

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Please utilize the [IRS Source COVID-19](#) for the most up to date information for IRS employees.

1. Where do IRS employees go for current information?

IRS Source, Daily News section has a [COVID-19 link](#).

2. What can I do to help prevent the spread of germs and viruses in general? CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions to help mitigate the spread of respiratory diseases. Find a list of these preventive actions at [CDC Prevention and Treatment Actions](#).

3. What if I, my family member, or a co-worker is having flu-like symptoms or potentially the Coronavirus? Notify your manager and follow the [CDC preventative guidance](#). Employees who are well, but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure. 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.

4. What types of leave flexibilities are available if I or my family member are experiencing flu-like symptoms or potentially the Coronavirus? Employees should contact their manager, and when appropriate, may request to telework, or request sick leave, annual leave, advanced annual and/or sick leave, Family and Medical Leave Act leave, leave without pay, donated leave under the Voluntary Leave Transfer and Leave Bank Programs, and other paid time off such as compensatory time off and credit hours earned under flexible work schedules.

5. What if my local county health department has suggested employers enact measures that allow people who can work from home to do so? The Service has flexibilities to allow temporary telework on a full-time basis; we are reviewing our policies to determine if further flexibilities are needed. Managers at an affected Post of Duty (POD) should contact the designated Senior Commissioner Representative or Administrative Officer (AO) who will elevate and communicate guidance impacting a specific POD.

6. What if I just returned from overseas travel?

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. You must notify your manager as soon as possible regarding the circumstances involved. The [IRS Headline News for February 24, 2020](#) provides information related to anyone who has recently returned from overseas travel. Additional information

can be also 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 for the IRS employee to safely return to the workplace once the recommended monitoring period is complete.

7. What if my employee calls in sick and suspects they were exposed to the Coronavirus? 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.

8. If an employee suspects they were exposed to the Coronavirus and they or a family member are experiencing symptoms and are requesting to use sick leave, are there limits on the use of sick leave? An employee who is symptomatic (ill) or is receiving medical treatment may request to use their sick leave, or other types of leave as appropriate. There is no limit to the amount of sick leave that may be used for self-care. 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 as appropriate. There is a limit of 104 hours of sick leave for family care. See [IRM 6.630.1, Absence and Leave](#) for more information.

9. Is there a specific form or format required to submit a potential or confirmed disease or incident? Managers are asked to report a potential or confirmed disease through the Situational Assessment Management Center (SAMC) via telephone at 866-216-4809, email to samc@irs.gov or through the [Incident Entry Form](#). There is also a short training video on [How to Report an Incident](#).

10. Are there discussions regarding limiting travel and expanding the use of telework? The Human Capital Office (HCO) Continuity Office has put together a working group to monitor the current situation and will coordinate with Servicewide leaders to identify workforce impacts, direct employees to the latest information on COVID-19 and provide leadership with any necessary guidance on **human resource** flexibilities and authorities. The Service will review travel policies and begin to reduce non-essential travel as appropriate. Leveraging the use of technology in place of face to face meetings is advised, where appropriate.

11.If my employee suspects they were exposed to the Coronavirus and are asymptomatic, may they request to telework? What if my employee is “not eligible” to telework? Employees eligible to telework may request to telework. Employees who are asymptomatic and quarantined or isolated, that cannot perform work at an approved location, such as the home telework site (e.g., employees who are not eligible to telework), may be authorized weather and safety leave. Once an employee becomes symptomatic, they should request sick leave or other appropriate leave. Employees who are “not eligible” for telework generally will receive Weather and safety leave if an office closes, unless directed to another IRS office during an office closure. See the [IRS Dismissal and Closure Procedures](#) for more information.

12.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)? No, if management has deemed an employee “not eligible” in HRConnect for telework purposes, the employee may not telework during an office closure. Only employees who are “eligible” and have a signed/approved Telework Agreement on file are required to telework during an office closure. Entering into a Telework Agreement is voluntary for employees who are “eligible” for telework. Managers may use existing policies to provide flexibility for continued operations and may direct employees to report to another IRS office during an office closure. Employees may find their Employee Telework Eligibility designation in [HRConnect](#), under My Information, then Employee Information.

13.My employee lives in a state where there is virus outbreak and is requesting to temporarily telework on a full-time basis. Currently the IRS POD is open for business and there is no notice offering unscheduled Telework. May I approve the employee’s request? Because conditions at our PODs have not reached levels where building closures and unscheduled telework is warranted, the employee should request an exception to reporting to his/her official POD using the [Official POD](#) policy. As the manager, you may approve the exception to reporting up to a total of two pay periods in a 12-month period by [submitting Form 15088](#) on behalf of the employee at the following SharePoint site: [Requests for Exception to Reporting to Official POD](#). If the request extends beyond two pay periods, at least a first-level executive must approve the request.

If an exception to reporting to his/her official POD is granted, the employee must submit a new temporary Telework Agreement covering the time period the exception is granted, prior to teleworking on a full-time basis. Updated Telework Agreements must be emailed to your respective [Business Unit Telework Lead](#).

14.Where can I find information regarding flu vaccinations? [IRS Health Services Flu Vaccination information](#)

15. Where do managers go for additional information? Guidance for managers can be found in the recent [Leaders' Alert](#) dated February 18, 2020.

16. 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?



Coronavirus - What
the Public Should Do

Coronavirus – Stop the spread of germs



Coronavirus - Stop
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17. 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.

18. Whom should employees contact if they have additional questions?
Employees questions should be directed to their manager. Bargaining unit employees may also contact NTEU.

Authorities:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a [memorandum](#) titled, "Preliminary Guidance to Agencies during Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)."