

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. As a Department of Defense Appropriated fund Civilian employee, can I still take annual leave to travel?

A1. Approval of civilian employee leave remains at the discretion of individual supervisors. However, supervisors should discuss health risks and need to conduct 14-day Restriction of Movement (ROM) with travel associated with any specific leave plans. Supervisors should take into account the 14-day ROM requirement and its impact on section workload before approving all leave. It is highly recommended that civilian employees consider delaying travel outside the local area until after DoD travel restrictions are removed.

Q2. What workplace flexibilities do I have for my employees during this time?

A2. There are numerous workplace flexibilities to assist employees. Employees may request to go on Alternate Work Schedules. Employees may perform telework if they are telework eligible and able to safely perform work at an approved alternate location. Agencies should have written telework agreements in place with as many employees who are willing to participate and eligible for telework. Agencies may authorize weather and safety administrative leave when an asymptomatic employee is directed into movement restrictions (quarantine or isolation) and is unable to telework. If an employee chooses to stay home themselves, they may request to telework or request to take leave.

Q3. During a pandemic health crisis, can an agency require a telework-eligible employee to work from home without a telework agreement? Can agency also require an employee who has not been previously designated as telework-eligible to work from home?

A3. Yes. Regulation allows an agency to order one or more employees to evacuate from their worksite and perform work from their home (or an alternative location mutually agreeable to the agency and the employee as a safe haven) during a pandemic health crisis without regard to whether the agency and the employee have a telework agreement in place at the time the order to evacuate is issued. An evacuated employee at a safe haven may be assigned to perform any work considered necessary or required to be performed during the period of evacuation without regard to his or her grade, level, or title. The employee must have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work.

Q4. The local school system has closed during a pandemic health crisis; can an agency require an employee to work from home with his or her children present?

A4. OPM regulations do not prohibit an employee from working from home during a pandemic health crisis with children in the home. An agency may direct an evacuated employee to either telework or request personal leave (e.g, annual leave, sick leave if applicable, or leave without pay) as necessary.

Q5. What type of work may an agency assign to an evacuated employee?

A5. Under OPM regulations, an agency may assign any work considered necessary without regard to the employee's grade or title. However, an agency may not assign work to an employee unless the agency knows the employee has the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work.

Q6. If an agency does not have work to assign to an evacuated employee, what pay status should the employee be placed?

A6. If an agency does not have work to assign to an evacuated employee, the agency would provide weather and safety leave to that employee for affected hours.

Q7. Does an evacuated employee performing work during a pandemic health crisis need to use his or her accrued leave to take time off?

A7. Yes. If an evacuated employee cannot perform assigned work during his or her tour of duty due to personal reasons, the employee is required to request leave or other time off. For example, if an evacuated employee who is performing work becomes ill, he or she will need to take sick leave or other time off to cover the absence

Q8. How does the pandemic authority in the evacuation pay regulations relate to an agency's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?

A8. COOP supersedes any agency telework policy. During a pandemic emergency, an agency may direct employees to evacuate from (i.e., not report to) their normal worksite and perform work from their home (or an approved alternate telework location), without regard to whether the agency and the employee have a telework agreement. Thus, this provides an authority to adopt revised telework policies that supersede normal telework policies. Under normal conditions, weather and safety leave is available to employees who are not able to safely travel to or perform work at the normal worksite, if they are not telework program participants who are expected to telework at home or another approved location. A COOP plan can allow for revised telework policies to maximize the use of telework during a pandemic emergency to support continuity of Government operations. Those revised telework policies may allow an agency to direct employees who have not been participating in an agency's telework program to be designated as telework program participants.

U.S. Staffing

Q1: Can I exercise my Return Rights (from OCONUS to CONUS) at the end of my scheduled overseas tour?

-Am I to defer the excision of my Return Rights?

-If I defer exercising my return rights, are statutory Return Rights being administratively extended if past five-years?

A1: No. Since the travel ban is imposed by DoD, Return Rights will be extended until the travel ban is lifted. Statutory Return Rights will be extended.

Q2: If I have gained employment from OCONUS to a CONUS Non-DoD activity, am I authorized to continue travel?

A2: No. All Department of Navy civilian employees, whose transportation is government-funded, will stop movement until restrictions are lifted.

Q3: If I gained employment from OCONUS to CONUS through the Priority Placement Program, am I authorized to continue travel?

A3: No. IAW the ALNAV dated 12 Mar, "Civilian personnel hiring actions for positions in DCD THN level 2 and level 3 designated locations are postponed for non-essential civilian personnel until restrictions are lifted"

Q4: If I am retiring or separating from the Federal service, am I authorized to travel from OCONUS to CONUS?

A4: Yes, individuals pending retirement or separation are exempt from the current travel ban.
-Dependents are authorized to travel concurrently with retiring and/or separating personnel.

Q5: If I have an employee that was scheduled to return to CONUS from OCONUS due to the completion of his/her DEROS, will they be administratively extended until the travel ban is lifted?

A5: No. The Civilian Human Resources Office (CHRO) does not have the authority to extend overseas tours. Overseas Tour Extension request will be submitted IAW MCO 12301.1C, as usual.

Q6: Can Emergency Essential or Mission Essential personnel onboard from CONUS to OCONUS locations?

A6: Yes. Only Emergency Essential or Mission Essential personnel can proceed with onboarding, although approval must be received in writing from the Combatant Commander.
-All non-essential travel must be deferred until the travel ban is lifted.
-Concurrent dependent travel must be deferred, even with approved Emergency Essential and Mission Essential travel.

Q7: Are we to hold on recruitment actions?

A7: No, recruitment actions will continue (to include announcements, receiving certificates, conducting interviews, making selections, and completing new hire requirements).
-Local hire candidates will onboard as normal.
-CONUS to OCONUS hires and OCONUS to OCONUS hires will continue up to the point of setting the Entrance of Duty (EOD) date; once the travel ban is lifted, the EODs will be set.
NOTE: If new hire personnel (both local and non-local selectees) are required to complete a pre-employment physical; Occupational Health offices are not currently conducting physicals due to COVID-19, so the completion of this pre-hire task may delay the completion of this requirement.