



Social Security Administration (SSA)

COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan 3.1

July 3, 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Agency COVID-19 Coordination Teams	3
COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels	3
Vaccination	4
<i>Revocation of the Vaccination Mandate for Federal Workers and Health and Safety Protocols for Contractors</i>	4
<i>Leave Related to Vaccination</i>	4
Leave to Obtain Vaccination for Employees and Family Members	4
Leave for Post-Vaccination Recovery.....	4
Mask-Wearing	5
<i>Required Mask-Wearing When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is HIGH</i>	5
<i>Optional Mask-Wearing When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is LOW or MEDIUM</i>	5
<i>Types of High-Quality Mask and Respirators</i>	5
<i>Protocols When Mask-Wearing is Required</i>	5
<i>Exceptions to the Mask-Wearing Policy</i>	5
<i>Signage Regarding Mask-Wearing</i>	6
Official Travel	6
Meetings, Events, and Conferences	6
Symptom Screening	6
<i>No Entry for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or Suspected COVID-19</i>	6
<i>Symptom Screening Before Entering an SSA Facility</i>	6
<i>Developing COVID-19 Symptoms While Onsite</i>	7
Post-Exposure Precautions	7
<i>Instructions for Known Exposure</i>	7
<i>Testing for Known Exposure</i>	7
Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions	7
Confidentiality and Privacy	7

Introduction

This COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan (WSP) is a living document, which we update pursuant to Section 2(a) of Executive Order 13991 on “Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing” and implementing guidance issued by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force), and to align with the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance, guidance from other Federal agencies, and mission needs. This updated version of our WSP supersedes the March 27, 2023 version 3.0. This update is being implemented upon satisfaction of applicable labor obligations with labor unions representing our employees. We respect the important role of our labor unions and are committed to communicating regularly with employee representatives on workplace safety matters. We will continue to consult with our stakeholders including Congress and advocates.

We communicate all safety policies to employees via email, and managers remind employees of these policies during regularly scheduled staff meetings. Our plan is available to the public on [our website](#), so that members of the public coming to an SSA facility seeking a public service or benefit, and other visitors are aware of the COVID-19 safety protocols in place during their visit. We also maintain a [COVID-19 intranet site](#) with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for managers and employees. Signage explaining our safety measures is prominently displayed in all agency buildings used by our employees, visitors, and onsite contractor staff. Security guards will ensure the public complies with posted safety measures. We have communicated our safety measures to our contractors via email and in updated contract language.

Agency COVID-19 Coordination Teams

We will maintain a COVID-19 Coordination Team consistent with [OMB Memorandum M-21-15](#), as well as the Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles from the Task Force (see [SaferFederalWorkforce.gov](#)). The COVID-19 Coordination Team is a cross-agency team consisting of representatives from human resources, medical, legal (including consultation with the Senior Agency Official for Privacy), program operations, facilities, and representatives with expertise in health and safety. The team meets regularly to:

- Review compliance with the WSP, protocols, and policies;
- Consider potential actions, consult with the Task Force where appropriate, engage in deliberations leading to decisions, and implement revisions to the WSP, protocols, and policies consistent with Task Force and CDC guidance;
- Ensure the agency COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, protocols, and policies are broadly communicated to agency employees and, as appropriate, onsite contractor employees, members of the public seeking a public service or benefit, other visitors to agency facilities, and in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences; and
- Evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team coordinates decisions with Facility Security Committees, as appropriate. We consult with experts in other agencies including the CDC, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and General Services Administration (GSA), where appropriate.

COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels

CDC has set recommendations related to [COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels](#), which measure the

impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems and inform the appropriate prevention strategies to utilize at a given time. We will monitor COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels for the counties where each SSA facility is located, and make appropriate adjustments to facility-level COVID-19 workplace safety protocols in accordance with CDC and Task Force guidance. Signage will advise employees, contractor employees, visitors, and members of the public to follow CDC and Task Force guidance for mask-wearing, physical distancing, or other precautions, as discussed further below.

Vaccination

Revocation of the Vaccination Mandate for Federal Workers and Health and Safety Protocols for Contractors

Effective, May 12, 2023, Executive Order (E.O.) 14099 *Moving Beyond COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Federal Workers* revoked the vaccination mandate under E.O. 14043 on *Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees* and E.O. 14042 on *Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors*. In compliance with E.O. 14099, we also will take no action to implement or enforce E.O. 14042 or E.O. 14043. See the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force website for more information, including the latest guidance regarding the revocation of E.O. 14042: [For Federal Contractors | Safer Federal Workforce](#).

Leave Related to Vaccination

We will follow Government-wide guidance regarding vaccination-related leave from OPM and the Task Force, which is currently:

Leave to Obtain Vaccination for Employees and Family Members

The agency grants leave-eligible employees up to 4 hours of administrative leave per dose, including for a booster, or 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 agency 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 obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine or accompanying a family member who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, the agency 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 obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine or helping a family member get vaccinated.

Leave for Post-Vaccination Recovery

The agency grants up to 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 2 workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). The employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

Mask-Wearing

Individuals, including employees, contractor employees, visitors, and members of the public coming to an agency facility seeking a public service or benefit, will be required to wear masks when recommended by CDC and Task Force guidance, including in relation to [COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels](#), except where prohibited by Federal, State, local, Tribal, or territorial laws, rules, or regulations. Current guidance is as follows.

Required Mask-Wearing When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is HIGH

When the COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is HIGH in a county where a Federal facility is located, pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, we require all individuals—including employees, contractor employees, members of the public coming to an agency facility seeking a public service or benefit, and other visitors—who are 2 years or older, to wear a high-quality mask indoors in the facility, regardless of their vaccination status. This includes when our employees are interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities.

Optional Mask-Wearing When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is LOW or MEDIUM

Nothing in this WSP or Task Force guidance precludes an individual from wearing a mask, if the individual so chooses when the COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is LOW or MEDIUM. When the COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is LOW or MEDIUM in a county where a Federal facility is located, in most settings, to be consistent with Task Force guidance, we will communicate to individuals, such as through signage, that mask-wearing is optional, and would not otherwise require individuals to wear a mask, except where required by Federal, State, Tribal, territorial, or local laws, rules, regulations, or existing collective bargaining agreements.

Types of High-Quality Mask and Respirators

When individuals are required to wear a mask, we will follow [Government-wide guidance](#) regarding types of high-quality masks and respirators. We will provide individuals with high-quality masks or respirators when we require them. High-quality masks or respirators include respirators that meet U.S. or international standards (e.g., KN95) or “procedure” or “surgical” style masks.

Protocols When Mask-Wearing is Required

When individuals are required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as a KN95) in our facilities, masks and respirators should be well-fitting and worn consistently and correctly (over mouth and nose) and in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms).

Exceptions to the Mask-Wearing Policy

When mask-wearing is required, such as when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are HIGH, exceptions to the mask-wearing requirement include visitors under 2 years old or individuals seeking a public benefit or service who report being unable to wear a mask. When scheduling the appointment, if the visitor or individual seeking a public benefit or service is required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator pursuant to agency protocols but reports being unable to wear a mask, management will make alternative service plans (e.g., telephone service, contactless document drop off) and consult with the Medical Office (MO) for guidance, as necessary.

Masked individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance

with safety and security requirements.

When mask-wearing is required, such as when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are HIGH, if an employee reports being unable to wear a face mask due to a medical or religious reason, the manager will review the instructions in the management COVID-19 FAQ and engage in the reasonable accommodation process.

When mask-wearing is required, such as when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are HIGH, we will provide limited exceptions consistent with CDC guidelines, including, but not limited to, when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and closed door, or for a limited time when eating or drinking and maintaining distancing from others. Individuals do not need to wear masks or respirators when outdoors.

Signage Regarding Mask-Wearing

We will post and update physical signs and post information online on our websites making clear what mask-wearing requirements apply in our offices based on CDC COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels, including offices open to individuals seeking to access public benefits or services.

Official Travel

SSA employees will adhere strictly to [CDC guidelines](#) before, during, and after official travel.

There are no Government-wide restrictions on travel (although internal [SSA travel policies](#) still apply).

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

We will require attendees at in-person meetings, conferences, or events to follow CDC and Task Force guidance for mask-wearing (see mask-wearing section above), physical distancing, or other relevant COVID-19 safety protocols.

Symptom Screening

We will follow CDC guidance for symptom screening.

No Entry for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or Suspected COVID-19

If SSA employees, contractor employees, or visitors have [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), they will not enter an SSA facility. If an individual suspects that they have COVID-19, such as because they have new or unexplained COVID-19 symptoms, but they do not yet have test results, they should not enter an SSA facility and should get tested if they have not already done so.

Symptom Screening Before Entering an SSA Facility

SSA employees and contractor employees working onsite will regularly complete self-screening. Visitors will follow posted signage to complete symptom screening before entering an SSA facility.

Developing COVID-19 Symptoms While Onsite

Any individual who develops any new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately wear a high-quality mask or respirator, notify a supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

Post-Exposure Precautions

Instructions for Known Exposure

Employees and contractor employees who have had a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 will follow [CDC](#) and State, local, territorial, and Tribal requirements.

We will follow CDC guidance for post-exposure precautions. After a known exposure, we will supply a test kit or refer employees and contractor employees to available sites for testing. Employees will be tested on duty time at no cost to the employee.

Testing for Known Exposure

Employees and contractor employees who are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 and are onsite at an agency workplace or interacting in person with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities must be tested for current infection with a [viral test](#) at least 5 full days after their last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6). If the individual tests negative, the individual must continue to follow the above post-exposure precautions for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed. If they test positive, or if they at any time develop COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow protocols on isolation (see below).

Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions

Any individual with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 will be advised to isolate, pursuant to [CDC](#) guidelines.

If an employee is subject to isolation due to probable or confirmed COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee must request personal leave (e.g., sick leave, annual leave, credit hours).

Confidentiality and Privacy

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality, privacy, and the security of information technology. Positive tests will be recorded for the OSHA Illness and Injury Log, when appropriate. Managers may consult the Medical Office (MO) on questions about medical information or concerns. Questions about legal authority to share medical information internally or externally may be directed to Office of the General Counsel (OGC), Office of General Law, Division 1. When submitting questions to the MO or OGC, managers must exclude identifying information about individuals unless the MO or OGC requests it.