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Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 4:55 PM
To: R4 All Employees - Official <R4.All.Employees@epa.gov>
Subject: Fresh Return Initiative Update

Greetings Regional Colleagues,

This message is a follow-up to the MSD Director's email, dated April 6, 2022, announcing a pause in the "*Fresh Return Initiative for the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center (SNAFC)*." During the pause, we re-evaluated the rodent issues and adjusted the strategy and plan for EPA workspace cleanup. As is our practice, we will continue to be as transparent as possible with regional employees and mitigate concerns regarding health and safety in our facilities.

Before resuming our de-cluttering efforts and employees returning to workspaces, it has been determined that we will first engage in pest remediation activities as a health and safety measure for the EPA workspace. As explained herein, a revised plan with a phased approach will be deployed.

This plan has been developed in consultation with the Office of Mission Support (OMS) and the General Services Administration (GSA). It should be noted that specific timelines are not provided as we have not procured the pest management contractor and negotiated completion milestones. However, we will post the complete activity milestones for Phases 1-5 to the Teams SharePoint site upon contract award/establishment of the timelines.

PHASE 1—CONTRACTOR INSPECTION/REMEDATION: FLOORS 10 -15

During Phase 1, maximum telework will remain in effect, and entry to the building will be avoided unless the purpose is mission critical. Each Division/Office will identify a lead manager(s) for remediation activities in their division's space. The designated managers will be responsible for providing oversight while the contractor is in their division's space. The contractor will inspect offices, and cubicle areas, such as drawers, cabinets, and overhead bins. Any excess paper and materials with obvious rodent droppings will be disposed of properly. Any other papers will be packed/boxed and stored within the Division/Office conference rooms.

Inspection: The contractor will inspect each work area for rodents or evidence thereof (nests, droppings, food remains, etc.). The contractor will also inspect the interior of drawers and cabinets.

Removal of Food Sources: Any/all food sources (sealed or unsealed) will be removed from each workspace and adequately disposed of. This includes but is not limited to sealed/unsealed snacks, beverages (including water), salt/pepper packets, condiment/sauce packets, candy, and plants. Food sources will be removed from exterior areas and the interior of drawers, cabinets, and other areas identified in the contract. Items such as plastic/paper and shopping bags will also be removed as they serve as food and nesting materials for rodents. A manager/s will accompany the contractor on each floor. The contractor will remove food sources on floors 10-15 progressing floor by floor.

Records and Excess Paper: Any/all paper with evidence of rodent activity will be disposed of in consultation with the manager on duty. Documents without evidence of rodent activity will be packed/boxed by the contractor and labeled by the manager to include the employee's name and cubicle number. EPA will store the boxes on the cognizant floor (i.e., conference rooms). Removal of all excess paper will ensure all surfaces are freed for subsequent cleaning. After cleaning and rodent remediation, packed boxes will be returned to the employee for record retention, or in the case of non-records, recycling during the resumption of the Fresh Return Initiative/de-clutter period, delineated in Phase 2 below.

Cleaning/Disinfecting Workspace: All desktop surfaces will be cleaned/disinfected by the contractor using EPA-approved products. Drawers and cabinet interiors will be cleaned where any rodent activity or food source is discovered.

- a. **Trapping/Inspections:** After inspection, additional traps will be set and placed throughout EPA workspaces. The pest management contractor will conduct weekly inspections, throughout the workspace for rodent evidence, and check the traps. Inspections/trapping will continue until there are zero findings in traps and within workspaces for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks. If rodent activities continue beyond the 4 weeks, then trapping will continue until there are 5 consecutive days of no rodent trappings.
- b. **Carpet Treatment:** All carpets in the EPA workspace will be thoroughly vacuumed using a High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) vacuum cleaner. Cubicle and office carpets will be shampooed.
- c. **Indoor Air Quality Assessment:** Upon completion of remediation efforts, an air quality test will be completed. Any/all issues will be resolved before relaxing maximum telework for Region 4 employees. Test results will be made available to EPA management officials and employees, and findings will be addressed as appropriate.

PHASE 2—RESUME “FRESH RETURN INITIATIVE” DE-CLUTTERING EFFORTS

Upon completion of contractor remediation efforts, employees will be notified, and we will re-engage in the “*Fresh Return Initiative*” with a focus on continued workspace de-cluttering and records management. As scheduled with their manager, employees will re-enter the workspace to complete the de-cluttering process. Regional Records and Regional Facilities personnel will provide supplies. The EPA will retrieve clearly labeled boxes from the conference rooms and return them to the appropriate cubicle. Employees will open boxes and sort papers that require records retention and place them in a records retention box. Non-record papers should be recycled.

PHASE 3—FINAL CLEANING AND PREPARATION FOR RETURN TO THE EPA WORKPLACE

Upon complete de-cluttering of the EPA workspaces, the following steps will be performed prior to employees returning to the building:

a. All carpets in the EPA workspace will be thoroughly vacuumed using a High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) vacuum cleaner.

PHASE 4 – FACILITY/EPA WORKSPACE INSPECTIONS

Final GSA and EPA workspace inspections will be conducted.

PHASE 5 – EMPLOYEES RETURN TO THE SNAFC EPA WORKPLACE

Specific dates and building entry details to be determined by EPA, Region 4 Senior Management.

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SUMMARY

Thank you for your continued support and patience. Please know that we are working diligently to ensure a safe and clean return to the EPA workspace. We will follow agency guidance, consult with the EPA Region 4 Senior Leadership Team, and provide information to employees consistently throughout this effort. In addition, we will continue to respond to all questions raised regarding the “*Fresh Return Initiative*” and our return to the workspace. Please send your questions to your Fresh Return Initiative Division/Office Representative. Your questions will be answered, and responses will be posted on the following [FAQ's - Fresh Return Initiative.docx](#).

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