

## Stop the Spread – State Government Edition – Employee/Supervisor Guidance – Updated 4/16/2021

**What's New** – Guidance has been updated to extend workplace flexibilities through July 4, 2021. DOA is working closely with DHS and will adjust capacity guidelines as COVID-19 disease incidence decreases and Wisconsin's vaccination rates continue to accelerate. For planning purposes, it is anticipated that normal state operations will resume on July 5, 2021. Additionally, beginning May 5<sup>th</sup>, general office space occupancy will be limited to 25% of pre-pandemic levels with appropriate COVID-19 mitigation measures. Transition planning, out-of-state work restrictions, and personnel-related guidance has been updated to reflect the ongoing transition. Information has also been added to this guidance encouraging all employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and outlining new guidance for employees who have been vaccinated.

The Wisconsin State Government continues to apply COVID-19-related workplace policies in terms of the number of employees at the worksite, 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 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and other sources as of the date published.

The State recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a considerable impact on our employees and their families. As such, telecommuting is encouraged where feasible and appropriate based on each 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 July 4, 2021.

### TELECOMMUTING

**Transition Planning.** Changes to the way agencies work, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to transformational improvements in digital services, increased productivity, better customer service, and improved workplace flexibilities. Agencies preparing for the transition to normal operations should develop transition plans that build upon the positive changes that have occurred during the last year. Agency planning efforts should consider ways to improve customer service, decrease operational costs, and grow employee satisfaction and engagement.

Agencies considering an update to their agency telecommuting plans should do so, in consultation with their human resources representative, with a plan to implement changes by July 5, 2021. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) enterprise facilities, human resources (HR), risk management, and technology staff have compiled several helpful resources and are available to consult with agencies on their transition and telecommuting plans. Please see the *Resources* section at the end of the document for additional information. The following information provides guidance on baseline standards for telecommuting practices.

**Headquartering.** All employees are expected to be headquartered and work within the State of Wisconsin. With prior approval from the appointing authority and agency HR manager, permanent employees may have a headquarters location or work outside of Wisconsin only when their job duties require them to work out-of-state or in limited situations. Non-permanent employees are expected to work within the State of Wisconsin. Per s. 230.26(1m) and 230.27(1m), Wis. Stats., appointing authorities are prohibited from appointing non-Wisconsin residents to limited-term or project positions unless approved by the director of DOA's Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection (BMRS).

When employees work out-of-state, in addition to other telecommuting considerations, employees and agencies should consider the following compliance-related impacts: out-of-state tax withholding, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, compensation and exemption from overtime, and health insurance and benefits impacts. If the 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 and seek approval from the BMRS director if appropriate) 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 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.

**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 printers 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 circumstances.

**Home Office and Internet Costs.** In voluntary telecommuting situations, home office costs including furniture, equipment, and internet connections are the responsibility of the employee. 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 the *Resources* section at the end of the document for additional information.

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

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING/FACE COVERINGS

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

Agencies should, to the greatest extent feasible, offer citizen 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.

**Face Coverings.** As a safety condition, all individuals, including both state employees and members of the public, should properly wear face coverings while in state facilities.

Except as otherwise noted below, state employees are required to properly wear face coverings both while they are in state facilities as well as while they are in other enclosed buildings while on state business. Members of the public will be asked to properly wear face coverings while in state facilities. This direction applies to all state facilities throughout the State of Wisconsin regardless of the physical distance between individuals 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.

Additionally, face coverings are strongly recommended for all individuals when outdoors on state-managed property in situations when it is not possible to maintain six feet of physical distancing.

- Employees who are unable to wear face coverings due to medical or mental health conditions or disability should notify their supervisor or human resources representative for assistance in requesting accommodation. Additionally, human resources may exclude certain positions from the indoor face coverings requirement if the covering would create a health or safety risk due to the duties of the position.
- Agencies will have a supply of appropriate face coverings 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 coverings.
- Face coverings 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.
- Employees who choose to disclose their vaccine status and are fully vaccinated may meet with other fully vaccinated employees indoors without wearing face coverings or physical distancing, so long as all such employees in the meeting are comfortable doing so. Note: *Employees 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 have passed since their final dose.*
- Employees who have concerns regarding face-covering compliance are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their supervisor or human resources.

## BUILDING ACCESS AND SERVICES

Beginning May 5, 2021, general office space occupancy shall be limited, if operationally feasible, to no more than 25% 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 COVID-19 disease incidence decreases 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 on July 5, 2021. These targets are subject to change depending on the rate of vaccinations and COVID-19 disease activity levels.

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.

**Other Mitigation Measures.** Employees are expected to stay home if ill and will be expected to follow proper handwashing, cough-covering, and hygiene practices to prevent the 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 the website: <https://www.shopbce.com> or [Statewide Office Furniture Contract](#): Category A, Systems Furniture and Accessories.

## VACCINATIONS, SYMPTOM SCREENING, AND TEMPERATURE CHECKS

**VACCINATION.** Employees are strongly encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Employees are encouraged to register and schedule a vaccine using the [Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Registry](#). The Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Registry allows Wisconsin residents to register for and schedule COVID-19 vaccinations at state-sponsored vaccination clinics across the state. Additionally, there are several places you may go to get your COVID-19 vaccine such as:

- Your doctor or health care provider,
- Pharmacies,
- Community-based vaccination clinics, and
- On-site vaccination clinics.

Additional information about how to locate a vaccine can be found [here](#).

**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 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.

**Testing Positive for or Exposure to COVID-19.** Employees who are experiencing [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should get tested. Additionally, all employees should follow the following guidance if they have tested positive or had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19.

- **Employees who test positive (with or without symptoms)**
  - An employee who tests positive and has COVID-19 symptoms will stay home until the following is met based on the direction of 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.
  - An employee who tests positive and has no COVID-19 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](#).
- **Unvaccinated<sup>1</sup> 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.
    - 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. The employee should get tested for COVID-19 if symptoms occur.
- If possible, stay away from others within their home, especially people who are at a [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19
- A COVID-19 test is strongly recommended for all people who are a close contact to someone

infected with COVID-19, regardless of symptoms.

- 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 for a full 14 days following the exposure 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.*

- **Vaccinated<sup>1</sup> employees who have been exposed to COVID-19.**
  - Vaccinated employees who have had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 are not required to quarantine with the exception of some employees who provide direct patient care. Vaccinated persons who do not quarantine should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following exposure. If symptoms develop, they should immediately isolate, contact their health care provider, and get tested.

<sup>1</sup>*Employees 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 since their final dose).*

*\*[CDC’s critical infrastructure guidance](#) provides exceptions to current home quarantine practices after exposure to COVID-19 for some workers. The guidance advises that employers may permit workers who have had 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 manager 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).
- 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 workstation following more stringent [environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols](#).

**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.

## TRAVEL & PERSONNEL

**Travel.** Travel is limited to essential travel for which no virtual option exists and may occur anywhere in the United States. 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 unvaccinated 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 because of their travel.

**Personnel.** The hiring freeze and suspension of the discretionary merit compensation program will continue through July 4, 2021. All other programs will continue to operate consistent with state law, administrative code, and DOA guidance.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & GUIDANCE

[Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook - Alternative Work Patterns and Telecommuting Guidance & Sample Templates](#)

[Facilities Planning Guidance](#)

[Risk Management Telecommuting Guidance](#)