

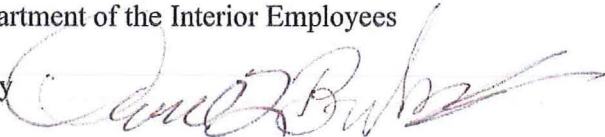


THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 05 2020

Memorandum

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Secretary 

Subject: Information for Employees Regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States

Over the last several days, I have received several questions regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19). I am writing to share a few thoughts with you.

During my 10 years of service as an employee at the Department of the Interior (Department), some of the clearest memories I have are of employees who have come forward to assist whenever our communities or Nation have faced a significant hazard. Among my most enduring memories, I will never forget the sense of comfort I took on September 11, 2001, from the work of those employees who trained for, thought through, and carried out our continuity of operations programs as the events of that terrible day unfolded. Every time a hazard confronts our country, either nationally or locally, I know our employees in every Bureau and Office are prepared to step up.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have explained that there is no widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States at this time. Nevertheless, over the last couple of weeks, appropriate Departmental, Bureau, and Office personnel who are responsible for managing and supporting activities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, and respond to such hazards have been actively engaged. In essence, the coordination that should happen throughout Government when a hazard takes place is happening, and the Department is part of those efforts. To ensure continuous engagement by senior leadership, I have assigned Deputy Secretary MacGregor to serve as the lead in overseeing our COVID-19 preparation and response efforts.

While it is important that we be vigilant, each of us needs to base our decisions and actions on accurate information. The [CDC COVID-19 website](#) remains an important resource for up-to-date information about the virus, including Frequently Asked Questions for Travelers. In addition, the Office of Personnel Management issued guidance for Federal employees, recently. The guidance reminds Agency/Bureau heads and supervisors of important telework and leave flexibility options, and recommends review of all non-essential travel. The Department's Office of Emergency Management will also be transmitting additional guidance for supervisors and answers to frequently asked questions.

The Department has a [Pandemic Influenza Plan](#) which is being reviewed, and should the need arise, it will be updated accordingly. However, as the CDC has stated, this virus is NOT currently spreading widely in the United States, and most people in the United States will have little immediate risk of exposure to this virus. As always, please rely on the advice of your medical professional. In the meantime, there are simple steps that you and your loved ones can take to prevent the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or do so into your elbow. Dispose of the tissue and wash your hands again.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- **Most important, if you experience flu symptoms or any serious infection or virus, please stay home to avoid exposing others.**

Finally, the President has established the [Coronavirus Task Force](#) which is composed of professionals and medical experts who are focused on ensuring the health and safety of the American people. At the Department, we will continue to utilize and apply our expertise, as well as that of other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services and CDC, to respond to this hazard as it evolves.