



HUD COVID-19 Response Return to Safe Workplace Plan

Headquarters and Field Offices

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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Overview

On January 24, 2021, the Executive Office of the President, in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), issued [M-21-15, COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles](#) (Memo), which provided guidance to agencies following the President's Executive Order on [Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask Wearing](#). The Memo focused on aligning safety standards for the Federal workplace with guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for [business and employers responding to COVID-19](#). Further, it directed agencies to utilize the provided model as a guide to make changes to their existing COVID-19 workplace safety plans aligned with the agency model safety principles outlined in the Memo.

On June 10, 2021, OMB, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and General Services Administration (GSA) issued [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](#), which provided agencies with guidance, including the requirement that agencies' COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plans remain in effect and updated as needed to align with current guidance, including agency model safety principles and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force) and CDC guidance as well as other relevant guidance from Federal workplace safety agencies.

On [September 15, 2022](#), the Task Force issued updated safety principles for Federal agencies. In response to those principles and the latest guidance from the CDC, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has amended its COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan.

Headquarters and all HUD facilities will adhere to the guidance in this document, which supersedes prior guidance in the Department's Resuming Normal Operations Guide dated June 2020 and the HUD COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace Plan dated March 2022, and this plan will be applicable to all HUD employees, HUD contractor employees, and all persons accessing HUD facilities, unless stated otherwise. Headquarters includes the Weaver Building and the following satellite offices: Portals, Potomac Office Center, Washington Office Center, and Capitol View. For the purposes of this guidance, the satellite offices, including Ginnie Mae, will be included in the *Regional/Field Office* guidance, unless otherwise stated.

The safety principles presented in this plan are aligned with the latest guidance from the [CDC](#) and from the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#), based on evolving understanding of COVID-19. Where a locality has imposed additional requirements related to COVID-19 that are more protective than those set forth in this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, those requirements should be followed in HUD facilities in that locality.

Consistent with President Biden's policy to support collective bargaining, HUD has satisfied applicable collective bargaining obligations under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 and Section 2(c) of EO

13991 when implementing this workplace safety plan and communicates regularly with employee representatives on workplace safety plans.

These principles will be reassessed over time, as conditions warrant and as CDC and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidelines are updated. Any future changes from the CDC and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force are hereby incorporated herein.

HUD COVID-19 Coordination Team (Operations)

HUD's COVID-19 Coordination Team (Team), as required by [M-21-15](#), meets regularly and is responsible for reviewing compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols, considering potential revisions to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols pursuant to guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and current CDC guidelines, and evaluating any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety. The Team also works closely with the Office of Chief Procurement Officer and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer to monitor application of safety protocols for onsite contractor employees and coordinate operational decisions with facilities personnel and GSA, respectively. HUD's Team consists of representatives from the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Office of General Counsel, Office of Administration (Occupational Safety and Health), and executive leadership. The team consults with HUD's Senior Agency Official for Privacy, as needed. Additionally, the team consults with a representative from CDC's Public and Occupational Health Office. Although team members are subject to change, the purpose and responsibilities of the Team will remain constant.

Health and Safety Standards

COVID-19 Community Levels

CDC has set recommendations related to [COVID-19 Community 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. CDC provides county-level data showing the COVID-19 Community Level for each county in the United States, as determined by CDC. HUD will utilize that data in determining the COVID-19 Community Level for HUD facilities by looking to the COVID-19 Community Level for the county in which the facility is located. CDC's COVID-19 Community Levels will determine the appropriate mask-wearing and other safety requirements for that facility at that time. HUD will review the COVID-19 Community Level on a weekly basis, to determine any changes that should be made to HUD COVID-19 workplace safety protocols for the upcoming week (*for example, HUD may review the COVID-19 Community Level each Friday and implement any changes to agency safety protocols due to changes in the COVID-19 Community Level starting the following Monday*).

Where a locality imposes more protective safety requirements related to COVID-19, those requirements will be followed by HUD employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors to HUD facilities in that locality.

Additional information on the COVID-19 Community Level Guidance for HUD facilities can be found via [HUD's COVID Operations Policy by Office](#).

Vaccination

Vaccination Requirement for Federal Employees

Federal employees. To ensure compliance with an applicable nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, depending on the course of ongoing litigation, HUD will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043 on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees. Any aspect of this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan related to the vaccination requirement pursuant to E.O. 14043 is not in effect and will not be implemented or enforced while the injunction is in place.

Information about Vaccination

Proof of Vaccination

Consistent with CDC guidance, COVID-19 workplace safety protocols currently do not vary based on vaccination status or otherwise depend on vaccination information. Accordingly, HUD has paused any efforts to require, request, or collect vaccination status information from any individual—including employees, contractor employees, visitors to agency facilities, or in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences—for the purposes of implementing agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.

Vaccination Leave

To be consistent with Task Force guidance, employees are authorized to receive any dose of FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccine while on duty time, if appropriate, or by requesting Administrative Leave in accordance with the [COVID-19 Related Leave Fact Sheet](#). Employees may also be granted leave for adverse side effects that prevent the employee from working and to accompany a family member receiving any COVID-19 vaccine dose. For this purpose, a “family member” is an individual who meets the definition of that term in Office of Personnel Management (OPM) leave regulations (see 5 CFR 630.201). For additional information on COVID-related leave, see HUD's [COVID-19-Related Leave Fact Sheet](#).

The time authorized will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccine dose, and return to work. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccine dose, only the needed amount of time should be authorized. Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using official time for purposes of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Lastly, employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent getting a vaccine dose outside their tour of duty.

Operating Status

The Department's operating status is subject to change as conditions warrant. Any change in operational status for the Agency, including Agency components, will be situational-based and data-driven.

Mask-Wearing

The Department's mask-wearing guidance will follow Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance and CDC's COVID-19 Community Levels. Appropriate applicable signage will be posted to alert employees on the mask-wearing guidance required for the facility. Where a locality imposes more protective COVID-19-related safety requirements, those requirements should be followed by HUD employees and onsite contractor employees, and visitors, in federal buildings, in federally controlled indoor worksites, and on federal lands within that locality. Any changes based on updates to CDC Guidance and/or Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance are incorporated herein into this plan.

For purposes of this guidance, when determining COVID-19 community levels the Department will reference the [COVID-19 Community Levels by County Map](#).

When the CDC COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH in a county where a Federal facility is located, pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, all individuals —federal employees, federal contractor employees, and visitors must wear a high-quality mask or respirator that covers their nose and mouth, and that is in accordance with current CDC mask guidance for type of mask required in indoor settings, except for limited exceptions such as when alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door, or for a limited time when eating or drinking and maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines. This includes when Federal employees are interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities.

When required indoors, high-quality masks and respirators:

- include respirators that meet U.S. or international standards (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94), masks that meet a standard (e.g., ASTM), or “procedure” or “surgical”-style masks.
- should be well-fitting and worn consistently and correctly.
- should be worn in common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms).

- If an employee is unable to wear a mask when required due to a health or medical condition, including sensory, cognitive, behavioral issues, or due to religious practices or belief, the employee should contact the Department's Reasonable Accommodation Branch at ReasonableAccommodationBranch@hud.gov or work with the immediate supervisor regarding workplace flexibilities.
- Masked individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with agency safety and security requirements.

Consistent with CDC and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, HUD recommends all individuals wear an appropriate mask or respirator in government-operated vans, cars, trucks, and other motor pool passenger vehicles where there are multiple occupants.

When the COVID-19 Community Level in a county where a Federal facility is located is LOW or MEDIUM, in most settings, to be consistent with Task Force guidance, HUD will communicate to individuals, such as through signage, that mask-wearing is optional, and will 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. All individuals should feel comfortable to continue wearing masks when COVID-19 Community Levels are LOW or MEDIUM and mask-wearing is not otherwise required.

Visitors

Visitors are expected to follow CDC guidance related to COVID-19 Community Levels for mask-wearing and physical distancing in HUD controlled facilities. HUD employees should make visitors and customers — who are two years old or older, aware of the masking requirement when masking is required due to the CDC COVID-19 Community Level status for the facility and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance. If the visitor or customer refuses, that is the individual's right, but they must be directed to conduct business off-site (over the phone or online) and to please depart the premises.

Testing

HUD follows the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force's guidance regarding screening testing for COVID-19.

Information on diagnostic testing after a workplace exposure and travel-related testing can be found on [HUD@Work](#).

Travel

Individuals on HUD sponsored travel, must adhere to CDC guidance for domestic and international travel before, during, and after official travel. Employees should know and follow all travel restrictions put in place by State, Tribal, local and territorial governments for the location they are traveling to and be

prepared to be flexible during travel, as restrictions, policies, and circumstances may change during travel.

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

Meetings may be held in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. Meeting hosts are responsible for ensuring all in-person attendees comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols, including as it relates to any mask-wearing requirement for the facility in which the meeting is held, consistent with CDC guidance and pursuant to E.O. 13991. This includes requiring mask wearing when the COVID-19 Community Level in the county where the meeting will be located is HIGH. For more information on attendees at meetings, events, and conferences hosted by HUD, please visit [HUD@Work](#).

Symptom Screening

Prior to entering the workplace daily, employees and onsite contractor employees should regularly self-monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If an employee, contractor employee, or visitor is experiencing a fever or chills, or new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19, such as new or unexplained onset of cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, new or unexplained loss of taste or smell, or new or unexplained muscle aches, they should notify their supervisor and refrain from entering a HUD office unless in accordance with current CDC recommendations.

If an individual suspects that they have COVID-19, due to new or unexplained COVID-19 symptoms, they should not enter a Federal workplace and should get tested if they have not already done so. Any individual who develops fever, chills, or other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who tests positive for COVID-19, while onsite during the workday must immediately wear a high-quality mask or respirator, notify their supervisor or Department point of contact, and promptly leave the workplace. If additional support is needed, please email the COVID-19 Team at COVID19Reporting@hud.gov.

All HUD Facilities

Prior to entering a HUD facility or HUD controlled space, all employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors must complete a self-screening assessment. HUD employees must also complete a self-screening prior to interacting with members of the public in-person as part of their official responsibilities. Employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors may use the following tools to assist with self-screening: HUD's [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#) (QR code). The self-screening tool is also available on signs posted at HUD entrances.



All employees, contractor employees, and visitors must follow [CDC recommended steps](#) after taking the self-assessment.

Isolation for Individuals with Probable or Confirmed COVID-19

Any employee or onsite contractor employee with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, must not enter a HUD facility or interact with members of the public in person as part of their official HUD responsibilities and will be advised to isolate, pursuant to [CDC guidelines](#), and in compliance with State, local, and Tribal laws and regulations, and monitor their symptoms. If an employee is required to isolate due to being infected with COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee may request sick leave, accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate.

Additional information for what to do if positive or exposed to COVID-19 can be found on the Employee [COVID Resource Corner](#).

Exposure to COVID-19

Any employee or onsite contractor employee who has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow [CDC guidance](#) for post-exposure precautions.

Additional information for what to do if positive or exposed to COVID-19 can be found on the Employee [COVID Resource Corner](#).

Reporting a COVID-19 Case at HUD

If an employee or contractor employee is experiencing new or unexplained [symptoms and/or warning signs for COVID-19](#), or is confirmed to have COVID-19, they should refrain from entering a HUD office unless in accordance with current [CDC recommendations](#). If they have recently been in a HUD facility and/or HUD controlled space, on official travel, or working offsite in an official duty status while experiencing symptoms or prior to testing positive for COVID-19 they should immediately notify their supervisor to determine if HUD's exposure reporting process should be initiated. These individuals should follow [CDC guidelines](#) and seek medical advice and/or attention, if they deem appropriate under the circumstances.

Confidentiality

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 not be maintained in the employee's Official Personnel Folder and will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy and will be accessible only to those with a need to know. HUD will continue to consult its Senior Agency Official for Privacy

on matters related to the collection and handling of personally identifiable information and identify a point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical information.

If sending medical information, to ensure confidentiality and privacy, employees should ensure information is encrypted before sending. (**How to Encrypt Email:** When creating a new email in Microsoft outlook, go to *Options* on the ribbon, select the *Encrypt* option.)

Workplace Operations

Occupancy

When COVID-19 Community Levels are MEDIUM or HIGH, HUD may establish occupancy limits for indoor common areas and meeting rooms in Federal facilities, and in high-risk settings within Federal facilities, where necessary, including where ventilation and air filtration is challenging to improve, or crowding cannot otherwise be avoided.

Environmental Cleaning

Headquarters

In Headquarters, the contracted cleaning company regularly cleans common use, high touch, and high-density areas in accordance with CDC guidelines. These areas include restrooms, elevators, and common areas.

Employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment such as desks, telephones, computers, keyboards, docking stations, computer power supplies, and computer mouse, personal fans and heaters, desk lighting, personal refrigerators, etc. EPA-approved disinfecting wipes will be available for employee use.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in the Weaver Building (*see [Process for Reporting COVID-19 at HUD](#)*), once reported, facilities management will employ cleaning and disinfecting following CDC's [cleaning and disinfecting guidance](#).

A notice will be sent to the affected employees regarding the reported case and the completion of cleaning with EPA-approved disinfectants.

Regional and Field Offices (also applies to Satellite Offices)

GSA is following all CDC considerations and recommendations for building operations. Additionally, GSA has modified its custodial contracts and cleaning and disinfection procedures for federal buildings to require disinfection using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#). GSA will

continue to perform cleaning and disinfection as part of the daily custodial services in all GSA-controlled and operated federal buildings in accordance with recommended CDC guidance.

Employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment such as desks, telephones, computers, keyboards, docking stations, computer power supplies, and computer mouse, personal fans and heaters, desk lighting, personal refrigerators, etc. EPA-approved disinfecting wipes will be available for employee use.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case in a regional or field office (*see [Process for Reporting COVID-19 at HUD](#)*), HUD will immediately notify the appropriate officials, including the GSA Facility Manager, or building management in a private office building, the Facility Security Committee, and the Regional Support Manager, if applicable.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system in the Weaver Building has been in full operation during the entire period of mandated telework. The building utilizes an Ultraviolet Sanitization system and humidity controls to prevent any occurrence of airborne pathogens. By monitoring the amount of outdoor air intake and balancing that with the ambient outdoor humidity, the system remains in accordance with CDC Guidelines (see link below).

To be consistent with Task Force guidance, HUD would make and maintain improvements to indoor ventilation and air filtration throughout Federal facilities to the maximum extent feasible, regardless of COVID-19 Community Levels.

In regional and field offices, and satellite offices, GSA is following the CDC's COVID-related guidance. Per GSA's [Safer Federal Workplace guidance](#), in GSA-operated buildings, CDC HVAC recommendations will be incorporated based on existing equipment, current configuration, and re-occupancy schedule, including disabling demand-control ventilation, increasing operating hours, increasing use of outside air, ensuring air filters are properly sealed, and upgrading air handler filtration efficiency.