

SSC Medical Clearance to Return to On-Site Work for Confirmed Positive and Self-Isolated Cases

The following process for obtaining medical clearance to return to on-site work at SSC is applicable to all SSC employees reported as self-isolated or under a directed quarantine due to COVID-19. The process is based on guidance developed by the NASA Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer (OCHMO) (dated 11 December 2020) in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Department of Defense (DoD) employees assigned to SSC should follow DoD guidelines.

In order to be cleared for access to SSC, all NASA and NASA contractor employees in self-isolation/quarantine must utilize the SSC Medical Clinic to complete the process. The SSC Medical Clinic uses SSC Form 602, *Request for Medical Certification Exam*, as the means to record/track employees seeking medical clearance for return to on-site work. Supervisors of employees will be contacted by the NASA Emergency Management Officer and provided instructions on filing the SSC Form 602. The completed SSC Form 602 shall be e-mailed to the clinic (tasia.b.henton@nasa.gov or ssc-medical-certifications@mail.nasa.gov) to initiate the process. The SSC Medical Director is the final approval authority for medically qualifying NASA and NASA contractor employees who have been in self-isolation/quarantine to return to on-site work. Once medically qualified to return to site, the supervisor authorizes the employee's return to their on-site work location.

Employers/supervisors with resident agencies, tenants, or on-site organizations, not performing NASA work, with self-isolation/quarantine cases at SSC, may utilize the SSC Clinic process as described above or their own health/medical team if appropriate. The SSC Clinic medical staff or employer's medical service provider will verify that the employee meets the below criteria and will comply with the employer's medical policies for documentation of this medical clearance.

Once this verification process has been completed, the employee's supervisor will notify the NASA Emergency Management Officer (Kenneth Volante, 228-342-8167 or kenneth.e.volante@nasa.gov) or the Alternate Emergency Management Officer (John Schreck, 228-861-4955 or john.n.schreck@nasa.gov) when the employee has been cleared. Mr. Volante will confirm with the supervisor that the employee is cleared to access SSC.

NASA follows the CDC and U.S. Department of State (State Department) guidelines with regard to testing and return to on-site work, with one notable exception. Rather than allow an employee to return to on-site work within 24 hours of resolution of symptoms, NASA will maintain the 72 hour (3 days) standard from the previous edition of the CDC guidelines. This exception is due to the higher average age of the NASA workforce than the population for which this guidance was developed, as well as the higher risk to NASA missions than an average employment risk.

OCHMO COVID Return to Work Guidelines DEC 2020
MASTER (with SSC clarification in italics 27 January 2021)

NASA will follow the CDC and State Department guidelines with regards to testing and return to on-site work, with one notable exception. Instead of allowing an employee to return to work within 24 hours of resolution of symptoms, NASA will maintain the 72 hour (3 days) from the previous edition of the CDC’s guideline. The reason for this is that the average age of the NASA workforce is higher than the population for whom this guidance was established, and the risk to NASA missions is higher than an average employment risk. All guidance and return requirements assume that employees are required to maintain social distancing, wear appropriate masks, and perform hand sanitization. As a reminder this is a guideline, not a mandate. We will not be policing or adding this guidance to contracts, but expect everyone to follow the recommendations where practicable in order to maintain the safety of our personnel, and continued work on our missions.

SSC Supervisors shall submit SSC Form 602, “Request for Medical Certification Exam”, to the SSC Clinic to request an employee who is either COVID positive or has had a contact with a COVID positive/presumed positive person be cleared by the SSC Clinic for return to on-site work in accordance with the guidance below. The SSC Medical Director shall have the final say over the application of the following Return To On-Site Work guidance. Unique circumstances for a case may warranted a variance from the below to reduce the risk of infection to the on-site workforce.

SSC supervisors may request mission essential employees who are on quarantine (due to contact with a COVID positive/presumed positive person) be tested (or submit test results) and evaluated for return to on-site work by SSC clinic staff following the guidelines below by submitting a request to Stephen O’Neill (stephen.g.o'neill@nasa.gov) and/or David Lorange (David.k.lorange@nasa.gov).

Scenario	Return Requirements
1. Employee has tested positive for COVID-19	<p>a. At least 3 days have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms; <u>and</u>,</p> <p>b. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; <u>and</u></p> <p>c. At least 20 days since discharge if hospitalized or if history of immunocompromised state.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html</p> <p>OR</p> <p>d. For persons who <u>never develop symptoms</u>, isolation and other precautions may be discontinued 10 days after the date of their first positive test for COVID-19.</p>
2. Employee has not taken a COVID-19 test but does exhibit symptoms	<p>a. The employee opts not to be tested or is not able to gain testing in a timely manner:</p>

OCHMO COVID Return to Work Guidelines DEC 2020
MASTER *(with SSC clarification in italics 27 January 2021)*

<p>of COVID-19 or the flu (and has not been hospitalized)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 3 days have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms; <u>AND</u> 2. At least a full 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. <p>b. Employee gets tested via Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) <i>(no earlier than 5-7 days of quarantine)</i> and the test result is negative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 3 days have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms; <u>AND</u> 2. At least full 7 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared. (employee may return on the 8th day)
<p>3. Employee has been identified as a close/tracing contact, or has a known exposure to COVID, or has a member of their household who has tested positive or exhibits signs of COVID-19.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Self-quarantine for at least 10 days if no testing <i>and asymptomatic</i>. b. The employee may be tested (using RT-PCR) between 4 and 5 days <i>no earlier than 5-7 days</i> after known exposure, and if the test is negative, the employee may return to work after the full 7th day, assuming they remain asymptomatic, and will follow strict mask protocol. c. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For an employee with a household contact who tests positive, they should self-isolate and if possible, away from the positive individual. Their quarantine period begins after the infected household contact recovers (24 hours after their household contact is asymptomatic and without fever...<i>when the household contact is deemed to no longer be infectious</i>). Return to work may be either <i>after 7 full days of self-quarantine</i> with negative RT-PCR testing (<i>taken no earlier than after 5-7 of quarantine</i>) of the employee, or 10 days without testing as above. 2. <i>If the household contact who exhibits signs/symptoms of COVID-19 receives a negative PCR test and/or is determined to have an alternate cause of the signs/symptoms, then the employee may return to work immediately provided that the employee remains asymptomatic and is able to provide supporting documentation.</i> d. FOR critical personnel only (Fire, EMS, Medical, Security, Safing of critical hardware) personnel may return to work immediately after a negative RT-PCR test assuming the test was performed <i>no earlier than 5-7 days</i> on days 4-5 after known exposure, they remain

OCHMO COVID Return to Work Guidelines DEC 2020
MASTER (with SSC clarification in italics 27 January 2021)

	<p>asymptomatic, are in appropriate PPE* while on-site, and a temperature checks reveal no fever.</p>
<p>4. Domestic Travel for NASA Employees</p>	<p>a. Follow the requirements for the local destination in regards to testing. If required, get tested 1-3 days before your flight. Please note that PCR tests take 24-48 hours to return, so plan accordingly so that you will have results in hand when presenting to the airport. The cost of testing is reimbursable and should be turned in with travel receipts, or you may use the NASA testing contract for direct billing to the agency for official agency travel. Upon return, you may get tested again between 3-5 days after travel. The CDC recommends that you stay home for 7 days after travel if your test is negative and 10 days if you elect to not to get tested. This is not a mandate, but a precautionary measure. Work with your supervisor as to whether your work requires you to return on site immediately, or if you are able to telework for the period recommended.</p> <p>b. It is imperative to check state and local conditions and restrictions before traveling within the U.S, as many states and municipalities have further restricted or placed enhanced testing guidelines due to escalating cases in their area. Follow local restrictions and guidelines where possible.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-air-travel.html</p> <p>https://www.flyhealthy.gov</p>
<p>5. International Travel by NASA employees, International Partners, or</p>	<p>1. For NASA employees traveling internationally, it is imperative to check conditions and restrictions at the destination and in layover countries. Information may be available from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Country Information webpages or through the airlines.</p> <p>2. Many countries require a negative test performed 72 hours prior to travel. It is recommended to have an RT-PCR test performed as opposed to a</p>

OCHMO COVID Return to Work Guidelines DEC 2020
MASTER (with SSC clarification in italics 27 January 2021)

<p>other visitors to NASA Centers.</p>	<p>rapid antigen test, due to its higher sensitivity. Upon return to the United States, repeat testing should be performed 3-5 days after entry. The CDC recommends self-isolating for 7 full days if the return test is negative, and 10 days if no test is obtained. Work with your supervisor as to whether your work requires you to return on site immediately, or if you are able to telework for the period recommended. Receipts for testing secondary to travel can be turned in with your other travel receipts, or you may obtain testing using the direct billing NASA contract.</p> <p>3. For International Partners traveling from outside the United States to a NASA Center: Those countries which currently have quarantine or specific restrictions posted by the CDC or State Department must abide by those restrictions. Upon entering the United States, the travelers not subject to more restrictive requirements based on their country of origin should get tested between 3-5 days after travel <u>AND</u> isolate for a full 7 days in their billeted quarters. If the test is negative you may report on site at a NASA center after the 7th day. If you do not get tested, you should isolate the full 10 days before reporting on site. You should be asymptomatic (no fever, cough, sore throat, etc.) and should have the appropriate mask in place and maintain social distancing and frequent hand washing/sanitation. All travelers should maintain vigilance with self-observation for any signs or symptoms in the week following their arrival, and maintain PPE and social distancing while on site.</p> <p>4. The agency reserves the right to check any and all visitors at the badging office for proof of testing and may deny access for non-compliance.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-air-travel.html</p> <p>https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html</p> <p>https://www.flyhealthy.gov</p>
--	--

*Appropriate PPE refers to personal protective equipment appropriate to the task and risk, in the example above this is either a two layer cloth mask, surgical mask, or N-95 mask or its equivalent. For direct patient care or where social distancing is not possible, an N-95 or surgical mask is recommended. Neck “gaiters” in general are not appropriate PPE for indoor areas.

OCHMO COVID Return to Work Guidelines DEC 2020
MASTER (with SSC clarification in italics 27 January 2021)

Note: For Centers that already have rapid antigen tests in place for surveillance, those tests may be used for their current purpose (general surveillance, etc.) and RT-PCR may be used when clinical suspicion warrants or to augment as needed.

Note: For mission critical travel to states that currently have their own quarantine orders: federal employees and contractors doing *mission critical work* are not bound by the state quarantine orders. A letter from the COTR/Center Contracting Office is required for contractors and a letter from the Center Director is required for civil servants that explains the nature of the critical work. Please take those letters with you when you travel. It is advisable to check with the hotel to see what documentation they may require in those states that have enacted their own quarantine orders.

Note: These exceptions to the State and local quarantine apply to official mission critical work only for agency civil servants, contractors, and International Partners on official business.

Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local restrictions are fluid and may change due to escalation of the disease in a particular country or area. It is highly advisable to check the information in the area you are traveling frequently for any changes.

Note: For international partners traveling to the US- The State Department currently is restricting travel or entry from areas with high cases of COVID-19. However, there is an exemption under the President's Executive order (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-certain-additional-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/>) for critical work at the behest of the U.S. government, which would apply for those traveling to work on NASA missions. Please contact the Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR) for a letter that would be required to gain this exemption. Although the exception allows for entry into the United States, the expectations from the CDC regarding testing and isolation prior to coming on site are to be adhered to.

Note: The guidance may or may not match the currently available scientific data. Where possible, we have aligned as best as possible, but deviations may be required due to the mission, the availability of the tests, the ability to get results in a timely manner, or for other circumstances.