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Preliminary Guidance to Agencies during Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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CPM 2020-04

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
From: DALE CABANISS, DIRECTOR
Subject: Preliminary Guidance to Agencies during Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

On March 3, 2020, President Donald J. Trump announced the formation of the White House Coronavirus Task Force (the Task Force). The Task Force leads the Administration's efforts to monitor, contain, and mitigate the spread of the virus, while ensuring that the American people have the most accurate and up-to-date health and travel information.

At the direction of the Task Force, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides the following preliminary guidance to the Heads of Executive departments and agencies to prepare the Federal workforce for the potential impacts of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). OPM coordinated this guidance with the National Security Council (NSC), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Department of State (DoS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), General Services Administration (GSA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Federal Protective Service (FPS). This preliminary guidance addresses Federal workforce posture, management of visitors to Federal facilities, and domestic and international travel by Federal employees.

Human Resources Flexibilities for Federal Employees

Over the past month, OPM has released CPM 2020-01 and CPM 2020-02 reminding agencies of the various human resources flexibilities available to assist agencies.

Telework and Federal Mission Resilience

To be prepared for COVID-19, departments and agencies must incorporate telework in their continuity of operations (COOP) plans. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 states that "each executive agency shall incorporate telework into the continuity of operations plan of that agency." *See* 5 U.S.C. § 6504(d)(1). If an agency COOP plan is in operation, that plan "shall supersede any telework policy." *See* 5 U.S.C. § 6504(d)(2). Therefore, agencies should immediately review their current COOP plans to ensure that telework has been fully incorporated and that as many employees as possible have been identified as telework employees in the plan, and are telework capable (or "telework ready").

FEMA advises that departments and agencies continue to monitor and prepare for any circumstances that may hinder the performance of essential functions and continue to submit Continuity Status Reports (CSRs) in accordance with Federal Continuity Directive 1.

OPM and OMB plan to host periodic interagency calls concerning questions and issues that arise about relevant human resource issues. In the meantime, agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact OPM at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov with questions about human resources flexibilities. Agency field offices should contact their appropriate headquarters-level agency human resources office. Individual employees should contact their agency human resources office.

CDC Guidance

The CDC continues to update the American public that the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low at this time. Nevertheless, Federal agencies should review their plans and continue their preparations since this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. CDC will provide updated information on the CDC website. Additionally, CDC and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have created a page to highlight resources available for the protection of U.S. workers in all settings. *See* CDC/NIOSH worker resources

In addition, the CDC's interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings, where it is unlikely that work tasks create an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. The guidance also provides planning considerations for widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19. *See* Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions to help mitigate the spread of respiratory diseases. Find a list of these preventive actions at CDC Prevention and Treatment Actions.

Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

For further guidance on workplace safety and health for Federal agencies and employees, please visit: OSHA.gov/covid-19

Domestic Travel for Federal Employees

The intent of this travel guidance is not to be prescriptive, but to present a framework for decision making among the departments and agencies. All agencies shall review their travel policies and begin to reduce non-essential travel as appropriate.

Employees planning domestic travel should routinely check COVID-19 Information for Travel for information about COVID-19 for travelers and travel-related industries and take into consideration the location and purpose of their travel.

International Travel for Federal Employees

Federal employees that have spent time in certain countries or specific regions within countries that have been designated by the U.S. Department of State as Level 4 (Do Not Travel) due to COVID-19 are advised to stay at home and monitor their health for 14 days after returning to the U.S. Federal employees should seek medical advice if they get sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

Level 4 designated locations can be found at Department of State Destination Travel Advisories.

This guidance does not require immediate cancellation of pre-planned, conferences/large meetings that are not located in areas with a Level 4 travel advisory.

Federal employees planning to travel to other overseas destinations are advised to individually review the U.S. Department of State's Travel.State.Gov website for up-to-date overseas travel information for destination countries and the Emergency Alert for Coronavirus page. Approval for travel to any country outside the CONUS is approved by the Chief of Mission for that country. This is usually the Ambassador or his/her designee. Travel advisories are directly available at Department of State Travel Advisories. All Federal employees seeking to travel overseas for official purposes should complete the Department of State's "eCountry Clearance" process. Once registered, users will receive up-to-date travel information. Final approval for travel to any country is at the discretion of the Chief of Mission. The "eCountry Clearance" system is available via "myServices" or at myServices eCountry Travel Registration. Please start the process of requesting overseas travel as early as possible. All USG staff must also obtain all necessary Department of State clearances and attend required trainings.

Travelers should consult the CDC's guidelines for the prevention of coronavirus and visit the CDC Travelers' Health Page for information on specific country health conditions.

Guidance on Visitor Access to Federal Offices and Buildings

The Interagency Security Committee has established standards for day-to-day risk management of Federal facilities. State and Federal health officials are providing ongoing guidance to Federal agencies regarding control and containment of COVID-19 exposure. Based on that health guidance, the Facility Security Committee (FSC) and/or Designated Official (DO) in each Federal facility has the authority and discretion to set requirements for admission to Federal property. See 41 CFR §102-74.375. Agencies should contact their respective FSC or DO for any further developments on visitor access.

At Federal Protective Services (FPS) protected facilities, FPS will work with the FSC and/or DO to implement and enforce any new requirements as necessary. At non-FPS protected facilities, this role is the responsibility of the individual facility security organization. Agencies should contact their respective FSC, DO, or security organization for any developments related to protection of facilities.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, Work-Life Coordinators, Telework Coordinators, and Federal Executive Boards