

21-986

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and wishes to announce changes to the previously communicated temporary restrictions on the Department's ability to conduct in-person meetings from any of its facilities in the United States with foreign government delegations and members of foreign missions. This note supersedes the Department's circular note No. 21-212, dated February 12, 2021.

The Administration continues to issue guidance for federal facilities relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures. As a result, federal agencies have been instructed to minimize the number of visitors and make efforts to conduct visits virtually where possible.

**Visits to the Department's Domestic Facilities by Foreign Government
Representatives Who Are Not Normally Resident in the United States**

Upon approval by the Assistant Secretary or equivalent of the respective bureau, the Department may receive visits to its domestic facilities by foreign government representatives who are not normally resident in the United States. Bureaus and offices may extend meeting requests at Department facilities to

foreign diplomatic travelers or delegations based outside the United States if the foreign visits are deemed mission-critical by the Assistant Secretary or equivalent. If such visits are approved, foreign delegations must follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for entering the United States. Current travel guidelines are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>.

Visits to the Department's Domestic Facilities by Accredited Members of a Foreign Mission

As a general policy, accredited members of foreign missions are welcome to visit the Department's domestic facilities for the conduct of in person meetings. However, at this time, such meetings are generally discouraged and limited to only those for which the hosting bureau's Assistant Secretary or equivalent have determined that an in-person engagement within a Department facility is necessary and appropriate.

Visitor Screening

All visitors who are authorized to visit the Department's domestic facilities are required to provide written responses in advance of their arrival to the questions listed below.

When a written response is not obtained in advance, the host office escort must pose these questions again in person to the visitors before they can enter the facility. Please note that the Department may refuse access to any visitor who exhibits any obvious physical signs of being unwell.

For this purpose, close contact is defined as contact of six feet or closer for 15 minutes or longer with someone who has COVID-19 **OR** direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case.

If a visitor answers **YES** to any of the following questions, or refuses to provide answers, they will not be permitted to enter the facility.

- Have you had any cold or flu-like symptoms in the past 14 days, such as a fever, shortness of breath, or a persistent cough?
- Have you checked your temperature in the last 24 hours and was it outside the normal range? Temperatures at or above 100.4°F/38°C are outside the normal range.
- Have you traveled to or through areas or regions that have a CDC Level 3 Travel Advisory or a State Department Level 4 Travel Advisory in the last 14 days?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html>;

<https://travelmaps.state.gov/TSGMap/>

- Have you had close contact over the past 14 days with individuals who have traveled within the last 14 days through areas or regions that have a CDC Level 3 Travel Advisory or a State Department Level 4 Travel Advisory?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html>;

<https://travelmaps.state.gov/TSGMap/>

- Have you had close contact with anyone currently under isolation or quarantine?

Visitors are encouraged to check their temperature prior to their arrival. Host offices should request that their visitors self-check temperatures prior to their arrival to any domestic Department facility. If the visitor's temperature is not within normal range, then the visitor should be rescheduled to another time. Temperatures above 100.4°F (38°C) are outside the normal range.

Unvaccinated visitors permitted to enter a domestic Department facility must wear a mask, especially in areas where social distancing is not feasible (e.g., elevators, common areas, bathrooms, etc.). Offices should provide visitors advanced notice about masks so they may bring their own. CDC guidance about masks can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Exceptions for visitors who are not permitted to enter based on their answers to the screening questions, who refuse to answer the screening questions or refuse to wear a mask, may only be authorized by the bureau/office's respective Under Secretary.

Visitors who require a reasonable accommodation for a disability that makes wearing a mask ill-advised should inform the host office prior to arrival at the facility.

Inquiries concerning this and other matters related to COVID-19 may continue to be transmitted by electronic mail to OFM-EmergencyMGT@state.gov. Past circular diplomatic notes and notices released by the Office of Foreign Missions related to COVID-19 may be found at <https://www.state.gov/office-of-foreign-missions-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-information-and-resources/>.

Department of State,

Washington, June 23, 2021.

