COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN
March 2022

DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team
CONTENTS

Introduction 3
Overview 5
  DOC Bureaus & Offices 5
  DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team 6
  DOC COVID-19 Response 7
Health & Safety 8
  Vaccination 8
  Levels of Community Risk 10
  Telework & Remote Work 10
  Face Masks & Physical Distancing 11
  Testing 12
  Contact Tracing 13
  Symptom Monitoring 14
  Quarantine & Isolation 15
  Travel 16
  Meetings, Events, and Conferences 16
  Confidentiality & Privacy 17
Workplace Operations 18
  Environmental Cleaning 18
  Hygiene 18
  Ventilation & Air Filtration 18
  Visitors 19
  Shared Spaces 19
  Collective Bargaining Obligations 20
Appendix 21
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 return to the office and post-return to office activities to aid in Bureau and Office leadership decision-making
✓ Developed critical data-driven processes for the workplace return to office and post-return to office activities 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

✓ Developed a customized solution for tracking employee vaccination

✓ Finalized employee telework and remote work agreements in preparation for employee return to office

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 and 14043, 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](mailto: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 return to office 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.
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)
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOC COVID-19 Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Coordinate closely with the Task Force to protect the health and safety of the American public and DOC employees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Update the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and other policy guidance as Federal and CDC guidelines evolve.</td>
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<td>● Coordinate with DOC Bureaus to align their workplace safety plans with the DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan.</td>
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<td>● Develop Bureau-specific health and safety protocols to limit disruption to Mission Critical activities.</td>
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<td>● Assist DOC Bureaus in implementing and communicating health and safety protocols across their workforces (e.g., maximum telework, updating contracts for contractors).</td>
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<td>● Identify and source supplies and services necessary to respond to the pandemic in consultation with the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM).</td>
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<td>● Evaluate and implement building reconditioning activities like mechanical and safety system checks (e.g., HVAC) to prepare for increased workforce occupancy.</td>
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<td>● Provide up-to-date COVID-19 resources and information for employees and updates on Departmental and Bureau COVID-19 activities on the <a href="#">DOC COVID-19 Information Hub</a>.</td>
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<td>● Work with DOC Bureaus to obtain and report all COVID-19 data to the Emergency Operations Center and DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team.</td>
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<td>● 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.</td>
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Federal Employees: Vaccination Attestation

The DOC supports public health guidance and recognizes vaccines as the best available resource to combat the pandemic. DOC urges all employees to get all COVID-19 vaccinations recommended by the CDC to protect themselves and others.

DOC requires that all employees attest to their vaccination status via methods established by their Bureaus. Employees must upload proof of vaccination to their Bureau-specific platform (e.g., Census Bureau employees will upload to CHRI S, the Bureau of Industry and Security will upload to Commerce Connection). DOC employees should refer to the instructions on how to upload your proof of vaccination shared by the DOC or their Bureau.

Further, DOC encourages employees to update their vaccination status, including any booster dose received, as soon as possible. As of January 16, 2022, the CDC updated its vaccination status definition, specifically defining up to date as meaning that “a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.” Employees who are up to date with COVID-19 vaccination are subject to different safety protocols and help DOC make informed workforce policy decisions and keep the workplace safe.

Employees must certify under penalty of perjury the documentation they submit 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 who do not comply with vaccination attestation requirements will be considered not vaccinated or held to the highest level previously attested and confirmed with documentation. 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. DOC considers individuals up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations when “a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.”

Federal Employees: Vaccination and Administrative Leave

In accordance with Federal guidance, employees can request up to four hours of administrative leave to complete any COVID-19 vaccination dose.

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.

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, located in a county where COVID-19 Community Levels are Medium or High, 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 Risk

The Department will use CDC county-level data in making facility-level determinations consistent with the Task Force guidelines. DOC will assess risk metrics for the appropriate counties on a weekly basis to determine the appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols. Bureaus should make county-level assessments each Friday to determine the appropriate safety protocols for the subsequent week. All DOC COVID-19 safety protocols, informed by local levels of community risk, 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 Community Level tool to determine local levels of community risk.

In line with CDC guidance, the DOC continues to consider the levels of community risk 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 risk 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.

On March 25, 2022 DOC provided official 30-day notice that all Department employees are expected to return to office facilities beginning on April 25, 2022. DOC’s Return to Office planning follows the President’s direction from his State of the Union address that the federal workforce return to in-person work. With this in mind, and in partnership with Bureau leadership, we have designed baseline telework guidance for Department that will offer staff up to two days of telework per week. To allow for flexibility as we make this transition together, we are providing the Bureaus with a process to expand telework baseline guidance in support of the Department’s mission.

If you have any questions about the measures we are taking to keep you safe and healthy in our buildings, please visit the COVID-19 Information Hub.
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 risk. County-level risk assessments will take place on Fridays with appropriate masking policies applicable to the following week. In areas of Low or Medium risk, in most settings, DOC employees, contractors, and visitors do not need to wear a mask or physically distance in public indoor settings. In the event local requirements exceed Agency or Federal guidance, the more stringent protocols will be observed. Please refer to the Levels of Community Risk section for resources to determine the local community’s level of risk.

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.

Additionally, the Department follows CDC guidelines for physical distancing. For the purpose of any policy dependent on vaccination, personnel will be held to the policy appropriate to their attested and confirmed level of vaccination status. Please refer to the Vaccination section for more information on disclosing your vaccination status.
The DOC reinforces face mask and physical distancing policies with signage and works with Bureaus to ensure they have appropriate and up-to-date resources for employees. Bureaus, at their discretion, may determine that additional protective measures should be taken according to their unique workplace situations.

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 and Federal 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 who are not vaccinated — whose work requires 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) dependent on local COVID-19 risk levels. Testing expenses should be submitted for agency reimbursement, not to exceed reasonable market rates.

When [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) are Medium or High in a county where a Federal facility is located, 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.

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.

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.

**Quarantine & Isolation**

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

- Follow [CDC’s Isolation](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) guidance
- Alert their supervisor of positive test results (Refer to the [Contact Tracing section](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/contact-tracing/what-to-do-if-you-were-exposed.html) 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](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/what-to-do-if-sick/what-to-do-if-sick.html) guidance

As appropriate for unique operating circumstances and considerations, DOC permits its Bureaus to develop reasonable policies that exceed the safeguards recommended by CDC. Any Bureau policies exceeding CDC guidance should be submitted to and approved by the COVID-19 Coordination Team.

Individuals who have close contact with someone confirmed positive with COVID-19 should follow [CDC’s Quarantine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-risk/quarantine.html) guidance.

Per CDC’s guidance on [Ending Home Isolation](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-risk/ending-home-isolation.html), the DOC advises its Bureaus & Offices to use a symptom, time, and testing approach to determine when to discontinue isolation for workers with COVID-19.

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 reinstituted 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

If taking place in a county where COVID-19 Community Levels are High, 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. Further, 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 in High COVID-19 Community Level areas 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 risk. Please refer to the Levels of Community Risk 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.
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

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 risk 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.

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

When COVID-19 Community Levels are Medium or High in a county where a Federal facility is located, onsite contractor employees and visitors should attest to their vaccination status using existing forms. 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.

Shared Spaces

Shared spaces include elevators, hallways, stairwells, cafeterias or kitchens, restrooms, and other facility-specific shared spaces. Dependent on current local risk 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOC COVID-19 Information Hub</td>
<td>Employees, contractors, and visitors across DOC and its Bureaus, and the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce Connection</td>
<td>Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast Email Messages</td>
<td>Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Townhalls</td>
<td>Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Newsletters</td>
<td>Employees and contractors across DOC and its Bureaus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Modifications Made</th>
<th>Date Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Finalized DOC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan for publication based on OMB and GSA feedback and additional requirements</td>
<td>2/19/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>9/10/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>10/15/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>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 risk</td>
<td>10/29/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Updated formatting, links, and the Vaccination, Levels of Community Risk, Telework &amp; Remote Work, Face Mask &amp; Physical Distancing, Quarantine &amp; Isolation, Travel, Occupancy, and Appendix sections per OMB feedback and GSA recommended text.</td>
<td>11/30/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Updated introduction to include required statement from OMB regarding the implementation of EO 14042.</td>
<td>12/10/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Updated based on the court injunction of EO 14043, changes to community risk metrics, testing, and quarantine and isolation.</td>
<td>2/25/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Updated to include latest Safer Federal Workforce FAQ guidance on community risk metrics-based policies.</td>
<td>3/15/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Updated the Telework &amp; Remote Work and Visitors sections per the latest guidance. Removed the Occupancy and Work Schedules sections.</td>
<td>03/25/22</td>
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