

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5:00 A.M. ET, TUESDAY, 10/25



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Fall Playbook for Businesses to Manage COVID-19 and Protect Workers

Under President Biden's leadership, the U.S. has made tremendous progress in its ability to manage COVID-19. Through widely available vaccines, treatments, and tests, as well as layered prevention strategies like improved indoor air quality, the nation can reduce serious illness, prevent deaths, keep businesses and schools open, and minimize disruptions.

We now have the tools we need to make sure that COVID-19 does not control our lives, but we must continue to use them to help to ensure that we can have a safe fall and winter.

To date, employers and businesses have played a vital role in getting Americans vaccinated and leading in a number of other areas to keep their workforce and communities safe. The continued leadership of employers and businesses this fall will be essential, given the potential increased risk for a rise in COVID-19 infections this winter. To that end, the Administration is calling on business leaders to step up this fall:

1. Help employees access updated COVID-19 vaccines.

We have updated COVID-19 vaccines that target the versions of COVID-19 we are facing now. Therefore, everyone ages 5 and older who has gotten previously vaccinated should get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to ensure maximum protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. In addition, every business and employer can act to help their workforce get the updated vaccine. This includes:

- ✓ Partner with a vaccine provider to host on-site fall vaccination clinics for your workforce, including vaccination clinics that offer both the annual flu shot and updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- ✓ Disseminate clear information (e.g., emails and texts) to your workforce regularly throughout the fall on the importance of getting the updated COVID-19 vaccine, as well as annual flu shot, this fall.
- ✓ Work with local health care providers to host virtual or in-person activities to help answer employee questions on COVID-19 vaccination.
- ✓ Offer paid time off for vaccinations, which the federal government has done for its employees and their families.
- ✓ Follow business best practices such as providing incentives, offering COVID-19 vaccinations through on-site health services, and adding information to onboarding and HR materials.

2. Ensure that employees know about COVID-19 treatment options, such as oral antiviral pills, and how to access them.

There are now widely available and easily accessible COVID-19 treatments, including oral antiviral medications like Paxlovid, that are proven to reduce hospitalizations and serious illness. These treatments play an essential role in keeping the workforce healthy and out of the hospital if they do get COVID-19. Every employer can act to ensure its workforce is aware of COVID-19 treatments and their effectiveness and to promote easy access to these lifesaving treatments:

- ✓ Encourage your employees to test if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Testing leads to treatment, and treatment prevents serious illness and saves lives.
- ✓ Make sure your employees know that if they get infected with COVID-19, they should consult a health care provider immediately to see if they are eligible for lifesaving treatments.
- ✓ Increase awareness of valuable resources, such as free at-home tests that are available through their health insurance and telehealth and virtual care for COVID-19 evaluation and treatment, because timely access to clinical evaluations can save lives.

3. Improve indoor air quality across buildings.

As the weather gets colder and people spend more time indoors where airborne viruses spread much more easily, taking steps to improve air quality inside your buildings can reduce the spread of COVID-19, in addition to offering other health benefits. At a time where [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) are lower and fewer people are masking, the threat of transmission still persists – but more passive measures like improving [indoor air quality](#) will help reduce the risk and spread of this airborne virus, and others.

- ✓ Take the [Clean Air in Buildings Challenge](#) and publicly commit to it, with clear goals and actions.
- ✓ Ensure that all occupied spaces have been recently assessed and inspect systems for ventilation, filtration, and air cleaning.
- ✓ Replace air filters in mechanical ventilation systems the highest filtration level it can accommodate, including MERV-13 filters if possible.
- ✓ Use portable air cleaners in all areas where there is limited ventilation or filtration.
- ✓ Run HVAC system at all occupied hours, with increased run-time and enhanced settings when COVID-19 Community Levels are higher.