

Stop the Spread – State Government Edition – Employee/Supervisor Guidance – Updated 3/9/2021

What's New – Guidance has been updated to extend workplace flexibilities through at least June 1st. Additionally beginning April 5th, DOA-managed facilities will reopen with general office space occupancy limited to 10% of pre-pandemic levels and appropriate COVID-19 mitigation measures. Attendee capacity for in-person meetings, conferences and trainings has also been increased to 350 attendees provided physical distancing can be maintained.

The Wisconsin State Government continues to apply COVID-19-related workplace policies in terms of the number of employees at the work site, social distancing requirements, personal protective equipment, cleaning standards, travel restrictions, etc. The information below summarizes policies and guidance currently in effect. The information is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and other sources as of the date published.

TELECOMMUTING

The state recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic is having a considerable impact on our employees and their families. As such, telecommuting is encouraged where feasible and appropriate based on an agency's unique needs. Supervisors are also strongly encouraged to provide flexibility for employees' work schedules and/or support other accommodations to the maximum extent possible. These expectations regarding telecommuting will be in place through at least June 1, 2021.

Headquartering. Employees who are permitted to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic are doing so under a short-term or temporary authorization meaning there is no change to an employee's headquarter location. Under normal circumstances, short-term and temporary authorizations are limited to six months. However, under the circumstances of the current state-wide pandemic, authorization to work from home is considered temporary until the state declares a return to normal operations.

All employees are generally expected to be headquartered within the state of Wisconsin. Employees may have a headquarters location outside of Wisconsin only when their job duties require them to work out-of-state or in limited situations approved by appointing authorities. When employees work out-of-state, in addition to other telecommuting considerations, employees and agencies should consider the following compliance related impacts: worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, out-of-state tax withholding, compensation and exemption from overtime, health insurance and benefits impacts. If job duties of the position require an employee(s) to work outside of the state of Wisconsin, the employee must first have approval from the appointing authority and agency HR manager (who will coordinate with central payroll) before hiring or allowing an existing employee to regularly perform their assigned duties from an out-of-state location. The agency must also contact the Worker's Compensation Section of the DOA Bureau of State Risk Management regarding worker's compensation coverage.

Commuting. When an employee is temporarily or voluntarily telecommuting, any commute from the employee's home to the office is not reimbursable (See Compensation Plan, Section F 3.05(3)(a) 6.). If an employee is temporarily commuting from their home to a location that is different than their headquarters, the guidance in Section F of the Compensation Plan should be followed to determine mileage when traveling for work. Employees working from home will not be eligible for lunch reimbursement even though they are working outside of their headquarters city during this period of the day. Employees working at home are not considered to be in travel status for work purposes. See Section F of the Compensation Plan which states that lunch is provided if the employee leaves his or her headquarters city before 10:30 a.m. and returns after 2:30 p.m.

Employees with Caregiving Responsibilities. Agencies are encouraged to establish flexible work schedules (FWS) to facilitate the performance of work despite caregiving responsibilities. An FWS consists of workdays with core hours and flexible hours. Core hours are designated hours when employees must be present for work (including telework). Flexible hours are the part of the workday when employees may (within limits) choose their start and stop times and break periods (i.e., work starting and stopping times).

Equipment Use and Request. Employees should be permitted to take home a computer (laptop preferred but desktop permitted for necessity), monitor(s), keyboard, mouse, headset, office supplies, and cellphone, if deemed necessary. Agencies are encouraged to expand their digital capabilities to diminish the need for printers and copying. It is recommended that printer and copiers remain in state facilities. Any equipment sent home with the employee should have been inventoried to include asset tags and serial numbers where available.

If an individual requests additional office equipment for working from home, the request should not be approved unless the item is:

- Easily moved, and
- There is no or limited risk in transporting or using the equipment outside of its normal facility.
For example: A sit/stand station requires a stable, solid surface and has considerable bulk and weight. The state is unable to readily assess the installation at an individual's home, thus the risk of injury outweighs the request to use at home. This request should not be approved.

Should an individual require large equipment to complete day-to-day tasks, as described above, but the risk management issues associated with larger objects cannot be mitigated, the most effective resolution is likely for the employee to work from their officially assigned work location. The assigned work location has already been configured to address the employee's unique circumstance.

Home Office and Internet Costs. In temporary or voluntary telecommuting situations, home office cost including furniture, equipment and internet connections are the responsibility of the employee. That said, during the COVID-19 pandemic, agencies will continue to work with employees to ensure they have sufficient tools to complete their work activities from home. Employees who are unable or unwilling to do so within these parameters can and should return to their workspace at their work headquarters.

DOA has published an updated telecommuting policy and template if needed. Please see DOA Division of Personnel Management's website.

Please note the above guidance may differ for 24/7 operations including correctional settings or health care settings.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING/PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Physical distancing, of six feet apart, is required. In person meetings, trainings, and conferences (except those activities related to public health/public safety/national security) are limited to a maximum of 350 individuals provided physical distancing can be maintained. Coworkers working in the same building should not share food.

Agencies should, to the greatest extent feasible, offer resident services online or virtually.

Shift Changes. Shift changes must be managed thoughtfully to reduce infection risk and to ensure optimal disinfection of the worksite. Agencies are encouraged to designate specific entrances/exits for employees to use.

Shift Staggering. Where operationally feasible, worksites should implement staggered shifts (including break and meal periods). Supervisors should work with their HR representative to determine if a staggered schedule can be accommodated and how to assign employees to different schedules. Supervisors should consult with employees to determine if there are concerns with carpools, mass transit, or other factors that may impact their work schedule. If employee start and end times are already staggered, the supervisor should review the schedule to ensure adequate separation exists to avoid groups of employees waiting in a particular area. Examples of shift staggering work times:

- Group 1 – 7:00 to 7:15 a.m.
- Group 2 – 7:30 to 7:45 a.m.
- Group 3 – 8:00 to 8:15 a.m.

End of shift times should be scheduled to release the employees in the order they arrived.

Personal Protective Equipment. Employees are required to properly wear face masks while in state facilities or when in enclosed buildings while on state business. This direction is applicable to all state facilities throughout the State of Wisconsin regardless of physical distance between employees or the number of people present. This includes while waiting to enter a facility, cubicles, offices, conference rooms, elevators, stairwells, kitchenettes, bathrooms, hallways, and corridors.

- Employees who are unable to wear masks due to medical or mental health conditions or disability should notify their supervisor or human resources representative for assistance in requesting an accommodation. Additionally, human resources may exclude certain positions from the indoor mask requirement if the mask would create a health or safety risk due to the duties of the position.
- Agencies will have a supply of appropriate face masks available for employees and members of the public doing business with the state. Employees are also permitted to wear their own clean, work appropriate face masks.
- Masks may be removed when eating, drinking, communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, and when communication cannot be achieved through other means, to confirm identity if requested, or if in an enclosed space where no other person is present.

BUILDING ACCESS AND SERVICES

Beginning April 5, 2021, DOA-managed state facilities will reopen to a larger segment of the state workforce and the public. General office space occupancy shall be limited, if operationally feasible, to no more than 10% of pre-pandemic levels. Agency heads may grant exceptions to the capacity limit for non-general office space and those locations where the agency determines that the delivery of services necessitates a higher occupancy rate.

The updated capacity guidelines will allow employees who are fully vaccinated and others who desire to work in person to do so from their regular work site. The capacity guideline is the maximum number of workers that may be present at any given time. Telecommuting remains strongly encouraged until there is sufficient vaccine for all employees. DOA is working closely with DHS and will adjust the capacity guideline as the spread of COVID-19 changes and Wisconsin's vaccination rates continue to accelerate. We are hopeful that capacity limits will continue to increase over the coming months. For planning purposes, agencies can anticipate an increase in maximum capacity to 50% of pre-pandemic levels on June 1, with the goal of resuming normal office operations during the summer of 2021.

Agencies are required to post in main building entrances and on their websites updated lists of services that will be offered in person and virtually at each location. Additionally, DOA will work with agencies to manage building entrances, exits, elevators, stairwells, and the overall building flow to accommodate an increasing number of individuals in state buildings.

Employees are expected to stay home if ill and will be expected to follow proper handwashing, cough-covering, and hygiene practices to prevent spread of viruses. In addition, the Division of Facilities and Transportation Services (DFTS) will ensure enhanced cleaning in DOA managed and leased facilities. This includes maintaining hand sanitizer in common areas and stocking cleaning stations. Agencies that need assistance with leased facility requirements should contact the DFTS, Real Estate Section.

Hygiene-Related Print Resources. Hygiene-related print resources are available to order through the Bureau of Publishing and Distribution (BPAD). BPADs order form is available on their website: [DET BPAD Home \(wi.gov\)](#). CDC provided hygiene signage is available at the following link: [Print Resources | CDC](#)

Signage. The Division of Facilities & Transportation Services, Space Management group should be contacted for any

signage needs or changes within DOA facilities.

Plexiglass Barriers. Plexiglass panels are now available at multiple state contract providers including Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE) safe space products at website: <https://www.shopbce.com> or [Statewide Office Furniture Contract](#): Category A, Systems Furniture and Accessories.

MANAGING SICK EMPLOYEES (SYMPTOM SCREENING AND TEMPERATURE CHECKS)

Employees may be subject to temperature checks or other testing at authorized locations such as correctional and healthcare settings. Currently, temperature checks and health screenings have been authorized only at DOC, DHS, DMA, and DVA facilities, and the State Patrol Academy. Employees who are or appear ill will be sent home from work by supervisors. Supervisors may make inquiry regarding employee health and test results.

Symptom Screening. Supervisors and/or HR staff can send employees home who exhibit Covid-19 or [flu-like symptoms](#) or otherwise appear sick and unable to perform their duties.

- Supervisors may ask employees who report feeling ill at work if they are experiencing Covid-19 or [flu-like symptoms](#).
- If the employee is not able to immediately leave the workplace due to transportation issues, the employee should be isolated in a non-public area. Alternative transportation should be encouraged if the employee uses public transportation to get to work.
- If, after discussion regarding the necessity of protecting the employee's health and the health of the workforce, the employee refuses to leave work, the supervisor should direct the employee to leave. Human resources staff are available to consult with supervisors unsure about whether to send an employee home.
- If an employee calls in sick or is sent home from work with flu-like symptoms, the employee is considered unfit for duty and may not return until the applicable interval has passed. Employees will be required to use the appropriate leave category. Employees with no available sick leave or alternate leave will be placed on approved leave without pay for the duration of their illness.
- Consistent with CDC and DHS DPH recommendations, normal agency requirements to provide a doctor's note to justify an extended absence have been temporarily suspended for an employee's absence due to flu-like (COVID-19) symptoms, *unless* the employee is currently required to provide medical verification for all absences. If there is concern about the truth of the employee's statements related to their need for the leave, the supervisor should consult their HR representative to assist in obtaining further documentation. Before returning to work, employees must contact their supervisor to provide an update on their status.

Temperature Checks. Except where explicitly authorized (e.g. at DOC, DHS, DMA, and DVA facilities, and the State Patrol Academy) and in accordance with the approved procedures, supervisors and/or HR staff should never take an employee's temperature or attempt to perform any medical evaluation of an employee. The exception to this direction is for agencies with authorized (based on operational needs and approval of DHS) temperature checking procedures. DPM will provide additional details related to implementation and management in these cases.

Managing Employees Positive for or Exposed to COVID-19 – based on updated CDC and DHS DPH Guidance.

- **Employees who test positive (with or without symptoms)**
 - A positive employee with symptoms will stay home until the following is met based on the employee's health care provider: at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours have passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved.
 - A positive employee with no symptoms can return, based on the direction of the employee's health care provider, once 10 days have passed since the positive test.
 - Additional information on the timing of close contact with an individual who tested positive can be found on [CDC Public Health Recommendations](#).

- **Unvaccinated¹ employees who have been exposed to COVID-19**

- Employees who have had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 will quarantine* at home. Close contact means:
 - Employee was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes within a 24 hour period.
 - Employee provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - Employee had direct physical contact with the person (touched or hugged them)
 - Employee shared eating or drinking utensils when COVID positive person sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on employee

During the quarantine period, employees must:

- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
 - If possible, stay away from others within their home, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19
- While a **14-day quarantine continues to be the safest and recommended option**, two additional quarantine options are now allowed for some people. Follow local guidance for quarantine release times as some options may not be acceptable in certain settings and situations. Consideration for these shortened quarantine periods is only for people who do not have symptoms at any time during their quarantine period.
 - The two options to reduce the quarantine period are available as follows:
 - Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing, if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. This option results in about a 1% chance of transmission.
 - Quarantine can end after Day 7 if the result of a diagnostic (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test is negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The test specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation, but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. A pending test result on day 7 is not sufficient to end quarantine early. This option results in about a 5% chance of transmission.

Employees must continue to monitor for symptoms daily through day 14 of the quarantine, and continue to follow public health guidelines such as wearing a mask, physical distancing, and avoiding gatherings. If you are unable to monitor for symptoms and follow public health guidelines, you should quarantine for the full 14 days. If symptoms develop, employees are advised to immediately isolate, contact their health care provider, and get tested.

*NOTE: If an employee was in contact, but **not close contact** with someone who is positive (e.g. low risk), they do not need to take preventive measures, e.g. quarantine for 14 days; however, employees should closely monitor for symptoms for 14 days and immediately isolate and get a test if any symptoms develop.*

¹Employees are considered “vaccinated” if they have completed their vaccine series (two doses for Pfizer and Moderna vaccine; one dose for Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and at least two weeks has passed for the two-dose series or at least four weeks has passed for the one-dose vaccine. Vaccinated employees do not have to quarantine if they have been in close contact with the exception of some employees who provide direct patient care.

**[CDC’s critical infrastructure guidance](#) provides exceptions to current home quarantine practices after an exposure to COVID-19 for some workers. The guidance advises that employers may permit workers who have had an exposure to COVID-19, but who do not have symptoms, to continue to work, provided they adhere to additional safety precautions, such as measuring the employee’s temperature and assessing for symptoms of COVID-19 before each work shift (“pre-screening”), asking the employee to self-monitor for symptoms during their work shift, and wearing a [cloth face covering](#). Per DHS guidance, this exception should only be used when exclusion from work would result in an imminent threat to patient care, public health or public safety. See [Health Alert #16: Quarantine of Wisconsin Residents Exposed to COVID-19 is an Essential Prevention Strategy](#).*

- **Notification Requirements**

- An employee who is working in a state facility and tests positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact of an individual positive for COVID-19 should notify their supervisor or HR.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, the agency HR Director will notify employees who were in close contact with the ill employee to inform them of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- A notice to the entire worksite is not necessary. Additional information on the [DHS COVID-19 resources for employers](#) should be referred to for additional information about how to assess risk and steps to maintain operations when an employee is positive.
- HR or the supervisor will also contact facilities management to initiate cleaning of the COVID-19 positive employee's work station following more stringent [environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols](#).

TRAVEL

Travel is limited to essential travel for which no virtual option exists and may occur anywhere in the United States. This guidance replaces all previously issued travel directives.

Employees traveling by motor vehicle should ride alone in vehicles where operationally feasible. Employees who normally have multiple employees in the vehicle due to safety or work standards should follow their agency-specific protocols when traveling. If more than one person is in the vehicle, all occupants must wear masks. Upon arrival at the worksite and prior to departing, employees should wash their hands as recommended. Employees who travel for work do not need to quarantine as a result of their travel.