

National Gallery of Art

COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN UPDATE

Context

The Federal Government strongly encourages independent Federal agencies such as the National Gallery of Art (National Gallery or agency) to comply with the requirements of Executive Order 13991 (Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing).¹ Section 2(a) of EO 13991 directs agencies to “immediately take action, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, to require compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by: on-duty or on-site Federal employees; on-site Federal contractors; and all persons in Federal buildings or on Federal lands.” Section 4 of EO 13991 established the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and directs the Task Force to “provide ongoing guidance to heads of agencies on the operation of the Federal Government, the safety of its employees, and the continuity of Government functions during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

To continue to support the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce, the Task Force provided departments and agencies with updated Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles² on September 15, 2022. The updated model safety principles established protocols that agencies must follow to comply with section 2(a) of EO 13991, and protocols that agencies must follow to implement Task Force guidance issued pursuant to EO 13991. The updated safety principles note that “to be consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies would need to incorporate the model COVID-19 safety principles into their existing agency COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and ensure the agency’s updated COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan is posted on a publicly available website, following consultation with the Task Force.”

This Covid-19 Workplace Safety Plan Update is the National Gallery’s current COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. This plan complies with Task Force guidance, incorporates the model COVID-19 safety principles, and supersedes previous National Gallery workplace safety plans. This document is available to National Gallery staff and contractors on connect.nga.gov and to the public on nga.gov.

¹ [Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing - The White House](#)

² [SFWTF_model_agency_safety_principles_20220915.pdf \(saferfederalworkforce.gov\)](#)

Overview

The health and safety of National Gallery staff, contractors, and visitors are of paramount concern for the National Gallery’s executive team.

Overview of National Gallery COVID-19 Safety Protocols by COVID-19 Community Level			
COVID-19 Community Levels measure the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems and inform the appropriate prevention strategies to utilize at a given time. The current COVID-19 Community Level is noted in each Campus Connect email and on the connect.nga.gov homepage.			
COVID-19 Safety Protocols	When COVID-19 Community Level is LOW	When COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM	When COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH
Employee vaccination requirement pursuant to EO 14043	No implementation or enforcement given a nationwide injunction	No implementation or enforcement given a nationwide injunction	No implementation or enforcement given a nationwide injunction
Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must require documentation of vaccination status from employees, and ask about the vaccination status of onsite contractors, and visitors, including personal guests of staff.	Pause, given that COVID-19 safety protocols do not vary by vaccination status at this time	Pause, given that COVID-19 safety protocols do not vary by vaccination status at this time	Pause, given that COVID-19 safety protocols do not vary by vaccination status at this time
Agencies must require all onsite individuals to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) regardless of vaccination status.	No; mask-wearing optional ³	No; mask-wearing optional ³	Yes
Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must require symptom screening self-checks for all individuals prior to entering National Gallery facilities.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agencies must instruct all individuals known to be exposed to COVID-19 to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask), take other post-exposure precautions, and watch for symptoms for 10 full days after exposure, consistent with CDC guidance – instead of at-home quarantine and regardless of vaccination status. Agencies must require that individuals exposed to COVID-19 are tested at least 5 full days (ideally, on or after day 6) after individuals’ last exposures.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agencies must instruct all individuals with probable or confirmed COVID-19 to follow agency isolation protocols and take other precautions consistent with CDC guidance.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must make and maintain improvements to	Yes	Yes	Yes

³ In some on-duty settings, such as during travel, staff must follow the mask-wearing requirements of transportation carriers, local authorities, restaurants, lodging, etc.

indoor ventilation and air filtration to the maximum extent feasible.			
Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must post signage encouraging individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to consider avoiding crowding and physically distancing themselves from others in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings.	No	Yes	Yes
Agencies may consider establishing occupancy limits for indoor common areas and meeting rooms, and high-risk settings.	No	Yes	Yes

Vaccination requirements

In compliance with an applicable nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated depending on the course of ongoing litigation, agencies will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to EO 14043 - Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees.

Vaccination-Related Leave

Supervisors must grant up to 4 hours of administrative leave to staff who seek any non-required dose of FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine or booster during staff’s tours of duty, or who accompany a family member⁴ to get a vaccination or booster during staff’s tours of duty. The administrative leave is for only traveling to the vaccination site, receiving a vaccine dose, and returning to work, and administrative leave for this purpose must be requested and approved in advance.

- If staff needs less time getting a vaccine dose, supervisors may grant only the administrative leave needed.
- Staff must obtain advance approval from their supervisors before using administrative leave for obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine dose.
- Staff may not be credited with administrative leave, compensatory time, or overtime for time spent obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine dose outside their tours of duty.

⁴ As defined in 5 CFR § 630.201, family member means an individual with any of the following relationships to an employee: (1) spouse, and parents thereof; (2) sons and daughters, and spouses thereof; (3) parents, and spouses thereof; (4) brothers and sisters, and spouses thereof; (5) grandparents and grandchildren, and spouses thereof; (6) domestic partner and parents thereof, including domestic partners of any individual in categories (2)-(5) of this definition; and (7) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

Vaccination Documentation and Information

Currently, agencies must pause any efforts to require, request, or collect vaccination status information from any individual – including staff, contractors, and visitors, or in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences – for the purposes of implementing agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.

Agencies must continue to preserve vaccination information previously collected in accordance with the Federal Records Act and other records requirements. Preserving this information is important because COVID-19 workplace safety protocols may change in the future and collecting vaccination information may resume.

Mask-wearing

When COVID-19 Community Level in Washington, DC, is HIGH: Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, agencies must require individuals – including staff, contractors, and visitors who are 2 years old or older – to wear a high-quality mask indoors in National Gallery facilities, regardless of the individuals' vaccination status.

When COVID-19 Community Level in Washington, DC, is LOW or MEDIUM: Nothing in CDC or Task Force guidance precludes individuals from wearing masks.

Signage and Online Notice of Mask-wearing Requirements

Consistent with Task Force guidance –

- The agency must post and update physical signage and online information on agency websites that make clear what mask-wearing requirements currently apply for each agency.
- When COVID-19 Community Level in Washington, DC, is HIGH: The agency must post physical signage and online information on agency websites that all individuals are required to wear high-quality masks or respirators (such as N95 MASK) indoors in National Gallery facilities pursuant to EO 13991.
- When COVID-19 Community Level in Washington, DC, is LOW or MEDIUM: The agency must post physical signage and online information on agency websites that mask-wearing is optional.

Official Travel - General

Currently, there are no Federal Government-wide limits on official travel – local travel and travel conducted under an official travel authorization – regardless of a traveler's vaccination status. National Gallery travelers, including invitational travelers, must follow guidance provided by the National Gallery travel office (ASD-TVL).

The agency must –

- Inform each traveler that CDC recommends that travelers verify that travelers' COVID-19 vaccines are current before travel.
- Recommend that each traveler consider being tested for current infection with a viral test as close to the time of departure as possible (no more than 3 days).

- Instruct each traveler to adhere strictly to CDC guidance for domestic and international travel before, during, and after official travel.
- Instruct each traveler to check the COVID-19 Community Level or equivalent at the traveler's destination before traveling, and to wear high-quality masks or respirators (such as an N95 mask) while on-duty and around others indoors at the destination, if the COVID-19 Community Level or equivalent at the traveler's destination is HIGH.
- Advise travelers to be flexible during travel, as restrictions, policies, and circumstances may change during travel.

Official Travel for Asymptomatic Individuals with Known Exposure

Agencies may approve official travel, consistent with the agency's travel policy for asymptomatic individuals (individuals without COVID-19 symptoms) who have had a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the past 10 days.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, if an individual remains asymptomatic before official travel, then the agency must instruct the individual to, in addition to other standard pre-travel instructions related to COVID-19 –

- Wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 MASK) the entire time on-duty and around others indoors for the full duration of official travel that falls within the 10 full days after the last known exposure.
- Not travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if the individual will not be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) when around others indoors for the full duration of official travel within the 10 full days after the last known exposure.
- Follow other aspects of post-exposure protocols, including the requirement for individuals with a known exposure to be tested for COVID-19 after 5 full days following the last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6). Testing may need to occur while the individual is on official travel. Agencies do not need to require that individuals wait for the results of post-exposure diagnostic tests to undertake official travel, including return travel.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, if an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 after official travel has been approved but not commenced, the agency must instruct the individual to not undertake official travel and to instead follow agency protocols consistent with the Task Force guidance on travel for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms.

Official Travel for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or a Positive COVID-19 Test

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, agencies must not approve official travel for individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for an initial diagnostic viral test result. Agencies also must not approve official travel for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, for at least 5 full days after the first day of symptoms or after the date of the initial positive diagnostic viral test for asymptomatic individuals.

If an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 returns to work after the individual is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving,

the agency may approve official travel for the individual. Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, the agency must instruct the individual to, in addition to other standard pre-travel instructions related to COVID-19 –

- Wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) the entire time that the individual is on-duty and around others indoors for the full duration of official travel that falls within the period when the individual is otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator after ending isolation, consistent with Task Force guidance.
- Not travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if the individual will not be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) when around others indoors for the full duration of official travel that falls within the period when the individual is otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator after ending isolation, consistent with Task Force guidance.
- Follow other aspects of post-isolation protocols.

If, after official travel has been approved, the individual's COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, then pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance on isolation, the agency must instruct the individual to not undertake further official travel, to not to enter National Gallery facilities, and to restart isolation protocols at day zero.

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

Currently, there are no special Federal Government-wide restrictions regarding in-person meetings, events, and conferences regardless of the expected number participants or local COVID-19 Community Levels.

All in-person attendees at any meetings, conferences, or events hosted by agencies must comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols, including mask-wearing requirements when COVID-19 Community Levels are HIGH, pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance.

National Gallery staff who participate in meetings, events, and conferences sponsored or hosted by external organizations must comply with the organizations' COVID-19 safety requirements and guidance.

Symptom Screening

To be consistent with Task Force guidance, all National Gallery staff, contractors, and visitors must complete symptom screening before entering National Gallery facilities. Symptom screening can be self-conducted and does not need to be verified by agency personnel. The National Gallery's self-assessment screening tool is on the intranet, connect.nga.gov.

If National Gallery staff, contractors, or visitors have fever or chills, or if they have other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19 such as new or unexplained onset of cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; new or unexplained loss of taste or smell; or new or unexplained muscle aches, they may not enter National Gallery facilities.

If National Gallery staff, contractors, or visitors suspect that they have COVID-19 because they have new or unexplained COVID-19 symptoms but do not yet have test results, they may not

enter National Gallery facilities and should get tested for COVID-19 if they have not already done so.

Pursuant to EO 13991, agencies must require that any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who develops fever, chills, or other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who tests positive for COVID-19, while onsite at National Gallery facilities must immediately wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) and promptly leave National Gallery facilities.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, agencies must require individuals who disclose that they have tested positive for COVID-19 to follow the CDC's isolation protocols: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>.

Post-exposure Precautions

If an asymptomatic individual has a known exposure to someone with COVID-19, the CDC does not recommend quarantine at home, so the agency may not prevent the individual from entering National Gallery facilities.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance on post-exposure precautions, individuals who are known to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, must –

- Wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 MASK) while indoors at National Gallery facilities as soon as possible after notification of exposure and continue to do so for 10 full days from the date when they were last known to have been exposed.
- Take extra precautions, such as avoiding crowding and physically distancing from others, when they know that they are around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 while at National Gallery facilities for 10 full days from the date when they were last known to have been exposed.
- Watch for COVID-19 symptoms for 10 full days from the date when they were last known to have been exposed. To calculate 10 full days, day zero is the day of their last known exposure to someone with COVID-19, and day 1 is the first full day after their last known exposure.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, agencies must require COVID-19 tests for current infection with a viral test at least 5 full days after the last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6) for staff and contractors who are at National Gallery facilities and are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 and are onsite. Tests can be self-administered and self-read if the agency has the staff or contractor certify when they took the test and that they received a negative result.

Pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, if an individual tests negative, the individual must continue to follow the post-exposure precautions described above for 10 full days from the date when the individual was last known to have been exposed.

The agency may not require an individual who has been known to be exposed to COVID-19 to be tested if the individual –

- Is not working at National Gallery facilities within 10 days of the known exposure.

- Tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 30 days and subsequently recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

The agency must require an individual who has been known to be exposed to COVID-19 to be tested using a viral antigen test if the individual tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 31-90 days and subsequently recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

Isolation and Post-isolation

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test must follow the CDC's isolation protocols: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>.

Any individual with probable or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, must not enter National Gallery facilities and must monitor their symptoms. This requirement applies to individuals who have an initial positive diagnostic viral test for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms, and individuals with symptoms of COVID-19, including individuals who are awaiting test results or have not been tested.

Consistent with Task Force guidance, the agency must allow individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and never developed symptoms to return to National Gallery facilities after 5 full days following their positive COVID-19 test (with the day that the individual was tested as day zero).

Consistent with Task Force guidance, the agency must allow individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and had symptoms to return to National Gallery facilities after 5 full days from the onset of symptoms (with the day of symptom onset as day zero), once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their 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 an individual had moderate illness, such as shortness of breath or difficult breathing, or severe illness, such as illness due to COVID-19 that requires hospitalization, or the individual has a weakened immune system, then, consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must advise the individual to delay returning to working onsite for a full 10 days. If an individual had severe illness or has a weakened immune system, they should consult their healthcare provider before ending isolation. If an individual is unsure whether symptoms are moderate or severe or if the individual has a weakened immune system, agencies should advise the individual to talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Consistent with Task Force guidance, the agency should not use a test-based approach to determine when, after having tested positive for COVID-19 and isolated, an individual can return to National Gallery facilities, except when approved by the agency head following consultation with the agency's COVID-19 Coordination team, including a representative of the Secretary and General Counsel's office. Once an individual has returned to National Gallery facilities after testing positive for COVID-19 and isolating consistent with CDC guidance on isolation, then, pursuant to EO 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, the agency must instruct the individual to continue to take precautions consistent with CDC guidance for at least 10 full days after the first day of symptoms, or after the date of a positive viral test for asymptomatic individuals.

Precautions include wearing a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95 mask) when around others, avoiding eating and drinking around others, avoiding environments such as dining facilities or other places where the individual may need to be unmasked around others, and avoiding being around people who are at high risk for severe disease from COVID-19.

Regarding mask-wearing after returning from isolation, agencies may also inform individuals that they can opt to take two viral antigen tests authorized by the FDA to detect current COVID-19 infection, starting on day 6. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the individuals may remove their masks sooner than day 10. If either of their antigen test results are positive, the individuals should continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until they have two sequential negative results. This may mean that the individuals would continue wearing masks and testing beyond day 10. If at any point their COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, the individuals again must not enter National Gallery facilities, restarting at day zero, consistent with EO 13991 and CDC recommendations on isolation.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Agencies will treat medical information collected from individuals in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy. Medical information includes vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring.

Access to medical information collected by agencies must be limited to persons who have a need to know. Agencies should consult their Senior Agency Officials for Privacy on matters related to the collection and handling of personally identifiable information. Circular No. 2 - Protection of Personally Identifiable Information designates the Administrator as the National Gallery's Senior Agency Officials for Privacy, and the point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical information.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must make and maintain improvements to indoor ventilation and air filtration to the maximum extent feasible, regardless of COVID-19 Community Levels. Where ventilation or air filtration is otherwise challenging to improve, where crowding cannot be avoided, or in high-risk settings, agencies should consider installing portable air cleaners with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.

Physical Distancing and Avoiding Crowding

When COVID-19 Community Levels are MEDIUM or HIGH –

- Consistent with Task Force guidance, agencies must post signage encouraging individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to consider avoiding crowding and physically distancing themselves from others in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings at National Gallery facilities.
- Agencies may consider establishing occupancy limits for indoor common areas and meeting rooms, and high-risk settings, including where ventilation and air filtration is challenging to improve or crowding cannot otherwise be avoided.

Telework and Remote Work

The National Gallery provides telework opportunities consistent with the principles set forth in OMB Memorandum M-21-25, OPM guidance on telework and remote work, and National Gallery telework policies and procedures.

Collective Bargaining Unit

The National Gallery will consult with the collective bargaining unit when the National Gallery updates its COVID-19 workplace safety plan, protocols, and policies, and otherwise satisfy any applicable existing collective bargaining agreement provisions.

Covid-19 Coordination Team

To be consistent with Task Force guidance and OMB Memorandum M-21-15, agencies must maintain a COVID-19 Coordination Team. The team should include, at a minimum, a representative from: each component agency (if applicable); the appropriate human resources office(s); occupational safety and health experts; executive leadership; and legal counsel. The COVID-19 Coordination Team should include or consult with as needed the agency's Senior Agency Official for Privacy as needed. The team should meet regularly to review compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies; consider and – following consultation with the Task Force – implement potential revisions to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies consistent with Task Force and CDC guidance; ensure agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies are broadly communicated to agency employees and, as appropriate, onsite contractor employees, visitors to agency facilities, and in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences; and evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety.

The following staff comprise the National Gallery's Covid-19 Coordination Team: Gallery Representative for employee and labor relations, AP; AOP-RM department head; Chief of Staff, D (chair); and Associate General Counsel, SG.

Exceptions

E.O. 13991 directs agencies to, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, require compliance with CDC guidance with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by staff, contractors and visitors at National Gallery facilities.

E.O. 13991 also provides that heads of agencies may make categorical or case-by-case exceptions to the extent that doing so is necessary or required by law, and consistent with applicable law. Agencies should consult with the Task Force prior to approving any such exceptions. If agencies have implementation challenges or operational circumstances that may require alternate or additional prevention measures beyond those set forth in Task Force guidance, or otherwise require an agency to adopt COVID-19 workplace safety protocols that differ from Task Force guidance unless for reasons of following setting-specific CDC guidance, agencies should consult the Task Force regarding exceptions, prior to implementing alternate or additional prevention measures.

E.O. 13991 also provides that agencies must follow CDC guidance related to certain settings where different or additional layers of prevention are recommended by CDC, such as travel, corridors, and congregate settings. Where there is a conflict with more general Task Force or CDC guidance, agencies must follow the setting-specific CDC guidance. In addition, to be consistent with Task Force guidance, where a locality has imposed additional pandemic-related requirements that are more protective than those in Task Force guidance, agencies must follow additional local requirements in Federal buildings, in Federally controlled worksites, on Government-operated transportation conveyances, and on local Federal land in that locality. For example, if a locality has imposed mask-wearing requirements for indoor facilities, agencies must apply those requirements in Federal facilities, even if not otherwise required under agency mask-wearing protocols.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

<https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/>, Safer Federal Workforce provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding implementation of EO 13991, COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles, M-21-25 on Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environments, and the updated Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles. Where the model safety principles and current FAQs or Task Force guidance conflict, the agency should follow information in the FAQs or guidance.

Contact AOP-Risk Management (aop-rm@nga.gov) with other questions.