





Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

MTA Policy

01-20 MTA Office Workers Return to Work

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Description

As the State of New York approaches lifting portions of New York on PAUSE in the downstate regions, now that the spread of the COVID-19 virus has been slowing significantly, the MTA has developed this policy in order to take all possible actions to minimize risk to customers and employees. Particularly, social distancing and crowd avoidance, both in offices and on transit systems, are taken into consideration for this policy as the health and safety of our employees and the travelling public are paramount to the MTA.

At the time of issuance of this policy, several measures were put in place by either the State or New York State Department of Health. These measures include mandatory wearing of face covering when social distancing is not possible and on public transit and other common-sense healthy habits such as sneezing in your sleeve or a tissue, wash hands regularly or use hand sanitizer and not touching one's face.



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When employees return to work, they will be faced with these new practices and have to comply. In lobbies and offices, all will have to wear face covering in shared areas where the social distance is not possible, use hand sanitizers that will be distributed throughout the buildings and use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as required and provided. All employees will also have to have their temperature checked upon arrival in office spaces daily.

Teleworking

There is a subsection of the employee population that is ready to continue teleworking while some others may need training in order to telework more effectively. Other employees will be able to telework some days each week and work at an office at times, in which case, the other sections of this policy will be applicable. Each agency will be in the best position to know how to manage that population. The overarching goal is to have as many teleworkers as possible, permanently, going forward.

We expect that a minimum of 10% of all available employees will be identified as personnel that can continue to work remotely more or less permanently.

The basic decision criteria for this determination, as a basis, consists of:

- Does not need specialized technology equipment (i.e. CAD machine);
- Can work independently and accomplish tasks independently with minimal in-person supervision;
- Is available to attend occasional meetings in one of the MTA offices when required;
- Will be subject to frequent review of work performed with supervisor; and
- Will be subject to goal setting and performance evaluation twice a year.

Gradual Return to Work

When employees return to work (reoccupying office buildings and non-essential personnel), they will do so over a period of several months while the majority will continue teleworking during that period. The suggested rates of return are: no more than 30% monthly. It is understood that this approach could be slowed down in case any of the downstate reopening metrics fall below the recommended threshold during the re-opening process, and we will follow any direction given; possibly holding at whatever number we are or even reducing the level.



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Separation of employee population

The agencies will split the employees eligible to return to work under this policy under two groups, identified by the logo for subway lines A and B. These groups of employees would not work in the office at the same time. On the first week of RTW, for instance, the A group will work the Monday, Wednesday and Friday and during the second week, they will work Tuesday and Thursday. The B group people would work alternative days on that schedule (first week: Tuesday and Thursday, second week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday).

Any of those employees would be allowed to telework occasionally if their functions allow, upon approval from their supervisor.

It is understood that, on case-by-case basis, there may be facilities constraints or operational circumstances where teleworking is not supportable (e.g. employees must use a special piece of equipment only available at the worksite) or where in the judgement of the manager a different arrangement would be preferable subject to, in all cases, overriding public health consideration. Each agency is responsible for identifying these special situations and exempting them from the A and B split. For these circumstances, agencies must put procedures in place to ensure employees maintain 6-feet social distancing standards and/or establish barriers which mitigate social distancing requirements. If neither of these conditions can be achieved, facial coverings are required to be worn.

Arrival / Departure times

In order to further ensure proper social distance while commuting and arriving and departing from office locations, work hours will be spread amongst the population on any given day. For instance, a third of the attending group would begin at 7:30, a third would begin at 8:30 and a third group would begin at 9:30. Similar spread would be implemented for departure from the office, with a third leaving at 3:30pm, a third leaving at 4:30pm, and the last third departing at 5:30pm in alignment with their staggered start time. These times and percentages may be adjusted from time to time.

MTA facilities and agencies will take additional steps to minimize direct contact between employees, including creating specific entrances for entry or exit into a building, or creating directional entry and exit turnstiles and lanes in lobbies.