



NARA COVID-19 Response

Fact Sheet #2, version 3: Visitors to NARA research rooms, museums, and public spaces

March 16, 2020

This fact sheet provides guidance to help protect NARA staff and reduce the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the workplace. This version has been updated to clarify and revise the procedure for denying access to NARA facilities.

No contact policy.

NARA has established a “no physical contact” policy in all research rooms, museums, and public spaces. Staff and visitors are prohibited from person-to-person physical contact, in order to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 in NARA facilities.

All NARA staff who interact with the public must avoid person-to-person physical contact with visitors or other staff in public areas. If you are offered a handshake or other attempted contact from a visitor, do not make contact and instead remind the visitor of NARA’s “no physical contact” policy.

NARA has posted signs at the entry to all public spaces informing visitors of our “no physical contact” policy and notifying them that NARA staff will not reciprocate their attempted contacts.

Masks.

Visitors are permitted to wear respirators and surgical or other protective masks in NARA facilities. A visitor may be required to briefly lower or remove a protective mask in order to verify her or his identity when entering a NARA facility or research room, or when getting their picture taken for a NARA-issued researcher card.

NARA employees may not require a visitor to wear a protective mask. If a visitor demonstrates symptoms of respiratory illness, the Designated Official may deny access to the facility, following the procedures below.

NARA will not supply protective masks for visitors. NARA facilities that supply *dust masks* for researchers working with dusty records can continue to do so, on request. NARA will not supply visitors with masks for the purpose of protecting them from a respiratory illness.

Denying access to NARA facilities and property.

The [Designated Official](#) for your facility (or, in her or his absence, a designee) can deny access to NARA facilities to a visitor who: (a) demonstrates obvious signs of respiratory illness; and (b) does not offer an alternative explanation for her or his symptoms. In Washington, DC, and College Park, MD, the Research Room Branch Chief, the Director of the Museum Programs Division, and personnel from the Security Management Division (BX) have the authority assigned to the Designated Official below.

Obvious signs of respiratory illness, in this case, means persistent cough or sneezing, wheezing, or producing large amounts of mucus or phlegm. *Staff should be mindful that similar symptoms may be caused by seasonal allergies, dust, or injury, or other reasons that are not illness or disease.* Staff should not deny access to visitors who say their symptoms are caused by something other than respiratory illness.

This policy does not permit discrimination and cannot be used to discriminate against individuals based on race, nationality, ethnic origin, travel status, or other factors. Before exercising this authority, the Designated Official must review CDC guidance on [Stigma Related to COVID-19](#) and must post the following CDC infographic in a prominent place within the facility: [Share Facts, Stop Fear](#).

If you suspect that a visitor has a flu-like illness which could impact the health of employees or other occupants of NARA facilities, follow the below guidelines to address the visitor in a way that avoids the perception of discrimination.

Procedure:

1. Staff or security guards who observe obvious signs of respiratory illness in a visitor should contact their Designated Official immediately.
2. The Designated Official will contact the visitor or assign a staff member or security guard to contact the visitor to ask, “Are you experiencing a flu-like illness?” (Yes or no.)



If the visitor answers, “No”, let them continue with their business with NARA. If the visitor responds, “Yes”, proceed to step 3.

3. If a follow-up question is required, the Designated Official (or designee) may ask, “Are you experiencing any flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, **and** have you been in close contact with a person known to have coronavirus/COVID-19 or do you live in or have you recently been in an area with ongoing spread of coronavirus/COVID-19?” (Yes or no.)



If the visitor answers, “No”, let them continue with their business with NARA. If the visitor responds, “Yes”, proceed to step 4.

4. The Designated Official will deny access to a visitor who answers "Yes" to either question (2 or 3, above) regardless of whether the visitor wears a mask or offers to put one on.
5. Only the Designated Official (or designee) can deny access to a visitor under this procedure. If the Designated Official denies access to a visitor, the Designated Official or assigned staff will ask the visitor to leave. If the visitor refuses to leave, the Designated Official or assigned staff will remove the visitor following the procedures in [NARA 1604, Supplement 1](#), *How to Handle Threats and Misconduct in Research Rooms*.

If the visitor refuse to comply, the Designated Official or assigned staff will inform the visitor that she or he will be trespassing and security staff or law enforcement will be contacted to assist in their departure from the facility. Any other belligerent or abusive action by the visitor will also be addressed by security staff or law enforcement as appropriate in accordance with 36 CFR §§ 1280.32 and 1280.34.

6. If the Designated Official denies access to a visitor, the Designated Official will immediately notify the appropriate Executive and the Security Management Division. The Designated Official will maintain a log of all visitors who are denied access, including the visitor's name (if known), date and time of the event, and a brief description of all interactions with the visitor.

Point of Contact: If you have questions or comments, please contact the Security Management Division (BX) at safety@nara.gov.