

Memorandum



Date April 19, 2021

To All Employees

From Patrick T. Warren, Chief Safety Officer



Re April 2021 Revision: MTA All Agency Return to Duty Process & Travel Guidance due to COVID-19 Precautions

Effective immediately, this memo sets forth the Return to Work and Travel policy applicable to all agencies' represented and non-represented employees, unless otherwise noted herein. This memo is an update to the March 15, 2021 guidance reflecting updated guidance from the NYS DOH, including the April 10, 2021 "Updated Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York State Following Out of State Travel."

In all cases of absence from work, employees must contact their supervisor and follow established absence reporting procedures. If an employee is represented, they must also submit any prescribed documentation required under their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

For updated guidance on the leaves available to employees in connection with COVID-19 scenarios, please refer to the March 3, 2021 Memorandum from Paul Fama, Chief People Officer.

Please note, this guidance is subject to change, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rapidly evolve.

I. Return to Work After COVID Exposure/Screening

A. Exposure Protocols for Employees that are Not Fully Vaccinated or Not Post Infection:

Please note, a negative test is not required in order to return to work under any of the MTA's protocols.

- (1) **Positive COVID test, experiencing symptoms:** The employee must self-isolate at home and not come to work for at least 10 calendar days from the onset of symptoms. The employee should not come to work unless they have been without a fever for 72 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine).
- (2) **Positive COVID test, asymptomatic:** The employee must self-isolate at home and not come to work for at least 10 calendar days from the date of the test.
- (3) **Positive COVID test and asymptomatic at the time, but develops symptoms later:** If an employee initially is asymptomatic and then develops symptoms, they should self-

isolate at home for 10 days after the onset of symptoms. The employee should not come to work unless they have been without a fever for 72 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine).

- (4) **Close contact¹ with a confirmed infected person and now experiencing symptoms:** Employee may return to work upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms. Employee should not come to work unless they have been without a fever for 72 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine).
- (5) **Close contact¹ with a confirmed infected person and remain asymptomatic:** Employees who are able to perform their regular work duties from home should do so for a minimum of 10 days from the date of contact. Employees whose work duties do not allow them to work productively from home should self-isolate at home for 5 calendar days from the date of contact and have a diagnostic test (RT-PCR, unless otherwise directed by OHS) for COVID-19 on day 5. Please visit the [MY MTA portal](#) to get the latest testing information and schedule an appointment. For essential employees, if the test is negative and the employee has no symptoms, the employee's supervisor can direct the employee to return to the workplace immediately after receiving the negative result, and the following protocols must be observed for at least 7 calendar days following the employee's return to work:
- a. The employee must self-monitor their temperature every 12 hours and report a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and/or other symptoms consistent with COVID under the supervision of Occupational Health Services ("OHS").²
 - b. The employee must wear a face mask at all times, comply with social distancing policies, and the workplace will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
 - c. While not at work, the employee should self-monitor for fever and other COVID symptoms.

Please note that if an employee obtains a quarantine order for the purpose of qualifying for NYS COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave, the employee must quarantine for the period of time provided for by that order and not follow the test-out process set forth in this paragraph (5).³

- (6) **Employee Sent Home With Fever:** Employees sent home by MTA when a fever (of 100.0 or more) is detected at a screening should be advised that they have up to 3 days to get tested and provide results with a rapid test, unless another test is directed by OHS. Please visit the [MY MTA portal](#) to get the latest testing information and schedule an appointment. Employees should self-isolate and call their healthcare provider for evaluation and report results to the hotline.

¹ Close contact refers to being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes during the period starting from 48 hours before onset of symptoms or the date of a positive test (whichever is earlier) until that time the person was isolated.

² Employees should call the MTA COVID Hotline and choose option 1 to report temperature or symptoms.

³ In limited cases, an employee who has received a quarantine order may be deemed critical for the MTA's operations or safety by OHS and the employee's department. Unless a return to work is prevented by the quarantine order, such employee may be directed to return to work after an exposure to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 if they are asymptomatic and in accordance with the test out process in this paragraph (5).

B. Fully Vaccinated or Post Infection Employees

Employees in these groups do not need to quarantine after an exposure event:

- (1) Fully vaccinated: Both criteria must be satisfied:
 - a. Fully vaccinated (i.e., greater or equal to 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or greater or equal to 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single dose vaccine); AND
 - b. Have remained asymptomatic since the exposure event.
- (2) Post infection: Both criteria must be satisfied:
 - a. Tested positive for COVID-19 with a diagnostic RT-PCR, rapid molecular or rapid antigen test within the past 3 months and recovered; AND
 - b. Have remained asymptomatic since the exposure event.

Employees who meet the criteria above to be considered fully vaccinated or post infection should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 calendar days following an exposure. Employees are responsible for updating the MTA Vaccine Portal with their vaccination information and for reporting positive tests to the MTA COVID Hotline. MTA will confirm post-infection status with the MTA COVID Hotline, and will confirm post-vaccination status using the MTA Vaccine Portal. If they experience symptoms, they should get a diagnostic RT-PCR test unless another test is directed by OHS and follow reporting procedures if positive.

II. Return to Work After Travel/Use of Leave

The guidance in this section applies to all agencies' non-represented employees and represented employees, including all "essential employees", with the exception of MTA Police and MTA C&D personnel, who may be required to follow different procedures based on operational necessity.

All individuals regardless of state of residency coming into New York State (NYS), for more than 24 hours, from either a non-contiguous state or US territory, or another country, must fill out the NYS Traveler's Health Form found at <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/Welcome-to-New-York-State-Traveler-Health-Form> upon arrival in New York. Please be advised that New York state and local health departments can issue significant penalties for individuals that do not fill out this form.

As a general matter, employees are not permitted to use Administrative Leave or the New York State COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave to cover travel-related quarantines for non-business travel. Using Administrative Leave for non-MTA business travel related **exceptional** circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Agency HR Lead.

A. Travel to New York from Another U.S. State or U.S. Territory

Asymptomatic domestic travelers arriving in New York State from other U.S. states and/or territories are not required to test or quarantine (regardless of vaccination status or status as recently recovered from COVID-19). While asymptomatic domestic travelers are not required to quarantine based on NYS guidance, please be aware that for asymptomatic domestic travelers who are not fully vaccinated or have not recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 within the previous 3 months, NYS still recommends that they get tested 3-5 days after arrival in NYS and should consider 10 days of self-isolation (or 7 days if tested). Accordingly, employees should continue to observe all safety protocols and self-monitor their health. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of testing offered by MTA.

If at any time an employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should immediately get tested, stay home from work, and report results to the COVID-19 hotline.

B. International Travel to New York Other Than Canada Land Crossings

General info: Current CDC guidance requires air passengers traveling to the U.S. from another country to show documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 within the previous 3 months or a negative test result from no more than 3 days prior to the day of travel to the airline before boarding the flight. At this time, documentation of vaccination status or antibody test results will not be accepted as proof of COVID status prior to boarding, per CDC guidance.

MTA Policy:

Asymptomatic employees who are either (i) fully vaccinated or (2) recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the last 3 months are not required to self-isolate after international travel and may report to work. Please be aware that, while not required, NYS still recommends that all asymptomatic international travelers (including those who are vaccinated or recently recovered) get tested 3-5 days after travel.

Employees who are not (i) fully vaccinated or (2) recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the last 3 months are required to self-isolate after international travel that is not work-related, and must not report to work for either 10 calendar days or upon receipt of a negative test result for a diagnostic RT-PCR test (unless another test is directed by OHS), taken 3-5 days after arrival in the United States. Employees traveling for non-MTA reasons must use leave balances to cover their self-isolation period, unless they are able to telework and their supervisor approves.⁴

Employees that are required to self-isolate after non-work related international travel under this policy (that is, those that are **not** fully vaccinated or **not** recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the last 3 months) are responsible for requesting sufficient time off from work to cover not only the time they are at the international destination but a sufficient time after their return to allow for testing and/or self-isolation away from work if unable to telework.

⁴ Employees who engage in international travel for MTA business reasons and are required to self-isolate under this policy will be provided with leave.

Travelers from Canada, crossing at land borders subject to the agreement between the governments of the U.S. and Canada, are permitted to travel in accordance with the federal agreement and need not quarantine solely due to such federally authorized travel.

If at any time an employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should immediately get tested, stay home from work, and report results to the COVID-19 hotline.