
From: Broadcast, DOC
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To: Broadcast, DOC
Subject: All Hands: Coronavirus Update (3-13-20 with revised links)

To All DOC Employees

Leadership understands that you are each understandably concerned about the evolving COVID-19 outbreak. The Department of Commerce and Bureau leadership teams continue to closely monitor the evolving outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Please know that all Commerce leaders are grateful to each of you for the work you are continuing to do to support the American public and our businesses.

The Department and its operating Bureaus have all established their own COVID-19 task forces that are meeting multiple times every day. These task forces are prioritizing the health and safety of Commerce employees as they implement guidance from Federal, State, and local health authorities. Due to the evolving and fluid nature of the situation, employees are strongly encouraged to monitor all announcements from their State and local health authorities. Department leadership will continue to track COVID-19 to help employees stay safe and healthy. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) has continued to update its comprehensive COVID-19 website](#), which contains a wide variety of resources to track the current COVID-19 situation and to help prevent its spread.

All employees are strongly encouraged to direct questions to their supervisors. If supervisors do not have an answer, they are encouraged to elevate the question to leadership. Department leadership will continue to track COVID-19 to help employees stay safe and healthy.

[The Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) has also released agency-wide guidance](#) on topics such as:

- Telework
- Continuity of operations (COOP) plans,
- Visitor access to federal offices,
- Domestic and international travel, and
- Large gatherings and meetings.

Provided below are some COVID-19 updates since the last DOC Broadcast email sent on March 5:

Telework

At the direction of the Department, Bureaus are undertaking efforts to make sure their employees are telework-ready. Bureaus have been advised to prepare their IT systems for increased telework activity and telework instructions are being distributed electronically to employees.

- On March 12, [The Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) released updated guidance on telework flexibilities in response to COVID- 19.](#)
- Following OPM's, the Department, working with Bureau HR organizations, has revised its telework policy in accordance with the guidance. Supervisors are working to ensure employees are aware of these new flexibilities and are encouraged to use them to the maximum extent practicable.
- Some State and local authorities across the country have closed schools or issued guidance on telework. To accommodate such decisions from local authorities, the Department has worked with all Bureaus to provide maximum flexibility for telework. Two recent examples of this implementation include actions taken for Commerce employees in [King County, Washington](#) and [Santa Clara County, California](#).
- Your supervisor is your primary point-of-contact for questions on telework.
- Check that your telework plan is in place and that you are prepared to telework, as would be the case for an imminent weather event.
- If you have a work-issued laptop, take the laptop home every evening. Also make sure your laptop can connect to DOC resources when away from your normal worksite.
- If you believe you are not telework-ready, you should coordinate with your supervisor immediately to explore telework options.
- If your family member requires medical care or becomes exposed to COVID-19, you may need to telework in order to limit potential COVID-19 exposure to others.
- Personal leave should be used for those hours during the telework day when you are not performing work but are instead caring for a family member.

Travel

- The CDC has issued a [Level 3 Travel Notice for most of Europe](#), encouraging all Americans to avoid non-essential travel to the continent. President Trump also signed a [proclamation restricting entry into the U.S. by foreign nationals who have visited certain European countries within the past 14 days](#). In response to these actions, the Commerce Department is actively working to ensure a safe and quick return of all employees who are on official travel in Europe, and other Level 3 and 4 countries who have not already returned. In addition, with respect to all travel, bureaus have been asked to limit all non-essential travel.
- Pursuant to OPM guidance, Bureaus have been instructed to limit all non-essential travel. If a Commerce employee or associate has traveled to a [CDC-identified Level 3 or higher country within the past 14 days](#) (China, Iran, South Korea, and most of Europe), he or she must self-monitor at home for 14 days after returning to the U.S.
- The Department is working to ensure the safe return of all employees who are on official international travel or in an assigned overseas post.

Feeling unwell

- If you feel ill, you should avoid coming into work, remain at home, and contact a healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- If you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should remain at home and contact a healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- If you remain at home for health reasons, you must inquire with your supervisor about telework opportunities and/or appropriate leave.
- [The CDC has provided medical guidance](#) on how you can self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

Hygiene practices to protect yourself and others

- [Wash your hands](#) frequently with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.
- Take extra care to cover your mouth and face when blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- When using hand sanitizer, be sure to cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Leave from work

- Your supervisor is your primary point-of-contact for questions on leave options.
- If you may have been exposed to COVID-19, but do not display symptoms, telework may be the most appropriate first option.
- If you are ill enough that you cannot performing work or if you have to care for a family member, sick leave and/or annual leave may be the most appropriate options.

Work meetings and group gatherings

- Begin relying more on teleconferences and phone calls in place of in-person meetings when possible.
- If you are uncomfortable attending a work-related event or gathering for health reasons, communicate your concerns with your supervisor and know that you can forego participation.

Again, thank you to each of you everything you do each and every day for the American people. We will continue to provide you with updates as this situation continues to evolve.

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