

## **Economic Research Service – Phase 3 Reopening Guidelines**

On Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, USDA facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR) began Phase 1 of reopening, and Phase 2 began on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Limited numbers of ERS Employees returned to the worksite during Phase 1, and this will continue through Phase 2 of reopening. (Politically appointed leadership for ERS and REE returned in Phase 1.)

All ERS employees are telework-eligible and have been teleworking uninterrupted since maximum/mandatory telework orders have been implemented and have maintained a positive level of work productivity. No employees are deemed mission-critical by the DHS CISA memo or are customer-facing. Any instances of employees needing to report to the worksite will be handled on a case-by-case basis and approved only when necessary.

Now that USDA has entered Phase 2 of reopening, ERS has developed a staged approach to employees returning to the office beginning in Phase 3 of the NCR reopening while meeting social distancing guidelines. As facility guidelines allow, ERS will incrementally increase the number of days employees are expected to report to the office until normal operations are met. Childcare and public transportation considerations should be taken into account during all stages of Phase 3.

### **Phase 3 Reopening and Transitioning to Normal Operations**

#### **Stage 1: Est. July 6 – July 17, 2020**

1. Employees *MAY* return to the workplace one (1) day per week on their designated workday according to the schedule in Attachment #1.
2. Employees *MAY* work their full daily tour of duty schedule in the office or work a hybrid telework/office workday in order accommodate reduced capacity on public transportation.
3. Although employees are not *required* to report to the office during Stage 1, it is highly encouraged for employees to test commuting and public transportation options.

#### **Stage 2: Est. July 19 – July 31, 2020**

1. Employees are *EXPECTED* report to the workplace one (1) day per week on their designated workday according to the schedule in Attachment #1.
2. Employees *MAY* work their full daily tour of duty schedule in the office or work a hybrid telework/office workday in order accommodate reduced capacity on public transportation.

#### **Stage 3: Est. August 3 – August 13, 2020**

1. Employees are *EXPECTED* report to the workplace two (2) days per week designated workdays according to the schedule in Attachment #1.
2. Employees *MAY* work their full daily tour of duty schedule in the office or work a hybrid telework/office workday in order accommodate reduced capacity on public transportation.

This scenario assumes that COVID-19 cases continue to decline during the time period and all other federal gating criteria continue to be met. ERS will continue to analyze the state and local conditions and update employees as more information is known on Phase 3 stage dates as quickly as possible. Employees should with managers to establish a schedule that promotes social distancing. Employees will be provided 7 days' notice before being required to return to the office.

ERS will ensure the provision of the necessary personal protection equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies as well as regular facility cleaning for employees. Detailed information is included in Attachment #2.

**Employees at higher risk for COVID-19:** In alignment with OMB’s reopening guidance, employees at higher-risk for COVID-19 may return to the office provided that social distancing and other mitigating measures have been implemented in Phase 3. The [reasonable accommodation process](#) should be followed for employees requesting accommodations for Phase 3 and beyond.

## Attachment #2

### Personal Protection Equipment and Facility Cleaning

Face coverings are to be used by all employees partaking in any in-person human interactions until 100 percent reopening is achieved. This includes, but is not limited to, when employees enter and exit the building, walk in the hallways, ride elevators, enter bathrooms, and attend in person meetings.

The Department will provide cloth face coverings to all NCR employees upon request. Upon entering buildings in the NCR, employees who are wearing a mask will not be stopped by the guards at entrances. If an employee is not wearing a mask upon entering, the guard will provide one. An employee may also ask for a USDA-issued mask. These masks can be washed up to 15 times. Employees who wish to use their own personal face covering or mask may do so.

ERS will provide sanitizing wipes for use in the areas listed below:

- High touch points, such as shared printers/copiers and equipment
- Agencies and office conference rooms, which must be sanitized after each use
- Employee workstations

Presently, USDA Office of Operations is cleaning all high-contact areas twice a day; sanitizing first, followed by disinfection. All cleaning products are approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Please see the chart below for full details regarding the cleaning schedule. Please note that if you are in a GSA owned and operated facility, this information may vary slightly, but USDA is making every intent to treat all NCR facilities as similarly and fairly as possible, whether they are USDA owned and operated or GSA owned and operated.

<b>Task Area</b>	<b>Pre-Pandemic</b>	<b>Currently</b>
Breakrooms/Break Areas	1x daily	2x daily
Elevators (Passenger and Freight)	1x daily	2x daily
Doors exterior (to include glass and hardware, push bars, knobs, handrails, kick plates, and railings)	1x daily	2x daily
Drinking fountains	1x daily	2x daily
Escalators	1x daily	2x daily
Restrooms (sinks, water faucets and handles, toilets and control handles, restroom stall handles, doorknobs, light switches, paper dispensers, push plates, automatic door openers, soap dispensers)	1x daily	2x daily
Locker rooms/ Shower Areas	1x daily	2x daily
Light switches (common areas, conference rooms, break areas)	1x daily	2x daily
Vending machines	Not covered	1x daily
Stairwells/handrails	1x weekly	1x daily
AG Promenade area	2x daily	4x daily
Conference rooms	1x daily	2x daily

NCR cleaning crews will be cleaning common areas nightly, but throughout the day, employees should be using cleaning supplies after usage and they should be cleaning their individual workspaces.

While conference rooms are cleaned twice a day, they are not cleaned by USDA contract cleaners after each meeting occurrence. All conference room furniture and equipment should be wiped down after each use with the cleaning supplies provided.

Additionally, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer stations, and/or disinfecting wipes will be available throughout NCR buildings near highly trafficked areas. Should these items run out, employees should contact their facilities personnel.