



State of Arkansas

Updated Public Health Emergency

COVID-19 Return to On-Site Work Requirements

As of February 2021

The State's requirements for returning to on-site work have evolved as vaccines become more available. At present, all State employees without high-risk conditions impacted by COVID-19 have returned to work on-site. All State employees with high-risk conditions impacted by COVID-19 have continued to work remotely on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the Secretary of their Department. Vaccines for people with high-risk conditions are estimated to become available in April 2021. Therefore, all State employees working remotely shall return to work on-site by May 17, 2021, at the latest. Individual State employees shall return sooner if they receive all vaccination doses prior to May 17, 2021.

Departments, including those with situation-specific guidance,¹ should continue to follow ADH COVID-19 requirements for their operations. Department human resources staff will contact TSS with any questions that cannot be resolved at the Department level. State employees should refer to their respective Department Return to Work Plan for Department-specific procedure and guidance. The following return to work requirement is implemented and shall continue to be followed even after all State employees return to work on-site:

- State employees who have COVID-19 shall not return to on-site work. State employees recovering or recovered from COVID-19 should follow ADH guidance and the guidance of their doctor.
- State employees must be screened at the entrance to any state building using the prescribed screening questions. State employees should refer to their Department's Return to Work Plan for Department-specific procedure and guidance.
- Any State employee who tests positive for COVID-19 shall immediately follow his or her Department-specific procedure and guidance to report the positive results. The Human Resources Director of the Department shall report this information to the ADH Outbreak Response Team immediately.
- While conducting on-site work, State employees must socially distance themselves at least six feet away from other State employees. If this is not possible, State employees must wear a face mask or face covering that completely covers their nose and mouth at work.
- State employees are still encouraged to limit the size of in-person meetings, and participants are encouraged to utilize a conference call or video option. Any in-person meetings must accommodate sufficient social distancing or require face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth during the meeting.
- Departments must comply with ADH guidelines on the number of participants in work-related conferences. The venue must accommodate sufficient social distancing. Participants are encouraged to utilize a video or call-in option.
- All business travel must still be approved by the Secretary of the Department.
- Director's Authorized Leave will no longer be available after May 14, 2021.

The following requirements are implemented as it relates to COVID-19 vaccinations:

- Departments must provide reasonable time for State employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations on days the State employee has scheduled to receive the vaccination. This time will

¹ Examples of Departments with situation-specific guidance are the Arkansas Department of Corrections, the Arkansas Department of Public Safety, or those Departments with health care providers or food service preparation staff.

be in addition to the State employee's allowed breaks. State employees must still perform the duties of their workday.

- State employees with high-risk conditions that are still allowed to work remotely are encouraged to get vaccinations as soon as possible. Once a State employee with high-risk conditions receives his or her final vaccination dose he or she will be required to report to work on-site once the immunity protection is effective. Regardless of a State employee's decision to receive the vaccine or not, all State employees who are either working remotely or designated as Category 3 due to COVID-19 must return to on-site work no later than May 17, 2021. Please consult CDC and ADH guidance for the immunity protection effectiveness date post-vaccination.

As we continue to advance the response to COVID-19 regarding the on-site work requirements for State employees, updated requirements that may increase or ease restrictions will be released.