



Peace Corps

COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

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Office of Management / Office of Administrative Services

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PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The health and safety of the Peace Corps workforce is the Agency's highest priority. This Peace Corps COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan (WSP) outlines updated protocols for all who enter Peace Corps domestic facilities and procedures for staff to implement to support a safe and healthy workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic. This WSP applies to all domestic Peace Corps establishments and to all Peace Corps staff, contractors, and visitors, as specified throughout this WSP. Peace Corps staff assigned overseas are to follow the relevant U.S. Department of State Chief of Mission protocols and guidance on community levels for their duty location.

This WSP was developed in accordance with [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13991](#), the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (SFWTF) [guidance](#), including the [Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles](#), which sets forth COVID-19 protocols for ensuring a safe workplace and are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public health and infectious disease experts, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the General Services Administration (GSA), and other Federal agencies; and OMB Memoranda [M-21-15](#) and [M-21-25](#). More information is found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of the SFWTF website.

Where a locality has imposed added requirements more protective than those in the WSP and SFWTF guidance, Peace Corps staff will follow those additional local requirements in its domestic facilities and on Government-operated transportation conveyances.

Questions should be directed to askosh@peacecorps.gov.

COVID-19 CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS WORK GROUP (CCWG)

Per OMB Memorandum [M-21-15](#), Peace Corps established and maintains a CCWG of cross-agency representatives and expertise to coordinate and implement our COVID-19 WSP. The CCWG meets as needed and decides revisions to the WSP based on new or updated guidance from the federal government and public-health authorities, including the SFWTF, CDC, and local governments of the National Capital Region (NCR) jurisdictions, and will communicate WSP updates via publicly available website, following consultation with SFWTF.

Additionally, resources for Peace Corps staff are available on the Facilities Resource Center intranet workspace. The Office of Management has oversight for WSP management and meets as needed with Peace Corps senior leadership to review updates and compliance with this WSP and to evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level

For Peace Corps domestic facilities, the Office of Management monitors [COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels](#) in the National Capital Region (NCR) periodically to determine changes to workplace safety protocols based on SFWTF and current CDC recommendations.

The protocols outlined in this WSP apply to all domestic facilities owned or leased by the Peace Corps. Peace Corps facilities overseas will follow Chief of Mission protocols. Overseas health units also follow applicable Office of Health Services technical guidelines for healthcare of the Volunteer.

The following protocols have been extensively revised and updated consistent with [SFWTF Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles](#), last updated September 15, 2022 and [CDC COVID-19 website](#), last reviewed December 1, 2023.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Peace Corps supports vaccination for all staff. COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at protecting people from becoming seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying. As with other vaccine-preventable diseases, protection is highest from COVID-19 when individuals stay up to date with the recommended vaccinations. For more information on staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, see [Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

On May 12, 2023, previous Executive Orders on COVID-19 vaccination requirements for Federal employees and contractors were revoked. SFWTF guidance on other Federal agency safety protocols is still in effect as outlined below.

Mask-Wearing

Peace Corps staff must follow CDC recommendations related to certain settings where different or additional layers of prevention are recommended by CDC, including, for example, [healthcare settings](#). Where there is a conflict between this WSP, SFWTF guidance, and CDC recommendations, Peace Corps will follow the most current CDC [recommendations](#).

Mask-wearing accommodations is available for individuals consistent with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requirements under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. See below section on [Reasonable Accommodations](#) paragraphs for more information on this process. Any other issues related to compliance with mask-wearing requirements should be directed immediately to supervisors, who will notify the Office of Management at askosh@peacecorps.gov.

Indoors in Facilities, In-person Interaction with Public

Individuals - including Peace Corps staff, contractors, and visitors who are two years or older - must wear a high-quality mask or respirator indoors in Peace Corps domestic facilities when the COVID-19 Hospital Level is HIGH or when required for [post-exposure](#) and [post-isolation](#) precautions. This includes when Peace Corps staff are interacting with members of the public as part of their official duties. When mask-wearing is not required, anyone who would like to wear mask or respirator may choose to do so.

When masking is required in the workplace or establishment:

- Individuals must wear a high-quality mask or respirator that complies with CDC [recommendations](#), including: respirators that meet U.S. or international standards (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94), masks that meet an industry standard (e.g., ASTM), or “procedure” and “surgical”-style masks.
- Appropriate masks should be worn consistently and correctly (over the nose and mouth) in any common areas or shared workspaces (including all workstations/cubicles).
- Masks may be removed if an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls and a closed door, or for a limited time when eating or drinking at one’s workstation and while keeping distance from others.
- Individuals may be asked to lower their mask briefly to verify identity.
- Individuals do not need to wear masks or respirators when outdoors.

Peace Corps will make high-quality masks available to staff when wearing masks is required in Peace Corps establishments per SFWTF guidance and/or CDC recommendations. Staff or offices may request masks by emailing PLS@peacecorps.gov.

On Government-Operated Transportation Conveyances

Pursuant to [E.O. 13991](#) and consistent with [CDC advice](#) for wearing masks [during travel](#), staff are urged to consider wearing high-quality masks or respirators (such as an N95) when in government-operated aircraft, boats and other maritime transportation conveyances, and buses with multiple occupants. Local requirements may mandate this. In these conveyances, occupants can remove their masks or respirators for safety reasons or for brief periods of time while eating, drinking, or taking medication. Mask-wearing is not needed for outdoor areas of conveyances, if any. In government-operated vans, cars, trucks, and other motor pool passenger vehicles, Peace Corps recommends that staff wear high-quality masks or respirators (such as N95s) when there are multiple occupants.

The [Official Travel](#) paragraphs below have further information about mask requirements during travel.

In Healthcare Settings

In accordance with [CDC Interim COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel](#), all Peace Corps staff should consider [source control](#) (e.g., wearing a mask or respirator to prevent spread of respiratory secretions) when entering overseas health units where HIGH COVID-19 Hospital Admission

Levels or Transmission is occurring at locale per Chief of Mission assessment and any Office of Health Services guidance.

Until there is a final OSHA regulation, Peace Corps will follow terms outlined in OSHA's [COVID-19 Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard](#) which requires all staff occupationally exposed to Volunteers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 must use personal protective equipment in accordance with [Standard](#) and [Transmission-based](#) precautions, including a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator with N95 filters or higher when required by the Office of Health Services consistent with CDC guidance.

When required to prevent occupational exposure to COVID-19, NIOSH-approved N95 respirators must be used per OSHA Respiratory Standard (29 CFR 1910.134), Peace Corps Respiratory Protection Program, and medical Technical Guidelines published by the Office of Health Services.

Signage and Online Notice of Mask-Wearing Requirements

Peace Corps reinforces current CDC recommendations through the posting of approved signage in domestic facilities that notes requirements for [mask wearing](#).

Individual-level Prevention Steps and Community-level Strategies

CDC now recommends certain [individual-level prevention steps and community level prevention strategies](#), based on COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level, to protect yourself and others. When community COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, these prevention actions may include wearing a high-quality mask or respirator, increasing space and distance, avoiding crowded areas, avoiding indoor activities if at high-risk, and screening tests in high-risk settings. All staff are encouraged to develop and follow a [personal COVID-19 plan](#).

Symptom Screening

Self-screening for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) is required for all individuals prior to entry to Federal facilities. When U.S. government employees, onsite contractors, or visitors do not feel well - including if they have fever, chills, or other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19 such as, but not limited to, 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 should stay home and not enter any Peace Corps facility. All onsite staff and visitors should consider completing a [self-screening for symptoms](#) prior entering a facility. All staff should complete symptom self-screening prior to interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities.

All individuals experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#) should consider immediately testing for COVID-19 and staying at home until you have your results. If an individual (staff, contractor, or visitor) has tested positive for COVID-19 (even without symptoms), they should follow CDC [isolation recommendations](#).

Any individual who develops fever, chills, or other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who tests positive for COVID-19, while onsite in a Peace Corps establishment must immediately isolate, wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95), notify appropriate supervisor, and promptly leave the facility.

COVID-19 Screening Tests

Except in high-risk settings, staff and onsite contractor Peace Corps staff do not have to take part in COVID-19 serial or point-in-time screening testing, which is intended to identify people who are asymptomatic or do not have any known, suspected, or reported exposure. Screening testing is separate from diagnostic testing and symptom self-screening.

Post-Exposure Precautions

If an asymptomatic staff member has a known [exposure](#) to someone with COVID-19, the staff member does not need to stay out of the workplace for home quarantine.

Pursuant to [E.O. 13991](#) and consistent with CDC recommendations on [post-exposure precautions](#), Peace Corps staff who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 must do the following, regardless of their vaccination status, for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed:

- Wear a high-quality [mask or respirator](#) while working indoors at a Peace Corps facility or interacting indoors with members of the public in person as part of their official duties as soon as possible after notification of exposure and continue to do so;
- Take [extra precautions](#), such as avoiding crowding and increasing distance from others, when they know they are around people who are [more likely to get very sick](#) from COVID-19 while working onsite at a Peace Corps establishment or interacting indoors with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities; and
- Watch for COVID-19 [symptoms](#).

Required Post-Exposure Testing

Pursuant to [E.O. 13991](#) and consistent with [CDC recommendations](#) and if working onsite at a Peace Corps facility or interacting with the public in-person as part of official duties, Peace Corps staff must conduct or complete a [viral test](#) at least 5 full days after last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6). This test can be both self-administered and self-read.

- If the test is negative, staff should continue to follow the above protocols for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed.
- If the test is positive, or if staff at any time develop COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow CDC recommended protocols on [isolation](#).
- For exposed staff who have recovered from COVID-19 within the past 90 days, please refer to [specific testing CDC recommendations for those that have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days](#).

Peace Corps staff who require post-exposure testing to return to work onsite may request a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) from PLS@peacecorps.gov or use [SF-1164](#) to request reimbursement. Self-tests may be purchased online at [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov), in pharmacies, and retail stores (refer to [FDA's website](#) for a list of authorized tests).

Individuals known to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, who will not be working onsite at a Peace Corps establishment or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities within 10 days of the known exposure, do not have to be tested.

Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions

Any individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, should follow CDC recommendations for [isolation](#), monitor their symptoms, and not enter a Peace Corps or other federal facility or interact with members of the public in person as part of their official duties. This includes people who have an initial positive diagnostic [viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms, and people with symptoms of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested.

- Peace Corps staff who tested positive for COVID-19 and *never developed symptoms* may return to working onsite after five full days while wearing a mask thru day 10 following their positive COVID-19 test.
- Staff should refer to CDC [isolation calculator](#) to confirm ALL recommended preventive actions that staff must take when returning to onsite work.
- Peace Corps staff who tested positive for COVID-19 and *had symptoms* may return to working onsite, wearing a mask, after five full days following the onset of symptoms (day 0 being the day of symptom onset, regardless of when the member tested positive) once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms are improving.
- Again, staff returning to work onsite should follow all [post-isolation](#) precautions, including wearing a mask, as noted below in post-isolation precautions and per current CDC recommendations found in [isolation calculator](#).
- Peace Corps staff who had moderate illness (they experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) or severe illness (they were hospitalized) due to COVID-19, or has a weakened immune system, should delay returning to working onsite for a full 10 days.
 - Further, staff members with severe illness or a weakened immune system should consult their doctor before ending isolation. If a staff member is unsure if their symptoms are moderate or severe or if they have a weakened immune system, they should talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Post-Isolation Precautions

After testing positive for COVID-19 and isolating, Peace Corps staff returning to work onsite at a Peace Corps facility or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities must continue to follow

CDC recommendations on ending [isolation](#) and associated precautions for at least 10 full days after their first day of symptoms, or after the date of a positive viral test for asymptomatic individuals, including wearing a high-quality mask or respirator when around others; avoiding eating and drinking around others; avoiding environments such as dining facilities, gyms, and other places where they may need to be unmasked around others; and avoiding being around people known to be at for severe disease from COVID-19.

Peace Corps staff may opt to take two (2) viral rapid antigen tests authorized by the FDA to detect current COVID-19 infection, starting on day 6.

- With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, a staff member may remove their mask sooner than day 10.
- If either of their antigen test results are positive, the staff member should continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until they have two sequential negative results. This may mean that the staff member would continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

If at any point their COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, that individual must not enter a Peace Corps facility, restarting at day 0, consistent with [E.O. 13991](#) and CDC recommendations on [isolation](#) and Peace Corps workplace safety protocols.

Leave Related to Isolation

If a staff member who is isolating in response to a positive COVID-19 test result is unable to or does not feel well enough to telework, then the staff member may request sick leave, use accrued annual leave or other forms of earned paid time off (e.g., compensatory time off or credit hours), access a voluntary leave bank, or use unpaid leave.

OFFICIAL TRAVEL

There are no Government-wide limits on official travel (i.e., travel conducted under an official travel authorization), regardless of an individual's vaccination status. Peace Corps staff should consult the latest [CDC travelers' health recommendations](#) and follow in-country travel guidelines ([CDC](#), [DoS](#)) for the destination and reentry to the home community at the end of travel. All staff should adhere strictly to CDC recommendations for [travel](#) before, during and after official travel.

Peace Corps provides recommended and/or required COVID-19 testing associated with Official Travel at no cost to the staff, either through provision of RATs for self-testing or travel voucher reimbursement.

- Currently, Peace Corps-purchased RAT supply is still available. Staff may request RATs for testing as recommended by [CDC](#).
- PC/Washington staff may email PLS@peacecorps.gov to request RATs for Official Travel. Overseas staff may use any remaining RATs sent to the Post.

- When not readily available from Peace Corps supply or not covered or reimbursable through travel insurance, the cost of recommended or required testing may be claimed in a travel voucher as a Miscellaneous Expense under Peace Corps policy.

Official Travel Approval

Before approving official travel for Peace Corps staff, the approving official should:

- Instruct the traveler to follow all of the most current [CDC travelers' health recommendations](#) on COVID-19 before, during, and after travel.
- Inform the traveler that CDC recommends that individuals make sure they are [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines before travel.
- Recommend that the traveler consider being tested if they:
 - Develop COVID-19 symptoms before, during, or after travel.
 - Will be traveling to visit someone who is at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.
 - Were in a situation with a greater risk of exposure during travel (e.g., in an indoor, crowded space like an airport terminal while not wearing a mask).
- Instruct the traveler to check their destination's COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level before traveling, and to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) while on-duty and around others indoors at destination, if the travel location's COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level or Transmission is HIGH.
- Instruct the traveler to make sure they understand and follow all travel restrictions put in place by State, Tribal, local, and territorial governments.
- Recommend that travelers prepare to be flexible during their travel, as restrictions, policies, and circumstances may change during their travel.

Official Travel for Staff with Known Exposure

Peace Corps may approve official travel for asymptomatic staff who have had a known [exposure](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the past 10 days. If the staff member does not have COVID-19 [symptoms](#) before traveling, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, staff should:

- Wear a high-quality [mask or respirator](#) (such as an N95) the entire time they are on-duty and around others indoors for the full duration of their travel that falls within the 10 full days after their last known exposure;
- Not travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if they will not be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) when around others indoors for the full duration of their travel within the 10 full days after their last known exposure.
- Follow other aspects of [post-exposure protocols](#), including being tested for COVID-19 after 5 full days following their last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6).
 - NOTE: this testing may need to occur while the staff member is traveling, and Peace Corps does not require staff to wait for the results of this post-exposure diagnostic test to undertake official travel, including return travel.

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

Pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, Peace Corps will not approve official travel (i.e., travel conducted under an official travel authorization) for individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for an initial diagnostic viral test result or who have tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 5 full days after their first day of symptoms or after the date of the initial positive diagnostic viral test for asymptomatic individuals.

If staff who tested positive for COVID-19 have returned to work after following recommended isolation period and been approved for official travel, staff should:

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

If after official travel has been approved or begun, Peace Corps staff COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen or has confirmed COVID-19 while traveling, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC recommendations on isolation, Peace Corps staff must not undertake further official travel, including under any previously approved travel authorization or return travel, and to again not enter a federal facility or interact with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities, restarting at day 0 of isolation protocols, consistent with E.O. 13991 and CDC recommendations on [isolation](#).

Costs associated with travel and lodging expenses, as well as the cost of any diagnostic testing in these circumstances, are reimbursable expenses to the extent allowed by the Federal Travel Regulation. If testing is required for official travel, individuals should submit for direct reimbursement per test as part of the Travel Authorization. Staff should plan for any required pre-travel testing when building their travel itinerary. If a staff member is in travel status and must delay travel due to a COVID-19 positive test result, then the travel authorization should be amended. However, for any cost-constructed travel, Peace Corps staff are responsible for additional costs due to COVID-19, including costs for delays and rescheduling of flights, unless in official travel status.

MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND CONFERENCES

There are no Government-wide restrictions on meetings, events, and conferences. All in-person attendees at meetings, conferences, or events hosted by Peace Corps must comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols outlined in this WSP, including mask-wearing when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are HIGH, pursuant to

E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, or as required by State, Tribal, territorial, or local laws, rules, regulations, or existing collective bargaining agreements.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY - RECORDING KEEPING

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained because of testing and symptom monitoring, will be handled following applicable laws, regulations and policies on confidentiality and privacy, and will be accessible only to those with a need to know.

Peace Corps will maintain information collected from staff COVID-19 information collection systems following the Federal Records Act and other records requirements. Questions relating to COVID-19 related personal medical information and record keeping, should be directed to the Office of Management at askOSH@peacecorps.gov and/or to Peace Corps Privacy Officer at privacyoffice@peacecorps.gov.

FACILITY WORKPLACE OPERATIONS

Hand Hygiene

Per CDC's [handwashing](#) guidance, Peace Corps recommends frequent handwashing in the workplace, which is reinforced through educational posters throughout all facilities. Additionally, hand sanitizer stations are provided as needed, holding FDA-approved hand sanitizer, with at least 60% ethanol.

Facility Cleaning

While the risk of infection from building surfaces is low, Peace Corps regularly cleans common use, high-touch, and high-density spaces, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells. Office space that is in regular use and overseas health units are cleaned regularly, in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#). Peace Corps supplies sanitizer-wipes and other EPA-approved disinfectants to staff for wiping down their workstation and related personal property.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

Peace Corps Facilities Management has confirmed with the Washington, DC headquarters building management company that the headquarters building's air quality and HVAC system meets the LEED Platinum and ASHRAE guidelines for acceptable air quality and the HVAC is operating per the design requirements. Thus, portable air cleaners are not recommended for the Washington, DC headquarters building. Peace Corps staff may find more details on air quality on the Facilities Resources Center intranet workspace. For questions about indoor air quality related to COVID-19, individuals may contact the Office of Management at askosh@peacecorps.gov.

MISHAP REPORTING OF WORK-RELATED COVID-19

In accordance with Peace Corps policy and OSHA's recordkeeping requirements, if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19 related to workplace or official duties, the case must be recorded on the OSHA Illness and Injury Log if each of the following conditions are met:

- 1) the case is a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- 2) the case is work-related (as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5); and
- 3) the case involves one or more relevant recording criteria (set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7) (e.g., medical treatment beyond first aid, days away from work)

Staff mishap reporting procedures are outlined in [MS 520](#), *Peace Corps Staff Occupational Safety and Health Procedures*. Additionally, Peace Corps staff may reach out to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) at HR/ELR@peacecorps.gov for help with filing a work-related illness claim via the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. Peace Corps staff may also refer to OHR Worker's Compensation page available on our intranet workspace.

ENGAGEMENT WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNIT

This Peace Corps WSP has been shared with Employee Labor Relations via CCWG. Employee Labor Relations can provide feedback and negotiate impact on the implementation of this WSP, if any, as appropriate with the Collective Bargaining Unit.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations to WSP protocols will be made for individuals consistent with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requirements under the Rehabilitation Act. The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD) is the Peace Corps' designated decision-maker on all disability reasonable accommodation requests, including workplace safety protocols. Individuals should review [Civil Rights and Diversity](#) page or contact ocrd@peacecorps.gov to request reasonable accommodation to COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.