

## State of Arizona

Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA)  
Human Resources Division (HRD)

# Returning to the Workplace: A Pandemic Response Toolkit for State Agencies, Boards and Commissions

August 2021

*This toolkit has been prepared as a resource for State of Arizona agencies, boards and commissions (hereinafter referred to as agencies) as workplaces are reopened during the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be used in conjunction with the ADOA **HR Guidance and FAQs** document on the COVID-19 webpage at: [Re: HR GUIDANCE AND FAQs](#). The information provided herein is consistent with guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the state's Department of Health Services (ADHS) for general office environments as of May 2021. Should you need assistance with guidance in a more specific setting, such as healthcare or a correctional facility, please email the ADOA Human Resources Division (HRD) at [covid19questions@azdoa.gov](mailto:covid19questions@azdoa.gov).*

***This toolkit will be updated as circumstances continue to evolve and new information becomes known. Nothing in this toolkit should be interpreted to conflict with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) guidance and/or recommendations. If a conflict is discovered, the CDC or ADHS governs.***

***While this toolkit pertains to reopening workplaces, all agencies continue to be encouraged to allow State employees to telework whenever possible to reduce potential exposure to others who may have COVID-19.***

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## **PURPOSE**

This toolkit provides guidance for the implementation of safe practices and related communications in state agencies as employees return to state workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. The topics addressed provide information, guidance and resources for agencies to consider in developing their own policies, protocols and communications to best meet the agency's needs as employees return to their workplaces.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to all of the agency's stakeholder groups will continue to be important as operations change and/or evolve. Many of these communications will be specific to your agency, its mission and functions.

Regular communications relating to the pandemic, public health guidance, benefits, testing, vaccines and other employee-related topics have been provided by the ADOA Human Resources Division (HRD). One of these communications, the **HR Guidance & FAQs** document, can be found on the HRD COVID-19 webpage at: [COVID-19 | Human Resources](#). For benefits information, including information on COVID-19 testing and vaccines, consult the Benefit Services webpage at: [Benefits Services Division](#). Many agencies, including ADOA, used their websites to provide a one-stop shop for employee information, policies, and communication relating to the pandemic. The ADOA COVID-19 webpage can be seen at: [COVID-19 | Human Resources](#).

Agencies should communicate to their employees if expectations, policies and procedures have changed since they were last in the workplace. For example, if an agency has implemented screening prior to entry, it will want to educate employees on these procedures and what, if anything, employees will need to do before entering a facility. Agencies may wish to develop some communications and/or computer based training to provide this information.

If your agency would like assistance in the development of any communications, please contact ADOA HRD.

## CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Cleaning should be done in accordance with the guidance provided by the ADOA General Services Division (GSD) and/or your facility's property management authority. Agencies are encouraged to consult the guidance provided by the CDC and the OSHA to ensure that their workspaces are safely cleaned and/or sanitized during a public health emergency. This guidance may include more frequent cleaning, sanitizing as well as repeated cleaning of shared spaces and equipment throughout the workday, as well as specific cleaning after a known exposure.

Links to helpful guidance on workplace cleaning are provided below.

**Professional guidance for workplace cleaning:**

CDC Guidance for Community, Work and School:

[Community, Work and School Information](#)

CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility:

[CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Employees should be provided with cleaning supplies and sanitizing wipes to keep workspaces clean and disinfected, and they should be encouraged to do this in accordance with CDC guidance for frequently touched surfaces. Shared workspaces, such as those that are used for hoteling, meetings and breaks should also be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Signage with applicable instructions should be posted in visible locations. Employees using shared workspaces should also be reminded to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently. Remember, although vaccines are widely available, all employees and visitors are not vaccinated against COVID-19, so prevention protocols are still appropriate.

Sample language for this purpose is provided below:

<p><b><i><u>Workstation Cleaning Checklist</u></i></b></p>
<p><b>Please clean your station before you leave with the sanitizer wipes located on the middle tables</b></p>
Clean <b>entire desk</b> with sanitizer wipes
Clean the <b>docking station and monitors</b> with sanitizer wipes
Clean your <b>chair and armrests</b> with sanitizer wipes
Clean the <b>mouse &amp; keyboard</b> if you have used them
If you have brought <b>food</b> , please clean up and remove all the food and trash; wipe surfaces with sanitizer wipes

## EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

For employees who are not ill, but are concerned about returning to the workplace:

- Remind the employees that the State of Arizona takes the health and safety of its workforce very seriously and has implemented practices consistent with current professional public health standards and individual agency requirements to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- For employees who are still anxious about COVID-19, please remind them of the services available through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) called ComPsych. Services can be accessed by calling 1-877-327-2362 or visiting [guidanceresources.com](https://guidanceresources.com). Enter company code HN8876C to register. Employees may also speak with healthcare providers through their benefits plans for additional resources.
- For more information on the EAP programs available to state and university employees and those living in their households, please visit [Employee Assistance Program | EAP | Wellness](#).
- More information on testing and vaccines may also provide reassurance and can be found at: [Benefits Services Division](#).

## FACE COVERINGS, GLOVES, AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The CDC has changed its guidance on face coverings as knowledge of the COVID-19 virus and its variants has evolved. Current guidance from the CDC can be found at: [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated - Covid-19](#).

**Face coverings continue to be recommended for those who are NOT fully vaccinated whenever physical/social distancing cannot be maintained.**

CDC guidance for healthcare facilities requires that staff and visitors wear a mask while onsite. See [Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination](#). Those who are NOT fully vaccinated are expected to continue to wear a mask and physically distance themselves while in the building or around others when engaging in work-related activities.

Some agencies may have stricter standards and may specify certain types of face coverings/ masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate to the mission and functions of the agency. **Employees must follow the policies and procedures of their agencies.**

Children less than 2 years of age should never wear non-medical cloth face coverings due to safety concerns. At this time, we do not recommend children in a congregate child care setting wear cloth-based face coverings due to the risks to themselves or other children in the facility.

Governor Ducey issued a press release on July 27, 2021 stating: "Public health officials in Arizona and across the country have made it clear that the best protection against COVID-19 is the vaccine. Arizonans should get this vaccine. Arizona does not allow mask mandates, vaccine mandates, vaccine passports or discrimination in schools based on who is or isn't vaccinated. We've passed all of this into law, and it will not change."

## MEETINGS

Consistent with DHS guidance at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/#everyone-guidance>, meetings and gatherings may be conducted in person when social/physical distancing can be maintained and when face coverings/masks are worn and can be safely managed. To reduce potential exposure for those who are not fully vaccinated, consider the following:

- Using virtual videoconferencing, or a combination of in-person and virtual
- Hold in-person meetings in larger rooms with open, well-ventilated spaces
- Consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings, if possible
- Assess the risks of business travel; the CDC has provided guidance on domestic travel at: [CDC Travel](#)

If meetings are a challenge, consider if there is any other way to convey information. If so, that may be a better, more expeditious option than a meeting.

## POSTERS/SIGNAGE

Consider signage that provides employees and visitors with basic information on the protocols your agency has decided to implement. Information on distancing and face covering/mask requirements and reminders to maintain frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer can be very helpful in reducing potential spread of viruses, including COVID-19. Signage reminding employees using shared spaces, such as conference rooms, of occupancy limits and cleaning requirements when done should be posted in these spaces.

## REMOTE WORK/TELEWORK

All agencies continue to be encouraged to allow State employees to telework whenever possible to reduce potential exposure to others who may have COVID-19. Telework hours should be reported under pay code 110, Telecommuting Hours, or pay code 110C, COVID Work-Telecommuting, as appropriate.

Some employees may return to the workplace just a couple of days per week and continue working remotely the rest of the time. In late April/early May 2021, the State issued new guidance, requirements, and enhancements for the State's remote work program. Updated information about the State's remote work program, including many related training courses, can be viewed on [Capitol Rideshare's Remote Work website](#). Employees can also access these training courses directly through TraCorp, the state's Online Learning Portal using the code TRP.

Agencies have been encouraged to develop internal policies and procedures for remote work, and it is anticipated that agencies are in the process of communicating these updates to their employees. Agencies seeking guidance on how to effectively implement teleworking/remote work should contact ADOA HRD for assistance.

## SCREENING OF EMPLOYEES AND VISITORS

Some agencies with specialized functions and responsibilities are taking the temperatures of employees prior to their entry to a facility. This practice is **not recommended** for all agencies or all employees. If an agency wishes to implement temperature control as part of its re-entry procedures, it should contact ADOA HRD.

Agencies may conduct a screening using verbal inquiries. **Agencies should contact ADOA HRD prior to implementation of this type of procedure.**

**Agencies may not ask or track whether employees or visitors have been vaccinated for COVID-19, nor may they ask for proof or verification of a COVID-19 vaccine.**

## SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

All agencies and all state employees should maintain the practice of social/physical distancing at least 6 feet whenever possible and not touch anyone else in the workplace for any reason, other than as required by the job, such as a Correctional Officer having to search an offender or a nurse having to provide care to a patient.

Agencies may wish to develop their own policies/procedures with more detailed information for their employees regarding these recommended requirements. If your agency needs assistance with this, please contact ADOA HRD.

## **VACCINES**

**Anyone age 12 and above is eligible to receive a vaccine in Arizona.** The State has established multiple vaccine distribution locations, and information regarding the State's vaccine program, as well as other general information, can be found on the State employee benefits site at: [benefitoptions.az.gov/covidvaccine](https://benefitoptions.az.gov/covidvaccine)

Agency heads may allow employees to use a reasonable amount of paid administrative leave to obtain a vaccine, including a reasonable commute time, subject to pre-approval within the agency. The agency head can set an agency-specific process for approval to ensure consistency across the agency. If paid administrative leave is authorized and used for the purposes of obtaining a vaccine, it should be coded under pay code 376, Admin Leave-Emergency, and Attendance Code UN. This applies to employees whether they are exempt (salaried) or non-exempt (paid hourly).

Employees requesting time away from work to take their dependents to obtain a vaccine may, with prior supervisory approval, use family sick leave for this purpose, or may request to adjust their schedules to reduce the amount of time off work to take a dependent to a vaccination location.

**Agencies may not ask or track whether employees or visitors have been vaccinated for COVID-19, nor may they ask for proof or verification of a COVID-19 vaccine.**



## WORKPLACE CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of considerations to address to maintain safe workspaces and common spaces, such as lobbies; elevators; stairwells; restrooms; breakrooms; and conference rooms. These may include but are not limited to:

### Shared spaces:

- Provide postings re: social/physical distancing; maximum numbers of people allowed in rooms, elevators, etc. as applicable.
- Tape borders and footprints in elevators, lobbies, restrooms and other common areas to show 6-foot distances for social/physical distancing.
- Consider posting checklists in common space such as a breakroom or conference room to remind employees to leave the area clean or sanitized for others.
- Encourage employees to bring their own food and beverage items if they wish to limit the use of frequently touched items such as breakroom coffee pots.
- Ensure that areas with vending machines are frequently cleaned and/or sanitized to avoid possible transmission of viruses. Post signage encouraging users to wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to consuming their items from vending machines.
- Consider a cleaning schedule for shared equipment such as copiers, scanners, etc. consistent with the CDC guidance for frequently used/frequently touched surfaces. (In most situations, wiping these down with sanitizing wipes will suffice.)

### Work spaces: offices, cubicles

- People working in dedicated spaces (offices or cubicles) should keep their workspaces neat and clean. Sanitization of dedicated spaces may not be needed, and agencies can consult the CDC guidance about this at [Community, Work and School Information](#).
- For employees working in cubicles who are unable to telework or distance themselves at six feet, consider staggering in-office days/times of work, or even moving to different shifts, to reduce potential contact. Ensure these spaces are frequently cleaned or sanitized.
- If people can't be more distanced in cubicles, consider plexiglas shields to add to the height/width of walls to reduce potential spreading of germs.

**Questions may be directed to ADOA Human Resources at [covid19questions@azdoa.gov](mailto:covid19questions@azdoa.gov)**