

Guidance for Employees Effective July 13, 2021 (revised August 11, 2021)

Purpose

In returning the state's workforce back to onsite locations, agencies should exercise flexibility when developing an agency plan to safely return employees to the workplace in accordance with this guidance. No singular approach will work for all divisions or sections; therefore, management and leadership should carefully review draft plans together before implementation.

While steps should be taken to return the workforce to as near as it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, agencies may continue to utilize the expanded technology and alternative methods of operating, where necessary and feasible. Telecommuting may be considered if feasible to meet the operational needs of the agency.

The content within this guidance applies to State of Delaware (State) Executive Branch Cabinet agency employees. Other employers of State personnel may choose to adopt these provisions as well unless required by CDC or public health officials to have more restrictive guidance. Non-cabinet agency personnel should contact their supervisors to determine whether their employer has adopted these provisions.

Returning to the Workplace

Employees began returning to the workplace in a phased approach in May 2021, with a goal that all employees will be either returned to the workplace or have approved telecommuting agreements completed no later than September 3, 2021.

The following should be considered on agency return to the workplace plans:

- **Employees should discuss with managers concerns which may require flexibility for remote work when necessary.**
- Employees continuing to telecommute after September 3, 2021, are required to have an approved telecommuting agreement on file. Approval for telecommuting is at the sole discretion of management and is not subject to appeal or grievance. Telecommuting policies, procedures and forms can be found under [DHR's Policies and Procedures](#).

Screening

Employee screening and self-monitoring is essential to early detection and ensuring workplaces remain safe. Some facilities may require screening prior to entry by employees and the public.

de.gov/coronavirus

Employees must self-monitor prior to entering the workplace for the following symptoms to identify the early indicators of COVID-19:

- Do you have a fever above 100.4 degrees?
- Do you have a cough unrelated to known underlying causes (asthma, COPD, chronic sinusitis, etc.)?
- Do you have shortness of breath unrelated to known underlying causes (asthma, COPD, chronic sinusitis, etc.)?
- Do you have body aches or pains, severe sore throat, headache?
- Do you have loss of taste or smell?

If the response to any of these questions is yes, employees should not report to work, follow their workplace's call-out procedures, and contact their healthcare provider. Employees may be sent home by agency management, in consultation with human resources, if there is a belief that the employee has symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Personal Safety Measures

Employees are expected to comply with the following guidelines:

Face Coverings

- Face coverings must always be worn by employees when they are away from their designated workspace* (i.e. personal office, cubicle or workstation). This includes, but is not limited to, all common spaces such as break rooms/kitchen areas, elevators, hallways, bathrooms, and meeting rooms irrespective of physical distance.

* Note: Designated workspace includes off-site locations where state employees are assigned to work.

- Face coverings are not required in personal workspaces when other individuals are not present. Employees must use face coverings if another individual enters their workspace.
- Face coverings must be worn when in a fleet vehicle with another individual.
- Face coverings must be worn by all customers and the public when conducting business in state buildings. Customers who refuse to wear a face covering should be offered alternative methods for services (i.e. web services, phone, etc.), or be politely asked to leave the premises and return at another time.
- Face coverings are not required when outdoors but must be worn if social distancing cannot be consistently maintained.
- Face coverings must fully cover the mouth and nose area and may not have offensive or inappropriate writing or graphics. Management reserves the right to ask employees to replace their face covering if it is deemed inappropriate, unprofessional or unsafe.

- Unless required for law enforcement purposes, employees do not need to wear a face covering if it impedes their vision, if they have a medical condition that prevents wearing a face covering, or if it would create an unsafe condition when operating equipment. Employees shall obtain approval from their supervisor if they are unable to wear a face covering for these reasons. Employees may be asked to use an alternative face covering such as a full-face shield, if appropriate, or may be asked to provide documentation from their healthcare provider if they are unable to wear any face covering for these reasons.

Gloves

- Agencies may provide gloves to employees who require them to perform certain job functions such as handling mail, custodial work, toll collecting, groundskeeping, and other jobs identified by agency management.

Personal Hygiene

It is important that employees continue to adhere to the following guidelines for hygiene, as recommended by the CDC and the Division of Public Health:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for no less than 20 seconds is recommended.
- Hand sanitizer should be used frequently.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Reminders -
 - Avoid touching face
 - Avoid handshakes and hugs
 - Avoid touching frequently used objects and surfaces
 - Avoid sharing cellphones, pens, computers, and work areas
 - Avoid sharing paper and physical objects during meetings

Physical Distancing

Employees

- Employees must maintain 6 ft. of physical distance whenever possible.

Visitors

Some workplaces or work requirements include interaction with the public to perform business functions. These guidelines should be followed regardless of vaccination status:

- Agencies may continue to conduct business by appointment only. If appointments are not feasible, agencies should limit building occupancy in accordance with guidance provided by the Division of Public Health.
- Shields or other barriers may be used to help prevent exposure.

Traveling in Fleet Vehicles

- Employees should ride alone in fleet vehicles when operationally feasible.
- Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 should report to his/her supervisor if they have recently utilized a fleet vehicle so that sanitizing of the vehicle can occur. Note: Agencies with blocked vehicles will need to ensure that vehicles are properly sanitized and may engage GSS/Fleet Services for assistance, if needed.

Resources

The following resources are available to management and employees regarding leave policies, telecommuting policy, and resources for employee wellness:

- DHR's COVID-19 HR Resources for Executive Branch Employees:
<https://dhr.delaware.gov/covid19/>
- FAQ's for Employees Related to COVID-19:
<https://dhr.delaware.gov/personnel/faq/>
- DHR's Policies and Procedures:
<https://dhr.delaware.gov/policies/>
- State Employee Benefits and COVID-19 Resources:
<https://dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/covid-19>
- CDC Guidance on Wearing Gloves:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/gloves.html>
- Delaware's Response to the Coronavirus Disease Website:
<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov>
- Delaware Public Health State of Emergency Declarations:
<https://governor.delaware.gov/health-soe/>

Employees not complying with the terms and instructions in these guidelines may be subject to discipline.