

USDA COVID-19 PLAYBOOK version 2.0

Supplement to Pandemic Plans, Occupant Emergency Plans & Continuity of Operations Plans

Effective as of 3/19/2020 1:09 PM until further notice.

EMPLOYEE AT A USDA FACILITY WHO TESTS POSITIVE¹ FOR COVID-19

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The USDA facility should use the following guidance to manage response.

1. **EXPECT NOTICE** - If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, it is expected that either a local health department or the employee will notify USDA: that notice will likely be given to the employee's supervisor.
2. **FOLLOW HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS** – To the extent practicable, the facility should consult with and follow community-based recommendations relating to the facility's response. Any employee confirmed to test positive for COVID 2019 (symptomatic or asymptomatic) must comply with health authorities' instructions.
3. **PROTECT PERSONNEL INFORMATION** - USDA managing personnel *should not release personal information about employee's identity or health status*. Anyone who has access to an employee's medical information must ensure they comply with confidentiality and privacy obligations. Employees may voluntarily disclose their status.
4. **GIVE NOTICE TO [FACILITY'S LOCAL PANDEMIC COORDINATOR](#)** - Based on USDA's Incident Command structure and the Pandemic Plan, the supervisor or leader who is given notice of the employee's status should contact the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator to provide the employee's name, work location at the facility and contact information, including a phone number.
5. **RESPOND AT THE FACILITY** - The local Pandemic Coordinator should inform the senior-most leader at the facility, including agency for which the employee works and the employee's location. Together they should use the facility's Pandemic Plan and this guidance to coordinate response and address the employee's contact and movements at the facility and take necessary steps to mitigate spread of the illness, including:
 - a. **LABOR OBLIGATIONS** -Determine the agencies' responsibilities under collective bargaining agreements.
 - b. **INTERVIEW** - To the extent needed to address the employee's contact and movements at the USDA facility, the local Pandemic Coordinator (or their designee) should quickly coordinate telephone or electronic outreach to the employee to collect work-related information. *The approved [script for this interview is included as ATTACHMENT A](#).*
 - c. **LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS** - Contact local officials and follow the recommendations of the state/local/tribal health department.

¹Similar procedures should be followed if an employee is at USDA with symptoms of (coughing or shortness of breath with fever of 100.4 F or higher) and potential exposure to COVID-19 due to travel to impacted areas or contact with someone with the illness. Such an employee should be sent home and encouraged to contact the local health department for further instructions.

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- d. **CONSIDER INCIDENT COMMAND** - Based on the facility's Occupant Emergency Plan, consult with the agency's Designated Official to determine whether concerns warrant activating Incident Command to manage the facility response.
 - e. **RETRACE MOVEMENTS** - To the extent possible, determine the areas within the USDA facility the employee accessed.
 - i. To the extent possible, *restrict access to potentially impacted area(s)* until the impacted areas are properly assessed and appropriate cleaning is conducted.
 - ii. To the extent possible, *provide alternate entry and exit routes for other employees in or near impacted areas* to avoid potentially impacted areas or allow for alternate work locations until the areas are properly assessed and appropriate cleaning is conducted.
 - f. **INFORM MISSION AREA/AGENCY PANDEMIC COORDINATOR** – The local Pandemic Coordinator should promptly inform the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the facility response to the onsite infected employee. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator should then inform the USDA Pandemic Coordinator at homelandsecurity@usda.gov.
 - i. This Information must include the dates of the employee's positive diagnosis and expected return to duty. It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to maintain a line of communication with the infected employee. Changes in employee's work or health status should be communicated back to the [MISSION AREA/AGENCY PANDEMIC COORDINATOR](#) who should share that information with the USDA Pandemic Coordinator.
 - g. **INFORM IMPACTED PERSONNEL** – While protecting the employee's identity and health status, inform employees who are directly impacted by the movements of the infected employee of their potential exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. The confidentiality of the infected employee must be kept as required by applicable law. Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should be directed to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure.
6. **PROPERLY CLEAN** - Use a qualified cleaning crew to properly clean the impacted areas and common areas the employee is known to have visited using CDC recommended [guidance](#).
7. **REQUEST CHANGES TO OPERATIONAL STATUS²** - Facilities must submit a request to change operational status if that change results in the facility no longer providing any service, whether in person or remote, and if the change results in a loss of critical functions being performed at this location. Before taking action that could result in this type of operational change, the local Pandemic Coordinator should submit a request using the following process. All requests are considered pending until reviewed and determined.
- a. The facility's local Pandemic Coordinator submits the request to their Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator.

² Under USDA's maximized telework guidance, facilities no longer need to request a change in operational status as it relates to moving 3 or more employees to telework.

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- b. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator must promptly submit the request to the USDA Pandemic Coordinator at homelandsecurity@usda.gov.
 - c. The request should include the following information:
 - i. Mission and Agency seeking Request
 - ii. Facility Name and Address subject to Request
 - iii. Name, Title, Email, and Phone Number of facility Senior Leader seeking Request
 - iv. Number of Employees in the facility
 - v. Whether any of the employees at the facility have tested positive for COVID-19
 - vi. Whether any of the employees at the facility have been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - vii. Whether other offices (federal or private) are co-located at the facility and is that property controlled by USDA
 - viii. If applicable, the timeframe proposed for operational changes
 - ix. Proposed actions for ensuring essential facility operation, e.g., care and feeding of animals, continuation of research projects, essential services that cannot be done remotely, etc.
 - x. Hyperlink to or additional information from the facility's local public health department including specific guidance to the community
 - xi. Any other information relevant to making the determination (e.g., number of coronavirus cases in your area, local health declarations, Mission/Agency level recommendations, etc.)
 - d. The Office of the Secretary will make a determination regarding the request *promptly upon* receipt by the USDA Pandemic Coordinator.
 - e. The USDA Pandemic Coordinator will promptly notify the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the determination. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator will promptly give notice of the determination to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and senior most official.
8. **SECURE THE FACILITY** - If a USDA facility moves to full telework and is no longer accepting in-person meetings, the facility should follow the facility checklist included in ATTACHMENT C.
9. **REQUEST FOR DEVIATION FROM GUIDANCE** - Requests for changes to or deviation from this guidance should be submitted to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and will be treated as a REQUEST TO CHANGE TO OPERATIONAL STATUS.

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VISITOR TO A USDA FACILITY WHO TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

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The USDA facility should use the following guidance to manage response.

1. **EXPECT NOTICE** - If a visitor tests positive for COVID-19, it is expected that either a local health department or the visitor will notify USDA: that notice will likely be given to the visitor's point of contact.
2. **FOLLOW HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS** - To the extent practicable, the facility should consult with and follow community-based recommendations relating to the facility's response.
3. **GIVE NOTICE TO [FACILITY'S LOCAL PANDEMIC COORDINATOR](#)** - Based on USDA's Incident Command structure and the Pandemic Plan, the point of contact who is given notice of the visitor's status should contact the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator to provide the visitor's name, location visited at the facility and contact information, including a phone number.
4. **RESPOND AT THE FACILITY** - The local Pandemic Coordinator should inform the senior-most leader at the facility and together they should use the facility's Pandemic Plan and this guidance to coordinate response and address the visitor's contact and movements at the facility and take necessary steps to mitigate spread of the illness, including:
 - a. **INTERVIEW** - To address the visitor's contact and movements at the USDA facility, the Pandemic Coordinator (or their designee) should quickly coordinate telephone or electronic outreach to the visitor, or if not possible, to the point of contact and or meeting attendees to collect information. *The approved script for this interview is included as ATTACHMENT A.*
 - b. **LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS** - Contact local officials and follow the recommendations of the state/local/tribal health department.
 - c. **CONSIDER INCIDENT COMMAND** - Based on the facility's Occupant Emergency Plan, consult with the agency's Designated Official to determine whether concerns warrant activating Incident Command to manage the facility response.
 - d. **RETRACE MOVEMENTS** - To the extent possible, determine the areas within the USDA facility the visitor accessed.
 - i. To the extent possible, *restrict access to potentially impacted area(s)* until the impacted areas are properly assessed and appropriate cleaning is conducted.
 - ii. To the extent possible, *provide alternate entry and exit routes for employees in or near impacted areas* to avoid potentially impacted areas or allow for alternate work locations until the areas are properly assessed and appropriate cleaning is conducted.
 - h. **INFORM [MISSION AREA/AGENCY PANDEMIC COORDINATOR](#)** – The local Pandemic Coordinator should promptly inform the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the facility situations and response. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator should then inform the USDA Pandemic Coordinator at homelandsecurity@usda.gov.

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- i. **INFORM IMPACTED PERSONNEL** - Inform employees who are directly impacted by the movements of the infected visitor of their potential exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. During this process, the confidentiality of the infected visitor must be kept as required by applicable law. Employees exposed to a visitor with confirmed COVID-19 should be directed to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure.
 - e. **PROPERLY CLEAN** - Use a qualified cleaning crew to properly clean and decontaminate the impacted areas and common areas the visitor is known to have visited using [CDC recommended guidance](#).
5. **REQUEST CHANGES TO OPERATIONAL STATUS³** - Facilities must submit a request to change operational status if that change results in the facility no longer providing any service, whether in person or remote, and if the change results in a loss of critical functions being performed at this location. Before taking action that could result in this type of operational change, the local Pandemic Coordinator should submit a request using the following process. All requests are considered pending until reviewed and determined.
- f. The facility's local Pandemic Coordinator submits the request to their Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator.
 - g. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator must promptly submit the request to the USDA Pandemic Coordinator at homelandsecurity@usda.gov.
 - h. The request should include the following information:
 - xii. Mission and Agency seeking Request
 - xiii. Facility Name and Address subject to Request
 - xiv. Name, Title, Email, and Phone Number of facility Senior Leader seeking Request
 - xv. Number of Employees in the facility
 - xvi. Whether any of the employees at the facility have tested positive for COVID-19
 - xvii. Whether any of the employees at the facility have been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - xviii. Whether other offices (federal or private) are co-located at the facility and is that property controlled by USDA
 - xix. If applicable, the timeframe proposed for operational changes
 - xx. Proposed actions for ensuring essential facility operation, e.g., care and feeding of animals, continuation of research projects, essential services that cannot be done remotely, etc.
 - xxi. Hyperlink to or additional information from the facility's local public health department including specific guidance to the community
 - xxii. Any other information relevant to making the determination (e.g., number of coronavirus cases in your area, local health declarations, Mission/Agency level recommendations, etc.)

³ Under USDA's maximized telework guidance, facilities no longer need to request a change in operational status as it relates to moving 3 or more employees to telework.

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- i. The Office of the Secretary will make a determination regarding the request *promptly upon* receipt by the USDA Pandemic Coordinator.
 - j. The USDA Pandemic Coordinator will promptly notify the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the determination. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator will promptly give notice of the determination to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and senior most official.
6. **SECURE THE FACILITY** - If a USDA facility moves to full telework and is no longer accepting in-person meetings, the facility should *follow the facility checklist included in ATTACHMENT C.*
7. **REQUEST FOR DEVIATION FROM GUIDANCE** - Requests for changes to or deviation from this guidance should be submitted to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and will be treated as a REQUEST TO CHANGE TO OPERATIONAL STATUS.

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GOVERNMENT DECLARED OUTBREAK⁴ OF COVID-19 IN THE US OR NEAR A USDA FACILITY

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The USDA facility should use the following guidance to manage response.

1. **EXPECT NOTICE** - If the nation, a state or a community issues a COVID-19 related public health declaration, guidance or restrictions, it is expected that employees will find out either from the local health department or local media
2. **GIVE NOTICE TO LEADERS** - Based on USDA's Incident Command structure and Pandemic Plan, the supervisor or leader who is given notice of the community status should contact the facility's local [Pandemic Coordinator](#).
3. **RESPOND AT THE FACILITY** - The local Pandemic Coordinator should inform the senior-most leader at the facility and together they should use the facility's Pandemic Plan and this guidance to coordinate response and take necessary steps to mitigate spread of the illness, including:
 - a. **LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS** – Contact local health officials and follow the recommendations⁵ of the state/local/tribal health department.
 - b. **CONSIDER INCIDENT COMMAND** – Based on the facility's Occupant Emergency Plan, consult with the agency's Designated Official to determine whether conditions warrant activating Incident Command to manage the facility response.
 - c. **INFORM MISSION AREA/AGENCY PANDEMIC COORDINATOR** – The local Pandemic Coordinator should promptly inform the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the facility situations and response. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator should then inform the USDA Pandemic Coordinator.
 - d. **WHEN FACILITY IS OPEN**
 - i. Instruct sick individuals to stay home regardless of illness. The interactions with symptomatic individuals increase the risk level for contracting COVID-19 among those sick with other illnesses.
 - ii. Practice social distancing (i.e., six feet distance between individuals) to the greatest extent practicable.

⁴ Government acknowledged local or regional community spread of COVID-19 or widely acknowledged demonstration of efficient and sustained human-to human transmission of the virus within a geographic area.

⁵ This may include legally enforceable directives issued under the authority of a relevant federal, state, or local entity that, when applied to a person or group, may place restrictions on the activities undertaken by that person or group, potentially including movement restrictions or a requirement for monitoring by a public health authority, for the purposes of protecting the public's health. Federal, state, or local public health orders may be issued to enforce isolation, quarantine or conditional release.

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- iii. Instruct the use of audio and video teleconferencing capabilities, to the greatest extent possible.
 - iv. Limit all group interactions and meetings to 10 people or less.
 - v. Implement rigorous cleaning procedures at all locations where groups of people congregate.
 - vi. The facility should consider closing all USDA controlled or maintained facility food service to employees if conditions warrant.
 - vii. Though COVID-19 is transmissible on some surfaces, there is typically no need to perform special cleaning. However, if further cleaning is determined to be warranted, agencies should clean those areas using [CDC recommended guidance](#).
- a. VISITOR CONSIDERATIONS**
- 1. Restrict visitors to essential, time-sensitive visits only and require all visitors to be escorted at all times and limit visitor access to non-essential areas of the USDA.
 - 2. Do not allow the public or visitor use of food service that is maintained or controlled by USDA.
 - 3. Prior to arrival at a USDA facility, all visitors will be screened based on health concerns or recent travel. *Missions, agencies and offices must use the [visitor screening process](#) included as ATTACHMENT B.*
4. **REQUEST OFFICIAL CLOSURE ⁶ OF A FACILITY** - Facilities must submit a request to change operational status if that change results in the facility no longer providing any service, whether in person or remote, and if the change results in a loss of critical functions being performed at this location. *Before taking action that could result in this type of operational change, the local Pandemic Coordinator should submit a request using the following process. All requests are considered pending until reviewed and determined.*
- a) The facility's local Pandemic Coordinator submits the request to their Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator.
 - b) The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator must promptly submit the request to the USDA Pandemic Coordinator at homelandsecurity@usda.gov.
 - c) The request should include the following information:
 - xxiii. Mission and Agency seeking Request
 - xxiv. Facility Name and Address subject to Request
 - xxv. Name, Title, Email, and Phone Number of facility Senior Leader seeking Request
 - xxvi. Number of Employees in the facility
 - xxvii. Whether any of the employees at the facility have tested positive for COVID-19
 - xxviii. Whether any of the employees at the facility have been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - xxix. Whether other offices (federal or private) are co-located at the facility and is that property controlled by USDA
 - xxx. If applicable, the timeframe proposed for operational changes

⁶ Under USDA's maximized telework guidance, facilities no longer need to request a change in operational status as it relates to moving 3 or more employees to telework.

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- xxxi. Proposed actions for ensuring essential facility operation, e.g., care and feeding of animals, continuation of research projects, essential services that cannot be done remotely, etc.
 - xxxii. Hyperlink to or additional information from the facility's local public health department including specific guidance to the community
 - xxxiii. Any other information relevant to making the determination (e.g., number of coronavirus cases in your area, local health declarations, Mission/Agency level recommendations, etc.)
- k. The Office of the Secretary will make a determination regarding the request *promptly upon* receipt by the USDA Pandemic Coordinator.
 - l. The USDA Pandemic Coordinator will promptly notify the Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator of the determination. The Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinator will promptly give notice of the determination to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and senior most official.
5. **SECURE THE FACILITY** - If a USDA facility moves to full telework and is no longer accepting in-person meetings, the facility should *follow the facility checklist included in ATTACHMENT C.*
6. **REQUEST FOR DEVIATION FROM GUIDANCE** - Requests for changes to or deviation from this guidance should be submitted to the facility's local Pandemic Coordinator and will be treated as a REQUEST TO CHANGE TO OPERATIONAL STATUS.

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ATTACHMENT A

INTERVIEW OF AN EMPLOYEE OR VISITOR AT USDA WHO TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

The designated interviewer should directly contact the interviewee⁷ preferably by phone and ask the following questions:

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1. *Who is your immediate supervisor, and have you notified them of your illness? (Record supervisor's name, email and phone number.)*
2. *What approximate date did you start feeling ill?*
3. *Have you been tested for COVID-19? If so, what were the results? If yes, what date did you test positive or were diagnosed with Coronavirus?*
4. *Have you contacted your local health department for instructions on quarantine or testing for Coronavirus?*
5. *Have you been advised by medical officials to self-isolate or be under quarantine? If so, when and for how long?*
6. *Have you been in contact with someone possibly with the coronavirus or in a region where the virus is located?*
7. *Where is your office located or where was you meeting or visit?*
8. *Besides your office or that location, is there any other location at USDA you spent a considerable amount of time?*
9. *Who, if anyone, did you have close contact with at work or at this facility? If so, who and at what agency or specific location within the facility? (Record the name, location, email and phone number, if known.)*
10. *How do you arrive to work or to this facility (drive, metro, bus, other)? Is your commute to and from work or this facility the same? If not, describe how it may have varied in the last 14 days? Do you use this route or method everyday or has it varied in the last 14 days?*
11. *Which door do you use when entering and departing your building?*
12. *Which bathrooms do you typically use in your building or which bathrooms did you use in this building while you were on site (if any)?*
13. *Which elevators or stairwells do you typically use in your building or which bathrooms did you use in this building while you were on site (if any)?*
14. *If in the National Capital Region, do you purchase food and/or eat in the USDA cafeterias, snack shops, vending machines, or in the South Building sub-basement? If yes, in which establishment or provide a location?*
15. *Who is your point of contact in event of emergency? (Record the name, email and phone number.)*
16. *Is there anything else we should be made aware of?*

⁷ All information should be recorded in a secure system and any not secured written records must be destroyed to protect the interviewee's privacy.

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ATTACHMENT B

VISITOR⁸ SCREENING & ENGAGEMENT AT A USDA FACILITY

In accordance with the federal guidance and CDC guidelines, USDA facilities should restrict individuals infected with, or at higher risk for serious illness from, COVID-19 from accessing its USDA facilities. All visitors seeking entry to a USDA facility must comply with the following guidance.

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1. **LIMIT VISITS** - *Limit visitors to essential, time-sensitive visits only.* Employees must reconsider ALL in-person meetings and avoid bringing visitors to USDA facilities, including postponing in-person meetings, and instead use virtual meeting capabilities such as teleconferencing, video, and webinars to the greatest extent possible.
 - a. If an essential meeting or event must occur at an USDA facility, the meeting or event must be held in a space that can properly accommodate all visitors *and* all USDA participants (no more than 10 people) while allowing for adequate social distancing. No food or beverages may be served.
2. **SCHEDULE & SCREEN** - Visitors seeking entry to any USDA facility must comply with the following security screening procedures:
 - a. Schedule Visits: To the extent practicable, schedule all visits in advance.
 - b. Ask Health & Travel Questions: Facilities should to develop a process to ensure that all visitors are screened using the health and recent travel questions highlighted below prior to being admitted to the USDA facility. (For example, a facility could arrange for onsite Security Officers to ask the visitor questions or the USDA point of contact for the visit could ask the questions before the visitor is allowed access to the facility.)

SCREENING QUESTIONS TO ASK ALL USDA VISITORS⁹

- 1) *Have you, someone living in your household, someone with you have been in close or frequent contact with, or someone you are caring for been diagnosed with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) or had any contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?*
- 2) *In the last 14 days, have you or someone living in your household, or someone with you have been in close or frequent contact with, or someone you are caring for returned from, or made a travel connection through a CDC Level 3 or Level 2 country or State Department Level 3 or Level 4 country, for example, China, Korea, Japan, the European Union, Iran?*

⁸ All Non-USDA employees, *including other federal* employees, will be considered visitors for the purposes of this guidance.

⁹ The USDA point of contact for the visit MAY share or ask these questions in advance of the visit to a USDA facility.

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3) Do you currently have, or have you had within the last 24 hours, any cold or flu symptoms, including a fever greater than 100.4, shortness of breath, body aches and coughing)?

- If the visitor answers “Yes” to any of these questions, the visitor will be denied entry to the USDA facility. The Security Officer will contact the USDA point of contact to notify them of the visitor’s status.
- If the visitor answers “No” to all questions, the visitor will be allowed to enter the facility under normal procedures.

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3. **ESCORT REQUIRED** - All visitors must be escorted by USDA personnel at all times during their visit and should not be allowed access to locations directly relating to the reason for the visit.

4. **INDIVIDUALS WHO APPEAR ILL or ACKNOWLEDGE COVID-19 CONTACT WHILE AT A USDA FACILITY –**

If, while at a USDA facility, any individual is noticeably ill or acknowledges having contact with COVID-19, the risk of exposure to our employees could significantly impact USDA’s ability to conduct its core programs and essential operations.

- a. USDA prohibits all individuals who are either exhibiting symptoms of illness or acknowledge having contact with someone infected with COVID-19 from entering any USDA facility except as otherwise permitted by law.
- b. Signs should be posted on all facility entrances informing the public, visitors and employees of this temporary limitation on access. *The text of the sign should read:*
 - i. “USDA prohibits all individuals from entering any USDA facility who:
 - 1) Are exhibiting symptoms of any respiratory illness,
 - 2) have a fever over 100.4 F
 - OR
 - 3) have been in contact with someone infected with COVID-19.”
- c. If an individual disregards the posted notification, the USDA employee in charge of the facility or office can deem that person to be creating a “disturbance” under §102-74.390 of the Federal Management Regulation, i.e., conduct that “[o]therwise impedes or disrupts the performance of official duties by Government employees; or [p]revents the general public from obtaining the administrative services provided on the property in a timely manner.”
 - i. The USDA employee should immediately ask the individual to voluntarily leave and provide alternate arrangements for the remote delivery of services.
 - ii. If the individual refuses to leave, the USDA employee in charge of the facility or office should contact facility security personnel or, if necessary, local law enforcement to assist with removing the individual for trespass.

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ATTACHMENT C

FACILITY CHECKLIST

FOLLOW THE BELOW PROCEDURES FOR SECURING YOUR FACILITY SHOULD THE FACILITY MOVE TO FULL TELEWORK AND IS NO LONGER ACCEPTING IN-PERSON VISITORS

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1. COMMUNICATING STATUS

- a. **SIGNAGE** - Offices ensure proper signage on the doors and entrances advising public and visitors that the office has moved to virtual work to protect the health and safety of customers and employees.
 - i. If any USDA services are still available to customers, that should be communicated on the signage along with phone numbers and email contact(s). Local Pandemic coordinators should contact Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinators for suggested templates for signage.
- b. **PRESS RELEASES** – Local Pandemic coordinators should work with Office of Communications on drafting any press release. Local Pandemic coordinators should contact Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinators for suggested templates for press releases.

2. ENSURING UNINTERRUPTED AVAILABILITY –

- a. **PHONES** – For essential functions, or for any USDA services that are still available to customers, office phones should be forwarded to the cell phones of the employees performing those functions.
- b. **MAIL** - For essential functions, or for any USDA services that are still available to customers, procedures should be in place to ensure timely collection and processing of mail arriving at the facility.
- c. **EMAIL/IT** – For essential functions, or for any USDA services that are still available to customers, ensure IT and capacity for telework employees. Instruct employees to reflect their telework and office operational status as a footer in employee emails, with directions for requesting meetings if available. Local Pandemic coordinators should contact Mission/Agency Pandemic Coordinators for suggested templates for common messages.

3. SECURITY – Ensure arrangements are made for the physical security of USDA property and vehicles so that valuable equipment is not stolen or destroyed.

4. ESSENTIAL ON SITE SERVICES/ACTIVITIES - Ensure arrangements are made with local authorities who may be enforcing quarantines or monitoring local movements so that essential USDA personnel are able to perform essential services on site, e.g., care and feeding of animals, continuation of research projects, essential services that cannot be done remotely, etc.