

Federal Election Commission Workplace Safety Plan for Respiratory Viruses

I. Purpose

The health and safety of all Federal Election Commission (FEC or “the Agency”) employees continues to be an ongoing priority for the Agency. Pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) Memorandum M-24-12, “Updated Guidance Regarding COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles and COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plans,”¹ this Workplace Safety Plan (“Plan”) has been developed to support the ongoing and longer-term federal efforts to maintain a safe and healthy federal workplace and ensure future preparedness, consistent with Executive Order 14122, “COVID-19 and Public Health Preparedness and Response”² and relevant guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding respiratory viruses. The Plan provides minimum mandatory safety guidance for respiratory illnesses in the workplace in accordance with the aforementioned guidance and supersedes previous versions of the Agency’s “FEC COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan.” To protect FEC employees, contractors, and visitors from respiratory illness, the Agency will follow the health and safety protocols and procedures outlined in this Plan.

II. Coordination Teams

The Office of the Staff Director (OSD) will serve as the lead, as needed, for planning, response, and management regarding respiratory illnesses as they relate to the protection of the FEC workforce and those with whom we come into contact. OSD may constitute a Coordination Team (Team), if and as needed, to serve in an advisory role to the Commission in resolving matters that are crucial to the development and implementation of safety guidelines and supplemental guidance. Where appropriate, the Team may consult with other federal agencies, including OPM, OMB, CDC, and the General Service Administration (GSA). The Team may form subgroups, or workgroups, with representatives from other offices in the Agency to help support and inform the work of the Team.

During periods of time when enhanced safety protocols are required, OSD and the Team, if constituted, will be responsible for communicating with FEC employees and implementing any required protocols and/or training.

III. Health and Safety Standards for Respiratory Illnesses

a. CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance

The CDC evaluates the ongoing threat of respiratory viruses by monitoring key drivers and indicators such as the availability of protective tools (e.g., vaccines and treatments), the

¹ [M-24-12-Regarding-COVID-19-Safe-Federal-Workplace.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

² [Federal Register: COVID-19 and Public Health Preparedness and Response](#)

effectiveness of those tools, the level of population immunity, and cases of hospitalization and death.³ The CDC maintains guidance, including Respiratory Virus Guidance, as a result of this evaluation.⁴ The CDC guidance covers most common respiratory illnesses that cause significant amounts of disease, including COVID-19, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).⁵

The FEC will follow the CDC's guidance regarding handling respiratory viruses in the workplace, to the extent practicable and allowable by law, including:

- What to do if you have a respiratory virus,
- When you can resume your normal activities,
- Additional precautions you need to take when resuming your normal activities, and
- Special considerations for people with certain risk factors for severe illness.

b. Sick Leave and Medical Telework

In general, employees who are sick are advised to stay home. If you are sick, you can use accrued sick leave or other leave to account for that time or, if you feel well enough to work, request Medical Telework pursuant to the applicable workplace flexibilities program available for use by bargaining unit or non-bargaining unit employees.

c. Administrative Leave for COVID-19 Vaccinations

Pursuant to OPM's guidance in CPM 2024-08,⁶ employees may be granted up to 4 hours of administrative leave to receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine dose, as recommended by the CDC. This leave can be used to travel to and from the vaccination site. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccination, only the needed amount of administrative leave will be granted. Employees must obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using administrative leave for the purpose of getting a COVID-19 vaccine. A supervisor retains the ability to approve leave during a time period that will not unduly interfere with work requirements. Employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside of their tour of duty getting a COVID-19 vaccine.⁷

d. Other Safety Measures

As the landscape changes regarding respiratory viruses, the Agency may enact additional safety protocols pursuant to guidance from the CDC and other federal agencies such as OMB, OPM,

³ [Background for CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance | Respiratory Illnesses | CDC](#)

⁴ [Respiratory Virus Guidance \(cdc.gov\)](#)

⁵ The guidance may not apply in certain outbreak situations where more specific guidance may be needed.

⁶ [Leave policies related to COVID-19 Vaccinations and Boosters for Federal Employees | CHCOC](#)

⁷ OPM has determined that it is no longer warranted to provide administrative leave to assist a family member in getting a COVID-19 vaccine, an employee experiencing an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, or when an employee has COVID-19 symptoms and is isolating while actively seeking to be tested. Upon an employee's request, supervisors may approve sick leave for these circumstances. Employees may also choose to seek approval to use other paid or unpaid time off in lieu of sick leave.

and GSA, as appropriate, in addition to the general safety protocols outlined in Section IV, “General Safety Protocols,” of this Plan.

e. Safety Training

All FEC employees must review and familiarize themselves with this Workplace Safety Plan. In addition, employees may also be required to complete mandatory safety trainings in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other requirements, as needed.

f. Confidentiality

Any medical information collected from Agency personnel, including information obtained as a result of implementing respiratory virus guidance, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel and manage respiratory virus procedures.

IV. General Safety Protocols

a. Hygiene

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory viruses, respiratory hygiene should be practiced by everyone.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or mask, or use the inside of your elbow, and then throw the tissue away in the trash and immediately wash your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially if you have been in a public space, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

The Agency has posted signage in FEC space regarding the importance of proper hand washing in protecting themselves from serious illness. Employees should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol if washing with soap and water is not an option. The Agency will stock and refill hand sanitizer dispensers in locations that are readily accessible to employees working onsite.

b. Personal Protective Equipment

The Agency will continue to provide general personal protective equipment, including gloves and face masks, for general use by FEC employees, as needed. During periods of time when face masks are required in the FEC workspaces, employees will follow CDC guidelines regarding types of masks that are acceptable for use. Individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.

Employees who cannot safely wear a face covering or mask due to a health condition should notify their supervisor or contact the Agency's EEO Disability Program Manager so that alternative arrangements or accommodations can be made.

c. Environmental Cleaning

The Agency will provide CDC, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and/or EPA-approved cleaning supplies, including cleaning wipes and spray, for employee use in their own workspaces and in common areas in which they work. These are available upon request to the Administrative Services Division.

d. Elevators

Until further notice, three elevators in the building lobby will be designated for FEC use only. Employees, contractors, and FEC visitors should use these elevators to access the FEC's floors of the building.

V. Compliance

a. Failure to Comply

Employees who fail to comply with the requirements of this Plan may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable Agency policies.

b. Reporting Non-Compliance

Employees may report non-compliance with the Plan, including failure to follow safety protocols, to their first-line supervisor or to the Physical Security Officer.

VI. Questions or Concerns

Employees with questions about this Plan may submit those questions to the Deputy Staff Director for Management and Administration, the Office of Human Resources, or the Administrative Services Division.

Any individual who has questions or concerns about implementation of and compliance with the health and safety measures and general safety protocols set forth in this Plan should submit those questions or concerns to the Physical Security Officer.

Employees with questions about administrative leave for vaccinations, medical telework, or other workplace flexibilities available, as outlined in this Plan, should submit those questions to the Office of Human Resources.

Questions relating to the Agency's treatment of personal medical information in the context of its respiratory illness-related workplace safety protocols should be submitted to the Director of Human Resources.

VII. Modifications to the Workplace Safety Plan

This Plan supersedes any conflicting information in previously published FEC guidance on COVID-19 or respiratory illnesses. It is subject to modification by the Office of the Staff Director or Coordination Team with Commission approval as updated guidance is issued by relevant authorities, including OPM, OMB, GSA, CDC, or Department of Homeland Security (DHS), or as conditions require.

Date	Description of Modifications
August 1, 2024	The FEC’s Workplace Safety Plan was modified to address lowering risk from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, pursuant to CDC guidance and OMB instruction. This Plan supersedes former versions of the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plans. The following COVID-19 programs from prior versions of the Plan are no longer in effect: federal employee vaccination requirements; onsite contractor vaccination requirements; COVID-19 diagnostic and screening testing programs; COVID-19 contact notifications and contact tracing; administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination recovery or accompanying a family member to receive a COVID-19 vaccine; COVID-19-based travel restrictions; quarantine and isolation; workspace occupancy and physical distancing restrictions; visitor restrictions; and restrictions on meetings, events, and conferences. Please note that these programs may be reinstated if and as needed pursuant to guidance from federal entities (e.g., CDC, OMB, OPM, GSA).