



GSA OIG Workplace Safety Plan

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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, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, and 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.

Scope

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 workforce.

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. Conducting assessments to establish, implement, and monitor compliance with safety protocols for physical space and masking;
2. Making determinations with respect to on-site and telework/remote working;
3. Reviewing CDC guidelines and updating this framework as needed;
4. Collaborating with and supporting the contact tracing programs of local health departments and;



5. Determining appropriate next steps after a COVID-19 case occurs within a specific building or work setting, including communicating related information to the workforce, as relevant and appropriate.

Health and Safety

Since the pandemic began, GSA OIG has developed guidance and resources to provide a safe workplace for GSA OIG employees, contractors, and visitors. This section describes the guidance and policies for employees' personal health and safety that the OIG has implemented in response to the pandemic. These support the recommendations and best practices from M-21-15 and GSA's COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan.

Vaccination

For the purpose of vaccination status, the following definitions apply:

Fully vaccinated: Employees are considered "fully vaccinated" two weeks after completing the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single dose of a one-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson/Janssen).

Not fully vaccinated: Employees are considered "not fully vaccinated" if they have not been vaccinated; decline to provide their vaccination status; received only a first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine; or received their second dose of a two-dose vaccine, or a single dose of a one-dose vaccine, less than two weeks ago.

The GSA OIG is following guidance from the Biden Administration regarding vaccination status. [Executive Order, "Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees,"](#) has mandated that all federal employees receive the COVID-19 vaccination, subject to exceptions as required by law. Employees who are fully vaccinated should now provide proof of vaccination, in accordance with guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Proof of vaccination information will be captured by Employee Relations in line with The Privacy Act. Employees who believe they fall under an exception as required by law should discuss their request with their supervisor. All other employees must provide proof of vaccination by the November 22, 2021 deadline.

NOTE: Due to a recent nationwide injunction of the vaccination mandate for federal employees, employees will not be required to get vaccinated but must still follow guidelines set by the OIG for work in an OIG or other federal office.



Telework and Remote Work

Supervisors should allow for maximum telework when job responsibilities allow. 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 working remotely on a frequent or regular basis, such as maximum telework, 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.

The current telework policy has increased the number of days available for employees for telework and will be enacted when employees return to work in the office and maximum telework is lifted.

Checking In

Employees must check in each morning they work and report whether they are working in the office or teleworking. To do this, employees should use the Workforce Readiness Application, which was developed to capture information that will keep OIG management informed when employees work in the office. This information will be used when we need to contact employees who may have worked in an area that is exposed to COVID-19.

Masks

Updated CDC guidance requires all individuals entering a federal building located in a county with a high COVID-19 Community Level (regardless of vaccination status), to wear a mask. Employees should also follow federal or commercial building policies and local government policies that require stricter safety protocols.

Employees may choose to continue to wear a mask where not mandated and are permitted to provide their own masks. Masks must follow CDC guidelines and be free from offensive language and graphics. A limited number of cloth masks are available at each OIG office if needed by employees or visitors. The use of homemade masks is authorized but the masks must fall in line with CDC recommendations and guidelines.

Symptom Monitoring

Employees should conduct a health self-assessment, to include taking their temperature, before returning to the office each day. Pursuant to CDC guidance, an employee with a temperature over 100.4 or exhibiting other signs of COVID-19 infection should self-report to their supervisor, stay home and contact his/her physician. Use the CDC Self-Checker to assist in assessing COVID-19 symptoms. If employees are ill, they are encouraged stay home.



Employees who feel ill while in the office should report this to their supervisor. The employee should self-isolate until they can return home. Employees should avoid using public transportation if they are feeling ill.

Contact Tracing

The GSA OIG COVID-19 Coordination Team will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases. The COVID-19 Coordination Team will also engage with the OIG Facilities and Support Services team to coordinate with GSA for cleaning services.

The OIG and the COVID-19 Coordination Team encourages employees to report their confirmed-positive diagnoses of COVID-19 to appropriate local health authorities. If an employee has been onsite at their official duty location and later receives a confirmed-positive COVID diagnosis, they must notify their supervisor to initiate 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.

GSA plans to issue specific guidance or policies with regard to contact tracing in spring 2021. GSA OIG will follow that guidance when it becomes available and update this plan accordingly.

Confidentiality

All medical information collected from personnel, including 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.

Questions or concerns about the medical information being collected will be addressed by the GSA OIG Employee Relations Officer.

Travel

Employees who are fully vaccinated are approved to travel with supervisor approval. Employees who are considered not fully vaccinated are restricted to mission critical travel and must get component head approval before booking travel arrangements. All employees who travel must follow CDC health and safety guidelines while traveling, including wearing a mask.

Employees should not travel to areas that have been shut down for quarantining purposes or that have self-quarantining rules for those visiting from out of state. Exemptions may be made for travel to those states that allow federal employees on official business to visit without self-quarantining.



Testing

Not fully vaccinated employees must participate in the OIG COVID-19 Testing Program. This program requires not fully vaccinated employees working in a location with a medium or high COVID-19 Community Level to provide a negative COVID-19 test weekly when working in an OIG office or traveling for work. Onsite contractors and visitors to the OIG offices who have not been vaccinated or who choose not to share their vaccination status must provide a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of their visit to an OIG office. OIG employees should verify the negative test (which must include a stamped date on the test) prior to the office visit but should not keep a copy of the test. Onsite contractor tests should be shared with the Contracting Office Representative (COR) but the record should not be kept by the COR. OIG employees are encouraged to continue to hold meetings virtually whenever possible.

Workplace Operations

This section describes the guidance and policies for OIG employees who are working onsite during the COVID-19 pandemic. These support the recommendations and best practices from M-21-15 and GSA's COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan.

Occupancy

All OIG offices are open. Supervisors should work with their employees and their component heads to ensure that physical distancing can occur when multiple employees need to be in the office.

No GSA OIG workplace should operate above the federal guideline for normal occupancy standards at any given time during mandatory or maximum telework. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared with the Component Head and reported to the Inspector General.

Employees must have supervisory approval to work onsite during the pandemic. Supervisory approval is granted on a case-by-case basis.

Employees must follow the guidelines set by their building management when entering and exiting the building and using public spaces. This includes participating in required scanning or reporting protocols before entering a building. Visitors should be allowed in the building only when necessary and should be limited. Supervisory approval of visitors in OIG workspace is granted on a case-by-case basis and should follow building occupancy rules.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

GSA OIG follows GSA guidance with regard to 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.

Physical Distancing

Employees who have been vaccinated are not required to physical distance in the workplace except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations or building management. A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their final COVID-19 vaccine shot.

For safety and health reasons, employees who are not fully vaccinated are required to practice physical distancing while in the office. This includes leaving at least six feet or more, based on the building regulations, between employees. Special attention should be paid when using break rooms, bathrooms, and elevators.

Face-to-face meetings should be limited in the number of attendees to ensure physical distancing is observed. When using conference rooms, adherence to occupancy limits and physical distancing recommendations must be observed.

Supervisors are required to manage employee schedules to address office space issues needed for physical distancing. Schedules should also be managed to address timing when entering and exiting the main buildings.

Environmental Cleaning

Employees should ensure that their workspace is kept free of clutter after work hours. Due to the possible need to clean work areas should an employee in the area test positive for COVID-19, work surfaces should be clear of clutter.

Cleaning supplies will be provided in each office and should be used to wipe down surfaces after use. This includes both work surfaces and shared technology tools such as telephones, printers, etc. Cleaning supplies purchased by the agency are for use in the office and should not be taken home for personal use.

Cleaning supplies are found in each conference room and must be used by the meeting organizer at the conclusion of the meeting to wipe down all surfaces used.



Hygiene

Employees should avoid keeping food at their desk after work hours to help keep the area free from pests.

GSA and the OIG have also set up hand sanitizer stations at entrances to GSA-controlled facilities and throughout workspaces. Employees are reminded to wash their hands with soap and water or to use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently.

Visitors

GSA OIG follows GSA's visitor policies and guidelines for GSA-controlled facilities. See Testing section above for updated guidelines.

Currently, visitors are allowed in GSA facilities only with prior approval. All visitors should follow CDC guidelines for federal buildings. For the GSA Headquarters building (1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC), where OIG's Central Office is located, all visitors are required to complete the screening questionnaire and thermal screen before entering and are required to wear face masks if the building requires it. Accommodations can be provided for persons for whom wearing masks may be difficult because of sensory, cognitive, or behavioral issues and should be addressed with the Employee Relations Specialist.

Individuals may be required to lower their face covering when passing through security. If needed, visitors are provided with facemasks.

Employees at the regional field offices must follow guidelines from local building managers.

Elevators

GSA has assessed elevators in GSA-controlled facilities to determine safe occupancy. Employees, contractors, and visitors who are not fully vaccinated are instructed to stagger their use of elevators, restrict elevator loads, and follow posted signs for physical distancing. The use of stairs by those who are physically able is strongly encouraged.

Shared Spaces

GSA OIG follows GSA's best practices for using shared equipment and spaces in GSA-controlled facilities. This guidance includes disinfecting tools or equipment after each use, instructions to configure furniture and workspaces, and restrictions on use or access.



Returning to the Office

Based on the consideration of information relevant to each locality, the Inspector General (IG) will decide when to lift the maximum telework order for the Headquarters and each Region of the GSA OIG. See M-20-23-Aligning Federal Agency Operations with the National Guidelines for Opening Up America Again ([M-20-23](#)) and M-21-15 COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles ([M-21-15](#)).

Guiding Principles

Employees must follow internal guidelines posted for returning to the office. Supervisors will consider employee requests for telework, leave, and scheduling flexibilities on case-by-case basis. Case-by-case consideration should include:

- a. States' transmission conditions,
- b. School and daycare closures,
- c. Mass transit availability,
- d. Parking availability,
- e. Facility requirements, and
- f. Mission requirements.

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