

Today, (Feb 17, 2022) the Department of Labor reached out to the APWU with additional information on OWCP claims due to COVID-19 allowed under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). The DOL has been receiving increasing numbers of inquiries from employing agencies and from those filing claims regarding evidence needed to substantiate a COVID-19 claim and the eligibility for Continuation of Pay (COP).

The following information was provided:

\* FECA Bulletin 22-

06<<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/regs/compliance/DFECfolio/FECABulletins/FY2020-2024#FECAB2206>> (Updates to COVID-19 Claims Processing Guidelines Relating to Reinfections and Home Tests) provides updated guidance on the following topics:

- o Reinfection claims (a claim for COVID-19 will be considered a new injury when the employee tests positive for COVID-19 90 days or more from the date of the employee's previous positive COVID-19 test);
- o Self-administered COVID-19 tests (these are insufficient to establish a diagnosis of COVID-19 under the FECA, with only one exception); and
- o Administratively closed claims (clarifying that a formal decision denying COP may be issued even if the case remains in an administrative closure status).

\* A set of COVID-19

FAQs<<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/InfoFECACoverageCoronavirus>> are also available that provide easy-to-understand information on COP, including the type of evidence required during the first 10 days of COP, and thereafter.

Important things to note:

1. Self-administered at-home test are not sufficient evidence of COVID-19 to have your claim approved.
2. In order to have COP paid, you must file a claim within 30-days of a positive test/diagnosis. If you file later than 30-days you are not entitled to receive COP.
3. You must submit sufficient medical evidence (preferably a laboratory administered PCR test) within 10-days of filing your OWCP claim in order to have your COP paid. If you don't the Postal Service may collect any COP you had paid to you.
4. If you file more than 30-days after your diagnosis, you will need to file a form CA-7 to have any lost wages paid to you by OWCP.
5. Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 more than 90 days since a previous diagnosis, can file a new OWCP claim and would be entitled to COP.

6. All employees have the right to file an OWCP claim. Career or non-career it does not matter.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to your Local or State president. Local/State Presidents or NBAs who have questions or need to escalate an issue should contact Charlie Cash at [ccash@apwu.org](mailto:ccash@apwu.org)<mailto:ccash@apwu.org>.

LINKS TO FOR YOUR REFERENCE:

FAQS: Claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act due to COVID-19 | U.S. Department of Labor  
([dol.gov](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/InfoFECACoverageCoronavirus))<<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/InfoFECACoverageCoronavirus>>

FECA BULLETIN 22-06 (Issued February 16, 2022): FECA Bulletins (2020-2024) | U.S. Department of Labor  
([dol.gov](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/regs/compliance/DFECfolio/FECABulletins/FY2020-2024#FECAB2206))<<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/regs/compliance/DFECfolio/FECABulletins/FY2020-2024#FECAB2206>> (provides what constitutes appropriate medical evidence of COVID-19 infection)

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