

## Client Alert

### OMB Issues Guidance on Pandemic Federal Workplace Safety

January 27, 2021

On January 24, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a [memo](#) which provides guidance to federal agencies on maintaining a safe federal workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. This memo instructs federal agencies to require face masks and social distancing in all Federal buildings, as directed by President Biden's Executive Order (EO) on [Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#) issued on January 20, 2021, which Crowell has discussed in a previous [client alert](#). It also provides model safety principles which the 24 Chief Financial Officer Act agencies are required to review and use to build tailored workplace safety plans by January 29, 2021. These plans should also address how the safety principles will apply to on-site contractor employees, and agencies must ensure such contractor employees are aware of the requirements to comply with the CDC guidelines, including mask wearing and social distancing.

The model safety principles include:

- Establishing a COVID-19 Coordination Team by January 26, 2021 that is responsible for conducting assessments and reviewing compliance with the workplace safety plans;
- Continuing to encourage the use of telework;
- Requiring the use of face masks by all federal employees and on-site contractors (face shields must not be permitted as substitutes) and providing exceptions consistent with CDC guidance for those unable to wear masks or during specific activities (such as eating and drinking or when alone in an enclosed space);
- Limiting official domestic and international travel for Federal employees;
- Working with local public health officials on contact tracing;
- Conducting symptom monitoring for all federal employees and on-site contractors on a daily basis or upon entry to the workplace, which the agency will use to assess the individual's risk level and to determine whether they should be allowed entry to the workplace;
- Limiting capacity in all Federal workplaces to 25%, unless it is physically impossible or poses a threat to national security; and
- Requiring social distancing of at least 6 feet from others.

The principles also address environmental cleaning, hygiene, and ventilation and air filtration, as well as the use of elevators and shared spaces. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is developing a testing plan for the federal workforce.

Crowell & Moring will continue to monitor developments in the implementation of the memo.

For more information, please contact the professional(s) listed below, or your regular Crowell & Moring contact.

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