

## Stop the Spread – State Government Edition – Employee/Supervisor Guidance

Updated 5/19/2021 - Effective 6/1/2021

**What's New** – Effective June 1, 2021, guidance has been updated to reflect CDC, DHS and local public health guidance relaxing face covering and physical distancing requirements for fully vaccinated individuals. Requirements for individuals that are not fully vaccinated remain unchanged and all employees are strongly encouraged to receive the vaccine.

The Wisconsin State Government continues to apply COVID-19-related workplace policies consistent with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and local public health officials. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for Wisconsin state employees and members of the public. This guidance will continue to be updated based on COVID-19 transmission rates and any additional information provided by federal and state public health experts.

### VACCINATIONS, FACE COVERINGS, and PHYSICAL DISTANCING

**VACCINATION.** COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing employees and the public from getting sick. Employees are strongly encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Employees are encouraged to register and schedule a vaccine using the [Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Registry](#). The Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Registry allows Wisconsin residents to register for and schedule COVID-19 vaccinations at state-sponsored vaccination clinics across the state. Additionally, there are several places you may go to get your COVID-19 vaccine such as:

- Your doctor or health care provider,
- Pharmacies,
- Community-based vaccination clinics, and
- On-site vaccination clinics.

Additional information about how to locate a vaccine can be found [here](#).

For the purposes of this guidance, individuals are considered “vaccinated” if they have completed their vaccine series (two doses for Pfizer and Moderna vaccine; one dose for Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and at least two weeks has passed since their final dose.

**FACE COVERINGS.** The CDC has recently determined that it is safe for vaccinated individuals to be indoors without wearing face coverings. Therefore, vaccinated individuals may continue to wear face coverings but are not required to do so while in state facilities or outdoors. All unvaccinated individuals, including both state employees and members of the public, should continue to properly wear face coverings while in state facilities. Additionally, unvaccinated employees are required to properly wear face coverings in other enclosed buildings while on state business.

Face covering guidance applies to all state facilities throughout the State of Wisconsin regardless of the physical distance between individuals or the number of people present. This includes while waiting to enter a facility, cubicles, offices, conference rooms, elevators, stairwells, kitchenettes, bathrooms, hallways, and corridors.

- Unvaccinated employees who are unable to wear face coverings due to physical or mental health conditions or disability should notify their supervisor or human resources representative for assistance in requesting accommodation. Additionally, human resources may exclude certain positions from the indoor face coverings requirement if the covering would create a health or safety risk due to the duties of the position.
- Unless otherwise specified in an agency-specific policy (see “Note” below), verification of vaccine status (e.g., by showing a vaccination card) will not be required for employees to go without a face covering indoors. Supervisors will only seek verification of an employee’s vaccine status in the context of a potential

disciplinary action if there is credible evidence that an employee is misrepresenting their vaccine status solely to avoid face covering requirements.

- Agencies will have a supply of appropriate face coverings available for employees and members of the public doing business with the state. Employees are also permitted to wear their own clean, work-appropriate face coverings.
- Face coverings may be removed when eating, drinking, communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, and when communication cannot be achieved through other means, to confirm identity if requested, or if in an enclosed space where no other person is present.
- Employees who have concerns regarding face-covering compliance are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their supervisor or human resources. Employees and supervisors are prohibited from discriminating against individuals who choose to wear a face covering regardless of the reason. Please remember that there are a multitude of reasons why someone may choose to wear a face covering and wearing a face covering is not necessarily an indication that the person is not vaccinated.

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING.** Employee workspaces should be at least six feet apart where operationally feasible. Agencies are encouraged to continue offering citizen services online or virtually. Additionally, coworkers working in the same building should not share food.

Note: All employees, regardless of vaccination status, are required to follow all federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including business guidance, when working on non-state property. Failure to follow this guidance or any law, rule, or regulation may result in disciplinary action.

The Departments of Corrections, Health Services, and Veterans Affairs may issue additional regulations for their employees, residents, and visitors of congregate living facilities. All agency rules or guidance require approval by the Division of Personnel Management Administrator prior to implementation.

## TELECOMMUTING

The State recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on our employees and their families. As such, telecommuting is encouraged where feasible and appropriate based on each agency's unique needs. Supervisors are also strongly encouraged to provide flexibility for employees' work schedules and/or support other accommodations to the maximum extent possible. These expectations regarding telecommuting will be in place through July 4, 2021.

**Transition Planning.** Changes to the way agencies work, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to transformational improvements in digital services, increased productivity, better customer service, and improved workplace flexibilities. Agencies preparing for the transition to normal operations should develop transition plans that build upon the positive changes that have occurred during the last year. Agency planning efforts should consider ways to improve customer service, decrease operational costs, and grow employee satisfaction and engagement.

Agencies considering an update to their agency telecommuting plans should do so, in consultation with their human resources representative, with a plan to implement changes by July 5, 2021. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) enterprise facilities, human resources (HR), risk management, and technology staff have compiled several helpful resources and are available to consult with agencies on their transition and telecommuting plans. Please see the *Resources* section at the end of the document for additional information. The following information provides guidance on baseline standards for telecommuting practices.

**Headquartering.** All employees are expected to be headquartered and work within the State of Wisconsin. With prior approval from the appointing authority and agency HR manager, permanent employees may have a headquarters location or work outside of Wisconsin only when their job duties require them to work out-of-state or in limited situations. Non-permanent employees are expected to work within the State of Wisconsin. Per s. 230.26(1m) and

230.27(1m), Wis. Stats., appointing authorities are prohibited from appointing non-Wisconsin residents to limited-term or project positions unless approved by the director of DOA's Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection (BMRS).

When employees work out-of-state, in addition to other telecommuting considerations, employees and agencies should consider the following compliance-related impacts: out-of-state tax withholding, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, compensation and exemption from overtime, and health insurance and benefits impacts. If the job duties of the position require an employee(s) to work outside of the State of Wisconsin, the employee must first have approval from the appointing authority and agency HR manager (who will coordinate with Central Payroll and seek approval from the BMRS director if appropriate) before hiring or allowing an existing employee to regularly perform their assigned duties from an out-of-state location. The agency must also contact the Worker's Compensation Section of the DOA Bureau of State Risk Management regarding worker's compensation coverage.

**Commuting.** When an employee is voluntarily telecommuting, any commute from the employee's home to the office is not reimbursable (See Compensation Plan, Section F 3.05(3)(a) 6.). If an employee is temporarily commuting from their home to a location that is different than their headquarters, the guidance in Section F of the Compensation Plan should be followed to determine mileage when traveling for work. Employees working from home will not be eligible for lunch reimbursement even though they are working outside of their headquarters city during this period of the day. Employees working at home are not considered to be in travel status for work purposes. See Section F of the Compensation Plan which states that lunch is provided if the employee leaves his or her headquarters city before 10:30 a.m. and returns after 2:30 p.m.

**Employees with Caregiving Responsibilities.** Agencies are encouraged to establish flexible work schedules (FWS) to facilitate the performance of work despite caregiving responsibilities. An FWS consists of workdays with core hours and flexible hours. Core hours are designated hours when employees must be present for work (including telework). Flexible hours are the part of the workday when employees may (within limits) choose their start and stop times and break periods.

**Equipment Use and Request.** Employees should be permitted to take home a computer (laptop preferred but desktop permitted for necessity), monitor(s), keyboard, mouse, headset, office supplies, and cellphone, if deemed necessary. Agencies are encouraged to expand their digital capabilities to diminish the need for printers and copying. It is recommended that printers and copiers remain in state facilities. Any equipment sent home with the employee should have been inventoried to include asset tags and serial numbers where available.

If an individual requests additional office equipment for working from home, the request should not be approved unless the item is:

- Easily moved, and
- There is no or limited risk in transporting or using the equipment outside of its normal facility.  
For example, a sit/stand station requires a stable, solid surface and has considerable bulk and weight. The state is unable to readily assess the installation at an individual's home, thus the risk of injury outweighs the request to use at home. This request should not be approved.

Should an individual require large equipment to complete day-to-day tasks, as described above, but the risk management issues associated with larger objects cannot be mitigated, the most effective resolution is likely for the employee to work from their officially assigned work location. The assigned work location has already been configured to address the employee's unique circumstances.

**Home Office and Internet Costs.** In voluntary telecommuting situations, home office costs including furniture, equipment, and internet connections are the responsibility of the employee. Employees who are unable or unwilling to do so within these parameters can and should return to their workspace at their work headquarters.

DOA has published an updated telecommuting policy and template if needed. Please see the *Resources* section at the end of the document for additional information.

*Please note the above guidance may differ for 24/7 operations including correctional settings or health care settings.*

## BUILDING ACCESS AND SERVICES

COVID-19 related occupancy limits are being lifted and building capacity limits will resume at 100% of pre-pandemic levels. Telecommuting will remain strongly encouraged until July 5, 2021, and agencies are required to post in main building entrances and on their websites updated lists of services that will be offered in person and virtually at each location.

Agencies are required to post in main building entrances and on their websites updated lists of services that will be offered in person and virtually at each location. Additionally, DOA will work with agencies to manage building entrances, exits, elevators, stairwells, and the overall building flow to accommodate an increasing number of individuals in state buildings.

**Other Mitigation Measures.** Employees are expected to stay home if ill and will be expected to follow proper handwashing, cough-covering, and hygiene practices to prevent the spread of viruses. In addition, the Division of Facilities and Transportation Services (DFTS) will ensure enhanced cleaning in DOA-managed and leased facilities. This includes maintaining hand sanitizer in common areas and stocking cleaning stations. Agencies that need assistance with leased facility requirements should contact the DFTS, Real Estate Section.

**Hygiene-Related Print Resources.** Hygiene-related print resources are available to order through the Bureau of Publishing and Distribution (BPAD). BPADs order form is available on their website: [DET BPAD Home \(wi.gov\)](#). CDC-provided hygiene signage is available at the following link: [Print Resources | CDC](#).

**Signage.** The Division of Facilities & Transportation Services, Space Management group should be contacted for any signage needs or changes within DOA facilities.

**Plexiglass Barriers.** Plexiglass panels are now available at multiple state contract providers including Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE) safe space products at the website: <https://www.shopbce.com> or [Statewide Office Furniture Contract](#): Category A, Systems Furniture and Accessories.

## SYMPTOM SCREENING AND TEMPERATURE CHECKS

**Symptom Screening.** Supervisors and/or HR staff can send employees home who exhibit COVID-19 or [flu-like symptoms](#) or otherwise appear sick and unable to perform their duties.

- Supervisors may ask employees who report feeling ill at work if they are experiencing COVID-19 or [flu-like symptoms](#).
- If the employee is not able to immediately leave the workplace due to transportation issues, the employee should be isolated in a non-public area. Alternative transportation should be encouraged if the employee uses public transportation to get to work.
- If, after discussion regarding the necessity of protecting the employee's health and the health of the workforce, the employee refuses to leave work, the supervisor should direct the employee to leave. Human resources staff are available to consult with supervisors unsure about whether to send an employee home.
- If an employee calls in sick or is sent home from work with flu-like symptoms, the employee will be required to use the appropriate leave category or follow their agency's alternative work policy. Employees with no available sick leave or alternate leave will be placed on approved leave without pay for the duration of their illness.

- Consistent with CDC and DHS DPH recommendations, normal agency requirements to provide a doctor's note to justify an extended absence have been temporarily suspended for an employee's absence due to flu-like (COVID-19) symptoms, *unless* the employee is currently required to provide medical verification for all absences. If there is concern about the truth of the employee's statements related to their need for leave, the supervisor should consult their HR representative to assist in obtaining further documentation. Before returning to work, employees must contact their supervisor to provide an update on their status.

**Testing Positive for or Exposure to COVID-19.** Employees who are experiencing [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should get tested. Additionally, all employees should follow the following guidance if they have tested positive or had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19.

- **Employees who test positive (with or without symptoms)**
  - An employee who tests positive and has COVID-19 symptoms will stay home until the following is met based on the direction of the employee's health care provider: at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours have passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved.
  - An employee who tests positive and has no COVID-19 symptoms can return, based on the direction of the employee's health care provider, once 10 days have passed since the positive test.
  - Additional information on the timing of close contact with an individual who tested positive can be found on [CDC Public Health Recommendations](#).
- **Unvaccinated employees who have been exposed to COVID-19**
  - Employees who have had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 will quarantine\* at home. Close contact means:
    - Employee was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period.
    - Employee provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
    - Employee had direct physical contact with the person (touched or hugged them).
    - Employee shared eating or drinking utensils.
    - COVID-positive person sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on employee.

**During the quarantine period, employees must:**

- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19. The employee should get tested for COVID-19 if symptoms occur.
- If possible, stay away from others within their home, especially people who are at a [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19
- A COVID-19 test is strongly recommended for all people who are a close contact to someone infected with COVID-19, regardless of symptoms.
- While a **14-day quarantine continues to be the safest and recommended option**, two additional quarantine options are now allowed for some people. Follow local guidance for quarantine release times as some options may not be acceptable in certain settings and situations. Consideration for these shortened quarantine periods is only for people who do not have symptoms at any time during their quarantine period.
- The two options to reduce the quarantine period are available as follows:
  - Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. This option results in about a 1% chance of transmission.
  - Quarantine can end after Day 7 if the result of a diagnostic (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test is negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The test specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation, but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. A pending test result on Day 7 is not sufficient to end quarantine early. This option results in about a 5% chance of transmission.

Employees must continue to monitor for symptoms daily for a full 14 days following the exposure and continue to follow public health guidelines such as wearing a mask, physical distancing, and avoiding

gatherings. If you are unable to monitor for symptoms and follow public health guidelines, you should quarantine for the full 14 days. If symptoms develop, employees are advised to immediately isolate, contact their health care provider, and get tested.

*NOTE: If an employee was in contact, but **not close contact** with someone who is positive (e.g., low risk), they do not need to take preventive measures, e.g., quarantine for 14 days; however, employees should closely monitor for symptoms for 14 days and immediately isolate and get a test if any symptoms develop.*

- **Vaccinated employees who have been exposed to COVID-19.**
  - Vaccinated employees who have had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 are not required to quarantine with the exception of some employees who provide direct patient care. Vaccinated persons who do not quarantine should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following exposure. If symptoms develop, they should immediately isolate, wear a face covering, contact their health care provider, and get tested.

*\*[CDC's critical infrastructure guidance](#) provides exceptions to current home quarantine practices after exposure to COVID-19 for some workers. The guidance advises that employers may permit workers who have had exposure to COVID-19, but who do not have symptoms, to continue to work, provided they adhere to additional safety precautions, such as measuring the employee's temperature and assessing for symptoms of COVID-19 before each work shift ("pre-screening"), asking the employee to self-monitor for symptoms during their work shift, and wearing a [cloth face covering](#). Per DHS guidance, this exception should only be used when exclusion from work would result in an imminent threat to patient care, public health, or public safety. See [Health Alert #16: Quarantine of Wisconsin Residents Exposed to COVID-19 is an Essential Prevention Strategy](#).*

- **Notification Requirements**
  - An employee who is working in a state facility and tests positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact of an individual positive for COVID-19 should notify their supervisor or HR.
  - If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, the agency HR manager will notify employees who were in close contact with the ill employee to inform them of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - Notice to the entire worksite is not necessary. Additional information on the [DHS COVID-19 resources for employers](#) should be referred to for additional information about how to assess risk and steps to maintain operations when an employee is positive.
  - HR or the supervisor will also contact facilities management to initiate cleaning of the COVID-19 positive employee's workstation following more stringent [environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols](#).

**Temperature Checks.** Except where explicitly authorized (e.g., at DOC, DHS, DMA, and DVA facilities, and the State Patrol Academy) and in accordance with the approved procedures, supervisors and/or HR staff should never take an employee's temperature or attempt to perform any medical evaluation of an employee. The exception to this direction is for agencies with authorized (based on operational needs and approval of DHS) temperature checking procedures.

## TRAVEL & PERSONNEL

**Travel.** Travel is limited to essential travel and may occur anywhere in the United States. Employees traveling by motor vehicle should ride alone in vehicles where operationally feasible. Employees who normally have multiple employees in the vehicle due to safety or work standards should follow their agency-specific protocols when traveling. If more than one person is in the vehicle, all unvaccinated occupants must wear masks. Upon arrival at the worksite and prior to departing, employees should wash their hands as recommended. Vaccinated employees who travel do not need to self-quarantine or get tested because of their travel. Unvaccinated employees must follow [CDC guidelines](#) before and after any travel.

**Personnel.** The hiring freeze and suspension of the discretionary merit compensation program will continue through July 5, 2021. All other programs will continue to operate consistent with state law, administrative code, and DOA guidance.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & GUIDANCE

[Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook - Alternative Work Patterns and Telecommuting Guidance & Sample Templates](#)

[Facilities Planning Guidance](#)

[Risk Management Telecommuting Guidance](#)