropriate distance as well as the maximum number of people who can ride in an elevator car at a time, and designating one-way stairwells, hallways, walkways, etc.

Virtual meetings must be employed wherever possible, even for employees in the same worksite.

If a face-to-face meeting is required, furniture should be removed from conference spaces in order to prevent exceeding appropriate limits. These limits include 25% of the maximum room capacity, allowing for occupants to maintain appropriate physical distance based on the length of the meeting and environmental factors, local public health orders that limit the size of gatherings, and other relevant considerations (whichever is lower).

All office workspaces will enforce physical distancing and occupancy limits by employing staggered work times, cohort-based scheduling, etc. Employees may not be seated within six feet of one another. When proper physical distancing is impossible, alternate methods of mitigation should be employed. Physical barriers such as plexiglass shields may be installed where appropriate (e.g. fixed locations such as guard desks, visitor reception desks, cafeteria cashier stations).

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

Enhanced cleaning in common use/high touch/high density spaces, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells will be conducted. Office space that is in regular use will be cleaned regularly, and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wipes and other EPA-approved disinfectants will be made available for individuals to wipe down their workstation and related personal property. Gloves and other appropriate PPE will be made available to workers using cleaning supplies.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace (if the individual had been in the building up to seven days prior), enhanced environmental cleaning will be performed in accordance with CDC and GSA guidance. This cleaning is coordinated with GSA for locations where DOL is leasing space from GSA under an occupancy agreement. Cleaning in the headquarters building is completed in accordance with the relevant guidance.

If such enhanced cleaning is required, agencies should wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Personnel and visitors may be asked to vacate the affected space until cleaning or disinfection is completed.

HYGIENE

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, respiratory hygiene should be practiced by everyone.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or mask, or use the inside of your elbow, and then throw the tissue away in the trash and immediately wash your hands.
- When in public spaces, wear an appropriate mask covering your nose and mouth.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially if you have been in a public space, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

Hand sanitizer stations are to be available at the building entrance and throughout workspaces, and should contain FDA-approved hand sanitizer, with at least 60% alcohol. Personnel will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently.

VISITORS

By leveraging technology and modifying work processes, DOL is able to provide most products and services virtually and without requiring members of vulnerable populations to come onsite. In rare instances when an in-person meeting is necessary and a visitor must enter a DOL workplace for DOL products or services, visitors will be subject to building screening policies, mask, and physical distancing requirements. The DOL public-facing website will have instructions for visiting the FPB which indicate that visitors should conduct self-screening prior to coming to the building. Other DOL facilities should provide similar screening information to their visitors. They may also be asked these questions prior to building admittance and will be denied entry should they not answer the questions satisfactorily. The public website will also mention that physical distancing measures are in effect and masks are required in the building. All DOL agencies should share the public website link with visitors when scheduling meetings so they are aware of building requirements prior to arrival. DOL agencies are expected to use the working guidance for determining essential work when scheduling meetings with visitors. The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team may evaluate the need for additional guidance.

ELEVATORS

DOL or regional occupational health specialists should assess elevators to determine safe occupancy in DOL facilities. DOL's Office of Worker Safety and Health assessed the elevators in FPB and instituted a 2-person capacity limit with social distancing floor markers. DOL regions will work with GSA to conduct similar assessments on elevators in other DOL locations.

Individuals must wear masks in elevators and in elevator lobbies. The use of stairs by those who are physically able is strongly encouraged. Where possible, signage will be posted to explain current procedures.

SHARED SPACES

DOL agencies will plan for controls that help prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection through shared spaces and equipment. Shared tools and equipment must be disinfected by users anytime the equipment is used by or transferred to a new person, and disinfectant wipes will be provided. This includes phones, computers and other communication devices, kitchen implements, and other office equipment. Refrigerators, water coolers, and coffee brewers with disposable cups (or a personal re-usable cup/container) and single serve condiments and creamers may be used with proper hand hygiene. Visual markers will be installed to promote physical distancing within common spaces, and furniture may be removed or disabled. Steps may be taken to limit the number of people who can use common spaces at any one time, and signage outlining these limits will be prominently displayed.

TRAINING

Training is already provided to DOL employees to communicate policy and best practices for mitigating the spread of COVID-19, in accordance with CDC guidelines, and training materials will be updated in light of this plan. OASAM has developed and implemented different mandatory training LearningLink courses that cover physical distancing, use of masks, and other pandemic hygiene strategies. Employees must complete these trainings within eight hours of returning to onsite work, if not previously completed remotely.

TESTING

As required in Executive Order 13991, the CDC is developing and submitting a testing plan for the Federal workforce to the National COVID-19 Response Coordinator. Once that plan is available, the inter-agency Safer Federal Workforce Task Force will follow up with government agencies to provide additional guidance. DOL's COVID-19 Coordination Team will work closely with the Task Force to implement the plan and will provide timely and transparent communication about testing to the DOL workforce.

CONTACT TRACING

DOL's COVID-19 Coordination Team will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases, as appropriate. The Department has a robust plan for identifying and mitigating positive and potential COVID-19 cases in DOL facilities and field operations. This process notifies DOL employees and contractors of potential exposure in the workplace. Additionally, the Department also has a plan for contacting local public health authorities when required because a potential exposure extends to member of the public who interacted with DOL employees while working in their official capacity.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team will work with OASAM to make disclosures to local public health officials as required or necessary to provide for the public health and safety of Federal employees, contractors, and visitors in accordance with local public health mandates. DOL will continue to be transparent in communicating related information to the workforce, as relevant and appropriate, while safeguarding the privacy of DOL employees, contractors, and visitors.

VACCINATION

Executive Order 13991 tasks the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force with providing guidance on vaccine prioritization, distribution, and administration. Once the Task Force has developed the appropriate policies and procedures, the DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team will work with them on vaccine administration for DOL employees.

CONTACT

DOL employees, DOL contractor employees, and visitors to DOL facilities with questions about the DOL COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan can contact the following:

- DOL employees—Contact COVID19Questions@dol.gov.
- DOL contractors—Contact the appropriate DOL Contracting Official.
- Visitors to DOL facilities—Contact the DOL office or point of contact for your visit.



Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR