



AIR MARSHAL ASSOCIATION

Federal Air Marshal Hardships during COVID-19

Overview:

Air Marshal Association members experienced hardships while working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

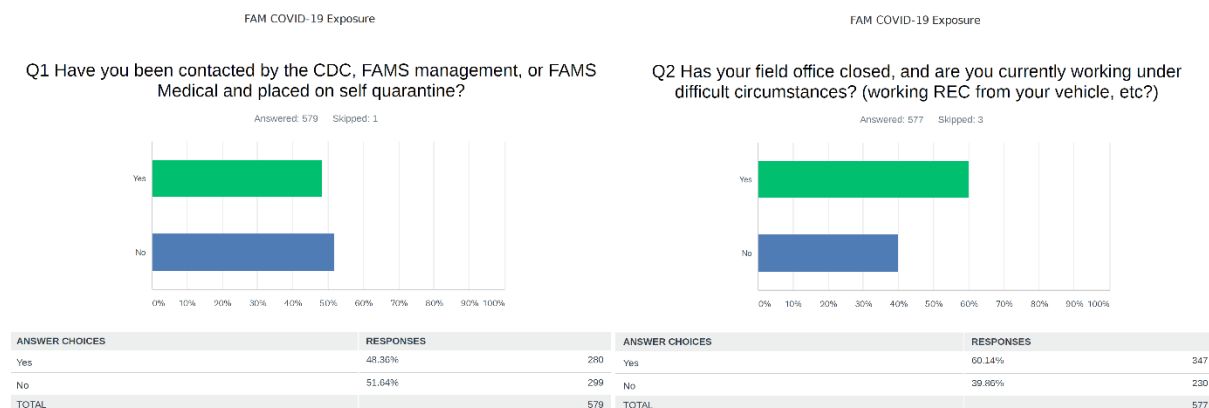
Federal Air Marshals (FAMs) are essential personnel, and are required to fly on missions deemed 'high risk' for terrorism. Since transportation security is paramount, no risk based schedule modifications occurred, and FAMs necessarily flew to International COVID hot spots.

As the outbreak progressed, the FAM agency gradually modified its response; however, it was initially reactive instead of proactive. As CDC quarantine notifications to air passengers began, the agency allowed those FAMs notified to remain at home for 2 weeks to self-monitor. As the virus further progressed, agency operations began granting 2 weeks self-monitor leave to FAMs assigned to missions where they were seated in close proximity to COVID positive travelers. Ultimately, the agency granted health and safety leave to those agents with immunodeficiency, or had a health compromised loved one at home.

Air Marshal Association members resolutely flew to impacted countries, and served honorably throughout the pandemic. FAMs continue to work in difficult conditions. Federal officers forced to work through the COVID crisis by nature of their position and responsibilities should be, at a minimum, paid hazardous duty pay.

Survey results:

Below are survey results for Air Marshal Association members taken on 3/24/2020 and ending on 3/31/2020. The results clearly indicate over half of the FAM workgroup endured hardships related to essential duties during COVID-19.



Personal stories from Air Marshal Association members:

"On 2/26/2020 I was exposed while on a mission status flight from PHL- LAX. Notified 12 days later by CDC and MD state health department. Since no symptoms they would not test me. I had to contact my US Senator and his office got it done. I did this because I flew on 5 other flights and was in our office 2 days. Took a week to get results, negative. By the way, I was the first with exposure In the FAM service."-**M.**

"59 FAMs were place on leave because of their contact with me. I didn't get to see my girlfriend or her daughter for 14 days. I missed my custody time with my two daughters so I won't get to see them until the summer. My boss gave me a little push back on filing my CA-1 trying to say that I didn't get it from the SFAM that three of us got it from. Then he gave me grief when I had internet problems and couldn't work a few days from home. When I got it fixed, he gave me a hard time for working after testing positive. But he usually doesn't treat people well, so nothing out of the ordinary with this episode. I had to find a way to have groceries delivered during quarantine. You couldn't get a delivery same day. Neighbors had to mow my lawn."-**B.T.**

"Before and at the start of symptoms, I have been conducting standard FAM domestic and foreign flying missions (to Asia, the UK and Germany), and interacted with coworkers in a normal manner until knowledge of the pandemic became widespread and the service initiated mitigation measures. In my mind it is a certainty that our line of work places us first in line for exposure to dangerous new and little-known pathogens like Covid-19, as well as the full suite of more common communicative diseases."-**M.S.**

"I for one was sick in March with several COVID 19 symptoms; however, I was not eligible for a test, as the tests were very scarce, and I did not fall into any of the high risk patient categories. I was also unable to conclusively prove that I had direct contact with an infected individual, thus I was instructed to self-quarantine and monitor my symptoms for complications. I was able to return to work following the requisite CDC guidelines, but because my case was not confirmed, I was not counted as an infected individual."-**M.S.**

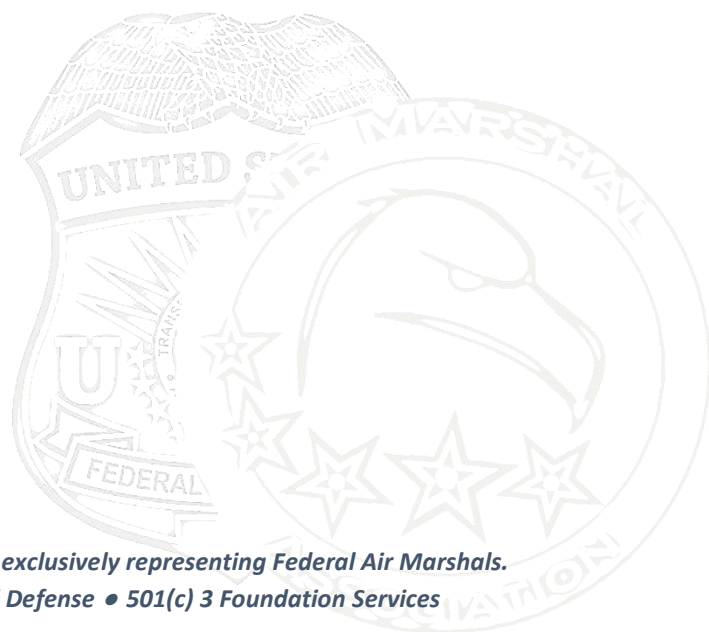
"I first began manifesting symptoms of COVID 19 on 3/27, having been assigned to four domestic flights over the prior two weeks. My concerns about flying during the peak of a pandemic were disregarded at both a field office and headquarters level. My personal experience with the virus was brutal, with symptoms of fever, aches, severe congestion and fatigue, just to name a few. Despite engaging in strict exposure precautions when caring for me, my wife also contracted Covid-19 (verified). The state of New York is not testing children, but I expect our six year old daughter was infected as well, as she showed less severe symptoms. I'm a 45 year old man with a strong immune system. I cannot recall feeling sicker than this in my life. I did not begin feeling anywhere close to normal until 4/12. Although our daughter seems to have recovered, my wife still has intermittent symptoms that have focused on the more serious

breathing issues associated with Covid-19. There is a serious and pronounced risk to law enforcement officers being compelled to work in these conditions. Combining an airborne pandemic with the woefully poor cleaning practices of commercial aircraft and the small, confined spaces is a recipe for disaster. Even if I want to play tough guy and say, "I signed up for this", my family certainly did not. And if we're being honest here, FAMS signed up to serve as highly-trained counter terrorism agents, not hosts to a well-documented and dangerous virus. Failing to compensate them for that exposure would be a tremendous sign of disrespect to the agents and their families that are being placed in direct danger by working in these conditions."-C.L.

"Whether FAMs are performing Airport Security, VIPR, on Recovery/Stand by, SMC Coverage and/or actually flying, they too are on the COVID-19 Frontline and classified as Essential Personnel and First Responders. We run into danger, not away from it.

Having recently flown Mission status, I can assure you there is not 6 feet Social Distancing onboard. Additionally, not all Passengers and/or Flight Crews are wearing masks."-D.K.

"My wife is currently under a doctor's care for an auto-immune disease and is auto-immune compromised. On the advice of her doctor, she forwent her infusion treatment in March when I was notified I had been exposed to a co-worker who had tested positive for Covid-19. Due to my work environment we have elected to limit our interaction while I am at home. We have elected to sleep in separate bedrooms. I take my clothes off in the garage before entering our house after a deployment and go directly to the shower. We will continue to be cautious until such time we can feel confident of avoiding an exposure incident."-D.H.



The Air Marshal Association is the largest labor organization exclusively representing Federal Air Marshals.
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