
NARA Notice 2024-082: New Workplace Safety Plan for Respiratory Viral Illnesses and Changes in COVID-19 Leave Policy

May 7, 2024



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 NARA's new Workplace Safety Plan for respiratory viral illnesses and changes in our COVID-19 leave policy.

Workplace Safety Plan

NARA's new workplace safety plan for respiratory viral illnesses establishes our safety protocols for preventing the spread of respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Our new workplace safety plan is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [core prevention strategies](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory viral illnesses. The CDC's core prevention strategies replace their previous guidance on COVID-19. In addition, the Administration has rescinded their guidance to agencies related to COVID-19. NARA's workplace safety plan for respiratory viral illnesses replaces the prior COVID-19 workplace safety plan in alignment with these updates.

Under our new workplace safety plan, NARA will continue to take the following actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viral illnesses:

- Encourage employees to stay home and use personal leave when sick.
- Allow visitors and staff to wear face coverings on a voluntary basis in our facilities.
- Use MERV 13 or higher filters throughout our buildings.
- Set HVAC systems to bring in the maximum intake of outside air.
- Deploy portable HEPA filtration units, as needed, to areas of our facilities with limited air circulation.
- Stock restrooms with soap and ensure an adequate stock of paper towels and/or hand drying devices.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations throughout our facilities and keep them filled.
- Regularly clean frequently-touched surfaces in our facilities.

Effective immediately, NARA has discontinued the specific COVID-19 workplace safety protocols that are no longer supported by Administration policy or CDC guidance.

We will *not*:

- Require face coverings in our facilities at any COVID-19 hospital admission level.
- Post signage related to COVID-19 in our facilities.
- Change workplace safety protocols based on COVID-19 hospital admission levels or other local public health metrics.
- Track and report local public health metrics. Employees can continue to monitor their local public health metrics on [CDC's respiratory illness tracker](#).
- Collect information on close contacts in the event of a potential on-site exposure and will not notify close contacts or building occupants in the event of a potential on-site exposure.
- Provide deep cleaning or disinfection of impacted space if a person with COVID-19 has been in the building.

These changes are being made to implement [Executive Order 14122, COVID-19 and Public Health Preparedness and Response](#), which rescinded previous COVID-19 guidance and abolished the White House Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Memorandum 24-12, Updated Guidance Regarding COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace](#), which rescinded OMB agency model safety principles. Under M-24-12, agencies are still required to maintain a workplace safety plan; however, those plans are no longer required to follow the model safety principles, Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, or other rescinded COVID-19 directives.

Change in Leave Policy

Effective immediately, employees may no longer use administrative leave to assist a family member in getting a COVID-19 vaccine, when an employee has an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, or when an employee has COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a COVID-19 test. Employees must use sick leave or other (paid or unpaid) leave for these absences.

Employees may continue to use administrative leave if they choose to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine for themselves. Vaccine-related administrative leave is available only for time necessary to travel to the vaccination site, obtain a vaccine dose, and return to the work site, up to four hours. Vaccine-related administrative leave must be requested and approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. An employee who uses more than four hours to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine must submit a written explanation to their supervisor. Supervisors may disapprove a request for time in excess of four hours if delays are caused by reasons that are within the employee's control.

Employees must stay home if they are sick. CDC now recommends that individuals stay home if they have respiratory virus symptoms. CDC recommends individuals stay home until their symptoms are improving and they have not had a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine) for at least 24 hours. Employees must use sick leave or other (paid or unpaid) leave to stay home when they are sick.

Weather and safety leave is no longer available for any purpose related to COVID-19. Previously, NARA allowed employees who had tested positive for COVID-19 but did not experience symptoms and did not have telework-appropriate work to use weather and safety leave. However, because the CDC no longer recommends that individuals isolate without symptoms, weather and safety leave is no longer available for this purpose.

These changes are being made to implement new guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in [Compensation Policy Memorandum \(CPM\) 2024-08, Leave Policies Related to COVID-19 Vaccinations and Boosters for Federal Employees](#).

NARA Guidance Documents

NARA's COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan is cancelled. The following additional guidance documents are also now cancelled:

- NARA COVID-19 Fact Sheet #1, Leave and workforce flexibilities,
- NARA COVID-19 Fact Sheet #8, Isolation and post-exposure protocols,
- COVID-19 Fact Sheet #9, Health screening, and
- COVID-19 Fact Sheet #12, Agency testing program.

COVID-19 Fact Sheet #6, which provides electronic exit clearance procedures, remains in effect until we can incorporate the procedure into NARA policy.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

MICAH CHEATHAM
Chief of Management and Administration

Attachment:
NARA Workplace Safety Plan for Respiratory Viral Illnesses

If you have questions about this notice, contact:

Micah Cheatham, Chief of Management and Administration
micah.cheatham@nara.gov
Room: 5200
National Archives at College Park
Phone: 301-837-2992