

<p align="center">State of Alaska Mike Dunleavy, Governor</p>	<p align="center">Alaska Workers' Compensation Division PO Box 115512 Juneau, Alaska 99811-5512</p>		
<p>Department of Labor and Workforce Development</p>	<p align="center">BULLETIN</p>	<p>Number 20-02 (<i>REVISED</i>)</p>	<p>Date August 13, 2020</p>
<p>Dr. Tamika L. Ledbetter Commissioner</p>	<p>SUBJECT REFERENCE</p>	<p>Out-of-State travel for second independent medical evaluations (SIMEs). AS 23.30.095(k); 8 AAC 45.092</p>	

In some cases, the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board requires Second Independent Medical Evaluations (SIMEs), which often necessitate air travel outside Alaska. The location of many SIME doctors may result in travel through areas with a higher number of reported COVID-19 cases. The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) states some individuals are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness and is recommending that high risk individuals avoid non-essential air travel until further notice (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-riskcomplications.html>).

In light of the CDC recommendation, injured workers who are considered to be at high risk by the CDC, or whose physician has stated they should not travel, will not be required to attend out-of-state SIMEs that require air travel. Travel to these SIMEs will be suspended until the CDC lifts its recommendation against air travel for high risk individuals.

Injured workers who are at high risk or whose doctors have stated they should not travel are encouraged to contact the division as soon as possible.

If an injured worker is not at high risk and all parties agree, a SIME that requires air travel may proceed. Several jurisdictions, including Alaska, and several airlines have imposed restrictions on travelers due to COVID-19. The cost of any testing, layovers, quarantine, or medical treatment due to COVID-19 during or resulting from the SIME travel will be considered part of the cost of the examination under AS 23.30.095(k) that shall be paid by the employer.

If you have questions regarding the information in this bulletin, please contact the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Workers' Compensation Division at (907) 269-4980, or by email at workerscomp@alaska.gov.