

Reopening Survey: High Level Observations

Communications

We received positive feedback around communications related to the pandemic itself but heard that there is a desire for even better communication around reopening. See **Figures 1-2** below. There was also a discrepancy between overall satisfaction with communication between onsite and remote staff. The proportion who disagreed that they have received adequate communication about COVID-19 and the Smithsonian's response was nearly twice as high among onsite staff compared to telework staff, (although the absolute level of disagreement was still low among the former).

Figure 1. Overall, how do you feel about the statement: "I am getting the information I need about COVID-19 and the Smithsonian's response." [Q3.7]

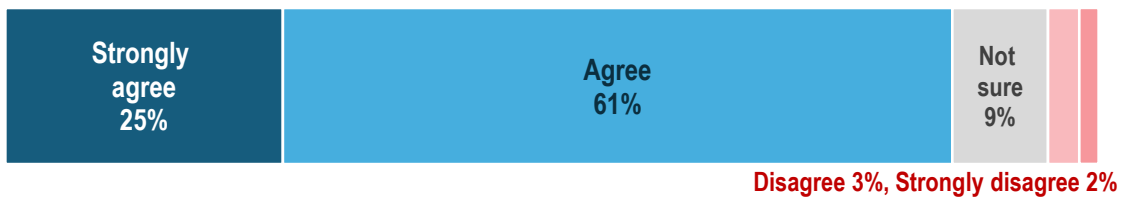
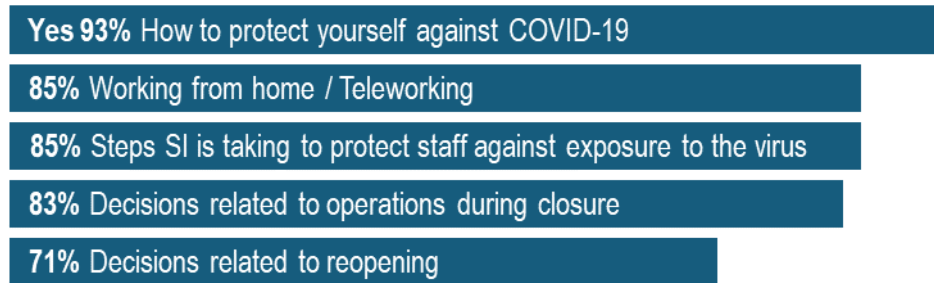


Figure 2 Do you feel Smithsonian central leadership (e.g., the Secretary, COVID-19 Team) is communicating adequately about ... [Q3.2]



Actions taken to-date by the COVID-19 Response Team and Reopening Task Force in this area include but are not limited to:

- Weekly COVID-19 Response Team letters to address new information and policy updates, and to respond to questions submitted to the SI-CoronavirusInfo@si.edu resource account;
- Weekly Secretary letters or video chats to discuss larger themes or provide insight into leadership's decision-making;
- Weekly meetings with Unit Directors and the Emergency Operations Group, which is comprised of a representative from every unit;
- Continuous updates to the COVID-19 website;
- The development of a strategic plan for reopening and a Reopening Framework flowchart that was shared staff-wide; and
- Ongoing engagement between the Reopening Team and each individual unit to develop its tailored reopening plan.

Telework

We learned that telework staff felt overwhelmingly positive about their ability to perform their duties and communicate with team members remotely. See **Figures 3-4** below.

Figure 3

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I am able to complete my duties adequately while teleworking from home." [Q5.4]



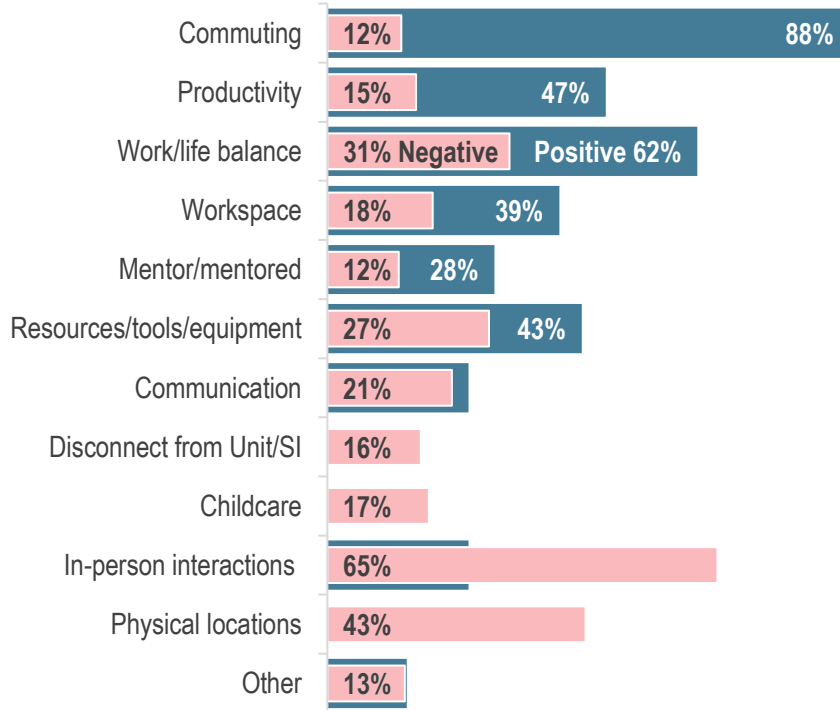
Figure 4

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I am able to communicate easily with other members of my team while teleworking from home." [Q5.5]



Many respondents noted, however, that they have grappled with drawbacks of remote work, which include: lack of in-person interactions with colleagues; inadequate at-home workspaces (both space and equipment); the competing demands of work and child or eldercare issues; and, for research and collections staff, the inability to access key physical spaces such as labs and collections. See **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5
What have you found to be positive/negative aspects of teleworking?
(Select all that apply.) [Q5.6, Q5.7]
 (In descending order of net positive)



In recognition of these challenges, as an Institution, we took the following actions:

- Rapidly brought online those platforms necessary to support mass telework;
- Allowed unit funds to offset certain home workspace equipment and other costs; and
- Deployed a broadened range of leave options and workplace flexibilities.

We have further encouraged leaders, managers, and supervisors to provide accommodations for these workplace challenges and to ease the impact of the pandemic on emotional well-being generally. We still have more to do in this area and continue to look for increased flexibility and ways to support the Institution’s entire workforce as the pandemic continues, especially into the new school year.

Health & Safety

For all of us, keeping ourselves, our families and our colleagues healthy and safe is a top priority. At the time of the survey, there were clear differences in perceptions of workplace safety between staff who were exclusively teleworking and those who had been working onsite. See **Figure 6**. Most staff, particularly telework-eligible staff, felt uncomfortable about the health risks of returning to work onsite. As **Figure 7** illustrates, onsite workers were more comfortable coming into the workplace.

Figure 6
As of this moment, how comfortable do you feel about (the prospect of) coming to work onsite? (All respondents) [Q7.2]

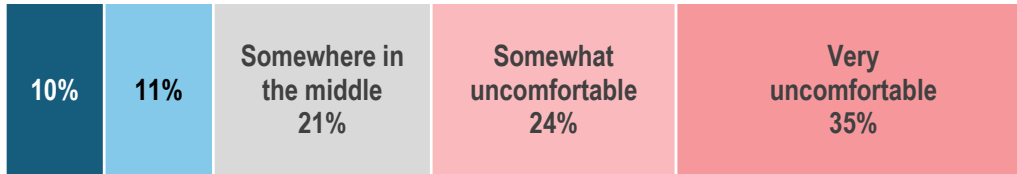
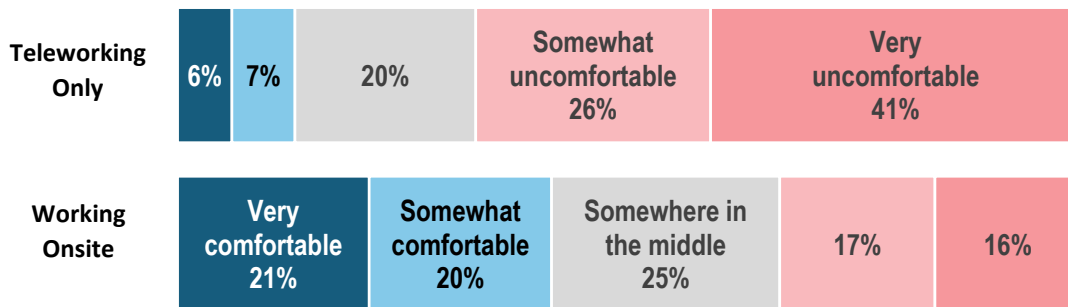


Figure 7
As of this moment, how comfortable do you feel about (the prospect of) coming to work onsite? (Teleworkers vs. onsite workers) [Q7.2]



The survey included detailed questions about what employees’ concerns are and what we could do to mitigate them. See **Figures 8-10** below.

Figure 8
Do you have any safety concerns about working onsite that you feel have not been resolved at this time? (Onsite workers only) [Q4.2]

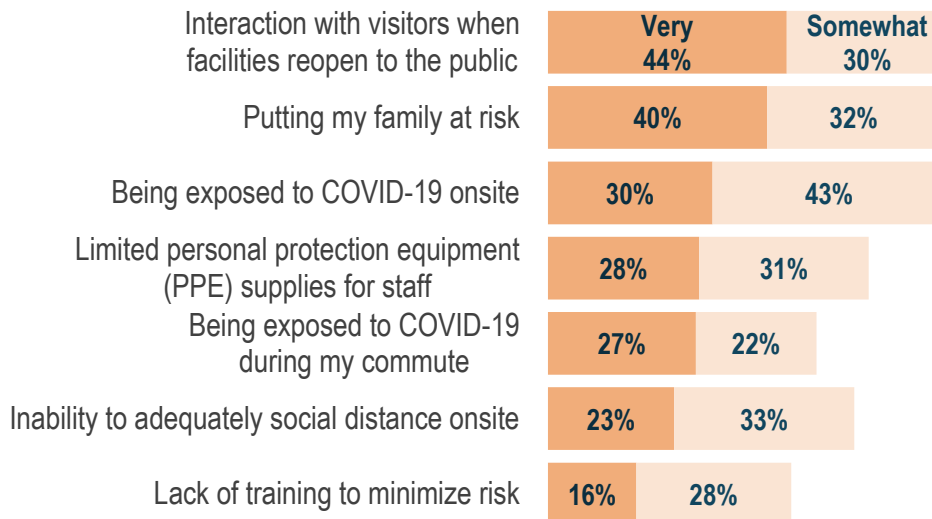


Figure 9
Do you think your colleagues will be respectful of your safety and stay home if they are feeling sick? [Q7.7]

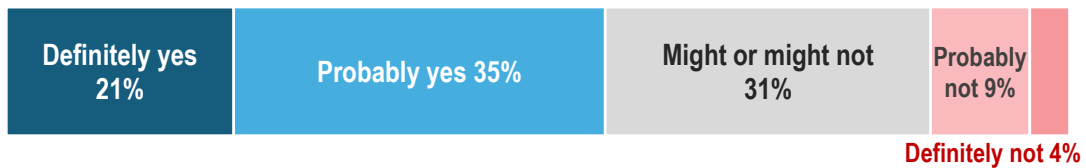
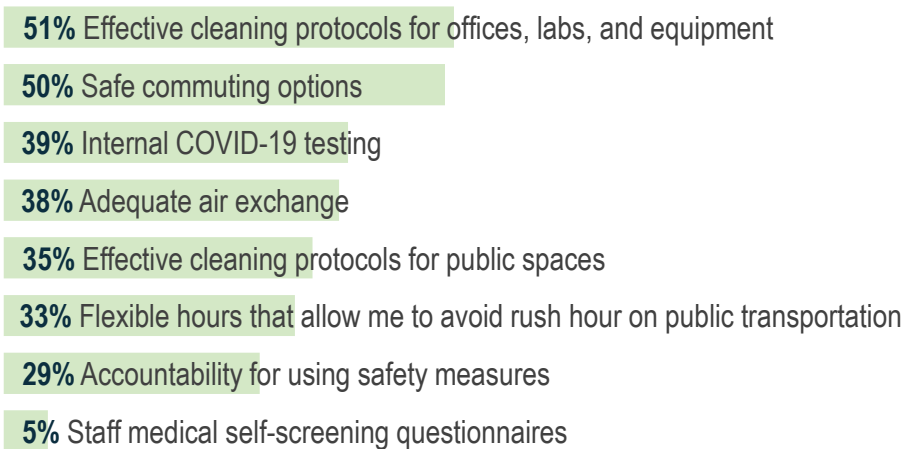


Figure 10
What are the most important work environment protections you need to feel safe coming to work onsite? [Q7.3]



In response to the concerns expressed by staff, the Smithsonian implemented and/or strengthened a range of health and safety measures, including the following:

- We have called for a change in our organizational culture to encourage people to stay home when they are sick and supported that with as much leave flexibility as possible;
- We now require all employees working onsite to do a daily health screening before leaving home;
- We require all staff and other people working onsite to take an online COVID-19 training;
- We have put in place mechanisms that enable units to order COVID-19 cleaning supplies for their workspaces and PPE supplies for their staff;
- We instituted enhanced cleaning protocols for non-public workspaces;
- We adopted policies such as mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing for everyone onsite—both staff and visitors—to protect them from being exposed to the virus; and
- Our Office of Health Services developed a robust contact tracing protocol to ensure that we are tracking any potential COVID-19 exposures in the workplace in real time.

We're optimistic that by working together to follow these protocols we will continue to ensure that SI facilities remain healthy and safe.