

ARMY FLYER

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PHOTO BY SGT. JOHN SCHOBEL

Two Hawaii Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopters carrying soldiers and equipment take off from Oahu to travel to Maui and Kauai, Hawaii, April 13 to support COVID-19 response efforts.

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Fort Rucker Schools continue digital learning for rest of school year

DODEA

Press Release

The Department of Defense Education Activity Americas Region in direct and close coordination with Fort Rucker leadership has made the decision to continue with digital teaching and learning and keep school buildings closed to students for the remainder of the 2019/2020 school year.

While our schools will remain physically closed to students, teachers and administrators will continue to work diligently to maintain digital learning programs in order to ensure continuity of education for our amazing students. These programs continue to evolve and differ slightly for each community and school...but the goal is the same, to provide Excellence in Education for Every Student, Every Day, Everywhere.

"Our main priority right now with COVID-19 continues to be focused on protecting our personnel, our families and our mission," said Maj. Gen. David J. Francis, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general. "By continuing with digital teaching and learning in our schools for the remainder of the school year, this augments and supports the protective measures that we have implemented during this crisis and we have seen positive results of that here at Fort Rucker," Francis added.

We know that this decision is disappointing to our staff, students and families alike. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect every community across the Americas footprint. While some states are making decisions to slowly open up aspects of their economies, given the relatively short amount of time remaining in the current school year, DODEA and military leadership agree that this was the prudent decision for our schools.



PHOTO BY JIM HUGHES

Fort Rucker Schools staff and mascot, Patriot, hand out free meals for children on Fort Rucker March 24 at the primary school.

The health and safety of our students, staff and communities is our highest priority.

This is obviously an extraordinarily challenging and concerning time for all of us. Watching our teachers, students and communities come together to ensure continuity of education for our military-connected students under these circumstances has

been incredibly inspiring. Please continue to work diligently and cohesively to ensure that we build upon our successes to this point. Communication, moving forward, will be critical to the maintenance and evolution of these digital learning programs. Feel free to communicate all needs and concerns related to these programs to your teachers and prin-

cipals. This type of feedback is important to the education process.

Thank you again for your continued support.

For more information regarding DoDEA's response to COVID 19, go to: <https://www.dodea.edu/Coronavirus.cfm>



Commissary places shopping limits on fresh beef, poultry, pork

By Defense Commissary Agency
Corporate Communications

FORT LEE, Va. – Commissaries in the continental United States, along with Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, placed shopping limits on fresh beef, poultry and pork May 1.

The Defense Commissary Agency implemented these shopping limits in response to anticipated shortages in the supply chain impacted by the closures of various U.S. beef/pork/poultry processing plants, said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, DOD special assistant for commissary operations.

“There may be some shortages of fresh protein products in the coming weeks,” Bianchi said. “Enacting this policy now will help ensure that all of our customers have an opportunity to purchase these products on an equitable basis.”

The shopping limits are as follows: fresh beef – two items; fresh pork – two items; fresh chicken – two items; and fresh turkey – two items.

There will be some exceptions to the two-item limits, however. In the event the limits are not in line with a store’s supply, the store can increase or decrease as needed. For example, if a store is extremely short on product they might go to a limit of one per type, or if they have a lot of supply building up, they may extend the limits on some items.

DECA will post quantity limits at each of its affected locations, similar to how it has been posting limits for toilet paper, sanitizers, canned food items and other high-demand items.

Placing shopping limits on fresh meat will particularly keep commissaries that don’t receive daily meat deliveries from having their

meat inventory wiped out because of panic buying, Bianchi said. These limits will be removed once supply chain operations return to normal.

DECA has enough quantities on hand in its pipeline to overseas commissaries to avoid any limits for these stores, Bianchi said.

“Our overseas supply chain remains strong,” he said. “In addition, we continue to prioritize quantities for our overseas shipments, so we should be able to support the demand. If we experience any unexpected major hiccups in the pipeline, we will look at expanding shopping limits to other locations.”

The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus caused a significant spike in customers shopping for essential items. On March 14, the agency enacted a directive instructing its store directors worldwide to use their discretion in placing shopping limits necessary to help maintain stock availability.

The shopping directive gave store directors more authority to quickly tailor shopping limits, as required, to keep more products available for more customers.

“We know this is a potentially stressful time for all concerned,” Bianchi said. “But together we will meet these challenges and support our service members and their families throughout the duration of this crisis wherever necessary.”

“We always recommend to our customers that they purchase what they need and avoid any panic buying to ensure products are available for others in their communities.”



**COVID-19 ADVISORY
TO OUR VALUED PATRONS**

ALL CONUS STORES INCLUDING HAWAII, ALASKA AND PUERTO RICO

**Limits* on Fresh Beef, Pork, Chicken,
and Turkey Products**

- ▶ Fresh Beef: 2 Items
- ▶ Fresh Pork: 2 Items
- ▶ Fresh Chicken: 2 Items
- ▶ Fresh Turkey: 2 Items

*LIMITATIONS MAY INCREASE OR DECREASE DEPENDING ON STOCK AVAILABILITY.

**We apologize for this inconvenience
and will remove these limit requirements
once supply chain operations return
to normal.**

We appreciate your understanding.

**WE ARE
IN THIS
TOGETHER!**

MF30114

PROTECTING CHILDREN, STAFF

Fort Rucker CYS upgrades CCTV systems in its facilities

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

Fort Rucker Child and Youth Services facilities received a major upgrade in its closed-circuit television systems in late April in a move to better protect the children it serves and its staff.

Major improvements in the systems include a vast improvement in the quality of video produced and, for the first time, audio capability at each camera, according to Toni Hampton, CYS coordinator.

The above improvements at the main child development center, mini-CDC, school age center and youth center make a valuable addition to the CYS program's "comprehensive toolkit designed to deter and reduce the risk of child abuse in CYS facilities, protect staff from unwarranted allegations of abuse or neglect, provide Soldiers and parents with peace of mind, and support management staff in program oversight," Hampton said, adding that footage can also be used as a tool for parents, teachers and management staff to address behavioral concerns with children.

First brought up as an issue in 1998 as an Army Family Action Plan concern, CCTV is now standard in Army CYS facilities, and this latest upgrade is a part of a continuing process to ensure the systems are up to the task at hand, Hampton added.

"I have worked here at Fort Rucker for just over 18 years and this is the third system that we've had in our facilities in that time," she said. "They keep getting better. The first

one when I got here was a VCR system, and you'd have all these tapes, and you'd take them out every week and put new ones in. Then we went to DVRs, and now each camera has a single server and directly links to the system.

"The old system was standard definition and this is a high-definition system, and the old system was analog and the new is digital, so we can digitally zoom up to 250 feet," Hampton added.

Each camera also pans 90 degrees and the system has a much larger recording capacity, according to Shavonne Sapp, functional technology specialist for CYS, who did a "great job" working with contractors to remove the old system and install the new, Hampton said.

"Before, we were averaging around 30 days that we kept footage and now it will exceed 120 days," Sapp said, adding that there are 112 cameras in the CDC, while the mini-CDC has 45 cameras. "There were roughly 145 cameras in the CDC before, but with new cameras we're able to rotate the view and zoom in where we can even see what people are holding in their hands."

And the addition of audio on each camera will also help with training and allegations of abuse, she added.

"All interior cameras have full audio capability and this helps because body motion does not always convey intent," she said. "You

might have staff in there raising a hand trying to teach a child to do something, but just by looking at it you might think they want to hit a child, so that is the reason we added audio."

The new system is also more user friendly, and the staff members needing to work with the system were trained by Sapp, who also spearheaded the mission to get 20 contractors on post to work in four teams to install the systems in the facilities all while the post was restricting access due to COVID-19.

"I really like the system, and the training went really well," she said, adding that not constantly replacing malfunctioning DVRs is another benefit to the new system. "The feedback from the staff makes me think they're going to enjoy it, as well. I think it's going to make the environment safer for our youth and our staff with all of the new enhancements."

Just as Sapp overcame the challenges associated with working the installation of the system while the COVID-19 restrictions were in place, so is CYS experiencing success working through these challenging times, Hampton said.

"We're doing great," she said, adding that just the CDC and school age center are open,

and only to children of certain personnel. "We've implemented a lot of different safety measures, of course, taking temperatures as children and staff come in the building, parents are dropping off and picking up at the front door to limit the exposure in the building, caregivers are wearing masks in the classrooms because it is hard to have that social distancing when you're working with little ones, and enhanced cleaning.

"I think the children are doing really well, too," Hampton added. "They seem to be happy and they have been resilient – the parents have, too. They've been very understanding and supportive of the CYS team, as a whole."

She said the staff misses all of the children who aren't able to participate in the programs and have even called to check up on some of them

"I think that was a big morale booster, just to be able to talk to the parents and children and check in on them," Hampton said, "And they've been doing some fun stuff, they posted a few story times, and they're looking at posting a few fun activities on Facebook. I think that outreach has helped the staff, and also the children not here right now and their parents, as well."



UNITED STATES ARMY
CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES

Close encounters with snakes on rise on Fort Rucker

Army Flier
Staff Report

As temperatures are on the rise, so are people's chances of close encounters with snakes on post.

Fort Rucker Directorate of Public Safety officials report that instances of people coming into contact with snakes in the woods and in housing are indeed on the rise.

DPS officials said that people need to keep that threat in mind when outdoors, even outside around their homes, especially during warmer weather, and around bushes, shrubs, tall grass, water sources and in the woods.

Officials added that they have seen instances of snakes coiled up under children's riding toys on porches and patios, so they recommend people pick these toys up and hang them up off the ground or patio. Also, people should remember that if they keep their porch lights on, this attracts insects, and insects attract toads and frogs, and frogs and toads attract snakes, so people need to be cautious around their patios and porches.

If people encounter a snake, they can call the police desk at 255-2222 to request a game warden to remove the snake.

There are a wide variety of snakes on the installation, many of which are not dangerous and pose no threat to people, according to Daniel Spillers, Fort Rucker fish and wildlife administrator, but there are a few that people should especially avoid, such as the eastern diamondback rattlesnake, the timber rattlesnake, the pygmy rattlesnake, copperheads, cottonmouths or water moccasins, and the coral snake.

The eastern diamondback is the largest of the venomous snakes that can be found on Fort Rucker and they can be identified by the diamond shape markings along its back, said

the wildlife biologist. The rattlesnakes, along with the copperheads and cottonmouths, are all pit vipers, which have one main distinguishing characteristic – a wedge-shaped head.

Spillers said that most of the venomous snakes on Fort Rucker have a head that is noticeably larger than its body and shaped like a triangle. Non-venomous snakes' heads usually just flow into the body of the snake without much difference in size, but the coral snake's head has no such distinction, he added.

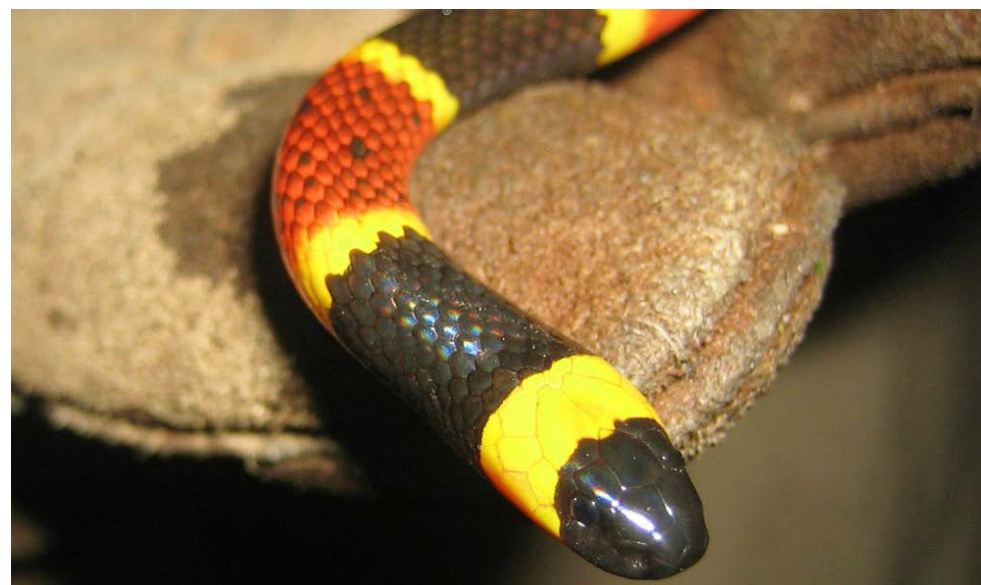
"The coral snake is a really colorful snake with red, black and yellow bands along its body," said Spillers. "It's a smaller snake and very reclusive. Unlike most snakes, it doesn't have a wedge-shaped head and its fangs are in the back of its mouth."

The coral snake shares a common coloring with the scarlet king snake, a non-venomous snake, he added, and people can distinguish the two by looking at the tip of the snake's nose. The tip of a coral snake's head will be black, but the tip of the head of a scarlet king snake won't be.

Because of the snake's reclusive and un-aggressive nature, along with the fact that its fangs are so far back in its head, it's unusual for people to actually be bitten by a coral snake, he said.

"This is not a snake that can easily strike you and inject its venom," said the wildlife biologist. "It would basically have to grab onto your finger and start chewing on you to get its venom into you," adding that this fact makes the snake no less dangerous than the others.

The coral snake's venom is particularly dangerous compared to the other snakes be-



COURTESY PHOTO

Coral snakes are one of the venomous snakes found on Fort Rucker.

cause its venom is neurotoxic venom rather than hemotoxic venom, according to the wildlife biologist.

Neurotoxic venom works directly on the nervous system, which can be particularly harmful when it gets into the blood stream, said Spillers. Hemotoxic venom of the pit vipers are very harmful as well, but is a blood toxin that causes necrosis of the tissue, killing and essentially causing the tissue around the bite area to decay.

Although both venoms are dangerous, Spillers said neurotoxic venom is harder to deal with and treat, but prevention is the best form of medicine.

If people encounter these snakes in the wild, it's best to avoid them, said the wildlife biologist.

"Most snakes aren't very aggressive, so if you leave them alone, they will leave you alone," he said. "Most of the time you would have to step on them or show them you were

some type of threat before they would strike."

Spillers also said that if people know they are going to be traveling in wooded areas, they should wear clothing that is appropriate to the environment like boots or some type of heavy footwear that covers up to at least their ankles.

If a person does come across one of these venomous snakes in an area they can't avoid, however, he suggests that people call the military police and they will get in contact with the game warden to try and relocate the snake, if possible.

If a person is bitten by a snake, Spillers recommends that the first thing that people try to do is get medical attention as fast as they can rather than deal with the wound themselves.

For more on staying safe around snakes, and what to do and what not to do, see the article on the next page.

The dos and don'ts of snake safety

By Becky Ghostley

Fort Rucker Safety Manager

Most snake bites occur when a snake is handled or accidentally touched by someone walking or climbing.

Rattlesnakes, water moccasins and copperhead snakes are responsible for the overwhelming majority of venomous snake bites, and all three are indigenous to the Fort Rucker area.

Although most snakes are not aggressive and will slither away at the first hint of human presence, people should still take precautions to lessen the chance of being bitten – particularly in wooded areas around lakes or ponds.

MITIGATING THE HAZARD

Here are some tips to help mitigate the hazard of incurring a venomous snake bite.

- Use the buddy system when walking or running on trails near wooded areas.
- Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots, thick socks and long loose pants, especially when venturing off of heavily used trails.
- Tap ahead of you with a walking stick before entering an area where you can't see your feet. Snakes will try to avoid you if given enough warning.
- When possible, step on logs and rocks, never over them as you may surprise a sheltering snake.
- Avoid walking through dense brush or blackberry thickets.
- Be careful when stepping over a door-step. Snakes like to crawl along the edge of buildings where they are protected on one

side.

- Avoid wandering around in the dark. If you are out at night, always use a flashlight, because most snakes are active on warm nights.

- Never try to pick up a snake, even if it is dead. A snake's reflexes can still cause the snake to strike up to an hour after it has died.

- If you have an encounter with a snake, give it the right-of-way. Do not attempt to kill the snake, just move out of the snake's way.

- If you encounter a snake in the housing area or in your yard, call the police desk at 255-2222 and follow their instructions.


- If you hike often, consider buying a snake bite kit – available from hiking supply stores. Do not use older snake bite kits, such as those containing razor blades and suction bulbs.

WHAT TO DO IF BITTEN

Despite taking all safety precautions, we cannot completely eliminate the hazard, so it is a good idea to have a plan about what to do in the event you, your child, or a buddy is bitten by a snake.

When it comes to treating a venomous snake bite, the most important thing to do is get to a medical facility as quickly as possible. Call 911 (see NOTE below). While waiting for help, you may call the National Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or administer the following first aid measures:

- Keep the person calm, reassuring them that bites can be effectively treated in an emergency room. Restrict movement. Immobilize the site and keep it below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.
- Remove any rings or constricting items because the affected area may swell. Create a




VENOMOUS SNAKES OF ALABAMA



COPPERHEAD



COTTONMOUTH




TIMBER RATTLESNAKE



DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE



EASTERN CORAL

-  Use caution around bushes, shrubs or tall grass, and whenever near water or wooded areas.
-  Warn children to watch out for snakes and not to get close to them.
-  Clear your property of habitat that can attract snakes. Piles of firewood, debris or overgrown areas are attractive spots for foraging and building dens.

IF NECESSARY, CONTACT THE FORT RUCKER MP DESK AT 255-2222 TO REQUEST A GAME WARDEN TO REMOVE A SNAKE.



GRAPHIC BY DAVID AGAN

SNAKE SAFETY *cont.*

loose splint to help restrict movement of the area.

- Bring in the dead snake only if this can be done safely. Do not waste time hunting for the snake, and do not risk another bite if it is not easy to kill the snake. Be careful of the head when transporting it – a snake can actually bite for up to an hour after it's dead.

- If you have a pump suction device (such as that made by Sawyer), follow the manufacturer's directions.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- * Do not allow the person to become over-exerted. If necessary, carry the person to safety.

- * Do not apply a tourniquet.

- * Do not apply ice or cold compresses to a snake bite.

- * Do not cut into a snake bite with a knife or razor.

- * Do not try to suck out the venom by mouth.

- * Do not give the person stimulants or pain medications (to include aspirin) unless a doctor tells you to do so.

- * Do not give the person anything by mouth.

- * Do not raise the site of the bite above the level of the person's heart.

Note: When you call 911 from a cell phone, the call often goes to a regional center. Immediately tell the call-taker which city you're calling from and the type of emergen-

cy. Even better, prepare ahead of time by recording local emergency numbers into your cell phone. Fort Rucker's emergency number is 255-2222.

For more information about poisonous snakes in Alabama, go to:

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/watchable-wildlife/Watchablearticles/isthatsnake.cfm> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/snakes/default.html>.

RANGES, TRAINING AREAS AND IMPACT AREAS ARE OFF-LIMITS



Fort Rucker limits running, jogging, biking, swimming, walking and picnics to authorized areas for your safety.

All other areas are **OFF-LIMITS** unless posted otherwise. Be safe! Stay in areas designated for recreational use.



Even with social distancing, Fort Rucker helping agencies still open for business

By Jim Hughes

Fort Rucker Public Affairs

As social distancing measures continue on post to help protect the Fort Rucker community from COVID-19, helping agencies remain open for business, but that help might be delivered a little differently than in the past.

"Most Fort Rucker services continue to meet community needs, even though we have changed how we provide the services due to social distancing," said Traci D. Waters, Fort Rucker Community Readiness and Resilience Integrator Suicide Prevention Program Manager, Directorate of Human Resources.

"If you are having trouble coping with life challenges, the Employee Assistance Program is still here to help. The service is available to Army civilians, non-appropriated fund employees, adult family members of active-duty Soldiers and retirees, she said, adding that people can contact program staff members by calling 447-3859 to request a phone appointment.

"In addition, the Army Community Services Family Advocacy Program is available to assist if you need suggestions on how to help your children cope with all the changes that are occurring at this time," Waters said.

ACS Family Advocacy can be reached by calling 347-7947. Behavioral health is also providing virtual appointments. For more information, call 255-7028.

For those experiencing financial difficulties during the pandemic, Army Emergency Relief stands ready to assist. For more information, call 255-2341 or go to www.armyemergencyrelief.org.

Waters said many people might be feeling stressed out by the pandemic or like they

just can't cope with the situation anymore, and she does have advice for those who find themselves with those feelings.

"They should remember to do the activities they enjoy the most," she said. "It can be easy to lose sight of the things we enjoy most when there is so much change occurring around us. Some great activities to help us cope include exercising, listening to music, going for a walk, playing in the backyard with your children or reading a book.

"Managing your time is another way to cope when you are feeling overwhelmed," Waters added. "Also, beware of the negative coping skills, such as drinking in excess, overeating or sleeping too much."

She also recommended people keep connected with the latest happenings around them, but not too much.

"Take a look at the USAACE and Fort Rucker Facebook page," she said. "Most installation services share their online classes and tips for getting through this crisis on that site. There is a lot of useful information posted daily.

"You should also limit how much news you listen to regarding COVID 19," Waters added. "Find one reliable source and only get an update at a certain time of the day – do not watch the constant updates because it can cause anxiety in some people."

If someone sees another person struggling with the situation, the step they should take to help them is a simple one, she said.

"The best thing to do is to talk with them," Waters said. "Talking to them helps them to see they are not alone and it will allow you to see if additional services are needed. Simple conversation with others is vital right now to

Would you like to speak with a Chaplain?

(334) 255-9566

"Talk-2-Chaplain" is a way for you to speak confidentially with a chaplain. We're standing by Monday through Friday, 0900-1700.



keep us from feeling so disconnected from our family and friends. Through your conversation, you may be able to tell if you need to get others involved to assist that individual.

"The biggest thing to remember right now is that the services you need are still available to help," she added. "We have each adjusted how we provide services, but we are still here. You are not alone. Reach out and ask for the help you need. We are ready to assist!"

Waters also provided the following information from the Defense Suicide Prevention Office.

As we all strive to support our nation's efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the Department of Defense maintains its commitment to supporting our most valuable resource – our people.

The personal health and well-being of our servicemembers, civilian employees and families is paramount. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations and, certainly, an infectious disease outbreak that requires

social distancing, quarantine, or isolation is bound to generate stress.

Many across our nation – and around the world – are feeling stress, uncertainty, anxiety, disconnectedness, financial insecurity, as well as potentially feeling a sense of hopelessness. For some, such experiences can be associated with an increased risk for suicide.

Finding healthy ways to cope with stress during this time will help us to remain strong. The following are some tips and resources both within and outside the DOD to help cope with stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage you to take these steps to support your own and others' personal health and well-being.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND CARING CONNECTIONS ARE CRITICAL RIGHT NOW

Limiting in-person contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing – also called physical distancing – means keeping physical space between yourself and other people who are not inside your home. As a result of

HELPING AGENCIES *cont.*

physical distancing requirements, you may be feeling isolated or less connected, or notice this in others. Social distancing requires only a physical space between individuals. There are still many ways to look out for each other, build cohesion, and stay connected virtually. Social connectedness and a sense of belonging improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being – now more than ever, it is vital to stay socially connected while physical distancing.

Being connected takes many forms.

* Stay connected to others. Whether through phone calls, virtual meet-ups, texts, or sending and posting messages via social media platforms – talk about your experiences and feelings with friends and loved ones if you find it helpful. Share words of support, listen without judgment; and, if needed, connect with resources and help.

* Stay connected with yourself. Make it a priority to eat healthy, exercise regularly, and to get plenty of sleep.

Use practical ways to cope and to relax. Relax your body often by doing things that work for you – deep breathing, stretching, meditating, or engaging in other activities you enjoy. Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.

* Stay informed. Stay up-to-date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry.

* Get help. Numerous support resources are available including your chaplain, behavioral health provider, supervisor, peers or family members, Military OneSource, Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line, or other trusted resource.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Even if you have never accessed such support services before, take advantage of re-

sources available to you. Health care support systems like telehealth services – especially for accessing behavioral health services – can provide preventative tools, resources, treatments and supports.

* If you, or someone you know, are experiencing an emotional crisis or thoughts of suicide, please connect 24/7 with free, confidential services. For those experiencing a suicidal crisis, call the Veteran Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

For emotional support related to COVID-19, call the Disaster Distress Helpline.

* If you are concerned about your financial stability during the pandemic, there are several financial readiness resources available to help.

Free, confidential financial counseling is available for Service members and their families from accredited financial counselors via Military OneSource's 24/7 call center. Civilian employees have access to similar support through their agencies' Employee Assistance Programs.

* Support is available to all members, including the Reserve Component, through numerous resources including chaplains, family programs and behavioral health resources.

* National Guard members in Title 32 status can access multiple programs and support services. Psychological health teams are available regardless of your activation status in every state, territory and the District of Columbia that can complete assessments, referrals and case management.

* Military OneSource is available to all service members (including National Guard members whether or not federally activated) and their families throughout their career and up to one year following separation/retirement from the military.

HOW WE SHARE INFORMATION MATTERS

Reliable information can keep you safe and physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy during and after a public health crisis like the current COVID-19 pandemic. Look for and share only credible sources of information on COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides up-to-date information via their website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and social media channels. The DOD also maintains a website (www.defense.gov/explore/spotlight/coronavirus) specifically designed to share the latest information about the COVID-19 response.

When communicating with family, friends, and other members of the community, avoid speculating about the potential impact COVID-19 may have. Share the importance of staying connected with the people in your life, and that help is still available for those in crisis, as well as for those who simply need some additional support.

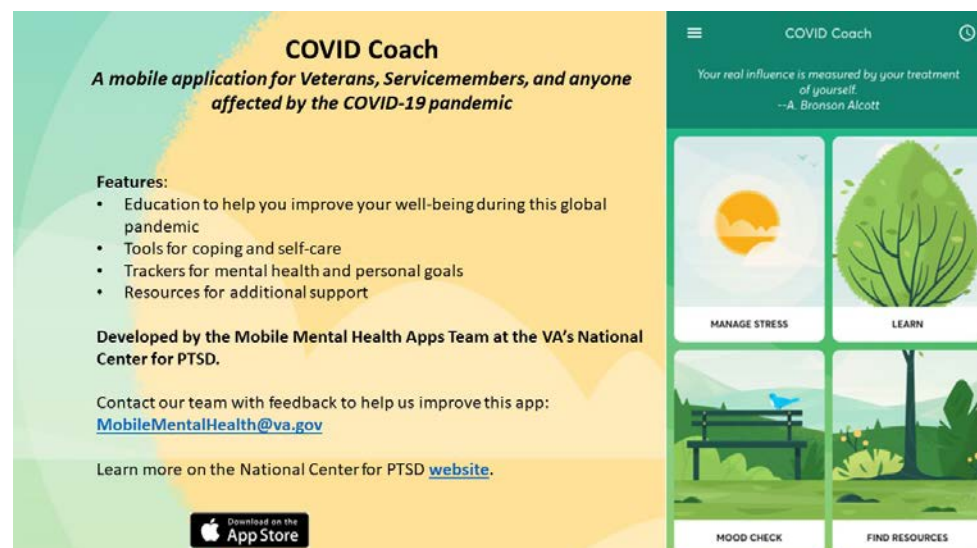
Members of the media are strongly en-

couraged to incorporate best practices for reporting on suicide (www.reportingonsuicide.org) and educate readers on helping resources.

RESOURCES

* Military OneSource is available 24/7/365 to help with handling stress and challenges related to COVID-19, as well as to provide non-medical counseling or peer support services. It is available to eligible servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve members, and family members. You may call 800-342-9647 or connect through live chat (www.militaryonesource.mil). A dedicated section (www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus) provides resources, updates and information about the impacts of COVID-19 on the military community. New offerings include non-medical counseling video sessions for children and youth.

* inTransition is a free, confidential program that offers specialized coaching and assistance for active-duty servicemembers, National Guard members, reservists, veter-



HELPING AGENCIES

ans, and retirees who need access to a new mental health provider or wish to initiate mental health care for the first time. inTransition services are available to all military members regardless of length of service or discharge status. Call 800-424-7877. Outside the United States (international toll-free number): 800-424-4685. Outside the United States (collect): 314-387-4700. All calls are confidential and free.

* Agency-specific Employee Assistance Programs provide a variety of support services to civilian employees and their dependents. Topics of assistance include mental health, financial and/or legal matters, alcohol or drug abuse, work-related stressors, marriage/family and caregiving issues, illnesses, accidents and relationships. The DOD EAP provides resources, information,

and confidential help and can be reached 24/7 at 800-222-0364 (TTY: 888-262-7848). Telehealth services are now available during the COVID-19 pandemic allowing for providers to conduct telehealth video and/or phone sessions for all routine EAP services.

* Disaster Distress Helpline, 800-985-5990, is a 24/7 national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recognizes the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 situation and is providing guidance and resources to assist individuals, providers, communities and states across the country.

* Social Distancing Tips: www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf

* Virtual Recovery Resources: www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf

* Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that provides Department of Veterans Affairs support for all servicemembers, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, all veterans, and their families, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in

VA health care. VCL/MCL responders are specially trained and experienced in helping servicemembers and veterans of all ages and circumstances. If you, or someone you know, is in a crisis, please contact the VCL/MCL by calling 800-273-8255, press 1; by chat at www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat, or online at www.veteranscrisisline.net

* National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-8255, provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources for all Americans and their loved ones, as well as best practices for professionals.

Note: Any reference to or listing of non-governmental organizations does not constitute endorsement by the United States Department of Defense.

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