



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS-NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  
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ANCG

11 March 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Exceptions to Joint Force Headquarters – National Capital Region & U.S. Army Military District of Washington (JFHQ-NCR & MDW) Facial Covering Policy

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

2. General.

a. From the Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing: “It is the policy of my Administration to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures. Such measures include wearing masks when around others, physical distancing, and other related precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Put simply, masks and other public health measures reduce the spread of the disease ...”

b. The following specific exceptions are approved based on their association with military readiness, living on a military installation, or mask wearing by children.

c. Within these approved exceptions, all personnel are still encouraged to wear masks when possible.

3. In response to the reference in para 1, the following exceptions to the existing U.S. Army MDW Mask Policy are authorized.

a. **Religious Services.** Religious leaders 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 911<sup>th</sup> Technical Rescue Engineer Company (TREC) will not wear a mask or face covering while actively conducting vertical rope rescue or steel

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cutting operations. The risk associated with misinterpreted verbal rope commands between the Rappelers, Belayers, or Climbers 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. TUSAB/Field Band/FDC 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 COVID-19 transmission through measures such as 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. Installation Residents.** Residents of military installations may remove masks while in personally owned vehicles with members of their own household and while in their private yard with members of their own household. Masks will be worn in community areas such as playgrounds and parks.

**h. Outdoor Physical Activity.** Individuals may remove masks while actively conducting physical training outdoors. Individuals will maintain six (6) feet of separation from other individuals who are not members of their immediate family. If conducting physical fitness in a group and physical distancing of six (6) feet of separation cannot be maintained, a mask is required. Physical activities include cardiovascular development, muscular strength/endurance development, and low intensity outdoor activities (ex. dog walking).

**(1) Personnel conducting official Army physical testing events (e.g. initial strength test, physical fitness test, ACFT, and military occupational specialty specific physical tests):**

(a) During warm-up periods, event marshalling, and event transitions, test takers are not required to wear masks but will maintain appropriate physical distancing

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during the events. Upon completion of the event test takers will don their masks. Test monitors and other support personnel are required to wear masks throughout the conduct of the event(s).

(b) Personnel conducting training in which mask wearing is not feasible, such as swim qualification, amphibious, or aquatic training events or where mask wearing impedes safety, such as live-fire, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) or other high-risk training events where masks create a hazard are not required to wear a mask.

(2) **Youth Sports Programs.** Children athletes may remove face masks during youth sporting events (run by AACPS) while on the field of play (i.e. actively participating in a football play) – this is the current standard AACPS is operating under.

4. All Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for prevention of the spread of COVID-19 will be followed for all of the above mentioned exceptions to policy.

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is COL Allen “Al” Leth, J3 Director of Operations at (202) 902-0031 or by email at [allen.d.leth.mil@mail.mil](mailto:allen.d.leth.mil@mail.mil).



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