



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Washington, D.C. 20230



COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

December 2021

DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team

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Introduction

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Department of Commerce (DOC) has taken a measured and managed approach — focused on employee **health, safety, and well-being** — to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and the impact on our workforce, while ensuring the continuity of Mission Critical work across our 13 Bureaus. We are committed to ensuring your safety and continue to make decisions based on the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, public health best practices, and guidance from the Administration.

On January 20, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden issued [Executive Order \(EO\) 13991: Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#). This EO, which is part of the Administration’s [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#), states:

“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.” – President Joseph R. Biden, 2021

In accordance with President Biden’s EO, the DOC continues to make significant strides and provide overarching guidance and policies to its Bureaus in all areas of COVID-19 workplace safety. For example, the DOC developed and implemented numerous policies and initiatives including:

- ✓ Successfully transitioned to maximum telework with minimal issues or disruption while continuing to achieve all mission objectives and maintaining 24/7 building operations
- ✓ Implemented a rigorous DOC-level approval process for any critical travel, meetings and conferences, and visitor tracking
- ✓ Established a Federal vaccination site in partnership with more than 10 agencies in the National Capital Region (NCR)
- ✓ Created a COVID-19 Information Hub to educate the public and our employees on key COVID-19 activities occurring at the DOC and to communicate critical policy updates and resources
- ✓ Developed and implemented the DOC COVID-19 Communications Plan, deployed targeted communications on key DOC policy updates and COVID-19 guidance through multiple channels including the Commerce.gov COVID-19 Information Hub
- ✓ Engaged with ~10,000 personnel during DOC COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall Series to answer employees’ pressing concerns about the latest COVID-19 science, medical data, and mental health information
- ✓ Developed the DOC COVID-19 Safety Handbook detailing policies and guidance for phased reentry and post-reentry activities to aid in Bureau and Office leadership decision-making

- ✓ Developed critical data-driven processes for workplace re-entry and post-reentry across all Bureaus
- ✓ Conducted various types of vaccination education to remind personnel about the importance of getting vaccinated, the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, the Federal COVID-19 vaccination requirement, deadlines to become fully vaccinated, and resources on where to get vaccinated
- ✓ Communicated and implemented the Federal COVID-19 vaccination requirement in accordance with EO 14042 and 14043
- ✓ Implemented a Reasonable Accommodations process for limited medical and religious exceptions to vaccination requirements across all DOC offices and Bureaus, ensuring DOC policy and procedures were in line with Federal standards, policy, and requirements
- ✓ Developed a customized solution for tracking employee compliance with vaccination requirements
- ✓ Finalized employee telework and remote work agreements in preparation for employee reentry

The DOC also formally established the [DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team](#) to oversee our efforts and ensure the health and safety of our workforce. In response to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Memorandum 21-15](#), [Memorandum 21-25](#), [EO 14042](#), [EO 14043](#), and [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force Agency Model Safety Principles \(updated 9/13/21\)](#), the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team developed and enhanced its [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#). In implementing EO 14042, the Department will comply with all relevant court orders, including by following relevant OMB and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance. The purpose of our COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, outlined below, is to provide [minimum mandatory safety guidance for all DOC employees, on-site contractors, and any individuals interacting with the DOC workforce](#).

For any questions about the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, please contact the DOC's COVID-19 Coordination Team Lead Zack Schwartz (Zschwartz@doc.gov).

Overview

The **goal** of the Department's **COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan** is to ensure the **health** and **safety** of our Federal workforce.

Our COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan builds upon the Department's framework for safe workplace operations and includes updated health and safety policies, protocols, and essential COVID-19 work requirements consistent with Federal policies and guidelines, including:

- [Latest guidance](#) from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- [Latest guidance](#) from the [Safer](#) Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force)
- [Latest guidance](#) from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on preparing workplaces for COVID-19
- Latest guidance from [OMB, Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\)](#), and [General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#)

The DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan includes:

- Current Department-level and Bureau-specific policies
- Future policy enhancements, implementation plans, and timelines
- Communication strategy for employee, contractor, and visitor COVID-19 updates

The DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan is a **living document**. The DOC COVID-19 Coordination team will continue to assess and refresh this plan over time as conditions warrant, and guidance from the CDC, OMB, and other Federal agencies evolves.

DOC Bureaus & Offices

The DOC will adhere to all applicable laws and guidelines and will follow a tailored rather than “one-size-fits all” approach to empower its Bureaus & Offices (“Bureaus”) to craft policy and make decisions based on the needs of their workforce, including reentry decisions and phased approaches. The DOC continues to maintain close coordination with its Bureaus for continued implementation of health and safety policies outlined in the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan based on the needs of their workforce and environment. In addition to addressing Bureau-specific safety challenges, the DOC ensures all employees, on-site contractors, and visitors are aware of the requirement to comply with CDC guidelines and have access to COVID-19 resources and information, as outlined in our COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Socialization Framework. The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team regularly coordinates with the DOC to discuss and review Bureau-specific plans and policies to ensure they are aligned to all Federal policies and guidelines.

DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team

The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team is responsible for championing health protocols established by the CDC and regularly reviewing pandemic-related data, guidelines, and workplace safety needs across Bureaus. The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team meets regularly to review compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols, consider potential revisions to DOC COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols pursuant to guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and current CDC guidelines, and evaluates any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety. The Team includes representatives from Human Resources, Occupational Safety & Health, Executive Leadership, the General Counsel Office, and Public Health Experts.

The core members of the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team include:

- Acting Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration
- COVID-19 Coordination Team Lead
- Associate Deputy General Counsel of the Office of the General Counsel
- Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration and Director Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality (OFEQ)
- Associate Director of Office of Space and Building Management
- Manager of Occupational Safety and Health at Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)
- Director of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)
- Director of Occupational Safety and Health
- Health Scientist from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Representative from the Office of Safety, Security, and Asset Management (OSSAM)

The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team also includes representation from all Bureaus including:

- Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)
- Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)
- U.S. Census Bureau (USCB)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs (OUS/EA)
- International Trade Administration (ITA)
- Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)
- Office of the Secretary (OS)

DOC COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan is part of the Department’s larger COVID-19 response strategy. In addition to creating the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, the Department continues to take action to protect our workforce against COVID-19.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate closely with the Task Force to protect the health and safety of the American public and DOC employees. • Update the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and other policy guidance as Federal and CDC guidelines evolve.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with DOC Bureaus to align their workplace safety plans with the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. • Develop Bureau-specific health and safety protocols to limit disruption to Mission Critical activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist DOC Bureaus in implementing and communicating health and safety protocols across their workforces (e.g., maximum telework, updating contracts for contractors).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and source supplies and services necessary to respond to the pandemic in consultation with the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and implement building reconditioning activities like mechanical and safety system checks (e.g., HVAC) to prepare for increased workforce occupancy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide up-to-date COVID-19 resources and information for employees and updates on Departmental and Bureau COVID-19 activities on the DOC COVID-19 Information Hub.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DOC Bureaus to obtain and report all COVID-19 data to the Emergency Operations Center and DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure engagement with organized labor to confer and coordinate both with respect to the current operating status and with respect to return-to-office planning.

Health & Safety

Vaccination

Federal Employees: Vaccination Requirement

The DOC supports public health guidance and recognizes vaccines as the best available resource to combat the pandemic. In line with [EO14043](#), the DOC **requires all Federal employees, regardless of telework or remote work status, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by November 22, 2021**, except in limited circumstances where an accommodation is legally required.

DOC employees must upload proof of vaccination to their Bureau-specific platform (e.g., Census Bureau employees will upload to CHRIS, the Bureau of Industry and Security will upload to Commerce Connection) by the November 22, 2021 deadline. DOC employees should refer to the instructions on how to upload your proof of vaccination shared by the DOC or their Bureau.

Employees **must certify under penalty of perjury** the documentation they are submitting is true and correct.

Acceptable forms of proof of vaccination include:

- A copy the record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy
- A copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card
- A copy of medical records documenting the vaccination
- A copy of immunization records from a public health or state immunization information system
- A copy of any other official documentation containing required data points (type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s)) (NOTE: A recent antibody test cannot be used to prove vaccination status)

Federal employees with **medical or religious exceptions may apply for a reasonable accommodation** through their Bureau's established reasonable accommodation process. The DOC makes [medical](#) or [religious](#) exception forms available to all Federal employees on the COVID-19 Information Hub. Employees may also request medical extensions (delay in compliance with the COVID-19 vaccination requirement) based on certain medical considerations outlined by the [Task Force](#) and the [CDC](#). For more information on applying for a medical extension or a medical or religious exception to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement, please contact your Bureau leadership or Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator (RAC).

Federal employees who do **not comply with vaccination requirements** and **do not obtain an approved reasonable accommodation or extension** will be **subject to progressive discipline, up to and including termination or removal**. For more information on vaccination enforcement, please contact your Bureau leadership.

For purposes of its safety protocols, DOC considers employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two (2) weeks after they have received the requisite number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (WHO). For Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or AstraZeneca/Oxford, that is two (2) weeks after an employee has received the second dose in a two-dose series. For Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen, that is two (2) weeks after an employee has received a single-dose. Clinical trial participants from a U.S. site who are documented to have received the full series of an “active” (not placebo) COVID-19 vaccine candidate, for which vaccine efficacy has been independently confirmed (e.g., by a data and safety monitoring board), can be considered fully vaccinated two (2) weeks after they have completed the vaccine series. Currently, the U.S.-based AstraZeneca and Novavax COVID-19 vaccines meet these criteria.

Federal Employees: Vaccination on Duty Time

Because vaccination is a requirement for Federal employees, **time spent obtaining a required COVID-19 vaccine dose (including travel time) is duty time**. DOC employees do not need to take administrative leave while getting vaccinated for COVID-19 during a basic tour of duty, and the DOC will not credit employees with administrative leave for time spent getting a vaccination.

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, an employee is unable to obtain the vaccine during basic tour of duty hours, the normal overtime hours of work rules apply:

- In most circumstances, DOC will **authorize employees to take up to four hours to travel to the vaccination site, complete any vaccination dose, and return to work**—for example, up to eight (8) hours of duty time for employees receiving two doses. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccine, only the needed amount of duty time should be granted.
- DOC requires employees **taking longer than four hours to document the reasons for the additional time** (e.g., they may need to travel long distances to get the vaccine). If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the employee is unable to obtain the vaccine during basic tour of duty hours, the normal overtime hours of work rules apply.

The DOC handles **reasonable transportation costs** incurred as a result of obtaining the vaccine from a site preapproved by DOC in the same manner as local travel or temporary duty cost reimbursement (based on agency policy and the Federal Travel Regulation).

For COVID-19 vaccinations received after July 29, 2021, DOC will grant employees up to four (4) hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member that is receiving a COVID-19 vaccination as defined in OPM’s leave regulations (5 CFR 630.201). If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member who is receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, DOC will grant only the needed amount of administrative leave time. DOC employees should obtain approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes. DOC employees will not

be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside of their tour of duty helping a family member receive their COVID-19 vaccination.

Federal Employees: New Hires

Any individuals who enter Federal service after November 22, 2021 **must be fully vaccinated prior to their start date**, except in limited circumstances where an accommodation is legally required.

However, in case of an urgent, mission-critical hiring need to onboard new staff prior to full vaccination, the DOC may delay the vaccination requirement. In the case of **limited delays**, DOC will **require new hires to be vaccinated within 60 days of their start date** and to follow safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals until they are fully vaccinated.

The DOC encourages Bureaus to reference [OPM guidance](#) for recommended language related to job opportunity announcements and tentative and final offer letters with respect to vaccination requirements.

Contractors and Visitors

When implementing EO 14042, the Department will comply with all relevant court orders, including by following relevant OMB and Safer Federal Workforce guidance **for those contractors under obligations to be vaccinated by January 18, 2022**. DOC contractors should contact their Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) if they have specific questions regarding this policy.

The DOC and its Bureaus **will not collect or store vaccination status information from contractor employees or visitors**. When visiting or entering a Federal facility or workspace, on-site contractors and visitors should:

- **Complete a [Certification of Vaccination Form](#)** prior to or upon entry to a DOC facility or workspace. Contractors with a PIV card do not need to present the form upon each entry, but must be able to present it while on premise, if necessary.
- Keep a completed Certification of Vaccination Form with them **at all times on premise** and be prepared to **produce it upon request to verify vaccination status**.

At this time, on-site contractors and visitors who **are not fully vaccinated or elect not to provide information** on their vaccination status will be required to:

- Follow all COVID-19 safety protocols for individuals who are not fully vaccinated
- Be able to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within the past three (3) days when in a Federal building or on Federal lands (unless a member of the public receiving a public service or benefit, see disclaimer above)

Individuals entering a Federal building, a Federally controlled indoor worksite, or Federal land to obtain a public service or benefit do not need to provide information on their vaccination status or show documentation of a negative COVID-19 test result. This includes children receiving childcare services.

For more information on vaccination status and privacy, please refer to the [Confidentiality and Privacy section](#). For more information on COVID-19 Testing, please refer to the [Testing section](#).

Levels of Community Transmission

The Department will use CDC county-level data in making facility-level determinations consistent with the Task Force guidelines. DOC will assess transmission rates for the appropriate counties on a weekly basis to determine the appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols. The level of transmission must remain at a lower level for at least two (2) weeks before DOC will adjust COVID-19 safety protocols, including mask wearing. All DOC COVID-19 safety protocols, informed by local levels of community transmission, must be followed by all federal employees and onsite contractors in federal buildings, in federally controlled indoor worksites, and on federal lands within the respective locality. DOC will use the [CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker – County View](#) tool to determine local levels of community transmission.

In line with CDC guidance, the DOC continues to consider the levels of community transmission when developing COVID-19 health and safety policy. Please refer to the [Face Masks & Physical Distancing section](#) to learn more about how levels of community transmission impacts DOC's Face Mask Policy.

Telework & Remote Work

On March 16, 2020, in accordance with policy guidance from OMB, the DOC directed all telework ready DOC employees across the United States to telework until further notice. The DOC transitioned all employees to maximum telework with minimal issues and/or disruption. [Employees/Contractor employees should continue telework until further direction by Department and/or Bureau leadership.](#)

[Until reentry, the DOC continues adherence to maximum telework as an effective workplace safety measure.](#) The DOC developed comprehensive reentry guidelines, phases, timelines, and requirements in accordance with OMB guidance set forth in M-21-25. The DOC, Bureaus, and Offices will provide [employees and labor unions with 30-days' notice prior to reentry and any shifts in telework posture, targeting a return in January 2022.](#) The Department and its Bureaus will also provide managers and supervisors with reentry training, resources, and materials to ensure they are equipped with the right tools and information to support returning employees.

The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team will continue to work with Bureau Human Resources (HR) personnel to evaluate activities that may require on-site work and regularly assess telework policies. Bureau leaders, managers, and supervisors will also evaluate activities that may require on-site work on an on-going basis and work with their HR and Labor and Employee Relations (LER) teams to confirm on-site work is required. In the near term, managers will enhance coordination with their HR, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and LER team to communicate reentry activities for Bureau employees who are required to return on-site. Please refer to the [Collective Bargaining section](#) to learn more about how the Department is engaging with labor unions.



Face Masks & Physical Distancing

The Department follows current [CDC Considerations for Wearing Masks](#). All individuals on-site at a DOC facility or workspace must comply with CDC face mask guidance.

Per CDC recommendations, the DOC defines acceptable and unacceptable masks as seen in [Figure 1](#).

All DOC employees, contractors, and visitors are required to wear a face mask in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status, in areas of high or substantial transmission.

As confirmed by local Bureau leadership, in areas with **two (2) consecutive weeks or more of moderate transmission**, DOC employees, contractors, and visitors do not need to wear a mask or physically distance in public indoor settings if fully vaccinated. In areas of low transmission, in most settings, DOC employees, contractors, and visitors do not need to wear a mask or physically distance in public indoor settings if fully vaccinated. In the event local requirements exceed Agency or Federal guidance, the more stringent protocols will be observed. Please refer to the [Levels of Community Transmission section](#) for resources to determine the local community's level of transmission. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks regardless of the transmission level in a given area.

Personnel may remove face masks when alone in a closed setting (e.g., personal or enclosed office), as needed for identification purposes, or when eating and drinking.

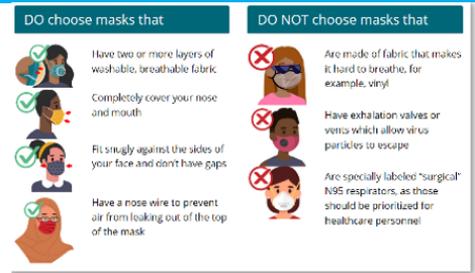
Pursuant to [CDC guidance](#) on mask adaptations and alternatives, [the DOC makes accommodations for individuals on a case-by-case basis, with required documentation](#). Possible situations include:

- People of any age with certain disabilities including cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory, and behavioral disorders
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who interact with people who are hearing impaired
- People with certain underlying medical conditions

In terms of resource distribution, [the DOC and its Bureaus, Offices, and facilities will provide face masks to personnel and visitors, as required and/or available](#). Where a mask exception is necessary to permit an employee to perform an essential function of their position, supervisors work with their Bureau's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator to ensure efforts are made to identify alternative protections to combat the spread of COVID-19.

[Masks](#) do not provide the same level of protection as N95 respirators and [should not replace personal protective equipment](#) required or recommended at the workplace.

Figure 1: Types of Masks



Additionally, the Department follows current CDC guidelines for physical distancing. **Fully vaccinated personnel are not required to practice physical distancing but are required to wear a mask in areas of high or substantial transmission. Personnel who are not fully vaccinated, unvaccinated, or do not disclose their vaccination status are required to practice physical distancing and wear a mask.** Please refer to the [Vaccination section](#) for more information on disclosing your vaccination status.

The DOC reinforces face mask and physical distancing policies with resources, as seen in the sample in [Figure 2](#), and works with Bureaus to ensure they have appropriate and up-to-date resources for employees.

To ensure the DOC is in alignment with the latest health standards, **the DOC will adjust its policy and guidelines related to face masks and physical distancing as necessary based upon guidance from CDC.** Guidelines include strategies for travel within facilities (e.g., designating “up” and “down” stairwells, encouraging stairwell use, floor markings for elevator lobbies, limits to the number of people in an elevator, etc.) and will be communicated across DOC Bureaus via up-to-date signage throughout facilities.

Testing

The DOC supports CDC recommendations for COVID-19 testing and is committed to ongoing information-sharing related to these guidelines.

At this time, and subject to change, Federal employees with approved medical or religious reasonable accommodations to the COVID-19 Federal vaccination requirement —whose work may require them to enter a Federal facility or interact with the public— may be **required to test up to twice weekly with an FDA-authorized COVID-19 viral test (such as PCR or antigen).** Testing expenses should be submitted for agency reimbursement, not to exceed reasonable market rates.

At this time, **on-site contractors who are not vaccinated, not fully vaccinated, or decline to disclose vaccination status** are required to **present a negative FDA-authorized COVID-19 viral test (such as PCR or antigen) taken within three calendar days of entering the facility and follow all on-site COVID-19 safety protocols regarding mask usage and physical distancing.**

- On-site contractors are responsible for funding and maintaining their own vaccination attestation and testing programs for access to DOC facilities. Compliance shall be enforced by the Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) at DOC and its Bureaus.
- Contractor employees who refuse to get tested or do not provide proof of a negative test will be prohibited from entering the facility.

Figure 2: Face Mask and Physical Distancing Resource



Visitors, international and domestic, are required to [present a negative FDA-authorized COVID-19 viral test \(such as PCR or antigen\) taken within three calendar days of entering the facility and follow all on-site COVID-19 safety protocols regarding mask usage and physical distancing.](#)

- Visitors are responsible for procuring their own COVID-19 tests. Visitors who refuse to get tested or do not provide proof of a negative test will be prohibited from entering the facility.
- This policy does not apply to members of the public entering a Federal building or Federal land to obtain a public service or benefit, including individuals receiving childcare services.

Following CDC guidelines on [COVID-19 testing](#), the DOC recommends any employee or contractor employee with COVID-19 symptoms or with a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19, contact their healthcare provider or visit their [state](#), [Tribal](#), [local](#), or [territorial](#) health department's website to find the latest local information, and obtain their own testing.

For information on testing requirements for individuals with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 as well as individuals identified as a close contact, please reference the [Quarantine & Isolation Section](#).

Contact Tracing

The Department and its Bureaus implement Contact Tracing to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect our workforce and communities. Employees and contractors must report to their supervisors, as soon as possible, if they:

- Received a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, are presumed to be COVID-19 positive, or are exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms **AND**
- Occupied an Agency facility either 48 hours prior to the onset of COVID-19 symptoms or two-days prior to the date of specimen collection for their test if asymptomatic.

Supervisors are then required to notify appropriate DOC or Bureau POCs of the suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

If an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 the DOC encourages them to follow CDC guidelines on [What To Do If You Are Sick](#) and [Isolation](#). Refer to the [Quarantine & Isolation section](#) for more information on when an employee may return to DOC facilities or worksites after a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

In situations of potential or confirmed COVID-19 cases, supervisors [notify the Safety Office, request enhanced cleaning, and identify close contacts from two days prior to onset of symptoms.](#)

The CDC defines a [close contact](#) as anyone who was within six (6) feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more. An infected person can spread COVID-19 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or a confirmed positive COVID-19 test. A person is still considered a close contact even if they were wearing a mask while in the presence of someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

[Impacted individuals identified as a close contact receive communications regarding potential exposure.](#)

At HCHB, the DOC uses a notification email template to request cleaning, identify travel paths, and address other concerns/questions. The DOC coordinates with its Bureaus to develop similar policies, aligned to CDC guidance on [Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Non-healthcare Workplaces](#). These policies include best practices for reviewing community contact tracing and highlighting the type of information Bureaus gather including, but not limited to, locations visited and potential employees working in the same workspace.

The DOC also works with Bureaus, Offices, employees, contractors, and visitors to ensure any [new cases are quickly identified and tracked](#). The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team will also assist Bureaus in adhering to OSHA reporting requirements (e.g., using 29 CFR 1904 to report COVID-19 fatalities and hospitalizations, reporting outbreaks to health department). The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team supports Bureau COVID-19 case management programs that include workplace close contact identification and notification (i.e., workplace contact tracing).

The DOC [encourages those individuals identified as close contacts to follow CDC guidelines on follow up actions and when they can be around others after exposure](#). For more information on COVID-19 safety guidelines for close contacts, please reference the [Quarantine & Isolation section](#).

Communication of information related to positive COVID-19 cases, when relevant and appropriate, is timely, transparent, and consistent with local and federal privacy and confidentiality regulations and laws.

In accordance with confidentiality policies, an employee/contractor can expect continued protection of their personal privacy information. The DOC adheres to all Federal requirements to protect personal privacy information to the extent possible and consistent with DOC's needs to implement this contact tracing program.

Symptom Monitoring

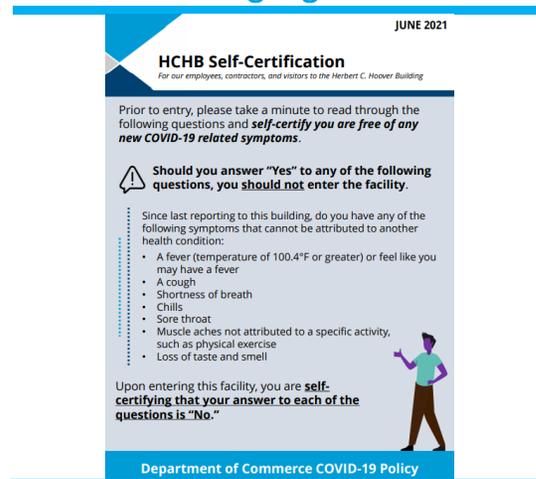
Employees, on-site contractors, or visitors who are not feeling well must stay home and follow CDC guidelines for [testing](#) and [isolation](#). For information on the DOC's policies and procedures on communicating and escalating suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the workplace, please reference the [Contact Tracing section](#).

The DOC and its Bureaus also post signage in and around their facilities and offices informing individuals entering Federal workspaces of COVID-19 signs and symptoms (see [Figure 3](#)). In accordance with [CDC recommendations](#) and [OMB policies](#), personnel entering DOC facilities or workspaces are required to regularly complete symptom screening (e.g., a symptom questionnaire) and self-certify absence of COVID-19 symptoms. Bureaus and facilities use this information to assess the individual's risk level and to determine whether they should be allowed entry to the workplace. Visitors must also complete symptom screening before entering a Federal facility or workspace. For more information on visitor policies, please reference the [Visitors section](#).

The DOC supports Bureaus in the development of facility-specific entry guidelines (e.g., barrier/partitional controls, virtual health-checks, staggered arrival) and appropriate signage, where applicable and in line with [OSHA safe work guidance](#). The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team regularly assesses Bureau facility-specific guidelines to ensure they are in accordance with CDC and OMB policies.

The DOC encourages Bureaus to expand and provide resources such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and tools for Bureau supervisors to systematically report employees infected with COVID-19. The DOC also encourages its Bureaus and Offices to implement flexible, nonpunitive sick leave and supportive policies as part of a comprehensive approach to prevent and reduce transmission among employees.

Figure 3: Self-Certification Signage



Quarantine & Isolation

Regardless of vaccination status, individuals who test positive for COVID-19, should:

- Follow [CDC's Isolation](#) guidance
- Alert their supervisor of positive test results (Refer to the [Contact Tracing section](#) for more information)
- Provide information on their last on-site visit (e.g., date, travel paths, interactions)
- Monitor their health closely and seek medical attention per the [CDC's What To Do If You Are Sick](#) guidance

Individuals who have close contact with someone confirmed positive with COVID-19 should follow [CDC's Quarantine](#) guidance.

Per CDC's guidance on [Ending Home Isolation](#), the DOC advises its Bureaus & Offices to use a symptom-based or time-based approach to determine when to discontinue isolation for workers with COVID-19.

Employees **suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and exhibit symptoms**, must stay home. Employees can discontinue isolation and return on-site to a DOC facility or workspace if:

- A negative COVID-19 test result is obtained **and**
- 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

Employees **suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and do not exhibit symptoms**, can discontinue isolation and return on-site to a DOC facility or workspace if:

- A negative COVID-19 test result is obtained **and**
- 10 days have passed since the positive viral test for COVID-19 **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

In the event an individual is identified as a close contact, they should follow the guidelines below.

	Fully Vaccinated Close Contacts	Not Fully Vaccinated Close Contacts
 Get Tested	Stay home and get tested 5 – 7 days after exposure.	Stay home. Get tested immediately after being identified as a close contact and again 5 – 7 days after exposure if the initial test was negative.
 Wear A Mask	Keep your community safe. Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until test results are negative.	Keep your community safe. Wear a mask at all times.
 Minimize Contact	The DOC requires individuals to telework for a minimum of five days and individuals cannot return on-site until they receive a negative antigen or PCR COVID-19 test.	Quarantine for 14 days from the date of last known exposure and telework until you receive a negative COVID-19 test.
 Monitor Symptoms	Monitor symptoms and seek emergency medical care if displaying any emergency warning signs.	

Official or personal travel may result in a mandatory quarantine before returning to the workplace. If quarantine is required because of official travel or workplace exposure, the agency provides weather and safety leave, or other administrative leave.

If quarantine is required because of personal travel, and the employee is otherwise expected to be present onsite, the employee may take personal leave while quarantining. If an employee refuses to quarantine or refuses to take personal leave while under mandatory quarantine after personal travel, the agency may elect to bar the employee from the workplace for the safety of others. If the agency bars the employee from the workplace, the employee must be placed on administrative leave until the agency determines what status the employee should be placed in while on quarantine. The agency, however, should avoid placing an employee on extended administrative leave in this situation and should act quickly to determine the appropriate status for the employee.

If an employee is subject to isolation due to being infected with COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee may request sick leave, as weather and safety leave would be unavailable. Employees may also request accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate.

Travel

In line with CDC [travel guidance](#) and the latest Task Force guidance on [Official Travel for Federal Employees who are Fully Vaccinated](#), **fully vaccinated employees do not have any restrictions on official travel** while continuing to follow all CDC safety guidelines and protocols, destination policies, specific transportation vendors (airlines, trains, etc.) guidance, and each Bureau's travel protocol. Employees should speak with their Bureau leadership, manager, or supervisor about additional travel protocols, criteria, or exemptions.

Currently, unless contrary to a reasonable accommodation to which an employee is legally entitled, official travel for employees **who are not fully vaccinated or do not disclose their vaccination status is limited to mission-critical trips. Non-vaccinated employees** must adhere to the Department's travel guidance under COVID restriction (travel justification) and should follow CDC guidelines.

All employees should be aware that **restricted travel protocols can be reinstated at any time** due to government lapse in appropriations, safety, security, and any other precautionary or operational reasons such as Transportation Security Administration (TSA) or Department of State (DOS) travel alerts.

Personnel should adhere strictly to the CDC's latest [Travel During COVID-19](#) guidance (e.g., testing, quarantine) before, during, and after [domestic](#) or [international](#) travel, as applicable for unvaccinated or vaccinated travelers and regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business.

In the future, the DOC will evaluate the feasibility of leveraging dashboards and other data-driven tools to inform more targeted travel strategies.

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

In line with Federal guidance, **in-person DOC meetings, conferences, or events with more than 50 participants must be approved by the Secretary, in consultation with the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team, regardless of whether participants are DOC employees, on-site contractors, or visiting members of the public.**

All in-person DOC meeting, event, or conference attendees must provide information about their vaccination status, regardless of the size of the party.

In-person DOC attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test **taken within three calendar days of entering the facility and follow all on-site COVID-19 safety protocols regarding mask usage and physical distancing**. In-person DOC attendees who are fully vaccinated must wear a mask indoors in areas of high or substantial COVID-19 transmission. Please refer to the [Levels of Community Transmission section](#) for more information.

The DOC complies with all applicable Federal laws, including the Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act when collecting proof of vaccination information. For more information, please reference the [Confidentiality and Privacy](#) section.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The DOC remains committed to the **responsible handling of information related to vaccination status and proof of vaccination**. Employee vaccination documentation and information is securely maintained in accordance with all applicable Federal laws and protocols, including the Privacy Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The DOC and its Bureaus coordinate with the Department's Agency Records Officer, Chief Information Officer, and Senior Agency Official for Privacy to determine the best means to collect and maintain required medical information and documentation. As required, the DOC and its Bureaus **present personnel with a Privacy Act statement at the point of documentation and information collection**.

Personnel medical information, including reasonable accommodations, test results, information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, and vaccination status, **is treated as confidential** in accordance with applicable law. The DOC will only disseminate vaccination and/or testing information to the appropriate DOC officials who have a need to know to ensure effective implementation of the safety protocols, which, in many cases, will include the supervisor level.

The DOC consistently evaluates its COVID-19 specific confidentiality policy to identify areas for additional enhancement, as necessary and promotes department-wide privacy and information technology (IT) security compliance. These efforts are an extension of the DOC's adherence to existing laws and policies with respect to the confidentiality and handling of personal medical data generally. Employees should contact the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team for any questions or issues related to privacy or confidentiality.

Workplace Operations

Occupancy

The DOC currently permits **100% occupancy** with **telework flexibility**. Facilities have the ability to limit access based upon local factors, including but not limited to a spike in positive COVID-19 cases, or as a means of ensuring physical distancing between unvaccinated individuals. Facility occupancy rates may be monitored via badging and systems or tracked by facility management personnel.

Federal employees who must work on-site given the needs of their jobs can vary their work schedule within limits set by the Department and its Bureaus through the use of **Flexible Work Schedules (FWS)**. For example, during the flexible hours, employees vary their arrival and departure times, hours worked each day, and days worked each week. The FWS options (including flexitour, gliding, variable day, variable week, and maxi-flex schedules, etc.) have different degrees of flexibility.

Environmental Cleaning

For information on the DOC's policies and procedures on communicating and escalating suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the workplace, please reference the [Contact Tracing section](#).

Department-wide, the DOC continues to clean and disinfect its communal spaces, business centers, pantries, stairwells, suite door handles, conference rooms, lobbies, restrooms, and elevators daily. If a COVID-19 case is reported, the DOC adheres to [CDC guidelines](#) on additional cleaning and disinfection protocols within specified windows.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace (if the individual had been in the building within the last 24 hours), enhanced environmental cleaning is performed for the spaces they occupied in accordance with CDC and GSA guidance. Individuals are asked to vacate the affected space until cleaning or disinfection is completed.

Per CDC guidelines, to allow for the maximum dissipation of any viral presence, custodians should wait at least several hours before disinfecting the space. If more than 24 hours have passed, the Department may choose to disinfect the area based on [CDC recommendations](#) if rates of COVID-19 transmission are high, prevention measures such as mask wearing were not observed in the space, or the space is used by people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team determines the appropriate scope of workplace closures—in some cases, it may be a suite, offices, or part of a floor, in other cases, it may include an entire building.

Hygiene

Individuals should follow [CDC guidelines](#) for washing hands ([Figure 5](#)) frequently, using sanitizer when needed, and wiping down phones and other high-touch surfaces in personal space.

In addition to signage posted in and around its workspaces, the DOC also supplies hand sanitizer dispensers with at least 60% ethanol at building entrances, workspaces, and in common areas, such as but not limited to breakrooms, conference spaces, and business centers.

Figure 5: Wash Your Hands



Ventilation & Air Filtration

DOC, Bureau, and Office facilities follow the latest CDC guidelines on [building](#), heating, and air conditioning (HVAC) recommendations. To the maximum extent feasible, [indoor ventilation is optimized](#) to increase the proportion of outdoor air, improve filtration, and reduce or eliminate recirculation. The DOC, Bureaus, and Offices also continuously evaluate facilities, monitor mechanical and life safety systems, and check for hazards associated with prolonged facility shutdown or low occupancy (e.g., plumbing system checks, water quality testing).

The DOC uses Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) light in Air Handling Units (AHUs) throughout the HCHB in Washington, D.C. This system kills viral, bacterial and fungal organisms and in combination with increased outside air exchanges and appropriate protocols, reduces risk of COVID-19 transmission. Additionally, the HCHB is maximizing ventilation by expanding hours of operating of the AHUs which increases the number of daily air exchanges. Finally, all AHUs are regularly maintained and utilize the highest MERV rating air filters allowable per manufacturer's recommendations, including MERV 13 air filters.

Visitors

The Department empowers Bureaus to lift all [domestic](#) visitor restrictions based on their reentry approach, public health guidance, and community COVID-19 data. The Department continues to develop Department-wide policies for [international](#) visitors. At this time, approved international visitors to HCHB must adhere to facility COVID-19 protocols and vaccination status. Protocols are subject to change based upon CDC guidance and local public health conditions.

All visitors are required to follow self-monitoring protocols and prohibited on-site if exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Visitors to DOC Federal workspaces are required to adhere to and follow all COVID-19 policies and on-site signage.

Please reference the [Vaccination](#) and [Testing sections](#) for additional information on visitor safety protocols.

Work Schedules

The Department supports variations of work schedules (flexible schedules, core days in office requirements, staggered work times) as deemed necessary and appropriate by Bureau leadership and supervisors and approved by senior leadership. Core working hours remain as previously or newly negotiated through collective bargaining agreements. The Department encourages all employees to contact their managers/supervisor to determine work schedules and/or available flexibilities that fit their needs, while adhering to Bureau policies.

In the event of changes to telework policy, in line with CDC and OMB guidance, the DOC advises its Bureaus develop and communicate work schedule plans to minimize contact and the spread of COVID-19. Plans include, but are not limited to, flexibilities for individuals, including those in increased risk groups, and Bureau and facility-specific information like staggered shifts, start times, and break times for returning employees and in accordance with [CDC recommendations](#).

The DOC coordinates with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to understand pay and leave implications surrounding work schedules and other flexibilities.

The DOC grants up to two (2) workdays of administrative leave if an employee has an adverse reaction to any COVID-19 vaccination dose that prevents the employee from working (i.e., no more than two (2) workdays for reactions associated with a single dose).

- If an employee requests more than two (2) workdays to recover, the DOC may make a determination to grant emergency paid leave under the American Rescue Plan Act —if available—or the employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

The DOC grants leave-eligible employees up to four (4) hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member (as defined in OPM's leave regulations, see 5 CFR 630.201) who is receiving any COVID-19 vaccination dose.

- The DOC grants leave-eligible employees up to four hours of administrative leave per dose—for example, up to a total of twelve hours of leave for a family member receiving three doses—for each family member the employee accompanies.
- If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, the DOC grants only the needed amount of administrative leave.
- Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes.
- Employees are not credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside their tour of duty helping a family member get vaccinated.
- This policy applies to covered vaccinations received after July 29, 2021.

The DOC makes employees aware that official or personal travel may result in a mandatory quarantine before they are allowed to return to the workplace. If quarantine is required because of official travel or workplace exposure, the agency provides weather and safety leave, or other administrative leave.

- If quarantine is required because of personal travel, and the employee is otherwise expected to be present onsite, the employee may take personal leave while quarantining. If an employee refuses to quarantine or refuses to take personal leave while under mandatory quarantine after personal travel, the agency may elect to bar the employee from the workplace for the safety of others.

If an employee is subject to isolation due to being infected with COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee may request sick leave, as weather and safety leave would be unavailable. Employees may also request accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate. (See OPM CPM 2020-02, February 7, 2020)

Shared Spaces

Shared spaces include elevators, hallways, stairwells, cafeterias or kitchens, restrooms, and other facility-specific shared spaces. Dependent on current local transmission and facility masking guidelines, **fully vaccinated personnel may not be required to wear a mask in shared spaces but may opt to do so if desired**. Please refer to the [Face Masks section](#) for more information on appropriate facility mask policies.

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated, unvaccinated, or do not disclose their vaccination status are required to wear a mask and practice physical distancing in shared spaces.

On-site personnel, regardless of vaccination status, should follow hand-washing guidance before utilizing shared tools and equipment and disinfect shared tools and equipment after use (e.g., phones, printers, computers, workstations). Personnel must disinfect tools and equipment anytime they are used by or transferred to a new person. This includes phones, computers, shared printers, and other communication devices, kitchen utensils, 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.

Subject to the availability of appropriations and necessary expense justification, disinfectant wipes will be provided to the extent possible. Bureau leadership may also utilize the DOC's space planning services at HCHB to minimize employee contact.

Collective Bargaining Obligations

The DOC continues to satisfy all applicable collective bargaining obligations under [5 U.S.C Chapter 71](#) when implementing the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and corresponding policies, including on a post-implementation basis when necessary. The DOC and its corresponding Bureaus and Offices will continue to communicate regularly with the appropriate employee representatives on workplace safety matters.

Appendix

DOC COVID-19 Communications Plan

The COVID-19 crisis is not a single event, but rather a series of circumstances requiring constant communication as new information and policies emerge. To help ensure workplace health and safety, the DOC continues to provide proactive, transparent, timely, and iterative engagement with its employees, Bureaus, Offices, and Federal employee unions on policy enhancement and implementation.

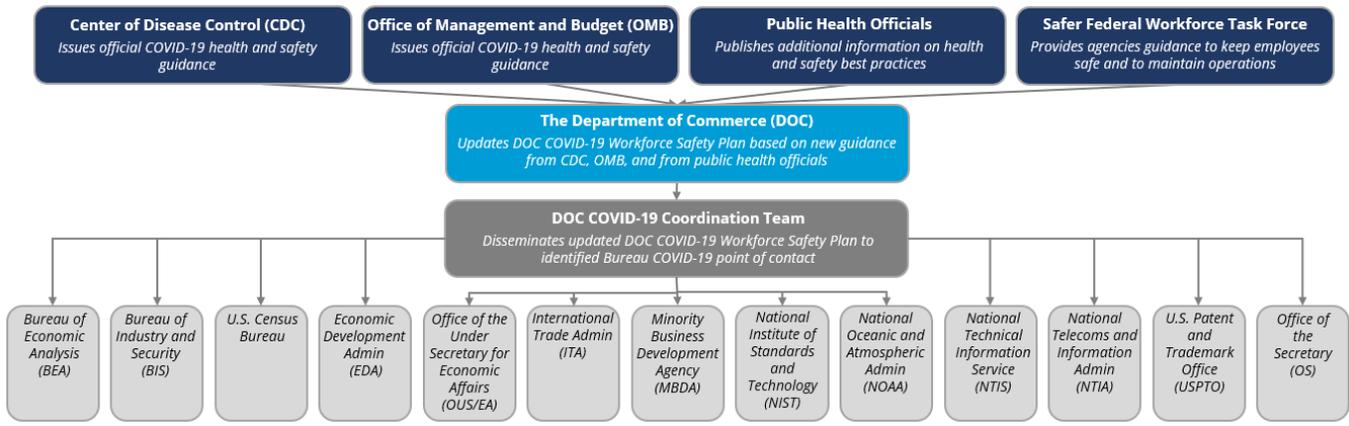
To promote information sharing across its workforce and Bureaus, and effectively communicate changes to the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team provides regular updates to employees through designated communication channels, as outlined in Table 2 below. In addition to established communication channels, moving forward, the DOC will consider multi-media communication channels such as the use of videos and podcasts to share up-to-date information effectively and efficiently to its employees.

Channel	Stakeholders
DOC COVID-19 Information Hub	Employees, contractors, and visitors across DOC and its Bureaus, and the public
Commerce Connection	Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus
Broadcast Email Messages	Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus
Virtual Townhalls	Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus
Monthly Newsletters	Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus

The DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team will continue to explore additional communication channels for continued engagement.

The DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Socialization Framework outlined below showcases the communications flow from CDC, OMB, and public health officials to the DOC, who work directly with the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team on information dissemination to its Bureaus.

The Department of Commerce (DOC) Workforce Safety Plan Socialization Approach



Bureaus socialize revised DOC COVID-19 Workforce Safety Plan and associated policies and procedures as required by the CDC, OMB, public health officials, and the Safer Federal workforce Task Force to the workforce via targeted communications channels, including but not limited to All Hands Meetings, executive memos, newsletters, facility signage, posters, and emails.

Table 3. DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Version Control

Version Number	Modifications Made	Date Modified
2.0	Finalized DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan for publication based on OMB and GSA feedback and additional requirements	2/19/21
3.0	Updated DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan to align with CDC Federal Guidelines for Fully Vaccinated Individuals, OMB M-21-25, EO 14042, and EO 14043.	9/10/21
4.0	Updated DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan to align with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force Updated COVID-19 Workplace Safety Agency Model Safety Principles, Vaccination Guidance, and Guidance for Federal Contractors and Subcontractors	10/8/21
5.0	Updated DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan to include updated Vaccination and Confidentiality and Privacy Guidance following an assessment using the OMB COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Agency Self-Assessment Tool	10/15/21

6.0	Updated DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team Members, included additional progress made to date within the introduction and added a new requirement easing mask requirements after two weeks of moderate community transmission	10/29/21
7.0	Updated formatting, links, and the Vaccination, Levels of Community Transmission, Telework & Remote Work, Face Mask & Physical Distancing, Quarantine & Isolation, Travel, Occupancy, and Appendix sections per OMB feedback and GSA recommended text.	11/30/21
8.0	Updated introduction to include required statement from OMB regarding the implementation of EO 14042.	12/10/21