

Mandatory Stand-Up Talk

March 30, 2020

Employee privacy — COVID-19

Protection and confidential handling of employee health information

As you may be aware, cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) have recently been confirmed in some postal facilities across the country.

It is important to know that the federal Rehabilitation and Privacy Acts require agencies, and their employees, to follow certain rules when disseminating information about an individual. In response to COVID-19, there are designated persons responsible for handling notifications, informing only those individuals legally entitled to such information.

Here are some additional privacy guidelines:

- While we understand you may want to know who is sick, under the federal laws mentioned above, specific employee medical information must be kept confidential and may only be shared in very limited circumstances.
- The Postal Service cannot share the name or medical condition of any employee, including one who tested positive for COVID-19, except under those limited circumstances.
- If you receive employee medical information regarding COVID-19 as part of your job, share it only with your District Occupational Health Nurse Administrator. Do not share it with anyone else.
- Employee medical information, including information about COVID-19, must be kept in a secure file, separate from personnel information about the employee.

- You may receive requests to share protected information about an employee, including from the media, a customer or a local government entity. Even if the requester claims to have a legal right to the information, do not provide it. Consult your Area Law Office or the Headquarters Law Department to determine if the information can be shared, or have your manager do so on your behalf.
- The safety and well-being of our employees are our highest priorities, but we must also protect our employees' privacy.

Consistent with Centers for Disease Control guidance, we work closely with local public health departments to identify close contacts of individuals confirmed to have COVID-19 to ensure they are properly informed of any additional risk to their health.

If the public health department is unable to assist in this process, our Occupational Health Nurse Administrators identify and contact those individuals determined to be at a higher exposure risk.

Additionally, the Postal Service will tell you, without identifying the individual by name, if an employee in your workplace is confirmed to have COVID-19 so you may conduct a risk assessment.

Remember that the best defense against sickness is good personal hygiene. Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds at a time; and cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing using your elbow or a tissue, and then discard the tissue if you use one.

EAP continues to be available 24 hours a day at 1-800-EAP-4-YOU or online at www.EAP4YOU.com. EAP provides coaching, referrals and short-term counseling, as well as crisis response, a health resource library and other services for you and your family as needed. EAP is a benefit of your postal employment.

Thank you for your attention.

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