

MSPB COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

UPDATED: September 29, 2021

The health and safety of employees, interns, contractors, and visitors at the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) are always our highest priorities. This COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan supports [Executive Order \(EO\) 13991](#), “Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing” (Jan. 20, 2021), [EO 14043](#), “Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees” (Sept. 9, 2021), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum [M-21-15](#), “COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles” (Jan. 24, 2021), and guidance provided by the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#) (Task Force), including “COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles” (Sept. 13, 2021). This plan is a living document that will be updated as new information becomes available and requirements change.

1. COVID-19 Coordination Team

In accordance with M-21-15, MSPB’s COVID-19 Coordination Team members are:

- Tristan Leavitt, Acting Chief Executive and Administrative Officer & General Counsel
- Bill Spencer, Acting Executive Director
- Kevin Nash, Director of Financial and Administrative Management

The team will consult with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) through the Task Force, as needed. Where appropriate, the team will consult with the General Services Administration (GSA), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and OMB.

The team is responsible for conducting assessments to establish, implement, and monitor compliance with: (a) safety protocols for physical space and masking; and (b) determinations of onsite and telework/remote working. The team has met at least weekly throughout the pandemic to review compliance with MSPB COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols, consider potential revisions to them, and address any other operational needs. The team will continue to coordinate and communicate with office directors, the professional association, and all employees as we move forward.

Questions about this plan should be directed to the COVID-19 Coordination Team. Employees who require a reasonable accommodation should contact [Jess Lang](#), Director of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), for information about submitting a request.

2. Health and Safety

a. Vaccination is Required

To ensure the safety of the Federal workforce, MSPB employees must be fully vaccinated regardless of their telework status, except in limited circumstances where an employee is legally entitled to a reasonable accommodation. Agencies must work expeditiously so that their employees are [fully vaccinated](#)¹ as quickly as possible and by no later than November 22, 2021.

¹ Employees will be considered fully vaccinated 14 days after they have received the requisite number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization.

Key Milestones:

- **October 11:** First dose deadline (if an employee is getting the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine).
- **October 18:** First dose deadline (if an employee is getting the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine).
- **November 8:** Second dose deadline (for Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech).
- **November 8:** First (only) dose deadline (if an employee is getting the Johnson and Johnson (or J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine).
- **November 22:** Covered Federal employees must be fully vaccinated.
- **By start date:** New employees need to be fully vaccinated by their start date or November 22, whichever is later (agency heads may approve exceptions to up to 60 days after start date for urgent, mission critical hiring needs).

We strongly encourage any employees who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated to plan ahead and allow enough time to receive all required vaccine doses before the November 8 deadline to have your second shot. MSPB staff who do not meet this requirement may be subject to discipline.

To ensure you have the information you need to get vaccinated, please go to [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) (or for information in Spanish, [Vacunas.gov](https://www.vacunass.gov)).

For additional information, see <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/vaccinations>.

b. Vaccination-related Leave

The time an employee spends obtaining any COVID-19 vaccination (including travel time) is duty time; thus, there is no need for the employee to take administrative leave for such time during the employee's basic tour of duty. Employees may not be credited with administrative leave for time spent getting a vaccination. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the employee is unable to obtain the vaccine during basic tour of duty hours, the normal overtime hours of work rules apply.

MSPB will grant up to 2 workdays of administrative leave if an employee has an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination dose that prevents the employee from working (i.e., no more than 2 workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). If an employee requests more than 2 workdays to recover, MSPB may make a determination to grant emergency paid leave under the American Rescue Plan Act—if available—or the employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

To assist an employee's family member, up to 4 hours of administrative leave will be granted per dose for a family member the employee accompanies. (If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted.) Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes. Employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside their tour of duty helping a family member get vaccinated. For this purpose, a "family member" is an individual who meets the definition of that term in OPM's leave regulations (see 5 CFR 630.201).

Fully vaccinated people are at substantially reduced risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.

c. Vaccination Documentation and Information

Agencies are required to collect documentation from employees to prove vaccination, even if an employee has previously attested to their vaccination status. More information about what employees need to provide and how it will be collected will be provided as soon as possible. Until then, please ***do not*** provide any further information or documentation on your vaccination status.

d. Levels of Community Transmission

For purposes of this guidance, when determining levels of community transmission in a given area, MSPB references the CDC's [COVID-19 Integrated County View](#). We use discretion in determining the counties relevant to the determination of the level of community transmission in a given area for our office locations. For example, MSPB considers the county in which an office is located as well as the transmission levels of surrounding local counties from which employees commute.

e. Face Masks

[Current guidance from the CDC](#) and OMB is that, in areas of substantial or high community transmission, agencies must require ***all*** Federal employees, onsite contractors, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask inside of Federal buildings. For MSPB, this applies to our locations in areas of substantial or high community spread, whether offices are in a Federal or a leased building. Masks must ***properly fit over your nose and mouth*** in accordance with current guidance from the [CDC](#) and the [Occupational Health and Safety Administration](#).

When the level of community transmission in the area around an MSPB location is reduced from high or substantial to moderate or low, the level of transmission must remain at that lower level for at least 2 consecutive weeks before the MSPB utilizes those protocols recommended for areas of moderate or low transmission, including CDC and Task Force guidance.

In areas of low or moderate transmission, in most settings, fully vaccinated people generally do not need to wear a mask or physically distance in Federal buildings or on Federal land, except where required by Federal, State, local, Tribal, or territorial laws, rules, or regulations. Fully vaccinated individuals might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission for a variety of reasons. Nothing in CDC guidance precludes an employee from wearing a mask if the employee so chooses.

MSPB's COVID-19 Coordination Team will communicate any changes in community transmission levels, associated masking requirements, and office staffing levels at least 2 weeks before those changes become effective. MSPB's office capacity is tied to the level of community spread as follows:

- **Low:** 75% capacity
- **Moderate:** 50% capacity
- **Substantial:** 50% capacity + mandatory masking (including for vaccinated individuals)
- **High:** 25% capacity + mandatory masking (including for vaccinated individuals).

Where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, those requirements should be followed by Federal employees and onsite contractor employees, in Federal buildings, in federally controlled indoor worksites, and on Federal lands within that locality.

Unvaccinated individuals, including those who are not 2 weeks past their final vaccine dose, must wear a mask *at all times and physically distance from other people inside the building and MSPB office space*, regardless of the level of community spread. In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, consistent with CDC guidance, those who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during outdoor activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

You may remove your mask only when you are in your own office with the door closed.

Masked individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.

MSPB staff who do not adhere to these requirements will be notified along with their office director, and they may be subject to discipline.

If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact EEO Director [Jess Lang](#).

f. Physical Distancing

In addition to properly wearing a mask, individuals who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status must maintain distance. To the extent practicable, individuals who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status should maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others at all times, consistent with CDC guidelines, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and workspaces. One-way walkways, reconfiguration of workspaces or office assignments, and other mitigation strategies may be implemented to minimize interactions.

g. Staffing

1. As previously announced, on October 4, 2021, maximum telework will end and reentry will begin at MSPB. We are assuming all MSPB locations will continue to be in areas with high community transmission or will not have decreased to substantial community transmission for enough time; therefore, reentry for all MSPB locations will begin at 25% capacity. This allows an office director to schedule 25% of staff to be in the office at the same time, taking into consideration the proximity of individual offices, hearing schedules, work that is more efficiently and effectively performed in the office, the number of entrances to MSPB space at their location, the use of varying arrival and departure times, etc. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Establishing in-office work schedules for individual employees and work units before the new Board members arrive so that scheduling and other issues can be worked through in advance.
 - Establishing work routines and in-office procedures prior to the arrival of new Board members so that we are prepared to assist them immediately.
 - Prioritizing the organization of cases at headquarters and advancing the digitization of paper case files.

- Identifying in-office duties which have not been performed by those whose position descriptions include the duties (whether because they were temporarily performed by other employees or otherwise) and transitioning them back to the appropriate employees with the essential duties and skills to enable additional progress on in-office work.
 - Providing training and coaching, especially for newly hired employees who have not yet been into the office or worked extensively with their teams in person, or who have not had the benefit of sufficient in-office time to learn their duties and the procedures of their office.
2. To the extent possible, meetings should continue to be conducted by Zoom for Government, conference call, or other audio- or video-conferencing means, even among employees in the office. Exceptions may include training a new employee or a conversation that cannot easily be accomplished remotely, while adhering to applicable protocols.

Hearings:

1. In coordination with their regional or office director, administrative judges may conduct video hearings in the office.
2. More than one hearing may be conducted at the same time.
3. Two employees may be in the hearing room at the same time, provided they adhere to applicable masking and physical distancing guidelines and follow the other requirements of this plan.
4. In-person hearings with parties and witnesses will not be conducted until further notice.
5. If it is necessary for a non-employee to be present for a hearing, permission may be granted by the regional director and the Director of the Office of Regional Operations on a case-by-case basis, considering all the circumstances, including the physical layout of the office as well as case-related details.

h. Shared Spaces

Do not use common areas, including kitchens, for eating or drinking. Instead, eat in your office and access common areas only to obtain water or retrieve food.

Shared items and equipment must be disinfected by users anytime the equipment is used by or transferred to a new person, and disinfectant wipes and cleaning supplies are provided at each MSPB location. This includes phones, computers and other communication devices, kitchen implements, and other office equipment. Refrigerators, water coolers, and coffee makers with disposable cups (or a personal reusable cup/container) and single-serve condiments and creamers may be used with proper hand hygiene. Visual markers may be installed to promote physical distancing within common spaces, and furniture may be removed.

i. Visitors

Currently, MSPB is not allowing visitors. The COVID-19 Coordination Team, in consultation with an office director(s), will decide when visitors will be allowed into MSPB workspace and communicate that to employees. Mask wearing requirements also will apply to any visitors to Federal or federally leased facilities, where applicable. Even after visitors are allowed, the number of visitors to MSPB offices should be minimized, and efforts should be made to conduct visits virtually where possible.

For future reference, given the different safety protocols for individuals who are fully vaccinated and those who are not fully vaccinated, agencies need to ask about the vaccination status of visitors to Federal buildings—including Federal employees from other agencies—and onsite contractors who are not yet contractually required to be vaccinated. Individuals must attest to the truthfulness of the response they provide using the OMB-approved form provided to MSPB offices. If possible, the form should be provided to the visitor or contractor in advance of their arrival, and it should be retained by the visitor or contractor. MSPB personnel should not collect or otherwise retain completed forms, and they should not ask for documentation to verify their attestation.

Visitors to Federal buildings who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status should be treated as not fully vaccinated for purposes of implementing safety measures, including with respect to mask wearing and physical distancing. They also must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test from no later than the previous 3 days prior to entry to a Federal building. The type of test must be authorized by FDA to detect current infection and produce a dated result.

Requirements related to the provision of information about vaccination and provision of proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test ***do not*** apply to members of the public entering a Federal building or Federal land to obtain a public service or benefit. If they are not fully vaccinated, these visitors must comply with all relevant CDC guidance, including wearing a mask and physically distancing from other people.

j. Symptom Monitoring

If an MSPB employee, intern, onsite contractor, or visitor has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must not enter the workplace.

Employees, interns, and onsite contractors should complete [symptom screening](#) daily or upon entry to the workplace. (The CDC form is a reference for screening questions; it should not be filled out, signed, collected, etc.)

Visitors may be asked to complete symptom screening before entering a Federal facility. This may be done using signage posted at building or office suite entrances.

Any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately isolate, wear a mask (if the individual is not already doing so and one is available), notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

A symptom list requiring immediate medical attention can be accessed on the CDC website [here](#).

Additional Protocols While in the Office:

1. Personal protective equipment (disposable masks and gloves) and sanitizing wipes are available when entering the office lobby. Hand sanitizer is available at office lobbies and throughout MSPB space. Wearing gloves is optional.
2. Wash your hands as soon as possible after arriving at the office.
3. Wash your hands before you leave the building.

If you go into the office and begin to feel ill in any way with [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), within 5 days thereafter, you must notify your office director so that others who were in the office can be notified. See “Contact Tracing” below.

If mutually agreeable, staff members can pick up items for colleagues and deliver them to their residence. In doing so, please follow applicable health and safety protocols.

k. Contact Tracing

If an employee is notified of a positive COVID-19 test result, and they have been in the workplace within 7 days prior to becoming symptomatic or a positive test, they must notify their office director as soon as possible and provide contact information for their local health department. The office director will coordinate next steps with the COVID-19 Coordination Team. There is no obligation to notify MSPB if an employee who has not been in the workplace tests positive for COVID-19.

If an MSPB employee contracts COVID-19 and has been in the workplace, MSPB’s COVID-19 Coordination Team or a designee will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments and determine next steps. The team also will coordinate with facilities staff to implement infection control and workplace safety efforts once informed of a case of COVID-19 (either due to specific symptoms or a positive test). The specific circumstances are important for determining next steps, e.g., when was the person last in the office, did they come in contact with anyone, for how long (15 minutes or more, within 6 feet, etc., per CDC guidance), etc. The specifics will determine what that employee needs to do, notification to anyone with whom they were in close contact, whether to conduct more extensive cleaning, additional communications, etc. The agency’s COVID-19 Coordination Team will determine the appropriate scope of any workplace closures or schedule changes as a result of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in an MSPB workplace.

The team will be transparent in communicating information to employees, as relevant and appropriate, consistent with local and Federal privacy and confidentiality regulations and laws.

l. Quarantine and Isolation

Any individual with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 will be advised to isolate, pursuant to CDC guidelines, and in compliance with State, local, and Tribal laws and regulations. Personnel who are not fully vaccinated and who have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow CDC and State, local, and Tribal guidance for quarantine.

Individuals who have been fully vaccinated and have had close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms.

They should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative. If their test result is positive, they should isolate for 10 days.

Please consult [CDC guidelines](#) and local laws and regulations on when to quarantine or isolate, depending on your vaccination status, whether you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, etc.

m. Travel

To the maximum extent possible, hearings, training, conference attendance, etc., should be conducted virtually. Official travel is limited to **only mission-critical trips** and must be approved in advance by the COVID-19 Coordination Team. MSPB employees should adhere strictly to [CDC guidelines before, during, and after travel](#), regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business. The CDC has extensive guidelines for both domestic and international travel, and employees should consult these resources carefully before deciding to travel, including before returning to the office after travel if you are unvaccinated.

n. Testing

Given the requirement for Federal employees to be vaccinated, our current operating posture, agency size, and the widespread availability of COVID-19 testing, MSPB does not plan to implement a separate testing plan for our employees.

o. Confidentiality

All medical information collected from MSPB personnel, including vaccination documentation, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy, and will be accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel.² MSPB's point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical data is EEO Director [Jess Lang](#).

p. Employee Assistance Program

In addition to the protocols set out in this plan, we remind all employees that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The EAP can be reached at 1-800-222-0364 or at www.FOH4you.com.

3. Workplace Operations

a. Environmental Cleaning

Enhanced cleaning and disinfection within a building's common use and high traffic areas, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells, will be provided daily. Routine cleaning of frequently

² In response to multiple inquiries about whether asking about vaccination status is a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), we note that HIPAA "only applies to HIPAA-covered entities – healthcare providers, health plans, and healthcare clearinghouses – and their business associates. If an employer asks an employee to provide proof that they have been vaccinated in order to allow that individual to work without wearing a facemask, that is not a HIPAA violation as HIPAA does not apply to most employers." See "[Is it a HIPAA Violation to Ask for Proof of Vaccine Status?](http://hipaajournal.com)" (hipaajournal.com).

touched surfaces in common areas, conference rooms, and office spaces within an MSPB facility will be cleaned regularly and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wipes, gloves, and other Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectants have been made available for employees who wish to use them to wipe down their individual workstations and personal property when in their workspace.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in an MSPB workplace (if the employee or visitor had been in the building up to 7 days prior), enhanced environmental cleaning will be performed in accordance with CDC guidelines. In GSA-controlled facilities, GSA will perform the enhanced environmental cleaning under GSA guidance and in accordance with CDC guidelines.

- If fewer than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space.
- If more than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough.
- If more than 3 days have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

If enhanced cleaning is required, wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before cleaning and disinfecting. Extended wait periods allow increased opportunity for viral deactivation to occur naturally, while also allowing time for aerosols to settle, prior to surface disinfection. Personnel and visitors will be required to vacate the affected space until the cleaning is completed.

b. Elevators

Unvaccinated individuals, and vaccinated individuals in areas with substantial or high community spread, must wear masks in elevators and in elevator lobbies. At MSPB locations where employees can access the elevator lobby on our floor from the stairwell, the use of stairs by those who are physically able to do so is strongly encouraged.

c. Ventilation and Air Filtration

Reoccupying a building during the COVID-19 pandemic requires healthy, code-compliant indoor air quality. Viral particles spread between people more readily indoors than outdoors. Therefore, CDC recommends improvements to building ventilation to reduce the spread of the disease and lower the risk of exposure. In accordance with CDC guidance, ventilation system upgrades or improvements increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants by reducing the concentration of virus particles in the air. To the maximum extent feasible, indoor ventilation has been optimized to increase the proportion of outdoor air and improve filtration. To achieve this, the following measures are being taken.

HEADQUARTERS:

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are running at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after the building is occupied (or from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) to ensure improved ventilation. Outdoor air dampers remain open beyond minimum settings to reduce or eliminate HVAC air recirculation. Both steps increase total airflow to occupied spaces. On individual HVAC units, where the HVAC fan operation can be controlled at the thermostat, the fan has been set to the "on" position instead of "auto," which will operate the fan continuously, even when heating or air conditioning is not

required. In addition, building restroom exhaust fans are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.

Regular inspections and maintenance on all building Air Handler Units (AHUs) and HVAC systems are being performed to ensure ventilation and filtration effectiveness. Experience has shown that when mechanical and visual inspections are properly conducted, the proportion of outdoor ventilation continues to increase, and recirculation is reduced or eliminated. Likewise, existing air filters have been replaced with Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value 13 (MERV-13) rated filters which improve filtration for all central AHUs that recirculate floor air.

Indoor air quality is tested regularly. This is essential to detect airborne particles, carbon dioxide, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), which are invisible gases and chemical vapors emitted by office equipment, like printers and fax machines, as well as chemical cleaning agents.

Additional modifications will continue to be considered and evaluated.

ATLANTA REGIONAL OFFICE:

HVAC systems are running at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after the building is occupied (or from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) to ensure improved ventilation. Air filters have been replaced with MERV-8 rated filters. The HVAC systems are not designed to accommodate any filters rated higher than a MERV-8. Higher rated filters prevent the system from taking in and blowing out enough air and cause the system to shut down.

CHICAGO REGIONAL OFFICE:

Air filters have been replaced with MERV-15 rated filters with microbial protective coating and also ultraviolet lights inside the fans for microbial growth mitigation. The fans are checked daily by building engineers for proper operation and tightness of filters. Fans have been adjusted to increase airflow and bring in the maximum amount of outside fresh air possible and fan operating hours have been extended by 4 hours each day, resulting in fan runtime of 14 hours per day (5:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.). These measures were implemented per CDC and American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guidance.

DALLAS REGIONAL OFFICE:

The HVAC and Building Automation Systems are currently being inspected daily for any issues. Building Operation Schedules have been modified to allow additional ventilation 2 hours before and after scheduled occupancy hours (or from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday. Outside air is provided to all AHUs by dedicated outside air units that are filtered and pretreat the air supply. The outside air units run 24/7. All Air Filter Banks have been inspected and sealed as needed to ensure that air does not bypass the filter bank. The initial and current MERV filtration rating for all AHUs has been verified and documented. Filter upgrades have been applied where applicable and within design specifications. Air filters have been replaced with MERV-4 roll-type pre-filters on outside air and MERV-8 and MERV-10 rated filters in AHUs, depending on the specific AHU. Options are being considered to upgrade outside air filters.

DENVER FIELD OFFICE:

The lessor is installing ionization devices for the HVAC systems and elevators. Air filters have been replaced with MERV-13 rated filters.

NEW YORK FIELD OFFICE:

HVAC systems are running at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after the building is occupied to ensure improved ventilation. The HVAC and Building Automation Systems are currently being inspected daily, every 2 hours. Outside airflow for all relevant equipment has been verified per design specifications to ensure appropriate outside air volume and circulation. All Air Filter Banks have been inspected and sealed as needed to ensure that air does not bypass the filter bank. Air filters have been replaced with MERV-13 rated filters. GSA installed Dynamic electrostatic air filters that are MERV-13 rated or better since November 2017.

PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL OFFICE:

HVAC systems have been using MERV-14 air filters (ASHRAE standards for COVID-19 are MERV-13 or higher) since 2016. They were last changed in April 2021 and prior to that in April 2020. The HVAC system continues to maximize outside airflow (fresh air) into the building while maintaining appropriate comfort levels for building occupants.

WASHINGTON REGIONAL OFFICE:

HVAC systems are running at maximum outside airflow, flushing the building system every morning before the building is occupied to improve ventilation. Air filters have been replaced with MERV-13 rated filters.

WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE:

The HVAC system design at the Ronald Dellums Federal Building includes return air grilles in the suspended ceiling. The air handling units have MERV-8 rated pre-filters and MERV-13 primary filters. Outside air for ventilation has been increased as much as the HVAC system can accommodate and still maintain acceptable indoor conditions. There is the potential for fire season to limit the amount of outside air that would be able to be provided and still maintain indoor air quality; tenants would be notified if that type of situation were to occur.

d. Water Filtration

Many federally owned facilities under the jurisdiction, custody, and control of GSA are experiencing less than normal tenant occupancy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this reduced occupancy, the use of potable water in MSPB facilities is substantially less than the usage prior to the pandemic. As a result, the reduced usage has heightened the potential for water quality degradation.

GSA has implemented a weekly flushing program designed in coordination with a team of experts from EPA and the CDC. In federally owned facilities, the guidance directs facility managers to perform initial and weekly flushing of the drinking water in each facility, randomly test water outlets for surrogates of freshwater treatment (e.g., chlorine levels), and adjust the flushing frequency as necessary to ensure fresh, treated water is always present.

MSPB owned equipment (such as ice machines, coffee makers, water filters, etc.) that is served by the building's water supply are not covered by the GSA operation and maintenance contracts and are currently not being flushed. It is recommended that tenants properly flush these devices on a recurring basis based on [CDC](#) and [EPA](#) guidelines.

At each MSPB location, the following measures are being taken.

HEADQUARTERS:

Water systems and all common area water fixtures (including toilets, faucets, drinking fountains, sink drains, floor drains, etc.) are being flushed on a regular basis to prevent abnormal biological growth. Distribution systems and equipment are being tested regularly and water sampling is being conducted to check for bacteria levels, residual chlorine and pH, heavy metals, and other contaminants of concern.

In addition, Boston Properties has been recognized with a Fitwel Viral Response Certification at the Sumner Square Office Building. Originally created by the CDC and GSA, Fitwel is a rigorous, third-party healthy building certification system that sets the industry standard for evidence-based strategies to promote positive health outcomes for building occupants and communities.

This certification confirms that Boston Properties' approach to health security aligns with evidence-based strategies for mitigating the spread of infectious respiratory diseases in the workplace. The implemented programs include managing indoor air and water quality, enhanced cleaning, disinfecting, and maintenance protocols along with clear and consistent communication with customers.

ATLANTA REGIONAL OFFICE:

The Summit Building never closed during the pandemic. There have always been agencies in the building so the water is run through the pipes every day. Even though the water runs through the pipes, the maintenance crew performs a "water flush" weekly on floors that are unoccupied. The flush consists of running faucets, sinks, toilets, and janitorial sinks for several minutes, so the water does not stagnate in the pipes.

CHICAGO REGIONAL OFFICE:

The John C. Kluczynski Federal Building has implemented an extensive water management plan based on ASHRAE standard 188 and developed in conjunction with third-party water treatment experts and GSA's environmental subject matter experts. The building also implemented a weekly domestic water flushing and testing program based on EPA guidance to help maintain proper domestic water quality while building occupancy is low. All the drinking fountains in the common areas of the building have filters in place to filter the water for contaminants. These measures have been in place in the building for some time now, and the weekly flushing and testing procedures will continue until building occupancy levels are high enough that it is no longer needed.

DALLAS REGIONAL OFFICE:

GSA discontinued use of the public water drinking fountains. The facility has remained open to tenants and all building operations have continued throughout the pandemic, so the plumbing system has been in use.

DENVER FIELD OFFICE:

The water in the building is being flushed once a week and is tested annually for legionella.

NEW YORK FIELD OFFICE:

Water systems are tested monthly. A complete flush of the domestic water systems and all common area water fixtures (including toilets, faucets, drinking fountains, sink drains, floor drains, etc.) are done daily. There is ongoing testing of the domestic water system using high quality digital chlorine

meter/test kits to ensure clean water. The plumbing system is routinely checked to ensure there are no dry traps in low occupancy areas due to COVID-19.

PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL OFFICE:

Water systems are operating at a high level of usage. Since the facility has remained open to tenants and all building operations have continued throughout the pandemic, there has been very little reduced occupancy. Water systems were tested in June/July 2020 out of an abundance of caution. A complete chlorine mapping study of the domestic water was performed. The results showed no issues.

WASHINGTON REGIONAL OFFICE:

Water in the common areas of the building is tested twice a year.

WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE:

Water systems are operating at the same level of usage as in previous years. Since the facility has remained open to tenants and all building operations have continued throughout the pandemic, there has been very little reduced occupancy. From March 2020 through February 2021, the facility used a comparable amount of water as in previous years. Therefore, it was determined that GSA's weekly flushing program is unnecessary for the building. Testing is only performed if there is a water quality concern.