



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
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SC-COS

29 July 2021

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/index.html>
- b. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 20) – Department of Defense Guidance for Personnel Traveling During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," April 12, 2021.
- c. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transition to Conditions-Based Phase Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," March 15, 2021.
- d. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 18) – Department of Defense Guidance for Protecting All Personnel in Department of Defense Workplaces during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," March 17, 2021.
- e. Commander, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Update to the Transition to Conditions-based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," February 22, 2021.
- f. Chief of Staff, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Visitor Policy and Procedures during COVID-19 Pandemic," April 14, 2021.
- g. Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget Memorandum, "COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles," January 24, 2021. (rescinded)
- h.. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 17) Revision 1 – Department of Defense Guidance for the Use of Masks, Personal Protective Equipment, and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," June 22, 2021.

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) poses a risk to force and mission, impacting travel and workplace norms. This memo revises the general measures that individuals at Headquarters, USSOUTHCOM will implement to minimize the associated risk while we continue to react to increased vaccination rates and the community re-opens.

5. Preventive Measures. Preventive measures include increasing the distance between individuals, minimizing the use of shared objects, regular cleaning, and wearing of masks. COVID-19 vaccines are highly encouraged and readily available. 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) Avoid touching other workers' phones, desks, or other work equipment. If you must use a shared item, disinfect before and after usage.

(4) Avoid handshaking and other forms of physical contact with co-workers.

(5) Practice physical distancing, including standing and sitting at least 6 feet apart. Individuals who are fully vaccinated per CDC standards are not required to maintain physical distancing. Avoid crowds and places where close contact with others may occur.

(6) 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.

(7) All personnel must wear approved face masks at all times in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms) regardless of vaccination status. Exceptions are permitted when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door or for an individual briefly when eating or drinking and maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines. Those who are not fully vaccinated, must maintain a 6 ft social distance from others both indoors and outdoors for added protection. Masks must cover the nose and mouth, fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), and align with current guidance from the CDC and OSHA. Face shields, bandanas, masks with valves, and novelty/non-protective masks are not a substitute for face masks. For the sake of clarity and consistency for USSOUTHCOM personnel, it is preferred that masks should not have any words or symbols and should be of neutral solid colors, but other colors and patterns are permitted if

they are workplace appropriate and, for military members, IAW service specific guidance. Requests for exceptions to policy (ETPs) for masks to accommodate a disability or request for temporary ETPs due to mission requirements will be routed to the Chief of Staff for approval.

(a) Unmasked, fully vaccinated Service members should be prepared to show proof of vaccination (CDC vaccination card or other medical documentation) and a commander has the authority to verify the vaccination status of Service members.

(b) As a general matter, supervisors may not inquire about or verify the vaccination status of civilian employees. For purposes of determining whether a civilian employee must wear a mask on military installations, unmasked civilian employees may be asked to confirm vaccination status **only if the supervisor has a reasonable basis to believe the unmasked employee has not been fully vaccinated, based on reliable evidence such as firsthand knowledge of voluntary employee statements.** Supervisors must follow applicable force health protection guidance and implement appropriate workplace measures to protect all employees.

(c) Service members are ordered to wear masks in accordance with this protocol if unvaccinated. Service members and civilian employees who misrepresent vaccination status may be subject to appropriate adverse administrative or punitive actions.

(8) Self-monitor daily for exposure and symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been exposed or suspect self of 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 discontinue quarantine or isolation.

(9) Individuals tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms and/or close contact exposure will not return to work while the results are pending. Individuals will follow the USSOUTHCOM Headquarters Return to Work guidance found on www.southcom.mil/coronavirus to discontinue quarantine or isolation.

b. Workplace Adjustments and Duty Schedules

(1) As needed, Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will consider physical distancing, staggering work hours/separate shifts while maintaining focus on mission requirements & force health protection. Occupancy limits may be placed by the Chief of Staff during periods of increased risk. 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 as being at elevated risk, they will coordinate with their supervisor to continue to telework as mission requirements allow to include using the reasonable accommodation process as needed. Risk factors for severe COVID-19 illness can be found on: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>. To support the Director's / Special Staff Chief's decision regarding place of duty, personnel will provide written documentation from a medical provider that he/she is 'high risk' for COVID-19 per CDC guidelines. This documentation must be treated confidentially as medical information; it may not be stored in their civilian personnel record.

(3) If military and civilian personnel identify they have dependent-care limitations because of COVID-19, 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.

c. Cleaning of Office Spaces. Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will ensure that cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer are fully stocked and readily available to their sections at all times. 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. Events and Meetings. Events and meetings may be conducted virtually, in-person, or as a hybrid. When an in-person meeting or event is conducted, the room will be large enough for non-fully-vaccinated personnel to be positioned at least 6 feet apart. Masks will be worn by non-fully-vaccinated personnel throughout the event/meeting. Meeting organizers are responsible to ensure that all attendees comply with social distancing and adherence to mask-wearing throughout the session. If any concerns arise, those concerns will be raised to leadership of the directorate hosting the event.

7. Accountability

a. Reporting

(1) Monday through Friday, conduct accountability through Daily Muster per J1 protocols. In addition to daily muster, the website is set up to enter COVID status information. 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.

(2) A CCIR is submitted when a person tests positive for COVID-19 infection. The USAG-Miami clinic will report all positive results from their clinic directly to the Joint Operations Center. If the individual is tested at a civilian site, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring the CCIR is submitted using the template at <https://intranet.ent.southcom.mil/SitePages/Playbook.aspx>.

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 work day must immediately isolate, notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace.

(3) For workplace exposures, the Rapid Response Team will conduct contact tracing and interviews to control infection and workplace safety. Persons notified by the team are given instructions and advised on next steps to take. The team will work with J1 to ensure transparency in communicating related information to the workforce, as relevant and appropriate, consistent with privacy and confidentiality regulations.

c. Return to Work after COVID-19 Illness or Close Contact

(1) 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/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

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

(3) In accordance with CDC guidelines, the following individuals are exempt from quarantine after exposure to COVID-19: asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals (as defined by the CDC, i.e., 2 weeks after completing the vaccination series). More information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

(4) Asymptomatic individuals who are not fully vaccinated but are designated as mission essential and in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, may return to work earlier, by exception, on a very limited case-by-case basis in accordance with reference (d). This exception to policy may be granted by the Chief of Staff after assessment of the associated risk. If any of the noted force health protection requirements cannot be met in the physical work-centers up to day 14, for the protection of others, individuals should not be cleared to return to work for mission essential tasks.

8. Official Travel and Leave Guidance

a. Military, civilian, and contractors will comply with CDC guidance and DoD requirements for travel as outlined below and in reference (b). Individuals will comply with installation, state, local government travel restrictions and, as applicable, country and theater entry requirements. Individuals should consult the following resources, as applicable, prior to travel:

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

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

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

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

b. Approval authorities: Commanders and supervisors will conduct a risk assessment of the health status and travel itinerary for any service member travel. For DoD civilian

employees, the risk assessment is required before official travel and strongly encouraged before unofficial travel. DoD contractors must complete the risk assessment if required by the contract and they are strongly encouraged to complete the risk assessment for unofficial travel. The [pre-travel screening questionnaire](#) and [post-travel screening questionnaire](#) will be used as noted. Individuals will not travel if they have COVID-19 related symptoms nor if they tested positive and have not met the CDC guidance for discontinuing isolation. Travel will be delayed if they had recent close contact with COVID-19 positive individual.

(1) Leave: Individuals are authorized leave (CONUS & OCONUS) in accordance with reference (e).

(2) Official travel: Official travel for HQ service members and civilians within the continental United States between installations, is approved at a level no lower than an appropriate officer in the grade of O-6 or a civilian equivalent while overseas official travel approval authority at the General Officer/ Flag Officer/Senior Executive Service level. Travel must meet the criteria of March 15, 2021, Secretary of Defense Memorandum on the "Transition to Conditions-Based, Phased Approach to Personnel Movement" (reference (c)). Individuals should consult the COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Installation Status Update, <https://www.defense.gov/explore/spotlight/coronavirus/>, for more information. COVID-19 vaccination status will not be used as a requirement for any official travel.

c. Restriction of Movement (ROM) and testing requirements for travel.

(1) In accordance with reference (b), for non-fully-vaccinated personnel, pre- and post-travel ROM is required for official travel to foreign countries and for all foreign travel for service members. In accordance with CDC and DoD guidance, the 14-day ROM may be shortened to 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5 from travel. For pre-travel ROM, travelers will comply with host nation requirements. Travel within the United States will comply with CDC guidelines and any local/state restrictions.

(2) Unless otherwise required by a more restrictive DoD or host nation policy, pre- and post-travel ROM is not required for individuals who are fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days post-completion of COVID-19 vaccination series).

(3) Individuals and supervisors will follow the Return to Work guidance on www.southcom.mil/coronavirus. These flowcharts identify when individuals can discontinue ROM/isolation based upon their specific scenario.

(4) Asymptomatic travelers who are not fully vaccinated but designated as mission essential may return to work earlier, by exception, on a very limited case-by-case basis in accordance with reference (d). This exception to policy may be granted by the Chief of Staff after assessment of the associated risk. If any of the noted force health protection requirements cannot be met in the physical work-centers up to day 14, for the protection of others, individuals should not be cleared to return to work for mission essential tasks.

d. Pre- and post-travel testing will be conducted in accordance with reference (b). Specific instructions can be found in the [pre-travel screening questionnaire](#) and [post-travel screening questionnaire](#)

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9. Restriction of Movement (ROM). During any required or recommended ROM period (whether due to pre/post travel or due to exposure to COVID-19), service members are required in accordance with reference (b), and civilian personnel are recommended to comply with the measures in appendix (1).

10. Visitors

a. All official and unofficial visits to the HQ require approval by Deputy Chief of Staff for O6 and below, comparable civilian guests, and their respective family members, CoS for senior military or executive service personnel (e.g., O7 and above), Combatant Commander for Ministers, Chiefs of Defense, and Ambassadors. All visitors must comply with the USSOUTHCOM visitor policy, reference (f).

b. Official and unofficial ceremonies will comply with CDC guidance. In-person events may occur so long as the appropriate mitigation measures are in place (e.g. availability of the room to allow for all non-fully-vaccinated personnel to maintain at least six feet separation). CoS/DCoS approval are the approval authority. Celebratory luncheons and dinners are prohibited during HPCON Charlie.

11. 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.

Appendix
(1) Active Duty Restriction of Movement Direction

YVETTE M. DAVIDS
RADM, USN
Chief of Staff

APPENDIX A

Appendix 1: Active Duty Restriction of Movement Order Directions

1. During the restriction of movement order, military personnel shall follow these measures:
 - a) Restrict movement to residence or other appropriate domicile except as necessary to attend medical appointments.
 - b) Maximize telework to the extent possible, as required by supervisor and as limited by individual connectivity capabilities.
 - c) Contact supervisor and update status, at least daily.
 - d) Inform any close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.
 - e) To the extent practicable, limit close contact (i.e., within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes in a 24 hour time period) with others (including family members or roommates). Practice strict wearing of face covering, good hygiene practices (regular hand washing, covering coughs/sneezes, cleaning high-touch surfaces etc.), and consider testing/retesting.
 - f) Monitor for symptoms daily. Take temperature at least two times per day. Remain alert for cough or trouble breathing or other COVID-19 symptoms as described by the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html> If personnel develops symptoms or a fever (>100.4°F), self-isolate, limit contact with others, notify supervisor, and seek advice by telephone from Primary Care Provider.
 - g) Notify chain of command or supervisor if personnel member or a family member develop a fever or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19. For any confirmed or suspected cases of household members, immediately quarantine IAW CDC guidance.
 - h) Complete close contact and pre/post travel testing as required.
2. For Active Duty Service Members, a violation of the above order is punishable under Article 92, UCMJ.