

COVID-19 Guidance for FAA Managers:

Determining When an FAA Employee Is Permitted to Return to Work at an FAA Facility

As of March 23, 2020

This memorandum provides guidance to FAA managers for determining when an FAA employee is permitted to return to duty status in an FAA facility after the employee has either (1) tested positive for COVID-19, even if the employee did not experience any symptoms; (2) had a respiratory illness with symptoms like COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath); or (3) was subject to quarantine or self-isolation orders under the direction of a public health authority due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19.

This managerial guidance is divided into two parts. Part I is for employees who are required to meet medical standards and to hold a medical clearance or airman medical certificate; Part II is for all other employees.

This guidance is not applicable to FAA employees who are in telework status at this time. It also does not apply to employees who used sick leave for conditions other than suspected or confirmed COVID-19 (e.g., employee was on sick leave for a medical procedure unrelated to COVID-19, recovery from an illness other than COVID-19, or parental leave). For those employees, existing FAA policy addresses the return to work process.

Finally, guidance concerning contractors will be under separate cover. Managers should consult with their relevant Contracting Officer (CO) to coordinate when/under what circumstances contractors are permitted to return to work at a FAA facility.

In the event an employee wishes to return to work at an FAA facility and refuses to provide adequate documentation, as described in Parts I and II below, the FAA can place the employee on involuntary sick leave. The manager **must coordinate with his/her servicing Labor Relations/Employee Relations specialist in the Human Resource Management Division prior to any such enforced leave action** to ensure due process rights are followed. Involuntary leave shall terminate when it is determined that the employee is able to do his/her job and provides appropriate medical documentation, as provided for in this guidance. The employee would not re-enter the facility without first satisfying this review.

I. Employees required to meet medical standards and to hold a medical clearance or medical certificate issued by the Office of Aerospace Medicine to perform duties

FAA employees who are subject to medical standards shall continue to have to obtain medical clearance prior to resuming these functions. Per the FAA Office of Aerospace Medicine, managers should inform their employees of the following conditions specific to the COVID-19 pandemic:

A. Employee Confirmed Positive for COVID-19

1. Employee with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who has had symptoms:

An employee may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:

- Released by the treating physician and no other household members have had a respiratory illness¹, **and**
- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
- Resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g., no cough or shortness of breath), **and**
- Provide a report from the treating physician outlining the clinical course and results of any testing and or studies, **and**
- Approval by the FAA Regional Flight Surgeon.

2. Employee with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who has not had any symptoms:

An employee may return to work under the following conditions:

- Released by the treating physician and no other household members have had a respiratory illness², **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since the date of the employee's first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, **and**
- Provide a report from the treating physician outlining the clinical course and results of any testing and or studies, **and**
- Approval by the FAA Regional Flight Surgeon.

B. Employee exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., respiratory illness with fever, cough, or shortness of breath), but has not had a confirmed positive test:

1. Employee evaluated/treated by a medical professional

An employee directed to self-care at home may discontinue home isolation and be eligible to return to work under the following conditions:

- Released by the treating physician and no other household members have had a respiratory illness³, **and**
- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g., no cough or shortness of breath), **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**

¹ FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) and Staff Offices (SOs) may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired.

² FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) and Staff Offices (SOs) may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired.

³ FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) and Staff Offices (SOs) may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired.

- Provide a report from the treating physician outlining the clinical course and results of any testing and or studies, **and**
- Approval by the FAA Regional Flight Surgeon.

2. Employee not evaluated/ treated by a medical professional

Managers should advise an employee to seek medical attention upon first learning of an employee’s illness. If an employee is not able to see a medical provider, the employee may return to work under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** resolution of respiratory symptoms (i.e., no cough or shortness of breath), **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
- Provide a report to the FAA Regional Flight Surgeon describing the course of their illness and actions or medication taken, **and**
- Approval by the FAA Regional Flight Surgeon.

C. Employee who was subject to quarantine or isolation ordered under the direction of a public health authority due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19 who has not had any symptoms:

An employee who has not had any symptoms of COVID-19 during the entirety of the quarantine/isolation period for 14 days, and has not subsequently been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19, may return to work.

II. Employees not subject to medical standard requirements⁴

A. Employee Confirmed Positive for COVID-19

An employee who has recovered from a confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis and intends to return to work must notify his/her manager and provide medical documentation. In accordance with existing FAA policy, the employee **must** provide medical certification for a serious health condition. The manager **must** request from the employee, prior to returning to work and/or a FAA facility, medical documentation.

1. Employee with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who has had symptoms:

An employee may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:

⁴ FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) and Staff Offices (SOs) may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon’s office, if desired.

- When released by the treating physician and no other household members have had a respiratory illness⁵ , **and**
- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
- Resolution of respiratory symptoms (i.e., no cough or shortness of breath), **and**
- Medical documentation by an authorized medical professional.

2. Employee with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who has not had any symptoms:

An employee may return to work under the following conditions:

- Released by the treating physician and no other household members have had a respiratory illness⁶, **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since the date of the first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, **and**
- Medical documentation by an authorized medical professional.

B. Employee exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., respiratory illness with fever, cough, or shortness of breath), but not confirmed positive:

1. Employee treated by a medical professional

An employee directed to self-care at home may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:

- When released by the treating physician and no other household members are ill, **and**
- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** resolution of respiratory symptoms, **and**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- *For ATO employees, the employee and his/her manager must consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office prior to a return to duty decision. Other LOB/SOs may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired.*

2. Employee not treated by a medical professional

Managers should advise an employee to seek medical attention upon first learning of an employee's illness. If an employee is not able to see a medical provider, the employee may return to work under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** resolution of respiratory symptoms, **and**

⁵ FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) and Staff Offices (SOs) may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired.

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- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- *For ATO employees, the employee and his/her manager must consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office prior to a return to duty decision. Other LOB/SOs may consult with the Regional Flight Surgeon's office, if desired*

C. Employee who was subject to quarantine or isolation ordered under the direction of a public health authority due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19 who has not had any symptoms:

An employee who has not had any symptoms of COVID-19 during the entirety of the quarantine/isolation period for 14 days, and has not subsequently been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19, may return to work.