



# GSA OIG Workplace Safety Plan

Last Updated June 2023

## Table of Contents

Updates in This Version.....	2
Purpose .....	2
COVID-19 Coordination Team .....	2
COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels   UPDATED .....	3
Overview of Federal Facility COVID-10 Safety Protocols by Hospital Admission Levels .....	3
Vaccinations .....	4
Vaccination-Related Leave .....	4
Vaccination Documentation and Information.....	4
Mask-Wearing .....	4
Official Travel.....	5
Travel for Individuals with Known Exposure .....	5
Travel for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or a Positive COVID-19 Test .....	5
Meetings, Events, and Conferences .....	5
Symptom Screening .....	5
Post-Exposure Precautions.....	6
Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions.....	6
Returning to Working Onsite at an Agency Workplace.....	7
Confidentiality and Privacy .....	7
Workplace Operations .....	8
Improving Ventilation and Air Filtration.....	8
Facilitating Physical Distancing and Avoiding Crowding.....	8
Telework and Remote Work.....	8
Checking In   UPDATED .....	8
Work Area Maintenance .....	8
Collective Bargaining Obligations.....	9
Exceptions .....	9



## Updates in This Version

- Protocols have been updated to reflect revised Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, consistent with Executive Order 13991, which requires federal agencies to follow CDC guidance regarding COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.
- Guidance from the CDC and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force has shifted its reporting of COVID-19 Community Levels to **COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels**. Safety protocols will continue to reflect layered prevention actions.

## Purpose

This plan provides the steps the General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) is taking to ensure a safe workplace for all civilian and contractor employees. GSA OIG leadership is closely monitoring government policy changes, CDC guidelines, and all public health advancements and will continue to update these procedures as appropriate. The health and welfare of each GSA OIG employee and contractor is paramount in the decisions made pursuant to these procedures.

This document provides additional OIG-specific policies and guidelines for COVID-19 Workplace safety. These guidelines are **in addition to** the following related authorities:

- GSA COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and related policies as documented within;
- [M-21-15 COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles](#);
- [Executive Order 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#);
- [CDC guidelines](#); and
- Local health departments and authorities.

## COVID-19 Coordination Team

The Inspector General convened a taskforce in April 2020 to develop guidelines and a framework for the GSA OIG to return to facilities. The taskforce's goal was to create policies and establish structure for employees' safe return to facilities across all workforces.

In January 2021, under guidance from OMB M-21-15, the taskforce updated its name to the COVID-19 Coordination Team. Its members are:

1. Inspector General
2. Deputy Inspector General
3. Associate Inspector General
4. Counsel to the Inspector General
5. Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
6. Assistant Inspector General for Auditing
7. Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
8. Assistant Inspector General for Administration



GSA OIG’s COVID-19 Coordination Team is responsible for:

1. Reviewing compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies;
2. Implementing revisions to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies consistent with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and CDC guidance;
3. Ensuring compliance with agency COVID-19 safety plans, protocols and policies are broadly communicated to agency employees, onsite contractor employees, visitors, and attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences;
4. Evaluating any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety; and
5. Coordinating all decisions with Facility Security Committees and the General Services Administration (GSA) as needed.

### COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels UPDATED

GSA OIG follows the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and CDC guidance to incorporate the levels of hospital admissions into the OIG’s processes and protocols. When determining levels of hospital admission, the OIG references the [U.S. Reported COVID-19 New Hospital Admissions Rate per 100,000 in the Past Week, by County](#) tracker.

The OIG’s mask-wearing guidance incorporates this data and is based on where a facility is located. Employees on official travel are responsible for knowing the hospital admission level for the local area where the federal facility in which they are working is located and following those local and facility guidelines.

### Overview of Federal Facility COVID-10 Safety Protocols by Hospital Admission Levels

Safety Protocols	Green	Yellow	Orange
Federal employee vaccination requirement	No*	No*	No*
Mask-wearing, regardless of vaccination status	No	No	Yes
Symptom screening self-checks for all individuals prior to entry to Federal facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
If known to be exposed to COVID-19 to wear a mask, take other precautions, and watch for symptoms for 10 full days after exposure. Must be tested at least 5 full days after last exposure.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Follow agency isolation protocols and take other precautions consistent with CDC guidance.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consider physically distancing from others and avoiding crowding in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings.	No	Yes	Yes
Agencies to make and maintain improvements to indoor ventilation and air filtration to the maximum extent possible.	Yes	Yes	Yes

*\*Revoked by Executive Order 14099.*



## Vaccinations **UPDATED**

Consistent with CDC guidance, GSA OIG’s COVID-19 workplace safety protocols currently do not vary based on vaccination status or otherwise depend on vaccination information, regardless of the COVID-19 hospital admission level for the county where a federal workplace is located.

### Vaccination-Related Leave

Employees may request administrative leave to get a non-required COVID-19 vaccination shot or a booster shot for themselves or to take a family member (as defined in 5 CFR 630.201) to be vaccinated. Employees may be granted up to four hours of administrative leave per shot. Supervisory approval is required prior to scheduling the administrative leave, which should be recorded as “Other Paid Absence” on timesheets.

Employees may also request up to two days of administrative leave if they cannot work due to an adverse reaction to the vaccination or a booster. Two days total can be used per dose.

### Vaccination Documentation and Information

Workplace safety protocols currently do not vary based on vaccination status or otherwise depend on vaccination information.

Information collected to date from employees about their vaccination status is preserved in accordance with the Federal Records Act and other records requirements.

## Mask-Wearing **UPDATED**

Updated federal guidance bases mask requirements on COVID-19 hospital admission levels.

<b>Community Level</b>	<b>Mask Status</b>
<b>Green</b>	Optional
<b>Yellow</b>	Optional
<b>Orange</b>	Mandatory for all employees, contractor employees, and visitors who are 2 years or older – Must use a high-quality mask such as a surgical mask, KN95, N95, or a respirator

Employees, including contractors, should also follow federal or commercial building policies and local government policies which require stricter safety protocols.

Employees may continue to wear a mask while working in the office. Masks must follow CDC guidelines. Masks must be free of offensive language, graphics, or other patterns that may be seen as offensive by others. The use of homemade masks is authorized but the masks must fall in line with CDC recommendations and guidelines and are not permitted when COVID-19 community levels are high and mask-wearing mandatory.



## Official Travel

There are no government-wide limits on official travel for federal employees, regardless of their vaccination status. All employees who travel must follow CDC health and safety guidelines [while traveling](#). These guidelines should be followed before, during, and after official travel. Component Heads have final approval on official travel decisions and arrangements for employees.

All employees are encouraged to test for COVID-19 before returning to the office after official travel for the safety of other employees in the office.

### Travel for Individuals with Known Exposure

Asymptomatic individuals with known exposure within the past 10 days may travel and follow additional precautions consistent with CDC guidance:

1. Wear a high-quality mask the entire time on-duty and around others;
2. Do not travel on public transportation if unable to wear a high-quality mask and around others;
3. Follow all post-exposure protocols, including testing requirements which may need to occur while on travel.

### Travel for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or a Positive COVID-19 Test

Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for a diagnostic test result are not permitted to travel. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 5 full days after their first day of symptoms or after the date of a positive diagnostic test for asymptomatic individuals also are not permitted to travel.

If after official travel has been approved, an individual's COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, the individual must not undertake further official travel, including any under previously approved travel authorization.

## Meetings, Events, and Conferences

OIG employees are encouraged to continue to hold meetings virtually whenever possible. Face-to-face meetings are no longer restricted but should only be held with the safety of participants in mind.

All in-person attendees must comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols, including as it relates to any mask-wearing when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are Orange.

## Symptom Screening

Employees should conduct a health self-assessment, to include taking their temperature, before returning to the office each day. Pursuant to CDC guidance, employees exhibiting signs



of COVID-19 infection should self-report to their supervisor, stay home and contact their physician. If employees are ill, they are encouraged stay home.

Employees, including contractors, who begin to feel ill or develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in the office must immediately wear a high-quality mask or respirator, report this to their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

If an individual suspects they may have COVID-19 because of new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but has not been tested or has not received test results, they should not enter a federal workplace until conclusive test results have been received.

### Post-Exposure Precautions

The CDC no longer recommends quarantining at home if an asymptomatic individual has a known exposure to someone with COVID-19.

Individuals who are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 regardless of their vaccination status, are instructed to:

1. Wear a high-quality mask or respirator while indoors or interacting with others as part of official responsibilities;
2. Take extra precautions when they are around high-risk individuals while onsite at an agency workplace; and
3. Watch for COVID-19 symptoms for 10 full days from the date of their last known exposure.

If an employee has been onsite at their official duty location and later receives a confirmed-positive COVID diagnosis or begins feeling symptoms of COVID-19, they are encouraged to notify their supervisor to coordinate with GSA or JPA for cleaning services and follow GSA's standard operating procedure for [reporting a COVID-19 exposure](#). GSA OIG will follow internal procedures for reporting a positive COVID diagnosis or the onset of COVID symptoms.

Employees who are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 and are onsite at an agency workplace or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities are required to be tested for current infection at least 5 full days after their last known exposure. If employees are not working onsite at an agency workplace or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities within 10 days of the known exposure, they are not required to be tested.

### Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions

The CDC's guidance for isolation due to COVID-19 should be followed by all employees when they are known to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status.



Employees in a telework-eligible position are required to telework for the duration of their isolation period or take sick leave or other paid leave to account for their time. Employees who are not in a telework-eligible position may use weather and safety leave for the duration of their quarantine period, pending supervisory notification and approval.

The CDC has released guidance for quarantine and isolation due to COVID-19. Updated guidance found at [Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#) (CDC). An isolation and exposure calculator may be found at the CDC link above.

### Returning to Working Onsite at an Agency Workplace

Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and:

- Never developed symptoms may return to the agency workplace after 5 full days following their positive COVID-19 test.

OR

- Have had symptoms may return to the agency workplace after 5 full days from the onset of symptoms once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving. (The loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.)

If an individual had a moderate or severe illness (shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or hospitalization) due to COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system, the individual may delay returning to working onsite or interacting with members of the public for a full 10 days. These individuals are advised to consult their healthcare providers for further guidance.

All individuals who return to the workplace after completing their isolation are instructed to continue taking additional precautions for at least 10 full days after their first day of symptoms (after the date of a positive viral test for asymptomatic individuals). These include wearing a high-quality mask or respirator around others and avoiding common-use and high-frequency areas where others may be unmasked, such as a cafeteria or fitness center.

### Confidentiality and Privacy

All medical information received from personnel, including vaccination information, test results and any other information obtained through testing and symptom monitoring under previous guidelines, will be treated in accordance with applicable law and policies on confidentiality and privacy, and will be accessible only by those with a need to know. All information will be stored in accordance with records management procedures.

Questions or concerns about the personal medical information or the handling of personally identifiable information collected will be addressed by the GSA OIG Employee Relations Officer.



## Workplace Operations

### Improving Ventilation and Air Filtration

GSA OIG follows GSA guidance regarding ventilation and air filtration. GSA developed and revised heating, ventilating, and air conditioning guidance for all GSA-controlled buildings to reflect current CDC recommendations on workplace ventilation.

For the GSA OIG's regional offices, new ventilation methods have increased outdoor ventilation and fresh air to meet new CDC recommendations. These activities are led by GSA.

For leased office space, the GSA OIG is working with building maintenance to ensure safety measures are taken to address a safe transition back to the office.

### Facilitating Physical Distancing and Avoiding Crowding

Employees are no longer required to practice the physical distancing protocol in low community transmission areas. Employees in areas where COVID-19 hospital admission levels are Yellow or Orange should consider distancing in common or high use areas.

Employees in all GSA OIG offices must follow guidelines from local building managers.

### Telework and Remote Work

Supervisors should be mindful of external circumstances for employees such as underlying health conditions for the employee and/or their household member(s), dependent care issues, and public transportation issues when determining telework activities. Employees currently teleworking on a frequent or regular basis will be given advance notice and guidance before returning to the physical workplace. Employees are encouraged to continue to hold virtual meetings using approved OIG IT tools.

### Checking In **UPDATED**

As of May 15, 2023, GSA OIG employees are no longer required to check in each morning using the Workforce Readiness Application.

### Work Area Maintenance

Due to the possible need to clean work areas should an employee in the area test positive for COVID-19, work surfaces should be cleared of clutter at the end of work hours. Employees should also avoid keeping food at their desk after work hours to help keep the area free from pests.

Cleaning supplies will be provided in each office and can be used to wipe down surfaces after use. This includes work surfaces such as desks and keyboards, shared technology tools such as telephones and printers, and high-touch surfaces like doorknobs and light switches. Cleaning supplies purchased by the agency are to be used only in the office and should not be taken home for personal use.





## Collective Bargaining Obligations

The GSA OIG does not have any collective bargaining obligations.

### Exceptions

Pursuant to Executive Order 13991, Federal agencies, employees, and onsite contractors must follow CDC guidance related to certain settings where different or additional layers of prevention are recommended by the CDC, including travel and the indoor transportation corridor. Where there is a conflict with more general Task Force or CDC guidance, agencies must follow the setting-specific CDC guidance.

In addition, to be consistent with Task Force guidance, where a locality has imposed additional pandemic-related requirements more protective than those in Task Force guidance, workplace safety plans, or working in the office guidelines, federal employees and onsite contractors would need to follow those additional local requirements in Federal buildings, in Federally controlled worksites, on Government-operated transportation conveyances, and on Federal land in that locality.