

AMEPilot

May 2021 Newsletter

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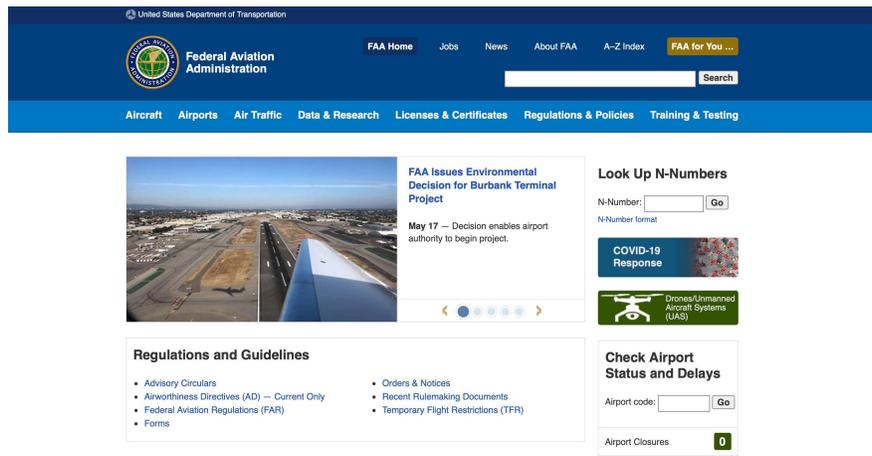
Since my last Newsletter before the Christmas and New Year's holidays the COVID-19 pandemic has begun to recede. Only months ago, Los Angeles was the center of the pandemic with the 3rd wave of infections devastating our area. The San Fernando Valley was especially hard hit with the highest case rates in the nation. Currently, we are one of the lowest areas of infection. What a turnaround! Many public health factors have contributed to this reversal of fortune - including our diligent adherence to **TIME, SPACE, PEOPLE, PLACE and vaccinations**. However, it is imperative that we still maintain our vigilance as the COVID-19 infection is still with us. Currently, 33,000,000 Americans have been infected; and 582,000 have died. Today alone 33,000 people in the US will be infected and 600 will succumb to the disease and die. 600 deaths a day is equivalent to 2 jumbo jets crashing each day. An astounding statistic! Some countries such as India and Brazil are especially hard hit with several thousands of deaths each day.

The prospect of becoming a COVID "**long-hauler**" is still a very serious issue. This post-COVID-19 syndrome is now formally labeled "**Post-Acute-Sequelae of SARS COV-2.**" Dr. Fauci and the CDC has labeled it **P-A-S-C**, a term used to describe the lingering bad effects of COVID-19, which can continue for months after the initial acute infection. A variable percentage of infected people of all age ranges can become "long haulers." At least 1 in 10 were found to have long term effects at 8 months following their illness. The reason for this is not yet known. Anyone infected with the virus has the potential to develop long term symptoms even if they were not hospitalized or had serious illness.

This is not good news for pilots as the "long haul" symptoms preclude flying. A pilot affected by "Post-Acute-Sequelae of COVID-19" will experience symptoms of fatigue, cognitive impairment/brain fog, mood disorders, emotional lability, as well as respiratory, cardiac, and neurological complaints. Loss of smell and taste is common. Physical impairment from muscle and joint pain limit movement. The most common symptom reported in 80% of patients is unusual fatigue. More than one half of the patients reported trouble with thinking/concentration/memory - brain fog; and one half of the patients reported that they were experiencing difficulties performing basic activities of daily living. Only 1 in 3 had been able to return to full work activity. As if this is not bad enough, it was also discovered that the risk of developing erectile dysfunction was sixfold higher in men, and even young males with COVID-19. Many large medical

centers such as the Mayo Clinic are actively researching this “long haul” syndrome as an attempt to better define the disease process, and its effect on our population. The CDC has launched INSPIRE - Innovative Support for Patients with SARS-CoV-2 registry - to follow “long haul” patients over time. This, in order to gain a better understanding of the disease process. It is recommended that if you continue to experience prolonged symptoms after a COVID-19 infection you should not hesitate to seek evaluation and appropriate care. Most importantly, getting vaccinated appears to not only greatly diminish the chance of contracting and/or transmitting the virus, but it also lessens the chance of becoming a “long hauler” with P-A-C-S as well.

The FAA has provided information regarding its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



On the opening web page at faa.gov, on the right side of the page select the box labeled COVID-19 Response, and you are directed to the next web page where you will find information on Regulatory Updates, Guidance and Resources, SFARs and Temporary Control Tower Adjustments.

Coronavirus 

- Latest News and Updates
- FAA Facilities Affected by COVID-19
- Vaccine Transport
- Regulatory Updates
- Guidance & Resources

Regulatory Updates

- Extended Air Carrier Training Exemptions
- Clarifying information for Airmen Using Medical Certificate Duration Relief
- Extension of Minimum Slot Usage Requirements
- Second Amendment to Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 118
- Amendment of Air Carrier Training Exemptions
- FAA Extends Flight Attendant Exemption
- FAA Amends Exemption for Certain Air Ambulance Personnel
- New Cargo Exemption, Amendment to Existing Cargo Exemption
- Amendment to Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 118
- Updated CARES Act FAQs
- Exemption for Transporting Cargo on Airplane Seats
- Exemption for Certain Air Ambulance Personnel
- Relief for Certain Persons and Operations during the COVID-19 Outbreak
- Temporary Control Tower Hour Adjustments
- FAA extends AIP Application Deadlines
- Drone Use for Response Efforts
- Flight Attendant Exemption
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Airport Program
- Additional Pilot Medical Certificate Exemptions
- Air Carrier Training Exemptions
- Pilot Medical Certificates
- Airport Slot-Use Waivers
- Temporary Parking of Overflow Aircraft
- Airport Certification Safety Inspections

Coronavirus



Latest News and Updates

FAA Facilities Affected by COVID-19

Vaccine Transport

Regulatory Updates

Guidance & Resources

Guidance and Resources

- Use of COVID-19 Vaccines by Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers
- Transporting Dry Ice
- FlyHealthy.gov
- Enforcement Discretion for Random Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Updated Health Guidance for Air Carriers and Crews
- FAA Issues Guidance about Flexibly Managing Scheduled Maintenance Requirements Due to COVID-19
- FAA Issues Guidance on Operations in Terminal Airspace
- Runway to Recovery: Government publishes national strategy for air transportation system recovery
- FAA issues guidance on operations in oceanic airspace
- Updated Guidance for Airport Sponsors Considering COVID-19 Restrictions or Accommodations
- Cargo Guidance for Safety Inspectors
- Cargo Transportation Guidance
- Flexible Air Traffic Control Schedule
- Information for Airport Sponsors
- Guidance to FAA Inspectors
- FAA Construction Projects
- Airport Construction Projects
- Airport Improvement Program
- Aviation Maintenance Technician Schools
- COVID-19 Information
- Sharing Health Safety Messages
- Pilot Oxygen Mask Requirements
- Expanded Drone Operations
- Puerto Rico Flight Restriction Request
- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Guidance for States, Localities, and Territories Considering Air Transportation Restrictions

Also, on the home page of faa.gov select Licenses and Certificates, then when you select Medical Certification, you will arrive at the **FAA Memorandum dated March 26, 2021** on the subject: **Policy Memo Regarding Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) Evaluations of Airmen and Air Traffic Control Specialists (ATCS) with a History of COVID-19.**

Medical Certification



[Air Carrier and Air Agency Certification](#)

[Aircraft Certification](#)

[Airmen Certification](#)

[Airport Certification](#)

[Commercial Space Transportation](#)

Medical Certification 

Important Policy Memorandums

- [Policy Memorandum Regarding Yellow Fever Vaccine \(PDF\)](#)
- [Policy Memorandum Regarding Aviation Medical Examiner \(AME\) Evaluations of Airmen and Air Traffic Control Specialists \(ATCS\) with a History of COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#)

Vaccines

The COVID-19 public health emergency has driven extraordinary global efforts to develop an effective and safe vaccine. The vaccines produced by Pfizer and BioNTech, Moderna, and the Janssen Single-Dose COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Johnson & Johnson, have been made available to the American public under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). After careful review of available data regarding safety profiles, the FAA Office of Aerospace Medicine (AAM) adopts the following policy as both safe and operationally responsive to this unique situation:

Holders of FAA-issued Airman Medical Certificates or Medical Clearances may receive the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine; however, a 48-hour no fly/no safety related duty interval must be observed after each dose.

Individuals holding an Airman Medical Certificate or Medical Clearance should be reminded that they are prohibited from performing flight crewmember duties or air traffic control duties if they do not meet medical certification requirements, including those related to adverse events from medications that render them unable to perform such duties.

AAM will monitor the patient response to each vaccine and may adjust this policy as necessary to ensure aviation safety. Additional vaccines will each be evaluated as EUAs are issued.

Top Tasks

- [Get a medical certificate](#)
- [Log in to AMCS](#)
- [Contact Office of Aerospace Medicine](#)
- [View pilot medical certification FAQs](#)

This Memorandum provides guidance to AMEs performing flight physicals on airmen that have been infected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The FAA is concerned that a COVID-19 infection may lead to sequelae that may affect an airman's ability to perform safety sensitive functions. Six categories of COVID-19 disease progression are listed. First of all in category 1 - an airman who is currently infected should not present for a flight physical until asymptomatic. In category 2 - a laboratory confirmed asymptomatic or mild infection with a full recovery can be issued medical certification. Similarly, in category 3 - a prolonged outpatient infection with a full recovery; and in category 4 - fully recovered following hospitalization, but did not require intensive care, can be issued medical certification. For category 5 - fully recovered requiring hospitalization requiring intensive care; and category 6 - continuing to experience ongoing residual signs and symptoms of confirmed COVID-19, their medical certification will be deferred to the AMCS FAA medical facility in Oklahoma City for review.

The FAA also recommends that after vaccination for COVID-19, pilots should wait a minimum of 48 hours before resuming flying.

In summary, we are still in the pandemic. In February 2021 we lost Mike Collins, a 59 year old AOPA journalist, to the disease. Conditions are improving day by day, and the CDC issues guidelines almost daily allowing us to be more social; especially if you are fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated people have little risk of contracting a serious SARS-CoV-2 infection, passing on the disease by infecting others, and little chance of becoming a "long hauler."

Safe flying,

Gregory Hanker, M.D.