



STOP THE SPREAD



In the first two weeks of 2022 and within the three districts under the jurisdiction of Local 308, we have recorded 1,190 COVID positives. This does not necessarily include those who may have been exposed to the virus through workplace close contact. It is not an exaggeration to state that the employer has failed to keep its employees safe. This local has multiple grievances filed on this failure to abide by Article 14 of the Contract which reads in part, **“It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force.”** Management’s failure to adhere to its own rules regarding masking, contact tracing, messaging, and cleaning has put employees and their families at risk. While the employer fails to demonstrate the leadership needed at the operations level, **we** all need to step up and do what we can. We encourage all to vaccinate and mask up to help stop the spread of this insidious virus. Please do all you can to protect the ones you love and the vulnerable among us.

As stated, the employer has failed in many regards and continues to do so. This also includes getting those who have recovered and wish to return to work, actually back to work. The current return work guidance which is posted on the Local’s website (npmhu308.org) states in part **“The determination of return to work can be made by a local supervisor or manager without requiring nurse intervention as long as the employee indicates that they have not developed any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. If the employee indicates that they have tested positive or have developed symptoms, nurse intervention is required.”**

If your return to duty is delayed by the actions of management, notify your Union representative right away so we can help get you back to work and made whole. As always, if you have any questions or concerns please contact your Union.

In Solidarity– John Gibson

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.

Department of Labor @DOL.GOV



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.