# Administrative Workplace Annex

This document customizes the COVID-19 hierarchy of controls for administrative and general office settings for Army workforce personnel. See Figure 1 for a graphical summary of the hierarchy of controls. The Return to Workplace Operations document provides detailed information of the COVID-19 hierarchy of controls. The controls presented in this annex may need to be customized to suit the specific location where they are employed. If the facility contains more than one type of work environment, see appropriate annex(es).

Figure 1.

**COVID-19 Hierarchy of Controls for Workplace Operations**



Most Protective

Least Protective

Elimination — eliminate exposure-associated risks

Substitution Measures — substitute the activities, but not the hazard

Engineering Controls — alter the work environment to decrease exposure

Administrative Controls — modify the way people work to decrease exposure

PPE — protect workers based on role

*Adapted from NIOSH Hierarchy of Controls*

Minimizing the risks to the mission and ensuring the health, safety, and protection of the Army workforce and partners are priorities as the Army returns to full operations. The reopening of administrative work places should be conducted in a thorough and thoughtful manner, accounting for several factors before employees are allowed to return. Additionally, consideration for the comfort of employees as they return to work is essential, as many may be in a heightened state of concern.

Leadership should work with Contracting Officers and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) to ensure contractor employees whose place of duty is in an administrative work place adhere to the workplace access restrictions. Contractor employees should discuss any implementation questions or concerns with their contract team lead and their employer.

A draft administrative assessment checklist is provided in Appendix 1 and the end of this document.

## Elimination:

Elimination of disease transmission risk will require the development and broad distribution of an effective vaccine. For the COVID-19 pandemic, elimination of exposure can be achieved by requiring all workers to telework, canceling all travel and other restrictions.

## Substitution Measures:

Substitution measures control the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace by substituting work activities and will change based upon the level of sustaining workplace operations. This control is highly variable in most workplaces. For the COVID-19 pandemic, an example of substitution is only having essential personnel on-site to perform required missions, while keeping the rest of the workforce in telework status.

## Engineering Controls:

For detailed COVID-19 guidance on heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and indoor environmental quality issues, see the Building Readiness Annex.

Assess high-touch surfaces for possible modifications to lessen the potential for disease transmission (e.g., foot stops for doors). Identified modifications should be made before personnel return to the office.

Additional engineering controls that should be utilized within administrative spaces:

- Consider using physical barriers at reception desks, if proper social distancing cannot be maintained.
- If social distancing is not possible (i.e., maintenance of at least 6 feet between persons), then partitions should be placed between desks.
- Personal cooling fans should be removed from the workplace to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses. With the removal of personal cooling fans, employers should remain aware of, and take steps to prevent, heat hazards.

## Administrative Controls:

Administrative controls are procedural changes and training that are used to help keep the workforce safe. There are many administrative controls that can be used to help lower the risk associated with COVID-19.

## General Administrative Controls

- Consider consulting installation Public Health if additional advice is needed.
- Use of spaces.
    - » Explore work-from-home options, staggering work shift/hours, and other flexible approaches for employees.
    - » Reduce tasks requiring many people to be in one area.
    - » Actively discourage use of conference rooms. As an alternative, use virtual meeting tools, including phone, and virtual teleconference, in lieu of in-person meetings, whenever possible.
    - » Regulate the use of common areas with clear signage (including maximum occupancy) and social distancing measures according to public health rules and guidelines.

## Communications

- Adopt communication practices that emphasize transparency with the workforce.
- Consider establishing a communication plan with other units/tenants to inform of confirmed COVID-19 cases present in the building.
- Establish formal and informal routes of communication for employees to express concerns, questions, comments, and feedback. Platforms for communication can include emails, texts, automated phone calls, websites and signage.
- Regularly communicate to employees what is being done to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., disinfection routine and health and safety measures in place).
- Ensure that supplemental information on cleaning and disinfectant products are available to the workforce.

- Communicate that leadership may limit office hours and close-off or prohibit public access if needed. Installation support services offices that are not able to eliminate public access, should consider a communication strategy to limit access and inform installation personnel of reduced operating hours.

- Consider special circumstances that could prevent or impact personnel from returning to the workplace (e.g., school and childcare closures, employee's need to care for ill family members, COVID-19 risk status of employee's household members, availability of public transportation, vanpool, carpool, etc.). Consider implementing supervisor flexibilities to address the needs of individuals on a case-by-case basis.

## Employee Engagement

- Anticipate a hesitant and potentially uncomfortable workforce. Prior to reopening, consider flexible work schedules, staggering work shifts/hours, and work from home options.

- Management and leadership are encouraged to check-in with employees regularly to ensure their concerns are heard, understood, and addressed (see Communications section above).

- Ensure all protective measures and cleaning supplies for common use areas (kitchens, conference rooms, lobbies, etc.) are available prior to occupancy. Restrict visitor access where possible, rearrange office layout to increase distance between employees, provide adequate hand-washing supplies, and provide 60% alcohol hand sanitizer in common areas.

- If the workplace is located in a multi-tenant location:

  » Tenants should communicate indoor environmental quality concerns and responses with one another to ensure all systems are in agreement and balanced. HVAC systems can be shared by multiple tenants, so adjusting the system in one area may have negative effects in another area.

- As part of the resuming operations planning, Leadership should determine which personnel might need to take extra precautions (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html). This may be accomplished by personnel self-reporting.

  » Personnel who need to take extra precautions should continue to telework/work remotely, with approval from their supervisor. When local public health officials have determined that it is safe for high-risk individuals to return to the workplace based on local conditions and HPCON level, personnel who are to take extra precautions may return to office spaces and should continue to self-monitor their health status, in coordination with their medical provider.

  » Leadership are not required to, but have the authority to, request verification from a medical authority that an employee needs to take extra precautions. Supervisors may not inquire about the condition requiring extra precautions. Supervisors should comply with labor laws and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.

## Facility Access and Personnel Monitoring

- Establish and maintain contact with the installation and/or nearest civilian public health authority (i.e., state or local public-health department), as well as the installation Public Health Emergency Officer (PHEO), as appropriate.

- Each site should establish a procedure for access control including who will perform each function, with modifications to be implemented based on current COVID-19 threat level. The installation PHEO should provide appropriate guidance based on the Force Health Protection Guidance and Health Protection Conditions (HPCON) to ensure protection for the workforce.

## Practices for Social Distancing

- Wear a face covering at all times if recommended social distance cannot be maintained according to local policies or guidelines.

- Allow for flexible worksites and schedules (e.g., telework, rotating/staggering shifts).

- Workplace modifications:

  » Consider eliminating reception seating areas and request that visitors phone ahead prior to arrival.

  » Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues placed 6 feet (2 meters) apart to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible.

> » Review floorplans, and remove or reconfigure seats, furniture and workstations as needed to preserve recommended social distancing according to guidelines.

> » Reconfigure workstations so that employees do not face each other, or install partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided.

> » Annotate one-way halls and different stairwells for up or down where feasible (not during emergency evacuations).

> » Close or limit access to common areas where employees are likely to congregate and interact (e.g., kitchens, conference rooms).

> » Reduce capacity in multi-stall restrooms.

## Sanitation and Hygiene:

### General

- Establish a cleaning and disinfection routine. Consider using a checklist to track when and how cleaning and disinfection are conducted. (Note: cleaning and disinfection are applied in succession to remove particles from surfaces within the building and to kill the infectious agents on those surfaces.)

- When using cleaning products and disinfectants, review product labels and Safety Data Sheets and follow the manufacturer's specifications.

- Select appropriate cleaner for surfaces. Clean surfaces prior to disinfection.

- Select appropriate disinfectants; consider effectiveness and safety. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19

- All contact surfaces should be disinfected regularly, including:

  > » Individual workspaces between each shift.

  > » Common area contact surfaces. Examples of commonly touched surfaces in office settings include:
  >   – Door handles
  >   – Light switches
  >   – Stair handrails
  >   – Elevator buttons
  >   – Bathroom surfaces
  >   – Kitchen appliances and surfaces
  >   – Sign-in areas
  >   – Common office electronics (e.g., phones, printers, keyboards, mice)

### Common Areas

- Common areas should be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis at minimum.

- Identify items with likely surface contact that are difficult to clean and remove or replace with alternatives.

- Determine maximum occupancy of conference rooms based on maintenance of social distancing. Place signage to indicate maximum occupancy.

  > » Conference rooms should be disinfected before and after each use. Disinfectant wipes or spray should be left in each conference room, and employees should be encouraged to wipe down all surfaces and equipment (e.g., mouse, keyboard, phone).

  > » If meetings are to occur in person, they should be conducted in a quick manner.

  > » Lingering and socializing before and after meetings should be discouraged.

- Provide cleaning supplies for employees to utilize before/after they use common spaces.

- If vending machines are used, provide supplies and require cleaning and disinfecting after each use.

## Kitchen Areas

- Kitchen areas should be cleaned and disinfected after each use or on a daily basis at minimum.
- Refrigerators, sinks, coffee makers, ice machines, faucets, beverage dispensers and dishwasher handles, and associated control surfaces, should be disinfected at least three times per day.
- Use disposable kitchen products when possible.
- If reusable products are used, ensure that these products are maintained, handled and cleaned per product instructions. If available, utilize dishwasher to clean reusable materials.
- Both reusable and disposable silverware should be stored in a way so that adjacent silverware is not easily touched when a worker is retrieving a piece.
- Ice machines requiring a handheld scoop should not be used.
- Communal meals should not be provided to employees, and food should not be available in common areas where employees may congregate.

## Restrooms

- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles if at all possible.
    - » Place a trash can by the door if the door cannot be opened without touching the handle. Foot stops for doors (engineering control) may also be an option.
- For single restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles.
- Provide paper towels in restrooms, and disconnect or tape-off hand air dryers.
- Ensure bathrooms are kept clean and are properly disinfected.
- Place signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing.

## Training

- Ensure employees understand and comply with all policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Employees should be notified of new workplace policies and changes prior to reopening and as part of resuming operations.
- Train employees on new or modified work schedules, how they can stay up to date on new scheduling requirements, and how to make requests for schedule changes.
- Train employees on proper social distance protocols at work.

## General Hygiene

- Train employees on proper workplace hygiene practices including:
    - » At minimum, employees should wash their hands upon arrival to work; after touching their face, face covering or any common contact surfaces; after coughing or sneezing; after using the restroom; before eating; and when leaving work.
    - » Employees should wash their hands using soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds. If handwashing facilities are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
    - » Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette. When employees have to sneeze or cough, they should cover their nose, mouth, and face cover with a towel or handkerchief.

## Symptoms, what to do if sick

- Health checks and reporting requirements of individuals infected with COVID-19 should be explained to employees prior to reopening and again once operations have resumed.
- Employees should evaluate their health; if they are sick (have a fever or other symptoms), or if someone at home is sick, then they should remain home.

## Cleaning and disinfection

- Employees should receive, at minimum, awareness training on cleaning and disinfection products used in the workplace in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration Hazard Communication Standards. For employees who will use disinfectants and cleaners, training should also include proper use and disposal of, personal protective equipment (PPE) if required, as well as all precautionary measures.

- Ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.

## Face coverings

- Face coverings are not PPE.

- Do not place face coverings on anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.

- Clean your hands with soap and water or a hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol before and after putting on the face covering.

- Face coverings must extend over the nose, mouth and chin. Ensure the covering fits snugly but does not restrict the ability to breathe.

- Avoid touching the front of the face covering. Remove by grasping the elastic ear bands or untying.

- Wash face coverings daily, using warm water and regular detergent.

- Personnel who may not be able to wear a face covering should contact their local occupational health authorities.

## Personal Protective Equipment

Administrative tasks do not require any PPE. Cleaning of common areas may require the use of disposable gloves, depending on the cleaners and disinfectants used and the tasks being performed.

## References:

American Industrial Hygiene Association, General Office Settings Guidelines: https://aiha-assets.sfo2. digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/Reopening-Guidance-for-General-Office-Settings_ GuidanceDocument.pdf

Centers for Disease Control, Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response. html

EPA N-List Disinfectants: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Memorandum. Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, April 13, 2020, Subject: "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 8) - Department of Defense Guidance for Protecting Personnel in Workplaces during the Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic. Memorandum. Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, April 8, 2020, Subject: "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 7) - Department of Defense Guidance for the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment, and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic.

Memorandum. Secretary of Defense April 5, 2020 Subject: "Department of Defense Guidance on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings".

## Appendix 1: Draft Checklist

### COVID-19 Administrative Workplace Checklist

Date: _____

Building: _____

Building POC: _____

Assessor Name: _____

This is a draft checklist to be modified by the assessors to ensure that locally determined COVID-19 mitigation measures have been considered and implemented

| ENGINEERING CONTROLS | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Physical barriers where needed (reception desk, etc.) | |
| Partitions between desk/work stations | |

| ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS | |
|---|---|
| **General Guidance** | Yes/No/NA |
| Schedules and shifts adjusted for reduced occupancy | |
| Liberal telework continued | |
| Common areas are closed common areas or use has been altered (conference rooms, break areas, etc.) | |

| Communication Guidance | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Develop communication program specific for each building and facility | |
| Guidance provided to occupants | |
| Guidance posted throughout the building | |
| Other platforms are used to communicate COVID-19 mitigation measures (social media, installation social media, etc.) | |
| Develop training on COVID-19 related topics has been developed and provided to workplace as needed. | |

| Social Distancing Requirements | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Face coverings use explained (where/when required) | |
| Changes in building will operate under a reduced capacity to ensure social distancing | |
| Changes to building flow of people (into/around building) | |
| One way halls | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Dedicated entrances/exits | |
| Kitchen occupancy | |
| Breakroom use and occupancy | |
| Conference/huddle room use and occupancy | |

| **Personal Hygiene** | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Enforce handwashing/hand sanitizing | |
| – At facility entrance | |
| – After using bathroom | |
| – When departing facility | |
| Provide 60% alcohol hand sanitizer throughout the facility | |
| Review proper cough and sneeze etiquette (cover nose/mouth/face) | |
| Provide adequate supplies of handwashing soap, towels, and 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer for all areas of the facility | |

| **Other Building Changes** | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Reconfigure areas to meet social distancing requirements | |
| Remove chairs to allow for proper social distancing | |
| Restrict visitors and change policies to reflect changes | |
| Restrict in-person meetings | |
| Discourage lingering in common spaces | |
| Restrict elevator occupancy & post in/around elevator(s) | |

| **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION CHECKLIST** | |
|---|---|
| **Cleaning & Disinfecting Supplies** | Yes/No/NA |
| Disposable gloves | |
| Paper towels | |
| Cleaning solution | |
| Disinfectant (EPA N-list as per CDC guidance) | |

| Common Areas | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Clean & disinfect high touch areas in these common spaces: high touch areas include door handles, drawer handles, faucets, light switches, buttons, appliance handles, etc. | |
| Lobby | |
| Breakrooms | |
| Kitchens | |
| Vending | |
| Elevators | |
| Stairways/stairwells | |
| Exterior doors | |
| Restrooms | |

| Office Areas | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Clean and disinfect work stations at least once a day | |

| Restrooms/Showers/Locker Rooms | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Operate restrooms, locker rooms and showers operating according to the Installation's HPCON level | |
| Provide signage and materials to ensure proper hand washing | |
| Provide signage instructing closing toilet lids prior to flushing | |
| When possible, ensure that doors be opened/closed without touching handles | |

| Custodial Services | Yes/No/NA |
|---|---|
| Evaluate to see if changes needed in the custodial services for the building | |