



**DCF**  
**Return to Onsite Work**  
**Frequently Asked Questions, Part II**  
**December 13, 2021**  
**Updated: March 7, 2022**

**General Questions**

**Q. Will there be different rules for different offices, or will all staff be required to return to onsite work fulltime?**

All DCF employees are required to return to onsite work fulltime. Individual hardships, including employees who are the primary caregiver of a school-aged child, a child under five years old attending child care, or an adult that attends a congregate care setting, including but not limited to adult day care, senior care, or a developmental disability day program impacted by a COVID-19-related isolation, quarantine, or closure may work remotely for the period of the COVID-19-related isolation, quarantine, or closure, if necessary. The employee must submit documentation from the school, child care center, or congregate care setting to be eligible for this limited exception.

Additionally, an employee who is eligible for COVID-19 leave, but is able to work remotely, may work remotely for the period of time they would otherwise be eligible for COVID-19 leave time, with the requisite documentation outlined in the temporary rule governing COVID-19 Sick Leave and COVID-19 Family Leave.

**Q. How do I keep my unvaccinated children safe when I return to in person work?**

- A.** Children ages 5+ are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. If your child is younger than 5, or unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons, the best way to protect them is for all other eligible members of the household to be fully vaccinated. Parents can discuss any questions they have with their pediatrician, family physician or healthcare provider. The fact sheet for recipients and caregivers is available [here](#).

To see the CDC statement authorizing the COVID pediatric vaccine, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1102-PediatricCOVID-19Vaccine.html>

To find a vaccination site, visit [covid19.nj.gov/finder](https://covid19.nj.gov/finder). Pediatric dose locations should be listed on the site and will be updated as additional sites are added.

Finally, you should follow all COVID-19-related health and safety protocols including wearing a mask while in DCF buildings, keeping a minimum of 6 feet distance from others, whenever possible, and washing your hands frequently.

### **Masking**

**Q. I noticed that Governor Murphy lifted the mask mandates for schools K-12 and school transportation effective March 7. When will DCF lift its mask mandate for state offices?**

**A.** All state employees will be required to wear, at a minimum, cloth or disposable face masks indoors in state executive branch offices, subject to certain exceptions. As is currently permitted, all employees may remove their mask when they are eating or drinking, where seated at a workstation and separated from other individuals by at minimum six feet of distance, and when situated in a room alone. All individuals must wear masks during in person meetings, in common areas such as a breakroom, and on elevators when more than one individual is present.

This shift is aligned with the most recent [CDC Guidance](#), which is easing up on masking, recognizing that there is widespread immunity through vaccination and prior infection as well as better access to testing and treatments.

We anticipate that as New Jersey's rates of infection and transmission continue to go down, masking requirements will continue to be revised.

### **COVID-19 Notifications**

**Q. It appears notification of positive Covid-19 cases are emailed to staff in late afternoon. With our expected return to work, has Human Resources examined providing staff with this information in the morning? Notification of a positive case can lead to heightened concern and anxiety. What is staff's alternative work location option upon notification of a positive case within our building and floor?**

**A.** DCF is required to report positive COVID-19 cases to all staff within 24 hours. DCF's emails are sent to staff each afternoon at approximately the same time, after the compilation of notices has come in from every office. If staff provide notification late in the day, it impacts when the email to all staff is distributed. Individual offices receive notification from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) upon receipt of a positive test. In addition, staff from OHR reach out to any employee that may have come into direct contact with the employee. When an office needs to close for cleaning, notice is provided to Cost Center manager(s) who then notify all staff in the building.

### **Travel & Quarantine**

**Q. What procedures are in place for out-of-country and out-of-state travel (especially now that the delta variant and other variants are of concern). What is the protocol for staff to follow as they return to the office? Will a quarantine period be implemented?**

**A.** As of May 17, 2021, New Jersey's travel advisory is no longer in effect. The CDC, however, has

recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers. Travelers leaving New Jersey should check with the travel destination and transportation carrier (i.e. airline, cruise ship, etc.) to see if there are additional health and safety protocols or requirements, such as proof of a negative COVID-19 test within days of departure. Travelers should also check with their employers, schools and other entities that may have quarantine policies for individuals returning from travel.

The CDC released updated [travel guidance](#) for Domestic and International travel for people who are fully vaccinated or persons who have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past three months. Testing and quarantine are no longer recommended by the CDC for fully vaccinated people who travel domestically and do not have symptoms of COVID-19. Because International travel poses additional risks, testing before arrival to the U.S. is required (or documentation of recent recovery) and testing (3-5 days) after arrival is recommended for fully vaccinated persons. There is no longer a requirement to quarantine. The CDC currently recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated.

## **Facilities**

### **Q. Will DCF purchase portable HEPA filters and locate them throughout the offices?**

- A.** The NJ Department of Treasury's Division of Property Management & Construction's (DPMC) health and safety team reviewed several air purification units as well as HEPA filtration units and has advised Departments that, at this time, portable and individual air purifiers are not recommended.

Please note that DPMC manages leased property for state agencies. Most of DCF's offices are in leased space and there are guidelines promulgated by Treasury that the lessors and lessees must follow. Therefore, DPMC is the governing state agency for guidance on matters related to what can/cannot be done on the premises of the buildings we occupy.

### **Q. What is the elevator capacity?**

- A.** For most DCF locations, elevator capacity is capped at a maximum of four individuals based on guidance provided by the NJ Department of Treasury. Please check with local building and/or parking authority to confirm capacity limitations.

### **Q. What is the protocol for fire drills?**

- A.** Per Treasury, once the alarm signals, everyone must evacuate in an orderly manner. Since the required mandate that all persons in a building are required to wear a mask and based on the standard timing of one minute per floor of evacuation time social distancing does not need to be observed. There should be no other thought other than evacuating the building. Once outside the building, any and all policies of the CDC go into effect as far as social distancing and other guidance.

Please note, the Office of Education schools must follow Department of Education guidance as referenced in the Road Forward. That information can be found [here](#).

## **Daily Wellness Screening**

### **Q. What is symptom screening?**

- A.** Symptom screening is intended to identify people who have possible symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone with symptoms is then kept from entering a setting to reduce the spreading of the COVID-19 virus. Infection prevention in the workplace is important to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Screening is one-way employers can lower the chance of COVID-19 transmission. Screening will not identify people not yet showing symptoms, or who may be infected but show no symptoms.

### **Q. Who should be screened?**

- A.** All staff and visitors should self-screen **prior** to entering a DCF work site or starting their workday. Copies of the DCF self-screening tool are posted at the entrance to every DCF building. By entering a DCF building, you are confirming that you are not symptomatic and that you have not been in contact with someone confirmed/suspected COVID-19 symptoms and that you are not under any quarantine order. Click [here](#) to access the DCF Screening tool.

### **Q. Will there be allowances for mask breaks outside of routine breaks and lunch?**

- A.** Staff are entitled to two fifteen-minute breaks. One in mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Staff with the approval of their supervisor, staff can take those breaks in smaller increments throughout the day in areas that do not require a mask (e.g. Outside, in an empty office or conference room).

## **Use of Leave Time**

### **Q. What if I have a cold, will I have to take use my personal benefit time or can I work from home?**

- A.** If staff are too ill to report to work, they need to use their own personal benefit time.

## **General Questions**

### **Q. Is it safe for staff to wear masks all day?**

- A.** Prolonged use of any face mask, including the N95 respirator has not been shown to have an adverse impact on healthy people.<sup>1</sup> Please note that many categories of professions routinely wear masks for prolonged periods (i.e. health care workers) with little to no evidence of adverse effects.

Certain groups of people may find it difficult to wear a mask, including some children 2 years and

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vumc.org/coronavirus/latest-news-you-asked-we-answered/does-prolonged-wearing-facemask-cause-harm>

older and people of any age with certain disabilities. Consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and/or the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (“NJLAD”), DCF will work to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be provided to individuals who have medical reasons that prevent them from wearing a mask for prolonged periods. Please contact the Office of Human Resource ADA office at [DCF.ADA@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:DCF.ADA@dcf.nj.gov) for additional information.

**Q. Does the flex policy still apply?**

A. The [DCF Flextime policy](#) is still available as a scheduling option for staff.

**Q. Will the hours of security be expanded at DCF Office locations to accommodate the expansion of the core hours of work?**

A. DCF Office managers and Office of Facilities and Support Services staff are reviewing the operating hours and work schedules at worksites to assess security needs.

**Testing**

**Q. What is the cost of testing?**

A. Mandatory testing of unvaccinated staff done through state agencies is at zero cost to employees.

**Q. Can we decide the testing location, or will it be a location closest to our assigned office? Some of us travel a considerable distance to the office and being assigned a location close to the office might not be the best option for us.**

A. DCF will work with the authorized testing vendor, Vault, to ensure that testing is made available to eligible employees. This may include the completion of at-home testing, supervised self-administered tests in the workplace, or testing performed by a medical professional on-site at the workplace or at an alternative, central location. DCF management will determine the required testing method and testing schedule for employees. At this time, we expect that most staff will receive the self-administered test. For more information about testing, please review the [FAQs](#) specific to screening testing for COVID-19.