



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

May 22, 2020

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Scott J. Cameron, Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Path Forward Toward Resuming Normal Operations from the Global Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The Secretary and I are appreciative of how hard everyone across the Interior Department is working to support the important and critical work of our agency as we adjust to the government COVID-19 response, while continuing to manage the impacts of the pandemic on our personal lives. Thank you for all you are doing.

Interior bureau COVID-19 Adaptive Operations Recovery Plans have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and are now finalized. At the State and local level, our progression toward regular operations will appropriately vary, and the pace of our own actions will be guided by the pace of Governors and public health officials. Each Bureau's plan phases in regular operations at our offices/duty locations and increases access to our public lands. As always, the Department's ability to carry out its mission and prioritize the safety of its workforce remains paramount in our decision making.

As we continue down the path toward resuming normal operating conditions, this memorandum modifies the following operating/leave protocols, effective May 24, 2020, until rescinded:

## **Telework & Flexible Work Schedules**

Consistent with Bureau Adaptive Operations Recovery Plans (Plans) offices/duty locations are encouraged to begin moving toward normal operations as conditions warrant and consistent with Plans by utilizing available telework options, which will generally align to the designated phase of an office location pursuant to the [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#). Until offices/duty locations return to normal operating protocols, supervisors may encourage telework where consistent with operational needs. Supervisors should also work with all teleworking employees to establish a mutually agreeable work schedule that enables the employee to effectively complete 80 hours of work each pay period.

To ensure the maximum value from telework as a tool for delivering the mission of the Department, Supervisors should ensure all telework eligible employees are telework ready within 7 days of the date of this memorandum. Any employee who is deemed telework eligible must discontinue the use

of Weather & Safety leave (administrative leave code 061) within 7 days of this memo unless written concurrence is received from the Bureau's Deputy Director.

### Vulnerable Persons

Consistent with [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)/Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies](#), until a station/office has resumed normal operations, DOI supervisors are encouraged to maximize telework flexibilities for workers whose conditions the CDC has identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 ([CDC High Risk Complications](#)) and to CDC-identified special populations including pregnant women ([CDC Special Populations](#)), regardless of location. Until a vulnerable employee's office/duty location returns to a normal operating status (i.e., a Phase Three "unrestricted staffing of worksites" per the White House [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)), Weather & Safety leave (administrative leave code 061) is approved for vulnerable employees who cannot effectively perform their jobs in a telework status (i.e., offsite).

When offices/duty locations return to normal operating protocols (i.e., a Phase Three "unrestricted staffing of worksites" per the White House [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)), vulnerable employees may return to work at their duty locations, but should continue physical distancing protocols and other mitigation measures. Use of Weather & Safety leave (administrative leave code 061) for employees in high risk groups is no longer approved once an office/duty location returns to a normal operating status (i.e., a Phase Three "unrestricted staffing of worksites" per the White House [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)).

### Weather & Safety Leave

Use of Weather & Safety leave (administrative leave code 061) for employees that do not fall within a high risk/vulnerable population is no longer approved once an office/duty location enters Phase Two, as described in the White House [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#), and/or the relevant State or local government lifts stay at home orders, whichever happens first.

### Excused Absence for Caregivers

Supervisors may grant employees with childcare and/or dependent care responsibilities affected by COVID-19 up to 20 hours per pay period of excused absence (administrative leave code 060) to the extent they cannot telework, until the associated school(s) return to normal operations where children return to physical learning locations.

### Hazardous Duty Pay

COVID-19 related hazardous duty pay is no longer authorized once an office/duty location enters Phase One, as described in the White House [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#), and/or the relevant State or local government lifts stay at home orders, whichever happens first.

### Inter-bureau Coordination within Interior Regions

Field Special Assistants (FSAs) should continue coordinating with their respective regional executive teams to ensure the DOI workplace flexibilities / operating protocols described in this memo are applied as consistently as possible, taking into account the unique circumstances of a

particular geography relative to a State/tribe/local authority's operating posture.

All DOI employees are encouraged to review the guidance on the Department's [COVID-19 Information Portal](#) which is updated frequently. Employees who need additional assistance or are encountering difficult challenges during this time are encouraged to reach out to their supervisors and/or Interior's Employee Assistance Program, [ESPYR](#).