



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

JUN 22 2020

Memorandum

To: All Department of the Interior Employees
From: Deputy Secretary *Katharine MacGregor*
Subject: Return to the Main Interior Building During Phase 2

It has been several months since the White House first unveiled the plan to slow the spread of COVID-19. The plan encouraged following State and local public health guidance. I applaud all Department of the Interior (Department) employees for your hard work during these challenging times and for your ability to adapt to a changing work environment. This has enabled the Department to continue to serve its mission on behalf of the American people, while also allowing healthcare facilities nationwide to prepare for and adapt to this disease. Now, as the National Capital Region (NCR) transitions to Phase 2 today, we will rely on your professionalism and versatility once again as employees begin to return to the workplace.

The majority of you have not returned to the Main Interior Building (MIB) since we moved to maximum telework in March. For those of you who are able to return, I ask you to take note of the procedures and precautions we are asking you to take to further mitigate the risk of exposure throughout Phase 2. First, we ask employees to use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [self-checker](#) to identify if you should seek further medical care prior to returning to work. When you do return, you will notice signs placed at all entrances and throughout the building to remind employees of CDC guidance or to notify employees of maximum occupancy, where applicable. Further, we are encouraging employees to wear facial coverings in circumstances where the recommended social distancing cannot be maintained. Some seating areas and office furniture have been rearranged to provide for social distancing. Office cleanings will continue while communal areas that remain open will undergo additional sanitization measures. For more information on what to expect, I encourage you to review the guidance on the Reopening Tab of the Department's COVID-19 [information portal](#).

While the NCR has moved into Phase 2, and several areas within the region are considering moving into Phase 3 in the near future, it is important to remember that supervisors should maximize telework flexibilities for workers who self-certify as individuals that the CDC has identified as being at [higher risk for serious complications](#) from COVID-19. For employees who do not self-certify as falling within a high risk/vulnerable population, use of weather and safety leave will no longer be available because local offices/duty locations have entered Phase 2, as described in the White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, and State and local governments have lifted stay-at-home orders. However, supervisors may continue to grant employees with childcare or dependent-care responsibilities affected by COVID-19 up to 20 hours of excused absence per pay period in accordance with [previous guidance](#). This childcare or

dependent-care leave for employees, to the extent that they cannot otherwise telework, will be continued until schools reopen physical facilities.

I know that many of you, like me, never envisioned we would be confronted by a pandemic that would so fundamentally shift how we work, how we connect with friends and family, and how we go about our daily lives. That said, I am thankful for all of you who have made the best of this situation, and I greatly look forward to seeing you once again at MIB as you begin to return this week.