

COVID-19 Instructions for the New Hire's First Work Day

The Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Business Services (MRPBS) Human Resources Division (HRD), MRP Information Technology Division (MRP-IT) and the MRPBS Emergency Management Safety and Security Division (EMSSD) are working closely together to ensure that any MRP New Hires are onboarded as efficiently and effectively as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic; MRPBS will continue to onboard New Hires mission area-wide during the COVID-19 emergency. While In-Person Onboarding is preferable, **you can virtually onboard a New Hire by following the instructions below.** In person onboarding may be applicable in some of MRP field locations; if this is the case, please move forward with your established processes.

New Hires joining the MRP Agencies (APHIS and AMS) in Pay Periods (PP) 07 and 08 (March 29 through April 25) will continue to be processed by HRD and additional new hires will be onboarded throughout the COVID-19 emergency. New Hire information will be provided to the MRP-IT staff so that email addresses and active directory accounts can be created. Once these accounts are created, MRP-IT staff will configure laptops and set up Outlook profiles.

As the telework duration increases, MRP-ITD will pre-image machines and make them ready for use. These machines can then be shipped appropriately as needed triggered the request made by the supervisor through the AMS or APHIS Help Desks.

What Hiring Supervisors need to do prior to the Entry on Duty (EOD) Date

- Stay in contact with your New Hires. You are best positioned to answer their questions about how to report, how they can receive their equipment, what requirements your office has for telework, etc., knowing that circumstances can change very quickly, even hourly.
- New Hires will be allowed to proceed with onboarding and will provide the following items/clearances after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides: Official Transcripts, Satisfactory Drug Test, Fingerprints, Medical Exam. MRPBS HR will notify New Hires what tasks need to be completed when it is safe to do so.
- Prior to their start date, consider an adequate number of meaningful tasks you can assign, and if there will be staff available to begin training the New Hire either in person, with proper mitigation procedures in place like social distancing and only in essential circumstances, or remotely. **If an Entry on Duty date needs to change because of COVID-19 -- please alert your servicing HRD Specialist ASAP.**
- Follow your Program's established practice around ordering IT equipment (laptops, iPhones, iPads, headphones, etc.)
- Ensure the MRP-IT program representative has access to all equipment so that the representative can configure it as soon as possible.
- Submit the [PIV Exception](#) and request any network access to the appropriate MRP-IT Help Desk, once you can see that the New Hire's email address is available within the Global Address Book.

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What Hiring Supervisors need to do on Day One

Stay in contact with your New Hires. You need to ensure someone is available to conduct their Day One activities in person or remotely. Make sure that the New Hires have something to do until their IT equipment and eAuthentication access become available and active.

On the Entry on Duty (EOD), the Monday of the Pay Period, the supervisor should establish contact with the New Hire. At some period of this virtual onboarding process, the supervisor should establish a visible electronic connection with the New Hire, either through Skype or some other connection.

If the New Hire is a current MRP employee who can telework, AND the onboarding process is done virtually:

- Make sure the New Hire signs (electronically or physically/scans) the **Appointee** Signature (block 17B) on the Declaration for Federal Employment Form ([OF-306](#)), if the New Hire was instructed to complete the form in their final offer letter. Have the New Hire complete a new form, if necessary.
- Scan and send the completed and signed electronic and hard copy version of the document via email and the U.S. Postal Service (or other mail delivery service) to your HRD Servicing Processing Assistant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (Look at "Who to Contact with Questions" at the bottom of this document for contact information.)
- Advise the New Hire that any changes needed in tax withholdings, residence address, etc. can be made using the National Finance Center's [Employee Personal Page](#) (EPP)
- Ensure that MRP-IT provides the New Hire with equipment and an ID/Password combination that allows them access into their device. The New Hire will be able to get to an Internet browser and Outlook Mail at a minimum.
 - If you are **onboarding a New Hire in the Hub location**, a MRP-IT technician will be onsite as needed (on a rotating basis) during the core duty hours throughout the maximum teleworking period to provide support. At least 10 days prior to onboarding, the program's administrative office should contact the AMS or APHIS Help Desk to ensure IT equipment will be available and ready for the New Hire. After this contact, the onsite technician will then make arrangements with the supervisor and New Hire to distribute and set up the IT equipment at the hub office.
 - If you are **onboarding a New Hire in a Field location**, the Field Support areas may not have a local technician onsite daily during the core duty hours during the maximum teleworking period. However, it is important that the program's administrative office still contact the AMS or APHIS Help Desk at least 10 days prior to New Hire onboarding to ensure IT equipment will be available and ready for the New Hire. Then local APHIS or AMS IT technician will make arrangements with the supervisor and New Hire to distribute and set up the IT equipment at the field office or provide instructions for setting up the equipment remotely.

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If the New Hire is not a current USDA employee, AND he/she will be onboarded virtually:

On the Entry on Duty (EOD) date, the first Monday of the Pay Period, the supervisor should establish contact with the New Hire at a predetermined time. At some period of this virtual onboarding process, the supervisor should establish a visible electronic connection with the New Hire, either through Skype or some other connection. During this virtual onboard process, the supervisor, or delegate, should perform the following:

- Conduct the Oath of Office using Standard Form [SF-61](#). Make sure all signatures are in the proper places and ensure that the supervisor or delegate confirm visually as the New Hire takes the Oath.
- Obtain the **Appointee** Signature (block 17B) on the Declaration for Federal Employment Form ([OF-306](#)).
- Verify the identity of the New Hire in Section 2 of the Employment Eligibility Verification([I-9](#)). Include "COVID-19" in the Additional Information box in Section 2. Ask New Hire to send password-protected (if using e-mail) copies of identification documents to you or your staff member conducting orientation. The supervisor or delegate must visually compare the supporting documents while viewing the face of the New Hire. This can be done via Skype or another connection.
- Photocopy Identification Documents (See [acceptable documents.](#))
- After the supervisor or delegate signs all the onboarding documents, the documents should be scanned. The supervisor or delegate should send the completed and signed electronic and hard copy version of the document via email and/or the U.S. Postal Service (or other mail delivery service) to your HRD Servicing Processing Assistant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (see "Who to Contact with Questions" at the bottom of this document for contact information.)
- Assign the New Hire access to any Program owned applications. If these are accessed via an ID and Password and not eAuthentication, the New Hire can use them immediately.
- Ensure that MRP-IT provides the New Hire with equipment and an ID/Password combination that allows them access into their device. The New Hire will be able to get to an Internet browser and Outlook Mail at a minimum.
 - If you are onboarding a New Hire in the Hub locations, an IT technician will be onsite as needed (on a rotating basis) during the core duty hours throughout the maximum teleworking period to provide support. At least 10 days prior to onboarding, the program's administrative office should contact the AMS or APHIS Help Desk to ensure IT equipment will be available and ready for the New Hire. After this contact, the onsite technician will then make arrangements with the supervisor and New Hire to distribute and set up the IT equipment at the hub office.

- If you are onboarding a New Hire in a Field location, the Field Support areas may not have a local technician onsite daily during the core duty hours during the maximum teleworking period. However, it is important that the program's administrative office still contact the AMS or APHIS Help Desk at least 10 days prior to New Hire onboarding to ensure IT equipment will be available and ready for the New Hire. Then local APHIS or AMS IT technician will make arrangements with the supervisor and New Hire to distribute and set up the IT equipment at the field office or provide instructions for setting up the equipment remotely.
- Provide New Hires with guidance about their specific responsibilities, as well as relevant office protocol during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

NOTE: Remember, all forms must be signed by both the New Hire and by the Hiring Office conducting the Day One activities. You need to determine how the New Hire will sign and scan forms back to your office or to your teleworking office personnel if the onboarding is done remotely.

Also, if the New Hire has not followed these instructions, please use the blank forms accessible from the links above in blue. At this time, for those New Hires, who are not already government employees or have U.S. Government email accounts, digitally signing the forms is not allowed. A physical signature is required, and then the documents should be scanned and sent.

What Hiring Supervisors need to do after the New Hire has Onboarded

Stay in contact with your New Hires. You can ensure their questions are answered and that they have work they can do while they are waiting for their computer access and other necessary tools,

- Understand that both MRPBS HRD, MRP-IT, and EMSSD are working as quickly as they can to ensure equipment and accesses are available as soon as possible. But **DO NOT** assume that equipment, Authentication access, or a LincPass will be available on Day One. **You must have a plan for what the New Hire can do if they do not immediately have equipment and/or access.**
- Follow up to make sure that MRP-IT provided the New Hire with equipment and an ID/Password combination that allows them access into their device. The New Hire should be able to get to an Internet browser and Outlook Mail at a minimum.
 - Check to see if the New Hire has received an eAuthentication invitation email. This email will generate once the New Hire's Personnel Action is processed. Typically, this personnel action is processed within the first week of employment. Then, once the New Hire's government email address has been added to his/her personal profile within EmpowHR, the New Hire will receive an invitation email from the eAuthentication server prompting him/her to register your eAuthentication account. This email will come from DoNotReply.ICAM@ocio.usda.gov. (This link will give you or the New Hire more information on [eAuthentication](#).)

- HRD will provide the New Hire with a LincPass enrollment message if there is a credentialing center open near them. Please understand that LincPass stations are highly impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Supervisors and New Hires are encouraged to check the credentialing center operating status at <https://www.fedidcard.gov/> as there may not be any open in the New Hire's area. If obtaining a LincPass appointment is not possible, MRP-IT will continue to extend the 30-day exception for New Hires.
- Assign the New Hire access to any Program owned applications. If these are accessed via an ID and Password and not eAuthentication, the New Hire can use them immediately.

USDA LincPass

In the COVID-19 pandemic environment, with many 'stay at home' orders from the Federal and State Governments, many of the Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentialing stations have temporarily closed in the United States. If any employee LincPass has credential/certificates issues, such as expiring in the near future, or have lost/damaged badge, then MRP-ITD will provide extended computer access via an identification name and password. Contact the appropriate Help Desk address from below. Once the pandemic is over and more normal operations are established, then normal LincPass operations, including HRD Personnel Security sending notifications for employees to make appointments at local credentialing stations, will resume.

New Hires starting after PP08, (after April 26)

For New Hires starting PP09 and beyond, HRD is continuing to onboard New Hires; however, the future of the pandemic is unknown at this time. Therefore, HRD will continue to monitor the situation, working on a strategy to ensure that EOD dates will be minimally impacted.

In the meantime, HRD asks all supervisors who might be onboarding New Hires in PP09 and beyond, to consider the following factors when you determine the most viable EOD date.

- Is the position mission-critical or does it play an essential role in your organization?
- Will work assignments be immediately available that the New Hire can perform?
- If training is required, are staff members available to conduct the training remotely via Skype, Microsoft Teams, or other medium?

Working with your HRD contact, you should discuss and determine the most appropriate effective date to bring the New Hire onboard.

Who to Contact with Questions

MRP.COVID.19.Response@usda.gov

HRD Contacts

For AMS Employees - https://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_AMS.pdf

For APHIS employees - https://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_APHIS.pdf

For the Foreign Agricultural Service Employees

- https://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/contact_us/downloads/HRO_FAS.pdf

HRD Mailing Address - USDA APHIS MRPBS HRD
250 Marquette Ave, Suite 410
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Weather and Safety Leave Contact – Your Leave and Compensation Team Member

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/HRD/Contact_Us RD/Contact_Us](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/HRD/Contact_Us_RD/Contact_Us)

Information Technology Division Support:

For APHIS Employees Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM EST Closed on Federal Holidays	For AMS Employees Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM EST Closed on Federal Holidays
The APHIS Help Desk: (877) 944-8457, option 1 - US toll-free (919) 326-7896, option 1 – International	The AMS Service Desk: (844) 267-2424 (202) 720-1111
Email: Help@usda.gov URL: MRP Customer Portal	Email: AMSServiceDesk@usda.gov URL: MRP Customer Portal