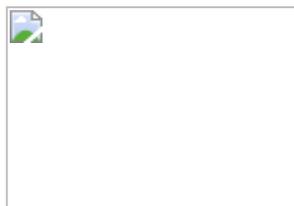


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Guidance on Leave for Quarantine and Isolation Scenarios



Key Points:

- The guidance below explains how hours should be recorded for employees in various self-isolation or self-quarantine situations.
- Health and Human Services defines “isolation” as separating **ill** individuals from those who are healthy. “Quarantine” is meant to separate and restrict the movement of **well** individuals who may have been exposed to a communicable disease, such as COVID-19.
- This guidance applies to U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the Department of State, including eligible family members on Family Member Appointments (FMA).

Below is guidance on recording work hours when in various self-isolation and self-quarantine scenarios. Health and Human Services defines “isolation” as separating **ill** individuals from those who are healthy. “Quarantine” is meant to separate and restrict the movement of **well** individuals who may have been exposed to a communicable disease, such as COVID-19. The guidance below is based on Department policy and Office of Personnel Management guidance and regulations.

To Whom Does This Apply?

This guidance applies to U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the Department of State, including eligible family members on Family Member Appointments (FMA). This guidance does not apply to eligible family members employed on a Personal Services Agreement (PSA), Locally Employed (LE) Staff, contractors, or intermittent employees (e.g. reemployed annuitants/while-actually-employed (REA/WAE)). Contractors should consult with their contract employer and bureau/post COR representatives to determine whether any specific contract provisions apply to their circumstance.

Telework Reminder

Telework should be liberally authorized if an employee is well and able to perform work remotely. For employees who are not telework-ready, supervisors should consider whether the employee has some portable duties (e.g., reading reports; analyzing documents and studies; preparing written letters, memorandums, reports and other correspondence; setting up conference calls, or other tasks that do not require the employee to be physically present), that would allow him/her to telework on a situational basis. A situational telework agreement should be signed to cover the period the employee is permitted to work from the approved alternate location (e.g., home).

I'm in Quarantine and Asymptomatic/Healthy

If an employee is asymptomatic and a local, state, or host-nation public health authority (e.g. ministry of health, state health department) determines the employee would jeopardize the health of others if allowed to return to work, the employee is considered under quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19. While under quarantine, if the employee is telework-ready, whether in the United States or overseas, the employee is expected to telework. Overseas posts may consult 19 STATE 126438 for more information regarding overseas telework policies. If the employee is not telework-ready, supervisors should authorize weather and safety leave for the period of the quarantine. Employees may also contact the [Bureau of Medical Services nCoV Task Force](#) if they are concerned about their personal risk or condition.

I've Been Diagnosed as Infected or Become Symptomatic

If an employee has been under quarantine and then becomes symptomatic, they should notify their supervisor that they are ill (no further medical details are needed), and then request sick leave or other accrued leave from the onset of symptoms. Weather and safety leave may not continue to be granted when an employee is ill; sick leave, as provided under 3 FAM 3420 and 5 C.F.R. 630.401(a)(2), is the appropriate leave category to cover that absence. [20 STATE 24986](#), para 7 details the types of leave that an employee may take while ill. Employees who become ill or are diagnosed with COVID-19 are encouraged to contact the [Bureau of Medical Services nCoV Task Force](#).

Do I Need a Doctor's Note?

Not necessarily. Per 3 FAM 3427(a), an employee's own self-certification is generally acceptable for absences of three workdays or less, unless the manager has reason to believe that the employee is improperly using sick leave. Leave approvers have discretion to require medical certification under such circumstances, or for absences longer than three workdays. However, supervisors should use their best judgment when asking for a doctor's note to grant sick leave, and should be mindful about the burden and impact of requiring a medical certificate; the CDC notes that healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner. In the current environment, if the employee is requested to provide a doctor's note, they should be given adequate time to obtain it.

I'm Healthy, But Have Been in Contact with Someone Exposed

Healthy employees who choose to stay home and self-quarantine because they have been in direct contact with an exposed individual and are telework-ready must telework. An employee may also request to take annual leave, advanced annual leave, other accrued leave (e.g., earned compensatory time off, earned credit hours), or leave without pay. If a local health authority determines the asymptomatic employee has been exposed and would jeopardize the health of others if allowed to return to work, then the employee should self-quarantine, and telework if telework-ready or, if not telework-ready, request weather and safety leave. Employees in this situation are also encouraged to contact the [Bureau of Medical Services nCoV Task Force](#).

My Family Member is Healthy but Quarantined, And I Want to Care for Them

Currently, employees must use annual leave, advanced annual leave, other accrued leave (e.g., earned compensatory time off, earned credit hours), or leave without pay to care for a family member who is healthy (asymptomatic) but has been quarantined due to COVID-19. Telework-ready employees may telework during the quarantine period, during the time he or she is not responsible for caring for the family member. For more information on leave options, see para 7 of [20 STATE 24986](#).

My Family Member is Symptomatic or was Diagnosed with COVID-19

If the family member becomes symptomatic or is diagnosed, the employee may then request sick leave for the time they are caring for the family member. Telework-ready employees may also telework during this period when not caring for their family member, and would be in regular duty status during time spent working. If the employee's family member is diagnosed, and a local health authority determines that the employee has been exposed and is required to self-quarantine, and the employee is not telework-ready, the employee is eligible for

weather and safety leave (see para 3). Employees in this situation are also encouraged to contact the [Bureau of Medical Services nCoV Task Force](#).

My Office/Space is Closed for Disinfecting

Certain situations where a person in the office is confirmed with COVID-19 may result in management closing the office or space for disinfecting. If employees are sent home, non-telework-ready employees will receive weather and safety leave for the remainder of the workday. Telework-ready employees will receive weather and safety leave for the time that it takes them to go home. Once they arrive at home, they will be expected to account for the remainder of their workday either by teleworking or by taking personal leave. If they arrive home after the end of their workday, they will not be expected to work. If offices/spaces remain closed on subsequent workdays, employees will remain home, subject to this same guidance.

Advanced Leave and Other Options

For more information on currently available leave options, including advanced annual or sick leave, leave without pay, family and medical leave, and the voluntary leave transfer program, see paragraph 7 of [20 STATE 24986](#).

Additional Information and Resources on COVID-19

Employees or supervisors with questions on post-specific leave, telework, or work schedule policies should contact their post HR section. HR staff with questions on USDH leave or work schedule policy should contact HRLeave@state.gov. Questions on telework policy should be directed to Telework@State.gov. Consult the [Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit's SharePoint site](#) for the latest updates and guidance on COVID-19.

HRLeave@state.gov