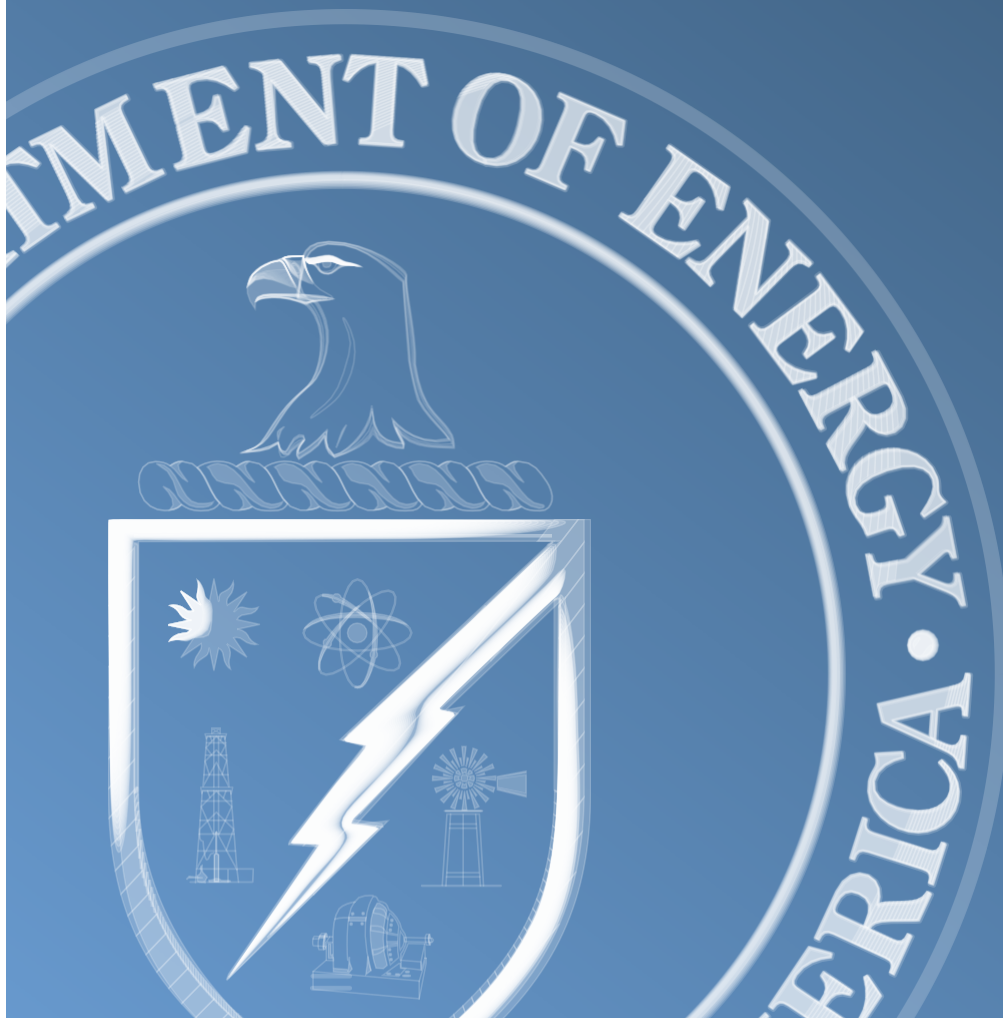




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENERGY**

# COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Reentry Framework

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# DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Reentry Framework

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# DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Reentry Framework

### Purpose

The health and safety of the DOE workforce and the public is the Administration's highest priority. The Federal Government and the Department of Energy (Department or DOE) are committed to addressing essential work requirements and reentering employees safely to the workplace consistent with best public health practices. The Department's paramount concern is the health and safety of all Federal employees, contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce.

As set forth in the January 20, 2021, Executive Order 13991 "[Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#)," the policy of the Administration is "to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures". This Framework has been developed in accordance with relevant orders and guidance, including: the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum [M-21-15, COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles](#), issued January 24, 2021; [M-21-25, Integrating Planning for a Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment](#), issued June 10, 2021; [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force COVID-19 Workplace Safety: Agency Model Safety Principles](#), updated September 13, 2021; Executive Order 14042, [Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors](#), signed on September 9, 2021, Executive Order 14043, [Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees](#), signed September 9, 2021, and relevant court orders; guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force; updated U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance; Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines; and other federal guidance.

This Framework outlines the requirements to protect the health and safety of the workforce for a safe reentry to DOE Federal facilities as well as the reentry schedule for the safe accomplishment of the DOE mission in a COVID-19 environment. The Framework is a living document that will be updated as needed to account for changing COVID-19 conditions, Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, [Exceptions](#) and CDC guidelines.

### Scope and Applicability

This Framework replaces the *DOE COVID-19 Workplace Safety Framework*, revised on June 13, 2022, and provides overall DOE requirements and guidance for associated site/facility plans. DOE will update site/facility plans as appropriate to ensure compliance with this overarching COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Reentry Framework.

The safety principles in this Framework document apply to Federal employees, contractors, and any others entering or working at DOE sites/facilities. The principles presented here establish a minimum level for workplace safety and are developed from current CDC guidance and established public health best practices, based on evolving understanding of the pandemic. These principles will be reassessed over time, as conditions warrant. This document is not meant to be exhaustive, and additional program or site/facility controls will be developed as needed. Site/Facility safety and reentry plans will build upon these principles and be tailored as appropriate for mission requirements and facility status and will be reviewed by the cognizant DOE Departmental Element.

DOE conducted an orderly reentry to the workplace where employees returned in waves to the physical workplace. During this process, Federal employees continued to work under their current work schedules until directed to return to the physical workplace aligned with the timeframe for their position's work category as set forth in this document. Departmental Elements will continue to use the guidelines in this

document to refine their plans and prepare sites for the workforce who will return onsite in the future.

For DOE Headquarters, the Office of Management and the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer are responsible for reviewing and updating the plan for the National Capitol Region (NCR). This Plan applies to all DOE elements within the NCR. For DOE sites that have Management and Operating (M&O) or prime contractors that have previously developed and implemented site/facility plans, these plans will be updated accordingly, and each cognizant DOE Departmental Element will review these plans, as appropriate. Departmental Elements are expected to satisfy applicable Federal collective-bargaining and labor-management relations obligations before finalizing site/facility plans. For DOE sites/facilities outside of the NCR that are not co-located with M&O or other prime contractors, each site/facility will either review and update its existing plan or develop a site-specific plan if one does not exist. The cognizant DOE Departmental Element will review these plans.

## COVID-19 Coordination Team

On January 20, 2021, DOE established a COVID-19 Coordination Team that reports directly to the Secretary of Energy through the DOE Chief of Staff. This executive leadership team represents the complex-wide components of DOE and keeps Heads of Departmental Elements (HDEs) and other DOE leadership apprised of issues. Departmental Elements maintain line management authority and are responsible for monitoring site/facility plans and considering potential changes to site/facility plans to remain in compliance with any revisions to this Framework or other new guidance.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team is responsible for establishing, implementing, and monitoring compliance with the health and safety requirements specified in this Framework as well as coordinating with appropriate agency programmatic and acquisition staff regarding the application of safety protocols to contractor employees. The team meets regularly to review this Framework and to consider potential revisions and updates based on emerging guidance and any other operational needs. Decisions are coordinated with cognizant site security officials, as appropriate. For privately owned facilities leased by the Federal Government, the team coordinates with the General Services Administration (GSA), where appropriate, and the lessor's designated representative.

## Principles

- The health and safety of DOE Federal and contractor employees are of paramount importance and guide all actions for employees to reenter DOE facilities.
- The Department will utilize telework and flexible work schedules consistent with the principles set forth in OMB Memorandum M-21-25.
- This Framework aligns with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force's model safety principles and will be revised, as necessary, to account for any superseding or additional guidance.
- CDC-recommended practices, including enhanced entrance screening, social distancing, and workplace protocols as outlined on [Workplaces and Businesses | COVID-19 | CDC](#), will be used, as practical and appropriate, to lower risk.
- Where a locality has imposed additional pandemic-related requirements more protective than those set forth in this Framework, those requirements should be followed in DOE buildings, in DOE-controlled indoor worksites, and on DOE land in that locality.
- Plans and protocols will consider contingencies to prepare for potential new developments. The Department will use CDC guidelines and monitor the [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to reassess and inform decisions as conditions warrant.

- Executive Order 14043 requires Federal employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 regardless of the employee's duty location or work arrangement (e.g., telework, remote work), subject to such exceptions as required by law. At this time, Executive Order 14043 is subject to a preliminary nationwide injunction. Although this injunction may ultimately be supplemented, modified, or vacated, depending on the course of ongoing litigation, the Federal Government will take no action at this time to implement or enforce Executive Order 14043's requirement that employees must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

## Approach to Reentry

In addition to ensuring the health and safety of DOE Federal and contractor employees, DOE's approach to reentry and the post-reentry work environment is focused on mission accomplishment and sustainability. The approach incorporates values to shape a future workplace that achieves a reduced carbon footprint, improves recruitment and retention, reduces facility costs, and creates a better work-life balance without negatively impacting mission delivery. DOE is committed to creating a flexible and agile workforce that is better able to respond to local and world events and that highlights DOE's core values and principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. DOE site decisions will consider the impact on local communities.

Taking into account the evolving future work environment, DOE conducted an orderly reentry to the workplace through a phased return to the physical workplace by Federal employees. To facilitate this process, this Framework outlined the timeframes for Federal employees to reenter the physical workplace based on the work category and key duties of an employee's position as defined below. Site/Facility contractors coordinated with local DOE offices in the development of their specific reentry plans, which are to be aligned with the principles and requirements of this Framework.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced changes to our workplace. Many DOE employees and contractors have learned how to perform the functions of their job in a new way during a difficult time, meeting the challenges head-on. DOE has demonstrated that we have been able to carry out our missions effectively. Accordingly, we now have an opportunity to revisit how we were operating prior to the pandemic and leverage lessons learned during the pandemic to integrate telework and remote work into our workforce plans. As we look to the future, DOE is encouraging programs to strategically leverage workplace flexibilities such as telework, remote work, and alternative/flexible work schedules as tools to help attract, recruit, and retain the best possible workforce.

## Reentry and Position Work Categories

This Framework is informed by the feedback gathered from our workforce through varied means, including a Department-wide Federal employee survey, listening sessions, COVID-19 Coordination Team Office Hours, and input and collaboration with our union partners. Our approach allows DOE supervisors to determine the right mix of onsite and telework work for their offices based on their mission needs and in accordance with DOE's values. DOE recognizes that many employees may be authorized to telework a greater percentage of their time post-reentry than they did before the COVID-19 outbreak based on the experience gained during this pandemic.

At this time, Federal positions at DOE are divided into three main work categories:

- **Site Critical:** Most or all key duties must be performed onsite (e.g., regular access to classified information, site safety and security activities), including onsite mission essential scientific research and national security activities (e.g., Primary Mission Essential Function activities).
- **Site Flexible:** Some key duties or work activities are required to be performed onsite (e.g., intermittent access to classified information, project oversight, onsite inspections, improved efficiency of mission essential work).

- **Site Optional:** Most or all key duties can be performed effectively and efficiently from a remote location.

### *Reentry for Federal Employees*

The Department completed its reentry to the workplace on March 14, 2022. Extenuating circumstances that prevent an employee from returning onsite are being handled on a case-by-case basis. To assist, consistent with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's determination that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to qualify for an exigency of public service, HDEs or their designee may temporarily exempt the requirement for telework employees to report onsite twice-in-a-pay-period, if such a schedule can be supported by mission operations. This temporary suspension applies for employees whose position has been designated as telework eligible and who will be expected to return to the DOE official worksite on a regular and recurring basis absent the COVID-19 pandemic. HDEs will be notified when this authority ends.

As of February 28, 2022, routine use of Weather and Safety Leave (WSL) for non-telework eligible positions (i.e., Site Critical and Site Flexible work categories) is no longer in effect for COVID-19 purposes. On that date, evacuation orders were rescinded, and excused absence for caregiving no longer applies for employees in those work categories. For the Site Optional work category, these flexibilities ended on March 14, 2022, when the final wave of DOE's workplace reentry was completed. Please note WSL may continue to be needed on a very limited basis as outlined in this Framework.

DOE will formally assess the effectiveness of its workplace flexibilities, including telework and remote work, within one year after reentry is complete to inform DOE's Future of Work planning.

### **Vaccinations**

Vaccinations are the most effective tool we possess to protect public health, the health of our workforce, and DOE's ability to accomplish its critical work during this pandemic. To promote the safety of the workforce, in accordance with applicable law and collective bargaining obligations, Federal employees are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated to conduct work or business at a Federal site. In implementing Executive Orders 14042 and 14043, the Department will comply with all relevant court orders, including following relevant OMB and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance.

### *Federal Employees*

In connection with recent court orders that have been entered concerning EO 14043, [Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees](#), signed on September 9, 2021, the Department will continue to strongly encourage all Federal employees to be vaccinated but is not enforcing a requirement for vaccines.

As of the date of this plan, Federal employees will not be required to provide proof of vaccination status. This may be revisited depending on court decisions or future CDC guidance.

### *Covered Contractor and Subcontractor Employees*

In connection with court orders that have been entered concerning Executive Order 14042, [Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors](#), DOE may not attempt to add a clause implementing requirements of the Executive Order into newly awarded (awarded, option exercised, renewed) contracts and contract-like instruments if the work under such a contract is performed entirely in a U.S. state or outlying area subject to the court order. For existing contractors or contract-like instruments that contain the clause, DOE has notified contractors that it will take no action to enforce the clause implementing requirements of Executive Order 14042, absent further written notice from DOE, where the place of performance identified in the contract is in a U.S. state or outlying area subject to a

court order prohibiting the application of requirements pursuant to the Executive Order. These requirements may be subject to future change depending on the outcome of ongoing litigation and the receipt of updated guidance from the Office of Management and Budget.

In implementing Executive Order 14042, the Department will comply with all relevant court orders, including following relevant OMB and [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance](#).

### *Vaccination Status*

In accordance with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, the Department considers Federal employees, contractor employees, and visitors fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two 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. For Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or AstraZeneca/Oxford, Novavax fully vaccinated is 2 weeks after an employee has received the second dose in a 2-dose series. For Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen, fully vaccinated is 2 weeks after an employee has received a single dose. The CDC recommends that employees stay “up to date” with vaccinations which includes booster shots. Should the Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce update their definition of fully vaccinated, DOE will follow their recommendation.

Please note that the CDC updated their vaccination guidance to include those who are “up to date” with the vaccine requirements and includes a booster shot.

### *Vaccine-Related Leave*

#### **Fully Vaccinated**

Federal employees are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated. However, due to the injunction, the time an employee spends obtaining any COVID-19 vaccination doses (including travel time) is covered under administrative leave, not duty time. In most circumstances, DOE authorizes employees to take up to four hours to travel to the vaccination site, complete any required vaccination dose, and return to work—for example, up to eight hours of administrative time for employees receiving two doses. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccine, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted.

DOE 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.

#### **Booster Shots**

Federal employees will be granted up to four hours of administrative leave to receive any authorized COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, if they are eligible to receive such a booster shot, or any authorized additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The administrative leave will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccination dose, and return to work. Because there is currently no requirement for Federal employees to receive a vaccine booster shot or additional dose, the use of duty time is not allowable in these instances.

#### **Recovery from Vaccine**

Federal employees will be granted up to 2 workdays of administrative leave if an employee has an adverse reaction to any COVID-19 vaccination dose, including a booster shot, that prevents the employee from working (i.e., no more than 2 workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). If an employee requests more than 2 workdays to recover, the employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

## Accompanying a Family Member

Federal employees will be granted up to 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.

- DOE 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, DOE 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.

## Additional Health and Safety Requirements

The Department follows CDC guidance and will implement updated guidance as it becomes available. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, DOE will continue to take a measured, methodical approach in implementing new guidance as it is issued.

Taking into account the diversity of DOE’s mission objectives and operations, the following requirements set the minimum threshold for health and safety and must be included in all site/facility plans. Where DOE has sites/facilities in the same geographic region but are managed by different DOE Departmental Elements, Federal officials shall coordinate as practicable. In the event the health and safety information in the Framework conflicts with CDC guidance, the CDC guidance will always supersede the Departmental guidance and apply automatically without the need for changes in the Framework.

### Community Levels at DOE Sites

When applying COVID-19 workplace safety protocols, DOE sites should reference the [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to determine appropriate steps. Sites should use the county where the Site/Facility is located to determine the community level. For Headquarters facilities, Washington, DC and Montgomery County, MD will be used as appropriate to determine Community Levels.

Where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, those requirements are followed by DOE employees and onsite contractor employees, in DOE buildings, in DOE controlled indoor worksites, and on DOE lands within that locality.

The following masking requirements will continue to apply to all DOE sites and other facilities owned or leased by the Department based on the CDC Community Levels:

COVID-19 Community Level	Mask Wearing	Physical Distancing
LOW	Optional	None
MEDIUM	Optional	Encouraged to maintain distance from others and avoid crowding
HIGH	Required	Encouraged to maintain distance from others and avoid crowding

## *Face Masks*

Site/Facility plans, including the plan for the NCR, will outline specific protocols for wearing masks, as stipulated by the CDC Community Level. When masks are required, employees, contractors, and visitors must wear [high-quality masks](#) or respirators (e.g., surgical masks, N95s, KN95s). Unfiltered cloth masks are not permitted. In Government-operated vans, cars, trucks, and other motor pool passenger vehicles, Federal employees are required to wear masks when there are multiple occupants.

Importantly, individuals may choose to wear a mask regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level.

## *Screening*

In accordance with the [guidance](#) released by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force on February 28, 2022 and updated on August 12, 2022, the Department will no longer conduct screening testing based on locality transmission rates or vaccination status.

DOE Sites/facilities may continue to conduct previously implemented serial screening testing of individual employees where there is no differentiation based on their COVID-19 vaccination status depending on their job functions and work environment. New screening testing programs should not be implemented pending further guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.

All tests will be proctored. Testing may be made available to DOE Federal employees and onsite support service contractors who may have been exposed while on official government business or while on official government travel.

## *Contact Tracing*

In accordance with CDC and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, contact tracing is not required. When Sites/facilities perform contact tracing, it should be handled in accordance with CDC guidelines to help identify, track, and manage work-related close contacts of COVID-19 cases. Site contact tracing should be done in collaboration with, and in support of the contact tracing programs of local health departments, as applicable. Site/Facility Workplace Safety plans should include site procedures and protocols to implement infection control and workplace safety efforts once informed of a case of COVID-19, as appropriate.

Disclosures of COVID-19 cases should be made to local public health officials as required or necessary to provide for the public health and safety of DOE employees and contractors in accordance with local public health mandates.

## *COVID-19 Reporting*

Programs and sites will continue to follow established protocols for reporting the status of COVID cases to the [DOE COVID-19 Hotline](#) (or a field office or agency component designee). The numbers of onsite active confirmed cases (those cases where an individual has been onsite in the 10 days prior to onset of symptoms or testing positive or within the 5 days after onset of symptoms or testing positive), including total confirmed cases (since March 2020), and deaths shall be reported every Monday. All deaths associated with COVID-19 must be reported to the DOE COVID-19 Hotline within one business day. An anonymized summary narrative will be requested for each death associated with COVID-19. Sites may use the COVID-19 Hotline's application to track cases at their site.

To promote transparency and safety, sites will notify their workforce about confirmed COVID cases, as relevant and appropriate, consistent with local and Federal privacy and confidentiality regulations and laws. Depending on the circumstances and such factors as the size of the site, notifications will be made by contacting individuals or by issuing broader messages. In addition, anonymized data on the DOE-wide total number of confirmed cases as well as the number of confirmed cases at each site is available to the

workforce on the Department's COVID-19 Powerpedia Portal.

## *Travel*

The Safer Federal Workforce Task Force has issued extensive travel guidance that is located at [Travel | Safer Federal Workforce](#). This includes but is not limited to guidance if a Federal employee develops probable or confirmed COVID-19 while on official or local travel and if a Federal employee has come in close contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19 while on official or local travel.

Regardless of vaccination status, Federal and contractor employees cannot go on official travel if they have an active case of COVID-19. Federal and contractor employees are to adhere strictly to CDC, state, and local guidelines before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business.

Federal and contractor employees, regardless of vaccination status, can go on official domestic and international travel using the normal organizational approval processes.

Official travel can be approved for individuals who have had a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the prior 10 days and for individuals who have ended isolation after testing positive with COVID-19, but who still need to continue wearing a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95), consistent with [CDC guidance](#). Individuals who have official travel approved should:

- Adhere strictly to CDC guidance for domestic and international travel before, during and after travel – including CDC recommendations for wearing masks in travel and public transportation settings.
- Wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) the entire time they are around others indoors for the full duration of their travel within the period they are otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator following a known exposure or after ending isolation, consistent with Taskforce guidance.
- Only travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if they will be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) when around others indoors for the full duration of their travel within the period they are otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator following a known exposure or after ending isolation, consistent with Taskforce guidance.
- Follow other aspects of post-exposure and post-isolation protocols, including the requirement for individuals with a known exposure to be tested for COVID-19 after 5 full days following their known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6). It is not necessary to wait for the results of this post-exposure diagnostic test to undertake official travel, including return travel.

Official Government travelers may use their travel card for payment of COVID-19 tests recommended or required prior to or following travel. The travel costs for required COVID tests may be reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense. If a traveler cannot use the travel card due to a blockage on the card, the traveler can be reimbursed via the travel voucher, with a receipt for the test.

## *Symptom Monitoring*

If Federal employees, contractors, or visitors are not feeling well, they are not to enter the Federal workplace. Site/Facility plans must ensure procedures and processes are in place requiring Federal and contractor employees working on site to complete screening for symptoms (e.g., a symptom questionnaire, a temperature check, self-verification of entry requirements) upon entry to the workplace. Visitors may also be asked to complete symptom screening before entering a DOE facility. Entry screening may be self-screening or administered in-person by the site contractor or DOE office. Individuals are encouraged to monitor themselves for the development of symptoms. Any individual

who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday, even if fully vaccinated, must immediately isolate, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

### *Isolation*

Effective August 2022, CDC updated its quarantine and isolation guidance and removed the requirement to quarantine after an exposure to COVID-19.

Any individual, who is per the CDC guidelines due to COVID symptoms or testing positive, will not be allowed onsite consistent with and in compliance with local laws and regulations. Individuals will also need to follow CDC guidelines with respect to [travel, mask wearing, and getting tested](#). Individuals should contact their health care provider and follow their instructions, if different than the CDC guidelines. Unless advised otherwise by a health care provider, health department official, or site occupational medical official, a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 may return to work in accordance with the CDC guidelines.

Any individual who has been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone who tested positive does not need to quarantine, but must follow the [CDC guidelines for exposure](#). If the exposure is potentially work-related, an individual must follow the site guidelines for reporting COVID-19 cases and/or work-related accidents, injuries, and illnesses. On-site testing may be available.

### *Leave Related to Close Contacts, Isolation, and Travel*

The Safer Federal Workforce Task Force has issued extensive leave guidance for Federal employees related to close contacts, isolation, and travel that can be found at [Leave | Safer Federal Workforce](#).

In all situations, Federal employees who are eligible to telework and are subject to CDC isolation requirements will be required to take leave or telework for the duration of the CDC isolation period before they are allowed to return to the workplace, as well as follow any applicable testing guidance. Federal employees who are not telework eligible must work with their management on an appropriate work status for the duration of the CDC isolation period to mitigate impacts to the mission of their office to the greatest extent possible; otherwise, WSL is provided. Federal employees are reminded that making a false statement to the Department regarding close contact, quarantine or isolation matters could result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from Federal service. DOE may ask for additional information if necessary to confirm notification of a close contact, including if there is reason to believe the employee requested leave under false pretenses. If requested, DOE will comply any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

If an employee is subject to CDC isolation and the employee is unable to telework because they are too sick to telework, or the employee is ineligible for telework and is sick, weather and safety leave cannot be used. Employees request may use sick leave or may also request accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate.

### *Confidentiality*

When providing information to the workforce on confirmed COVID-19 cases, the Department must balance the privacy rights of the individual diagnosed with COVID-19 with the need to openly communicate with the workforce. All medical information collected from personnel, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel. The DOE COVID-19 Hotline Response Team will direct all questions relating to personal medical data to an appropriate point of contact.

Generally, in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act, and with privacy laws, managers and supervisors may not specifically disclose the identity of an individual who has or may have COVID-19 or provide information, such as the specific location of the individual's workstation, which will allow other employees to identify the individual. Supervisors may ask the individual for consent to share their identity information with those whom they have been in close contact. Even if an individual consents to such disclosure, identifying information is only to be provided to those who have a need to know.

The COVID-19 Hotline Response Team or the site individuals who are performing contact tracing will work with managers and supervisors to verbally (vice email) notify coworkers who may have been in close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 to provide these employees more information to help when monitoring themselves for signs or symptoms and quarantining themselves, if appropriate. Again, the information provided about any individual's health should be minimized as much as possible.

## Workplace Operations

### *Planning and Preparation*

The Department will continue to follow CDC, OSHA, and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidelines applicable to the Federal workplace. The principles presented here establish a minimum level for workplace safety and are aligned to current CDC guidance and established public health best practices, based on evolving understanding of the pandemic. Principles will be reassessed over time, as conditions warrant, and as new guidance is issued. This document is not meant to be exhaustive, and additional program or site/facility controls will be developed as needed.

Site/Facility plans should align with these principles to the extent possible but may be adjusted as appropriate for mission requirements and changing CDC or public health guidance. In addition, sites should incorporate location specific plans to appropriately reorient returning workers to site operations considering items such as:

- Emergency procedures and responsibilities
- Facility orientation to include COVID controls
- General employee training and specific safety and health training (e.g., HAZWOPR, Radiological Training, Respiratory Protection)
- Job specific proficiency needs and training
- Office information technology readiness

### *Physical Distancing*

In accordance with CDC's guidance, and consistent with guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, Federal employees, contractors, and visitors entering or working inside or on the grounds of a DOE site/facility are no longer required to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet in DOE buildings or in DOE leased spaces, except where called for by Federal, State, local, Tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations. Floor markings, one-way walkways, reconfiguration of workspaces or office assignments, and other mitigation strategies may continue to be implemented to minimize interactions.

In addition, consistent with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, when Community Levels are at MEDIUM or HIGH, signage will be posted in DOE facilities encouraging individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to consider physically distancing themselves from others and avoiding crowding in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings while onsite.

## *Environmental Cleaning*

Enhanced cleaning in common use/high touch/high density spaces, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells will continue to be performed. Office space that is in regular use will be cleaned regularly, and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wipes, gloves, and EPA-approved disinfectants will continue to be made available for individuals to wipe down their workstation and related personal property. Physical barriers such as plexiglass shields may continue to be used where appropriate.

In accordance with [CDC](#) and [GSA](#) guidelines, if a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been in a facility within the last 24 hours, the spaces occupied by that person should be cleaned and disinfected unless it will not be occupied for the subsequent 3 days. If more than 24 hours has passed since the person has been in the space, regular cleaning is sufficient. If more than 3 days have passed since the person was in the space, no additional cleaning is necessary. Judgement should be used in identifying the appropriate scope of the cleaning and in cleaning industrial and radiological work areas.

Site/Facility plans must ensure procedures and process are in place that determine the scope of any workplace or area closures related to cleaning and disinfecting requirements.

## *Hygiene*

Hand sanitizer stations will continue to be available at building entrances and throughout workspaces, and must contain hand sanitizer, with at least 60 percent alcohol and be manufactured in accordance with the requirements of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). DOE sites should ensure that the hand sanitizer is not on the [FDA's do not use list](#).

Personnel are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently. To reinforce the importance of hygiene, signage is required at all DOE sites/facilities.

Each Site/Facility plan must have procedures and processes for disinfecting shared tools, equipment, and common work surfaces (e.g., workbenches, laboratory spaces, desks). Disinfectant wipes will continue to be provided by the DOE or the contractor, as appropriate.

## *Ventilation and Air Filtration*

To the maximum extent feasible, and with consideration of current [guidance from the CDC](#), indoor ventilation will be optimized to increase the proportion of outdoor ventilation, improve filtration, and reduce or eliminate recirculation. Where technically practicable, and depending on the availability of funds, continued action will be taken to improve engineering controls such as improving Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) filter efficiency ratings and sealing of filters. Space heaters, desk fans and other devices that provide air movement inside a space are to be eliminated to the extent practicable. If needed, work should be relocated to room/buildings with better ventilation characteristics.

## *Visitors*

Areas open to the general public must post signs indicating any requirements for wearing masks when in the area. Visitors must comply with all relevant CDC guidance, including wearing a mask, when appropriate. In areas of HIGH [Community Levels](#), all visitors must wear masks.

## *Meetings, Events, and Conferences*

Regardless of the Community Level, no approval is required if a Departmental Element hosts an in-person meeting, conference, or event that will be attended by more than 50 participants.

In-person attendees in areas of HIGH [Community Levels](#) must wear a high-quality mask in public indoor settings. Regardless of Community Levels, Departmental Elements cannot collect vaccination information

or require proof of negative COVID-19 tests for meeting attendees.

### *Elevators*

Assessments will continue to be performed to determine the safe occupancy level of elevators to ensure social distancing, and signage detailing the requirements will be posted near the entrances. The use of stairs by those who are physically able is strongly encouraged. Signage has been posted to explain current procedures.

### *Shared Spaces*

Assessments will continue to be performed to determine the safe occupancy level of shared spaces such as elevators, conference rooms, auditoriums, and cafeterias and the requirements will be posted near the entrances. Other visual markers will be installed to promote physical distancing within common spaces, and furniture should be removed.

## **DOE COVID-19 Hotline Response Team**

The DOE COVID-19 Hotline Response Team protocols will be used across the DOE complex for handling reports of COVID-like symptoms and confirmed cases. Field sites will be responsible for following established DOE-wide protocols, and where applicable, managing the site/facility cases, and providing recommendations to site staff. Field sites will report the status of their onsite confirmed cases and occupancy to the DOE COVID-19 Hotline Response Team in weekly status updates every Monday. Information may be entered directly into the COVID System Metrics (CSM) application.

For DOE HQ, the COVID-19 Hotline Response Team will triage potential onsite cases and follow up on cases at Headquarters. The COVID-19 Hotline is available for reporting cases as well as for answering questions. The COVID-19 Hotline can be reached by calling [202-586-2683](tel:202-586-2683) ([202-586-COVD](tel:202-586-COVD)) or by emailing the COVID-19 mailbox at [COVID-19inquiries@hq.doe.gov](mailto:COVID-19inquiries@hq.doe.gov). Emails with personal information should be sent using Entrust.