



U.S. AIR FORCE

# Civilian Personnel

# NEWSLETTER

May & June 2021 Edition



## Welcome to the May & June edition of our newsletter

Greetings to all – can you believe that this calendar year is nearly half gone already?! COVID-19 topics remain front and center, and in this issue of our newsletter we have articles to help managers handle situations that may arise during the gradual return of employees to the workplace, as well as information on granting administrative leave for employees to receive and recover from COVID-19 vaccinations (pages 2-3).

On pages 5 and 6 you will find important articles providing sound guidance on the Civilian Health and Wellness Program, and Prohibited Personnel Practices.

On the Local National (LN) side, this edition features an update on compensation in accordance with the German Infection Protection Act for the necessary care of children when daycare centers and schools are closed, and entitlement to child sick pay at times of COVID-19 (pages 8-9).

Our Team wishes you a wonderful start of the summer season!

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### Quote of the Month

Coming together is a  
**BEGINNING**  
 Keeping together is  
**PROGRESS**  
 Working together is  
**SUCCESS**

Henry Ford



- \* 03 Jun - Corpus Christi (GER)
- \* 11 Jun - Last Day of DoDEA School Year
- \* 20 Jun- Father's Day (US)
- \* 21 Jun- Summer Solstice
- \* 02 Jul- Independence Day (in lieu)
- \* 04 Jul - Independence Day (US)
- \* 05 Jul- Family Day (US)



## Returning to duty during COVID-19: How should managers handle situations that may arise in which employees fail to report to their assigned duty station?

While continuing to use available and appropriate workforce flexibilities, commanders and leaders are making risk-based determinations to re-open worksites to fulfill their missions, while protecting the health and safety of employees during this crisis. Once leadership has determined that sufficient conditions allow for employees to safely work in a given environment, employees can be expected to report to their office unless they are in an approved leave status.



Some employees may have reservations about returning to their workplace even as the likelihood of contracting Coronavirus diminishes and vaccines are more readily available. Management should never dismiss the health concerns of employees. It is appropriate for management to work with employees to address concerns about their safety in the workplace or during commuting, and determine if steps can be taken to mitigate those concerns. Before requiring employees to report to duty on-site, and when considering any administrative action based on non-compliance with a reporting requirement, management is encouraged to consider all facts and circumstances in each case. Such considerations may include an employee's vulnerability to serious complications if infected, the presence of an individual in a CDC-identified high-risk category in the home, or child-care or other dependent care responsibilities resulting from daycare, camp, or school closures. Management should determine if other options are appropriate, such as allowing employees to continue to telework, alternate work schedules, or asking them to request personal leave (e.g., annual leave, sick leave if applicable, or leave without pay).



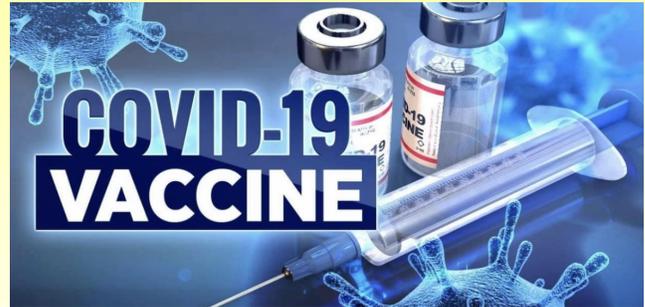
Employees that are a higher risk for severe illness should follow CDC advice on actions to take to reduce their risk of getting sick with COVID-19.

This advice can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html>

Supervisors should contact the Employee Management Relations office at [86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil](mailto:86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil) for guidance and assistance when considering administrative action for an employee that fails to report, or for assistance with requests for reasonable accommodation due to a disability.

# Administrative Leave to Receive COVID-19 Vaccinations and Necessary Recovery

Administrative leave is authorized for the purpose of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. DoD civilian employees who accept an offer to get vaccinated through either DoD or private providers shall be excused from duty for the time necessary to obtain the vaccination, generally up to 4 hours per vaccination event. This includes time spent traveling to and from the vaccination location. The time card code used for this type of administrative leave is LN, with the hazard code “PF.”



Employees should NOT be charged personal leave, and other statuses (such as on-duty or weather/safety leave) are not appropriate.

Employees must notify and coordinate with their supervisors regarding the time off so it does not conflict with mission accomplishment or important work center requirements. If an employee experiences an adverse reaction and becomes ill after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, administrative leave should be granted for recovery as needed. Not more than 2 workdays of administrative leave may be granted in association with a single vaccination dose.

Please review the **\*\*\*Updated\*\*\* Vaccination DAF Policy and Fact Sheet**” posted to the Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight website at the following link:

<https://www.ramstein.af.mil/Contact/Civilian-Personnel-Flight/>

Here are a few key takeaways:

COVID-19 vaccinations are voluntary for all employees until one of the vaccines receives full Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval and licensure. All personnel are encouraged to get vaccinated to protect their health as well as the health of their coworkers and families. Commanders may offer vaccinations, but may not suggest or recommend, or offer in such a way that it appears to be anything other than at the employee’s discretion.

As a general matter, supervisors may NOT ask employees if they have been vaccinated. For purposes of acting on a request for administrative leave for vaccination and recovery, supervisors may only ask employees about the time and location of the vaccination event and whether there was a reaction to the vaccine requiring a period of recovery.

Supervisors may ask about an employee’s vaccination status only in very limited circumstances where there is a business necessity for the information, as determined on a case-by-case basis. For examples and information on determining such a business necessity, please closely review the “Frequently Asked Questions and Answers” portion of the Vaccination DAF Policy and Fact Sheet, FAQ #35.

Visit the Ramstein COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution website at the following link for additional information: [vaccine: https://www.ramstein.af.mil/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information/](https://www.ramstein.af.mil/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information/)

# EAP Services

The Air Force Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free, confidential services to help you and your household members manage everyday challenges, as well as work on more complex issues that you may be facing. The EAP provides a variety of support services, to include the following:

**Counseling**--Counselors can provide support for challenges such as stress, anxiety, grief, relationship concerns and more.

**Coaching**--When you have a goal to achieve, coaches help you create a plan of action and stay on track.

**Online programs**--Self-guided, interactive programs help improve your emotional well-being for issues like depression and anxiety.

**Legal assistance, financial coaching & identity theft resolution**--Expert consultation to help with your legal, financial and identity theft needs. Access a free online library with resources for identity theft resolution, budgeting, debt management, family law, wills and more.

**Work-life services**--Save time and money on life's most important needs. Specialists provide expert guidance and personalized referrals to service providers including childcare, adult care, education, home improvement, consumer information, emergency preparedness and more.

**Senior care management**--Caregiving can be demanding physically, emotionally and financially. This service will help assess and recommend the right care for your household member. Services include in-home assessments, facility reviews, post-hospitalization assessments and ongoing care coordination.

To get started visit the EAP Homepage at <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Personal-and-Work-Life/> and select "Civilian EAP (OCONUS)" at the bottom of the page to access resources and contact information for U.S. Citizens living abroad.



# CIVILIAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Civilian Health and Wellness Program is designed to encourage U.S. appropriated fund civilian employees to become physically active and promote a healthier workforce. Participation in the program established under DoDI1400.25V630\_AFI36-815, *Leave*, are limited to a cumulative total of 3 hours of duty time per week based on mission and workload requirements.

Employees may participate in physical fitness and wellness activities. Health and wellness activities include but are not limited to: health fairs; alcohol and tobacco cessation programs; diet and nutrition classes; relaxation and stress management classes or seminars; lactation classes and seminars; and work-life programs. Employees must notify supervisors in advance of the events to ensure attendance does not conflict with work center requirements.

Employees must coordinate with the supervisor regarding time off for physical activity and a signed agreement is to be executed by both the employee and supervisor. At a minimum, the agreement will include self-certification by the employee of fitness to engage in physical activity and describe the number of days per week and duration of absences. A sample agreement can be found in the Health and Wellness Program CPF factsheet: [https://www.ramstein.af.mil/Portals/6/documents/Civilian Personnel Section/Factsheets/EMR/Health Wellness-Feb20.pdf?ver=2020-02-18-075711-873](https://www.ramstein.af.mil/Portals/6/documents/Civilian_Personnel_Section/Factsheets/EMR/Health_Wellness-Feb20.pdf?ver=2020-02-18-075711-873)



Time off for physical fitness activities will be coordinated in advance with management officials, and documented with an approved leave request in ATAAPS. Use of duty time (excused absence) is appropriate only if approved by the supervisor in accordance with procedures. Mission impact is the key element in making this decision.

- Normally, overtime, compensatory time, and credit hours may not be approved nor earned on days when use of duty time is authorized under this program. Credit hours, overtime, and compensatory time may not be earned while an employee is actually performing fitness activities.
- The employee and supervisor are required to document physical fitness time in ATAAPS with the appropriate code (LN) for administrative leave. The sub code (PF) should be used to specify the type of administrative leave being used.
- Participation is strictly voluntary and supervisors have the authority to revoke participation privileges at any time.
- To minimize travel time away from work, employees are encouraged to utilize installation fitness facilities, or facilities immediately adjacent to the installation or work center with which the employee or agency may have an agreement.
- USAFE-AFARICA employees may participate in the Physical Fitness Program on their telework day, as long as it is documented on the telework agreement and follows requirements identified by DODI1400.25V630\_AFI36-815, Section 6.a.(1).  
(see USAFE-AFARICA Installations and Tenant Units Telework Policy & Civilian Telework Guide).

For questions, please contact your supervisor or Employee Management Relations at: [86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil](mailto:86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil).

## PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs) are employment-related activities that are banned in the federal workforce because they violate the merit system through some form of employment discrimination, retaliation, improper hiring practices, or failure to adhere to laws, rules, or regulations that directly concern the merit system principles. This includes reprisal for whistleblowing, defined by law at 5 USC 2302(b). Generally stated, a federal employee who has authority over personnel decisions may NOT:

1. Discriminate against an employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation;
2. Request or consider employment recommendations about an employee or applicant based on factors other than personal knowledge or records of job-related abilities or characteristics;
3. Coerce the political activity of any person or retaliate against an employee for refusing to engage in political activity;
4. Intentionally deceive or obstruct anyone from competing for employment;
5. Influence anyone to withdraw from competition in order to improve or injure the employment prospects of any person;
6. Give an unauthorized advantage in order to improve or injure the employment prospects of any person;
7. Engage in nepotism (i.e., hire, promote, or advocate the hiring or promotion of relatives);
8. Retaliate against an employee for whistleblowing. Agency officials cannot take, fail to take, or threaten to take a personnel action because of an employee's whistleblowing;
9. Retaliate because an employee filed a complaint, grievance or appeal; testified for or helped someone else who testified; cooperated with or disclosed information to the Special Counsel or an Inspector General; or refused to obey an order that would require the employee to violate a law;
10. Discriminate due to conduct that does not adversely affect job performance;
11. Take or fail to take, recommend, or approve a personnel action if the official knows that doing so would violate a veterans' preference requirement;
12. Take or fail to take a personnel action if doing so would violate any law, rule or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit system principles;
13. Implement or enforce a nondisclosure policy, form, or agreement, if it does not contain a specific statement notifying employees of their rights, obligations, or liabilities relating to classified information, communications to Congress, whistleblowing to an Inspector General, or any other whistleblower protection; or
14. Access the medical record of another employee or applicant in furtherance of any conduct prescribed by the 13 other PPPs.

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has the authority to investigate and prosecute violations of the 14 PPPs.

### **HOW CAN A PERSON FILE A PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICE COMPLAINT?**

Federal employees, former federal employees and applicants for federal employment can file a claim of PPP with OSC by completing OSC Form 14. Claims can be filed online at: <https://osc.gov/Pages/File-Complaint.aspx>. OSC requires that you use this form in order to submit a complaint alleging a prohibited personnel practice or other prohibited activity within OSC's jurisdiction. OSC encourages, but does not require you to use this form to submit a complaint alleging a Hatch Act violation or to submit a disclosure of information alleging agency wrong doing. Employees can also download the OSC Form 14 for completion and mail to the OSC at: U.S. Office of Special Counsel, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505. For further information refer to OSC's website at: <https://osc.gov/>.

## CIVILIAN DRESS CODE

Civilian Dress code is covered in AFI 36-703, Civilian Conduct and Responsibility, Chapter 4.

Employees are expected to comply with reasonable dress and grooming standards based on comfort, productivity, health, safety, and type of position occupied. Due to the diversity of work functions and locations, appropriate dress standards may vary significantly.



For civilian dress, employee attire will be in good repair, and should not be considered offensive, disruptive, or unsafe. Commanders or civilian equivalents may establish and publish civilian dress standards for their employees. Such standards should be consistent with the provisions listed above. Management disagreement with styles, modes of dress, and grooming currently in fashion is not an adequate criterion for establishing local civilian dress standards. Note that military grooming and appearance standards do not apply to civilian employees.



If you have any questions specific to your work area, check with your supervisor. Additional questions or concerns may be addressed to [86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil](mailto:86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil)

## Merit System Principles

The Merit Systems Principles (5 USC 2301(b)) outline requirements for managing the workforce in a fair and equitable manner and protect employees from arbitrary and capricious personnel actions and decisions. For more information go to:

<http://www.mspb.gov/meritsystemsprinciples.htm>



## Fehlerhafte Zuweisung von Tätigkeiten

Eine fehlerhafte Zuweisung ist eine inkorrekte oder unangemessene Anweisung eines Vorgesetzten an einen Arbeitnehmer, Haupttätigkeiten auszuführen, die nicht in der offiziellen Stellenbeschreibung festgelegt sind. Auch umgekehrt kann es zu einer fehlerhaften Zuweisung kommen und zwar dann, wenn die offizielle Stellenbeschreibung Haupttätigkeiten enthält, die überhaupt nicht oder nur teilweise vom Arbeitnehmer ausgeführt werden. Fehlerhafte Zuweisungen sind ein Hinweis auf schwerwiegende Fehlsteuerung von personellen Ressourcen und Planstellen, welche von allen Vorgesetzten vermieden werden sollten. Die Festlegung von Aufgabenbereichen basiert auf erforderlichen Aufgaben und Funktionen, Personalanforderungen und/oder Personalstärke, welche von der Luftwaffe ermittelt und bestimmt sind. Gründe für fehlerhafte Zuweisungen sind das Versäumnis von Management, die Tätigkeiten gemäß dem offiziellen Bedarf festzulegen, zu beschreiben und zuzuweisen; Managements Versäumnis, vor der



Zuweisung neuer Aufgabenbereiche an der offiziellen Stellenbeschreibung Änderungen vorzunehmen; oder das Hauptaugenmerk von Management liegt eher auf der Person anstatt auf den tatsächlichen Anforderungen der Planstelle. Um fehlerhafte Zuweisungen zu vermeiden, sollte das zuständige Management die Eingruppierungsabteilung des zivilen Personalbüros über erforderliche Änderungen, Anpassungen, oder Überarbeitungen informieren, um die Positionsvoraussetzungen akkurat zu reflektieren.

## Misassignment

A misassignment is an incorrect or inappropriate assignment which occurs when a supervisor/manager tasks and/or allows a subordinate employee to perform major duties which are not described in the official position description (PD). The opposite situation is considered a misassignment as well; for instance, when the official job description includes major duties which are not performed by the individual.

A misassignment indicates serious mismanagement of human resources and should be avoided by all supervisors.

Work assignments are based on mission and functional requirements, manning needs and other factors as determined by the Air Force.

Reasons for misassignments are: Management's failure to officially assign and describe mission/function requirements in duty descriptions; management's failure to request official job description changes prior to assigning new duties on a continuing basis; and management having a main focus of attention on the person in the position versus position requirements.

To prevent misassignments, management should inform the civilian personnel staff performing classification work of any necessary changes/adjustments/revisions required to reflect accurate position requirements.



## Update zu Entschädigungen nach dem Infektionsschutzgesetz für die notwendige Betreuung von Kindern bei Schließungen von Kitas und Schulen sowie Anspruch auf Kinderkrankengeld zu Zeiten von COVID-19 für Non-US Beschäftigte (Local Nationals)

In unseren Newsletter Ausgaben vom Juli/August sowie Mai/Juni 2020 haben wir Sie bereits zu Entschädigungsleistungen nach dem Infektionsschutzgesetz (IfSG) für die notwendige Betreuung von Kindern bei Schließungen von Kitas und Schulen zu Zeiten von COVID-19 für Non-US Beschäftigte sowie unseren internen Prozess informiert. In dem heutigen Newsletter Artikel möchten wir Sie über die neuen gesetzlichen Entwicklungen zu diesem Thema informieren:

Mit Inkrafttreten des Vierten Gesetzes zum Schutz der Bevölkerung wird bei einer epidemischen Lage von nationaler Tragweite, der Anspruch auf Kinderkrankengeld nach § 45 Abs. 2a SGB V für das Kalenderjahr 2021 erweitert. Danach besteht für das Kalenderjahr 2021 für jedes Kind längstens für 30 Arbeitstage (ursprünglich 10 Arbeitstage) und für alleinerziehende Versicherte längstens 60 Arbeitstage (ursprünglich 20 Arbeitstage) Anspruch auf Kinderkrankengeld. Insgesamt besteht der Anspruch für Versicherte in diesem Kalenderjahr für nicht mehr als 65 Arbeitstage (ursprünglich 25 Arbeitstage) sowie für alleinerziehende Versicherte für nicht mehr als 130 Arbeitstage (ursprünglich 50 Arbeitstage). Der Anspruch auf Kinderkrankengeld besteht auch bei der Schließung von Kitas und Schulen bei der Erreichung der entsprechenden Inzidenzwerten. Dem Arbeitgeber ist die Abwesenheit anzuzeigen.

Nach dem neuen § 56 Abs. 2 IfSG besteht der Anspruch auf Entschädigung von nunmehr längstens zehn Wochen pro erwerbstätigem Elternteil nur für die Dauer der Feststellung vom Deutschen Bundestag, dass eine epidemische Lage von nationaler Tragweite besteht. Der Entschädigungsanspruch pro erwerbstätigem Elternteil entsteht pro Jahr. Dieser Jahreszeitraum begann mit der erstmaligen Feststellung des Deutschen Bundestages am 28. März 2020. Damit entsteht der Anspruch auf Entschädigung ab dem 28. März 2021 neu. Eine Übertragung von Resttagen aus dem alten Gewährungszeitraum (28. März 2020 – 27. März 2021) ist nicht möglich. Die Feststellung einer epidemischen Lage von nationaler Tragweite gilt dann als aufgehoben, wenn der Deutsche Bundestag nicht spätestens 3 Monate nach der letzten Feststellung ein erneutes Fortbestehen der epidemischen Lage von nationaler Tragweite feststellt. Der Deutsche Bundestag hat zuletzt am 04. März 2021 ein Fortbestehen festgestellt, somit laufen die Regelungen aus, sollte bis Juni 2021 kein neuer Beschluss gefasst werden.

Für die Zeit des Bezugs von Kinderkrankengeld (§ 45 SGB V) ruht für beide Elternteile der Entschädigungsanspruch (§ 56 IfSG). Für denselben Zeitraum kann nur ein Anspruch geltend gemacht werden. Es ist den Beschäftigten überlassen, welchen Anspruch sie wählen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass es sich bei der Beantragung des Entschädigungsanspruches nach § 56 IfSG um einen gesonderten Prozess handelt, wie es in den vorherigen Newsletter Artikeln beschrieben wurde. Alle sonstigen Regelungen und Abwicklungsprozedere bleiben zu diesem Zeitpunkt unverändert.

Bei Fragen steht Ihnen Ihr Non-US EMR Team (DSN 480-5365) gerne zur Verfügung.  
Ihr EMR-Team

## [Update on compensation for the necessary care of children when daycare centers and schools are closed, and entitlement to child sick pay at times of COVID-19](#)

In our July/August and May/June 2020 newsletter articles, we informed you about compensation payments as well as our internal process under the German Infection Protection Act for the necessary care of children when daycare centers and schools are closed at the time of COVID-19 for non-US employees (Local Nationals). In this updated article, we would like to inform you about the following new developments.

With the implementation of the Fourth Law for the Protection of the Population in the epidemic situation of national significance, the entitlement to children's sick pay according to Art. 45 (2a) of the Fifth Book of Social Security Code will be extended for the calendar year 2021. Under the new law, each employee will be entitled to child sickness benefits for a maximum of 30 working days (originally 10 working days) and single parents for a maximum of 60 working days (originally 20 working days) in the calendar year 2021. The total entitlement for insured persons in this calendar year is no more than 65 working days (originally 25 working days) and for single parents no more than 130 working days (originally 50 working days). Entitlement to children's sick pay also occurs when daycare centers and schools are closed at the time of COVID-19 when the relevant incidence levels are reached.

According to the new Art. 56 (2) of the German Infection Protection Act, the entitlement to compensation of now a maximum of ten weeks per working parent exists only for the duration of the determination by the German Bundestag that an epidemic situation of national significance prevails. The compensation entitlement per working parent accrues per year. This annual period began with the first determination by the German Bundestag on March 28, 2020. This means that the entitlement to compensation arises newly as of March 28, 2021. It is not possible to carry over remaining days from the old grant period (March 28, 2020 - March 27, 2021). The determination of an epidemic situation of national importance is then considered to be cancelled if the German Bundestag does not determine a renewed continuation of the epidemic situation of national importance no later than 3 months after the last determination. The German Bundestag last determined a continuation on March 04, 2021, therefore the regulations will expire if no new decision is made by June 2021.

For the period of entitlement to children's sick pay (Art. 45 (2a) of the Fifth Book of Social Security Code), the entitlement to compensation is suspended for both parents (Art. 56 (2) German Infection Protection Act). Only one claim can be made for the same period of time. It is up to the employees which entitlement they choose. Please note that submitting a compensation claim is a separate process, as described in previous newsletter articles. All other regulations and administrative procedures remain unchanged at this time.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Non-US EMR Team (DSN 480-5365).