

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 21, 2021

To: Executive Branch Agency Leadership & HR Directors

From: DeAngela Burns-Wallace, Secretary of Administration

Subject: State Agency Guidance – Return to In-Person Work

Our goal with extending the remote work model through the end of the calendar year was to remain diligent and take what measures we could to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus over these past few months. While the State's positivity rates increased after the Thanksgiving holiday and the Omicron variant became a new concern in the past few weeks, the numbers of Kansans of all ages being vaccinated has continued to increase. Therefore, as indicated in my October 28, 2021 memo, all agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction are to return to normal operations beginning January 2, 2022.

Masks

Masks or other facial coverings will continue to be required for all State of Kansas employees and visitors to any State of Kansas facilities under the jurisdiction of the Governor until further notice. **This requirement applies to fully vaccinated individuals as well as those who remain unvaccinated.** Notice of this requirement will be posted at entrances to all State of Kansas buildings and public facing offices.

Individuals are required to wear masks or other face coverings in all common areas, such as break rooms, elevators, hallways, restrooms and stairwells, or otherwise when unable to maintain social distancing. Employees are not required to wear masks or other facial coverings when they are alone or at least six feet away from others in their own workspaces.

Mask Exemptions

Children age 5 years or under, anyone who is unable to wear a mask or facial covering due to a medical condition, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, or communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication and persons for whom wearing a face mask would create a risk to the person related to their work are exempt from this requirement. Exceptions for other reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Social Distancing

Agencies should continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that at least six feet of space can be maintained between employee workstations and other seating arrangements. This may include the minor reconfiguration or reorganization of floorplans or workstations, as well as the incorporation of engineering controls such as physical barriers like plexiglass screens, where appropriate. Signs and floor markings will continue to be used throughout State of Kansas buildings to reinforce the importance of social distancing.

Remote Work

Agencies may allow employees to work remotely in situations where adequate social distancing cannot be maintained in the office or as otherwise deemed necessary by the agency, provided there is no disruption to agency operations. The determination of which positions may work remotely should be an intentional process involving agency leadership and HR staff where all parties agree that remote work fits the needs of the agency, position

functionality and the employee's effectiveness and interest. All such arrangements should be done in accordance with the agency's current remote work or telework policy. Any employees who are utilizing remote work must have a signed remote work agreement in place.

Meetings & Other Gatherings

Gatherings should continue to be limited to spaces where individuals can maintain at least six feet of distance from one another. **Virtual meeting tools should continue to be used whenever possible to limit in-person meetings.** If meetings are in-person, social distancing of at least six feet must be adhered to and masks or other facial coverings must be worn at all times during the meeting. If those requirements cannot be met, the meeting should be virtual.

For those agencies with larger gatherings planned, please ensure that plans for any such events adhere to CDC, KDHE and local guidance, including considerations of overall capacity, space for social distancing, ventilation, mask-wearing, and symptom screening. Communications about such events should clearly address the planned public health considerations and that attendees are aware that the agency may have to adjust plans in response to changes in public health conditions. If all requirements cannot be met, the gathering should not occur or should be moved to a virtual setting.

Infant at Work Program

Agencies may re-institute Infant in the Workplace programs, in accordance with existing policies. Employees participating in the program should work closely with agency HR staff and their supervisors to ensure that all proper safety precautions are taken and should not bring sick infants into the workplace.

Travel

Agencies may continue to approve any business-related travel to a location that is not identified at the following link: <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/175/Travel-Exposure-Related-Isolation-Quaran> Business-related travel to any location listed at the above referenced link may be approved due to an emergency or extreme circumstance, but the agency should consider all other possible options before doing so.

There are no restrictions on employees traveling outside of work, but employees who travel to or through any location identified at the above referenced link are subject to quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated. The leave to be used for that quarantine depends on the circumstances of the travel, as indicated in the section on leave in this document.

Public Facing Operations

Those agencies with public facing operations may, at the discretion of the agency head, may continue to utilize mitigation measures, such as scheduling "by appointment only" or making allowances for virtual as opposed to in-person interactions. However, all such measures should have as minimal an impact or inconvenience on customers and the public as possible.

Employee Leave Usage

Employees will continue to receive administrative leave for time spent receiving the vaccination – including boosters – as well as any reasonable travel to and from their workstation, any time spent waiting to be vaccinated at the vaccination location, and the observation period following the vaccination. If an employee experiences any sickness or side effects after receiving the vaccination that prevent them from performing their regular duties, this time should also be recorded as administrative leave. **All other current leave provisions associated with COVID-19 are unchanged and will remain in place until further notice.**

General Hygiene

Agencies should continue to reinforce the need for proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Where this is not available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% of alcohol may be used. Employees should be encouraged to practice hand hygiene frequently, especially upon arrival to the workplace, after coughing, sneezing or blowing one's nose, after going to the restroom and after touching objects that have been handled by other employees or customers. Individual employees should take precautions in their personal lives to help control the risk of spreading disease within their workplace.

Employee Health

Employees should continue to self-monitor and conduct self-screening activities before appearing for in-person work. Specifically, employees should ask themselves the following questions before reporting to work:

1. Have they been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with, or is suspected to have, COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
2. Are they experiencing any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Stiffness/Rigidity
 - Muscle aches or pains
 - Fatigue/Weakness
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - Sudden loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Vomiting/diarrhea/stomach or abdominal pain

If an employee can answer "NO" to both of these questions, the employee should report to work as normal. If the answer to either of these questions is YES, the employee should contact their supervisor to report the symptoms and follow the appropriate guidance.

Passive temperature check stations and posting of screening questions will continue to be in place in all State of Kansas buildings under the jurisdiction of the Governor. Use of temperature check stations is mandatory for all individuals entering such buildings.

Agencies with work environments that have a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 and/or have frequent close contact (less than six feet) with coworkers or the general public may implement additional policies and procedures necessary to maintain operations and ensure safety. This can include more active screening procedures or establishing testing protocols in accordance with KDHE guidelines.

If not specifically referenced in this document, all other provisions of previous guidance remain in effect.