



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

4 November 2020

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 12) – Department of Defense Guidance for Personnel Traveling During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," August 06, 2020.
- c. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transition to Conditions-Based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," May 22, 2020.
- d. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Exemption of Authorized Leave for Department of Defense Service Members from Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions", June 29, 2020.
- e. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Delegation of Waiver Approval Authority for Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," Oct 5, 2020.
- f. Commander, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)," April 06, 2020. (hereby rescinded)
- g. Commander, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Transition to Conditions-based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," 20 July 2020.
- h. Commander, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Updated Return of the Workforce to USSOUTHCOM Headquarters," August 26, 2020.
- i. Chief of Staff, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Visitor Policy and Procedures during COVID-19 Pandemic", October 26, 2020.
- j. Chief of Staff, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Exception to Policy request for travel guidelines to or from Partner Nations during COVID-19 Pandemic for Key Leader Engagements," October 9, 2020.

k. [United States Southern Command, "Exception to Return for Mission Essential Activities After COVID-19 Exposure," template October 9, 2020.](#)

2. Purpose. This memorandum sets forth the general measures that all personnel entering and working at Headquarters, United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) will implement to minimize the risk of Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19). This memorandum rescinds all previous HQ USSOUTHCOM Workplace Protocol memorandums and reference (f).

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.

4. Background. The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 poses a risk to force and mission, affecting all aspects of daily life including travel and workplace norms. The virus spreads mainly by close contact with an infected person, within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes in a 24-hour time period, through respiratory droplets. A person may also contract COVID-19 by touching a surface contaminated by the virus, then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

5. Preventive Measures. Preventive measures include increasing the distance between individuals, minimizing the use of shared spaces/objects, and regular cleaning. All personnel are expected to conduct themselves with the highest level of vigilance, both on and off duty, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Under guidelines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) 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. Remain in your own work-space/section as much as possible. Interactions/meetings will continue to be held virtually when possible. Comply with paragraph 6.b for in-person meetings. Be respectful of others in breakrooms and other public spaces. Avoid crowds and places where close contact with others may occur.

(6) Clean and disinfect 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) Wear approved cloth face masks at all times unless in a private office alone, or when eating or drinking. Cubicles regardless of physical barriers or sneeze guards are not to be considered private offices. Cloth face masks must also be worn in hallways/stairwells/elevators,

parking lots, and other public spaces. Face shields and bandanas are not a substitute for cloth face masks. Masks with exhalation valves or vents that do not filter exhaled air are not approved for use. Face shields may be worn in addition to masks. Surgical masks, N95 masks and neck gaiters (with at least 2 layers) may be worn in place of cloth masks. For the sake of clarity and consistency for USSOUTHCOM personnel, it is preferred that masks 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. However, masks with logos, words, or symbols are not authorized.

(8) Self-monitor daily for exposure and symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been exposed or have any symptoms of COVID-19, do not enter the headquarters without proper medical clearance. Notify your supervisor and contact your medical provider for clinical recommendations.

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

b. Workplace Adjustments and Duty Schedules

(1) To optimize scheduling, Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will consider physical distancing, adjustments in work hours/separate shifts, and telework, while maintaining focus on force health protection and mission requirements.

(2) Directors / Special Staff Chiefs will ensure barriers are installed between workspaces to protect employees. In higher-density areas, section leadership should leverage shifts and telework as needed.

(3) 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. 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. High-risk personnel will work with their leadership on ways to maximize productivity while teleworking.

(4) 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.

(5) Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will ensure communications plans are in place, including a forum for answering workers' concerns.

c. Cleaning of Office Spaces

(1) Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will ensure that conference room and break rooms

that are assigned under the responsibility of their directorate are cleaned before and after use. In addition, ensure daily cleaning checklist posted on the conference room doors and breakroom entrances are filled out completely.

(2) 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.

(3) Staff will clean and disinfect commonly used items and surfaces and other objects in the office at the beginning and end of shift, and throughout the day.

(4) Staff will clean per the "Work Area Sanitization Checklist" at the beginning and end of shift. Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will ensure completion of the checklist each duty day.

6. Battle Rhythm Events and Meetings

a. Events, meetings, and working groups should be conducted virtually whenever feasible. Maximize the use of virtual tools (SVTC, GVS, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype).

b. When an in-person mission-essential meeting is determined necessary, the meeting must occur in a room that allows for all personnel to be positioned at least 6 feet apart. When conference rooms are utilized, they must be disinfected by the users at the end of each meeting. Attendance will be documented by the meeting organizer and maintained for 30 days to facilitate possible tracing efforts.

c. No more than 10 people are authorized in the same room at any time. Exceptions to policy for larger rooms (Joint Operations Center, CCA Main Conference Room, etc.) or where six feet spacing cannot be maintained, must be granted by the Chief of Staff.

d. When possible utilize NIPR for meetings. Use SIPR virtual meeting space when required but NIPR when appropriate to facilitate fast communications.

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 direct 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. 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.

(2) If individuals have questions about their ability to return to work, the USSOUTHCOM Army Health Clinic will evaluate and provide recommendations. Civilians and contractors should seek treatment advice from their primary care manager.

(3) Individuals designated as mission essential and in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, may return to work earlier on a case-by-case basis as outlined in reference (k).

8. Restriction of Movement, Travel, and Leave Guidance

a. Restriction of Movement (ROM). During any required or recommended ROM period, service members are required in accordance with appendix (1) and civilian personnel are recommended to:

(1) Restrict movement to their residence or other appropriate domicile.

(2) 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.

(3) Consider their ROM location as their official duty location.

(4) Self-monitor by taking their temperature twice a day to check for fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$), cough, or difficulty breathing as described by the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>. If COVID-19 symptoms develop during the self-monitoring period, individuals will be required to self-isolate, limit physical contact with others, and seek immediate advice by telephone or other authorized communication modalities from the appropriate healthcare provider to determine whether a medical evaluation is needed.

(5) Only the Commander, USSOUTHCOM can authorize exceptions to policy for ROM as outlined in reference (g). In low risk situations, the Chief of Staff (CoS) can authorize return to work for mission-essential activities as outlined in reference (j).

b. Determining Whether to Travel

(1) Individuals should consult the following resources prior to travel:

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

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

iii. Dept of State Travel Advisories, available at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>.

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

(2) Prior to travel, 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](#) will be used as noted below. Individuals should 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 should be delayed if they had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days in accordance with reference (g).

(3) Travel Guidance

i. Requirements: Military, civilian and contractors will comply with CDC guidance and DoD requirements for travel as outlined in reference (b). Individuals will comply with installation, state and local government travel restrictions. For overseas official and unofficial travel, individuals will comply with country and theater entry requirements.

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

iii. Official travel: Official travel for 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 is the CoS for HQ USSOUTHCOM or component key leaders. Travel must meet the criteria of May 22, 2020, Secretary of Defense Memorandum on the "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. If criteria are not met, service member(s) must request an exception to policy from the CoS in accordance with reference (g).

9. 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 in accordance with reference (i). Virtual visits will remain the norm. When an essential visit to the HQ is required, all visitors must comply with the USSOUTHCOM visitor policy.

b. Official and unofficial ceremonies should occur in a virtual environment. However as conditions allow, events with CoS/DCoS ETP approval may occur so long as the appropriate mitigation measures are in place (e.g. availability of the room to allow for all personnel to maintain at least six feet separation). Outdoor settings should be considered if feasible. Food will not be served. Celebratory luncheons and dinners are prohibited

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during HPCON Charlie. Exceptions to policy for events require CoS approval. CoS review requires a risk mitigation plan developed by the action officer and approved by the USSOUTHCOM Public Health Emergency Officer.

10. 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

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RADM, USN
Chief of Staff

APPENDIX A

Active Duty Restriction of Movement Order Directions

1. During the 14-day 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) Do not report for duty.
 - c) Contact supervisor and update status, at least daily.
 - d) Be available for telework, as required by supervisor and as limited by individual connectivity capabilities.
 - 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).
 - 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 (>100.4F), self- isolate, limit contact, 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.
2. A violation of the above order is punishable under Article 92, UCMJ.