FAQs Listed Below Were Updated on 4/2

Facilities (23)

General (7)

Item 1
I am the COR on IRS Sign Language Interpreting contracts and I need to share the list of Office Closures to some vendors and contractors who do not have access to IRS Source, but the new format does not copy clearly. How can I get a list of office closures that I can share with these customers?

Yes, in the FMSS Communications COVID library.
This library includes a read-only list of the IRS Building Access.
4/2/2020 3:39 PM

Access (3)

Item 8
My manager directed me back to my Post of Duty (POD) to pick up work and process mail. How do I charge my time for commuting to my POD and back to my home?

Employees may travel to their POD and back home on administrative time (duty time).
4/2/2020 1:22 PM

Item 9
Can an employee enter their building if it’s closed?

Yes, with their manager’s approval, employees may re-enter the building to pick up work, materials, or process mail. Employees may travel to their Post of Duty (POD) on administrative time (duty time). Unless you are directed by your supervisor, we encourage you not to work in your assigned POD, but rather stay in the safety of your home or alternate location. See National Agreement Article 50, Section 7(C) and IRM 6.800.2.4.7 (4).
Although normal office operations are temporarily suspended, buildings remain open, unless closed for cleaning or facility issues. However, closed buildings should only be accessed on an as-needed basis. Weekend/after-hours access procedures may be in place. If you need to get into a closed location and cannot, please contact your manager first.
FMSS is responsible for ensuring access is available. If access still cannot be provided after approved by your manager, contact the servicing FMSS Security Section Chief for assistance.

4/2/2020 11:41 AM

Mail (7)

Item 16
If a hold is put on mail delivery to a POD does that also mean there are no pickups?

Correct, there’s no pickup for outgoing mail. A hold advises the post office there is no one in the office to accept mail, so, there would be no one there from whom to pick up outgoing mail.

4/2/2020 1:52 PM

Supplies (1)

Item 23
Can IRS offices who have the N95 masks that they are not using, can they donate those masks to local medical facilities?

There is a regulated process for excessing (including donations) federally owned materials, which includes the masks. Unfortunately, the IRS does have a robust inventory control system. If you have excess masks, sanitizer or other cleaning supplies please let your Territory Manager know as another territory may be in need.

4/2/2020 2:33 PM

General COVID Info (16)

General (16)

Item 27
What if my SmartID expired/ is expiring?

The PIV Smart Cards of some IRS employees and contractors will soon be expiring or will need certificate updates.

Procedures for Expiring PIV Smart Cards and Certificates: The PIV Smart Cards of some IRS employees and contractors will soon be expiring or will need certificate updates. If you are affected, YOU DO NOT NEED TO CONTACT THE ENTERPRISE SERVICE DESK. FMSS and IT have established procedures that will allow customers to retain access to their systems.

PIV Smart Cards with Expiring Certificates: FMSS will send a direct communication to customers whose PIV Smart Card requires a certificates update. This communication will provide instructions for downloading and running the Rekey Tool which updates the certificates.

Expiring and Expired PIV Smart Card: Customers with an expiring or expired PIV Smart Card will be placed on an exception list. IT will contact each customer and their manager to provide instructions to allow them to use a Login and Password until they are able to return to the office or a credentialing facility to obtain their replacement PIV Smart Card.

4/2/2020 6:13 PM
Item 28
Are any employees going to be furloughed due to the coronavirus outbreak?

The organization is not experiencing a Lapse in Appropriation situation at this time, therefore, furlough of employees is not an applicable or appropriate action. Employees have been ordered to evacuate IRS facilities and work from home, provided they meet all requirements and are able to do so.

4/2/2020 4:27 PM

Item 29
What if I live in a state or county under a Shelter in Place (SIP) and I get pulled over by a police officer while traveling to or from my Post of Duty (POD)?

All IRS employees are issued federal ID cards (Smart IDs/PIVs) for building entry and identification. Managers and employees should be aware that the U.S. Attorney General sent a memo directing state & local law enforcement that our federal ID cards are valid identification and to allow employees the freedom to pass during state or locally imposed travel restrictions. The Attorney General memorandum contains guidance on these procedures. If you need to travel to/enter your facility, please familiarize yourself with the Attorney General’s memorandum so you don’t encounter any issues. Privacy, Governmental Liaison and Disclosure has determined there is no PII violation if employees need to email this letter to their personal email addresses in order to print to show to authorities while transiting to work.

4/2/2020 2:55 PM

Incident Reporting (6)

Item 43
Can you please provide additional guidance on reporting incidents to SAMC by email as well as the form, telephone, etc.?

All email reports will be accepted and manually entered into the SAMC system as time permits. To expediate the reporting process all employees are encouraged to enter their reports directly into the SAMC system. Also, below is an excerpt from our IRM 10.2.8 Incident Reporting that clearly states the different ways an incident can be reported which includes email.

Incident Reporting Form (SAMC website portal) at:

b. telephone at 202-317-6124
c. toll free hotline at 1-866-216-4809
d. fax at 202-317-6129
e. e-mail samc@irs.gov

4/2/2020 2:29 PM

Weather and Safety (14)

Item 67
If an employee is on maternity leave, during the time their permanent position would be granted weather and safety leave, would that be granted in place of the pre-approved leave?

No, employees may not receive weather and safety leave for hours during which they are on other preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or paid time off (5 CFR 630.1606(c).
Technology (11)

General (11)

Item 98
Some employees may require assistance to set up/install IT equipment. Can IT be requested to set up equipment onsite at the telework location for these employees?

No, IT is unable to provide onsite service for telework employees. We do encourage employees to contact the Enterprise Service Desk for issues with their equipment while teleworking, and IT will work with them remotely to triage and resolve them. If needed IT can direct ship replacement equipment/components to an employee’s telework location.

Telework (55)

General (29)

Item 109
How do I apply for an ERAP an account?

You must submit an Online 5081 (OL5081) request to request access to ERAP:

1. Enter the OL5081 application.
2. Click the My Applications tab.
3. Click the Request New Applications button.
4. Click "ERAP" in the search box and click the Search button.
5. Click the box next to ERAP Production (ERAP), then click the Next button.
6. Read any special instructions on this screen, then click the Submit button. This will send the request to your manager, who must approve before your ERAP account is created.
7. Manager receives and approves the request
8. ERAP PMO receives and approves the request
9. OL5081 sends to AT&T IRS ERAP team for approval
10. AT&T creates ERAP accounts and the OL5081 system is updated
11. Employee receives email notification that account has been created from the OL5081 system

Employee must access the OL5081 system to sign the System Security Rules and acknowledge the account acceptance within 45 days.

Item 110
I am a recurring teleworker now working as a frequent teleworker. When the office opens and the evacuation order is lifted, will I be required to return to my normal telework agreement or can I remain working from home?

Employees will be expected to return to their approved telework agreement/type. You should discuss with your manager any telework options after the evacuation order is lifted.
4/2/2020 2:45 PM

Because schools and other caregiving facilities are closed, small children and/or elder dependents are home during normal telework hours. Can employees change their tour of duty to after hours?
For employees with caregiving responsibilities due to COVID-19, a new expanded Maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 is available for all bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit employees, who are telework-able, and working at an alternate site location. Employees may request, and first-line managers approve, this new expanded Maxiflex FWS for COVID-19, regardless of their current work schedule (e.g., Flexitour with Credit Hours, Gliding, or compressed work schedules). Employees may submit requests to first-line managers via email or other documentation. (Form 10911, Alternative Work Schedule & Staggered Work Schedule Request, is not to be used to request this schedule.) See: Interim Guidance to Establish Expanded Maxiflex Flexible Work Schedule (FWS) for Employees with Caregiving Responsibilities due to COVID-19 (.pdf).
4/2/2020 2:43 PM

Item 112
My job duties are not portable (cannot be performed from a telework location) and I am designated in HR Connect as “not eligible” for telework. Can I be required to telework during office closures (pandemic or otherwise)?

As of 3/30/2020, employees have been evacuated to perform work assignments at home. Please work with your supervisor to determine what work assignments will be assigned to you or to determine if you are directed to report to the POD for work-essential assignments.
4/2/2020 2:42 PM

Item 113
Do I need to change my current telework agreement from recurring or ad hoc to frequent?

No, Employees who voluntarily entered into a telework agreement do not have to change their telework type during COVID-19.
4/2/2020 2:41 PM

Line Item 114
In HR Connect my telework status is "no." Is that the same as not eligible? Could I still request to work for home?

On 3/30/20, all employees were directed to work from home if they have portable job duties. You should discuss this with your manager. Your manager will direct you either to perform duties at home or may direct you into the office to perform mission critical functions.
4/2/2020 2:40 PM
New teleworker (9)

Item 155
I have been ordered to evacuate my post of duty (POD) and work from home under 5 CFR 550 subpart D. Am I required to enter into a telework agreement and take telework training?

No. Telework agreements and telework training are not required for employees directed to work from home. It is strongly encouraged that evacuated employees take the IRS Telework Training course based on their bargaining/manager status. Separate courses are available for bargaining unit employees, non-bargaining employees and managers.
4/2/2020 6:12 PM

Item 156
I am an employee directed to work from home and have no Telework Agreement. How do I record my time?

You should use your regular OFP codes. Time will be entered as telework. To post telework hours, select Ad Hoc telework type in Single Entry Time Recording/Employee Profile tab. This will enable the telework box to appear for posting telework time on the Time Entry screen.
4/2/2020 2:47 PM

Item 157
I am an employee who will now work from home or an alternate location, what do I need to do to prepare?

Employees should:
• Request ERAP,
• Take all necessary equipment (for example, laptop) and assigned work files (paper or electronic) to complete duties at home and
• Ensure the home location or other work location is appropriate for work (for example, work space suitable to perform work, high-speed internet, work environment free from distractions, provides reasonable security and protection of government property).
4/2/2020 2:46 PM

Can reasonable accommodation (RA) furniture be transported to the telework location?

Yes, employees are allowed to take home federal property during this time. This includes RA furniture. The employee must work through their management for approval, transport and return the items when they return to office work.
4/2/2020 2:34 PM

Timekeeping/SETR (2)

General (2)

Item 164
Has there been any thought to doing a SETR sweep for the Building Closure W&S Leave OFP for the employees in those closed Centers?

This option was considered, but due to the variables involved, (who is on telework and on leave, who is working, etc.), there is a high potential for error by doing a sweep.
4/2/2020 2:17 PM

Item 165
Can the agency lift the credit hour maximum ceiling during COVID19?

No, the ceiling cannot be lifted as this is a statutory limitation (see 5 USC Section 6126). Employees on flexible work schedules can accumulate not more than 24 credit hours for carryover from a biweekly pay period to a succeeding biweekly pay period. That number is prorated for part-time employees.
4/2/2020 2:07 PM

Travel (7)
General (4)

Item 166
Is it possible to extend the April deadline for the public transportation subsidies, to allow those who may be required to come into the office to take advantage?

Deadlines regarding transit passes vary and are set by each individual transit authority. Contact your local transit authority for specific deadlines. The PTSP TRANServe Card and WMATA SmarTrip benefit funding cycles cannot be changed. The TRANServe Card is funded on the 10th of each month for the following month’s benefits (i.e., April benefits are available March 10th through April 9th). The SmarTrip Card is funded on the first of each month for that month’s benefits (i.e., April SmarTrip benefits are available April 1st through April 30th).
4/2/2020 2:16 PM

Item 167
What if we do not have PTSP funds available but are called back to work?

Funding will remain available for all active PTSP users.
4/2/2020 2:14 PM
FAQs Listed Below Were Updated Either on 3/31 or 4/1

Facilities (20)

General (6)

Item 1
Is there any guidance on continuing blood drives for IRS employees at IRS facilities or should each employee find a Red Cross blood drive on their own?

The American Red Cross is experiencing a severe blood shortage due to COVID-19 and donors are urgently needed. Please refer to the American Red Cross website to find places to donate and how to make an appointment. When local blood drives at IRS locations are held in the future, it will be communicated. See Article 36, Section 8.
4/1/2020 1:35 PM

Item 2
Should there be information posted in my local Post of Duty?

C&L and FMSS shared information (TV message and flyers) with our campus contacts for the Campus TVs (and flyer distribution).
- Coronavirus – What the Public Should Do.
- Stop the spread of germs (PDF-426KB)
4/1/2020 1:32 PM

Item 3
Who can I contact about building operations, mail, cleaning, security and other POD issues?

We know there are plenty of questions relating to building operations, mail, cleaning, security and other issues. Contact your designated territory manager, if you have questions about your POD.
4/1/2020 11:47 AM

Item 4
Should team or department treat days, celebrations or events with shared snacks and food at work, be cancelled?
Per the Center for Disease Control (CDC), events of any size should only be continued if they can be carried out following the guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations, hand hygiene, and social distancing. When feasible, organizers could modify events to be virtual.
3/31/2020 5:53 PM

Item 5
What signs and sanitizer materials are available in IRS buildings?

The COVID-19 page has posters and print information available to download. Your business unit should feel free to download the notices from the site and post in your work areas. Hand sanitizer will be provided and dispensers refilled as soon as the IRS can obtain it. Hand sanitizer is currently on back order, however, soap and water is available in all PODs and employees are encouraged to wash their hands often.

Access (2)

Item 7
Do business units need to provide a list of people who should be allowed into a building if it is closed?

No, there is no need to send Physical Security or other FMSS offices a list.
4/1/2020 1:10 PM

Item 8
Can an employee enter their building if it’s closed?

Yes, with managerial approval, employees may re-enter the building to pick up work, materials, or process mail. Employees may travel to their Post of Duty (POD) on administrative time (duty time).

Unless you are directed by your supervisor, we encourage you not to work in your assigned POD, but rather stay in the safety of your home or alternate location. See National Agreement Article 50, Section 7(C) and IRM 6.800.2.4.7 (4).
Although normal office operations are temporarily suspended, buildings remain open. However, closed buildings should only be accessed on an as-needed basis Weekend/after-hours access procedures may be in place. If you need to get into a closed location and cannot, please contact your manager first. If access still cannot be provided, contact the servicing FMSS Security Section Chief for assistance.
4/1/2020 10:20 AM

Building Closure (4)
Item 9
If the city where I work has declared shelter in place, am I still required to come in to the office?

Employees performing mission critical work may still be required to report to the worksite. If you have questions about whether to report to the office, please contact your manager.
4/1/2020 1:11 PM

Item 10
Can you provide a running list of campuses that have been closed?

A list of closed IRS offices can be found on the Corona-COVID 19 website.

IRS Office Closures.
4/1/2020 1:08 PM

Item 11
If facilities close, what is the impact to our contracted security, cleaning, and cafeteria staff workers?

The contractor’s employer will determine required staffing to support the facility based on its operating status and the terms and conditions of their contract with the IRS. This includes making all determinations regarding the employees job status, reassignment, furlough, etc.
3/31/2020 5:47 PM

Item 12
If the decision is made to close offices due to COVID-19, what procedures are followed?

The IRS Dismissal and Closure Procedures provide comprehensive guidance for office closures, including leave and telework provisions from the National Agreement and IRS policies. These procedures continue to apply in this situation.
3/31/2020 5:43 PM

Cleaning (1)

Item 13
IRS facilities have shared work spaces and areas and some employees are sensitive to strong smelling disinfectant sprays - what disinfectants are recommended for the work area to prevent any asthma or allergic triggers?
FMSS is following guidelines that remind us to not underestimate the power of cleaning to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus as well as other pathogens. Routine cleaning, to remove dirt and soil that harbor germs and viruses, is being done with green low odor products. EPA registered products effective against the coronavirus are being used including disinfectant wipes. Sprays are only permitted for use by janitorial staff. If an employee has a respiratory sensitivity to a product, they should submit an ERC ticket immediately. Options such as changing the product or changing cleaning schedules may be identified that will resolve the problem.

3/31/2020 5:45 PM

Mail (7)

Line Item 14
If my business makes the decision to stop mail delivery to all of their field locations for a period of 30 days, can this be done without affecting any other business units?

No, a decision to stop mail delivery affects all business units located at the facility. The USPS will not hold mail for one business unit. They don’t sort mail by business unit. They sort and deliver by the building address.
3/31/2020 12:11 PM

Item 15
If a hold is put on mail delivery to a POD does that also mean there are no pickups?

Correct, there’s no pickup for outgoing mail. A hold advises the post office there is no one in the office to accept mail, so, there would be no one there from whom to pick up outgoing mail.
3/31/2020 12:08 PM

Item 16
Is the mail being treated by chemical means to help kill the virus?

The CDC is not currently suggesting disinfection of the mail. Currently, there is not specific guidance with respect to COVID-19 and mail handling other than frequently washing hands. To date there is no evidence of transmission of the disease through the mail.
3/31/2020 12:08 PM

Item 17
What will USPS do if no one is at the office to accept mail delivery?

• USPS has increased the time they will hold mail before returning to sender from 10-to-30 days. The USPS will attempt to deliver mail to field locations. If no business unit employees are onsite to receive the mail, USPS will hold the mail for 30 days before returning it to sender. FMSS has contract mail personnel accepting mail on site at these 59 locations, DC metro buildings and New Carrollton Federal Building.
• UPS will hold shipments that cannot be delivered for 9 days. Day 10, the shipment will be returned to the originator.
FedEx will hold packages for 10 days for offices that are closed. After 10 days, FedEx will return to sender.

Item 18
Are employees paid to travel to Post Offices if they are to drop off or pick up mail?

Yes. If a traveler goes from his/her residence to a location other than the regular place of duty for official business, the mileage may be reimbursed (via Local Travel). Trips to the post office qualify for travel reimbursement. A Local Authorization should be created for the month and vouchered once a month.

Item 19
Is the mail being held beyond a “contamination period” if one actually exists?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is not currently suggesting disinfection of mail or holding times. Currently there is not specific guidance with respect to COVID-19 and mail handling other than frequently washing hands. To date, there is no evidence of transmission of the disease through the mail.

The United States Postal Service issued a statement on the March 22, 2020 in part that read: Importantly, the CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as the Surgeon General have indicated that there is currently no evidence that COVID-19 is being spread through the mail. Specifically, according to the WHO, "the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, traveled, and been exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low." And, according to the CDC, "in general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods."

Item 20
Can telework employees purchase stamps to mail information to taxpayers?

Yes, refer to Employee Reimbursables for additional details. This guidance is an exception to the standard procedures for ordering Postage Stamps. These procedures should be followed for the duration of the national state of emergency that relates to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Policy and Guidance related to ordering Postage Stamps is found in IRM 1.22.4, Mail and Transportation Management, Postage Accountability and Reporting Requirements.
Item 21
Is there specific guidance for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program coordinators and volunteers?

IRS relationship managers are staying in contact with their sites and offering support as they are able. However, it is up to each VITA and TCE site to direct their operations and volunteers during this difficult time, and the IRS supports their decisions.
3/31/2020 5:54 PM

Item 22
Will guidance be provided regarding income tax related programs and processes during this period of time when we are faced with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Business units program leaders should be providing any direction and/or modifications to program related processes or policy. Please consult with your supervisor.
3/31/2020 5:52 PM

General COVID Info (15)

Item 24
Where do employees go for information?

To find the latest information, visit the COVID-19 page on IRS Source.
4/1/2020 1:36 PM

Item 25
Whom should employees contact if they have additional questions?

Employees' questions should be directed to their manager. Bargaining unit employees may also contact NTEU.
4/1/2020 1:36 PM

Item 26
Why do some of the FAQs drop off the next day? Is there an archive where we can view all of them?

Questions are not being deleted, however, as we receive new or updated information we take them down temporarily. Once the answer is updated, it is published as an FAQ again. This ensures employees are provided with the most accurate information in a timely manner.
4/1/2020 1:36 PM
Item 27
Will exceptions be granted for supply orders to be delivered to employee homes if their POD is closed?

The Business Unit Division Finance Officer (DFO) can make the exception to allow office supplies to be shipped to the employee’s home.

4/1/2020 1:36 PM

Item 28
I have an employee planning to retire soon. I am not co-located with this employee. How should they go about turning in their equipment and badge?

Employees should contact their local Security representative Security POC to schedule an appointment to surrender badge and return equipment when they leave the Service.
Separating employees must take the following steps at least 2-weeks in advance:
- Employee/Contractors who separate and who need to return IT Equipment (i.e. Laptops, Printers, Cell-Phones, etc.) must create an RF ticket to return their IT equipment. The ticket should be created within 2-weeks of the separation effective date.
- Open OS GetServices and click on Order from the Product and Services Catalog in the right pane.
- At the top of screen, in the entry box next to Service Catalog, enter the words "unused equipment"
- Click the arrow (in the blue circle at the right side of the entry box) to start the search. You should receive the search results, "IT Equipment Return" and "Unused Equipment."
- Choose either:
  - Unused Equipment – to return unneeded or unused IT equipment; or
  - IT Equipment Return – to return IT equipment for separating employees
- Complete the electronic form and select Add to cart
- Select View Cart/Checkout
- Select Checkout to place your request

4/1/2020 1:35 PM

Item 29
My job requires me to meet with taxpayers face-to-face. What measures is the IRS taking to ensure I’m safe from exposure to COVID-19?

The Service has ended walk-in and in-person appointments with taxpayers at our Taxpayer Assistance Centers, protecting both taxpayers and our employees. Walk-in services with the Taxpayer Advocate Service have also ended, though phone operations continue.

4/1/2020 1:35 PM

Item 30
How can I receive important updates if I do not have access to an IRS laptop?

We encourage all Bargaining Unit employees to enroll in the Emergency AtHoc System to receive Agency updates. Enrollment is mandatory for Non-Bargaining Unit employees.
Another great resource will be the IRS.gov employee emergency page. This is accessible on our external website and will include important updates as well.
Item 31
My position is designated as mission-critical. If I’m not feeling well, but unsure if it’s COVID-19, should I still come to work?

All employees are to continue to follow the CDC guidance about COVID-19 to prevent illness and recognize symptoms. If not feeling well, stay home, or go home immediately if you are at work, and call your health care provider for medical advice. As soon as you are able, contact your manager.
4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 32
How do I know if my job is considered “mission critical?”

We are working to develop a consistent definition of mission critical functions. Please speak with your manager for immediate guidance to determine if your job is mission critical and if you need to report to the office.
4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 33
Where and how do I return a SmartID (Badge)?
Contact your nearest HSPD-12 SmartID Credentialing Station for instructions to return the SmartID via mail.
4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 34
What if my SmartID expired/is expiring?
The PIV Smart Cards of some IRS employees and contractors will soon be expiring or will need certificate updates.
Procedures for Expiring PIV Smart Cards and Certificates: The PIV Smart Cards of some IRS employees and contractors will soon be expiring or will need certificate updates. If you are affected, YOU DO NOT NEED TO CONTACT THE ENTERPRISE SERVICE DESK. FMSS and IT have established procedures that will allow customers to retain access to their systems.
PIV Smart Cards with Expiring Certificates: FMSS will send a direct communication to customers whose PIV Smart Card requires a certificates update. This communication will provide instructions for downloading and running the Rekey Tool which updates the certificates.
Expiring and Expired PIV Smart Card: Customers with an expiring or expired PIV Smart Card will be placed on an exception list. IT will contact each customer and their manager to provide instructions to allow them to use a Login and Password until they are able to return to the office or a credentialing facility to obtain their replacement PIV Smart Card.
4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 35
How do New Hires get badges with Virtual Orientation?

For Virtual Orientation, badges will not be issued until the new hire is able to return to the office.

• HCO will send Form 13716, Request for ID Card and/or Access Card for IRS Employees, directly to the managers for signing.
• Managers will send the completed signed form to the ICAM mailbox *FMSS ICAM SmartID.

• ICAM will route the completed forms to the appropriate credentialing station. Credential Offices are open for Mission Critical services by appointment. Our strategy is to conduct minimum activities to provide access.

In Office: Provisioning by Appointment Only. Find locations - credentialing station

Contacts:
Amy.L.Albee-Johnson@irs.gov
Chevaughn.K.Garner@irs.gov
Omari.C.Tingle@irs.gov
4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 36
How do I return a Pocket Commission?
Please follow the instructions for New and Expired Pocket Commission Processing.

4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Item 37
What if I live in a state or county under a Shelter in Place (SIP) and I get pulled over by a police officer while traveling to or from my Post of Duty (POD)?

In addition to the employee having their federal ID card for building entry and identification, managers and employees should be aware that the U.S. Attorney General sent a memo directing U.S. attorneys to notify state & local law enforcement that our federal ID cards are valid identification, to allow freedom to pass, during state or locally imposed travel restrictions.

4/1/2020 1:34 PM

Where do managers go for information?
To find the latest information, visit the COVID-19 page on IRS Source and iManage.

3/31/2020 3:05 PM

Pay/Leave/Benefits (32)

General (7)

Item 44
Will they reopen Leave Bank Open Season to allow employees who need leave to now participate?

Currently, there are no plans to reopen Leave Bank Open Season. Another scheduled Leave Bank Open Season will start in July 2020 to allow employees who could not or did not choose to join during the first open season for 2020.

4/1/2020 1:18 PM
Item 45
If I need to take leave without pay, will my benefits still be active?

Periods of extended LWOP may have significant impact on employee benefits including earning leave, health benefits, service computation date, etc. See OPM’s fact sheet titled Effect of Extended Leave Without Pay (LWOP) (or Other Non-pay Status) on Federal Benefits and Programs at: http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/HTML/LWOP_eff.asp. Information on the impact of LWOP is also found on IRS Source.

Item 46
I have an employee who suspects they were exposed to the COVID-19 outbreak and are asymptomatic, but they are not eligible to telework. May I grant them weather and safety leave?

Employees who are not telework eligible and are both asymptomatic (healthy) and quarantined or isolated under the direction of local or public health officials, may be authorized weather and safety leave. Note: Weather and safety leave may only be authorized during periods of quarantine or isolation directed by a local or public health authority if an employee is asymptomatic. Weather and safety leave authorized under this condition is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Weather and Safety Leave – Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.

Item 47
I participate in the Public Transportation Subsidy Program (PTSP). If I’m teleworking or on Weather and Safety leave because of the COVID-19 outbreak, do I need to adjust my PTSP application to account for the temporary change in work schedule?

No. Changes to your PTSP application are not necessary. It is the participant’s responsibility to purchase the most cost-effective transit type. If you are not reporting to your official post of duty (POD) during the COVID-19 outbreak, you should not be using your benefits to purchase transit. If you are not reporting to your POD as frequently as usual, adjust the type of pass you purchase for the days you commute to work (for example, instead of a monthly pass, buy a daily pass). Any unused PTSP benefits will be automatically returned to the Agency at the end of the funding cycle (TRANServe Credit Card: the 10th of the month to the 9th of the following month; SmartBenefits: Last day of the calendar month).

Item 48
Can I enroll, or make a change to my current FEHB enrollment, because of COVID-19?

OPM has stated there are no exceptions allowing a FEHB election to be processed because of COVID-19. You must have a Qualifying Life Event shown on the Table of Permissible Changes to make a FEHB election.

Item 49
If I'm pulled from my normal duties to perform essential duties will I keep my grade level and title until returning to my normal duties?
Yes. Under the current evacuation order, employees may be assigned any work considered necessary without regard to the employee's grade or title as long as the employee has the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work. Employees will be paid their normal rate of pay for the hours of work performed (including any applicable premium pay, allowances, and differentials, or other authorized payments.

3/31/2020 6:17 PM

Item 50
Some states and cities are asking for volunteers to help sew masks and other needed resources. Can IRS employees volunteer to take part in these activities on official time?

IRS policy for volunteer activities is contained in IRM 6.610.1.3.10 and provides that employees may be provided up to 8 hours of administrative leave per calendar year to volunteer their time to legitimate public service organizations if certain criteria are met. Bargaining unit employees should reference the 2019 National Agreement, Article 36, for provisions concerning volunteer activities. Administrative leave granted for this purpose requires second-level manager approval.

3/31/2020 6:15 PM

Advanced Leave (2)

Item 51
Are new hire employees eligible for advanced sick or annual leave if they have not completed their probationary period?

If an employee is on a permanent appointment and has served for more than 90 days, management may grant advanced annual leave. The amount of advanced annual leave may not exceed the amount that would be earned before the employee’s separation or by the end of the current leave year, whichever comes first.

Advanced sick leave is not a right. However, when the severity of the situation warrants, a maximum of 30 days (240 hours) of sick leave may be advanced to full-time employees with a serious health condition, or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. There is no minimum time requirement on the job that must be met before an employee may request advanced sick leave.

Reminder: Advanced leave incurs a debt which must be repaid by future leave accruals or a cash repayment. The request and use of advanced annual leave serve as the employee’s commitment to repay the debt. See IRM 6.630.1.6 and the National Agreement, Articles 32 and 34, for more information on advanced leave, including its request and use.

4/1/2020 1:17 PM

Item 52
Is Advanced Leave available if an employee has an ongoing TIGTA investigation pending regarding time reporting?

Managers are encouraged to approve requests for advanced leave during this unprecedented time. However, advanced leave is not a right, and is granted at managerial discretion. See IRM 6.630.1.6 and the National Agreement for further information.
Family Care (4)

Item 53
Can an employee, who is on telework, request and be granted advanced annual leave to home school their school aged kids?
Advanced annual leave may be granted at managerial discretion if an employee is on a permanent appointment and has served for more than 90 days. Employees do not have a right to advanced annual leave and should save their accrued annual leave to cover both planned and unplanned absences.

The amount of advanced annual leave may not exceed the amount that would be earned prior to the employee's separation or by the end of the current leave year, whichever comes first.
Reminder: Advanced leave incurs a debt which must be repaid by future leave accruals or a cash repayment. The request and use of advanced annual leave serve as the employee's commitment to repay the debt. See IRM 6.630.1.6 and the National Agreement, Articles 32 and 34, for more information on advanced leave.

Item 54
If I telework, do I have to request leave if I need to take care of my child or a family member who is home due to the COVID-19 outbreak?

Employees may request leave, other paid time off (e.g., previously earned compensatory time off, credit hours), leave without pay, or advanced leave if unable to report to their worksite due to caretaker responsibilities.

Item 55
What are my leave options if my position requires me to be on campus and I am not eligible to telework, but I need to provide child or family care due to the COVID-19 outbreak?

Employees may request leave, other paid time off (e.g., previously earned compensatory time off, credit hours), leave without pay, or advanced leave if unable to report to their worksite due to caretaker responsibilities.

Item 56
How does the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enacted into law on March 18, 2020, affect my options for leave, etc.?

We are aware of this new legislation. We are working closely with OPM and Treasury to provide guidance to employees and will issue additional information as soon as possible.

Military (2)
Item 57
I have been called to active duty in support of COVID-19. Am I entitled to 15 days of military leave?

Yes. Military leave is defined as the authorized absence of an employee from official duty to perform active military duty, active duty for training, inactive-duty training, funeral honors duty, or to engage in field or coast defense training. An employee on military leave under 5 USC 6323(a) receives full civilian salary as well as military pay. The employee is entitled to up to 15 days per fiscal year minus any they may have used in FY2020.
4/1/2020 1:17 PM

Item 58
I have been called to active duty in support of COVID-19. Am I entitled to the additional 22 days of military leave to enforce the law?

Reservists or National Guard members are potentially eligible for an additional 22 days of Military Leave (Emergency Military Leave) on a case-by-case basis. Orders must be submitted to the Military.Deployment.Program@irs.gov for review and approval. If approved, the employee is entitled to up to 22 days per calendar year, minus any time they may have used in calendar year 2020. To be eligible for military aid to enforce the law, Reservists and National Guard members must perform military duties supporting civil authorities in protecting life and property. If you have questions or need more information regarding military leave contact Military.Deployment.Program@irs.gov.
4/1/2020 1:17 PM

Sick (3)

Item 59
What if I call in sick because I suspect I was exposed to COVID-19 outbreak?

According to CDC recommendations, and just like with any sudden fever or respiratory illness, if someone is feeling sick, they should stay home and contact their health care provider. It’s far more likely the illness is caused by a typical respiratory virus or influenza. If you, or someone you know, is experiencing symptoms that include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, and has been in contact with someone infected with the COVID-19 virus, you should seek medical care right away and avoid contact with others.
Once an employee becomes symptomatic, they should request sick leave or other appropriate leave. Managers should visit the iManage website for managerial guidance on COVID-19.
4/1/2020 1:23 PM

Item 60
If I was exposed to COVID-19 outbreak or my family member is experiencing symptoms and I request sick leave, is there a limit on the use of sick leave? If I run out to sick leave, may I be advanced sick leave or annual leave?

An employee who is symptomatic (ill) or who is receiving a medical examination or treatment may request to use sick leave, other types of leave, or paid time-off as appropriate. If an employee’s family member is symptomatic (ill) or receiving medical examination or treatment, the employee may request sick leave for general family care, or other types of leave, or paid time-off as appropriate.
If using sick leave for general family care, there is a limit of 104 hours for family care and bereavement purposes and a limit of 480 hours for care of a family member with a serious health condition per leave year. There is no limit to the amount of accrued sick leave that may be used for self-care. See IRM 6.630.1, Absence and Leave, and National Agreement, Article 34, for more information including how to request and use sick leave.

4/1/2020 1:23 PM
Item 61
Is there still a requirement to provide a note from a doctor note when an employee is out sick for three days?

Managers should waive the medical documentation requirement during the COVID-19 outbreak.

4/1/2020 1:16 PM
Weather and Safety (14)

Item 62
If an employee, who has been receiving weather and safety leave due to quarantine or isolation as directed by local or public health authorities, becomes symptomatic (ill), should they continue to receive weather and safety leave?

No. Sick leave would be used to cover such a period of sickness. Managers must grant sick leave when an illness such as COVID-19, prevents an employee from performing work. See IRM 6.630.1, Absence and Leave for further information.

4/1/2020 1:23 PM

Item 63
If an employee is not eligible for telework but is at high risk for serious complications from COVID-19 and cannot safely travel to their office, may they request weather and safety leave rather than report to the office?

Yes, those populations that the CDC has identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 (see CDC High Risk Complications and CDC Special Populations may request weather and safety leave if they are not eligible to telework and their condition prevents them from safely traveling to or performing work in the office.

4/1/2020 1:22 PM

Item 64
Will we be paid for Weather and Safety leave?

Yes, Weather and safety leave is paid leave that may only be granted when an employee is prevented from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved location, including a telework location.

4/1/2020 1:17 PM

Item 65
If my wife is pregnant do I qualify for weather and safety leave as my working puts her at risk?

No, employees may not be granted weather and safety in such case, however, you may request other forms of leave or time off, as appropriate.
Item 66
How do I request Weather and Safety leave? Is there any documentation required?
Submit Form 10837, Request for Weather and Safety Leave Due to Emergency Conditions, or other documentation, per the National Agreement, Article 36, subsection 15.B. (for bargaining unit employees) and per Interim Guidance Memorandum HCO-06-0118-2018, Weather and Safety Leave (for nonbargaining unit employees). Weather and safety leave may be granted on a case-by-case basis, and if approved, is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.

Item 67
Is there a cap on the number of hours that may be granted as weather and safety leave?

There is no cap on the number of hours that may be granted as weather and safety leave as long as the requirements for it to be granted are met.

Item 68
I am not a telework participant. Will I be placed on Weather and Safety leave?

If the employee’s office is open and the employee is asymptomatic (healthy) and not quarantined or isolated, and the employee has not been identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 (see CDC High Risk Complications and CDC Special Populations), the employee should report to the office unless otherwise directed by their manager. Where appropriate, non-telework employees will be placed on Weather and Safety leave.

Item 69
My position requires me to be on campus and I am not a telework participant, but I have a family member in my household who has been told by a health authority to self-quarantine. May I request Weather and Safety leave?

Yes, employees can request weather and safety leave based on the general principle that weather and safety leave may be allowed in circumstances where an employee’s travel to or performance of work at the regular worksite would pose significant safety risk for other persons. Weather and safety leave authorized under this condition is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Weather and Safety Leave – Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.

Item 70
My position requires me to work in the office and I am not a telework participant, but there are travel restrictions due to COVID-19. May I request Weather and Safety leave?

If local travel restrictions have been issued, and employees are prevented from safely traveling to work, you may request weather and safety leave. Managers may also approve weather and safety leave on a case by case basis for employees who have been identified as a higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 by the CDC (e.g., pregnant). Submit Form 10837, Request for Weather and Safety Leave...
Due to Emergency Conditions, or other documentation, per the National Agreement, Article 36, subsection 15.B. (for bargaining unit employees) and per Interim Guidance Memorandum HCO-06-0118-2018, Weather and Safety Leave (for non-bargaining unit employees). Weather and safety leave may be granted on a case-by-case basis, and if approved, is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.
4/1/2020 1:16 PM

Item 71
My position requires me to work in the office and I am not a telework participant, but I am a high-risk employee that meets the CDC high-risk criteria. Am I eligible for Weather and Safety leave?

Yes, you may request weather and safety leave. Submit Form 10837, Request for Weather and Safety Leave Due to Emergency Conditions, or other documentation, per the National Agreement, Article 36, subsection 15.B. (for bargaining unit employees) and per Interim Guidance Memorandum HCO-06-0118-2018, Weather and Safety Leave (for non-bargaining unit employees). Weather and safety leave may be granted on a case-by-case basis, and if approved, is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.
4/1/2020 1:16 PM

Item 72
Are non-telework employees required to be in the office who are pregnant eligible for Weather and Safety leave?

Yes, you may request weather and safety leave as you are defined as “high risk” due to pregnancy. Submit Form 10837, Request for Weather and Safety Leave Due to Emergency Conditions, or other documentation, per the National Agreement, Article 36, subsection 15.B. (for bargaining unit employees) and per Interim Guidance Memorandum HCO-06-0118-2018, Weather and Safety Leave (for non-bargaining unit employees). Weather and safety leave may be granted on a case-by-case basis, and if approved, is posted to OFP code 990-59513, Office Open, Cannot Safely Report.
4/1/2020 1:16 PM

Item 73
I am not eligible for telework and my position requires me to be at the office. I am not in a high-risk or special population category, but I still have concerns about coming into work. May I be placed on Weather and Safety leave? Can I request other kinds of leave?

Employees should speak to their manager about telework options, if they would like to request to telework. If the office is open and the employee has not been exposed, quarantined or isolated, and the employee is not high risk, the employee should report to the office unless otherwise directed by their manager. Otherwise, employees may request annual leave, advanced annual leave, leave without pay, or other paid time off (e.g., credit hours or compensatory time off).
4/1/2020 1:16 PM

Item 74
If an employee is currently on non-pay status, are they eligible for weather and safety leave?

No, employees in non-pay and non-duty status are not eligible for weather and safety leave.
4/1/2020 1:16 PM
Item 75
If an employee is on maternity leave, during the time their permanent position would be granted weather and safety leave, would that be granted in place of the pre-approved leave?

No, employees may not receive weather and safety leave for hours during which they are on other preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or paid time off (5 CFR 630.1606(c).
3/31/2020 6:11 PM

Personal Health (5)
General (5)

Item 76
What resources are available to employees on how to cope with the stress and anxiety related to COVID-19 outbreak?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to help you cope with any stress or anxiety you may have concerning the COVID-19 outbreak. EAP services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week anywhere from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. For more information visit www.GuidanceResources.com. First time users enter: IRS112.
The GuidanceResources® Online site includes articles, podcasts, videos, and slideshows. There is also an "Ask a Guidance Consultant" section for personal responses to your questions.
To download the app to your cell phone:
•Search GuidanceResources (one word)
•Install GuidanceResources® Now
•Tap Member Resources and enter your username and password
HCO also has a special presentation available to read or download on the IRS Source COVID-19 page called Coping with Uncertainty About the Coronavirus (PDF-520KB).
Additionally, the CDC has a Manage Anxiety & Stress page which includes information and resources to cope with stress and anxiety during this time.
4/1/2020 12:06 PM

Item 77
Will the IRS be conducting COVID-19 testing?
No, IRS will not be providing COVID-19 testing. Please contact a local physician or health clinic if you think you suspect you have the virus.
3/31/2020 5:58 PM

Item 78
Will the Health Unit or contracted nurses at IRS be offering COVID-19 tests?
No, Federal Occupational Health does not have the authority to test for COVID-19. Employees should work with their personal physician for direction on testing.
3/31/2020 5:49 PM

Item 79
What should we do if we are uncomfortable working around others who are sneezing and coughing?
Please remember this is also the season for flu, colds and allergies depending on where you reside. Please be considerate of others and if you have concerns, please elevate them to your manager to address as appropriate.

3/31/2020 5:42 PM

Item 80
Where can I find information regarding flu vaccinations?

IRS Health Services Flu Vaccination information
3/31/2020 5:41 PM

Sanitation (12)

General (3)

Item 81
Our work site is not cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis. Vacuuming is done daily, but disinfecting and cleaning of restroom counters and other objects that are used and touched by all representatives are not cleaned appropriately. We are very concerned to be working in these conditions. We finally received hand sanitizer on some areas but still not enough to control the spreading of germs.

Some sites have been able to rapidly modify janitorial contracts and several have successfully exchanged non-critical work (such as window cleaning) to make time for increased sanitizing efforts, however, not all sites have been successful negotiating and implementing contract changes.

Please use the ERC ticket program to document and request support in a specific workplace. ERC tickets are the best way to get local attention to problems and track the response and progress until resolution.
3/31/2020 5:55 PM

Item 82
How long can the new coronavirus live on surfaces?

Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19.
3/31/2020 5:48 PM

Item 83
If there is no more soap in the restroom how can we get it refilled?

There should be hand soap in every restroom at all times. If you find a restroom that does not have hand soap readily available, please submit an ERC ticket immediately. If a ticket is not submitted, and employees go directly to building maintenance or management staff, FMSS cannot track the issue and ensure the facility is maintaining the dispensers.
3/31/2020 5:47 PM

Cleaning (5)

Item 85
How is FMSS addressing the additional cleaning and disinfecting required to help prevent COVID-19?
Janitorial contracts are being modified to include specific disinfecting requirements in cases of COVID-19. FMSS is following CDC guidance and discussions are taking place regarding cleaning requirements recommended prior to reoccupancy if there is a building shutdown.

3/31/2020 5:56 PM

Item 86
How do I properly clean surfaces, for example my keyboard, my badge, desks, printers, etc.? Viruses generally live longer on non-porous surfaces such as metals and plastics. Using disinfecting wipes, you can gently wipe keyboards, phones and other hard services. It is recommended to wipe down your desk before and after you use it for the day.

3/31/2020 5:55 PM

Item 87
Cleaning and disinfection practices to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus is being conducted differently at IRS facilities. Why is it not the same for all locations?

Some sites have been able to rapidly modify contracts and several sites have successfully exchanged non-critical work (such as window cleaning) to make time for increased sanitizing efforts, however, not all sites have successfully negotiated and implemented these contract changes. Please use the ERC ticket program to document and request support in a specific workplace. ERC tickets are the best way to get local attention to problems and track the response and progress until resolution.

3/31/2020 5:47 PM

Item 88
How can I get antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for personal use at my desk?

Business Units may purchase antibacterial wipes and are being asked to keep them near shared equipment. Hand sanitizer dispensers are located for common use as federal purchasing requirements do not allow for personal use items such as individual sized hand sanitizer bottles to be purchased. Refills for dispensers are ordered using a ERC ticket to FMSS. Refills are ordered immediately however, due to the pandemic, the refills are sometimes on backorder.

3/31/2020 5:46 PM

Item 89
How do employees order hand sanitizers and cleaning supplies for the POD? Can they input a service ticket?

To facilitate hand sanitation, IRS facilities have been provided with wall-mounted or stand-mounted alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers. Refills for existing dispensers should be requested by submitting an ERC ticket to Facilities Management and Security Services (FMSS) for purchase. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, sanitizer may be on back order but will be delivered as soon as the IRS receives it. Local offices and business units are responsible for installing the refills in existing dispensers. Business units can purchase disinfectant wipes directly using their credit card.

3/31/2020 5:45 PM

Supplies (3)
Item 90
I have an employee asking if they can order protective gear because the employees interact with the public at various locations. Is this something we are considering supplying?

At this time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend protective gear for the general public. CDC recommends surgical masks for people who are ill to wear if they must leave their home for a medical appointment. If CDC or local guidelines change and recommend protective gear for specific situations or events, the IRS will supply the item(s).

4/1/2020 1:32 PM

Line Item 91
I currently work in a campus with multiple people. Will they provide us hand sanitizers to help keep our hands clean after touching the same door knobs and office machinery?

We’ve expanded guidelines to allow greater access to hand sanitizers and similar items to assist our employees, and our FMSS teams have been working hard to obtain these wherever possible despite wider supply shortages.

4/1/2020 11:30 AM

Item 92
Due to the delayed supply of hand sanitizer at some facilities, will FMSS remove their restriction on the use of personally purchased sanitation products in the office or identify a list of acceptable personally purchased sanitation products?

The CDC website provides a list of products effective against COVID-19. Any of these products would be acceptable for use in a personal sized container. Be certain to label the bottle and use as directed.

3/31/2020 5:57 PM

Technology (10)

. General (10)

Line Item 93
Will ERAP be able to support all the employees working remotely?

To help manage our usage to enable more employees to work remotely while maintaining the best performance, we ask you take the following measures:

You can help minimize the effect on ERAP by taking the following actions:
  • Do not use video.
  • Avoid screen sharing, particularly in large meetings. If you need to share materials, ask the host to upload them to the meeting event. (Example: for a Skype PowerPoint presentation, the presenter should choose Share PowerPoint Files, not Share your Desktop).
  • Instead of Skype or WebEx, use the 312-777-1455 teleconference bridge for voice-only meetings, Access the internet for mission-critical needs only.
  • Connect to your internet provider through wire/cable instead Wi-Fi, when possible.
  • Leave your laptops connected to receive pushes during off-hours.

Do not use a hotspot.
Item 94
Must employees be at a POD to request and install ERAP?

No, ERAP is an account-based remote access solution required for use in conjunction with AnyConnect. To telework, the user ERAP account needs to be established by AT&T, and the AnyConnect application loaded on their laptop. The process to obtain the ERAP account is below.
The employee or the employee's manager will need to request ERAP account access by using the OL5081 application by following the steps below.
1. Choose the application, "ERAP PRODUCTION (ERAP)"
2. Manager receives and approves the request
3. ERAP PMO receives and approves the request
4. OL5081 combines all ERAP requests and sends to AT&T IRS ERAP team for approval
5. AT&T creates ERAP accounts, and the OL5081 system is updated (important, once created the employee can access the system)
6. The employee will receive an email notification from the OL5081 system that their account has been created. The employee's manager may also verify this in the OL5081 system at any time, but will not receive an email notification on the employee's behalf.
7. The employee will need to access the OL5081 system to sign the System Security Rules and acknowledge the account acceptance within 45 days. However, the employee may access ERAP before signing the System Security Rules.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the ERAP PMO is expediting approvals on a consistent basis. During this time, user accounts will typically be approved by the next business day after the ERAP PMO approves the request. As stated in step 6 above, the manager may check OL5081 for verification. The day following the ERAP PMO approval, employees may try to access ERAP and AnyConnect before or after the manager confirms from OL5081 that the account is created and ready to be accessed. See the TIPS for ERAP first time users for more information. If the Cisco AnyConnect application is not installed on the laptop, contact the Enterprise Service Desk at 866-743-5748, option 2.

ERAP approval notes:
• During the evacuation order, a Telework Agreement is not required to request ERAP.
• Once the employee is granted ERAP access they must access the OL5081 system to sign the System Security Rules and acknowledge the account acceptance within 45 days. (Users have up to 45 days to acknowledge receipt of the OL5081 notice before the access is deleted.)
• IT will facilitate OL5081 ERAP requests for Customer Service Representatives (CSR) employees only scheduled to become telework ready. Do not enter a separate request.

4/1/2020 11:09 AM

Line Item 95
IT recently issued an email, asking employees not to use a hotspot. If an employee doesn't have WiFi can they continue to use their hotspot to telework?

Yes. Employees are permitted to use a hotspot while teleworking. The email referenced in the question was a suggestion, not a prohibition, because hotspots can be slower than wifi or wired internet.

3/31/2020 5:59 PM

Item 96
How secure is the AtHoc system?
BlackBerry AtHoc is a Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (*FedRAMP) certified notification tool used by many federal government agencies including the Department of Defense (DOD). FedRAMP requirements include additional controls above the already strict NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) baseline controls governing information security requirements for federal agencies. These additional controls address the unique elements of this system to ensure all federal data is secure. For more information about FedRAMP please visit www.fedramp.gov.

*FedRAMP is a government-wide program that provides a standardized approach to security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring for cloud products and services.

Telework (55)
General (30)

Item 103
I need to telework from a different location in another state where I have housing secured. Do I need to request a temporary hardship due to the change in locality pay?

If the reason for the request is to comply with the Agency’s request to telework during COVID-19 or to work from home due to the evacuation order, then no, you will not have to request a temporary hardship. If you are making the request due to personal reasons, then yes, you are required to request a temporary hardship using the site here. If your temporary hardship is approved, and you continue teleworking outside the 150-mile commuting distance for personal reasons for more than 120 days (NBU) or 9 months (BU), then a PAR will need to be processed to adjust locality pay.

4/1/2020 11:14 AM

Item 104
The job duties of my employees are not portable (cannot be performed from a telework location) and they are designated in HR Connect as “not eligible” for telework. Can they be required to telework during office closures (pandemic or otherwise)?

As of 3/30/2020, employees have been evacuated to perform work assignments at home. Please work with your supervisor to determine what work assignments will be assigned to you or to determine if you are directed to report to the POD for work-essential assignments.

4/1/2020 11:12 AM

Item 105
What if an employee has been suspended or terminated from telework?

Managers should consult with their servicing Labor Relations Specialist for guidance on employees who have engaged in egregious misconduct. (This includes employees previously removed from telework for pornography, or AWOL infractions in violation of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010.) If evacuation is determined appropriate, these employees may work from home. If evacuation is not appropriate, employees are eligible for Weather and Safety leave for office closures. Any employee approved to work from home will return to their POD after the social distancing order is lifted.

4/1/2020 11:11 AM

Item 106
What happens if an employee does not have enough work to perform to cover the entire telework day during incidences of COVID-19?

Employees should contact their manager to obtain additional work assignments. The employee will be entitled to weather and safety leave for the portion of the day they do not have work to perform.

Item 107
All of my employees are teleworking and will go into the office at scheduled times, due to social distancing, to print and collect mail and any additional work as needed. They are only spending the necessary time it takes to print and collect mail and additional work then returning home. Our POD is closed so they are only doing what is necessary to continue working. How should that time be tracked on their dailies including the time to travel back home?

When an employee is scheduled for a full day at a telework site and is directed by their manager to report to the POD (or alternate worksite) outside their normal commute time, administrative time will be granted for travel. See National Agreement Art. 50, Section 7(C); IRM 6.800.2.4.7(4).

Item 108
Is the 150 mile radius of the employees assigned POD when teleworking being enforced while the COVID19 pandemic is ongoing?

The requirement that the telework location be within a 150-mile radius of the employee’s assigned POD has been temporarily waived during COVID-19.

Item 109
I am a recurring teleworker now working as a frequent teleworker. When the office opens and the virus is still in effect will I be required to return to my normal telework agreement or can I remain working from home?

Employees will be expected to return to their approved telework agreement/type. You should discuss with your manager any telework options after the evacuation order is lifted.

Line Item 110
I do not have a lockable filing cabinet at my home. Am I still allowed to work from home?

The work location requirement is that it provides reasonable security and protection for government equipment and data (paper and electronic). Please discuss with your supervisor if you have concerns with your ability to protect these items to determine if you should work from home.

Line Item 111
Can I telework from my vehicle if it has its own WiFi secure network?

If you have internet in your home, you should work in the home. If you only have internet in your vehicle and not the home, discuss the matter with your supervisor. A vehicle generally does not provide
reasonable security and protection of government equipment and data (paper and electronic) as windows could allow for inadvertent disclosure of taxpayer data.

4/1/2020 9:41 AM

Line Item 112
I am a manager with an employee who is brand new to Telework. How do I get their first-time Telework Agreement loaded to the Telework Portal?

For first time telework agreements, managers may upload here. To avoid duplicate entries, all updated/revised Telework Agreements must be sent to your BOD Telework Lead for processing.

3/31/2020 6:01 PM

Item 113
Because schools and other caregiving facilities are closed, small children and/or elder dependents are home during normal telework hours. Can employees change their tour of duty to after hours?

Please discuss with your manager if you can change your work schedule or tour of duty. If approved, you must submit Form 10911, Alternative Work Schedule & Staggered Work Schedule Request, to your manager for approval.

3/31/2020 6:00 PM

Item 114
Can an employee take home IRS owned equipment and property, provided to them as part of a Reasonable Accommodation (RA)?

Yes, until further notice employees have the option to take their office IT equipment (excluding desktop computers) to their home for use while teleworking.
• The employee should work with their manager regarding the items they wish to remove or take to their home.
• The employee’s manager should maintain an inventory list of removed IRS property with any associated barcodes.
• The employee is responsible for transportation of the items to their home and back to the office.
• EXCEPTION: IRS issued desktop video phones cannot be taken to employees’ homes. The IRS issued desktop video phones will function only at IRS PODs. However, employees can request the video enabled softphone configuration to be loaded on their laptops, through the KISAM Incident/Request System.

Note: Prior to returning equipment, i.e., reasonable accommodation chairs, should be cleaned and wiped with an EPA-approved disinfectant before bringing in back to the office.

3/31/2020 4:15 PM

Family Care (1)

Item 133
May I telework if my children/dependents are at home because of school closures?

Yes, whether your POD is open or closed, you may telework with your child at home. The IRS does not prohibit teleworking while dependents are at the telework site providing your ability to perform work is not diminished. However, telework is not a replacement for dependent/family care. Employees are
expected to request appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) for any time throughout the work day that they are providing care for their dependent/family. In addition, the work environment while teleworking should remain professional (i.e., free of noise, interruptions, and other distractions) and secure as it would be in the office.

3/31/2020 5:43 PM

Maxi flex (16)

Item 134
What is the expanded maxiflex flexible work schedule (FWS) for COVID-19?

It is a new, temporary FWS that IRS is offering to employees who are under an evacuation order, telework-able and are working at an alternate site location, and who have caregiving responsibilities due to COVID-19. This new schedule is offered to employees to help mitigate the dual demands of work and caregiving during the pandemic. This schedule is voluntary. Some of the flexibilities offered under this new FWS include:
• Gliding start and stop times,
• Expanded unpaid lunch or meal period,
• Expanded flexible time bands for the purposes of working regular hours and credit hours from 6 a.m. to midnight,
• Expanded flexible time bands, with managerial approval, for the purposes of earning credit hours from midnight until 5:59 a.m.,
• Increased the number of credit hours that may be worked on a workday and nonwork day and
• Reduced core hours as approved by the first-line manager.
4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 135
Who may request the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19?

All bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit employees, under an evacuation order, telework-able and are working at an alternate site location, with caregiving responsibilities due to COVID-19 may request this new FWS, regardless of their current work schedule (e.g., Flexitour with Credit Hours, Gliding, or compressed work schedules). Employees must be assigned a current annual rating of record of “Fully Successful” (or “Met,” for managers, management officials, etc.) or higher. Employees without a rating of record will be presumed to be rated as “Fully Successful” or “Met.”
4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 136
How does an employee request the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 and who may approve it?

Employees may request, and first-line managers may approve, the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 via email or other documentation. Managers and employees should save the email or documentation as a record of the request and approval. (Form 10911, Alternative Work Schedule & Staggered Work Schedule Request, is not to be used to request this schedule.) Employees should include the following factors in their requests:
• An employee has a child or children who attend an elementary or secondary school that is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
• An employee has a younger child or children who are not of school age, and normal childcare arrangements are not in effect due to the pandemic.
• An employee has other family members (e.g., adult child or elderly parent with special needs) in the home who require care and supervision.

If approved by the manager, employees not currently on a maxiflex FWS must select maxiflex in the Employee Profile screen in the time and attendance system.
Managers must retain records of denials of requests, and business units should promote consistency.

4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 137
How long will the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 be available?

The expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 will be available starting April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, but may be terminated sooner as determined by the IRS Human Capital Officer.

4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 138
Under expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19, what is the flexible time band for the purposes of working regular hours? What is the flexible time band for the purposes of earning credit hours?

The flexible time band is 6 a.m. to midnight, with flexible start times every 15 minutes for both the purposes of working regular hours and working credit hours. Managers may approve, during the COVID-19 outbreak, further expansion of the flexible time band from midnight to 5:59 a.m. for the purpose of earning credit hours.

4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 139
May employees change start and stop times daily (gliding start times) under the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19?

Employees may change start and stop times daily, without prior notice within the flexible time band of 6 a.m. to midnight. Employees must notify their supervisor of their start time(s) either prior to the start of their tour of duty or within 15 minutes after they have commenced working. Same for stop time(s). Such notice may be communicated via email, telephone or for the entire week via outlook calendar.
Managers should be as flexible as possible as the primary purpose is capturing hours worked each day.

4/1/2020 3:12 PM

Item 140
Must managers mandate core hours on each day within the biweekly pay period?

Managers must establish core hours to meet organizational needs on at least one day within a bi-weekly pay period (e.g. contacting taxpayers during "regular business hours.")
Expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 only requires core hours on at least one workday within a biweekly pay period. Core hours will be determined by the first-line manager to align with organizational needs and may be as little as 15 minutes (e.g., 10 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.), but may not exceed 5 hours.
(including a minimum 30-minute unpaid lunch or meal period) (e.g., 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) on the core days.

Employees are permitted up to nine non-core days in each biweekly pay period (i.e., up to nine workdays may consist of only flexible hours, may consist of a combination of flexible and some core hours or may consist of no hours at all (a regular day off) as long as the basic 80-hour biweekly basic work requirement is met. A core day is one in which the first-line manager has required core hours.

For example: Pat's manager establishes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week of the pay period as core days with core hours from 10-11 a.m. to attend mandatory staff meetings and complete required group reports.

4/1/2020 3:11 PM

Item 141
How many hours per day may employees work regular hours?

The expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 limits employees to a maximum of 12 regular work hours per day toward meeting the basic work requirement. Full-time employees may vary the number of hours scheduled to work on a given workday (up to 12 hours) or the number of hours worked each week to equal 80 hours for the pay period (consistent with the duties and requirements of their positions and as approved by the manager).

4/1/2020 3:11 PM

Item 142
May employees earn and use credit hours? How many credit hours may employees work on a workday and nonwork day?

Yes, employees may earn and use credit hours. Credit hours are any hours that are voluntarily worked (with prior managerial approval) more than an employee’s basic work requirement. Whenever deemed appropriate, a written understanding between an employee and their manager, defining circumstances when working credit hours are appropriate, will constitute prior approval. For example, a manager and employee may agree that the employee may work credit hours whenever a work assignment extends past the tour of duty of the employee.

Maxiflex employees may post up to a total of 12 hours per workday (including work hours, earned credit hours and any leave taken). For example, an employee may work six regular hours, take two hours of leave and request to earn four credit hours. Employees may request to earn up to 12 credit hours on a nonwork day within the flexible time bands of 6 a.m. to midnight. Once earned, credit hours may be used (with managerial approval) to vary the length of the workweek or another workday. Managers may approve, during the COVID-19 outbreak, further expansion of the flexible time band from midnight to 5:59 a.m. for the purpose of earning credit hours.

4/1/2020 3:11 PM

Item 143
May employees earn more than 24 credit hours during the pay period?

Yes, employees may earn more than 24 hours during the pay period; however, employees may not carry more than 24 hours into the next pay period.

4/1/2020 3:11 PM

Item 144
May an employee request to extend the required unpaid lunch or meal period under the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19?

Yes, employees may request an extended unpaid lunch or meal period. The length of the extended unpaid lunch or meal period will be approved by the first-line manager, and must be a minimum of 30 minutes, and the tour of duty must be completed within the flexible time bands of 6 a.m. to midnight.

Item 145
How many hours of pay does an employee receive on a holiday when working expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19?

Pursuant to 5 USC Section 6124, maxiflex employees receive eight hours of pay on a holiday regardless of the number of hours in the employee's scheduled tour of duty on that day.

Item 146
What if employees on a swing or night shift are interested in the expanded maxiflex schedule for COVID-19? How will this affect their night pay differential entitlements?

If the employee’s manager determines that their swing or night shift employee can perform their duties under the expanded maxiflex schedule for COVID-19, there will likely be a loss of night pay differential. Employees on a swing or night shift are typically entitled to night differential as their regular work must be completed (required by management) between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Item 147
Those working under the expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19, are voluntary electing to work hours within established flexible time bands (6:00 am to midnight). When an employee under this work schedule chooses to work during the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight, they are not entitled to night pay differential as they are provided 8 or more hours (from a combination of flexible time bands plus core hours) to schedule their tour of duty between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. My manager has expanded the flexible time bands from midnight to 5:59 a.m. for the purpose of earning credit hours. Am I entitled to night pay differential?

An employee may not receive night pay differential for credit hours that are earned or used at night under 5 USC 6123.

Can you provide a sample scenario and examples of the expanded maxiflex schedule for COVID-19?

Due to COVID-19, Pat needs to tend to caregiving issues in the middle of the work day. Pat requests to change to expanded maxiflex to have more flexibility to balance work and personal needs. Pat’s manager establishes the core hours to be from 10-11:00 a.m. each day.

Example 1: Pat asks to work from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. and then requests an extended meal period from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to attend to caregiving responsibilities. Pat returns to work at 4 p.m. and works the remaining three hours in the eight-hour tour of duty from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Then, anticipating the need
to provide additional childcare later in the week, Pat requests to earn 4 credit hours (from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.).

Example 2: Pat, on expanded maxiflex, decides to work 10 hours on Monday through Thursday, and Friday is Pat's regular day off. Pat's spouse gets called in for an extra shift at the hospital next Monday and Tuesday, and Pat must now perform childcare responsibilities on those days. Pat could earn up to 12 credit hours on the regular day off, and Saturday or Sunday, for use on the following Monday and Tuesday.

Example 3: Pat, on expanded maxiflex, needs flexibility in start times each morning due to the spouse's work in health care and that the spouse may be called in on short notice. Pat glides in at 6:30 a.m. on Monday, 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, and starts at 8 a.m. the rest of the pay period.

4/1/2020 3:10 PM

Item 149
Does this new expanded maxiflex FWS for COVID-19 preclude other options such as weather and safety leave or emergency sick leave?

No, this new schedule is being offered in addition to other COVID-19 flexibilities.

4/1/2020 3:10 PM

New teleworker (8)

Item 150
If a high-risk employee was in the process of becoming telework-ready, should they come into the office to retrieve their laptop and sign their OL5081 for ERAP? What if the employee is not high-risk?

A high-risk employee should not be directed back into the office. Each situation is unique, and the employee should discuss the best approach with their manager. As offices are being closed, IT’s ability to help affected employees may vary. Employees in need of IT support should contact the Enterprise Service Desk, or they can open a ticket and request it to be assigned to deskside support. IT will work directly with the employee on an appropriate resolution.

An employee who is not high-risk may be directed back into the office to retrieve their laptop. The employee does not need to be in the office to sign their OL5081 for ERAP. Instead, the day following the ERAP PMO approval, the employee may try to access ERAP and AnyConnect before or after their manager confirms from OL5081 that the account is created and ready to be accessed. All laptops should have AnyConnect pre-installed. Establishment of ERAP is what allows AnyConnect to be activated to enable remote access to the IRS network. Once connected, the employee will need to access the OL5081 system to sign the System Security Rules and acknowledge the account acceptance within 45 days.

4/1/2020 9:52 AM

Item 151
May I waive the one-year service telework requirement or the two-year journey or full-working level telework requirement?

Yes, per policy, on a case-by-case basis IRS managers may shorten these requirements.

3/31/2020 5:42 PM
.General (1)
Item 158
Can the agency lift the credit hour maximum ceiling during COVID19?

No, the ceiling cannot be lifted as this is a statutory limitation (see 5 USC Section 6126). Employees on flexible work schedules can accumulate no more than 24 credit hours for carryover from a biweekly pay period to a succeeding biweekly pay period. That number is prorated for part-time employees.
3/31/2020 6:22 PM

.Genera (2)
Item 159
Now that I am teleworking almost fulltime, do I need to adjust my monthly PTSP amount? Can I still get the fare to ride the bus when I do report to the office? Where can I find updated information on PTSP?

No action is needed to adjust the transit benefits at this time. Any PTSP funds unused by the close of each benefit cycle are returned to the IRS. Please note, the TRANServe card is funded to purchase fare media for the following month. For example, the TRANServe card is funded on March 10th for transportation benefits in April and may be used up to the 9th of April before the funds are returned to the service and the card is refreshed on the 10th of April, for May transportation. Employee’s temporarily teleworking more than normal should only purchase what is needed for their regular commute from home to work and work to home. If you would normally purchase an April monthly pass or vanpool seat with March 10th funds, in most instances, you will need to adjust your purchasing to account for your actual in-office days. Monthly pass holders are encouraged to purchase daily passes, and as a reminder, vanpool riders may not use the transit benefit to "hold" a seat in the vanpool in excess of 10 working days per month, while on annual or sick leave. For additional PTSP Guidance, participants can visit the PTSP page on IRS Source or the IRS DOT page.
3/31/2020 5:58 PM

City-to-city (2)
Item 161
What travel restrictions are currently in place? Are Revenue Officers, Revenue Agents, and other similar positions who frequently travel, still required to do so?

Only mission-critical travel is recommended at this time. Employees should talk with their supervisors about all business-related travel. Business Operating Division Commissioners or highest level leadership are encouraged to consider the factors set forth in the OPM Memo dated March 14, 2020.
3/31/2020 5:53 PM
Item 162
What if I am scheduled to travel for training classes at another IRS Post of Duty (POD)?

All arrangements and location of training (including virtual classes) should be communicated to you by the training coordinators. You should receive an email notification if any plans or arrangements are updated or modified.
3/31/2020 5:42 PM
Personal (1)

Item 163
What if I just returned from personal or business travel?

Federal employees should seek medical advice if they get sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. You must notify your manager as soon as possible regarding the circumstances involved. Employees who, under the direction of local or public health authorities, are under quarantine or isolation and who are asymptomatic (do not exhibit signs of illness) may be eligible for weather and safety leave if they are unable to perform work at an approved location (i.e., the telework site) during the period of quarantine or isolation. Additional information can be found on the CDC Travelers Information website.

Any IRS employee who has been to the areas of concern within the past 14 days or CDC recommended period, is requested to contact Situational Assessment Management Center (SAMC) via telephone at 866-216-4809, email to samc@irs.gov or through the Incident Entry Form when they return home and before returning to work. SAMC will notify the Infectious Disease Reporting Protocol (IDRP) Program Manager who will provide a plan of action should an employee develop symptoms of an infection and coordinate for medical clearance (as appropriate) for the IRS employee to safely return to the workplace once the recommended monitoring period is complete.

3/31/2020 5:40 PM