FSIS Appendix to the USDA COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

I. Protective Equipment
   a. All FSIS employees, contractors, and visitors are required to wear face masks in FSIS facilities, offices, and vehicles at all times. The mask requirements apply regardless of an employee’s vaccination status.
      i. FSIS will provide face masks to all employees, contractors, and visitors.
      ii. Face masks can be ordered from the USDA Service Center. ([USDA | DM | OO | Materiel Management Service Center](https://www.usda.gov))
      iii. Exceptions
         1. When alone in private offices with floor to ceiling walls and closed doors
         2. For brief periods when eating or drinking
         3. When alone in vehicles
         4. When outside and physical distancing can be maintained
   b. FSIS frontline employees are required to wear face shields in addition to face masks.
      i. OFO employees are required to wear face shields when they are on the slaughter or processing floor or otherwise engaged in inspection duties.
      ii. OIEA employees are required to wear face shields when in an in-commerce facility or regulated establishment and unable to maintain physical distancing.
      iii. OPHS employees are required to wear face shields when they are in laboratories and unable to maintain physical distancing.
      iv. Face shields can be ordered from the USDA Service Center. ([USDA | DM | OO | Materiel Management Service Center](https://www.usda.gov))

II. Occupancy, workplace operations, and physical distancing
   a. FSIS employees will follow the USDA COVID plan unless an exception is granted by the COO.
   b. To meet operational requirements, exceptions to the USDA plan are required for FSIS employees in frontline positions where 25% capacity and physical distancing are not always possible.
   c. Exceptions
      i. FSIS regulated establishments
         1. FSIS employees are assigned to approximately 6,500 industry owned establishments.
         2. FSIS employees are not eligible to telework in these positions, as they are required to perform on-site inspection for industry to operate.
      ii. FSIS laboratories
         1. FSIS operates the laboratories that analyze samples collected at FSIS regulated facilities.
         2. Whenever possible:
            a. Schedules should be staggered to minimize the number of FSIS employees at any one time.
            b. Laboratory equipment should be distributed within the facility to reduce the number of staff in a particular laboratory space at one time.

III. Travel
   a. All employee travel outside their normal duty station should be limited to mission critical activities.
   b. Pre-approved mission critical travel includes:
i. As needed to maintain inspection and supervision at FSIS regulated establishments
ii. To carry out surveillance, investigative duties, and related supervision
iii. To maintain analysis and supervision at FSIS laboratories
iv. For required audit activities at laboratories
v. For required audit activities at State facilities
vi. To maintain IT equipment at FSIS offices
vii. To maintain appropriate IT credentials
c. Any other mission critical travel not covered above should be approved by the COO prior to booking.
d. Blanket approval can be made in specific cases for recurring mission critical travel.

IV. Testing & Screening
   a. All FSIS employees should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.
   b. FSIS employees assigned to an establishment that has a COVID-19 screening program are expected to comply with the establishment’s screening protocols.
   c. FSIS employees assigned to an establishment that requires COVID-19 testing are required to get tested.
   d. FSIS employees who travel outside of their normal assignment, should follow CDC guidance related to COVID-19 testing. Where testing is not possible (see waivers below), other CDC recommended mitigation strategies (e.g., masks) will be used to protect employees. This option should be used as a last resort and only in limited circumstances.
      i. Current CDC guidance does not require a test before and after travel for those who are fully vaccinated.
      ii. For employees who are not fully vaccinated:
         2. For FSIS employees, this applies to all TDY travel outside the employee’s state of residence.
   e. Waivers
      a. A standing waiver applies to all OFO employees who receive travel assignments to provide inspection with insufficient time to get a test prior to departure.
      b. A standing waiver applies to all OIEA investigators assigned to perform illness traceback activities, take product control actions, or assist with unforeseen investigative needs involving immediate food safety concerns with insufficient time to get a test prior to departure.
      c. Any other FSIS employee who needs to travel on short notice needs a waiver from the COO.
      d. A waiver does not exempt employees from testing.
         i. Employees should get tested at the temporary duty station if time allows.
         ii. Employees should get tested after they return.
   f. FSIS employees are authorized to use Administrative Leave, up to four hours, for each test.
   g. FSIS will reimburse employees for out-of-pocket testing costs.
   h. FSIS employees should notify their supervisor of test results.

V. Quarantine
   a. All FSIS employees should follow CDC guidance regarding quarantine related to COVID-19 exposure. This includes exposure from travel in TDY status.
Current CDC guidance does not require fully vaccinated individuals to quarantine.

For employees who are not fully vaccinated:

1. Those who are eligible to telework should quarantine as outlined in CDC guidance.
2. Frontline employees should follow the CDC guidance related to the Critical Infrastructure Sector and Meat and Poultry Processing Workers.
   a. Current guidance states, “Employers may consider allowing exposed and asymptomatic critical infrastructure workers to continue to work in select instances when it is necessary to preserve the function of critical infrastructure workplaces.”
   b. FSIS frontline employees may be required to work following travel or other exposure when necessary to meet mission requirements.
3. For OFO employees who are immediately needed to provide inspection in-plant, their supervisor should attempt to identify another FSIS employee to cover the inspection duties until the CDC recommended quarantine period is complete. Supervisors may permit workers who have been exposed to COVID-19, but remain without symptoms, to continue to work, provided they adhere to additional safety precautions. This option should be used as a last resort and only in limited circumstances.
4. For OIEA investigators who are immediately needed to perform illness traceback activities, take product control actions, or assist with unforeseen investigative needs involving immediate food safety concerns, their supervisor should attempt to identify another FSIS employee to cover their investigative duties until the CDC recommended quarantine period is complete. Supervisors may permit workers who have been exposed to COVID-19, but remain without symptoms, to continue to work, provided they adhere to additional safety precautions. This option should be used as a last resort and only in limited circumstances.
5. Vaccinated persons should check and follow updated CDC guidance regarding quarantine recommendations.

VI. Visitors
   a. All visitors to FSIS facilities must be approved by the COO unless explicitly delegated to the local pandemic coordinator.

VII. Vaccination Status
   a. COVID vaccinations are under emergency use authorization and may not be mandated at this time.
   b. A USDA manager may confidentially ask an employee if the employee voluntarily received a COVID vaccine if the request is connected to the specific issue of whether the employee may follow the CDC’s April 2, 2021 Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People while in the workplace. See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html.
   c. USDA managers should not demand written or electronic proof of vaccination from employees. For those employees that voluntarily disclose, managers may document that the employee is vaccinated and the date(s) of those vaccinations. Managers are to maintain that documentation in a separate and secure location outside of the employee’s personnel files. Employees who decide not to receive the COVID vaccination or who refuse to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status must continue to follow CDC guidance for non-vaccinated individuals while in the workplace.