



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON &
JOINT TASK FORCE – NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
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ANCG

4 August 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Exceptions to Use of Masks

1. References.

a. Secretary of Defense Memorandum (Use of Masks and Other Public Health Measures), dated 4 February 2021

b. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum (Updated Mask Guidance for all DoD Installations and Other Facilities), dated 28 July 2021

c. Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness Memorandum (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), dated 22 June 2021

d. Secretary of the Army Memorandum (Use of Masks and Delegation of Authority to Grant Exceptions), dated 24 February 2021

e. FRAGO 2 to Headquarters, Department of the Army EXORD 225-21, COVID-19 Steady State Operations, dated 30 July 2021

f. Commanding General, Joint Task Force – National Capital Region & U.S. Army Military District of Washington (JTF-NCR & USAMDW) Memorandum (COVID-19 Face Covering Guidance to Garrison Commanders), dated 8 April 2020 [hereby rescinded]

g. Commanding General, JTF-NCR & USAMDW Memorandum (Exceptions to JTF-NCR & USAMDW Facial Covering Policy), dated 11 March 2021 [hereby rescinded]

2. General.

a. In accordance with Reference b. and Reference d., all service members, federal employees, on-site contractor employees, and visitors, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, are required to wear mask indoors on DOD installations/facilities in areas of substantial or high community transmission. When masks are required, the requirements of Reference a. and Reference d. apply, to include:

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(1) Individuals must wear masks continuously while indoors on DoD installations except:

(a) when an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls with a closed door;

(b) for brief periods of time when eating and drinking while maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines and instructions from commanders and supervisors;

(c) when the mask is required to be lowered briefly for identification or security purposes; and

(d) when necessary to reasonably accommodate an individual with a disability.

(2) Individuals on military installations and all individuals performing official duties on behalf of JTF-NCR & USAMDW from any location other than the individual's home will follow CDC guidance and practice physical distancing, specifically by maintaining at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from other people who are not from an individual's household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

b. Reference d. delegates to me the authority to grant categorical and case-by-case exceptions for the use of masks and other public health measures, to include exceptions where temporary unmasking is necessary for mission requirements in environments other than office spaces. This authority cannot be delegated further.

3. The following exceptions for use of masks and other public health measures are authorized:

a. **Religious Services.** Religious leaders to fulfill the mission requirements of conducting in-person worship services may unmask during the Act of Sacred Communication and leading of worship. Masks will remain worn until it is necessary to remove for leader's performed services, preaching, and worship. Masks will then be replaced and appropriately worn.

b. **Aircrews.** Aircrew members will not wear a mask or face covering while performing flight duties. The risk associated with ineffective aircrew coordination, inaccurate radio calls, or inability to don an oxygen mask for a pressurized aircraft, exceeds the risk for COVID-19 transmission.

c. **Rescuers.** Soldiers in the 911th Technical Rescue Engineer Company (TREC) will not wear a mask or face covering while actively conducting vertical rope rescue or steel cutting operations. The risk associated with misinterpreted verbal rope commands

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between the Rappel, Belayer, or Climber exceeds the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Additionally, masks pose a similar risk during steel cutting operations.

d. The Old Guard Ceremonial Duties within Arlington National Cemetery and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. Sentinels and relief commanders at the Tomb of the Unknown as well as members of ceremonial units with speaking duties will be authorized to perform duties without a mask or face covering. Duties will be performed with a minimum of six (6) feet separation between the service members and others. The only exception is the distance between the Sentinel and relief commander during guard change of inspection. Memorial Affairs Casket Teams are not required to wear a mask or face covering when conditions reach Heat Category Four (4).

e. The U.S. Army Band (TUSAB)/Field Band/Fife and Drum Corps During Rehearsal and Performance. Soldiers playing wind instruments may remove masks while playing the instruments for rehearsal or performance and will don masks when not playing. Units will mitigate the risk of COVID19 transition through measures such physical distancing, limiting the time of rehearsals/performances, and utilizing air purifiers.

f. Podium Speaking Engagements. Personnel speaking in a formal capacity who have greater than 6 feet of separation between themselves and the audience may remove their mask while speaking. This includes official speaking engagements, ceremonies, and meetings. When complete with the message, speakers will don their mask.

g. Indoor Gyms. Indoor gym patrons are required to continuously wear masks while inside fitness training facilities. Gym patrons may remove their masks temporarily while using indoor shower facilities.

4. Unvaccinated individuals must continue to wear masks outdoors and maintain physical distance (6 feet or more) while indoors or outdoors on DoD installations.

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5. The point of contact for this memorandum is Colonel John J. Geis III, J3, Director of Operations, at (202) 902-0031 or by email at john.j.geis.mil@mail.mil.



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