



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF MISSION SUPPORT



This email message is being sent to EPA employees.

Colleagues,

I want to thank you for your continued support and dedication to our mission as we work through the COVID-19 response. I want to assure you that the health and safety of our workforce is the primary concern of the agency. We also have the important responsibility of reassuring the American public that EPA will continue its mission of protecting human health and the environment.

We continue to evaluate human resources policies to provide as many flexibilities as possible. This mass mailer is to update you on resources and flexibilities available to EPA employees.

Please ensure you regularly review EPA's [COVID-19 intranet site](#) – which includes all EPA communications on COVID-19, OPM and OMB guidance, and all location-specific guidance. It also now includes [frequently asked questions](#). We will continue to update this site as we learn more.

EPA is offering the following flexibilities to all employees:

- Work Schedules
 - EPA has relaxed tour of duty requirements for employees on flexible schedules (e.g., maxiflex, gliding, flexitour, etc.). Employees on flexible schedules are permitted to work between the hours of 5:00 am and 11:30 pm.
 - Core hours for all flexible schedules are waived. This will allow employees on flexible schedules to take unpaid breaks during the day, to account for individual needs (such as dependent care). Employees may be permitted to work additional hours in the evening to make up for breaks during the day.
 - Employees should work with supervisors to determine the best schedule that meets both the employee's needs and needs of the agency. The objective is that employees are available during normal business hours, unless otherwise prevented from working during those hours (e.g., dependent care).
 - Employees may request a change to their work schedule (from fixed to flexible) starting immediately. Employees must obtain advance supervisor approval prior to working a new schedule, including the potential of a mid-pay period work schedule change. In all cases, the full pay period hours over the course of two weeks needs to equate to an employee's regular hours, e.g. 80, 32, etc. depending on full time or part time status. To initiate a work schedule change, employees must discuss with their supervisor and request a flexible schedule in PeoplePlus (note: supervisors must approve, and timekeepers must assign the schedule in PeoplePlus). There may be instances in which retroactive timecards will need to be processed if system changes do not occur in time for pay period time and attendance attestation for pay purposes. Please work with your local HR teams regarding what flexible schedules are authorized for your location.
 - Per regulation, this same flexibility to work outside of 6:00 am – 6:00 pm does not apply to fixed work schedules (e.g., compressed 5/4-9 and 4-10 and straight 8-hour days), because those schedules would incur significant additional costs for nighttime differential pay. Flexible work schedules are available at all EPA locations – employees should work with their supervisor and local HR teams to determine which schedule may be best for their individual circumstances.
- Telework
 - EPA is encouraging all EPA employees to telework.
 - EPA has relaxed telework eligibility criteria, to include encouraging supervisors and employees to be creative when finding temporary portable work for positions which may not be entirely portable. This includes conducting records management tasks, mandatory training, online training (FedTalent has over 8,000 courses available) and assisting colleagues with their work assignments.
- Leave
 - EPA has authorized unscheduled leave for all employees.
 - Employees not available for work should still follow normal leave requesting procedures.
 - Sick leave is not appropriate for caring for a healthy child/dependent.
 - Pursuant to OMB guidance, weather and safety leave (formerly administrative leave) is available for telework-eligible positions. While telework-eligible positions are rare at EPA, please work with your supervisor if you believe you are in a position that is not eligible for telework.

I can't stress enough that we should all follow the CDC guidance about COVID-19 to [prevent illness](#) and [recognize symptoms](#). Please, if you are sick, stay home, or go home and call your healthcare provider for medical advice. If you have been in the office or around your colleagues in the last 14 days and you test positive, are presumptive positive or have been around someone who is positive for COVID-19 please contact your supervisor. This will help us to keep the EPA workforce safe. I know this is difficult and scary times for all of us. I encourage you to visit the [CDC Coronavirus webpage](#), which includes [information and resources to cope with this stress and ensure your mental health](#). The [Employee Assistance Program](#) is also available.

On behalf of the entire senior leadership team, thank you for continuing to do the great work of the Agency.

Best,
Donna Vizian
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Mission Support