



Air Force Personnel Actions Resulting from COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Current as of March 20, 2020

NOTES: These FAQs are related to civilian personnel actions for Airmen traveling to or from countries designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with Level 2 or 3 Travel Health Notices, based on the health risks associated with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Due to this rapidly-changing situation, it's important to contact the following for the most current information for your specific situation:

- **Newly-hired employees not yet onboarded** – contact your human resources professional who presented the tentative or firm job offer. You may also contact the Civilian Personnel Office where you will be hired.
- **Current employees** – contact your supervisor, local civilian personnel section or the Total Force Service Center.

The Total Force Service Center telephone number is 1 (800) 525-0102.

FOR CIVILIAN MEMBERS/FAMILIES

Q1. My PCS is delayed due to COVID-19 but I've already departed my previous assignment. What should I do?

A1. If you have already traveled to your new permanent duty station, or PDS, then you should in-process with the Civilian Personnel Office. However, if you have not started travelling, please contact your servicing Civilian Personnel Office and HR Staffer who provided you with your orders for assistance.

Q2. I'm scheduled to PCS to a unit in one of the Level 2 or 3 countries. Will my PCS be delayed or canceled?

A2. PCS movements will not be canceled, however, start dates/reporting to the locations will be delayed for 60 days. Individuals will be contacted by AFPC to discuss their situation. Guidance will also be sent to the Civilian Personnel Offices. If you are a current AF employee you may contact the local Civilian Personnel Office or AFPC HR Staffer. For all other applicants, please contact the HR Staffer who provided you with your orders for assistance.

Q3. What if civilian employees traveling abroad fall ill while on temporary duty travel (TDY)? Our agency obtained Department of Defense approval to prepay the costs of emergency healthcare. Please advise if the civilian employees can use their Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) to cover these costs while on TDY.

A3. The GTCC cannot be used to prepay the costs of emergency healthcare. However, the DoD Component does have the flexibility to prepay the cost of emergency healthcare if the situation warrants it. Please reach out to your respective budget offices, as they will be able to properly advise you on how to apply DoD Component funds to prepay any medical needs. Furthermore, a federal employee who contracts the Coronavirus Disease – 2019, known as COVID-19, while in performance of their job duties would have full Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) coverage for related medical treatment and for wage loss or disability related to that condition or associated complications. However, under 20 C.F.R. § 10.303, exposure to COVID-19 alone does not constitute a work-related injury entitling an employee to medical treatment under the FECA. The employee must actually be diagnosed with COVID-19 to potentially be afforded coverage.



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Q4. If a base (or office) closes by the Installation Commander or Heads of Activities to whom appointing authority is delegated due to COVID-19 and employees cannot report to the worksite, may an agency authorize Weather and Safety Leave?

A4. Yes, an agency could authorize Weather and Safety leave to non-telework program participants whose office or base is closed. Telework program participants would be expected to continue working and may not receive weather and safety leave.

Q5. What should the agency do to prepare to implement social distancing strategies which increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others?

A5. To mitigate community transmission and protect vulnerable populations, DoD Components may be advised to implement social distancing strategies. Such strategies include the use of telework, teleconferences, and flexible work schedules (e.g., schedules that provide for flexible work days and/or work hours).

Q6. What options are available for civilian employees, whether in the United States or at an overseas location, if schools and child care facilities that their children attend are closed but the employees are healthy and their workplaces are open?

A6. Employees in these circumstances are not eligible for weather and safety leave.

Employees under these circumstances must still account for work and non-work hours during his or her tour of duty and take appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for time spent away from normal work-related duties (e.g., to care for a child or dependent). Employees who are not telework program participants may use annual leave or other paid time off, such as accrued compensatory time or credit hours. In locations where such programs have been approved for use, supervisors may authorize alternative work schedules (compressed or flexible work schedules) that provide for flexible work days and/or work hours.

Q7. If an employee, who has been receiving weather and safety leave due to exposure to COVID-19, becomes symptomatic (ill), should he or she continue to receive weather and safety leave?

A7. No. Sick leave would be used to cover such a period of sickness, as provided in 5 CFR 630.401(a)(2). Sick leave must be granted when an illness, such as COVID-19, prevents an employee from performing work.

Q8. If an employee runs out of sick leave, can the agency grant advanced sick leave to an employee who is ill (symptomatic) due to a quarantinable communicable disease, such as COVID-19, or must care for a family member who is ill?

A8. Yes. However, while sick leave may be advanced at an agency's discretion, it is not an employee entitlement. The sick leave regulations allow an employee to be advanced sick leave for exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease, subject to the limitations below:

- 240 hours (30 days) may be advanced if the employee would jeopardize the health of others by his or her presence on the job because of exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease;
- 104 hours (13 days) may be advanced if the employee is providing care for a family member who would jeopardize the health of others by his or her presence in the community because of exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease.



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Q9. If an employee is healthy but chooses to stay home because he or she has been in direct contact with an individual exposed to a quarantinable communicable disease, such as COVID-19, in what pay/leave status is the employee placed?

A9. An employee, covered by a telework agreement, may request to telework with the permission of the supervisor. Supervisors may authorize telework to telework eligible employees to provide additional flexibility for employees. For employees who are not currently covered by a telework agreement, supervisors may also consider whether an employee has some portable duties (e.g., reading reports; analyzing documents and studies; preparing written letters, memorandums, reports and other correspondence; setting up conference calls, or other tasks that do not require the employee to be physically present), that would allow him/her to work on a situational basis. An ad-hoc telework agreement should be signed to cover the period the employee is permitted to work from the approved alternate location (e.g., home).

An employee may also request to take annual leave, advanced annual leave, other paid time off (e.g., earned compensatory time off, earned credit hours), or leave without pay.

Weather and safety leave is not authorized in this scenario. The use of sick leave would be limited to circumstances where an employee has become symptomatic (ill) due to a quarantinable communicable disease, such as COVID-19.

Q10. I've recently traveled to a country designated by the State Department as Level 3. Am I required to do anything before coming back to work?

A10. Federal employees that have spent time in certain countries or specific regions within countries that have been designated by the U.S. Department of State as Level 4 (Do Not Travel) due to COVID-19 are advised to stay at home and monitor their health for 14 days after returning to the U.S. Federal employees should seek medical advice if they get sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

NOTE: Anyone planning to travel to overseas destinations are advised to individually review the U.S. Department of State's website for up-to-date overseas travel information for destination countries and the Emergency Alert for Coronavirus page at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>