



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JAN 29 2021

Memorandum

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Acting Secretary

Subject: Protecting Our Workforce by Requiring Mask-Wearing

Let me start off by saying “thank you.” You have shown resilience, creativity, and determination in accomplishing the Department of the Interior’s (Department) important mission amid the challenges of a global pandemic. Your work has not gone unnoticed, and it is deeply appreciated.

The Biden-Harris administration is committed to ensuring an urgent, robust, and professional response to the public health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On day one, President Biden signed an [Executive order](#) requiring compliance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by on-duty or onsite Federal employees, onsite Federal contractors, and all individuals in Federal buildings or on Federal lands.

Department leaders have spent time this week discussing thoughtful implementation of the President’s mandate. In alignment with [health and safety recommendations from the CDC](#) and [guidance from the Office of Management and Budget](#), all onsite employees, contractors, and volunteers are required to wear a mask or face covering at all times while in Department buildings or on Federal public lands when physical distancing of 6 feet or more is not possible, and to take other precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. If an individual is unable to wear a mask properly or cannot tolerate a mask, or if a work environment is not conducive to wearing a face covering, the Department will consider adaptations and alternatives on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with applicable law, the Department will provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals.

The [All DOI Employees COVID-19 Information Portal](#) remains an excellent resource, with information about health, safety, and work-life issues; it will be updated to reflect this new guidance.

As a reminder, here are some of the most important steps you can take to mitigate the spread of any virus and protect your families, coworkers, and others:

- Cover your mouth and nose with an appropriate mask or face covering when around others.
- Maintain appropriate social distancing.
- Wash your hands often.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often.
- Monitor your health.
- If you are sick, stay home.

Across the Department, we are taking proactive measures to protect you, our visitors, and the communities we serve from the impacts of COVID-19. I thank you for your continued service during these challenging times.