

COVID-19 FAQs

Updated as of January 7, 2022

Summary of Document Updates:

Information has been updated in certain sections of this document as of January 7, 2022 to account for new guidance from the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and other changes since the last iteration of the FAQs. Sections updated include:

- COVID-19 Testing (page 5) – Updated to reflect the vaccine mandate policy.
- COVID-19 Vaccines (page 6) – Updated to reflect the vaccine mandate policy and information on booster shots.
- Child and Dependent Care (page 19) – Updated to reflect current options for leave.
- Working in the Office (page 22) – Updated to reflect in-person meetings should not be mandatory and virtual options given. Guidance on using MS Teams for interviews has been updated.

COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended to provide answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) around the operations of the New York City (NYC) Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Due to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 emergency and response, modifications, and adjustments to HPD's policies, procedures and facilities may be made as necessary.

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General Return to Office Information

Safe Practices

Q: Where can I get the most up to date information about COVID-19?

A: Please refer to [What New Yorkers Need to Know Now About COVID-19](#) for answers to many frequently asked questions about COVID-19. Visit DOHMH's COVID-19 webpage at nyc.gov/health/coronavirus for up-to-date information and guidance about COVID-19, and nyc.gov/coronavirus for other NYC resources. For questions on HPD's Return to Office Plan, please email hpdemergencyprep@hpd.nyc.gov. For questions related to time and leave, please email askhr@hpd.nyc.gov.



Q: What can I do to contribute to stop the spread of COVID?

A: You play an essential role in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Always:

- ✓ Get vaccinated. This is the best protection that you can have for yourself, for loved ones and for your co-workers.
- ✓ Monitor your health daily
- ✓ Stay home if sick
- ✓ Wear face coverings (see [Face Coverings](#) section, below)
- ✓ Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve (not bare hands)
- ✓ Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth, with unwashed hands

- ✓ Do not shake hands or hug
- ✓ Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- ✓ Consider getting a COVID-19 booster shot
- ✓ Consider getting a flu shot during flu season to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading additional viruses
- ✓ HPD staff who are unvaccinated and received a reasonable accommodation should get tested for COVID-19 weekly

Q: What is the purpose of face coverings?

A: A face covering decreases the chance of spreading COVID-19. Face coverings are especially important because people can have COVID-19 and not know it because they do not have symptoms.

Q: Where can staff get general information about face coverings, including proper face covering use and care?

A: Refer to the following DOHMH guidance:

- [Face Masks: The Basics](#)
- [Face Mask FAQ](#)

HPD's COVID-19 training also includes information on face coverings.

COVID-19 Testing

Q: When should I get tested for COVID-19?

A: Per [DOHMH Commissioner's Order to Require COVID-19 Vaccination for City Employees and Certain City Contractors](#), the New York City Vaccine Mandate requires that all City employees must provide verification that they are vaccinated against COVID-19. Those employees with an exemption from the vaccination mandate as an approved reasonable accommodation must provide proof of a negative PCR COVID test, or proof of a pending test result, on a weekly basis. DOHMH recommends that everyone should get tested for if they have COVID-19 symptoms, if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, and before and after travel and attending large gatherings.

Q: Where can staff learn more about COVID-19 testing?

A: Refer to [DOHMH's COVID-19 Testing: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) about coronavirus and antibody testing. You can also call 311.

Q: For staff who have a reasonable accommodation and are not required to be vaccinated, what are the requirements for testing?

For each day that an employee reports to work onsite, they must have had a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within the preceding seven days. This test result must be submitted to HR [here](#) and must be negative. An employee who has been tested within the preceding seven days, but is still waiting for the result may report to work with a pending test result as long as they meet the criteria of the health screening and submit the test result to HR via the same link as soon as it becomes available. Employees who fail to comply will be placed on leave without pay ("LWOP") until they submit the required test result (or proof of a pending test result) to HR. Employees who refuse to comply will be

terminated. These employees may use City time to be tested, but some restrictions apply; please consult with HR if you are unclear about these restrictions.

Q: Will COVID-19 testing be offered to staff through the agency?

A: Testing is widely available in NYC. Go to nyc.gov/covidtest to find a testing site or call 311; many of the sites offer free COVID testing.

COVID-19 Vaccines

As of October 29, 2021, all City employees (including interns, aides, fellows, and volunteers) without a reasonable accommodation (RA) or pending RA request were to have provided proof to the Agency that:

- they were fully vaccinated against COVID-19; or
- they received a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, even if two weeks have not passed since they received the vaccine; or
- they received the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine.

Covered employees of a City human services contractor and covered employees of any other contractors whose work responsibilities require them to regularly work alongside City employees at a location controlled by the City of New York are also subject to the COVID-19 vaccination mandate. Employees of other contractors must continue to adhere to the COVID-Safe vaccine or testing requirement set forth in prior Executive Orders.

Booster shots are now available for those 12 years and older. It is recommended that fully vaccinated staff receive a booster shot. For more information, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page#boost>



Q: Where can staff learn more about COVID-19 vaccines?

A: DOHMH's website has information on eligibility, FAQs, making appointments for vaccination, and safety of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Visit DOHMH's vaccine webpage [here](#).

Where are COVID-19 vaccines available?

To schedule a vaccination or booster shot appointment, visit: nyc.gov/vaccinefinder. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to schedule an appointment at certain sites or request an at-home vaccination appointment.

Q: Are unvaccinated staff still able to work in office or the field?

A: Unvaccinated staff who have an approved reasonable accommodation may work from the office or the field but are required to submit weekly proof of a negative PCR test for COVID-19.

Commuting to Work

Q: What can staff do to ensure a safe commute to work?

A: There are some steps staff can take to safely commute to work:

- Bring a face covering, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes when leaving the home.
- Make a travel plan.
- Travel during non-peak hours if possible and allow extra time for travel changes.
- Always wear a face covering on mass transit, when not able to socially distance while walking or biking, and when using car services.
- Minimize touching surfaces on mass transit. Use hand sanitizer and/or wash hands after touching surfaces.
- Whenever possible, consider other forms of commuting, including biking (with a helmet) and walking.



For more information, review the DOHMH guidance [here](#).

Q: Will office infrastructure be updated to support more employees biking to work?

A: The bicycle room at 100 Gold St will continue to be open, but for only a limited number of bikes (approximately 14). Additional bike racks have been installed outside of 100 Gold Street (**Please note:** the bike racks have been removed due to the shed erected for work being performed on the building). Bike safety information and maps are available at 100 Gold St and on HPD's Intranet page.

Mental Health: Stress and Support for Staff

Q: What resources are available to support staff members' mental health during the COVID-19 emergency?

A: Staff may find the following resources helpful:

- [DOHMH's Worksite Wellness](#) webpage
- [DOHMH's COVID-19: Mental Health and Behavioral Health](#) webpage
- Find emotional support through your own mental health provider or a professional available through any of the following:
 - NYC Well, a confidential 24/7 helpline staffed by trained counselors who can provide brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. For assistance, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat at [NYC Well](#). NYC Well's website offers a

number of well-being and emotional support applications (apps). Visit [NYC Well](#) and click on **App Library**.

- NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 844-863-9314, staffed from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, with specially trained volunteer professionals who are there to listen, support and refer if needed.
- The NYC Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers free and confidential assistance to staff and family members and can be reached at 212-306-7660 or by email at eap@olr.nyc.gov

Q: What happens if the virus becomes more widespread? Will the building be closed if there is an increase in city-wide or building-wide infections?

A: HPD leadership will work with City partners to keep abreast of the rate of COVID-19 infections in NYC and monitor COVID positive cases in HPD. Based on available data and recommendations, HPD will take appropriate steps, as needed.

Keeping Us Safe at HPD

General

Q: What has been done to prepare the building for staff to return?

A: DCAS/General Services have:

- Posted multiple notices about the importance of mask-wearing. Signage is posted indicating that all elevator riders must wear a face covering and follow directional signage regarding which direction to face.
- Installed signage encouraging staff to use stairwells instead of elevators to minimize waiting time for the elevators.
- Installed plexiglass in customer-facing areas.
- Taken appropriate steps to ensure adequate ventilation (see below for more details on ventilation).
- Installed videoconferencing equipment in designated conference rooms, to facilitate virtual meetings.
- Established a daily cleaning schedule for high touch areas.
- Made PPE, hand sanitizer and cleaning disinfectant supplies available for all staff.
- Placed sanitizing supplies near copiers and other shared equipment.
- Implemented a daily health screening assessment enforced by the DCAS personnel or other guard personnel at our sites.



Building Ventilation

Q: What has been done to ensure proper ventilation?

A: The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends that, in general, buildings:

- Increase outdoor air ventilation
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly
- Increase air filtration.

Working in conjunction with DCAS and other managers of buildings used by HPD, our filtration and ventilation systems have been checked and upgraded to follow CDC and The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommendations regarding a building's preparedness for the return to office. These recommendations focus primarily on the volume of air circulating in a space and the quality of the air filtration system.

How ventilation systems generally work:

- Bring in fresh air from outside at a standard rate and disperse that air throughout the building; and
- Filter air inside the building to remove contaminants from the air.

Better ventilation means that air does not remain stagnant and free air flow is key – **wearing your mask in combination with adequate ventilation work hand in hand to reduce potential exposure.**

Working with DCAS and/or the operators of our site locations, we have confirmed that:

- Ventilation systems have been assessed and where necessary adjusted to meet the required volume of circulation (air flow). All restroom exhaust fans were checked for functionality and are operating as required.
- Ventilation filters were checked and upgraded to the Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating of 13 or the highest rating allowed for a particular HVAC system. Our site offices located at 1932 Arthur Avenue and 10 Richmond Terrace do not have an HVAC system and to support an increase in the number of staff that work at these locations the agency has purchased and installed standalone air purifying systems.

CDC and ASHRAE guidance suggests that, where possible, HVAC systems run using the maximum amount of outside air for two hours before buildings are occupied. In DCAS managed and in our private site office buildings, the HVAC systems will run for two hours before and after the peak

periods of building occupation (e.g., in the morning and evening on weekdays). Additionally, monthly ventilation maintenance checks are performed at all of our offices.

Building Systems

Q: What are the guidelines around use of restrooms?

A: Always wear a face covering while inside a restroom in an HPD building. If a restroom is too crowded, wait outside or use another restroom that is not crowded. Be courteous and limit your time in the restroom to allow others to use the restroom.

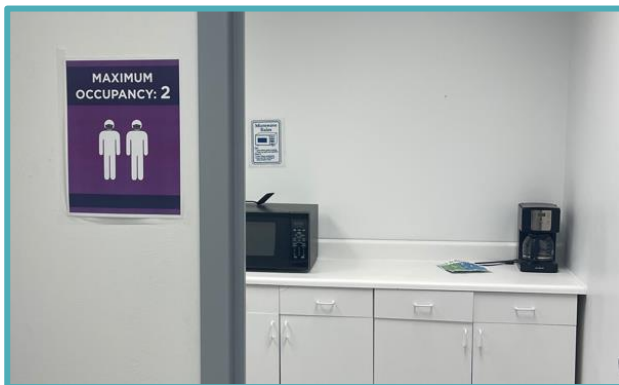
Shared Spaces

Q: Can doors in enclosed stairwells be propped open to avoid touching handles?

A: No. Fire doors in enclosed stairwells cannot be left open due to fire code regulations. However, stairwells in each building will be accessible for in-building transit. Please follow the one directional signage posted for stairwell use.

Q: Can I still use the CityTime Biometric Data Collection Device (DCD time clocks) to record my time when I am in the office?

A: Until further notice, staff cannot use the DCD time clocks in the office. All staff should use the CityTime Web Clock function on your desktop. Staff can access the “web clock” screen to record their time in, time out, meal start, and meal end, directly from the CityTime login screen by selecting the “web clock” option from the drop-down selection.



Q: Will pantry appliances be available for staff to use?

A: Yes. To ensure the safety of all, staff should wash their hands before and after use of appliances. Cleaning supplies will also be available for staff to use to clean appliances before use.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene

Q: What cleaning and disinfection measures will be in place at work sites?

A: A regular facility cleaning schedule is in place for all our workspaces to disinfect high touch areas such as door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, and shared spaces will continue to occur. At DCAS managed facilities, DCAS staff will be handling this regular cleaning and the services are either contracted for or provided by building management at our privately owned leased site offices. Additionally, public areas including lobbies and elevator cars are cleaned several times per day.

Q: Will cleaning supplies be available to staff to allow for routine cleaning of workstations and common areas?

A: Sanitizing wipe canisters and/or other cleaning supplies will be distributed to each unit. Staff can use them to wipe down individual workstations prior to beginning and at the end of their workday. Please clean shared equipment such as file cabinets and shared desks before using. **Note:** Aerosol disinfecting sprays, such as Lysol Disinfectant spray, should not be used by staff as others in the area may have fragrance sensitivity that can cause irritation or severe allergic reactions. Please do not remove or stockpile hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes provided for use at the office.

Q: What is done to clean workstations after someone tests positive for COVID-19?

A: When HR learns of a staffer with a positive COVID-19 test result, they notify General Services if the employee was in the office within the past three days. General Services then requests remedial cleaning and disinfecting of the staffer's workstation, as well as any place the staffer visited for more than ten minutes, nearby bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.



Q: How do you properly use hand sanitizer?

A: To properly use hand sanitizer, follow these basic instructions:

- Place a dime-size amount in the palm of one hand.
- Rub your hands together and cover your entire hand, including your wrist and between your fingers.
- Keep rubbing your hands until skin is dry.

Q: How do we ask for more hand sanitizer?

A: HPD will work to ensure that hand sanitizer is always available for staff. If you find that the large pump bottles are empty, please email General Services at gservices@hpd.nyc.gov and it will be replenished as soon as possible.

Q: Will trash pick-up in the offices resume?

A: At this time, DCAS will not be picking up the individual paper waste baskets. Employees will need to empty those in the recycle bins by the hallways.

Daily Health Screening Assessment

Q: What is the Daily Health Screening Assessment?

A: On a daily basis, staff are required to complete a mandatory electronic health screening (e-HSA) before coming to work at the link emailed to you each morning. Prior to completing the mandatory electronic health screening assessment and going into the office or the field, staff are required to check their temperature using a thermometer (see below for information on how to obtain one). Temperatures measuring at or above 100.0 F means that staff are not cleared to work in the field or office. Those who do not clear the screening requirements should not come to work (or should return home) and notify their supervisor.

If you are unable to complete the screening on your phone or other device prior to entering the building, you will complete an in-person screening verbally but **MUST** also complete the electronic screening once you get to your desk. Those who do not clear screening requirements should not come to work (or should return home) and notify their supervisor. The supervisor in turn should notify [Evelyn Taveras](#) at taverase@hpd.nyc.gov. Human Resources will provide further guidance on how staff should proceed. Staff should also follow up with their health care provider or call 311 and observe all guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others.

The eHSA is updated as citywide guidance changes.



Q: Once I've answered the health screening questions, do I have to answer them again each time I enter the building?

A: No. The health screening assessment is completed once a day. Show the green clearance email (or a printout of the clearance) each time you enter any HPD site, including after returning from lunch or an external meeting.

Q: How do I get a thermometer?

A: You may pick up a thermometer in the General Services office located in the main lobby area of 100 Gold Street, between 8AM and 5PM, Mondays through Fridays.

If you have your own thermometer and do not need one complete and return the attached waiver form to General Services at gsservices@hpd.nyc.gov. If you work in a site office, you can pick up a thermometer and/or submit a completed waiver form from your Borough Chief or the Site Director.

Staff must pick-up a thermometer or submit a completed waiver form to the appropriate party as soon as possible.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Q: When and where are face coverings needed at work?

A: All staff medically able to tolerate a face covering are expected to do so at all

times while in a shared indoor City workspace, or when interacting with the public, both indoors and outdoors. A shared indoor City workspace is a communal or open office setting in which individuals cannot be separated by a closed door. Fully vaccinated employees may remove their face covering if they are in an unshared workspace (i.e., a private office with a closed door), or when eating or drinking. An individual is considered fully vaccinated two or more weeks following receipt of second dose in a 2-dose series of a COVID-19 vaccine, or 2 or more weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine. **All non-vaccinated staff must continue to wear a face covering at all times except when they are eating or drinking, or if they have a reasonable accommodation.**

Refusal to wear a face covering when required, absent a reasonable accommodation, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination (per Revised DCAS Commissioner's Directive No. 2020-1).

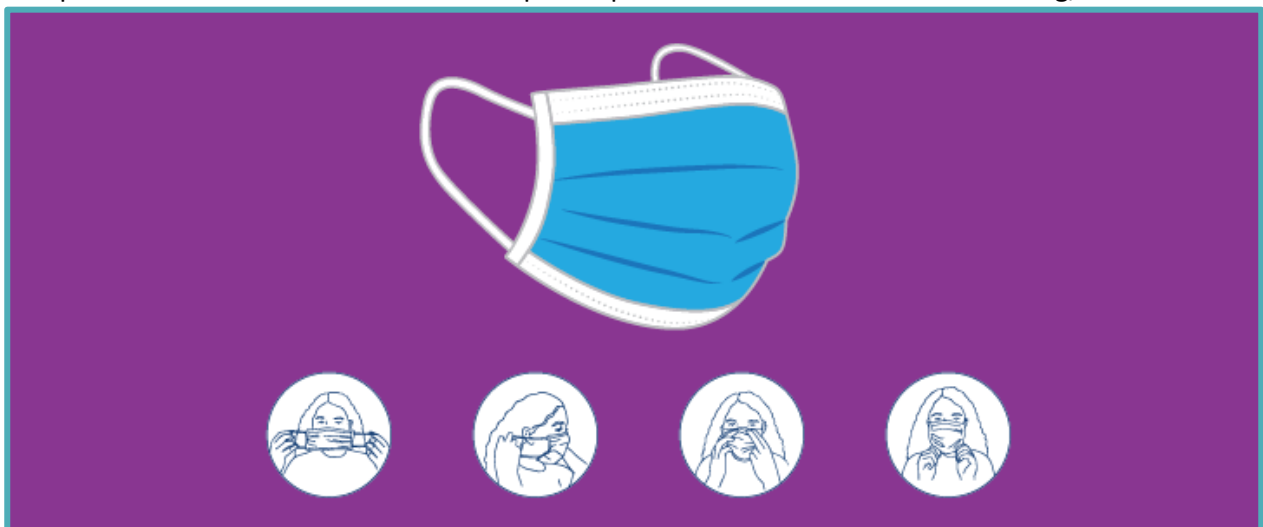
Q: Who is handling face covering distribution to program staff?

A: Face masks are currently provided to all field staff. Other staff can obtain face masks upon request. Staff will receive surgical face masks unless the staffer applies for a reasonable accommodation to wear a face shield instead of a mask. (See the reasonable accommodation section for more details). If you need a face mask you can ask your supervisor or contact General Services at gservices@hpd.nyc.gov. Face shields are also available for field staff who would want to use this mask in conjunction with the use of a disposable or cloth mask.

Q: Can staff use their own face covering?

A: Yes. Staff may use their own face coverings as long as the face covering meets the requirements of the City's Department of Health but must abide by HPD's Dress Code Policy related to statements, pictures, or logos. According to this policy—to promote efficiency and effectiveness of government operations and to prevent disruption—employees are required to be appropriately dressed and properly groomed during the workday. Appropriate attire is clothing that enables employees to project a business-like and professional appearance.

A face covering with an exhalation valve is **not** permitted, as it allows unfiltered exhaled air to escape to others. An exhalation valve is a plastic piece embedded in the face covering/mask. It acts



as a one-way valve that closes when you breathe in, but opens when you breathe out, expelling air from the face covering.

Q: Will double masking be required?

A: While double masking is not required, it is “strongly recommended” that City employees wear a face covering that fits snugly against the sides of the face and fully covers the nose and mouth without slipping, and (a) is made of two or three layers of tightly woven, breathable cloth material, or (b) consists of a cloth face covering worn over a disposable mask.

NYC DOHMH asks that everyone consider wearing two masks at this time. For more information on double masking, please see [DOHMH’s COVID webpage](#).

Q: What if a staff member cannot medically tolerate wearing a face covering?

A: Staff who cannot medically tolerate wearing a face covering can seek a reasonable accommodation by contacting Zenzile Vialva, EEO Officer at HPDEEO@hpd.nyc.gov or (212) 863-8329. Emails are preferred.

Q: Do field staff need to wear face masks, N95s and other PPE because of COVID-19?

A: In general, no special PPE other than a face covering is needed. However, HPD field staff are provided with disposable face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. Face masks and gloves are also available upon request for other staff who request them. Face shields are also available for field staff who would want to use this in conjunction with the use of a disposable or cloth mask.

Q: How will mask wearing be enforced?

A: Complaints about the failure to follow COVID-19 related requirements can be reported to Anna Vaysman, at Vaysmana@hpd.nyc.gov, or to Human Resources at AskHr@hpd.nyc.gov.

Q: Should gloves be used to protect against COVID-19?

A: No. Routine glove use is not recommended. In general, gloves are appropriate when cleaning with disinfectants or caring for someone who is sick. However, gloves are available to HPD staff if they are requested.

The best way to protect yourself is to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available. Concerns with glove use include the following:

- Using gloves can provide a false sense of security and studies have shown that most people who routinely use gloves remove them incorrectly or do not clean their hands after removing them and their hands picked up germs anyway. A 2019 study in the *American Journal of Infection Control* found that in simulations, 37% of health care workers using their normal glove removal technique contaminated their skin in the process.
- Gloves can be a source of contamination. If a wearer touches surfaces during the day while wearing the same pair of gloves, dirt and germs can be transmitted from one surface to another.

- Wearing gloves prevents a person from being able to clean their hands often, which is the most important hygiene action to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For more information, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's webpage [When to Wear Gloves](#).

Physical (or Social) Distancing

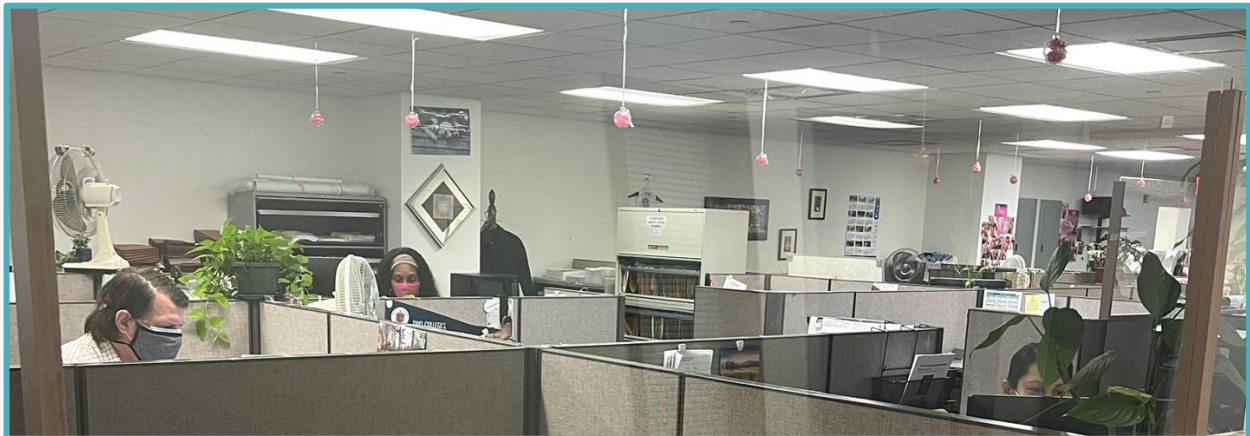
Q: How can I keep myself and others safe if we are using a shared vehicle for work?

A: Always wear a face covering in the vehicle. Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water frequently or using hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is available for field staff and sanitizing wipes are available for those who use City vehicles to wipe down high-touch surfaces in the vehicle.

The most recent DOHMH guidance can be found [here](#).

Q: What are the current rules on physical distancing?

A: Physical distancing is not required for employees unless they are interacting with the public. If an employee is interacting with the public, they are required to stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from each other in both indoor and outdoor workspaces, where feasible.



Q: Are there general guidelines around visitor restrictions?

A: There are no more restrictions on visitor access to the public spaces within the site offices and 100 Gold Street. If your team needs to begin seeing members of public, please contact Hector Padilla at padillah@hpd.nyc.gov and Alnisha Maniaci at maniacia@hpd.nyc.gov with questions.

Time, Leave, and COVID-related Human Resource Policies

Reasonable Accommodations

Q: What is a reasonable accommodation?

A: A reasonable accommodation is any change to the application or hiring process, a job, the way a job is done or the work environment that allows a person who is qualified for a job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Reasonable

accommodations are not available due to childcare or other caregiving issues. You can learn more about this process on the [intranet](#).

Q: When should a staff member request a reasonable accommodation?

A: Staff can request a reasonable accommodation if they need a change or adjustment in their job functions because of a disability (including an underlying medical condition related to COVID-19), pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical condition, domestic violence, or stalking, or to enable religious observance.

Q: Who should a staff member contact to request a reasonable accommodation?

A: Staff should contact Zenzile Vialva, EEO Officer at HPDEEO@hpd.nyc.gov or (212) 863-8329. Emails are preferred.

Q: What will staff need to apply for a reasonable accommodation?

A: The EEO office will inform staff of the necessary documents depending on the type of request. Reasonable accommodations can take up to 30 days to process, depending on the circumstances.

Q: Will an employee's information be kept confidential?

A: Yes, all correspondence with the EEO office is confidential. In addition, the EEO office will not disclose the staff members' medical information to the employee's program.

Q: How will supervisors/managers be informed of reasonable accommodations for their employees?

A: Supervisors/Managers are notified, via email, when the EEO office receives requests for reasonable accommodations. After a determination is made, they will receive a copy of the Determination Letter sent to the employee.

Q: If an employee's reasonable accommodation is set to expire by a certain date, will they have to re-apply for the reasonable accommodation again?

A: If an employee's reasonable accommodation is set to expire, it is not automatically renewed. The employee will need to reach out to the EEO Office to request an extension.

Child and Dependent Care

Q: What will happen if a child has to quarantine 10 days at home as instructed by the DOE or a daycare facility? Is there leave or a reasonable accommodation? Can I telework?

A: In these cases, staff should contact Anna Vaysman, Vaysmana@hpd.nyc.gov, for further instructions, but generally staff may telework during this time, if they are able to do so, after providing the required proof of a quarantine order to Human Resources.

Q: Can I bring my child to work if I do not have other childcare options?

A: No. Bringing children to the office is currently not allowed.

Q: What leave options are available for staff?

A: In addition to annual leave, eligible employees may take up to twelve weeks of leave to care for a son or daughter whose school or place of care has been closed or whose childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions and is unable to telework. This leave is not available if the employee has the option to switch their child to blended learning but chooses a fully remote schedule.

The Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is available for eligible City employees. Employees can take up to twelve weeks of job-protected leave in a twelve-month period for the following reason:

- a) the birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- b) to bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement);
- c) to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition; or
- d) for the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform their job.

COVID-19 in the Workplace

Q: What should I do if I learn that I am COVID-19 positive?

A: Inform Human Resources of your diagnosis by contacting Evelyn Taveras, TaverasE@hpd.nyc.gov. You may be required to submit proof of diagnosis. Human Resources will make any other appropriate notifications.

Q: What should I do if I learn that a close contact outside of work is COVID-19 positive?

A: Inform the above Human Resources staff that you have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person. Human Resources will make any other appropriate notifications.

Q: As a supervisor, how can I respect employee privacy and at the same time protect employees if two people work together and one tests positive for Covid-19? Who advises the other person?

A: All COVID-related positive cases should be reported to HR, which will make all appropriate notifications. Supervisors should not make inquiries or disclose any information to staff.

Q: What if a member of an employee's household tests positive for COVID-19 or has COVID-19 symptoms?

A: Staff are required to notify Human Resources and will be given quarantine instructions and leave usage guidance. Employees may also need to produce a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. More information will be provided to the employee from Human Resources. For any questions, employees should contact the above Human Resources staff.

Q: If a staff member is at work and reports that they have COVID-19 symptoms (that are not due to a pre-existing health condition), what should their supervisor do and who should the staff notify?

A: The supervisor should notify the Human Resources Liaison at taverase@hpd.nyc.gov. Human Resources will provide further guidance on how staff should proceed. Staff should also follow up with their health care provider or call 311 and observe all guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others.

Supervisors should advise staff impacted by COVID-19 to follow current recommendations and the advice of their health care provider. Staff can receive excused leave in keeping with the [Updated Guidance for City Agencies on Leave Policy Applicable During the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#), effective December 29, 2021. Human Resources will provide updated guidance where applicable.

Q: Is there a protocol for an employee that comes to work and appears ill?

A: Please inform your supervisor if you observe another employee who appears to be ill. Supervisors should reach out to Human Resources if the illness appears to be related to COVID symptoms.

Q: How will staff be notified if someone they work with has tested positive for COVID?

A: Human Resources will notify only those staff members who were in close contact with the individual who tested positive, currently defined as six feet or less for ten minutes or more. The affected individuals will be instructed to quarantine for the required length of time. To preserve the confidentiality of medical information, no other notifications will be made regarding anyone's positive diagnosis.

Q: What happens if there is high spread of COVID in a unit?

A: Human Resources is carefully monitoring all reported COVID cases on a daily basis and will take appropriate action as needed.

Q: How is HPD maintaining confidentiality of those who are COVID positive?

A: Only close contacts of the COVID-19 positive employee will be notified of potential exposure. No other information will be shared to protect the confidentiality of the staffer. HR maintains the information in a secure file that is password protected.

Q: If an employee feels sick, but well enough to work, is teleworking permitted?

A: Employees may be permitted to telework due to COVID related circumstances or as a reasonable accommodation. Employees must otherwise report to the office in accordance with their pre-pandemic work schedule.

Q: What is required when an employee is returning to work from a COVID-19 related absence?

A: Anyone returning to work from a COVID-19 related absence should reach out to Human Resources for instructions on returning to duty.

Q: Is there an accommodation or excused leave for someone who was recently vaccinated and had an adverse reaction?

A: Excused time for reactions to the vaccine is available. If you experience any symptoms after being vaccinated, please reach out to taverase@hpd.nyc.gov for further instructions.

Q: What roles are managers and supervisors expected to play?

A: Managers and supervisors are responsible for monitoring their work areas and units and for communicating face covering requirements. They may contact Human Resources about concerns

related to staff adhering to COVID health and safety policies and if they observe or are informed of anyone exhibiting COVID symptoms or who has tested positive.

Q: What if someone refuses to return to work due to fear of infection (or other reasons)?

A: Employees who fail to report to work without applicable leave may be subject to discipline. If an employee's refusal to return to work is related to an underlying medical or psychological condition, the employee should be referred to the agency EEO Office for an individualized assessment under the Reasonable Accommodation process.

Work Schedules

Q: What is being done to accommodate flexible work schedules?

A: Where possible, HPD is allowing staff flexibility with alternate schedules. Staff working in the office will be encouraged to arrive at staggered times.

Q: Is there any plan to create a long-term work from home policy, outside of the reasonable accommodation system?

A: At this time, HPD has not been advised of a plan for a telework policy beyond very limited circumstances.

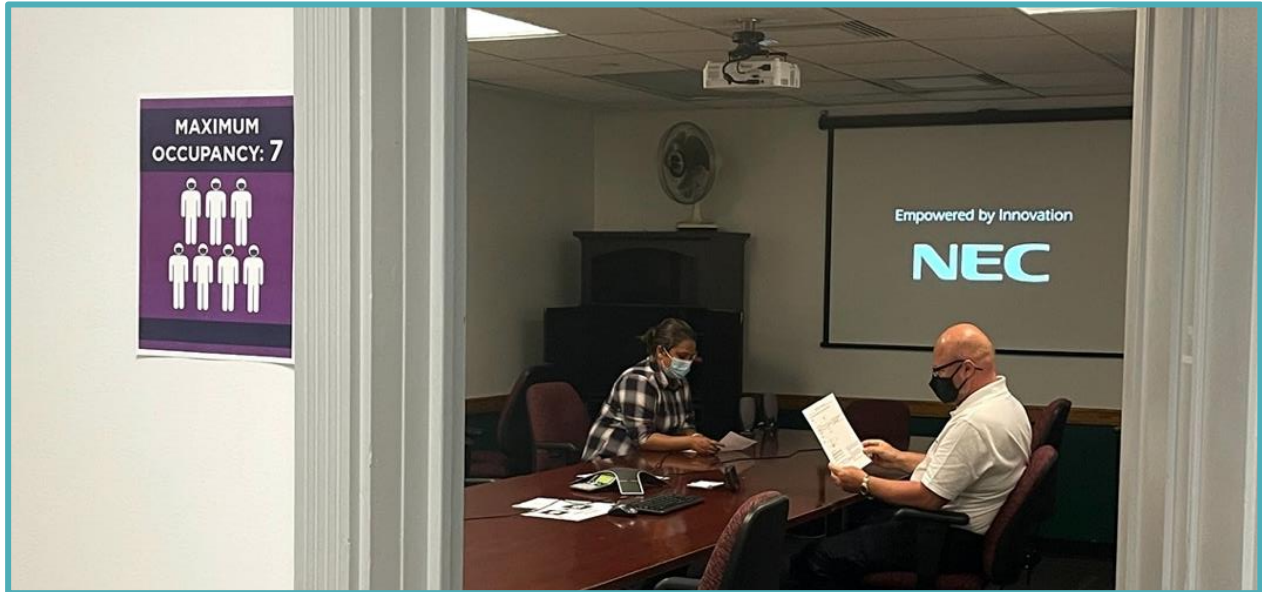
Q: Will there be remote work available if you have a positive COVID test and must self-isolate?

A: Yes, if the employee is well enough to work from home. Otherwise, the employee may be eligible to receive up to twenty days of excused leave. If you test positive for COVID, please reach out to Anna Vaysman, VaysmanA@hpd.nyc.gov or Evelyn Taveras, taverase@hpd.nyc.gov for further instructions.

Q: If an employee works their 35-hour work week in the office, may they telework to earn comp time from home?

A: No. Staff cannot telework in order to earn comp time. Telework is permitted as an option for COVID related circumstances or as part of a reasonable accommodation. Employees were otherwise expected to return to the office and resume their pre-March 2020 work schedule as of September 13th.

Working in the Office



Q: Can in-person meetings be held? Will staff be required to attend in-person meetings?

A: In-person meetings are currently allowed but attending in person should not be mandatory unless a face-to-face meeting is required. However, a virtual meeting option should also be offered. Please note: The agency has a limited number of connections for external phone calls. If you are connecting to a conference call number, please use your personal or agency-issued mobile phone.

Q: Can we use Teams to conduct employee interviews or should they come onsite to interview?

A: Since social distancing is still required when meeting with the visitors or clients, Teams is still encouraged for interviews or other meetings with external parties. You may host in-person interviews; however, it is preferred that members of the public meet with HPD staff on the first floor of 100 Gold. There are four conference rooms designated for meetings with members of the public. If you have questions about bringing in members of the public, please contact Hector Padilla (padillah@hpd.nyc.gov) or Alnisha Maniaci (maniacia@hpd.nyc.gov).

Q: What improvements will be made to allow for video- and teleconferencing?

A: HPD Tech procured several headsets and video cameras for use in the office. Please connect with your office liaison to get a headset or video camera if you do not already have one.

- Commissioner's Office: Carmen Martino
- Chief of Staff, Communications/Government Affairs: Carmen Martino
- APM: Sandra Peart
- ENS: Angie Robinson
- Executive Deputy Commissioner: Christina Velazquez
- Financial Management: Pierre Geneve
- HPT Tech: William Collazo
- Development: Joy-Ann Marshall
- Office of Legal Affairs: Penny Langsam

- ONS/Tenant Resources: Ainsley Williams
- OPS: Jashawn Frederick

Q: Will staff be able to keep computer and other resources provided to assist with working from home?

A: Resources can remain with the employee at this time.

Additional Resources

Q: If staff are stressed, is there someone they can talk to for support?

A: If staff need emotional support, they can contact the [NYC EAP](#) which offers extended hours (8 AM to 11 PM., Monday through Friday) by phone, text or video calls at eap@olr.nyc.gov or 212-306-7660. Supervisors can reach out to Human Resources for additional resources and guidance.

Q: I am grieving the loss of a loved one to COVID. Are there resources available?

A: DOHMH has guidance about grieving the loss of a loved one as well as workplace grief. Many providers are offering bereavement services by phone or chat, and faith-based and other community groups may have online services and support. The above-listed resources can also be utilized for support.

Q: How can staff help coworkers who may be struggling?

A: For colleagues in need, share [DOHMH's Coping with Stress and Social Distancing During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#) or connect them to the [NYC EAP](#) or [NYC Well](#).

If a staff member knows someone who may be thinking about suicide, they can learn the warning signs, listen to them, talk about it, suggest they seek professional mental health support, and help them connect to support through [NYC EAP](#) or [NYC Well](#). See [DOHMH's Coping with Thoughts of Suicide During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Appendix 1 - NYC Agency Employee and Visitor COVID-19 Screening Tool (12/30/2021)

You are being asked to answer this questionnaire in order to determine whether you have or may have COVID-19 or may have been recently exposed. This is being done solely for the purpose of protecting your workplace from potential spread of the disease. Any response you provide, and/or any directive you receive to stay home, does not constitute a diagnosis of COVID-19, nor are we advising you whether you need to get tested or contact a physician. You can consult CDC and health department websites for guidance in that regard.

1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 within the past 10 days:

- Fever of 100.0 F or greater or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

NO. Go to the next question.

YES, and my symptoms have resolved or if still with residual symptoms, they are all improving, I have received a negative result from a COVID-19 molecular test, and I have been fever-free for the last 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medications).

Go to the next question.

YES, and my symptoms have resolved or if still with residual symptoms, they are all improving, and it's been 10 days since my symptoms began, and I have been fever-free for the last 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medications).

Go to the next question.

YES, I have had a fever but I received a COVID-19 vaccine within 3 days prior to when my fever began, my fever lasted less than 24 hours, I have been fever-free for the last 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medications), and I have not had any of the other symptoms listed above.

Go to the next question.

YES, I have had a fever but I received a COVID-19 vaccine within 3 days prior to when my fever began, my fever lasted less than 24 hours, I have been fever-free for the last 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medications), and I have received a negative result from a COVID-19 diagnostic test.

Go to the next question.

YES, but it has been 5 days since my symptoms began, I am fully vaccinated, asymptomatic or have mild and improving symptoms, and my human resources department has confirmed, in writing, that my physical presence in the workplace is critical to operations or safety of the workplace and

provided me with requirements for returning to work after my exposure which include consistently and correctly wearing a well-fitted face mask.

Go to the next question.

YES, and I am not in the categories above.

You may NOT report to work. Go to Question #4 and select “No”.

2. In the past 10 days (days measured from the day you were tested, not from the day when you got the test result), have you tested positive for COVID-19, either using a test that used a nose or throat swab, or tested saliva (i.e., not a blood test)?

NO. Go to the next question.

YES, and it has been 10 days since my symptoms began, I’ve been fever-free for the last 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications), and other symptoms are improving.

Go to the next question.

YES, but it has been 5 days since I tested positive, I am fully vaccinated, asymptomatic, and my human resources department has confirmed, in writing, that my physical presence in the workplace is critical to operations or safety of the workplace and provided me with requirements for returning to work after my exposure which include consistently and correctly wearing a well-fitted face mask.

YES, and I am not in the above category.

Go to the next question.

You may NOT report to work. Go to Question #4 and select “No”.

3. To the best of your knowledge, in the past 10 days, have you been in close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes over a 24-hour period)¹ with anyone while they had COVID-19?

NO. Go to the next question.

YES, but I am fully vaccinated (it has been 2 or more weeks following receipt of my second dose in a 2-dose series or 2 or more weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine), and I have remained asymptomatic since my last COVID-19 exposure.

Go to the next question.

YES, but I am asymptomatic, and my human resources department has confirmed, in writing, that my physical presence in the workplace is critical to operations or safety of the workplace and provided me with requirements for returning to work after my exposure.

Go to the next question.

YES, and I am not in the categories above.

You may NOT report to work. Go to Question #4 and select “No”.

4. Having completed the assessment, I affirm that I am cleared to report to work:

¹ If you are a healthcare worker, please consult your employer to see if you would be considered a contact for work-related exposure.

☐ Yes

Go to question #5.

☐ No

You may NOT report to work.

5. I affirm that I will comply with the City's face covering policy.

The City's policy is that every City employee and visitor able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear a face covering that covers the individual's mouth and nose at all times (except when eating or drinking) while in a shared indoor City workspace.

A City employee or visitor conducting City business outside, who is able to medically tolerate a face covering, must wear a face covering at all times (except when eating and drinking) when interacting with members of the public.

Under no circumstances may an employee who has not provided proof of vaccination remove their face covering in the workplace (except when eating or drinking).

☐ Yes

Go to question #6.

6. I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge the information presented above is true and accurate under penalty of law.

☐ Yes