

NARA Notice 2020-124: New Procedures to Respond to COVID-19



Notice

To: All Employees.

Attention supervisors: If you have employees who do not have access to a computer, please ensure that those employees receive a copy of this notice. This includes employees on LWOP or paid leave.

This message communicates changes in NARA policy that are necessary to protect the health and safety of staff in the NARA workplace and to prepare for the future reopening of NARA facilities. These changes are effective immediately and until further notice.

Social Distancing

The most effective ways to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace are the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, and good personal hygiene. Effective immediately, all NARA staff and contractors must use PPE and social distancing procedures while in NARA facilities. (Our buildings are currently closed to the public. NARA will provide PPE and social distancing procedures for public visitors when we prepare to reopen to the public.)

The attached documents outline mandatory procedures for all occupants of NARA facilities and provide additional procedures for use in transfer and disposition work in the Federal Records Centers Program and in Research Services records move activities. The most critical requirements from the attached documents are listed below.

- **NARA employees must wear appropriate face coverings at all times in NARA facilities, except when alone in a private office, cubicle, processing space, or stack space and no one else is within 6 feet.** "Appropriate" face coverings cover the nose and mouth, do not have an exhaust valve or vent, and do not have offensive words, images, or logos. NARA will provide all staff with a supply of reusable face coverings and staff are also permitted to wear their own face coverings, provided that they meet NARA's definition of "appropriate" face coverings.
- **Employees must remain at least 6 feet apart and avoid gatherings except when absolutely necessary.** NARA managers and supervisors will batch and assign work so that it can be safely performed while maintaining appropriate distancing. All meetings and conferences must be virtual, including meetings of on-site employees. No more than two employees are permitted at one time in elevators and restrooms. We will apply floor markings and provide other procedures where needed, to help employees maintain appropriate distancing in hallways, aisles, and other narrow spaces.
- **Staff must wipe down door handles, copiers, ladders, streamliners, and other common equipment before and after each usage with disinfectant wipes.** NARA will provide all staff with

disinfectant wipes and sprays to use when disinfecting their workspace and equipment. NARA will also provide staff with disposable gloves. Currently, staff are not required to wear gloves; however, we strongly encourage you to use the gloves provided and wash your hands frequently.

- **Do not come to work if you feel sick.** We have revised our policies on leave and telework to ensure that we are encouraging staff to stay home when they are sick. We recently released [guidance to allow staff to use Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\) emergency paid sick leave](#), and we have updated our COVID-19 Fact Sheet #1 (attached) to provide the maximum leave and telework flexibilities available within law and regulation.

Please review the attachments to ensure you are familiar with all NARA social distancing requirements.

Contact Tracing

NARA is committed to protecting staff from workplace exposure to COVID-19 while maintaining the privacy of impacted staff. NARA has established contact tracing procedures to take timely and appropriate action when an employee or contractor reports she or he has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or has had close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes) with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. The attached COVID-19 Fact Sheet #8, Contact tracing procedure, establishes the actions that NARA will take when we are made aware of a sick or exposed person in the workplace. The key steps in our procedure are listed below.

- **Determine the scope of the potential exposure.** When an individual first reports her or his diagnosis, illness, or close contact, the supervisor who receives the call will ask for information on when the individual was last in the facility, where she or he worked, and who she or he had close contact with. ***All information must be treated as personally identifiable information and protected from inadvertent disclosure.***
- **Keep sick and exposed individuals at home.** An individual who reports a diagnosis, illness, or close contact will be kept on home isolation for the longer of: 14 calendar days OR until the individual has recovered from symptoms for 72 hours and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. The attached COVID-19 Fact Sheet #1, Workplace flexibilities, has been revised to ensure asymptomatic (healthy) employees are not charged personal leave when they are placed on home isolation. Employees must use sick or other personal leave when they are experiencing symptoms.
- **Clean the facility to limit potential spread.** If the individual has been in the facility in the past 14 calendar days, NARA will close off areas where the individual worked including, if applicable, records storage areas. All high-touch areas will be disinfected, workspaces will be deep cleaned using established criteria, and any boxes (or individual folders or records) that the individual worked with will be unavailable (closed) to staff for five calendar days.
- **Notify staff of a potential exposure and place exposed individuals on home isolation.** If the individual has been in the facility in any of the past 14 calendar days, NARA will notify all other staff and contractors who were in the facility in the past 14 days. If the individual was in the facility in the 48 hours before being diagnosed, experiencing symptoms, or having close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, any staff or contractors who were in close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes) with the individual will be placed on 14-day home isolation. All notifications will protect the identity of the sick or exposed person.
- **Report the incident.** All incidents and NARA's response must be reported to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (NEEO). NEEO will maintain all records related to the incident and the response in order to help ensure the confidentiality of all employee and contractor health information collected as a result of this procedure.

Local Procedures

The [Designated Official](#) at each NARA facility is working with local managers and supervisors and local health and safety committee members to develop facility-specific procedures for social distancing and contact tracing. Local procedures will implement NARA-wide requirements in a way that makes sense for the specific facility layout and local conditions. Once approved, local procedures will be communicated to staff and contractors before (where practical) or at the time the employee first reports to her or his facility.

NARA is implementing these changes to ensure that NARA employees are protected from potential exposure when they return to the NARA workplace. These procedures apply to NARA staff who are temporarily recalled during the continued COVID-19 facility closures and will remain in effect when NARA facilities begin phased reopening.

Everyone has an opportunity to contribute to a safe and healthy workplace. Wearing PPE, practicing social distancing and good personal hygiene, and staying home when you are sick are the most effective ways that you can protect your health and the health of your colleagues. Please review and follow the procedures outlined in this notice and the attachments to help keep NARA facilities safe for all occupants.

Thank you for your cooperation.

[Micah Cheatham](#)

Chief of Management and Administration

Attachments:

- [NARA social distancing procedure](#)
- [FRCP social distancing procedure_shelving transfers](#)
- [FRCP social distancing procedure_disposition](#)
- [R social distancing procedure_records moves](#)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet #1, version 3: Workplace flexibilities](#)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet #8: Contact tracing procedure](#)

If you have questions about this notice, contact:

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