

**FSIS COVID-19 Information Sheet**  
**March 19, 2020**

Requests for leave will be determined on a case-by-case basis and one pay period at a time within the parameters allowed by OPM, CDC, USDA and FSIS regulations and/or policies/guidelines. When an employee's absence will need to extend beyond a pay period, the employee and supervisor should maintain ongoing communication regarding the employee's continuing need to be absent from work due to COVID-19 (personal or family care purposes). All employee medical information must be kept confidential.

If	Then	Leave/Telework Options
Employee is not sick.	Expected to report for work/telework as scheduled.	If you are a telework-eligible employee and are not sick, you are expected to begin work as scheduled at your approved telework location.
Employee self-certifies to be at a higher risk (older adults and people of any age with serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease or diabetes, conditions that compromise the immune system) of severe illness from COVID-19 and is not exhibiting symptoms.	Contact supervisor to notify of self-certification of health status.	Follow the <a href="#">CDC</a> or state/local health department guidelines. Supervisors may grant weather and safety leave during the period of self-quarantine for employees that are not telework eligible. Telework-eligible employee should telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval.
Employee is sick.	Contact supervisor, request leave, and contact your medical care provider.	Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees on a maxiflex schedule; or leave without pay (LWOP). A telework-eligible employee may telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval.
Employee becomes sick during work hours.	Contact supervisor to request leave and contact your medical care provider.	Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees on a maxiflex schedule; or LWOP. A telework-eligible employee may work if able to do so and has supervisory approval.
Employee directly exposed to COVID-19+ individual, but not exhibiting symptoms.	Contact supervisor to self-certify exposure and notify of intent to quarantine* if advised to do so by local health authority.	Follow the <a href="#">CDC</a> or state/local health department guidelines. Supervisors may grant weather and safety leave if the employee is ordered to quarantine. A telework-eligible employee should telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval.
Employee directly exposed to COVID-19+ individual and exhibiting symptoms.	Contact supervisor to request leave and contact your medical care provider.	Follow the <a href="#">CDC</a> or state/local health department guidelines. Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees on a maxiflex schedule; or leave without pay (LWOP). A telework-eligible employee may telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval. Supervisors may grant safety leave if the employee is ordered to quarantine.
Employee exhibiting symptoms and directed to self-isolate* by a local health official.	Contact supervisor to request leave.	Follow the <a href="#">CDC</a> or state/local health department guidelines. Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees on a maxiflex schedule; or leave without pay (LWOP). A telework-eligible employee may telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval. Supervisors may grant weather and safety leave during the period of isolation to employees not eligible for telework.
Employee who is not exhibiting symptoms is directed to self-quarantine by a local health official.	Contact supervisor to request leave.	Follow the <a href="#">CDC</a> or state/local health department guidelines. Supervisors may grant weather and safety leave during the period of self-quarantine to employees not eligible to telework. A telework-eligible employee should telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval.
Employee receives a positive test result for COVID-19.	Contact supervisor to request leave and follow instructions provided by your medical care provider.	Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees who work a maxiflex schedule; or LWOP. A telework-eligible employee may telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval. Supervisors may grant weather and safety leave during the period of quarantine to employees not eligible for telework.
Employee is needed at home for dependent care when no symptoms are being experienced (e.g., school aged children when schools are closed).	Contact supervisor to request leave.	Accrued/advanced annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees who work a maxiflex schedule; or LWOP. A telework-eligible employee should telework if able to do so and has supervisory approval (must account for periods of work and nonwork when providing care using a combination of telework and/or leave as mentioned above).

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Employee is needed at home to provide care for a family member who is sick.	Contact supervisor to request leave.	Accrued/advanced sick/annual leave; earned compensatory time off or travel compensatory time off; earned credit hours for those employees on a maxiflex schedule; or LWOP. A telework-eligible employee should work if able to do so and has supervisory approval (must account for periods of work and nonwork when providing care using a combination of telework and/or leave as mentioned above).
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**Contact of Asymptomatic People Exposed to COVID-19:** CDC does not recommend testing, symptom monitoring or special management for people interacting with asymptomatic people with potential exposures to COVID-19 (such as in a household), i.e., “contacts of contacts;” these people are not considered exposed to COVID-19.

\*Isolation and quarantine are public health practices used to stop or limit the spread of disease. **Isolation** is used to separate **ill** persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases. For example, hospitals use isolation for patients with infectious tuberculosis. **Quarantine** is used to separate and restrict the movement of **well** persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Quarantine can also help limit the spread of communicable disease.

Practice good hygiene by washing your hands regularly, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface; avoid touching your face; sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow; and frequently disinfect items or surfaces touched. For step-by-step instructions on proper handwashing techniques, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.

Practice social distancing.

Avoid unnecessary shopping trips; and social activities involving 10 or more people.

Do not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

Follow USDA and [CDC guidelines on travel](#) which provides information on what to do when returning from high risk countries, traveling within the United States. If you or a travel companion are concerned about an area to which you are traveling, check local public health advisories at your destination.

The CDC recommends that discretionary travel be avoided. Depending on your unique circumstances, you may choose to delay or cancel such travel. If you do decide to travel, ensure you take steps (e.g., washing hands, social distancing) to help prevent getting and spreading COVID-19.

Stay informed by checking with your local, state public health offices or the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) for guidance on how to protect yourself and your family against contracting COVID-19](#) and the [USDA Be Prepared](#) site for information and travel guidelines.

Submit your questions, concerns and/or feedback to [FSIS\\_Feedback@usda.gov](mailto:FSIS_Feedback@usda.gov).

**Posting Weather and Safety Transaction Codes:  
Telework and webTA Timesheets During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

This document provides clarification regarding how employees should record leave and telework. Just as the Agency required supervisory approval before the COVID-19 pandemic, employees **must receive supervisory approval** to use leave and/or telework.

**Leave:**

**Leave Time Section** of the webTA Timesheet:

- Post Transaction Code **[66 – Weather and Safety Leave]** for non-telework-eligible employees who have a supervisory-approved reasonable accommodation. This applies to employees who have self-certified (in writing) to being at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines and whose condition prevents them from safely traveling to, or performing work at, an approved location and for whom no accommodation can be provided. The employee is expected to be ready and willing to work if work becomes available that can be performed from home, or other accommodations become available which allow the employee to safely travel to, or perform work at, an approved location. Supervisors can also grant Weather and Safety Leave for employees who need to self-quarantine or self-isolate due to the pandemic.
- If an employee becomes sick, to include contracting COVID-19 while on approved weather and safety leave:
  - Post Transaction code **[62-Sick Leave]** or Transaction code **[61-Annual Leave]** or LWOP etc. in lieu of sick leave, as applicable
- If an employee on telework or on weather and safety leave is not ready and willing to work when work becomes available or is on vacation:
  - Post Transaction code **[61-Annual Leave]** or LWOP etc., as applicable
- An employee whose position is eligible for telework but does not telework or report to his/ her duty station is not eligible for Weather and Safety Leave.

**Telework:**

**Work Time Section** of the webTA Timesheet:

- Post Transaction Code **[01 – Reg Time-TeleWork – Other]** for additional telework time due to the pandemic.
- Post Transaction Code **[01 – Reg Time-TeleWork]** for regularly scheduled telework time.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the FSIS Financial Services Center (FSC) at 1-800-949-3964 or by email at [FSCGeneral@USDA.GOV](mailto:FSCGeneral@USDA.GOV).

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