

DOL Reentry Planning & Future of Work Planning

This message is intended for all DOL federal employees and contractors

Dear Colleagues,

While I am still getting settled in here at the Department, I am humbled by the perseverance of the DOL workforce. I want to start by thanking each and every one of you for your dedication to the Department, despite the challenges of the last year and a half. I know it has been hard. From the vantage point of my previous job as Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the Department of Labor has been incredibly successful at meeting its mission after adapting to the realities of the pandemic. I am excited about joining the Department at this time, where we begin to think not only about how to safely increase onsite work, but about what the future of DOL's work looks like leveraging all the lessons learned since March 2020.

Following the Secretary's message earlier about the Department's approach to a phased reentry, **I am eager to provide additional information on implementing the Department's phased reentry approach for DOL employees and contractors:**

- **On Tuesday, September 7, the Department will move to Phase 1**, which permits for up to 50% occupancy at DOL sites for no less than thirty calendar days. The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team may extend the period for Phase 1 if necessary.
- **No earlier than Thursday, October 7, the Department will move to Phase 2**, which permits up to 75% occupancy for no less than thirty calendar days. The DOL COVID-19 Coordination Team may extend the period for Phase 2 if necessary.
- **No earlier than Monday, November 8, the Department will move to Phase 3**, which permits up to 100% occupancy.

Additionally, the Department is planning for the long-term future of work ("post-reentry"). We will not be reflexively returning to the pre-pandemic work model. Instead, we are engaging DOL staff, union leadership, and managers and supervisors to develop a future of work model that applies lessons learned from the pandemic to make DOL a more efficient, worker-friendly organization. The reentry and post-reentry periods, therefore, may look slightly different for different agencies. Please stay tuned for more specific information from your agencies.

The Department's **Internal Reentry and Post-Reentry Plan** contains additional information about the Department's phases, plans for the future of work, and guidance for employees. Some key takeaways include:

- **Employees will be provided no less than 45 calendar days of notice, absent exigent circumstances, that they are being directed to return to onsite work at their official worksite and duty station.**
 - Employees in the Phase 1 cohort will be notified on Thursday, July 22, 2021.
 - Employees in the Phase 2 and Phase 3 cohorts will similarly be provided 45-days notice in advance of being directed to return to onsite work.
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All employees, regardless of phase, must return to their official worksite and duty station by November 8, 2021, the planned date for entering Phase 3, unless they are operating under an approved formal remote work (full-time telework) arrangement that complies with duty station regulations.

- The Department is making efforts to allow employees to request deferrals to a later phase, to the extent practicable, but such requests must be discussed with your supervisor in advance and as soon as possible after your receipt of this notification.
- If you feel that you may need a reasonable accommodation for a disability, you should engage in the reasonable accommodation process as soon as possible and submit your request in advance of your scheduled reentry. The Department's procedures on requesting and processing requests for reasonable accommodation are provided in [DLMS 6-200 Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants](#).
- Beginning September 7, 2021, the Department's Reentry and Post-Reentry Plan will permit DOL employees to volunteer to reenter onsite work before being required to do so, so long as occupancy limits are not exceeded. All voluntary reentry must be approved, in advance, by an employee's supervisor. If you would like to voluntarily return to onsite work, please discuss with your supervisor.

As the health and safety of DOL employees, contractors, and visitors remains paramount, we are updating the Department's **Workplace Safety Plan** to align with updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and direction from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. The Plan addresses minimum mandatory safety guidance for reentry and post-reentry.

Significant updates to DOL Workplace Safety Plan include:

- DOL employees and contractors may be asked to disclose their vaccination status, but they are not required to do so. When an employee or contractor voluntarily discloses that they are not fully vaccinated or declines to provide their vaccination status, they must follow health and safety requirements that apply to individuals who are not fully vaccinated, which includes wearing a mask and physically distancing from others.
- At present, COVID-19 vaccination is not a precondition for employees or contractors at agencies to work in-person in Federal buildings, on Federal lands, and in other settings.
- Beginning September 7, 2021, restrictions on official travel for Federal employees who are fully vaccinated will be lifted. Federal employees who are not fully vaccinated will be limited to mission critical travel, as determined by management. All employees, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to follow the CDC travel guidelines.
- Employees with medical vulnerabilities who are directed to return onsite are advised to engage in the Reasonable Accommodations process immediately if they have concerns.

As a reminder, please join me and the Secretary for a discussion on what's next for both Reentry and the Future of Work at the Town Hall scheduled for **Thursday, July 22 from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Eastern**.

- Please find a link to access the Town Hall [here](#).
- For those who may need ASL interpretation, please find a link to the **ASL Interpreted Town Hall** [here](#).

The Town Hall will be recorded and available on LaborNet following the event for those who are not able to join us virtually on Thursday. This virtual event is just one in a series of opportunities to learn more about the Department's reentry plan and future of work efforts.

We encourage you to visit [the new Reentry site](#) on the [DOL COVID-19 Guidance and Resources page](#) for more information. Please send any questions to [REDACTED]. Additional frequently asked questions and information will be regularly posted to LaborNet during the reentry period.

Sincerely,

Julie Su
Deputy Secretary of Labor

Last updated: July 20, 2021