
REISSUE NARA Notice 2021-078: Update to NARA Policy on Face Coverings and Physical Distancing to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Wed, Feb 3, 2021



[This notice was originally published February 2, 2021. Since then, the CDC has revised its travel guidance. Currently, the CDC recommends testing and quarantine after all domestic and international travel. The following message has been updated to reflect the latest CDC guidance. This notice reflects NARA's current policy for post-travel testing and quarantine, and supersedes the previous version. All other policies described below are current and in effect.]

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 announces changes in NARA's COVID-19 policies that are necessary to implement [Executive Order 13991](#), Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum [M-21-15](#), COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles. The following changes are effective immediately.

All NARA employees, contractors, and visitors must wear appropriate face coverings (no valve or vent) over their nose and mouth at all times in NARA facilities. Face coverings may be removed only:

- (a) when an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls and a closed door;
- (b) when an individual is working alone in a records storage space (FRC stack or archival bay); or
- (c) for a limited time when eating or drinking and while maintaining a minimum of six feet of physical distancing from others.

Where feasible, managers and supervisors will schedule only one employee to work in a records storage area each day, so that staff can safely remove their masks, if needed. In addition, appropriate face coverings must be worn on NARA grounds (outdoors) in locations or under circumstances where physical distancing is not possible. Staff are no longer permitted to remove face coverings when alone in a cubicle, stack area, or processing space. Updated social distancing procedures are attached to this notice and will be posted to the ICN.

All NARA facilities are limited to a maximum occupancy of no more than 25 percent of normal (pre-COVID) occupancy. This change does not impact facilities in Phase 0 or Phase 1 of NARA's reopening plan. NARA facilities that are currently in Phase 2 have already cancelled any scheduled work that would increase their capacity above 25 percent and will maintain that level until additional guidance is provided. We will continue to progress and regress facilities through our

Phased Reopening Plan using the local public health standards first announced in [NARA Notice 2020-163](#); however, any facilities that progress to Phase 2 will be authorized to recall no more than 25 percent of staff to the facility at one time. We have updated our Phased Reopening Plan (attached and on the ICN) to reflect this change.

All NARA employees must follow [CDC guidance](#) for actions to take before, during, and after travel, for all personal and official business travel. All NARA employees must: carefully assess travel risk prior to travel, wear a mask during all portions of a trip, maintain physical distance from non-household members, maintain good hand hygiene, and quarantine after higher-risk travel. Official business travel remains restricted to mission-essential travel, as provided in NARA Notice 2020-071.

NARA employees must quarantine after all official business travel or personal travel. Employees who engage in official business or personal travel must quarantine for 10 calendar days after travel, unless they take a COVID test. Staff who take a COVID test three to five days after returning from travel may return to work seven days after returning from travel if they experience no symptoms, regardless of the test results. Staff who are scheduled to work on-site during their quarantine period must take personal leave; staff who are not scheduled to work on-site and have no symptoms may telework or take weather and safety leave, according to their normal work arrangements. Staff who experience COVID symptoms after travel must take personal leave.

If you need support or assistance coping with the stress of the pandemic, please take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP services are free, confidential, and available to all NARA employees, supervisors, and family members. EAP counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by telephone 24/7 at 1-800-222-0364 (TTY 1-888-262-7848) or online at www.FOH4YOU.com. EAP information can also be found at the [NARA@work EAP](#) page.

NARA is taking these actions to protect our workforce and implement government-wide guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We expect that the Administration will continue to issue guidance to promote a safe federal workplace in the near future. We will provide you with updates and additional information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

MICAH M. CHEATHAM
Chief of Management and Administration

Attachments:

[NARA Phase Reopening Plan, updated February 2, 2021](#)
[NARA Social Distancing Procedure](#)
[FRCP Social Distancing Procedure for Shelving Transfers](#)
[FRCP Social Distancing Procedure for Dispositions](#)
[Research Services Social Distancing Procedure for Records Moves](#)

If you have questions about this notice, contact:

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