



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
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DORAL, FL 33172-1202

SC-COS

22 August 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR All Directorates and Staff

SUBJECT: Command Guidance for HQ USSOUTHCOM Staff Regarding Force Health Protection and Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) Workplace Protocols.

1. References:

- a. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Website, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- b. Under Secretary of Defense Memorandum, " Consolidated Department of Defense Coronavirus Disease 2019 Force Health Protection Guidance- Revision 4" January 30, 2023.
- c. Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, "Tools to Mitigate the Treat of the Omicron Variant of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in the Department of Defense", December 30, 2021.
- d. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Website, "What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html>

2. Purpose. Protecting the health of our force is of vital importance to supporting the mission. This memorandum updates earlier guidance on the same topic based upon the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and DoD Force Health Protection Guidance.

3. Applicability. This applies to all U.S. military and civilian personnel assigned, attached, or on temporary duty to HQ USSOUTHCOM. Contractors will abide by these workplace guidelines except for telework instructions. Contractors will coordinate directly with their Contracting Officer Representative and company regarding their contract's telework policy. All individuals on military installations and all individuals performing official duties on behalf of the Department from any location other than the individual's home will follow CDC guidance for COVID-19 preventive measures.

4. Background. The global pandemic caused by Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) has posed a public health risk to the force and mission capabilities. This has had an impact on travel and workplace norms. This revised memo outlines the general measures that individuals at Headquarters, USSOUTHCOM will follow to continue to minimize the associated risk from this disease as the virus and our countermeasures evolve.

5. Preventive Measures. Preventive measures include increasing the distance between individuals as needed, minimizing the use of shared objects, regular cleaning, wearing of masks, and vaccination against COVID-19, and recommended booster vaccinations. All personnel are expected to conduct themselves with vigilance, both on and off duty, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Per CDC and Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) guidelines, all USSOUTHCOM Headquarters personnel will comply with the following measures to protect the team.

a. Personal Behaviors:

(1) Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If unable to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

(2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

(3) Clean your frequently touched objects/equipment and surfaces at least every 24 hours. Clean your work area at the start and end of each shift.

(4) Being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines including boosters is strongly recommended for all service members, civilian employees, and contractors. It is recommended that individuals get vaccinated with vaccines that are either fully licensed or authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization.

(5) All military personnel, civilian personnel and contractors will self-monitor daily for exposure and symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been exposed to or suspect any COVID-19 related symptoms, DO NOT enter the headquarters without proper medical clearance. Notify your supervisor and contact your medical provider for clinical recommendations. Follow the Return-to-Work guidance found on www.southcom.mil/coronavirus to return to work.

b. Workplace Adjustments and Duty Schedules:

(1) Supervisors will ensure that personnel that telework have clear guidance on the requirements and responsibilities outlined in their telework agreement.

(2) If military and civilian personnel identify they have dependent-care limitations, they will work with their leadership to continue telework to the extent possible. Employees and leadership will balance mission requirements. Employees must still account for work and

non-work hours during the duty day and take appropriate leave for time spent away from normal work-related duties.

(3) Cleaning of Office Spaces. Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will ensure that cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer are always stocked and readily available to their sections. Staff will coordinate with the Headquarters Commandant/ 1SG for resupply. Staff will routinely clean commonly used items and surfaces in the workplace/conference rooms and disinfect them when a suspected or known COVID case has been in contact with the surfaces.

6. Accountability.

a. Reporting. Monday through Friday, conduct accountability through Daily Muster per J1 protocols. Directorate deputies, XO, and accountability managers will report all individuals affected by COVID-19 with the following status options: hospitalized, quarantine/restriction of movement (ROM), isolation (self or medically directed), COVID-19 positive cases, and recovered cases. Isolation status applies to those who have symptoms and/or have tested positive for COVID-19. Supervisors will conduct daily morale and welfare checks with individuals in quarantine/ROM or isolation.

b. Symptoms Monitoring.

(1) All employees will self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms daily.

(2) Any individual who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately isolate, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

(3) Return to Work after COVID-19 Illness or Close Contact.

(4) Regardless of vaccination status, personnel who test positive for COVID-19 will isolate for 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or if their symptoms are resolving after 5 days, they can discontinue isolation after day 5. The date of the positive test result is considered day 0 and isolation starts on the day after the positive test. **If fever, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue start or persist, personnel will continue to isolate until these symptoms resolve without the aid of medication.** All COVID-19 positive cases will continue to always wear (whether indoors or outdoors) a mask around others and maintain at least 6 feet separation from others for an additional 5 days. Personnel who are exposed to COVID-19, who become ill, and/or who test positive for COVID-19 will follow the USSOUTHCOM Headquarters Return to Work Guidelines posted on www.southcom.mil/coronavirus. These guidelines are updated as needed to align with the latest CDC recommendations. More information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html>

(5) If individuals have questions about their ability to return to work, they should first seek medical advice from their primary care manager. The Army

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Health Clinic provides occupational health guidance for the USSOUTHCOM Headquarters; they are here to assist individuals who have additional questions after evaluation by their primary care manager.

(6) Regardless of your vaccination status or a previous infection(s), close contacts of COVID-19 cases must wear a mask around others as soon as they find out that they were exposed. Day 0 is the day of the last exposure with someone with COVID-19. Day 1 is the first full day after the last exposure. Close contacts regardless of vaccination status must continue precautions for 10 full days after exposure. Get tested at least 5 full days after your last exposure even if you do not develop symptoms. If you test negative, continue taking precautions through day 10 including wearing a well fitted mask when around others at home and indoor in public. Regardless of vaccination status, asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are not required to test. If you test positive, isolate immediately and follow guidance for positive COVID-19 cases.

7. Official Travel and Leave Guidance.

a. It is recommended all personnel are up to date with vaccinations prior to travel.

b. Individuals should consult the following resources, as applicable, prior to travel:

(1) DoD COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Installation Status Update, available at <https://www.defense.gov/explore/spotlight/coronavirus/>

(2) CDC Travel Advisory, Health Notices, FAQs and more information, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html/>

(3) Dept of State Travel Advisories, available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/11t/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

(4) Foreign Clearance Guide for theater and country entry requirements available at <https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>

8. This memorandum will be updated as the evolving COVID-19 situation requires. You may also review the COVID-19 frequently asked questions (FAQs) at <https://www.southcom.mil/coronavirus/> for additional updates. The point of contact for this action is the Deputy Chief of Staff, at 305-437-1034.

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FOR THE COMMANDER:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Jackson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

SCOTT A. JACKSON
Major General, USA
Chief of Staff

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