

From: [Soil & Water Conservation Program](#)
To: [Soil & Water Conservation Program](#); [DNR.Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff](#)
Cc: [DNR.SWC Staff](#)
Subject: RE: Updated Service Center Guidance Effective 4/12
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 3:08:59 PM
Attachments: [FPAC Workplace Safety Plan - April 2021 - Plus Visitors.docx](#)
[Service Center Sign if Open April 2021.pptx](#)
[Service Center Status Guidance and Communications - 4.9.2021.docx](#)
[FAQs on vaccines 040821.pdf](#)
[FPAC Facilities Screening.pdf](#)

All,

Please find attached updated Service Center Guidance Effective 4/12/2021. Please continue to work with USDA and the District Conservationists to provide protection of all the partners and customers of service centers during the pandemic. If you have questions please contact your district coordinator. Thank You!

Soil and Water Conservation Program

We'd like your feedback on the service you received from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Please consider taking a few minutes to complete the department's Customer Satisfaction Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MoDNRsurvey>. Thank you.

From: Johnson, Ashley - NRCS, Columbia, MO <ashley.johnson2@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:45 PM
To: ug-MO-nrcs <mo-nrcs@usda.gov>
Cc: Boeckmann, Kurt <kurt.boeckmann@dnr.mo.gov>; Casey Bergthold (<cbergthold@pheasantsforever.org> <cbergthold@pheasantsforever.org>); White, Bill <bill.white@mdc.mo.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Service Center Guidance Effective 4/12

Good afternoon everyone,

Attached is the guidance that was provided to us by FPAC for service center use. USDA Service Centers that are currently operating at up to 50% office staffing may begin to accept limited visitors by appointment only, effective immediately.

Following are resources for field offices to utilize in support of this effort:

- *FPAC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan*
- *Updated Sign for Service Centers*
- *Questionnaire for Visitors*
- *Service Center Status Guidance and Communications (i.e. voicemail, email signature, talking points, and GovDelivery bulletin)*
- *USDA FAQs for COVID-19 Vaccinations*

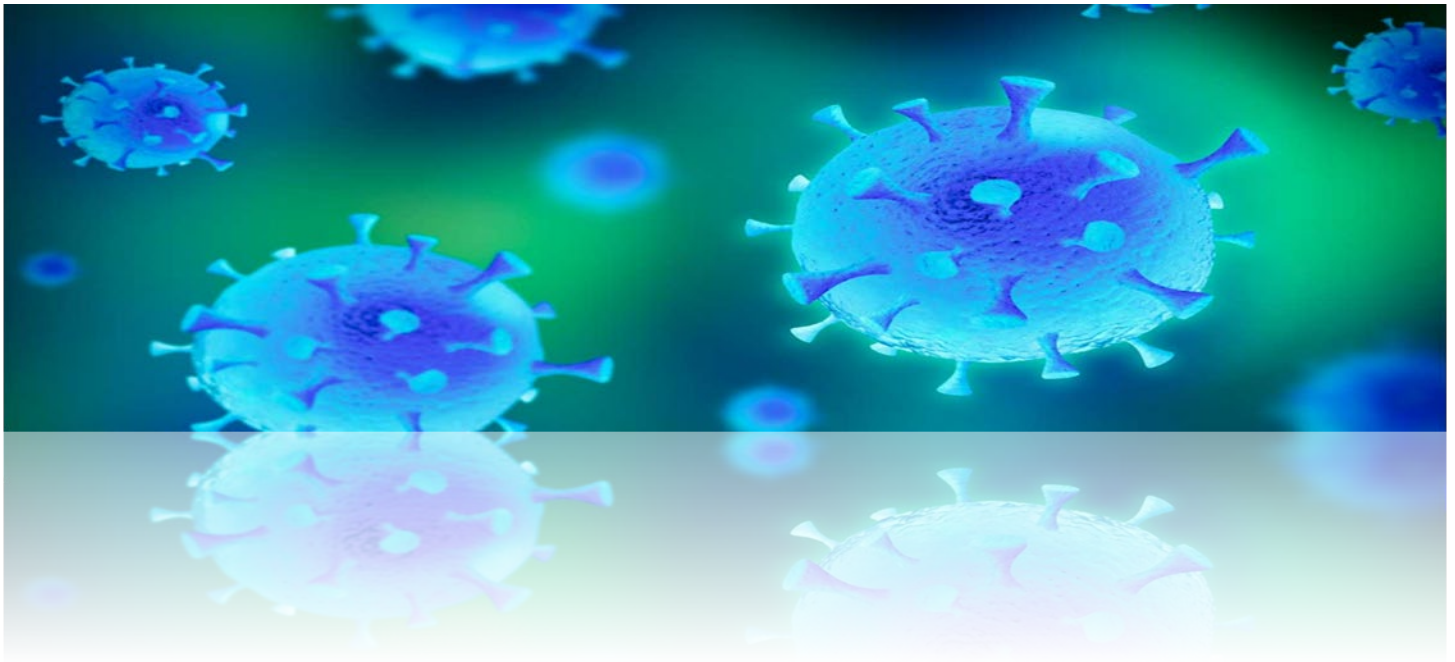
Additional resources, including translated signage, sign-in sheet, etc., will be [posted on myFPAC](#) in the near future.

As always we appreciate your support into this matter!

Thank you,

Ashley Johnson

United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area
(FPAC)



FPAC COVID WORKPLACE SAFETY SOP

This document supplements the USDA Workplace Safety Plan (dated February 22, 2021)

Version 5 – April 5, 2021

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Summary

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) supersedes the previous FPAC guidance that was issued in May 2020 and will govern all FPAC facilities and employees.

The [USDA Workplace Safety Plan](#) serves as the basis for this SOP and shall be followed unless further clarified in this document.

FPAC will continue to use the established Incident Management Team as the clearinghouse for all facility staffing requests and will depend on State and Hub Pandemic Coordinators to evaluate local conditions and collaborate with all FPAC agencies and other collocated Federal agencies.

The authoritative sources that will inform State and local Pandemic Coordinators on community spread will be the [FPAC COVID Dashboard](#) and the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#). Local leaders must consult these tools when applying this SOP.

This guidance will take precedence if a state unilaterally moves ahead of USDA's guidance.

FPAC Facility Staffing Process

1. FPAC's Office Staffing Process follows USDA and CDC guidance.
2. All FPAC Facilities will operate with not more than 25% of employees in the office at any one time.
3. Exceptions to the 25% Rule:
 - a. Service Centers may operate at higher than 25% occupancy if physical distancing permits. In the event of a rise in COVID cases, some locations may be required to return to lower staffing levels based on guidance from the FPAC COVID Incident Management Team.
 - b. FPAC facilities that would only be allowed 1 employee under the 25% rule, may have 2 employees in the office if physical distancing permits.
 - c. NRCS Plant Material Centers and Soils Laboratories may have sufficient staffing to complete required work, providing all work is conducted outdoors with masks and physical distancing. Up to 50% of total staff may work inside the facility (each building) unless the criteria below are met.

Additional Guidance for all FPAC Facilities:

- FPAC Hub locations, State Offices and RMA Offices may allow up to 25% of employees in the facility, providing the minimum 6 ft physical distancing can be maintained under all circumstances.
- Service Centers may allow higher occupancy (as indicated above), as long as physical distancing can be maintained. All Service Centers may have at least 2 people in the office with appropriate physical distancing.
- **If multiple agencies are located in the facility and their offices are separated by walls or on different floors, each agency may operate at the authorized strength for that type of facility as long as physical distancing can be maintained.**
 - The number and on-site positioning of employees returning to work must be determined based on the ability to follow all Social Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols including the use of appropriate PPE.

- This number is intended as a maximum, not a goal. Leaders at Hub locations, State Offices, Service Centers, and Regional Offices will assess the maximum daily capacity based on the ability to physically separate employees within the facility.
 - In locations with multiple agencies, the SFAC Chair or Hub Coordinator must coordinate to provide assurance an equitable distribution of employees allowed in the office across all agencies within a single physical space.
 - Partner agency employees must be counted in the total number of people allowed in the office.
 - Since office space is provided for County Committee members and FSA and NRCS District Directors, and SWCD employees, they may be included in the number used to calculate the 25% total.
- FPAC Agencies should prioritize the return of employees and contractors whose work does not permit telework, are deemed mission-critical, or are customer-facing. Agencies co-located with another USDA agency or federal department need to coordinate facility capacity and maximum physical distancing.
 - [High-risk](#) individuals as defined by the CDC who have self-certified should be allowed to continue maximum telework flexibility at this time.
 - Consistent child and dependent care, and mass transit availability should be factored into the decision of requiring employees to return to the office.
 - Leaders should consider establishing a team approach or staggered work schedule that would place a group in the office, while another is on telework.
- **For Service Centers that are currently operating at up to 50% office staffing, visitors are permitted by appointment only.**

Visits to FPAC Service Centers must be conducted in a safe manner and focus heavily on protecting both employees and customers through proper physical distancing, mask wearing and cleaning. All FPAC Service Centers should follow [CDC's facility hygiene and cleaning guidance](#).

Visitors should only be allowed in Service Centers that have the space to physically distance employee and visitors. If this is not possible, Service Centers should continue to provide all service through remote means. The safety of our employees and customers will always be our highest priority.

- Visits should be permitted for essential, time-sensitive service only.
- Visitors must be escorted at all times and access is limited to non-essential areas of the facility. Visitors should not enter employee office spaces or go beyond a service counter.
- Prior to entry, all visitors should be asked to complete symptom screening. A questionnaire is attached.
- Visitors are required to wear masks at all times while inside a USDA facility and should physically distance to the greatest extent possible while engaging with USDA employees. Masks must be worn at all times while conducting business at a USDA facility, regardless of local or state policies
- Only one visitor should be allowed in the Service Center at a time unless there is sufficient space to allow 6 feet of distance between visitors at all times. Scheduling of appointments must allow sufficient time between visitors to ensure proper cleaning of workspaces, service counter and items that would be frequently touched by visitors in accordance with [CDC guidance](#).
- Visitors are not permitted to wait for their appointment inside a USDA facility, unless there is sufficient space to allow 6 feet of distance between visitors. It is recommended that facilities obtain cell phone

numbers from visitors (whenever possible) prior to the appointment and call them when you are ready for their appointment.

- When possible, it is recommended that Service Centers have a physical barrier (such as plexiglass) between employees and visitors and that physical distance be maintained to the extent possible.
- If no Service Counter is available, but the facility has a conference room (e.g. NRCS), the conference room may be used to meet with visitors. Visitors must be distanced from employees at all times. This is to be used as a last resort, remote services and physically distanced visits to producers are preferable.
- Service Centers may utilize their discretionary supply funds to purchase masks to be available for producers
- Local leadership within a facility that houses multiple tenants should coordinate with each other to ensure awareness of all visitors, as appropriate.
- Office Doors should remain locked and visitors should be notified that office staff will allow visitor's entry at their specified appointment time.
- If a Service Center is notified by a visitor that they have tested positive for COVID, all FPAC notification, quarantine and office cleaning procedures must be followed. Additionally, if an employee who had direct contact with a visitor tests positive, the customer should be notified.
- Service Centers should maintain a log of visitors.
- If COVID cases rise to high levels in a location, the visitor access may be suspended until safer conditions return.

- **LincPass stations may reopen using the same criteria as other visitors.**

- It is recommended that at least 30 minutes be allowed between each appointment to allow for all equipment to be cleaned between each appointment.
 - Facilities that are reopening LincPass stations must notify the FPAC COVID Incident Management Team at FPAC-COVID19@usda.gov prior to reopening.
- Conference rooms and other common facilities should only be used for critical, time sensitive meetings and other events that cannot be performed virtually but where physical distancing is maintained.
 - Appropriate [signage](#) must be posted as stated in the Workplace Safety Plan.
 - Only mission essential, time sensitive business travel will be considered. (This does not preclude NRCS and FSA field work, and RMA field staff and their associated contractors including Approved Insurance Providers' agents and loss adjustors. with proper social distancing). Any local requirements for quarantining upon return from travel should be followed.
 - All potential new COVID exposures must follow the guidance in the Exposure Risk Matrix (Appendix A) and must be reported immediately via https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/health_updates or FPAC-COVID19@usda.gov (if access to the ServiceNow tool is unavailable). New COVID cases or exposure in the facility, or significant change in the community may require the facility to return to differ FPAC COVID Condition.
 - In accordance with [CDC Guidance](#), fully vaccinated people can:
 - Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
 - Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease, indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.

- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure to COVID-19 if the vaccinated person remains asymptomatic
- Fully vaccinated people should continue to take precautions in public and when:
 - Visiting unvaccinated people at increased risk for severe COVID-19
 - Visiting unvaccinated people from multiple households
 - Follow guidance from employers, and CDC and health department travel recommendations

Indicator	
Percentage of Workforce allowed in the office	Up to 25% Occupancy permitted with Physical Distancing for Hub locations, State Offices and RMA Offices. Service Centers may allow higher occupancy (as indicated above), as directed by the FPAC COVID Incident Management Team as long as physical distancing can be maintained. All Service Centers may have at least 2 people in the office with appropriate physical distancing
Telework	As possible to meet mission requirements
Masks	Must be available to all employees. Required at all times unless in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door, briefly while eating or drinking, alone in a USDA vehicle, or while performing field work outdoors and physically distanced.
At Risk Employees	Employees defined as high risk by CDC may maximum use telework flexibility
Travel	Mission essential, time sensitive travel only
Visitors	Visitors are permitted at Service Centers operating at 50% of office staffing under the guidelines listed on pages 4 and 5. Visitors are not permitted at other FPAC facilities at this time.
Meetings	Virtual is recommended, in person employee meetings must include masks and cannot exceed the number of people permitted by physical distancing
Common Areas	Limited and essential use only, with masks and physical distancing
Office Cleaning	Very frequent, daily if possible, with spot cleaning of frequently touched surfaces throughout the day

FPAC Travel Guidance

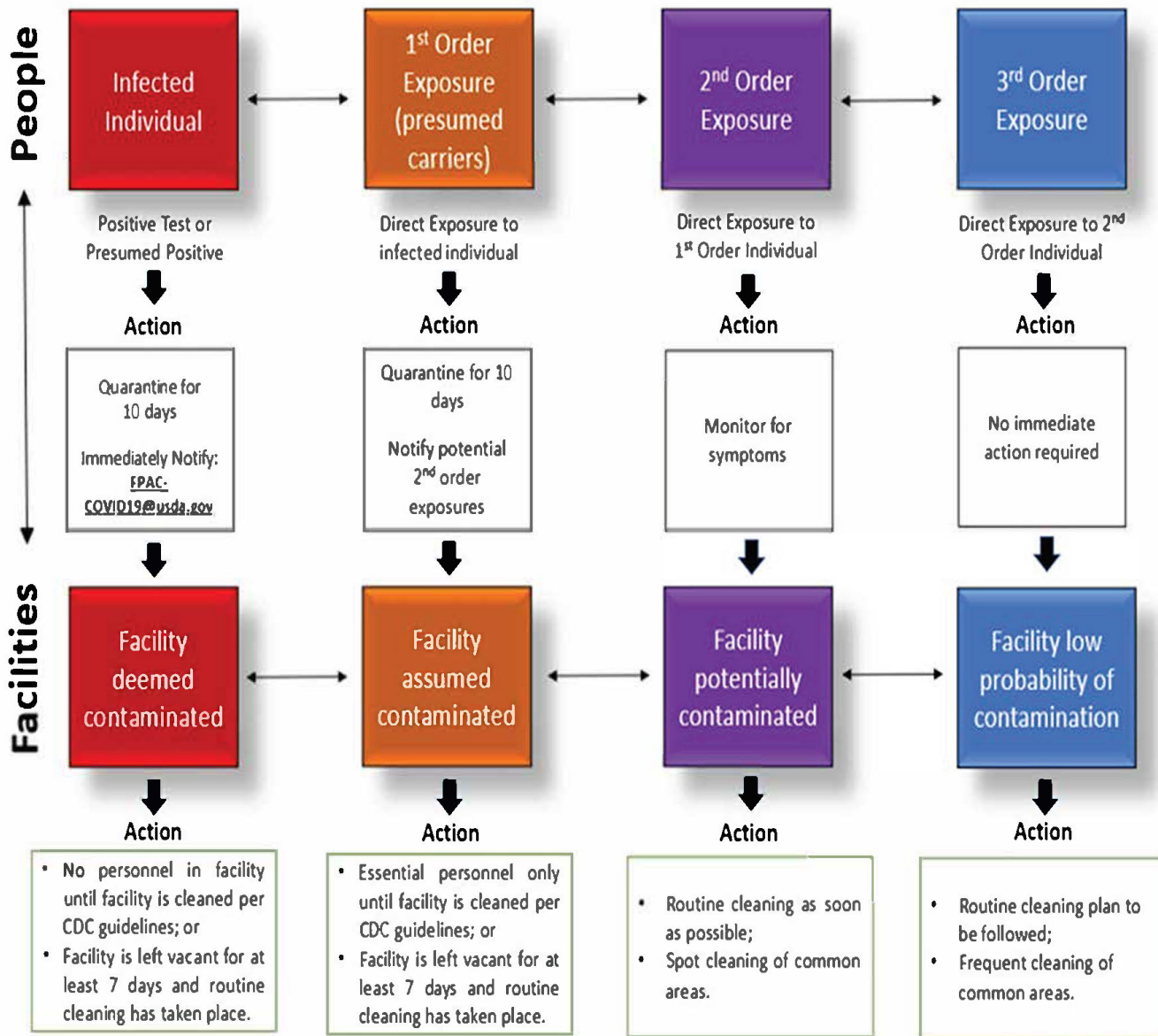
- Mission essential, time sensitive travel is defined as overnight travel to support operational matters that cannot be conducted remotely or deferred to a later date.
- Field work, including repair of FPAC IT equipment, is authorized provided mask, physical distancing and proper hygiene practices are followed. Field work requiring visits to FPAC facilities must be coordinated with the County Executive Director and/or District Conservationist prior to the visit.
- In-person training does not meet the criteria of mission essential, time sensitive travel unless it is required to maintain a certification that enables an employee to complete their duties, and the certifying body has not granted extensions or remote opportunities. All in person certification training should be approved by State and/or Headquarters leadership prior to any individual attending the training.
- Conferences and large gatherings (more than 50 people) present a high-risk situation at this time and do not meet the definition of mission essential, time sensitive travel and will be avoided.
- More than one person may occupy a Government vehicle, but masks must be worn, and it is recommended that windows be left partially open if possible. The interior of the vehicle should be cleaned at the beginning and end of use and if the driver changes.

Overnight Travel	Local Travel/Field Work	Local Training	Large Gatherings
Overnight travel that cannot be deferred must be approved at the State or HQ level.	Work that cannot be deferred is permitted. All precautions must be followed. Mission delivery field work will continue following appropriate precautions.	Conducting or attending group training is not permitted.	In person attendance at conferences and trade shows is not permitted.

Appendix A

Exposure Response Matrix

If an FPAC facility has an exposure after beginning the reopening process, this matrix will be followed to determine immediate actions.





Notice to Service Center Visitors

**This service center is now open to
limited visitors by appointment only.**

Call to make an appointment: XXX-XXX-XXXX
FSA: extension X NRCS: extension X
SWCD: extension X RD: extension X

More information is available online at farmers.gov/coronavirus.



Service Center Status Guidance and Communications

Last Updated: 4-6-21

Updated FPAC guidance reopens some USDA Service Centers to limited visitors by appointment only. Below is updated guidance for Service Center staff related to:

- Signage
- Email signature blocks
- Voicemail

We are also including two communications items (which were also shared with FSA Communications Coordinators and NRCS Public Affairs Specialists):

- County-level govDelivery article
- Talking points

This guidance replaces previous guidance on these topics. For more information on COVID-19 policy, including the USDA COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, visit myfpac.usda.gov/coronavirus.



Office Signage

If Service Center is closed to visitors, **download and use this sign.**

Remove out-of-date signs, if needed.

If Service Center is open to limited visitors, **download and use this sign.**

Remove out-of-date signs, if needed.

Signs are available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, and Punjabi.

Email Signature Block

Below is updated language for email signature blocks for Service Center employees to use at your discretion.

If Service Center is closed to visitors:

While the [COUNTY] County Service Center is currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, we continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Contact us at [OFFICE NUMBER WITH AREA CODE] to make an appointment.

If Service Center is open to limited visitors:

The Service Center in [NAME] County is now open to limited visitors by appointment only. Our staff also continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Contact us at [OFFICE NUMBER WITH AREA CODE] to make an in-person or phone appointment.



Voicemail

Below is updated language for voicemail recordings for Service Center employees.

If Service Center is closed to visitors:

You have reached the [COUNTY] County Service Center. While we are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, we continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Please leave a message, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

If Service Center is open to limited visitors:

You have reached the [COUNTY] County Service Center. We are now open to limited visitors by appointment only. Our staff is also available to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Please leave a message, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

County-level Bulletin

Below is an article that can be used for Service Centers closed to visitors, either as a reminder article, or if the office opened to visitors, but then closed again.

Subject Line/ Title: [NAME] County Service Center Currently Closed to Visitors

Body Text: The Service Center in [NAME] County is currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, but Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools.

To make a phone appointment, call XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Below is an article that can be used for Service Centers open to limited visitors. This can be used to signal the reopening.

Subject Line/ Title: [NAME] County Service Center Reopening to Limited Visitors

Body Text: The Service Center in [NAME] County is now open to limited visitors by appointment only. Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff also continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools.

To make an in-person or phone appointment, call XXX-XXX-XXXX.



Talking Points

- The safety of our staff is our top priority. We have a responsibility as an employer, a service provider to the public, and manager of federal recreation sites to ensure the safety of our employees, contractors and the public. That's why wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance, and making sure our workers have access to PPE are all essential.
- USDA has developed a detailed, data-driven COVID workplace safety plan that prioritizes the health and safety of our federal employees and contractors—whether they work in offices or out in the field, in food processing plants or in our labs—as well as their communities, families, and loved ones.
- As part of this strategy, USDA is allowing some Service Centers to have limited visitors by appointment only.
- Visits to USDA Service Centers must be conducted in a safe manner and focus heavily on protecting both employees and customers through proper physical distancing, mask wearing, and cleaning.
- While some of our Service Centers are open to limited visitors, we will continue to work with producers through phone, email, and online tools.
- We have several virtual tools, including Microsoft Teams, to enable face-to-face meetings and Box and OneSpan to enable sharing and signing of documents.
- We value highly the in-person work that we do with our customers, and we look forward to when we can resume at 100% capacity. In the meantime, we will use phone, email, and online tools to ensure we are meeting our customers' needs.



Pre-Decisional and Deliberative Process Privilege

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
COVID-19 Vaccinations
April 9, 2021**

On December 16, 2020, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) posted an updated and expanded technical assistance publication addressing questions related to COVID-19 vaccinations. The publication, "[What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)," now includes a new section providing information to employers and employees about how a COVID-19 vaccination interacts with the legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA).

On April 2, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>. On April 5, 2021, USDA published an updated version of its Workplace Safety Plan at <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus/workplacesafetyplan>.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are designed to provide interim guidance to assist Pandemic Coordinators and management in complying with the EEOC and CDC guidance as it pertains to vaccinations while we await further guidance from the White House Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce.

1) May a USDA manager require an employee to get a COVID vaccine?

No. COVID vaccinations are under emergency use authorization and may not be mandated by USDA supervisors at this time.

2) May a USDA manager confidentially ask an employee if the employee voluntarily received a COVID vaccine?

Yes. A manager may ask an employee confidentially if the employee voluntarily received a COVID vaccine if the request is connected to the specific issue of whether the employee may follow the CDC's April 2, 2021 Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People while in the workplace. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.

3) May a USDA manager require an employee to furnish written or electronic proof of receipt of a COVID-19 vaccination?

No. While, the EEOC's position is that employers may require an employee to furnish proof of receipt of a COVID-19 vaccination, USDA is awaiting further guidance from the White



House Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce on the collection of proof of vaccination.

Currently, USDA managers should not demand written or electronic proof of vaccination from employees. For those employees that voluntarily disclose, managers may document that the employee is vaccinated and the date(s) of those vaccinations. Managers must maintain that documentation in a separate and secure location outside of the employee's personnel files. Employees who decide not to receive the COVID vaccination or who refuse to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status must continue to follow CDC guidance for non-vaccinated individuals while in the workplace.

4) Are fully vaccinated employees required to comply with USDA's Safety Plan's mask requirements?

Yes. Executive Order 14003's mask mandate requirement remains in effect. Therefore, the masking requirements within USDA's Safety Plan and agency tailored plans also remain in effect.

5) May a USDA manager ask follow-up questions after learning an employee's vaccination status?

It depends. Asking whether an employee has voluntarily received a COVID vaccine, without requesting medical information, is generally permitted because it does not cross the line into a disability-related inquiry. Asking for the date or dates that the COVID vaccine was administered is also permitted because it does not constitute a disability-related inquiry. However, follow-up questions about why an employee did or did not receive a vaccine may improperly elicit disability-related information.

The EEOC cautions that if an employer asks about an employee's vaccination status, the employer may want to warn the employee not to provide any medical information as part of the proof in order to avoid implicating the ADA, Section 501, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA).

6) Does the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act apply to COVID-19 vaccines?

No. The EEOC guidance clarifies that the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) does not apply. The current COVID-19 vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. Because the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has explained that mRNA vaccines "do not interact with our DNA in any way," the EEOC concluded that requiring employees to receive an mRNA vaccination is not prohibited or governed by GINA.

This situation remains fluid and flexible and is not intended as fact-specific guidance. As such, please contact USDA's Senior Advisor for COVID Dr. Sara Bleich at Sara.Bleich@usda.gov or 202-997-2178 or Assistant General Counsel Emily Tasman at Emily.Tasman@usda.gov or (202) 720-6056 for assistance.

FPAC FACILITIES COVID-19 SCREENING

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY

**PLEASE CIRCLE
THE ANSWER
THAT APPLIES
TO YOU**

Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

YES

NO

Have you been in close physical contact in the last 14 days with:

- **Anyone who is known to have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19?**
- OR
- **Anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?**

YES

NO

Close physical contact is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected/symptomatic person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 48 hours before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic individuals, 48 hours prior to test specimen collection).

IMPORTANT: ANSWER "NO" IF YOU ARE FULLY VACCINATED

Are you isolating or quarantining because you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?

YES

NO

Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?

YES

NO

IMPORTANT: ANSWER "NO" IF YOU ARE WAITING ON THE RESULTS OF A PRE-TRAVEL COVID-19 TEST

Have you traveled in the past 10 days?

Travel is defined as any trip that is overnight AND on public transportation (plane, train, bus, Uber, Lyft, cab, etc.) OR any trip that is overnight AND with people who are not in your household.

YES

NO

Did you answer NO to ALL QUESTIONS?

YOU MAY ENTER

Did you answer YES to ANY QUESTION?

PLEASE DO NOT ENTER