



This National Capital Region (NCR) Reopening Playbook serves as a NCR specific plan. All USDA owned and occupied facilities across the NCR are expected to follow this guidance. Those buildings and facilities include: the Whitten Building, the South Building, the Yates Building, George Washington Carver Center (GWCC), Riverdale, the Arboretum, 1 Thomas Circle, Patriots Plaza 3, Braddock Road, the National Agriculture Library, the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), and the Centralized Excess Property Operation (CEPO).

Expectations for Each Phase

For the purposes of NCR reopening and to the extent practical, USDA will generally follow the lead of state and local governments in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Maryland on a phased reopening approach. With that in mind, USDA's NCR facilities, in conjunction with state and local governments, will begin Phase 1 of reopening on June 1, 2020. Each Mission Area, Agency, or O-Office will determine the functions and the associated number of NCR staff expected to return at each phase based on the guidelines given below.

Reopening will be dictated based on facility location, NOT where an individual employee resides. USDA anticipates that a limited number of customer-facing employees would return onsite during Phase 1, an increased number in Phase 2, and most in Phase 3. Below outlines an initial discussion of which career positions would come back during which phases. In order to ensure availability of proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, Mission Area and O-Office Chiefs of Staff have been directed to provide the Department with the number of employees expected to return in Phase 1 and Phase 2 by Friday June 5. Department deadlines for Phase 3 reporting have not yet been set but are forthcoming.

Phase 1: Mission Areas and O-Offices should identify staff who will return during Phase 1. These employees include all NCR political appointees who returned on June 1, those with customer-facing roles, and those who cannot complete their normal duties while teleworking. Customer facing positions can include IT support, badging, facility security, and staff responsible for preparing facilities for reopening for example. These employees should be identified by and are at the discretion of Mission Area and O-Office leaders.

Phase 2: Mission Areas and O-Offices should continue to identify staff who may come back on-site. This includes Administrators, COOs, senior program managers, and any other positions needed to carry out critical programs such as Farm Bill implementation, COVID-19 response, other high priority programs, etc.

Phase 3: Up to 100% of employees and contractors may return to work onsite to include employees at higher risk of COVID-19. Some level of telework may be maintained until able to return to "normal operations" as outlined in the Reopening USDA Facilities Playbook. Agency reasonable accommodation processes should be utilized for any requests for accommodation.

Telework: As outlined in USDA's Reopening Playbook, telework will continue to be leveraged throughout the Phases of reopening. Telework should be maintained for employees with higher risk of COVID-19 who have self-certified and requested telework as an accommodation in Phases 1 and 2. Also, in alignment with USDA's Reopening Playbook, an employee's caregiving responsibilities can be considered in determining telework status.

Communication with Returning Employees: Supervisors and leadership should communicate to employees and provide a reasonable amount of advanced notice (7 days) of expected return. If the 7th day falls on a weekend, employees are expected to return the next business day. If they choose, employees do not have to wait 7 days and may return sooner.

For each phase, Mission Areas and O-Offices must follow the general USDA Reopening Playbook provisions regarding social distancing of staff (keeping a distance of at least 6 feet), employees at higher risk for COVID-19, and to continue to consider the caregiving responsibilities of employees. At this time, the Department has no way to predict exact dates of when Phase 2 or 3 will start and will continue to analyze the state and local conditions and update managers as more information is known on Phase 2 and 3 dates as quickly as possible.



NCR Cleaning Protocols for Common Areas- in compliance with [CDC guidance](#), using [EPA approved products](#).

Building Maintenance/Regular Cleaning contract or staff- cleaning schedules will be posted in common areas and maintenance or cleaning staff will list when cleaning was last completed. The guidance below is recommended across all NCR facilities where feasible.

1. Increased cleaning exterior entrance/exits, and interior stairwell door handles 2x daily (all 2x daily cleanings will be mid-day and end-of-day).
2. Elevators/Escalators 2x daily
3. Turnstiles 2x daily
4. Water fountains 2x daily
5. Restrooms 2x daily
6. Conference rooms 2x daily (tabletops, light switches, chair arms, door handles)
7. Vending machines 2x daily
8. Stairwell/handrail cleaning frequency 2x daily

In addition to the cleaning, 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.

Mission Areas, Agencies, and Offices are responsible for cleaning and providing sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer, if desired, in the areas listed below during all phases:

1. High touch points such as shared printers/copiers and equipment
2. Agencies and office conference rooms must be sanitized after each use
3. Employee offices
4. 24-hour centers (NATI, Security Control, Watch Center) to be sanitized after each use/shift by the last employee at workstation (desk, chair, phone, computer, mouse, etc.)

NCR cleaning crews will be cleaning these Mission Area common areas nightly, but throughout the day, employees should be using wipes after usage as well as cleaning their individual workspaces.

Use of Cleaning Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment

Hand Sanitizer and Wipes

- Hand sanitizer and wipes, to the extent possible, will be provided throughout common areas in all NCR buildings.
- Should these items run out, employees should contact their facilities personnel.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings are expected to be worn in all three phases and 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 until USDA reaches its 100 percent reopening status. The face coverings will be available at each facility's open entrances and can be washed up to 15 times. Employees who wish to use their own personal face covering or mask may do so.
- All staff, visitors, and contractors are always expected to have a face covering or mask.
- Employees will not be issued a new face covering every day. The Department expects over the course of all reopening for employees to average a total of 2-3 USDA-provided face coverings, given these face coverings are reusable and washable.



United States Department of Agriculture

Meeting/Conference Rooms and Break Rooms

- Occupancy will be limited to allow social distancing. The maximum occupancy of each conference room will be posted outside each conference room.
- Where social distancing is not possible in person, remote tools (Skype, Teams, teleconferences) should be used.
- Conference rooms will be cleaned 2x daily by the cleaning staff at each NCR building.
- Wiping down room/furniture/equipment is the responsibility of the meeting attendees at end of meeting.
- Use of common areas and break rooms for gathering is discouraged unless social distancing can be practiced through Phase 1, 2, and 3.

Vendor/Food Services

- Vendor/food services will remain closed in Phases 1 and 2.
- Some vending machines may be available during Phases 1 and 2. Restocking may not be consistent and will be dependent on the individual vendor and may vary based on NCR facility.
- Additional information about vendor/food services for the NCR will be provided in advance of moving to for Phase 3.

Visitors

- Visitors are strongly discouraged in Phase 1 and 2.
- The Department is working on additional visitor parameters and will update guidance as its available accordingly.

Additional Considerations for Phases

Building Entrances/Exits: To maintain social distancing of 6 feet, NCR facilities will limit entrances and exits for facility access during Phases 1 and 2 (additional entrances may be added as phases progress). Upon reaching and remaining in Phase 3, entrances and exits for employees and visitors are expected to return to normal conditions. Mission Areas, Agencies, or Offices will provide employees with available facility entrances.

Parking/Commuting: Many NCR employees rely on public transportation to commute to work. Metro's COVID-19 operational status is being closely monitored to determine the phases of operations in the NCR and can be found [here](#). The Department anticipates being able to provide parking for onsite employees in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Additional information about parking for the NCR will be provided in advance of moving to Phase 3, though USDA does not anticipate parking will be available for all NCR employees. Employees are not required to drive and can use alternative modes of transportation.

Parking for Whitten/South: All onsite employees are currently anticipated to have access to parking for Phases 1 and 2 and will not need a need a parking pass. Mission Area leadership will be asked to identify the number of onsite employees through Phase 2 to ensure enough parking capacity is available.

Parking for all other locations: In determining the number of employees who can return for Phase 1 and Phase 2, Mission Area leadership will work with the Department to assess parking availability at all other NCR locations.

Bathrooms: Throughout all phases until complete reopening occurs maximum bathroom occupancy will be listed and the latest cleaning information will be posted outside each bathroom. In addition, wipes and hand sanitizer will be placed in or around bathrooms. This will continue until 100% reopening is complete.

Stairwells/Elevators: Throughout all phases until complete reopening occurs, elevator car occupancy should be limited to allow for social distancing. Social distancing should be practiced on stairways. Stairwells and elevators will be clearly marked to indicate last cleaning.

Temperature Checks: At this time the Department will not be performing temperature checks.



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Offices: In identifying the number of employees that will return on-site in Phase 1 and Phase 2, office configurations must be assessed to ensure social distancing (at least 6 feet) can be maintained between individual and shared workspaces. Mission Areas, Agencies, and O-Offices have begun to assess floor plans and desk spacing, especially for buildings with “open space” designs or office space with modular furniture. The Department is assessing if additional barriers are needed for Phase 3 reopening. Additional information will be provided in advance of moving to Phase 3.

Onboarding and Offboarding of Employees: Employees will continue to be onboarded and offboarded in the same manner as the agencies handled onboarding/offboarding in the maximized telework posture through Phases 1 and 2. Additional information about onboarding and offboarding will be provided in advance of moving to Phase 3.

On-Site IT Support for all NCR locations that have on-site support: Mondays-Thursdays 8am-4pm for Phases 1 and 2 beginning June 2, 2020. Normal Monday-Friday hours of operation will resume beginning in Phase 3.

On-Site PIV Card Support for all NCR locations that have on-site support: Mondays-Thursdays 8am-4pm for Phase 1 and 2 beginning June 2, 2020. Normal Monday-Friday hours of operation will resume beginning in Phase 3.

Meetings: Conference room capacity should be assessed in scheduling meetings. Normal in person meeting will resume throughout all Phases assuming social distancing of at least 6 feet is possible. Where social distancing is not possible in person, remote tools (Skype, Teams, teleconferences) should be used.

Public Transportation Availability: Additional information regarding availability of public transportation such as metro and buses will be considered in moving to Phase 3 of operations.

Considering caregiving responsibilities: Recognizing that school, daycare, and summer camp closures continue, Agencies can continue to consider an employee’s caregiving responsibilities in determining telework status. Other flexibilities that have been provided to employees to meet caregiving responsibilities continue to remain in place throughout all 3 phases.

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.