

## OWCP claims for COVID-19

A letter carrier who contracts COVID-19 while in the performance of their job duties would have the full coverage of the Federal Employees Compensation Act for related medical treatment and for wage loss or disability related to that condition or associated complications.

Letter carriers who have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus and are suffering symptoms related to the virus may file claims with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, OWCP. You should submit factual evidence concerning exposure as well as supporting medical evidence. The Postal Service will be expected to provide OWCP with any information they have concerning the alleged exposure and to indicate whether they are supporting or controverting the claim. If the Postal Service supports the claim including that the exposure occurred and the CA-1 is filed within 30 days, you are eligible to receive Continuation of Pay for up to 45 days.

OWCP will then develop the claim and review evidence provided by you and the Postal Service concerning work-related exposure and a COVID-19 diagnosis. Should the claim be accepted for COVID-19, you are entitled to receive all medical services, appliances or supplies which a qualified physician prescribes or recommends, and which OWCP considers necessary to treat the work-related injury.

Exposure to COVID-19 alone does not constitute a work-related injury. You must actually be diagnosed with COVID-19 to potentially be afforded coverage. To establish coverage, you must submit a medical report from a qualified physician reflecting a positive test result for COVID-19 based on established work-related exposure to COVID-19.

Letter carriers claiming an injury due to contact with COVID-19 must be in the performance of duty when exposed to be covered. You have the same burden to establish the basic requirements of coverage as other injured workers and must submit medical evidence in support of an identifiable injury in the performance of your letter carrier duties, and any related period of disability.

OWCP requires letter carriers exposed to the COVID-19 virus provide a detailed statement that explains:

How you were exposed to the virus;

When the exposure occurred;

How long and how frequently were you exposed; and

Where and why the exposure occurred.

You should also explain if other individuals and co-workers were exposed. You should provide a timeline of activities for the days leading up to your exposure or the onset of your symptoms. The Postal Service will be required to provide similar documentation, such as comments from a

knowledgeable supervisor on the accuracy of your statements, whether the agency concurs, and if possible, confirmation of a positive COVID-19 test result for any co-workers or customers.

If exposure to COVID-19 arose out of and in the course of your employment, it is generally said to have occurred in the performance of duty. The facts in your case must show that a work factor or requirement gave rise to the resulting COVID-19 diagnosis.

Proof that you have been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the office or out on the street will be necessary. Postal Service tracking data; TACS, RIMS and scan records should be requested and submitted to OWCP to support proof of exposure.

You will also need a medical report from a qualified physician reflecting that the positive COVID-19 diagnosis resulted from a work-related exposure while in the performance of your duties. You must explain the nature of your work exposure to your physician and make sure it is referenced in a medical report.

OWCP will only pay for the COVID - 19 test upfront (prior to accepting a case), if a claimant was exposed to a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 in the performance of duty. Otherwise, OWCP will pay for the test, if the case is accepted, through a reimbursement.

**Due to the rapid onset of COVID-19 symptoms, it is in your best interest to register in OWCP's electronic claim filing portal, ECOMP prior to exposure or diagnosis. You can register in ECOMP [here](#) and find directions on how to use the ECOMP web portal on the Injured on the Job page at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).**