



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 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

- References:
- (a) Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 17) – Department of Defense Guidance for the Use of Masks, Personal Protective Equipment, and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic,” March 17, 2021 (hereby rescinded)
 - (b) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, “Use of Masks and Other Public Health Measures,” February 4, 2021
 - (c) Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, “Updated Mask Guidelines for Vaccinated Persons,” May 13, 2021
 - (d) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Order, “Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs,” January 29, 2021
 - (e) Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Administrative Leave for Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Employees,” April 14, 2021
 - (f) Office of Management and Budget, Office of Personnel Management, and General Services Administration Memorandum, “Integrating Planning for a Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment,” June 10, 2021

This memorandum rescinds reference (a) and supplements references (b) and (c) with updated guidance on the use of masks in conjunction with other public health measures, including non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This memorandum includes updated guidance for fully vaccinated personnel. It maintains guidance on use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Service members and civilian employees who misrepresent their vaccination status may be subject to appropriate adverse administrative or punitive actions.

Masks:

In accordance with reference (c), all individuals who have not been fully vaccinated must wear masks on military installations and adhere to the requirements of reference (b). Specific Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on how to wear a mask correctly

and different types of masks for different circumstances may be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>. Cloth masks should be laundered regularly to maintain good hygiene. The Military Departments will issue guidance on uniform wear for Service members. Local commanders and supervisors may elect to establish more stringent guidelines for wearing masks and may require mask wearing as necessary to ensure a safe workforce, to respect host nation or local jurisdiction guidelines, or to ensure mission accomplishment.

The CDC requires all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask on public conveyances (e.g., planes, water transport, buses, trains, taxis, ride-shares) traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations (reference (d)). This requirement is extended to DoD transportation assets (including Government vehicles) and hubs, including those outside the United States, excluding ships, submarines, and aircraft in their operational environment.

All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask in correctional facilities and health care settings, including DoD military medical, dental, and veterinary treatment facilities, in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Per the CDC,¹ individuals are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 2 weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series (e.g., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines), or 2 weeks after administration of a single-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine). This guidance also applies to COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization (e.g., AstraZeneca/Oxford). Fully vaccinated individuals who are immunocompromised should discuss the need for personal protective measures after vaccination with their health care provider. A commander has the authority to verify the vaccination status of Service members.

The following is guidance for OSD and DoD Components to utilize (not including transportation conveyances or hubs, correctional facilities, and healthcare settings) with respect to the use of masks in the context of individuals' vaccination status:

- **Outdoor spaces:** Fully vaccinated individuals may participate in outdoor activities and recreation without a mask with both fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated individuals. Non-fully vaccinated individuals must continue to wear a mask.
- **Indoor Spaces:** Fully vaccinated individuals do not have to wear a mask in DoD indoor spaces or facilities, except in facilities where mask wearing is required, such as correctional and health care facilities. Non-fully vaccinated individuals must continue to wear masks. This guidance applies to DoD personnel living together in congregate settings ashore such as in barracks, etc., and extends to the common spaces occupied by these cohabitating personnel (e.g., shared kitchens, bathrooms, break rooms). Commanders may make exceptions as necessary to maintain a safe workforce; commanders will, when appropriate, conduct risk assessments of their personnel in coordination with their medical personnel for determining appropriate mask wearing requirements in these shared living space situations.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.

Unmasked, fully vaccinated Service members should be prepared to show proof of vaccination (CDC vaccination card or other medical documentation).

As a general matter, in accordance with references (e) and (f), 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, assuming that not everyone will be vaccinated.

Delegations and exceptions made pursuant to reference (b) remain valid unless rescinded by the authorizing official.

PPE:

Medical PPE items, such as N95 respirators, are reserved for use in specific circumstances, and should not be issued outside of these circumstances unless local commanders or supervisors determine they are necessary to respect host nation or local jurisdiction guidelines. In those instances, commanders or supervisors, in consultation with public health specialists, legal counsel, and with consideration of national or local jurisdictional agreements, such as Status of Forces Agreements, will determine if medical PPE items will be issued to non-medical personnel to respect such guidelines. The PPE supply must be optimized and the below guidelines should be followed, in addition to consulting CDC-published strategies found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>.

- Respirators, including N95 respirators. These items are not recommended for use outside of health care settings, discrete COVID-19 support missions, and other specifically authorized settings. N95 respirators must be fit-tested on the user to provide optimal protection.
- Surgical Masks. These items are intended to reduce the spread of viruses when worn by patients and health care workers.
- Gloves, gowns, and eye protection. These items should be used primarily for patient care (e.g., en route care during patient transport). Between patient encounters, non-disposable eye protection must be cleaned and disinfected, and gloves and gowns must be changed at prescribed intervals.

The table on the next page prescribes prioritized categories for PPE use, subject to available supply and direction from local commanders and supervisors.

Priority	Category	Examples	Measures
1	Source control	A COVID-19 patient or person under investigation (PUI)	Surgical Masks or Other Masks
2	Health care delivery	Military Medical Treatment Facility Patient Care Requirements Emergency Medical Services Ancillary Health Care Providers (e.g., Dental, Veterinary)	N95 or higher respirators (preferred)/ Surgical Masks (acceptable alternatives if respirators not available) Eye Protection Gowns Gloves
3	Discrete COVID-19 support missions	COVID-19 Patient or PUI Transport Quarantine and PUI Support Mortuary Affairs Teams	N95 or higher respirators (preferred)/ Surgical Masks (acceptable alternatives if respirators not available) Eye Protection Gowns Gloves
4	Increased risk in performance of official duties	Commanders, in consultation with their Public Health Emergency Officers, may require PPE for special public-facing duties and incorporate CDC considerations for other special groups.	Gloves Masks

NPIs:

Masks and PPE use are part of a larger strategy for using NPIs to limit transmission of COVID-19. Further CDC information on NPIs may be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>. It is important to practice NPI measures consistently, including but not limited to the following:

- Physical distancing (6 feet or more) for settings where it is prudent for health and safety;
- Frequent hand sanitation using soap and water or hand sanitizer;
- Properly covering coughs and sneezes;
- Staying at home when sick (“not feeling right,” or “start of a cold or allergies,” etc.);
- Use of telecommunications in place of face-to-face interactions as much as possible; and
- In most situations, routine daily cleaning of high-touch surfaces using soap or detergent is sufficient to reduce risk. Disinfection is recommended in indoor community settings where there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.

OSD and DoD Components will comply with applicable labor relations obligations to the extent such obligations do not conflict with the agency’s ability to conduct operations during this emergency.

This memorandum and other COVID-19 guidance memoranda are centrally located at: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Latest-DOD-Guidance/>. My point of contact for this guidance is Colonel Michael J. Berez, who may be reached at (703) 681-8463 or michael.j.berez.mil@mail.mil.

Virginia S. Penrod

Virginia S. Penrod
Acting