

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

14-22

3/15/22

REVISED AVAILABILITY OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR EMPLOYEES STATIONED AT USDA AND FSIS FACILITIES

I. PURPOSE

This notice cancels FSIS Notice 05-22, *Availability of Protective Equipment for Employees Stationed at USDA and FSIS Facilities* and FSIS Notice 22-21, *Cloth Face Coverings, Disposable Face Masks, Disinfectant Wipes, and Hand Sanitizer for Employees Stationed at USDA and FSIS Facilities*. Their contents have been updated to be consistent with new USDA Departmental guidelines, [Updated COVID-19 Mask Guidance](#).

II. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. On March 4, 2022, the Department issued new guidance on masking protocols for USDA employees at USDA facilities and worksites. FSIS employees are now to follow the Department's [Updated COVID-19 Mask Guidance](#).

B. Per the CDC, masking protocols are now based on the [COVID-19 Community Level](#) in the county where an employee works. COVID-19 community levels will be updated on a weekly basis and released in the Department's "Big 3" email that goes out to all employees on Fridays. Employees are to reference the updated mask requirements to determine whether masking is required at their worksite each week.

C. FSIS masking protocols are as follows:

1. Where the COVID-19 Community Level is LOW: Employees are not required to wear masks in the facility or worksite, regardless of vaccination status;
2. Where the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM: Employees are not required to wear masks in the facility or worksite, regardless of vaccination status; and
3. Where the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH: Employees are required to wear masks in the facility or worksite, regardless of vaccination status.

E. Additionally, where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, those requirements are to be followed in USDA facilities or employee worksites within that locality.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES 4/1/23

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F. Masking protocols are based on the location of the facility at which an employee works. Employees will follow the masking protocols for the county in which they work even if the county in which they live have a different COVID-19 community level.

G. FSIS employees with symptoms, a positive COVID-19 test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 are to follow the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force [guidance for quarantine and isolation](#) and wear a mask for the required period consistent with [CDC guidance](#), regardless of COVID-19 community level.

H. Although masks will no longer be required in **LOW** or **MEDIUM** COVID community levels, some employees may choose to continue wearing masks in the workplace. All individuals can wear a mask and/or face shield if they choose regardless of COVID-19 Community Level. Masks and face shields are available to employees through the Materiel Management Service Center. Employees are to honor their colleagues' choices and demonstrate professionalism, empathy, and respect for one another.

III. N95 RESPIRATORS, CLOTH FACE COVERINGS, AND DISPOSABLE FACE MASKS AVAILABLE FOR ORDER

A. The Agency will continue to make disposable face masks and cloth face coverings available to all FSIS employees in the National Capital Region (NCR) who are based in the Whitten Building, South Building, and George Washington Carver Center (GWCC), as well as those who work in District Offices, laboratories, and other locations outside of the NCR who request them. The Agency will also make N95 respirators available to employees on a voluntary use basis. Employees may select from the options made available based upon breathability, comfort, and fit. All disposable face masks and cloth face coverings made available by the Agency meet the ASTM 3502-21 standard; N95 respirators provided by the Agency are NIOSH-approved.

B. In accordance with CDC guidance, employees are to wear a mask correctly and consistently for the best protection. If employees have to touch or adjust the mask often, then it does not fit properly. Employees may need to find a different mask or make adjustments.

C. Employees are to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth and secures under the chin. Employees are to be sure that the mask fits snugly against the sides of the face.

D. If the N95 respirator, disposable mask, or cloth face covering becomes wet or contaminated, employees are to replace it with a clean, dry one.

E. N95 respirators are provided for voluntary use ([OSHA Appendix D 1910.134](#)). Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Employees who voluntarily wear respirators are to first review and sign the Appendix D Acknowledgement for employees, accessible through the link below, which is for employees using respirators when not required to do so under the Respiratory Protection Standard. Employees are to email the signed Appendix D form to their supervisor and block, copy, and paste gladyouaskedsafety@usda.gov into the email as a cc:. Before wearing an N95 respirator, review the instructions, fact sheet, and video provided here:

1. [Instructions](#);
2. Video on Donning and Doffing with seal checks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tzpz5fko-fg> (from https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nppt/topics/respirators/disp_part/donningdoffing.html); and
3. Fact Sheet: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/pdfs/2010-133.pdf>

IV. HAND SANITIZER AND DISINFECTANT WIPES

A. The Office of Management Administrative Services Division (ASD) will continue to make available sufficient supplies of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer to FSIS employees in the common areas of USDA and FSIS facilities.

B. As a reminder, handwashing is the most effective form of hand hygiene. Hand sanitizer is to be used when a sink and soap are unavailable.

V. ORDERING PROCEDURES

A. Pandemic Coordinators and Program Resource Managers are to continue to place bulk orders via the USDA Materiel Management Supply Center (MMSC) ordering system.

B. Program Resource Managers with a Customer ID number can also place orders using the CFPDC mailbox at cfpdc@usda.gov. When placing orders, provide your Customer ID number, complete mailing address, telephone number and the items needed.

C. ASD will continue to coordinate with the Pandemic Coordinators and Program Resource Managers for their respective Program Areas to coordinate shipments of supplies to all FSIS locations.

D. A list of protective items is posted at: [Covid-19-pandemic-resources](#) and can be ordered via this link: USDA [Office of Operations Materiel Management Service Center](#).

VI. QUESTIONS

Refer questions to the Office of Management, Administrative Services Division, Property Management Branch at propertymanagement@usda.gov.



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