

Surface Transportation Board

COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan



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Version 1.0

Revision History

Version Number	Date	Description	Primary Author(s)
.1	March 2021	First Draft	J. Layne, R. Molteni, L. Franklin
1.0	5/26/2020	Approved	R. Campbell

Surface Transportation Board (STB) directives are reviewed, at minimum, every three years and revisions are made as necessary to ensure that the strategy is still applicable to the STB environment and compliant with applicable federal laws, directives, policies, regulations, standards, and guidance. The revision history records dates of approval, recertification, and cancellation, as well as major and minor revisions to this directive. A brief summary of revisions will be noted. In the event this directive is cancelled, superseded, or supersedes another directive, that will also be noted in the revision history.

Approved by: _____
Managing Director

Date

INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the COVID-19 Federal Workforce Safety Plan of the Surface Transportation Board (STB). President Joseph R. Biden released the [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#) on January 21, 2021. The National Strategy provides a coordinated approach to improve the effectiveness of the country’s response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The President had earlier issued [Executive Order 13991: Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#) (January 20, 2021), which instructed agencies to immediately require masks and physical distancing measures in all Federal buildings, consistent with current U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. The Executive Order states that:

It is the policy of the Administration to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures. Such measures include wearing masks when around others, physical distancing, and other related precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

And on January 24, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance, M-21-15 COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles, to assist Federal agencies in developing tailored COVID-19 workplace safety plans.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

COVID-19 is a highly contagious, infectious disease. The purpose of this document is to provide COVID-19-related guidance applying best public health practices to protect the health and safety of all STB employees, on-site contractors, and any persons interacting with the workforce of the STB at its office at 395 E St. SW, Washington, D.C. (“STB Facility”). This document, while designed to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at the STB Facility, is not intended to be comprehensive and will be amended as circumstances warrant.

The STB will consult with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, created by Executive Order 13991; the General Services Administration (GSA); the Office of Personnel Management (OPM); OMB; and other entities, as appropriate. The STB will also participate in the sharing of best practices across government with STB employees, contractors, visitors, and persons physically interacting with the STB workforce regarding STB business.

STB COVID-19 COORDINATION TEAM

The Office of the Managing Director (OMD) will serve as lead for the STB's COVID-19 planning, response, and management as it relates to the protection of the STB workforce and those with whom we come in contact.

The STB has established a COVID-19 Coordination/Response Team (Team). The Team consists of five standing members and may also include other participants including a public health official from the Centers for Disease Control, as described below.

- **Office of the Chairman:** Chairman Martin Oberman (and/or his designee, Chief of Staff Ellen Erichsen)
- **OMD:** Rachel Campbell, Managing Director
- **OMD/Section of Human Resources:** Jennifer Layne, HR Director
- **OMD/Section of Facilities Management:** Jon Smith, Facilities Director
- **Office of the General Counsel:** Ron Molteni, Attorney

Other STB employees may be designated to participate as members of the Team, or the Team itself may reach out to other STB employees for information and assistance as needed.

The Team will establish, implement, and monitor compliance with safety protocols for physical space and masking and policies governing on-site (and to the extent necessary, telework/remote) working. The Team will also consider potential revisions to the COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols and assess other operational needs related to the STB's COVID-19 response.

The Team will work closely with STB leadership to develop an outreach strategy that provides regular, transparent communication to employees regarding how the STB is addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

TELEWORK, OCCUPANCY, AND REMOTE WORK

Although the STB Facility remains open, STB will continue its current policy of maximum telework until further notice. STB employees who need to work at the STB Facility on a particular day should indicate "yes" on the electronic notice they receive each morning. When

working at the office, staff who are not fully vaccinated must maintain safety protocols, particularly masking and physical distancing. You are generally considered to be fully vaccinated if you are at least two weeks beyond your final vaccine dose. Fully vaccinated staff are no longer required to wear masks or physically distance when working at the office. At this time, the agency will not ask staff for their vaccination status. Staff will be relied upon to self determine their vaccination status and to follow appropriate mask and physical distancing requirements.

In general, occupancy in the STB Facility should be no more than 25% of typical capacity. The STB's occupancy target may be adjusted as circumstances warrant. If business exigencies require it, Office Directors must contact the Team to request exceptions to the capacity limit, which must be approved in advance. Furthermore, as discussed below, physical distancing and the proper wearing of masks is required per this guidance at the STB Facility regardless of the occupancy rate.

While the STB continues to operate under its current maximum telework status, all employees who are telework-eligible are expected to telework, except when it is necessary for them to come to the STB Facility. This maximum telework status will be assessed continually, and employees will be informed reasonably in advance of any changes.

Although the STB remains in a maximum telework status, the Team will continue planning for the safe return of employees to the STB Facility in the future. In doing so, the STB will take into account employee safety and health considerations, especially with regard to, but not limited to, employees and contractors who are within those populations that the CDC has identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 (CDC High Risk Complications) and to CDC-identified special populations (CDC Special Populations).

Both during and after maximum telework status, the STB will take into account the status of schools and other caregiving facilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the STB expects to continue to make available other permissible flexibilities, subject to supervisor approval, for use by STB employees to meet their work obligations while managing their dependent-care responsibilities.

DETERMINATION OF ESSENTIAL ON-SITE FUNCTIONS

During maximum telework, certain program functions require on-site work at the STB Facility. For those functions that require on-site work, essential personnel will continue to report to the STB Facility as instructed by their supervisors.

STB employees will be given reasonable notice and guidance before being required to return to the STB Facility for an on-site function.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

MASKS

Consistent with Executive Order 13991, described above, and until further notice, each STB employee, contractor, and visitor to the STB Facility must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth and conforms to current CDC guidance unless the employee, contractor, or staff is fully vaccinated. The following guidance applies to those employees, contractors, and visitors required to wear a mask:

If employees or other individuals properly seeking to enter the STB Facility do not have their own masks, the STB will endeavor to provide them. Subject to the exceptions described below, the STB reserves the right to deny access to the STB Facility to anyone who is required to wear a mask and refuses to do so.

Appropriate masks must be worn in all common areas or shared workspaces (including but not limited to open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, conference rooms, breakrooms, and restrooms).

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

Wearing masks may be difficult for some people with certain medical issues. If STB employees and on-site contractors are unable to wear a mask properly or cannot tolerate a mask, they are encouraged to notify their supervisor or STB point-of-contact (POC), who will consult with the STB Office of Human Resources (HR Office) and the Office of the General Counsel to explore available options.

SYMPTOM MONITORING

All STB employees share in the responsibility for limiting the spread of COVID-19 at the STB Facility. The best way to limit the transmission of the virus is to stay home if you are sick. If

STB employees, on-site contractors, or visitors are not feeling well, they should not enter the STB Facility.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure to known or potential infection in STB's workplace, before entry to the STB Facility, all STB employees, contractors, and visitors who plan to enter the STB Facility must complete a self-administered symptom screening. This screening tool may be updated based on CDC guidance. The STB employee POC shall advise any visitor to the STB Facility of the STB requirements regarding symptom monitoring and other COVID-19 health and safety requirements.

To conduct this screening, STB employees, contractors and visitors must take their temperature and go through the series of questions listed below, based on current CDC guidelines on COVID-19. The STB's self-administered health screening questions are based on factors that may indicate a higher risk for COVID-19, including questions about current health and symptoms, exposure to positive cases, and travel history.

1. Are you currently experiencing any [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#)?
2. In the past 14 days, have you been diagnosed with, or do you believe you have had, COVID-19?
3. In the past 14 days, have you been directed to self-quarantine, self-observe, or self-isolate by any medical professional or public health authority due to contact with an infected person, symptoms, or travel history?
4. Have you had in-person contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, tested for COVID-19, or who may have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, within the past 14 days?

Any STB employee, contractor, or visitor answering "yes" to any of the screening questions during their home health screening are not authorized to enter the STB Facility and should instead notify their supervisor (or POC for contractors and visitors) for further information and instructions. Any individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection will be advised to isolate, pursuant to CDC guidelines, and in compliance with local laws/regulations. STB employees, contractors, or visitors who have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow CDC and local guidance for quarantine before returning to the STB Facility.

Any individual who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at the STB Facility must immediately isolate and promptly leave the workplace as soon as they can safely do so. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have been in the STB Facility within 10 days prior to receiving the diagnosis, you must contact HR within 24 hours of receiving your diagnosis so appropriate cleaning actions and notifications can take place.

STB supervisors and POCs informed of an individual with COVID-19-consistent symptoms must contact the HR Office regarding any reporting or HR requirements. Additionally, STB

employees and supervisors should consult with the HR Office regarding the appropriate use of leave due to COVID-19 exposure or illness. The agency has authorized the use of four hours of administrative leave for COVID vaccinations.

The STB will safeguard the privacy of its employees, on-site contractors, and visitors while also discharging its responsibility to protect the safety and health of all employees, contractors, and visitors. Following CDC guidelines, the STB will ensure that impacted office suites are cleaned to mitigate viral transmission.

Additionally, disclosures to local public health officials will be made as required or necessary to provide for the health and safety of all STB employees, contractors, and visitors, in accordance with both Federal and local public health mandates. Notification of public health authorities will be conducted under the oversight of the Team.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any personal and/or medical information collected from STB employees, contractors, and visitors to the STB Facility in connection with the implementation of this COVID-19 Safety Plan will be treated confidentially and in accordance with applicable law and Government-wide policy. Within the STB, this information will be accessible by and disclosed only to those who have a need to know the information in order to carry out the requirements of this COVID-19 Safety Plan. In addition, this information will be disclosed outside of the STB, for example to other Federal agencies and local public health officials, only as permitted by applicable law and policy and only to those individuals and entities with a need to know to protect health and safety. Please contact the HR Office with any questions regarding documentation or similar matters.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Under the Rehabilitation Act, any employee or applicant for employment with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation that may include a modification to a workplace policy. A reasonable accommodation may also be provided to employees participating in the STB telework program or employees teleworking full time pursuant to continuity of operations procedures. It is possible that certain conditions related to or impacted by COVID-19 may qualify for reasonable accommodation. Any employee who would like to request a reasonable accommodation may contact the STB Reasonable Accommodation Advisory Panel via email at RAAP@stb.gov. Applicants for employment or visitors to the STB who need an accommodation may contact the Director of the HR Office. Please see STB Issuance No. 5-827,

Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities, for additional information on the reasonable accommodation process.

WELLNESS RESOURCES

The challenges created by COVID-19 have led to an increase in anxiety, stress, depression, and other mental health challenges across the nation. Any STB employee experiencing difficulties is encouraged to take advantage of the STB's WorkLife programs and resources to help deal with those challenges or for assistance in work/life balance.

Employees can reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at FOH4You.com or 1-800-222-0364, which is a free, confidential, and professionally staffed service. EAP can help employees resolve life challenges, through confidential counseling and coaching with experienced, licensed counselors — including legal and financial consultation. The EAP is available 24 hours a day/7 days per week/365 days per year.

WorkLife4You is another resource and referral program available to STB employees and their dependents to help them better manage responsibilities and life events. Services include expert guidance from WorkLife specialists, personalized referrals to helpful resources nationwide, and online tools to help with topics such as childcare and parenting, adult care and aging, education and career development, financial and legal, health and wellness, and other everyday needs. For additional information regarding the WorkLife4You program visit [WorkLife4You.com](https://www.worklife4you.com).

TRAVEL

Official travel by STB employees will be limited until further notice and any such travel must be submitted in advance to the Team for review.

STB employees on official travel should adhere strictly to CDC, TSA, FAA, and carrier guidelines before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business. The CDC has [extensive guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) for both domestic and international travel, and federal workers should consult these resources carefully before deciding to travel. Additional resources for official travel can be found on the [GSA COVID-19 Information Site](https://www.gsa.gov/transaction/COVID-19).

STB employees and contractors should be aware that they may be required to refrain from entering the STB Facility for a period of time after official or personal travel. At this time, OMB guidance provides that private transportation for official travel is preferred over public or other communal transportation. The STB will factor this into its plans for employee official travel.

STB FACILITY OPERATIONS

VENTILATION AND AIR FILTRATION

The STB will work with GSA, CBRE and the other Patriot's Plaza I (PPI) tenants regarding the PPI's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in order to optimize indoor ventilation.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Until further notice, to the extent practicable, individuals at the STB Facility who are not fully vaccinated will maintain a distance of at least six feet from others at all times, consistent with CDC guidelines, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and workspaces. Please note that physical distancing is not a substitute for wearing masks. Individuals who are not vaccinated must maintain distance and properly wear masks.

Individuals in the STB Facility who are not vaccinated will be reminded of physical distancing requirements in a number of ways including through signage markers in elevators to note where occupants can stand while maintaining appropriate distance and the maximum number of people who can ride in an elevator car at one time.

Virtual meetings will be employed wherever/whenever possible, even for employees at the STB Facility. Any necessary face-to-face meeting will be subject to limits including 25% of the maximum room capacity, allowing for occupants to maintain appropriate physical distance based on the length of the meeting and environmental factors, local public health orders that limit the size of gatherings, and other relevant considerations. The same protocols apply to breakrooms and all other areas of the STB Facility where people ordinarily gather.

When proper physical distancing is impossible, alternate methods of mitigation should be employed. Physical barriers such as Plexiglas shields may be installed where appropriate. Supervisors should contact the Team with any requests for equipment to support alternative mitigation methods.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

The STB will work with CBRE and its cleaning contractor to advocate for enhanced cleaning in common use/high-touch/high-density spaces, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells at the STB Facility. Office space that is in regular use will continue to be cleaned regularly and in accordance with CDC guidelines.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace (if the individual had been in the building up to seven days prior), STB will request enhanced cleaning in accordance with CDC and GSA guidance and will notify employees.

HYGIENE

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, respiratory hygiene should be practiced by everyone. STB employees, contractors, and visitors to the STB Facility should always:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or mask, or use the inside of your elbow, and then throw the tissue away in the trash and immediately wash your hands.
- When in public spaces, wear an appropriate mask covering your nose and mouth if you are not vaccinated.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially if you have been in a public space, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

Hand sanitizer stations are available at the building entrance and on each floor. STB employees, contractors, and visitors working at the STB Facility are requested to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently.

VISITORS

The number of visitors to the STB workplace will be minimized to the extent possible, and efforts should be made to conduct visits virtually unless an in-person meeting is necessary. Building visitors will be subject to building screening policies, mask wearing, and physical

distancing requirements. STB employees who schedule in-person meetings with a visitor must inform the visitor of the STB and building COVID-19 protocols and direct compliance with those protocols, including but not limited to the Symptom Monitoring Provisions above, so that the visitor is aware of STB and building requirements prior to arrival.

SHARED SPACES

The STB continues to work on protocols that help prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection through shared spaces and equipment. Visual markers may be installed to promote physical distancing within common spaces and furniture may be removed or disabled.

TESTING

As required in Executive Order 13991, the CDC is developing and submitting a testing plan for the Federal workforce to the National COVID-19 Response Coordinator. Once that plan is available, the inter-agency Safer Federal Workforce Task Force will follow up with government agencies to provide additional guidance. The Team will work with the Task Force to implement the plan and will provide timely and transparent communication about testing to its workforce.

CONTACT TRACING

The Team will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases, as appropriate. Affected employees will be notified whenever the STB identifies positive and potential COVID-19 cases at the STB Facility. Additionally, the Board will contact local public health authorities, when required, because a potential exposure extends to members of the public who may have interacted with STB employees at the STB Facility.

The Team will work to make disclosures to local public health officials, as required or necessary, to provide for the public health and safety of Federal employees, contractors, and visitors in accordance with local public health mandates.

VACCINATION

Executive Order 13991 tasks the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force with providing guidance on vaccine prioritization, distribution, and administration. Once the Task Force has developed the appropriate policies and procedures, the Team will work with it on the possibility of vaccine administration for STB employees.