



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

22 February 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 14) – Department of Defense Guidance for Personnel Traveling During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," December 29, 2020.
- c. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transition to Conditions-Based Phase Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," May 22, 2020.
- d. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Delegation of Waiver Approval Authority for Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions," Oct 5, 2020.
- e. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 8) – Department of Defense Guidance for Protecting Personnel in Workplaces during the Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," April 13, 2020.
- f. 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.
- g. Commander, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Updated Return of the Workforce to USSOUTHCOM Headquarters," August 26, 2020.
- h. Chief of Staff, United States Southern Command Memorandum, "Visitor Policy and Procedures during COVID-19 Pandemic," February 22, 2021.
- i. 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.
- j. [United States Southern Command, "Travel Request – KLEs for Generals/Flag Officers" Template January 28, 2021.](#)

k. Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget Memorandum, "COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles," January 24, 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 and is based on multiple updates and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and newly published Force Health Protection Guidance. It revises the general measures that individuals at Headquarters, USSOUTHCOM will implement to minimize the risk of Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19).

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 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 at all times, 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 as much as 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 face masks at all times in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms). 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. Masks may be lowered briefly when required for identification or security purposes. Approved face masks must be worn in hallways, stairwells, elevators, parking lots, and other public spaces. Face shields, bandanas, masks with valves, and novelty/non-protective masks are not a substitute for face masks, and therefore are prohibited. Face shields may be worn in addition to masks. Surgical masks and N95 masks may be worn in place of cloth face masks. 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. Masks recommended by the CDC include non-medical disposable masks, masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets. 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. 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.

(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.

(9) Individuals tested for COVID-19 in accordance with reference (c) 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) To optimize scheduling, Directors / Chiefs of Special Staff will consider physical distancing, staggering work hours/separate shifts, and telework, while maintaining focus on force health protection and mission requirements. Occupancy limits may be placed by the Chief of Staff during periods of increased risk.

(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. Masks will be worn at all times. 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 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) Upon entry to Headquarters building, all employees will be asked to complete health screening which includes a symptoms questionnaire, an exposure history questionnaire, and a temperature check.

(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.

(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) Asymptomatic individuals 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 (e). 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. 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 reference (b), and civilian personnel are recommended to:

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

(2) Adhere to CDC guidelines: 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), strict wearing of face covering, good hygiene practices, and consider testing.

(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.

b. For travel-associated ROM, asymptomatic individuals designated as mission essential may return to work earlier, by exception, on a limited case-by-case basis in accordance with reference (e). 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.

c. 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.fcq.pentagon.mil/fcq.cfm>.

(2) Pre and post travel: Travelers will adhere to the force health protection, ROM requirements and follow DoD testing guidance pre/post travel and outlined in references (b). 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 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 recent close contact with COVID-19 positive individual.

(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 (f).

iii. Official travel: Per reference (d), 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 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.

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

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 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.

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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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Chief of Staff

APPENDIX A

Appendix 1: 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) 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.