



## OSC's COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN (October 2023)

### BACKGROUND AND POLICIES

**OSC's Mission:** The dedication of OSC's employees<sup>1</sup> enabled OSC to continue to successfully fulfill its mission when the Special Counsel instituted precautionary, mandatory telework on March 16, 2020.<sup>2</sup> In May 2022, all HQ employees returned to the office in person at least two days a week.

**The Special Counsel's Priorities:** The health and safety of OSC employees are OSC's top priorities. Accordingly, this Plan describes the steps OSC has undertaken to make our office space as safe as practicable and sets forth the health and safety protocols OSC employees should follow. This Plan has been updated to implement the latest guidance from the CDC, OMB, and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.

We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that this Plan addresses any health and safety concerns you may have at HQ.

**Employee Responsibilities:** Underlying this Plan is OSC's expectation that all employees will use common sense and take responsibility to ensure their own well-being and the safety of their fellow employees. OSC employees recognize that OSC does not employ any medical personnel and employees are responsible for consulting their medical providers as appropriate. Employees are responsible for complying with this Plan's "Policies and Protocols to Promote a Safe and Healthy Workplace."

### VACCINATIONS

**OSC continues to encourage all who can safely get vaccinated against COVID-19 to do so and is offering the use of administrative leave for the time it takes to get all recommended doses/boosters of the COVID-19 vaccination (4 hours leave per shot). OSC also provides administrative leave for employees who have side effects from the vaccine or booster or**

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this Plan, "employee" means any current OSC employee or contractor, including but not limited to OSC temporary employees, interns, volunteers, consultants, and/or other advisors, unless distinctions are noted.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the pandemic, certain OSC employees continued to go into OSC HQ as required by their positions. OSC gratefully acknowledges these workers' contributions.

**need to accompany a family member being vaccinated. Contact HCO for instructions on how to document administrative leave for this purpose in Paycheck8.**

### **TELEWORK AND RETURN TO THE OFFICE**

**Policy:** The Special Counsel recognizes the benefits to employees and the agency of both telework and physical presence in the office. This Plan seeks to enable OSC to optimize a combination of in-office work and telework while following the best available health and safety practices consistent with governmental guidance.

All HQ employees are required to be in the office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Employees may return to HQ more than two days a week.

**Access to OSC's IT Systems:** OSC employees are expected to transport their OSC-provided computer to and from the office to be telework-ready as per Directive 223.

### **POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS TO PROMOTE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE**

**Stay Home to Protect Your Colleagues:** Do not come into the office when you do not feel well.

If you are sick or exhibiting symptoms (whether or not you think they are COVID-19-related), you are to stay home and notify your supervisor. You do not have to work if you are sick (*i.e.*, you may take leave), but you do have the option to telework from home with supervisory approval.

You should not come into the office if you are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or other possible symptoms listed at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

**If You Develop Symptoms While at HQ:** Any employee who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately isolate, wear a surgical or KN95 mask everywhere, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

**Potential Exposure:** If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine at home, but you must:

- Wear a surgical or KN95 mask while indoors at HQ and continue to do so for 10 full days from the date of exposure (day 0 is the day of your last known exposure to someone with COVID-19, and day 1 is the first full day after your exposure);
- Take [extra precautions](#), such as avoiding crowds and physically distancing from others, when you know you will be around others who are [more likely to get very sick](#) from COVID-19 for 10 full days after exposure; and
- Watch for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) for 10 full days after exposure.

**Post-Exposure Testing:** You are required to test for current infection with a [viral test](#) (antigen or PCR) at least 5 full days after your last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6), unless you are not expected in the office during the 10 days following exposure.

- The test can be both self-administered and self-read.
- If you test negative, then continue to follow the above potential exposure precautions for 10 full days from the exposure date.
- If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, then you must follow the protocols on [isolation](#).
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 30 days, and have recovered and remain symptom free, then you do not need to test after a known exposure.
- If you tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 31-90 days and have recovered and remain symptom free, then you should test using a viral antigen test. See [CDC guidance](#).

**Isolation for Individuals with Probable or Confirmed COVID-19:** If you suspect you may have or confirmed you do have COVID-19, do not come into the office. You should follow CDC's guidance on [isolation](#) and monitor your symptoms. This includes employees who have an initial positive diagnostic [viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms, and employees with symptoms of COVID-19, including those who are awaiting test results or have not been tested.

**Returning to the Office After Isolation:** If you have tested positive for COVID-19 and never developed symptoms, you may return to the office after 5 full days following your positive COVID-19 test (day 0 being the day you tested). If you have tested positive for COVID-19 and had symptoms, you may return to the office after 5 full days from the onset of symptoms (day 0 being the day of symptom onset) if you have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms are improving. Note that loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

If you have had moderate illness (experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing), you should not return to the office for a full 10 days. If you had severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system, you should consult your healthcare provider before ending isolation. If you are unsure of the severity of your symptoms or if you have a weakened immune system, you should seek guidance from a healthcare provider.

**Post-Isolation Precautions:** Once you have returned to the office, you must continue to take precautions consistent with CDC guidance for at least 10 full days after your first day of symptoms, or after the date of a positive viral test if you were asymptomatic. These precautions include wearing a surgical or KN95 mask when around others, avoiding eating and drinking around others, avoiding places where you may need to be unmasked around others, and avoiding being around people who you know are at [high risk for severe disease from COVID-19](#).

If you wish to stop wearing a mask earlier, you can do so if you get two sequential negative antigen tests 48 hours apart, starting on day 6. If either of the antigen tests is positive, you should continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean that you would continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

**Leave Options:** If you have depleted your leave, there are options for covering additional absence including OSC's Voluntary Leave Bank Program, OSC's Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, advanced leave, and leave without pay.

**Face Coverings and Physical Distancing at OSC Headquarters:**

Any OSC employee who wishes to wear a mask at any time may do so. ASO has masks available if you are in the office and need one.

When Washington, D.C. and the surrounding local counties are experiencing high COVID-19 hospital admission levels (see the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)), all OSC employees must wear a surgical or KN95 mask while in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicles, and conference rooms). Exceptions to mask-wearing include when an employee is alone in an office or for a limited time when an individual is eating or drinking and maintaining distance from others.

Employees who do not have an office space may reserve conference room space for lunch breaks.

When Washington, D.C. and the surrounding local counties are experiencing low or medium COVID hospital admission levels, mask wearing is optional.

When Washington, D.C. has imposed pandemic-related requirements in addition to those in this Plan, you must follow the stricter of those requirements at OSC HQ.

**Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette:** Employees at OSC offices are expected to practice good respiratory hygiene. This means employees are to cover their nose/mouth with a tissue or mask when coughing or sneezing; to use disposable tissues and discard them after use; and to practice good hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions. See <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>.

**Visitors to OSC:** All visitors to OSC must comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols in this Plan, including mask-wearing when COVID-19 hospital admission levels in Washington, D.C. are high.

**Work Travel:** Federal employees should take CDC's [recommended precautions](#) during travel.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** EAP provides confidential counseling with experienced, licensed counselors, as well as other services, at no charge to you. If you are experiencing emotional or mental stress in these uncertain and unusual times, please call EAP at (800) 222-0364 or visit [www.FOH4you.com](http://www.FOH4you.com).

**Reasonable Accommodation:** If you are an individual with a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance that would conflict with, or a disability that would prevent you from, following any of the policies and protocols in this Plan and wish to request a reasonable accommodation, please follow the relevant procedures in [OSC's Religious Accommodation Policy and Procedures](#) or [Directive 52](#).

**Expiration of Plan:** This Plan expires upon notification by the Special Counsel.