

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) ...from Human Resources Office

March 16, 2021

On 11 March 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The act makes it easier for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). [Section 4016](#) of the act provides that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment.

The impacts of this provision are as follows:

- 1 Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was accepted for COVID-19 prior to 12 March 2021 is **not** impacted because coverage for benefits has already been extended.
- 2 Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was denied or withdrawn prior to 12 March 2021 is eligible for review under the new eligibility requirements.
- 3 Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA on or after 12 March 2021 will be reviewed solely under the new eligibility requirements.

What does this mean?

- 1 Employees who previously filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA that was accepted by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) = no change.
- 2 Employees who previously filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA that was denied by the OWCP based on a lack of federal exposure or a lack of medical evidence establishing a causal relationship = communication from OWCP within the next 30–45 days.
- 3 Employees who have never filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA and believe they have contracted COVID-19 as a result of their federal employment, should file a CA-1 (Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation) through the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP) at <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>.

Claims may be filed at any time; however, the OWCP is currently updating the ECOMP forms filing process to make it easier to file claims specifically for COVID-19. Those updates are expected to be fully implemented by 26 March 2021.