



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

14 March 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL SHEPPARD AFB PERSONNEL

FROM: 82 TRW/CC

SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Update 14 Mar 20

1. I want to give you an update on COVID-19, our local efforts to prepare and prevent its spread, and how Air Force and Department of Defense guidance released in the last 72 hours will affect us.
 - a) The President has declared this a National Emergency. This is an unprecedented evolving situation. We do not need to panic but we should remain flexible, patient and calm. We will get through this together.
 - b) This message is accurate as of 14 Mar as this situation evolves. Keep your questions coming. Your chain of command will be able to work with case by case situations.
 - c) Remember these two points. First, the health and safety of our team is a top priority and our actions will reflect; second, we will continue our critical technical and flying training missions to the best of our ability. Your actions will make a difference!
2. Before we dive into specifics, know that your local actions can help stop the spread of this disease. Wash your hands frequently, practice good social distancing and stick with your healthy routine of eating right, getting good rest and exercising.
3. This update is broken down into several sections. The attached enclosure with hyperlinks will assist with navigating to applicable sections. Additionally, here are a few websites I've found to be useful: [AF COVID-19 website](#), [DoD Frequently Asked Questions v3](#), the [CDC travel notices](#) websites.
 - <https://www.af.mil/News/Coronavirus-Disease-2019/> Overall COVID-19 information
 - https://media.defense.gov/2020/Mar/14/2002264758/-1/-1/1/FAQ_TRAVEL_RESTRICTIONS_V3.PDF
 - <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/> CDC Travel notices
4. Let's continue to take care of each other and remain flexible and stay informed. I'm confident that with proper preparation and preventive actions we will get through this as a team. Combat Capability Starts Here!

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KENYON K. BELL, Colonel, USAF
Installation Commander

Attachment (1):

Sheppard AFB COVID-19 Update, as of 14 Mar 20

SHEPPARD AFB COVID-19 UPDATE as of 14 Mar 20

[CURRENT SITUATION](#)

[OFFICIAL TRAVEL](#)

[UNOFFICIAL TRAVEL \(LEAVE\)](#)

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Current Situation

We currently (14 Mar) have no cases of COVID-19 at Sheppard or in the local area. There are a small number of Team Sheppard members who are in self-isolation, in keeping with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as DOD guidelines based on where they traveled from or through to get to Sheppard. Thus far, none of those people have met the protocols for COVID-19 testing.

We are currently at Health Protection Condition (HPCON) ZERO, or baseline. This will change soon – See [HPCON](#) section below. Our focus is on preparation and prevention. Your part of that is extremely important:

- Wash your hands correctly and frequently with soap and water, for 20 seconds
- Hand-washing is preferred, but if not possible, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth
- Disinfect commonly touched or used objects and surfaces frequently (door handles, counters)
- Practice social distancing; six feet when possible is the recommended guidance
- If you are sick, stay at home; contact your supervisor and medical provider
- Avoid large gatherings and limit travel as much as possible – more guidance linked below

If you or someone you know has traveled to an area where COVID-19 is active and have symptoms of respiratory disease, or may have had contact with someone who has the disease, do not report directly to the medical clinic, on or off base, to limit the possible spread of COVID-19. Instead, contact your medical provider by phone first, and follow their guidance. TRICARE Beneficiaries should contact the Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-874-2273. **NOTE: Always call 911 if you have a medical emergency.**

Please take this seriously. Our President has declared a national emergency and the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic. That does not mean we need to panic, but it does mean we need to take action, driven by those two clear priorities: protect our people, and continue our mission.

Official Travel

We will abide by the DOD travel guidance memoranda already released. I strongly encourage you to read them at www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/. Some of this guidance was effective March 12, and some (including domestic travel restrictions) will take effect March 16.

It's important to clarify how this guidance applies in our training environment. First, understand that our AETC chain of command has determined that skill-level-awarding training is mission essential and flying training is mission essential. Airmen will still be recruited, report to Basic Military Training, come to Sheppard or one of our detached locations for pipeline training, and then PCS to their first duty assignment. It also means that mandatory 5- and 7-level awarding courses, as well as courses mandated by Career Field Education and Training Plans, will continue with some exceptions. For our Guard and Reserve members currently in our training pipelines, stay the course and continue training. If you have unique situations, contact your chain of command for further guidance.

Leave en route and the Recruiter Assistance Program (RAP) will not be authorized. Also note that Airmen in Training will not PCS to overseas locations; those who have overseas orders will be redirected.

Official travel – PCS and TDY – for permanent party military, family members and civilian Airmen will stop unless it is mission essential. Those exceptions will be relatively few, but if you are unsure, talk to your chain of command.

We have a number of people assigned to Sheppard currently on TDY orders. Units should work these situations on a case-by-case basis to determine whether they should continue in their current location or return to home station. If a higher approval authority or waiver is required, use the chain of command. For Airmen currently on RAP assignments who have not been gained by their receiving units, we need to verify their location and safety; we are working within 2nd Air Force and Recruiting Service to expedite them to an installation where they can be formally gained.

Unofficial Travel (Leave)

The DOD guidance is that military members are only authorized local leave effective 16 Mar 20. As the installation commander, I have determined that for the duration of this guidance – the local area is defined as within a 60-mile radius of Sheppard AFB unless otherwise amended. Geographically separated units will adhere to local installation guidance. Unofficial or personal travel, whether on leave or during non-duty hours, is not authorized beyond these limits without approval from the proper authority; per the guidance, this is the first general officer in the chain. Utilize your chain of command for unique circumstances. Exceptions that may warrant such approval include mission-essential travel, as well as humanitarian or hardship considerations. These should flow through the chain of command. Travel for medical treatment is authorized for employees and their families.

I strongly encourage our federal civilians and contractor partners to observe this guidance as well, to both protect our people and preserve our ability to continue our missions.

Returning to Home Station

Let's revisit our priorities: The health and safety of our people is priority AND we must protect our ability to conduct our critical missions to support our Nation. Knowing that, this section applies to all

members of Team Sheppard. I am asking for your assistance in protecting our population by monitoring where you travel. If you have travelled in or through a location where the disease is active, whether personal or official capacity – be prepared to be in self-isolation status for 14 days upon your return...this applies to all members of Team Sheppard, whether military, civilian or family member. Utilize the CDCs website for locations with travel health notices. [CDC travel notices](#)

Because these locations are changing almost daily, you should contact your chain of command or the Nurse Advice Line [by telephone](#) upon arrival to home station to be screened and receive further direction. If you've travelled to restricted areas, please do not report directly to your unit, the medical clinic, finance, personnel or any other agency before being screened and cleared to do so.

For our civilian Airmen: leave, duty and pay status in these circumstances will require special handling and therefore determined on a case-by-case basis. Remain patient and flexible. The best advice is to avoid travel if at all possible.

We recommend our contracted partners adhere to similar protocols but you should follow your employers' guidelines as you are essential to our mission accomplishment.

Security

Expect to see changes at the gates. We are now implementing a "no exchange" ID check– instead of handing your ID card to the Defender, you will show the sentry the back of your ID, they'll scan it, before giving you instructions to proceed or not. This may cause some slowdowns, so please be patient. This "no exchange" eliminates one more method of transferring a virus. Safety of all our people is priority.

Health Protection Condition (HPCON)

We will increase our HPCON level to ALPHA on Monday, 16 March. HPCON-A means we are implementing additional preventive measures. Please be aware and follow any directed actions that may accompany that change. Educate yourself and your team on the HPCON framework. This elevated status is appropriate based on our current situation locally and the global impact of this pandemic. Let's be clear, as of 14 Mar there are no positive cases in our local area...this measure is preventive. Educate yourself and your teams on the HPCON framework. See the graphic below.

HEALTH PROTECTION CONDITIONS GRAPHIC

HEALTH PROTECTION MEASURES

Situation	HPCON	Example Health Protection Measures
Normal Baseline	0	Routine: Standard precautions such as routine hand washing, cough on sleeve, diet, exercise, vaccinations, education, stockpiling, planning, routine health alerts, etc.
Report of unusual health risk or disease	A	Limited: Health Alert, communicate risk and symptoms, review plans, verify preparation: training, stocks, posture, prepare to diagnose, isolate, and report new cases
Outbreak or heightened exposure risk	B	Moderate: Strict hygiene (no handshaking, wipe common use items); if exposed, self-isolate (wear mask or remain home); avoid contaminated water/food or risk area; vector control
High morbidity epidemic or contamination	C	Substantial: Social distance (limit meetings, socials, TDYs); shelter in-place indoors; or, if directed, don respirators; mass distribution of medical countermeasures, if applicable
High mortality epidemic or containment	D	Severe: Restrict movement (quarantine), mass evacuation, mass decontamination, subsist on secure food/water sources

Mass Gatherings

This topic of how we gather will affect many as it will require functions to be cancelled or postponed. In order to minimize exposure and potential spread of disease, our intent is to reduce mass gathers that will put large numbers of people in close proximity. In a training environment, this can be challenging and necessary in some instances. For example, meal times at our dining facilities are mass gatherings, but also necessary to keep our Airmen in Training healthy and fit for duty.

To assist in your planning, make every effort to keep gatherings to less than 100 personnel with increased social distancing. This is a guide and is subject to change as our local situation merits. **Many functions will be cancelled or postponed to meet the intent of minimizing exposure to groups of people.**

Here are some general guidelines to consider:

- Mass gatherings that are essential to the safe, efficient and effective execution of our core training missions will continue with mitigation efforts.
- Where possible, minimize interpersonal physical contact (handshakes, etc.) and maximize social distancing. Make hand sanitizer readily available and emphasize the importance of using it.
- At this point, gyms will remain open to promote good health and fitness. Additionally, we have increased cleaning frequency in these facilities and encourage patrons to wash or sanitize hands frequently while using the facilities.
- Where possible, utilize virtual options to gather and disseminate messages and even for recognition.
- Use sound judgement. Events that may expose people at higher risk for COVID-19, such as those over 60 or who have known health conditions, may need to be reconsidered even if they are small in nature.
- Always err on the side of our two core priorities: protecting our people and continuing our missions.

THANK YOU

Many people in our local area are working hard to keep Sheppard AFB personnel and our local population safe. Our public health professionals are learning as much as they can about this novel disease to keep us informed. Public affairs is embedded with them to share the message effectively. Sincere thanks to all who are engaged in this effort.

Also want to thank each of you for your understanding as we work through these issues. It will require our flexibility and patience to meet and overcome this challenge. I'm confident we can do that in excellence.

Take Care of Each Other

This is an unprecedented time. We must increase our accountability for ourselves and each other so we ensure everyone is taken care of. Canceling events, leave and travel can be an emotional event for some. Together we'll get through this. If we get this right, we will minimize the impact to our population and "flatten the curve" and avoid overwhelming our medical capacity. This is a great article if you are wondering why all these measures are necessary. Stay informed.

<https://www.vox.com/2020/3/10/21171481/coronavirus-us-cases-quarantine-cancellation>

Thank you for all you do in service to our Air Force and our nation. Please stay connected virtually and in small groups, stay healthy and stay flexible. Expect changes and updates to this guidance as the situation evolves. If you have ideas that could improve safety, health or mission-effectiveness, please send them through the chain of command.