



## Farm Credit Administration

### Covid-19 Workplace Safety Plan

#### **Draft Dated September 2022**

This plan is intended to provide FCA leaders with guidelines and planning considerations for evaluating the needs of employees as the agency transitions from one operating status to another during the pandemic. NOTE: With five (5) office locations whose occupancy ranges from 30 to over 160 employees, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and decisions will be based on data at the local level.

This plan is also intended to provide FCA employees with guidance regarding protocols.

**NOTE:** On February 25, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) set recommendations related to COVID-19 [community levels](#), which measure the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems. Layered prevention strategies — like staying up to date on vaccines, ventilation, and wearing masks — can help limit severe disease and reduce the potential for strain on the healthcare system.

Updates to this plan are consistent with [Initial Implementation Guidance for Federal Agencies on Updates to Federal Agency COVID-19 Workplace Safety Protocols \(PDF\)](#), dated August 17, 2022, and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force updates, issued August 31, 2022.

# FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION — PLAN FOR RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

## Predecisional Materials

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# Introduction

Protecting FCA employees and stakeholders from COVID-19, while preserving the agency’s ability to complete its mission, is the purpose of this plan. Effective reentry and reintegration planning are critical to FCA’s personnel, mission, and other stakeholders. This plan applies an enterprise-wide, risk management lens to a phased approach for re-opening FCA offices. Agency leadership meets regularly to implement this guidance on a location-by-location basis because the issues facing each office location may differ. FCA employees are strongly encouraged to be up to date with recommended COVID-19 vaccines.

With very few exceptions, this plan incorporates safety principles from [the OMB Memorandum M-21-25](#), [Executive Order 14043 \(Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees\)](#), [Executive Order 13991 \(Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing\)](#), [OMB Agency Model Safety Principles](#), protocols pursuant to guidance from the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#), and other pertinent guidance.

The agency considers the following trends when making operating status decisions for an office location:

- COVID-19 community levels: Is the community level high, medium, or low?
- Community transmission level: Is the transmission level high, substantial, moderate, or low?
- Testing: Is the number of tests administered increasing? Decreasing?
- Hospitalization: Is the hospitalization rate increasing? Decreasing?
- Cases: Is the number of new cases increasing? Decreasing?
- Vaccinations: Are total local vaccinations administered increasing? Decreasing?



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The following table outlines the protocols for the agency and its employees to follow.

Topic	Protocols
<b>Office location status</b>	All office locations are open.
<b>Office occupancy status</b>	To be consistent with Task Force guidance, FCA will not establish facility-level occupancy limits solely to facilitate physical distancing.
<b>COVID-19 vaccinations</b>	To comply with a nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, FCA will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043. Employees are encouraged to get vaccinated and get recommended boosters.
<b>Vaccination documentation</b>	At this time, employees generally do not need to submit any vaccination documentation. However, circumstances could arise that would require you to provide proof of your vaccination status to the agency. If that occurs, you will be notified as to how to provide documentation. Also, at this time, documentation is not required to enter FCA facilities.
<b>Vaccinations for new hires</b>	To comply with a nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, the federal government will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043. Therefore, even if a federal job announcement includes the requirement that applicants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 pursuant to Executive Order 14043, that requirement does not currently apply.
<b>Vaccinations during duty-time</b>	<p>The agency is granting up to four hours administrative leave for any CDC-recommended COVID-19 vaccination doses, including primary series doses (1 or 2), boosters, and other additional doses (e.g., for the immunocompromised). The four hours includes time to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccination, and return to work. For example, to receive a two-dose primary series, you may take up to eight hours of administrative leave for that purpose.</p> <p>If you take longer than four hours, the agency requires you to document the reason for the additional time (e.g., you may need to travel a long distance to get the vaccine).</p> <p>If you are prevented from working because of an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination dose, the agency will grant you up to two workdays of administrative leave (i.e., no more than two workdays for reactions associated with a single dose).</p> <p>The agency will grant leave-eligible employees up to four hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member (as defined in OPM’s leave regulations, see 5 CFR 630.201) who is receiving any COVID-19 vaccination dose.</p>
<b>Travel</b>	Vaccination status is no longer a factor in determining who can travel. We encourage you to get tested for COVID-19 immediately before and after travel. However, under FCA policies, if your FCA-related trip originates from an area with a high CDC community level (including return travel), you will be required to take a COVID-19 test

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	<p>before traveling. The agency will pay for a test kit. When interacting with others as part of your official responsibilities during official travel, you must follow applicable masking protocols when in a county with a high community level.</p> <p>Do NOT travel if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have COVID-19 symptoms,</li> <li>• you tested positive for COVID-19, or</li> <li>• you are waiting for results of a COVID-19 test.</li> </ul> <p>You will NOT be approved for travel if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have COVID-19 symptoms and are awaiting an initial diagnostic test result or</li> <li>• you have tested positive for COVID-19 for at least five full days after your first day of symptoms, or (if you’re asymptomatic) after the date of a positive viral test.</li> </ul> <p>Under the Task Force travel protocols, following CDC guidance, federal employees should adhere strictly to CDC guidance for <a href="#">domestic</a> and <a href="#">international</a> travel before, during, and after official travel, including the required wearing of masks in airports, train stations, and during flights and train rides. However, since the CDC guidance is not binding on the public at large, FCA is exercising its authority as an independent agency to allow you to choose whether to mask-up in these circumstances.</p> <p><b>However, the above masking exception is unavailable to employees who are traveling after a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 or after ending isolation from having COVID-19 (see sections on sick employees and exposure to COVID-19). If you cannot wear a high-quality mask during the required 10-day period outlined in those sections, you are not allowed to engage in official travel through public transportation during the required masking period. Depending on circumstances, you may be able to rent a vehicle and drive back to your residence.</b></p> <p>As a general matter, we recommend the use of masks on all public transportation for work-related travel as a way to keep yourself and your work colleagues safe.</p> <p>If, during official travel, you have a known exposure to someone with probable or confirmed COVID-19, please refer to the section on exposure to COVID-19. If you become sick with probable or confirmed COVID-19 while on official travel, please refer to the section on sick employees.</p>
<p><b>In-person training</b></p>	<p>Please refer to the following sections of this table:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face masks/coverings</li> <li>• Physical distancing</li> <li>• Travel (if applicable)</li> <li>• Signage</li> </ul>

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Topic	Protocols
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings and other gatherings</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency response contact</b>	Identify contact for each office location.
<b>COVID-19 testing</b>	Pursuant to Executive Order 13991 and consistent with guidance from the Task Force, FCA has stopped implementing COVID-19 serial screening testing for unvaccinated employees. However, you are required to get tested in certain situations as outlined in various sections of this workplace safety plan (see travel, sick employees, and exposure to COVID-19).
<b>Face masks/ coverings</b>	<p>The CDC has provided county-level data showing the COVID-19 <a href="#">community level</a> for each county in the United States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the community level is low or medium in the county where an FCA office is located, mask wearing is not required.</li> <li>• When the community level is high in the county where an FCA office is located, a well-fitting, <a href="#">high-quality mask</a> or respirator mask IS required, consistent with <a href="#">CDC</a> and Task Force guidance on mask wearing.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements than the community level calls for, those requirements should be followed in federal facilities within that locality.</p> <p>The rules for masking apply both at FCA offices and in locations where you go for official travel (e.g., conferences and examinations) when interacting with others as part of your official responsibilities. At any time, whether in an FCA office or on official travel, you may wear a mask if you choose, regardless of the COVID-19 community level. Please review the sections on travel, sick employees, and exposure to COVID-19 for masking requirements in those situations.</p> <p>Note: As an independent federal agency, we have the discretion to provide limited exceptions to masking requirements. Therefore, during board meetings, board members are not required to wear masks while maintaining distancing. In addition, presenters are not required to wear masks while presenting and maintaining distancing.</p>
<b>Physical distancing</b>	<p>When on-site, physical distancing is generally not required.</p> <p>To be consistent with Task Force guidance, when COVID-19 community levels are medium or high, FCA will post signs encouraging individuals to avoid crowding and to physically distance themselves from others in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings.</p>
<b>Temperature checks</b>	You must check your temperature every day when you first report to an FCA office. Until further notice, on-site temperature checks will be conducted using contactless thermometers and/or temperature-scanning kiosks.

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Sick employees	<p>Regardless of vaccination status, you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19. You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have <a href="#">test</a> results. If your results are positive, follow the full isolation recommendations. These procedures also apply when you're on official travel (substitute your hotel room for home).</p> <p><b>Isolation</b> – If you test positive for COVID-19, take the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home for at least five days and isolate from others in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if possible. You are likely most infectious during these first five days.</li> <li>• Wear a <a href="#">high-quality mask</a> if you must be around others at home and in public.</li> <li>• Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see the CDC's <a href="#">Travel webpage</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Do not travel</a>.</li> <li>• Take steps to <a href="#">improve ventilation</a> at home, if possible.</li> <li>• Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.</li> <li>• Monitor your <a href="#">symptoms</a>. If you have an <a href="#">emergency warning sign</a> (like trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.</li> <li>• Learn more about <a href="#">what to do if you have COVID-19</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ending isolation</b> — If you had NO symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5.</p> <p>If you HAD symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5 if the following statements are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).</li> <li>• Your symptoms are improving.</li> </ul> <p>You must retest for COVID-19 and receive a negative result before returning to the office or interacting with others outside the office as part of your official responsibilities. FCA exercises its authority as an independent agency to add this requirement.</p> <p>You must wear a <a href="#">high-quality mask</a> or respirator (such as an N95) for the subsequent five days.*</p> <p>If you still have fever or your other symptoms have not improved, continue to isolate until they improve.</p> <p>If you had <a href="#">moderate illness</a> (if you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) or <a href="#">severe illness</a> (you were hospitalized) due to COVID-19, or you have a weakened immune system, you need to isolate through day 10.</p> <p>If you had <a href="#">severe illness</a> or have a weakened immune system, consult your doctor before ending isolation. Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you.</p> <p>If you are unsure whether your symptoms are moderate or severe or whether you have a</p>

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	<p>weakened immune system, consult a healthcare provider.</p> <p>Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11. Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others at home and in public, and do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking.</p> <p>*Note: If you had COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 and, after day 5 from the onset of symptoms or a positive test, you had two negative tests within 48 hours of each other, you do not need to continue wearing a mask after the second negative test (e.g., negative tests on days 6 and 8 or days 7 and 9). If one of the tests comes up positive, you should continue taking tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may require you to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.</p>
<p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p>	<p>Pursuant to Executive Order 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance on <a href="#">post-exposure precautions</a>, if you have been <a href="#">exposed to someone with COVID-19</a>, regardless of their vaccination status, you should take the following precautions while working indoors at an agency workplace or interacting indoors elsewhere with others as part of your official responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As soon as possible after notification of exposure, begin wearing a <a href="#">high-quality mask</a> or respirator (such as an N95) and continue to do so for 10 full days from the date you were last exposed.</li> <li>• Take <a href="#">extra precautions</a>, such as physically distancing from others and avoiding crowding, for 10 full days from the date you were last exposed when you know you are around people who are <a href="#">more likely to get very sick from COVID-19</a>.</li> <li>• Watch for <a href="#">COVID-19 symptoms</a> for 10 full days from the date you were last exposed.</li> </ul> <p>If you plan to come into the office or interact with others in person as part of your official responsibilities outside the office, you must get tested for COVID-19 at least five full days after your exposure (ideally on day 6). You do not need to test if you will not be coming into the office or interacting with others outside the office during the 10 days after exposure.</p> <p>For purposes of calculating the 10 full days, day 0 is the day of your last exposure to someone with COVID-19, and day 1 is the first full day after your last exposure. These requirements also apply when you are on official travel.</p>
<p><b>Incident reporting</b></p>	<p>If you report to the worksite or are engaged in official travel and if you receive a positive COVID-19 test result or have been notified that you were exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 up to two days before the infected person developed symptoms (or tested positive in the absence of symptoms), you must report to your supervisor and the chief human capital officer so that appropriate precautions in the workplace can be taken. The identity of infected employees will be protected to the extent possible, in compliance with federal privacy and confidentiality laws and</p>

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Topic	Protocols
	regulations.
<b>Dependent care availability</b>	Telework flexibility is encouraged for employees who lack dependent care because of COVID-19.
<b>Transportation</b>	Telework flexibility is encouraged for employees whose transportation is disrupted because of COVID-19.
<b>Reasonable accommodation</b>	<p>To comply with a preliminary nationwide injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, the federal government will not implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043. Review of all reasonable accommodation requests regarding the mandate have been held in abeyance pending court resolution on the injunction.</p> <p>If you wish to make a reasonable accommodation request that is related to COVID-19 but is not related to the vaccination requirement, you may submit those requests at any time through FCA’s regular reasonable accommodation process (see PPM 857). Such requests will be processed as they are received.</p>
<b>Food services</b>	Food services are available.
<b>Building cleaning</b>	FCA will provide additional cleaning of high-touch areas (e.g., handrails, elevators, bathrooms). The agency will also evaluate systems that may be affected by low usage (e.g., plumbing and HVAC). All facilities will be sanitized. If the agency identifies a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace, it will perform enhanced environmental cleaning, in accordance with CDC guidance, of the space(s) that the infected individual occupied or accessed.
<b>Cleaning supplies</b>	The agency will evaluate the adequacy of cleaning supplies and the supply chain as needed.
<b>Personal protective equipment</b>	FCA will provide personal protective equipment as needed.
<b>Shared equipment</b>	FCA will ensure access to hand sanitizers or sanitizing wipes near shared equipment, such as printers, copiers, and scanners.
<b>Meetings and other gatherings</b>	<p>While some meetings will be virtual, others may be in person. For in-person meetings, please refer to the protocols in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face masks/coverings</li> <li>• Physical distancing</li> <li>• Signage</li> </ul> <p>Note: As an independent agency, FCA is exercising its authority to provide exceptions to</p>

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Topic	Protocols
	the masking requirement. During board meetings, board members are not required to wear masks while maintaining distancing. In addition, presenters are not required to wear masks while presenting and maintaining distancing.
<b>Common areas</b>	<p>Some common areas are closed. For those areas that are open, please refer to the protocols in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face masks/coverings</li> <li>• Physical distancing</li> <li>• Signage</li> </ul>
<b>Signage</b>	As the <a href="#">COVID-19 community level</a> dictates, FCA will work with the FCS Building Association to increase signage to remind employees when mask wearing and physical distancing is required. Signs may also be used to recommend hygiene practices, remind employees to stay home when sick, and explain how to report COVID-like symptoms.
<b>Re-exit strategy</b>	If necessary, FCA will reactivate a mandatory or expanded telework posture.



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Getting a COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



A safe and effective vaccine to protect against COVID-19 is now available.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)