

Team Sheppard

Last week was a fast paced welcome back to work. It also was full of national level activity, as well as some regional and local activity. In the message below, I'll address local health conditions and touch on the national scene in a separate thread.

First, as you've noticed we are getting back to a normal training routine and work related posture on the installation. Aircraft are flying, technical training teammates are back in the classrooms and a small number of our fellow airmen are still returning to Sheppard based on restriction of movement requirements and health protocols based on events that occurred while away. Thank you all for doing your part during the holidays to minimize the impacts to our environment here at home.

As forecast in last week's base-wide message, we continue to take active measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The numbers in our local area continue to rise which puts all of us at increased risk and threatens the medical capacity in the region. As we've discussed in the past, a rise in COVID cases requires additional medical needs (ICU beds, medical attention, appointments), it puts a drain on the system and could overwhelm the local capacity to meet the routine requirements. We are not there yet, however we also want to avoid having to test those waters.

I have directed our installation to transition to Health Protection Condition Charlie (HPCON-C). This aligns with the pure definition of HPCON Charlie of sustained spread of the coronavirus in our area. The purpose is to highlight the significant change in community spread in our local area requiring us to act differently and to minimize our exposure as we all settle back in from holiday leave and travel.

In addition to HPCON-C change, as an installation I've directed active duty members adhere to domicile to duty travel. Since we are a team of Airmen (Big 'A'), it is strongly recommended that our family members, civilian and contractor personnel do the same. This practically means limit your travel to/from work and for essential items only such as food, health, exercise and spiritual activities. We will keep this posture for a relatively short duration – intentionally open-ended to avoid false hope but you can think in terms of multiple weeks vice multiple months. I do understand the stress and strain this can cause on our population and ask for your active support in adhering to these measures. If you already had previously scheduled activities, please talk with your chain-of-command. Commanders across the installation have discussed particulars and are poised to ensure we take care of our people while we ensure we are all safe in the process.

Obviously, we have two wings and multiple mission partners on the installations. Col Haas, 80 FTW/CC and CMSgt Mueller, 80 FTW/CCC have been in close contact with CMSgt Mosely and me on these topics. We want to ensure you know we care about your health and welfare. For all of our mission partners on the installation, let's stick together ... we are indeed stronger together. Our installation recovery guide is being updated to reflect these new measures. For instance, under HPCON-C patio dining is not authorized and our 350 mile radius is not applicable. Domicile to duty is the key phrase...only move out and about if essential and necessary for this period. Additionally, some services on the installation will adjust hours as well.

Remember these key actions:

- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer
- Maintain strict physical distancing and wear a mask in public places. When in doubt, wear the mask.
- Avoid gatherings and crowded facilities, and limit travel. Remember, just because you “can” doesn’t mean you “should.”
- If you are sick, stay home, and contact your health care provider.

We will keep you updated as conditions adjust and we respond accordingly. Thank you

Sincerely

Brig Gen Bell

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Brigadier General, USAF

Installation Commander