

American Battle Monuments Commission COVID-19 Safety Plan

The Administration is committed to ensuring that the Federal Government is a model employer, with the health, safety, and physical and mental wellbeing of its workforce paramount.

[OMB Memo M-21-25]

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) is committed to protecting the health and safety of our employees, our visitors, our partners, our facilities, and our communities. With facilities and commemorative cemeteries and monuments located worldwide, the Commission carefully monitors the evolving COVID-19 outbreak on a global, regional, and local level. This plan documents Commission policies and procedures relevant to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It is grounded in principles and practices proven effective within the agency since the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020 and complies with the most recent guidance published by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and are aligned with the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Guiding Principles

1. ABMC will strive to create a sense of safety as employees return to their workplaces and visitors return to the Commission's commemorative sites.
2. Leadership must understand employee concerns, recognizing that employees will be reluctant to engage if they do not feel physically and psychologically safe. Employee accommodations will be liberally and equitably applied.
3. Timely and effective internal and external communication and messaging is critical.
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be readily available in workspaces.
5. The wearing of masks and social distancing, in accordance with the latest CDC, OMB, Department of State, and applicable foreign government guidance will be enforced in public and private facilities and office spaces.
6. Before directing employees to return to ABMC offices, senior leaders will consider what is not getting done or being provided in a maximum telework environment and what is to be gained by recalling employees to ABMC offices.
7. Leadership must model desired behaviors – “lead from the front.”

Covid Safety Team / Covid Task Force

The agency has appointed a **Covid Safety Team** to monitor pandemic conditions and take necessary precautions to protect staff and visitors. The Covid Safety Team is comprised of the Chief of Staff, the Chief of Human Resources and Administration, the Director of Public Affairs, the Chief Financial Officer, the General Counsel, the Safety Officer, the Director of Support Operations, and the Director of Cemetery Operations. The Covid Safety Team is chaired by the Chief of Staff.

The Covid Safety Team is responsible for conducting assessments to establish, implement, and monitor compliance with safety protocols for physical space and masking, and determinations of on-site or telework/remote working. The team will review compliance with agency safety plans and protocols and consider potential revisions and other operational needs as pandemic conditions evolve.

Complementing the Covid Safety Team is the overseas **Covid Task Force** that was formed in immediate reaction to the pandemic. With similar representation as the Covid Safety Team, the Covid Task Force will monitor pandemic conditions within the countries in which ABMC offices and commemorative sites are located, taking necessary precautions to protect staff and visitors. The Covid Task Force is chaired by the Director of Cemetery Operations.

General Guidance

The following general guidance applies to all ABMC employees, contractors, and sites. This guidance will be revised as needed to remain in compliance with OMB instructions and host nation COVID-19 protocols.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has set recommendations related to COVID-19 Community Levels, which measure the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems and inform the appropriate prevention strategies to utilize at a given time.

CDC has provided county-level data showing the COVID-19 Community Level for each county in the United States, as determined by CDC. ABMC will use this data to determine the COVID-19 Community Level in Arlington, Va.

ABMC will review the COVID-19 Community Level on a weekly basis to determine changes that must be made to agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols for the upcoming week.

COVID-19 Community Level signs will be posted at the entry doors in the Arlington headquarters, depicting the level and corresponding actions that should be adhered to.

Health and Safety

1. ABMC employees and contractors working remotely on a frequent or regular basis will be given advance notice and guidance before being asked to return to the physical workplace.

2. ABMC will utilize telework and remote work consistent with the principles set forth in OMB Memorandum M-21-25 during reentry and post-reentry.

Masking

1. Federal employees, onsite contractors, and visitors to Federal buildings and offices are not required to wear masks in a COVID-19 Community level of LOW. Individuals who are at a high risk should wear a mask with a COVID-19 Community level of MEDIUM. All individuals regardless of vaccination status must wear their masks inside Federal buildings and offices in areas of HIGH COVID-19 Community levels, consistent with paragraph 2.a. below. ABMC will determine the level of transmission by using the CDC COVID-19 Community Tracker in the United States and rely upon country specific information provided by the applicable embassy. ABMC will assess Community levels weekly.
2. Federal employees, onsite contractors, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask and physically distance in Federal facilities when the COVID-19 Community level is HIGH. This will be consistent with the following requirements:
 - a. Face coverings are required in areas such as walkways, hallways, elevators, staircases, bathrooms, cafeterias, kitchenettes, conference rooms, visitor centers, multi-occupancy offices, and maintenance areas. Face coverings may be removed when working alone in a private office with the door closed, in an individual cubicle with suitable separation, when working outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained, and when eating. Overseas Operations locations will comply with host-nation rules where these are more restrictive.
 - b. CDC recommends the following: Non-medical disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets.
 - c. ABMC employees will not wear novelty/non-protective masks, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for masks.
 - d. Individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.
 - e. Masks do not provide the same level of protection as respirators and should not replace personal protective equipment required or recommended at the workplace.
 - f. ABMC guidance does not preclude an employee from wearing a mask if they so choose.

- g. In the vast majority of cases, employees who are not vaccinated due to disability or religious practices or beliefs will be able to follow the safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals as a reasonable accommodation. Any additional accommodation requests will be considered by management, on a case-by-case basis, IAW applicable law and EEO Commission guidance.

Vaccines and Testing

1. Federal Employees and Onsite Contractors

- a. All ABMC Federal employees must be fully vaccinated.
- b. Employees will receive paid time off to be vaccinated or receive boosters (including travel time) and to recover from any side effects they may experience.
- c. ABMC has established a program for new employees requiring an exception to the vaccination requirement because of a disability. Individuals should review ABMC's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and contact the Director of HR at blackburng@abmc.gov for assistance.
- d. If a new employee requires an exception to the vaccination requirement for a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance, then they should contact the General Counsel at fontaine@abmc.gov.

2. Family Members

Employees will receive paid time off to accompany a family member being vaccinated or boosted. A "family member" is an individual who meets the definition of that term in [5 CFR 630.201](#).

3. Visitors and Contractors

- a. When the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, visitors and visiting contractors will be asked to provide information about vaccination status (consistent with foreign government privacy laws governing foreign national employees/contractors/visitors).
- b. Visitors or visiting contractors who are not vaccinated or decline to confirm vaccination status must produce a negative COVID test, dated within the previous 3 days, that will be shown to their ABMC escort prior to entering an ABMC office space or building to perform their contracted work.

- c. ABMC will not collect attestation forms or test results from contractors and visitors. Instead, contractors and visitors must retain the forms in their possession for showing when required.
- d. The requirement to provide information on vaccination status and a negative COVID-19 test result does not apply to members of the public entering an ABMC office or facility to obtain a public service or benefit. Hence, it is not required of visitors to our cemeteries or visitor centers. However, these visitors must comply with all relevant CDC and host-nation guidance, including wearing a mask and physically distancing as required.

Contact Tracing

The ABMC COVID-19 Safety Team will cooperate with and support the contact tracing programs of local health departments to include Embassy guidance to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases.

1. If you are notified that you were in close contact with a COVID positive individual AND you ARE either 1) boosted or 2) fully vaccinated against COVID within the last 6 months:
 - a. Call or email your supervisor and inform them of the situation as soon as possible.
 - b. You may come to work as long as you do not exhibit any flu-like symptoms.
 - c. You must:
 - 1) Wear a mask indoors and in public for 10 days following exposure or until a negative test result, AND
 - 2) Get tested **5 days** after the close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID. If during the 10-day period, you develop COVID symptoms and/or test positive for COVID **do not** come to work. Call/email your supervisor immediately and refer to the "Positive COVID Test" section above for additional information.

2. If you are notified that you were in close contact with a COVID positive individual AND you ARE NOT fully vaccinated, or it's been more than 6 months since you were fully vaccinated, and you are not boosted:
 - a. Call or email your supervisor and inform them of the situation as soon as possible.
 - b. If you are at work, depart the worksite as soon as possible, avoiding contact with staff.
 - c. Stay quarantined for **5 days** after your last exposure to the COVID positive individual.
 - d. During your quarantine period:
 - 1) If you **are** telework eligible you will telework from home for the duration of the quarantine, as long as you are asymptomatic.

- 2) If you **are not** telework eligible you will quarantine at home with pay under either Administrative Leave (LES) or Safety/Weather Leave (GS).

In addition—

- a. You must get tested **5 days** after the close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID, or immediately if symptoms develop.
- b. LES and GS staff should always follow the directions of their physician, the work doctor and/or the Embassy MED unit (for overseas staff) as appropriate.
- c. You may return to work (with a mask) after 5 days so long as you exhibit no COVID symptoms. If during the quarantine period, you develop COVID symptoms and/or test positive for COVID do **not** come to work. Call/email your supervisor immediately and refer to the "Positive COVID Test" document for additional information.

Ex. If you are vaccinated and your last close contact was on Saturday, you should plan on masking until Thursday and getting tested then. You *may* return to work.

If you are not fully vaccinated, then you will need to quarantine per the above.

3. Human Resources will—

- a. Coordinate with facilities staff to implement infection control and workplace safety efforts once informed of a case of COVID-19, either due to specific symptoms or a positive test.
- b. Make disclosures to local or Embassy public health officials as required or necessary to provide for the public health and safety of Federal employees, contractors, and visitors, in accordance with local public health mandates.

Travel

1. ABMC employees will adhere strictly to CDC and Mission/host nation [guidelines](#) before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business.
 - a. CDC guidelines include the following precautions: carefully assessing travel risk prior to travel, wearing a mask during all portions of a trip, maintaining physical distance from non-household members, maintaining good hygiene by regularly washing hands with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, and getting tested and staying home after higher-risk travel before returning to the workplace.
 - b. For Federal employees who are fully vaccinated, there are no Government-wide restrictions on travel.

- c. For Federal employees who are not fully vaccinated, official domestic and international travel should be limited to only necessary mission-critical trips. The ABMC Secretary is the sole approval authority in these cases. This can be delegated to the Deputy Secretary.
2. When returning from official or personal travel, ABMC employees will adhere to current CDC and Mission/host nation quarantine requirements and testing guidance before returning to the workplace.
3. If feasible, private transportation for official travel is preferred to the use of public or other communal transportation, in combination with other safety and security guidance.

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

1. Whenever ABMC hosts an in-person meeting, conference, or event that will be attended by 50 or more participants, when the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH, regardless of whether participants include members of the public, the approval must come from the Secretary, in consultation with the ABMC COVID-19 Safety Team. This can be delegated to the Deputy Secretary.
2. In-person attendees at any meetings, conferences, and events hosted by ABMC, where the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, regardless of size, will be asked to provide information about vaccination status. Any attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test completed within the previous 3 days and comply with masking and physical distancing requirements (foreign nation privacy laws will apply to foreign personnel).
3. All in-person attendees in areas where COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH must wear a mask in public indoor settings regardless of vaccination status.

Symptom Monitoring

1. If ABMC employees, onsite contractors, or visitors are not feeling well, they should not enter ABMC offices or sites.
2. ABMC employees or contractors working on site who develop [any symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) during the workday must immediately isolate, wear a mask, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace. ABMC will then provide advice and support to supervisors on any related reporting or human resource requirements.

Quarantine and Isolation

1. ABMC employees and contractors with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis will isolate, [pursuant to CDC guidelines](#), and in compliance with local laws/regulations.

2. Individuals who have been fully vaccinated within the last 6 months, or who are boosted, and have had close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 must get tested 5 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms. These individuals must also wear a mask indoors for 10 days following exposure. If their test result is positive, they should isolate for 5 days.

Confidentiality

1. All medical information collected from Federal employees, including attestation of vaccination status and test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel. All questions relating to personal medical data should be referred to the Chief of Human Resources and Administration.
2. ABMC will not retain in its records copies of contractor and visitor attestations and test results. These records must be retained by the individual contractor and visitor for examination by ABMC personnel as needed.

Workplace Operations

Occupancy

1. No ABMC office space, visitor building, or visitor center will operate above the number or percentage of personnel dictated by the local country, state, or community. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Secretary/Deputy Secretary, as advised by the Covid Safety Team and in consultation with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.
2. ABMC encourages supervisors of employees and contractors who report to their work location to stagger work times to reduce density, minimize traffic volume in elevators, and avoid crowds during commuting.

Physical Distancing

During periods when COVID-19 Community level is MEDIUM or HIGH ABMC employees and contractors will maintain, to the extent possible, a distance of at least six feet from others at all times, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and work-spaces.

Environmental Cleaning

1. ABMC office space that is in regular use will be cleaned regularly and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wipes, gloves, and other EPA-approved disinfectants will be available for individuals to wipe down their workstation and related personal property.

2. In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace (if the individual had been in the building up to 72 hours prior), enhanced environmental cleaning of any space occupied or accessed by the individual will be performed in accordance with [CDC](#) and GSA guidance. If more than 72 hours have passed since the person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning beyond the regular cleaning practices is required.
3. Employees, contractors, and visitors will be asked to vacate the affected space until sufficient time has gone by to allow the virus to become non harmful. The ABMC Covid Safety Team and/or Covid Task Force will determine the appropriate scope and duration of workplace closures, whether an office, a suite of offices, common space, an entire floor, or an entire building (visitor building, visitor center, service area, etc.).

Hygiene

Hand sanitizer stations or bottles will be made available at office or building entrances and throughout workspaces and will contain FDA-approved hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol. All personnel are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently.

Shared Spaces

During periods when COVID-19 Community level is MEDIUM or HIGH the following procedures will be enforced:

1. Shared tools and equipment will be disinfected by users anytime the equipment is used by or transferred to a new person. This includes phones, computers, copiers, printers, scanners, and other communication devices; kitchen implements; and other office equipment.
2. Breakrooms / Kitchens: Employees may use refrigerators to store personally identifiable food containers and drink, but water coolers and coffee brewers will not be used. Employees should use individual water bottles and must bring their own utensils, containers, and hydration source. Employees will use only cookware brought from their household and must clean before and after using refrigerators and microwave ovens.
3. Employees in the Headquarters and Overseas Operations Office are encouraged to bring their own meals to the office and should eat at their individual workstations or outside. In the Overseas Operations Office, individuals can eat their meal in the break room, but should socially distance. Cemetery break rooms will be configured to allow meals while conforming to social distancing guidelines. Masks will be worn at all times if not fully vaccinated or if the facility is in a region defined as a high or substantial transmission area, other than when eating a meal.

4. Use of conference rooms in high or substantial transmission areas will be limited. Conference rooms will be cleaned by the individual who ran the meeting.
5. Lobby chairs and couches will be labeled with “Do Not Sit” signs in HIGH transmission areas. Doors to executive office suites will be kept closed to limit foot traffic through the area to essential business only.
6. Only one employee at a time should be in an individual office or cubicle station. While engaging in conversation, visitors should remain in the hall outside of the office. Employees and on-site contractors will keep office doors shut while working or out of the office. This is not required if individuals are fully vaccinated, and they are in a low transmission area.
7. Posters will be placed at entrances and throughout common areas of ABMC offices and buildings to remind employees and visitors of entry screening protocols and best practices for proper hygiene.

Visitors

During periods when COVID-19 Community level is MEDIUM or HIGH the number of visitors to ABMC office spaces will be minimized; visits will be virtual unless a personal visit is the only way to achieve the mission. Visitors to ABMC office spaces will be screened in the same manner as ABMC personnel when entering an ABMC facility and must comply with the procedures and requirements specified in the *Vaccines and Testing* section of this plan, beginning on page 3. Visitors must adhere to the following social distancing, face mask, and personal hygiene measures:

1. Visitors must have a mask if not fully vaccinated or visiting an ABMC office or facility when COVID-19 Community level is HIGH, and they must disinfect their hands prior to entering the ABMC office suite or building.
2. If a visitor who is not fully vaccinated does not have a mask, one will be provided by the escort hosting the visit or the visit will be rescheduled.
3. When meeting physically, remain at least 6 feet from other people. Do not shake hands.

Visitors will be instructed to promptly report to their ABMC point of contact a positive test for COVID-19 within one day of their visit or within one day of notice of the positive test (if within 10 days of visiting an ABMC worksite) so that ABMC can implement contact tracing and notifications.

Public Affairs

The Director of Public Affairs will ensure consistent communication to our geographically dispersed staff, external audiences, and global visitors, providing timely updates on the evolution of agency office COVID-19 protocols and the operating status of cemeteries and sites.

All media queries will be forwarded without comment to the Director of Public Affairs, Ali Bettencourt, at bettencourta@abmc.gov or 703-677-5041 (work cell).

Appendix

ABMC Cemetery Guidelines

Current as of: April 12, 2022

Appendix – ABMC Cemetery Guidelines

The COVID-19 pandemic has created disparate impacts as conditions vary from country-to-country, with different periods of infection resurgence, and various government restrictions. The following guidelines will be used by the ABMC COVID Task Force to determine site closures and restrictions based on host nation government requirements.

Red – Cemeteries closed

Trip Wires:

Host nation restrictions result in insufficient staff to safely operate the cemetery. Host nation closes other public sites and facilities that, according to Director of Cemetery Operations (DCO), are equivalent to our cemeteries/buildings. Host nation specifically requests closure of ABMC sites. Host nation enforces other restrictions that impact ABMC operations and persuade DCO to close the cemetery.

Site Conditions:

- Sites remain closed to the public.
- All required staff (as determined by Superintendent) who are able to travel to work, will report to work. Emergency Telework will be approved as needed when practical.
- Team focuses on priority tasks (as determined by Superintendent).
- Contractual and Seasonal greenspace workers (as determined by Superintendent) who are able to travel, will report as directed.
- Commemoration ceremonies are authorized only to the extent that the Superintendent can remain within the limitations established by DCO, IAW host nation guidance.

Yellow – Cemetery gates open with visitor access to grounds only

Trip Wires:

Host nation restrictions are relaxed to the extent that DCO determines outdoor grounds are accessible by the public. Host nation restrictions prevent the access of visitors indoors to cemetery buildings.

Site Conditions:

- Cemetery grounds and plot areas are open to the public.
- Cemetery buildings remain closed to the public (offices and bathrooms at discretion of Superintendent).
- Guides may provide information to members of the public who visit the grounds, in accordance with host-nation social distancing rules. Scheduled tours may be conducted only at the discretion of the Superintendent, IAW host nation restrictions (all social distancing and safety protocols still apply).
- Up to 100% of Green Teams and Guides report back to work (Superintendent will follow applicable host nation COVID labor guidelines and applicable U.S. Federal/Chief of Mission labor guidelines).

- Commemoration ceremonies are authorized only to the extent that the Superintendent can remain within the limitations established by DCO, IAW host nation guidance.

Green – Cemeteries open fully

Trip Wires:

Host government removes all applicable restrictions, allowing visitor access to all cemetery grounds and buildings.

Site Conditions:

- Sites return to “normal” operating status.
- Visitor centers and visitor buildings are open to the public during regular hours (Superintendent will also consider U.S. Federal requirements).
- Guided tours are conducted normally.
- Crews, staff, and seasonal workers return to normal schedules.
- Visitors and employees may always wear masks if they so desire.
- Cemetery will continue to update local COVID measures as required by host-nation.

Attachment:

Cemetery Re-Opening Checklist

Cemetery Re-Opening Checklist

Safety

- Workplace PPE use will be IAW U.S. Federal and ABMC policy unless host nation rules are more restrictive.
- All LES employees will comply with host nation vaccination and/or PPE requirements, unless U.S. Federal PPE requirements are more restrictive.
- Supply stock of hydro-alcoholic solution for hand sanitizing and cleaning of common areas.
- Cleaning contracts will include host nation standard COVID sanitary requirements.
- Installation of Plexiglass screen or marking standoff (tape marker on floor) areas in visitor building and visitor center (as required by host nation).
- Maximum number of visitors allowed in one space posted (as required by host nation).
- Appropriate signage, based on local conditions, to inform visitors and staff regarding social distance, building closures, absence of guided tours, etc.

Maintenance and Site Standards - Horticulture

- When cemetery grounds are open, Superintendents accomplish all essential tasks to maintain sites to ABMC standard.
- In the event host-nation COVID guidance imposes new restrictions, horticulture programs will be modified IAW guidance at Appendix 1, above.

Maintenance and Site Standards – Facility Maintenance

- When cemetery sites are open, Superintendents accomplish all essential maintenance tasks to maintain sites to ABMC standard.
- In the event host-nation COVID guidance imposes new restrictions, maintenance programs will be modified IAW guidance at Appendix 1, above.

Personnel and Administrative

- When cemetery sites are open, Superintendents accomplish all essential personnel and administrative tasks to maintain sites to ABMC standard.
- In the event host-nation COVID guidance imposes new restrictions, personnel and administrative functions will be modified IAW guidance at Appendix 1, above.

Visitor Services

- Follow site status guidelines (Red, Yellow, Green).
- Restrict services if directed by host nation COVID restrictions.
- Receive “all-clear” from DCO before reopening visitor centers or visitor buildings to the public.

Note:

All above procedures may be selectively applied, as required, IAW respective host nation, U.S. Federal, and Chief of Mission changing restrictions and limitations.