

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Reasonable Accommodations for Employees Who Are at Higher Risk for COVID-19

Question: Who is at Higher Risk?

Answer: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), those at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include people aged 65 and older and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

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- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

The COVID-19 reasonable accommodation (RA) process is meant to support Members of the Service (MOS) that have increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 while ensuring the NYPD is still operating at full capacity to support our City through this pandemic. Therefore, when assessing an RA request due to COVID-19, it is imperative to adhere to the CDC Guidelines reproduced above.²

Question: Are high risk or pregnant employees eligible for the COVID-19 RA?

Answer: Yes, the CDC includes pregnant individuals as part of their “Others at Risk” category. The CDC notes that pregnant individuals experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections and that with viruses from the same family as COVID-19, and any other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza, women have had a higher risk of developing severe illness. The CDC reports that it is unknown at this time if COVID-19 would cause problems during pregnancy or affect the health of the baby after birth.³

The NYPD COVID-19 Reasonable Accommodation process has been streamlined to improve efficiency. Employees at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should submit their request to the Equal Employment Opportunity Division Via email at employeeasonableaccommodation@nypd.org and obtain a log number. Employees are not required to obtain approval from a supervisor to request a reasonable accommodation from EEOD.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

² As information regarding COVID-19 is constantly subject to change, members can visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov for updated information.

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

Question: Who can approve a COVID-19 RA?

Answer: Equal Employment Opportunity Division (EEOD).

Question: If I request a COVID-19 RA, do I have to follow the Administrative Guide procedure for requesting an RA?

Answer: No, MOS should contact EEOD.

Question: What information is required to request a COVID-19 RA?

Answer: Employees must provide the following information to the EEOD when requesting a log number:

- Employee Name
- Tax ID
- Civil Service Title
- Command
- Command Code
- Bureau
- PSB/DB/HB/TB borough
- Basis for request
- Member's contact information and commanding officer contact information
- Employees must submit supporting medical documentation to EEOD before the request will be approved

The EEOD may be contacted by emailing employeereasonableaccommodation@nypd.org or calling (646) 610-5330. Email is the preferred method of communication.

Question: I have a condition that is not specifically mentioned on the CDC website, but I believe that I am part the population who is high risk for serious complications from COVID-19. Am I eligible for the RA?

Answer: If you believe you have an underlying condition which places you at high risk, you may submit a COVID-19 RA request to your EEOD.

Question: What may be provided as part of a COVID-19 RA?

Answer: MOS may be provided an accommodation that includes adjusted tours, change in work location or work from home.

Question: How do I know if my RA was approved?

Answer: Commanding Officers/Civilian Managers will be notified by the EEOD via email or telephone of approved requests.

Question: Is there a time limit on the COVID-19 RA?

Answer: The current situation is fluid and the length of the RA is subject to change based on CDC and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene guidelines and the needs of the Department. MOS who have been granted a COVID-19 RA to work from home should be prepared to return to work at any time.

Question: Can an employee request a COVID-19 RA if they are not at risk but have a family member who is high risk?

Answer: No. This COVID-19 RA policy only applies to MOS with high risk conditions as defined above. However, the NYPD is working with external partners to potentially assist employees who are not at high risk but reside with high risk individuals by providing an accommodation for the MOS to stay in a hotel room.

Question: Can I elect to come back to work on my own if I am granted a COVID-19 RA? Answer: MOS can terminate/withdraw their request at any time via written request to their CO. However, if the Department has reason to believe that the MOS is not ready to return to work, that MOS may be subject to a fitness for duty evaluation.

Question: Is documentation required to be granted a COVID-19 RA?

Answer: Yes, MOS should be prepared to provide supporting medical documentation for the condition that requires an accommodation from a health care professional that includes, but is not limited to, your primary care physician. MOS are reminded that all documentation provided remains confidential

Question: What documentation is accepted?

Answer: For the purposes of this COVID-19 RA, supporting medical documentation may include but is not limited to the following: doctor's note, prescription history, copy of prescription(s), medical bands, etc.

Question: Is overtime authorized while working from home?

Answer: No. Overtime is not authorized for MOS who work from home.

Question: How will I account for my MOS who are working from home with regard to roll call and timekeeping?

Answer: Documents regarding timekeeping are posted on the Department intranet.

Question: What if I had vacation scheduled or if I need time off while I have a COVID-19 RA? Answer: Normal leave procedures still apply during the length of the COVID-19 RA. Leave time must be requested and approved in the same manner as in the workplace.

Question: Do I still call the Medical Division if I get sick while I have a COVID-19 RA?

Answer: Yes. MOS are required to adhere to P.G. 205-06 "Reporting Sick" and follow the regular process for reporting sick. Note: Civilian Members of the Service must notify the Medical Division according to the guidelines in FINEST Message Serial Number 37264255 (March 27, 2020).