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## NARA Notice 2021-020: Updated Procedures to Respond to COVID-19

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Thu, Oct 29, 2020



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.

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This message communicates important updates to our guidance for closing NARA facilities due to COVID-19 and contact tracing. This notice also transmits administrative guidance to support the ongoing deployment of laptops and tablets. These changes are effective immediately and until further notice.

### Regression procedures

NARA has substantially revised our procedures for closing a facility due to COVID-19 or regressing to an earlier phase in our [Phased Reopening Plan](#). We are releasing a new version of COVID-19 Fact Sheet #4, with the new title “Regression Procedures.” These procedures have already been used in recent facility closures at Fort Worth and the Hoover and Eisenhower Libraries. Although most responsibilities are assigned to local Designated Officials, it is important that all employees are aware of the circumstances that would trigger a closure or regression and the actions NARA will take if a closure or regression is authorized.

The conditions that will trigger a closure or regression are the same conditions we have been using since August, which we first announced in [NARA Notice 2020-163](#). To date, we have only ever had to address deteriorating public health conditions in Phase One facilities, where closure was the only option. We have not yet established criteria for deciding whether to regress a facility or completely close it when local public health conditions deteriorate and the facility is in Phase Two or Three. For now, we will make that decision on a case-by-case basis, based on available guidance and local conditions. Please note that the attached procedures only cover closures due to COVID-19 and that facility closures for other reasons, such as inclement weather, may continue under pre-COVID procedures. Please review the attached [Fact Sheet #4.2, Regression Procedures](#), to ensure you are familiar with NARA facility regression and closure procedures.

### Contact tracing

NARA is committed to protecting staff from workplace exposure to COVID-19. Recent changes in guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have required us to update [COVID-19 Fact Sheet #8, Contact Tracing Procedure](#). The latest version of NARA contact tracing guidance includes two changes:

- [Close contact](#). We have updated our guidance to incorporate CDC’s new definition of a “[close contact](#)” for identifying potential workplace exposures to COVID-19. Under our new guidance, a close contact has occurred when someone is within 6 feet of a sick person for a *cumulative total* of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. This may include one continuous exposure lasting longer than 15 minutes, or several shorter exposures that, in total, add up to more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period.
- [Home isolation vs. quarantine](#). We have also modified our procedures to incorporate CDC’s distinctions between [home isolation](#), which is for sick people, and [quarantine](#), which is for people who have been potentially exposed. When a NARA employee or contractor is diagnosed with COVID-19 or experiences symptoms, that person will be placed on home isolation for a minimum of 10 calendar days, which is consistent with our previous procedure. However, when a NARA employee or contractor has come into close contact with a sick person, inside or outside of a NARA facility, the employee or contractor will now be *quarantined* for a minimum period of *14 calendar days* after her or his last contact with the sick person.

Please review the attached [Fact Sheet #8.4, Contact Tracing Procedure](#) to ensure you are familiar with NARA facility regression and closure procedures.

## Laptop and tablet deployment

NARA is issuing laptops or tablets to all employees. As announced in [NARA Notice 2020-099](#), NARA received congressional appropriations to purchase laptops and tablets for all employees. Information Services is currently deploying laptops to employees funded by the Operating Expenses appropriation, following the procedures described in [NARA Notice 2020-183](#). Information Services has ordered additional laptops for employees in the Federal Records Centers Program (FRCP) and will deploy those laptops when they are received. Information Services is also deploying a limited number of tablets to selected employees in the FRCP and Research Services, as a pilot program to test the use of tablets for remote work.

The attached [COVID-19 Fact Sheet #10, Laptop and Tablet Deployment](#), provides guidance on several administrative matters related to the deployment of laptops and tablets. Key points in this fact sheet include:

- [Laptops and tablets are mandatory](#). NARA will issue a laptop or tablet to every NARA employee. Employees do not have the option to decline receiving a laptop or tablet. Employees must make every effort to schedule a deployment appointment when contacted and to attend their appointment when scheduled.
- [Reasonable accommodations](#). Employees with a reasonable accommodation that allows for full-time telework or weather and safety leave are required to return to a NARA facility to receive a laptop or tablet. Additional accommodations may be available for the deployment appointment, upon request (contacts are provided in the fact sheet). After receiving a laptop or tablet, employees with a COVID-19 reasonable accommodation must review their accommodation with their supervisor to determine whether a new or revised accommodation is required.
- [Employees must have their PIV card and remember their eight-digit PIN](#). In order to receive a laptop or tablet, the employee's Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card must have a valid certificate and their card must not be expired. Employees must also know their eight-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) associated with the card. Employees who have forgotten their PIN or have an expired or expiring PIV certificate or card must contact their PIV point of contact (provided in the fact sheet) *before* scheduling their laptop deployment appointment.
- [Returning to the worksite for deployment](#). Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of weather and safety leave (pay code 061) for travel time to and from the work site on the day of the laptop or tablet deployment (up to two hours total). Employees will not be reimbursed for travel costs, except for employees who are required to report to a facility that is not their official duty station to receive a laptop or tablet. All travel requests must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and NARA travel policy and receive appropriate approvals in advance.
- [Telework is mandatory](#). Once an employee has been issued a laptop or tablet, she or he is required to telework. The only exception is that weather and safety leave may be used when the employee's device or internet service fails, or if no telework-appropriate work is available. Employees who do not already have a telework agreement must complete telework training in the Learning Management System and complete a [COVID-19 telework agreement](#) as soon as possible after receiving a laptop or tablet. Staff may complete the training and telework agreement remotely.

If you or your staff are scheduled to receive a laptop or tablet, please ensure you review the attached [Fact Sheet #10, Laptop and Tablet Deployment](#) so that you are familiar with all requirements and procedures.

NARA is implementing these changes to ensure that we can continue agency operations under a wide range of possible scenarios. The guidance issued today will allow us to continue reopening facilities where it is safe, rapidly regress or close facilities when necessary, and continue to fulfill NARA's mission remotely for the duration of the pandemic. Please review the procedures outlined in this notice and the attached fact sheets to help keep yourself and your co-workers safe and ready to work, regardless of the circumstances.

Thank you for your cooperation.

MICAH CHEATHAM  
Chief of Management and Administration

Attachments:

- COVID-19 Fact Sheet #4, version 2: Regression Procedure
  - COVID-19 Fact Sheet #8, version 4: Contact Tracing Procedure
  - COVID-19 Fact Sheet #10: Laptop and Tablet Deployment
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**If you have questions about this notice, contact:**

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