



# COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

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## INTRODUCTION

The health, safety, and well-being of our employees during the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is and continues to be a top priority of the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). The RRB's COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan has been developed to protect the RRB's workforce, contractors, visitors (to include the railroad public) and other building occupants, and to ensure effective safety measures are in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This Workplace Safety Plan (WSP) incorporates the latest guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [on protecting workers](#). This WSP complies with the following: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-21-15, [COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles \(last updated September 13, 2021\)](#) as modified by OMB Memorandum M-21-25, [Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Work Environment](#); the President's Executive Order (EO) 13991, [Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#); EO 14043, [Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees](#); and EO 14042, [Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors](#).

This plan is a living document, which we will update to align with the most current CDC and OMB updates, as well as mission needs. Additionally, we will continue to communicate to our employees via email communications from the Board or the COVID-19 Coordination Team (aka Workplace Safety Committee). This update is being implemented upon satisfaction of applicable labor obligations with the Council of AFGE Locals in the Board (AFGE). We respect the important role of AFGE and are committed to communicating regularly with employee representatives on workplace safety matters.

For additional details on our COVID-19 pandemic policies, RRB employees and managers may visit our internal RRB COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Resources SharePoint site.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### VACCINATION

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#### FULLY VACCINATED DEFINITION

For purposes of its safety protocols, the RRB considers employees, onsite contractor employees, and visitors [fully vaccinated](#) for COVID-19 2 weeks after they have received the requisite number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved or authorized for emergency use

by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or those that the World Health Organization has listed for emergency use. For Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or AstraZeneca/Oxford, that is 2 weeks after an employee has received the second dose in a 2-dose series. For Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen, that is 2 weeks after an employee has received a single-dose. Clinical trial participants from a U.S. site who are documented to have received the full series of an “active” (not placebo) COVID-19 vaccine candidate, for which vaccine efficacy has been independently confirmed (e.g., by a data and safety monitoring board), can be considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after they have completed the vaccine series. Currently, the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine meets these criteria.

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## EMPLOYEE VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

EO 14043 and the requirements therein, including implementation guidance issued by the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#), apply to all employees whether they are reporting to work onsite or not. Employees must have met the fully vaccinated requirement by November 22, 2021, subject to such exceptions as required by law. Through regular mail, as well as electronic mail, employees received detailed information regarding the vaccination policy, including the Privacy Act requirements and the requirement to certify under penalty of perjury that the information they submit is true and correct.

Employees may use duty time to obtain required vaccination doses, as described above, and be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses in accordance with existing travel rules in agency policy and the Federal Travel Regulation. Employees are also eligible for up to 4 hours of administrative leave to receive any authorized COVID-19 vaccine booster shot or additional dose for an immunocompromised employee beyond the regular dose regimen described above. The administrative leave will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccination dose, and return to work. Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using administrative leave for purposes of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot or additional dose.

The agency grants up to 2 workdays of administrative leave if an employee has an adverse reaction to any COVID-19 vaccination dose that prevents the employee from working (i.e., no more than 2 workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). The employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

The agency grants leave-eligible employees up to 4 hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member (as defined in OPM’s leave regulations, see 5 CFR 630.201) who is receiving any COVID-19 vaccination dose.

- The agency grants leave-eligible employees up to four hours of administrative leave per dose—for example, up to a total of twelve hours of leave for a family member receiving three doses—for each family member the employee accompanies.

- If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, the agency grants only the needed amount of administrative leave.
- Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes.
- Employees are not credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside their tour of duty helping a family member get vaccinated.
- This policy applies to covered vaccinations received after July 29, 2021.

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#### *EXCEPTIONS TO EMPLOYEE VACCINATION REQUIREMENT*

All Federal employees must have been fully vaccinated from the COVID-19 virus by November 22, 2021, except for those legally excepted from the requirement. A legal exception includes accommodations due to a medical condition or for religious reasons. In particular, RRB may be required to provide an accommodation to employees who communicate they are not vaccinated against COVID-19 because of a medical condition or because of a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. Determining whether an exception is legally required will include consideration of factors such as the basis for the claim; the nature of the employee's job responsibilities; and, the reasonably foreseeable effects on the agency's operations, including protecting other agency employees and the public from COVID-19.

RRB informed employees on September 21, 2021 of the need to request an accommodation to be excepted from the requirement for employees to be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021. RRB employees who are unable to be vaccinated due to an approved legal exception, must request an accommodation through RRB's reasonable accommodation process. RRB employees may submit requests for religious exception directly to RRB's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC) at RAC@RRB.Gov. Employees may submit requests for exception due to a disabling medical condition through their immediate supervisor or directly to RAC@RRB.Gov. To ensure consistency in decisions between similar/like scenarios the adjudicative process will be coordinated through RRB's Executive Committee.

If an employee's request for accommodation is denied, following the agency's existing internal process for consideration and appeal, the agency will require that employee to receive their first (or, if a one-dose series, only) dose within two weeks of the final determination to deny the accommodation. If receiving a two-dose series, the employee must receive the second dose within 6 weeks of receiving the first dose. If the employee received a first dose of a two-dose series prior to seeking an accommodation, agencies should require that the employee receive their second dose within two weeks of the final determination to deny the accommodation or within a week of the earliest day by which they can receive their second dose, whichever is later.

Employees covered by Executive Order 14043 who fail to comply with a requirement to be fully vaccinated or provide proof of vaccination and have neither received an

accommodation nor have an accommodation request under consideration, are in violation of a lawful order. Employees who violate lawful orders are subject to discipline, up to and including termination or removal. While the agency works through the disciplinary process, these employees will be required to follow health and safety protocols for unvaccinated individuals, as well as applicable travel guidance.

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## VACCINATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

RRB requires that individuals who start their government service after November 22, 2021, be fully vaccinated prior to their start date, except in limited circumstances where an accommodation is legally required. New employees should be prepared to provide vaccination documentation as soon as their first day of employment. However, should RRB have an urgent, mission-critical hiring need to onboard new staff prior to those new staff becoming fully vaccinated, the Board may delay the vaccination requirement—in the case of such limited delays, RRB will require new hires to provide documentation that they have been fully vaccinated within 60 days of their start date and to follow safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals until they are fully vaccinated.

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## CONTRACTORS

Through EO 14042, the President has announced that employees of Federal contractors will be required to be vaccinated. Some contractor employees may not yet be subject to a contractual requirement to be vaccinated. Given the different safety protocols for individuals who are fully vaccinated and those who are not fully vaccinated, RRB will ask about the vaccination status of onsite contractor employees who are not yet contractually required to be vaccinated. These contractor employees must attest to the truthfulness of the response they provide. For contractor employees not yet subject to a contractual requirement to be vaccinated, RRB will provide contractors with the Certification of Vaccination form upon their arrival at an RRB facility for their completion and require them to maintain the form on their person while within the RRB facility. When a contractor employee discloses that they are not fully vaccinated or declines to provide information on their vaccination status, RRB will treat that individual as not fully vaccinated for purposes of implementing safety measures, including with respect to mask wearing and physical distancing.

Onsite contractor employees who are not fully vaccinated, or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status, must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 result from an FDA-approved test within the days as required by current CDC guidance prior to entering an RRB facility. Contractor employees who do not attest to being fully vaccinated (or who decline to respond to an attestation request), and who lack the required negative test result, will not be permitted into the facility. Contractor employees who are not fully vaccinated, and who are admitted to an RRB facility, must follow the safety protocols described in the “Face Mask and Physical Distancing” section listed below.

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## VISITORS

Given the different safety protocols for individuals who are fully vaccinated and those who are not fully vaccinated, RRB will ask about the vaccination status of visitors to RRB facilities who are not seeking a public service or benefit. To do so, RRB provides visitors with the Certification of Vaccination form when they enter an RRB facility and asks them to keep it with them during their time on Federal premises. Individuals must attest to the truthfulness of the response they provide. RRB will not ask visitors for vaccination documentation to verify their attestation. Additionally, visitors allowed within the William O. Lipinski will go through Enhanced Entry Screening Services, where admittance will be denied to visitors, employees or contractors with a temperature of 100.4°F or if they give affirmative answers to the screening questions developed in accordance with CDC guidance.

Visitors to RRB facilities who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test within the 3 days prior to entering an RRB facility. Visitors who do not attest to being fully vaccinated, who decline to respond, who lack the required negative test result, or who have a temperature or provide affirmative answers to screening questions will not be permitted entry into the facility. Visitors who are not fully vaccinated and who are admitted to an RRB facility, must follow the safety protocols described in the “Face Mask and Physical Distancing” section listed below.

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### *INDIVIDUALS SEEKING A PUBLIC SERVICE OR BENEFIT (AND THEIR COMPANIONS)*

Requirements related to vaccination status, and COVID-19 testing and results, do not apply to members of the public entering an RRB facility to obtain a public service or benefit, including Railroad Retirement Board field offices and Office of Legislative Affairs. If they are not fully vaccinated, these individuals must comply with all relevant CDC guidance, including wearing a mask and physically distancing from other people.

## LEVELS OF COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

When determining levels of community transmission in a given area, RRB will reference the [CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker County View](#) and consider not only the counties in which an RRB facility is located, but also may consider the locations from where employees and visitors to that facility are commuting and/or travelling. RRB will assess community transmission rates for each RRB facility at least weekly.

When the level of transmission related to a given RRB facility increases from low or moderate to substantial or high, RRB will, as soon as operationally feasible utilize those protocols recommended for areas of substantial or high transmission as detailed in this plan, consistent with CDC guidelines and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. The agency will not wait, for example, for a multi-day or multi-week trend to be established.

When the level of transmission related to a given RRB facility is reduced from high or substantial to moderate or low, the level of transmission must remain at that lower level for at least two consecutive weeks before RRB utilizes those protocols recommended for areas of moderate or low transmission as detailed in this plan, consistent with CDC guidelines and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.

Where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, including masking or physically distancing, agency employees, onsite contractor employees, and all visitors to RRB facilities within that locality will be required to follow those local requirements.

## TELEWORK AND REMOTE WORK

RRB will utilize telework and remote work consistent with its Telework and Mobility Policy and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

## COVID-19 COORDINATION TEAM

In accordance with OMB [M-21-15](#) and OMB [M-21-25](#) guidance, the RRB established a COVID-19 Coordination Team that consists of senior procurement executive, other senior executives, and health and safety experts. The Team meets regularly and involves subject matter experts from human resources, program operations, and facilities as necessary to review compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols, consider potential revisions to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols pursuant to guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and the most up-to-date CDC guidelines, and evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety. The Team consults regularly with and considers input from Facility Security Committees. We will continue to consult with experts in other agencies, including the CDC and General Services Administration (GSA).

## FACE MASKS AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

RRB will notify individuals of the following safety measures through signage in RRB facilities and on the RRB webpage.

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## VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

RRB employees must be fully vaccinated, except in limited circumstances where the law requires an exception.

In areas of high or substantial transmission, fully vaccinated people must wear a mask in public indoor settings, except for limited exceptions discussed in this section.

In areas of low or moderate transmission, in RRB facilities, fully vaccinated employees, contractor employees, visitors, and individuals seeking a public service or benefit generally do not need to wear a mask or physically distance, except where required by Federal, State,



local, Tribal, or territorial laws, rules, or regulations. Fully vaccinated individuals might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission for a variety of reasons. Nothing in CDC guidance precludes employees, contractor employees, visitors, or individuals seeking a public service or benefit from wearing a mask, if the individual so chooses.

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## NOT FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS (OR WHO DECLINE TO DISCLOSE VACCINATION STATUS)

RRB employees must be fully vaccinated other than in limited circumstances where the law requires an exception. Some contractor employees may not yet be subject to a contractual requirement to be vaccinated, and some visitors may not be fully vaccinated or decline to provide information on their vaccination status.

Employees, contractor employees, visitors, and individuals seeking a public benefit or service who are admitted to RRB facilities and who are not fully vaccinated (or who decline to provide vaccination status) must maintain a distance of at least six feet from others at all times and wear a mask regardless of community transmission level.

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## MASK GUIDELINES

For individuals who are required to wear a mask:

- ❖ Appropriate masks will be worn consistently and correctly (over mouth and nose). [CDC recommends](#) the following: disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets. RRB will not allow novelty or non-protective masks, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for masks.
- ❖ Appropriate masks should be worn in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms).
- ❖ In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, consistent with CDC guidance, those who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during outdoor activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.
- ❖ RRB will provide exceptions consistent with CDC guidelines, including, but not limited to, when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door, or for a limited time when eating or drinking and maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines.

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## EXCEPTIONS TO THE FACE MASK POLICY

Exceptions to the face mask policy include visitors or individuals seeking a public benefit or service under 2 years old. When scheduling the appointment, if the individual seeking a public benefit or service is required to wear a face mask pursuant to agency protocols but reports being unable to wear a face mask, management will offer alternative services during the scheduling (e.g., phone appointment, contactless drop off).

Masked individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.

Employees who express that they cannot wear a mask due to a medical or religious reason, must submit an accommodation request in accordance with agency policy.

## TESTING

After a workplace exposure, RRB will refer employees to [Community-based Testing Sites for COVID-19](#) for testing. Employees will be tested on duty time at no cost to the employee. Employees and contractor employees who are fully vaccinated and have had close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will get tested 5 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms.

## CONTACT TRACING

The RRB's COVID-19 Coordination Team receives reports of possible in-office exposures and directs management about next steps including enhanced cleaning and notifications, when applicable. The Team will continue collaborating with and supporting the contact tracing programs of local public health departments and will work with management to issue notifications, when appropriate. With any notification, we protect the confidentiality of personal medical information consistent with Federal, State, and local privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.

## TRAVEL

RRB employees will adhere strictly to [CDC guidelines before, during, and after travel](#).

For employees who are fully vaccinated, there are no Government-wide restrictions on travel (although RRB's travel policies within Administrative Circular OA-25, *Temporary Duty Travel* still apply).

- ❖ Federal employees who are fully vaccinated do not need to get tested before or after domestic travel or self-quarantine after travel, unless required by their destination.
- ❖ However, all air passengers coming to the United States from abroad, including employees who are fully vaccinated, are required to have a negative SARS-CoV-2 viral test result no more than three days before the flight to the United States

departs or must show documentation of recovery from COVID-19 within the previous 90 days before they board a flight to the United States.

- ❖ RRB advises, fully vaccinated travelers that they should also, after traveling abroad, get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after traveling; self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; if symptoms develop, isolate and get tested; and follow all recommendations or requirements of their local U.S. destination after travel

For employees who are not fully vaccinated, RRB will observe the following guidance, unless it is contrary to a reasonable accommodation to which an employee is legally entitled. Official domestic travel for such employees should be limited to only necessary mission-critical trips, and must be approved by the employee's respective Executive Committee member. International travel should also be avoided, if at all possible, unless it is mission critical, and must be approved by the Board. The cost of testing required for official travel can be claimed in a travel voucher as a Miscellaneous Expense under agency travel policies.

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## MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND CONFERENCES

RRB will avoid hosting in-person meetings, conferences, or events that will be attended by more than 50 participants, unless the event is mission-critical for the public benefit. When unavoidable, regardless of whether participants include members of the public, the Board, in consultation with the COVID-19 Coordination Team, must approve the event. The respective Executive Committee member must approve an RRB employee's attendance at a conference attended by more than 50 individuals.

In-person attendees at any meetings, conferences, and events hosted by RRB, regardless of size, must be asked to provide information about vaccination status. In requesting this information, RRB will comply with any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act. In-person attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test completed no later than the previous 3 days and comply with masking and physical distancing requirements for individuals who are not fully vaccinated consistent with the requirements for visitors in the Face Masks and Physical Distancing section above. Individuals who fail to comply with these requirements will not be permitted to attend. In-person attendees in areas of high or substantial transmission must wear a mask in public indoor settings regardless of vaccination status.

## SYMPTOM MONITORING

If RRB employees, contractor employees, visitors, or individuals seeking a public service or benefit have [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), they will be denied entry into an RRB facility. They will also be required to screen for exposures and comply with any CDC guidance related to quarantines or testing after travel.

The RRB will assess the health status of headquarters employees, on-site contractors, and visitors daily through the Enhanced Entry Screening Service contractor at the William O. Lipinski Building, to include temperature screening via a no touch device. For all other RRB locations, employees are required to self-report their health status via email to their respective supervisor prior to traveling to an RRB facility. Employees who do not feel well should not enter the workplace. Employees should review the RRB's Building Entry Self-Certification Questionnaire and not travel to an RRB facility if any of their responses indicate an illness or a potential exposure to or positive case for COVID-19.

The RRB posted signage at all facilities informing individuals entering Federal workspaces of COVID-19 signs and symptoms. Individuals exhibiting any signs or symptoms or who otherwise answer "yes" to any of the questions on the Entry-Self Certification Questionnaire or through the Enhanced Entry Screening will not be allowed into the RRB facility (or screening area, if applicable).

Any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately isolate, wear a mask (if the individual is not already doing so and one is available), notify a supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace. Supervisors may contact their respective Manager, Executive Committee member, or COVID-19 Coordination Team Member for advice, as necessary.

#### QUARANTINE, ISOLATION, AND STEPS FOR FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS FOLLOWING EXPOSURE TO SOMEONE WITH SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19

RRB advises any individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 to **isolate**, pursuant to [CDC isolation guidelines](#), and in compliance with state and local guidance. If an employee is subject to isolation due to being infected with COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee may request personal leave (e.g., sick leave, annual leave, credit hours).

Employees who have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should **quarantine** in accordance with applicable [CDC](#), state and local guidance.

RRB advises employees and onsite contractor employees who have had close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 to get tested 5 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms. RRB also advises these individuals to wear a mask indoors in public for 10 days following exposure. If their test result is positive, they should follow the CDC isolation guidelines linked above.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be accessible only to those with a need to know and will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality, privacy, and the security of Information

Technology. Questions about legal authority to share medical information internally or externally may be directed to Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

## WORKPLACE OPERATIONS

### OCCUPANCY

RRB may establish occupancy limits for specific offices as a means of facilitating physical distancing, depending on factors like vaccination status, public access, and mission requirements.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

The RRB will continue to maintain increased contracted sanitation services (i.e. daily cleaning and disinfection of common use, high-touch, and high density spaces) for the William O. Lipinski Building, as allowed under the authority delegated to RRB by the General Services Administration (GSA). The RRB will continue to coordinate with GSA to ensure that the workspaces at Field Service locations are cleaned regularly and in accordance with CDC guidelines. The RRB provided portable sneeze guards with a document pass-thru for each field office's front counter as a physical barrier and additional layer of protection for in-person customer service. The agency may install additional physical barriers, such as plexiglass shields, where appropriate.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace, RRB will ensure enhanced environmental cleaning of the spaces that the individual occupied or accessed in accordance with [CDC](#) and GSA guidance.

If such enhanced cleaning is required, RRB will wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, RRB will wait as long as possible. RRB will immediately vacate employees, contractors, or visitors from the affected space until cleaning or disinfection is completed.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team in coordination with the Executive Committee, will determine the appropriate scope of workplace closures needed—in some cases, it may be a suite or individual offices or part of a floor, in other cases, it may include an entire RRB facility.

### HYGIENE

Hand sanitizer and other hygiene items will be readily available throughout workspaces. Hand sanitizers will contain at least 60 percent alcohol and be manufactured in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Ingredients will be listed on a "Drug Facts" label. RRB will ensure the hand sanitizer is not on the FDA's do not use list. RRB will continue to encourage all agency employees and on-site contractors to periodically disinfect their personal workspace. Signage currently posted near restrooms

and other building locations encourages frequent hand washing with soap and water, or use of hand sanitizer.

## VENTILATION AND AIR FILTRATION

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the RRB installed HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Absorbing) filters in the William O. Lipinski Building's HVAC system. The RRB will continue to consider and work with GSA as appropriate to implement modifications to ventilation systems in accordance with CDC guidance, especially as building population density increases. To the maximum extent feasible, indoor ventilation will be optimized to increase the proportion of outdoor ventilation, improve filtration, and reduce or eliminate recirculation. RRB has deployed portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifiers in higher-risk meeting spaces.