

# Federal workers required to report their daily location, email says

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**By Olivia George, Aaron Wiener and Hannah Natanson  
Washington Post**

Federal Election Commission employees soon will be required to declare their work location in a daily questionnaire, part of the Trump administration’s effort to monitor compliance with return-to-office mandates and identify “unused space that may be ripe for disposal,” according to an email sent to FEC employees and obtained by The Washington Post.

The email said the FEC had prepared the “Daily Occupancy Tool” in response to directives from the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration.

“Unlike the ‘5 bullets’ this is not a strong encouragement,” said the email, referencing the command from Elon Musk that all federal workers submit weekly emails listing five accomplishments. The email noted in bold and italicized text, “All employees are *required* to submit this daily information.”

It is not immediately clear whether other agencies are launching the same tracking technique. But records obtained by The Post show the government several months ago began developing a tool for that purpose.

In late February, human resources chiefs across agencies gathered for a call led by the Office of Personnel Management, according to an email summarizing the call. During the discussion, representatives for GSA announced they were working on a “new federal daily check-in tool,” the email shows. A test email went out from a GSA email address that same day. GSA was hoping to debut the check-in tool by the first week in March, the emails show.

The email to FEC workers said that beginning Sunday, federal agencies are “required to implement a methodology for capturing daily occupancy levels

within their leased or owned space.” Agencies must also submit biweekly reports of their occupancy beginning May 19 and every two weeks thereafter.

The new requirement comes amid a chaotic return-to-office process for federal workers. On President Donald Trump’s first day in office, he directed all agencies to require their employees to begin reporting for in-person work five days a week.

Many federal offices had downsized during the pandemic as employees shifted to remote or hybrid work, and following Trump’s orders, some workers found themselves reporting to offices without enough desks, forcing them to work in conference rooms or closets, or to kill time in hallways until a desk opened up. Some attempting to use the administration’s online tools to match them to a nearby office received the suggestion of a self-storage facility and a shuttered sandwich shop. At the Federal Emergency Management Agency, supervisors were instructed to flip a coin to resolve some conflicts over workspaces.

According to screenshots of the FEC tool included in the Tuesday morning email, employees must fill out their email address, the date and then pick from six pre-written options including: “I worked at the FEC office,” “I am on approved leave,” “This is a federal holiday” and “I am on approved telework.”

Every Friday, employees will then receive an email summarizing their responses and highlighting any days for which a submission is missing.

Beyond tracking “agencies’ compliance with the requirement to return to the office fulltime,” the purpose of the daily tracker is “to assist the Federal government with identifying unused space that may be ripe for disposal,” according to the email.

In February, amid its effort to shed government real estate and slash the federal workforce, the administration gave federal agencies until April 14 to submit “any proposed relocations of agency bureaus and offices from Washington, D.C. and the National Capital Region to less-costly parts of the country.”

In the interim, state officials have been jockeying to lure federal agencies, sensing that D.C.’s loss of these major employers could be their economic gain.

The FEC, which enforces campaign finance laws and oversees federal elections, did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday via call or email.

The administration has not asked agencies to provide location information about individual employees as part of their reporting, according to the FEC email. Instead, they need to provide agency-level information such as the number of employees who worked in the office each day. Reports are due to the Office of Management and Budget on the Monday following the pay period.

The aggressive return-to-office push has frustrated some workers who say they can do their jobs just as effectively from home and avoid lengthy commutes. A Washington Post-Ipsos poll last month found that 85 percent of remote-capable federal workers opposed the in-person work mandate, and that more than a quarter of those workers were actively looking for another job.

Tuesday's email to FEC staff notes that agency officials "realize this new reporting requirement represents a significant change."