

Did you hear it's Easier to File a FECA Claim for COVID-19 now?

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that President Biden signed on March 11, 2021, makes it **much easier** for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. To establish a COVID-19 claim, you simply need to establish that you are a "covered employee," meaning that:

1. **You were diagnosed with COVID-19.** Specifically, you were diagnosed with COVID-19 while employed in the Federal service at any time during the period of January 27, 2020 to January 27, 2023; and,
2. **Your duties include any risk of exposure.** Specifically, within **21** days of your diagnosis of COVID-19, you carried out duties that—
 - a. required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers; or
 - b. included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus.



What Does the Change in the Law Mean?

1. **You are only required to establish that your duties included a risk of exposure to COVID-19.** You do not have to prove you were engaged in high-risk employment; that you were actually exposed to the virus; or that you were exposed to someone who had the virus while performing your duties.
2. **If you establish that you are a "covered employee," any diagnosed COVID-19 will be deemed to have been proximately caused by your Federal employment.** You no longer have to establish a causal link between your employment and your COVID-19 diagnosis.



What to Do:

You can quickly and easily file a **CA-1** Claim for COVID-19 through the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP). You can access ECOMP at ecomp.dol.gov. If you have never used ECOMP, you can [view this instructional video](#) to learn how to register for an ECOMP account, [and this video](#) to learn how to file a COVID-19 claim. If you don't have access to a computer, contact your supervisor.



Why File Now? What if I Think I Am OK?

If you were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 or even if you believe you just have a mild case of COVID-19, you should consider filing a COVID-19 FECA claim **now** even if you have fully recovered and/or had an asymptomatic infection.

- In the event you develop a consequential injury, impairment or illness later as a result of your COVID-19 diagnosis, timely filing your claim **now** will facilitate the processing of any future claim for any such consequential condition or impairment.
- If you wait until you experience a consequential injury or illness to file your COVID-19 claim, your claim may be subject to time limitation and you will have to establish **both** the initial COVID-19 claim and the consequential condition claim before benefits can begin.



Dear NALC Branch President,

During the course of the coronavirus pandemic, over 16,000 letter carriers have tested positive for COVID-19. At this time, approximately 1,000 of those letter carriers have filed claims with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, OWCP.

We are sending you this letter to let you know of important changes to the way claims for COVID-19 are being processed by OWCP and why your branch members who have had a positive COVID-19 diagnosis should consider filing a claim.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that President Biden signed on March 11, 2021, makes it much easier for federal and postal employees diagnosed with COVID-19 to have a claim accepted under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA).

If a letter carrier (who comes in contact with coworkers or members of the public) was previously diagnosed with COVID-19, or even if they believe they just had a mild case of COVID-19, they should consider filing a COVID-19 FECA claim now - even if they have fully recovered and/or had an asymptomatic infection.

The long-term effects of COVID-19 are relatively unknown-- getting a claim accepted will protect your members who may suffer medical and financial impacts in the future. In the event they develop a consequential injury, impairment or condition later as a result of their coronavirus infection, timely filing a claim now will facilitate the processing of any future claim for any such consequential condition or impairment.

The attached flyer is available on the NALC website. The NALC and OWCP are ready to assist any NALC members who are ready to file a claim.

Sincerely,

Fredric V. Rolando
President, National Association
of Letter Carriers

Antonio A. Rios
Director, Federal Employees', Longshore
and Harbor Workers' Compensation | OWCP