



Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Workplace Safety Plan

June 2024



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Introduction

Per Memorandum M-24-12, President Biden issued the Executive Order (E.O.) of April 12, 2024, on COVID-19 and Public Health Preparedness and Response (E.O. of April 12, 2024), which revokes E.O. 13991 of January 20, 2021, on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Masking Wearing. E.O. 13991 had established the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force). The Administration has determined that the Task Force is no longer necessary as the country has transitioned from an emergency response to a longer-term response to COVID-19 and pandemic preparedness in general. In light of the issuance of the E.O. of April 12, 2024, M-24-12 revokes Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-21-15 of January 24, 2021, which required federal agencies to develop and maintain agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans in accordance with the Task Force's model safety principles. While workplace safety plans are no longer driven by the guidance of the Task Force, agencies must continue to maintain, update, and implement workplace safety plans and refer to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and other agencies, as applicable.

This document provides safety guidance for all PBGC federal employees and onsite contractors (referred to as "PBGC's workforce") and is primarily focused on the application of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and OMB guidelines at all PBGC facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses in the workplace. This plan references communication with, and requires notification to, the "supervisor" or "manager" in certain circumstances. The "supervisor" or "manager" of onsite contractors is the contractor employee who serves as the Program Manager (PM) (i.e., the contractor's PM). The contractor's PM is responsible for communicating on behalf of all onsite contractors under their supervision to the PBGC Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).

These guidelines apply to buildings managed by PBGC and buildings (or areas within buildings) controlled by PBGC (referred to as "PBGC facilities"). This document is not meant to be comprehensive and is organized by subject consistent with OMB guidance. This guidance supersedes any conflicting information in any previously published PBGC guidance on COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses.

To ensure alignment with the latest health standards, PBGC may provide additional and supplemental guidance based on updates from CDC and OMB.

Workplace Flexibilities

As a general principle, every effort will be made to maximize the use of telework. In addition to maximizing telework, PBGC continues to make available other flexibilities for use by PBGC employees to help sustain their workday while managing their dependent care responsibilities. These flexibilities include, but are not limited to, alternative and compressed work schedules, a flexible workday (6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.), and remote work in accordance with memorandum [M-23-15](#), *Measuring, Monitoring, and Improving Organizational Health and Organizational Performance in the Context of Evolving Agency Work Environments*, issued by OMB on April 23, 2023.

It is understood that certain PBGC program functions may require onsite work. PBGC has identified key personnel in PBGC's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) who may be expected to continue to report onsite to perform certain business functions. Key personnel should consult with their supervisors or managers for work-related guidance.

Health and Safety

Masks

Federal employees, onsite contractors, and all visitors are expected to follow [CDC](#), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and OMB guidelines on wearing masks (also called face coverings), physical distancing, and hygiene. Currently, all mask wearing is optional.

Symptom Monitoring

The PBGC workforce shares the responsibility for limiting the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. One of the best ways to limit the transmission of the virus is to stay home if sick. **PBGC federal employees, onsite contractors, or visitors who are not feeling well should stay home and not enter the workplace.**

PBGC federal employees, contractors **working on site**, and visitors are [recommended to follow CDC guidance on preventing spread when they are sick](#) or have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by an illness prior to coming to a PBGC worksite.

Leave Related to Respiratory Infection

If an employee is infected with COVID-19 or another respiratory illness and is unable to telework, the employee may request sick leave, as weather and safety leave would be unavailable. Employees may also request accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate. (See Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Compensation Policy Memorandum 2020-02, February 7, 2020).

Confidentiality

All information collected from PBGC federal employees, contractors, and visitors to PBGC facilities in connection with the implementation of PBGC's Workplace Safety Plan — including but not limited to names and contact information, COVID-19 screening information, test results, any information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, and any other personal and/or medical information — will be treated confidentially and in accordance with applicable law and government-wide policy. Within PBGC, this information will be accessible by, and disclosed only to, those who have a need to know the information to carry out the requirements of this plan.

The HRD Director will serve as the point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical data. When in receipt of confidential and private information, PBGC will safeguard the information in a way consistent with applicable local, state, and federal privacy, health/medical, and workplace laws and regulations (e.g., U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)). In addition, this information may be disclosed outside of PBGC (for example, to other federal agencies and local public health officials) only as permitted by applicable law and policy and only to those individuals and entities with a need to know to protect health and safety.

Reasonable Accommodations

A "reasonable accommodation" under the Rehabilitation Act and ADA includes modification to a workplace policy due to a disability-related need of a federal employee.

Unrelated to the establishment of a home office for the purpose of telework, a reasonable accommodation may be required and provided to employees working from home.

Accommodations may relate to COVID-19 or other respiratory illness if the employee acquires the illness and needs modifications to perform the essential functions of his or her position. Additionally, accommodations may relate to other medical conditions that are unrelated to a respiratory illness but impact an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his or her position. These may be the same accommodations as those provided in the office setting, or they may differ based on the office setting or other circumstances. The way employees are accommodated may vary depending on the office setting or other circumstances. Employees should engage their supervisors and the Human Resources Department to initiate an interactive process to determine whether and what accommodation may be provided.

Wellness Resources

PBGC consistently promotes work-life programs and resources through email communications to help employees balance and manage daily home and work responsibilities or deal with life challenges.

Federal employees may reach out to the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP). This free, confidential, and professionally staffed service is available to all PBGC federal employees. EAP is a professional resource available to help employees resolve life challenges through confidential counseling and coaching with experienced, licensed counselors — including legal and financial consultation.

EAP is available 24 hours a day/7 days per week/365 days per year at 800-222-0364. When in-person sessions are limited, phone consultations will be provided right away.

[WorkLife4You](#) is another resource, a referral program, designed to help PBGC federal employees and their dependents better manage daily responsibilities and life events. Services include expert guidance from work-life specialists, personalized referrals to helpful resources nationwide, and online tools to help with topics such as childcare and parenting, adult care and aging, education, career development, financial and legal, health and wellness, and other everyday needs.

Workplace Operations

PBGC is committed to protecting the PBGC workforce and stakeholders from the effects of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses while preserving the Corporation's ability to complete its mission.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

To the extent feasible, PBGC's facility has made changes to their heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to optimize indoor ventilation by increasing the proportion of outdoor ventilation, improving filtration to a filter rated at least MERV-13 (or the highest efficiency filter that the HVAC system can handle), or reducing/eliminating recirculation. All PBGC facilities have had their HVAC systems tested to maximize the mix of outside air and to run continuously to increase the circulation of fresh air.

Environmental Cleaning

Office spaces are cleaned in accordance with GSA lease guidelines. PBGC provides wipes, gloves, and other Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectants. PBGC employees and contractors are expected to clean property, such as phones, computers, desks, and other office equipment, after use using disinfecting wipes available in the office.

Hygiene

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, everyone should practice respiratory hygiene.

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% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

Hand sanitizers provided meet FDA-approved guidelines and contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers are available at PBGC facility entrances and throughout the building in various workspaces. Individuals are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently.

Shared Spaces

Shared tools and equipment should be disinfected by users any time the equipment is used by, or transferred to, a new person, and disinfectant wipes have been provided throughout PBGC facilities. Shared tools and equipment include phones, printers/copiers, monitors, keyboards, mice, conference room scheduling devices, and other office equipment and devices.

PBGC-provided refrigerators, microwaves, coffee machines, and water and ice machines are located throughout the building and may be used with proper hand hygiene.

Training and Communications

Information on safety protocols has been provided and communicated to PBGC's workforce.

Vaccination

Leave Related to Vaccination

Leave to Obtain Vaccination. On May 9, 2023, President Biden signed an Executive Order revoking Executive Order 14043, which required vaccination for Federal civilian employees. Effective May 12, 2023, all prior guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force implementing the requirements of Executive Order 14043 has also been revoked. On April 12, 2024, President Biden revoked the 2021 executive order that had established the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and amended the instances when employees can take leave related to COVID-19 vaccinations. Employees who seek any non-required dose of FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine during work hours should be granted administrative leave (consistent with OPM guidance) and not use duty time.

- PBGC will grant leave-eligible employees up to four hours of administrative leave to receive any recommended dose of FDA-authorized COVID-19 or booster.
- The administrative leave will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccine dose, and return to work. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccine dose, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted.
- Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using administrative leave for purposes of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine dose.
- Employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent getting a vaccine dose outside their tour of duty.