COVID-19 Guidance for FSIS Personnel in Plants

Dear USDA-regulated Establishment,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced new guidance indicating that fully vaccinated people can safely participate in most activities, indoor or outdoor, without wearing a mask or social distancing. This decision is based on science and data which tells us that vaccines work, cases have been falling dramatically, and that vaccinated people are far less likely to spread the virus.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Given this new guidance, FSIS has instructed in-plant personnel to follow this guidance:

- If they are fully vaccinated, they are no longer required to wear a face mask and face shield or practice physical distancing in plants provided your establishment does not require it.
- If your establishment requires face masks and/or face shields, FSIS employees will continue to follow your requirements.
- Fully vaccinated FSIS personnel may elect to continue wearing face masks and/or face shields based on their level of comfort.
- If they are not fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks past your final dose), CDC guidance indicates they should continue to wear a face mask and shield and maintain physical distancing consistent with the requirements set forth in our workplace safety plan.
- FSIS inspection personnel will continue to follow requirements establishments have for their personnel to control exposure, including face masks, face shields, and monitoring procedures.

I encourage you to promote vaccination among your employees and associates. It is the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.

Paul Kiecker, FSIS Administrator

Terri Nintemann, FSIS Deputy Administrator