

Questions and Answers (COVID-19)

Section 1: General Questions (Quarantine)

Q1. What should we do if we need to seek an assessment of our risk of exposure to COVID-19?

A1. Any Soldier, Department of the Army Civilian, or Family Member seeking an assessment of their risk of exposure to COVID-19 will contact the Public Health team. The Public Health team will conduct a comprehensive, case-by-case screening based on the best available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the Army Public Health Center, and Department of Defense. Contact Public Health at Ft. Wainwright 24/7 at 907-361-3057 or JBER Monday-Friday 0730-1600 at 907-580-4014 or after duty hours at 907-382-0435.

Q2. An individual just came (or returned) to Alaska. What is the guidance?

A2. All individuals returning from travel out of state must contact Public Health to discuss quarantine. The Public Health team will conduct a comprehensive, case-by-case screening based on the best available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the Army Public Health Center, and Department of Defense. Contact Public Health at Ft. Wainwright 24/7 at 907-361-3057 or JBER Monday-Friday 0730-1600 at 907-580-4014 or after duty hours at 907-382-0435.

Q3. Can the Garrison Commander order an individual to comply with restrictions on movement, including quarantine?

A3. Yes. If necessary to protect public health on the installation and contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Installation Commander, or designee, will order an individual to comply with restrictions on movement, including quarantine. Unlike self-quarantine measures, this order to quarantine is punitive and enforceable under federal law. These orders will be in writing and issued by a member of the Public Health team upon a determination that a restriction on movement is medically required. If an individual is being seen in person by a member of the Public Health team, that individual will be provided a copy of the order and asked to complete an acknowledgment. The Public Health team will compile and maintain copies of all acknowledgments at the hospital.

Q4. What happens if an individual is being assessed remotely (via telephone) and is determined to be a medical risk?

A4. If an individual is assessed via the Public Health telephone line and determined to be a medical risk, the Public Health team will email a copy of the order directly to the individual concerned. The Public Health team member in contact with the impacted individual will complete the acknowledgment and attach the email traffic.

The Public Health team will compile and maintain copies of all acknowledgments completed by the team and associated email traffic.

Q5. How will I know if my employee or Soldier has been ordered into a quarantine?

A5. Supervisors can and should ask any employee or Soldier reporting that they have been ordered to quarantine for a copy of the order and any accompanying email traffic from Public Health. Any individual who completed a telephone consult will have email traffic serving him or her with a copy of the quarantine order. These emails do not contain protected medical information and only document the services of an order to quarantine and/or restrictions on movement.

Q6. Can unit commanders issue installation quarantine or temporary bar orders?

A6. Installation commanders may issue installation quarantine and bar orders. After consultation with Public Health, the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska Commander will issue all quarantine or bar orders at Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely, and the 673d ABW Commander will issue all quarantine or bar orders at JBER. However, unit commanders retain the inherent command authority to order individual Soldiers into quarantine on a short-term, case-by-case basis while awaiting Public Health consultation or determination. Prior to issuing an individual order to quarantine, unit commanders will: (1) order the individual concerned to contact Public Health; and (2) consult their legal advisor. Individual quarantine orders will be in writing and immediately reported to the HSOC.

Q7. Can unit commanders order individual Soldiers into quarantine if the Soldier is suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19?

A7. Yes. Unit commanders may order individual Soldiers into quarantine if the Soldier is suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 in accordance with AR 600-20. Use of this authority is reserved for circumstances in which a Soldier is unable to obtain a medical assessment of his or her condition. Prior to issuing an individual order to quarantine, unit commanders will: (1) order the individual concerned to contact Public Health; and (2) consult their legal advisor. Individual quarantine orders will be in writing and immediately reported to the HSOC.

Q8. Should unit commanders and/or supervisors contact Army Public Health at Bassett Army Community Hospital or the 673rd Hospital about the validity or status of quarantined individuals?

A8: No. Unit commanders and/or supervisors who are concerned about the validity of a quarantine order or need to verify the status of individuals ordered into quarantine will not contact Public Health directly. Public Health will provide a daily report to the USARAK Home Station Operations Center (HSOC) of the individuals who have been ordered to quarantine or issued a temporary bar to post. These reports will not be in real-time and are intended to confirm the status of individuals who should have already reported their order to their unit or supervisor. Unit commanders/supervisors wishing to confirm that the order is legitimate may contact the HSOC no earlier than 24 hours after the individual received their order. The purpose of these procedures are to ensure Public Health can focus on health screening.

Q9. If I believe my employee or Soldier has been issued an order in error, what I can do?

A9. Requests to rescind or exempt individuals from a quarantine order will be submitted to the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska Commander for Soldiers at Fort Wainwright/Fort Greely or the 673d ABW Commander for Soldiers at JBER. Unit commanders and/or supervisors may not unilaterally vacate a quarantine order.

Q10. Prior to returning to duty, what should individuals subject to a restriction on movement do?

A10: Individuals subject to a restriction on movement are encouraged to contact Public Health prior to returning to duty.

Q11. Does current reporting from Public Health to the USARAK Home Station Operation Center (HSOC) relieve me of my responsibility to know the status of my employees or Soldier and report that through the chain of command?

A11. No. Public Health cannot provide real-time reporting. The Public Health report to the HSOC should be used to validate the reports generated by unit leadership. Soldiers or employees may be ordered to quarantine 24-48 hours before their name will appear on the Public Health roll-up. Unit and organizational leaders must maintain accountability of their personnel and should ask for a copy of any order to quarantine or email traffic from their personnel or the HSOC. All Soldiers and employees are required to immediately notify their supervisor if they have been told to be absent from the workplace.

Q12. If my employee or Soldier has consulted an off-post medical provider and been advised to self-quarantine at home, what should I do?

A12. A civilian employee may take sick leave based on documentation from an off-post provider, or the employee must consult Public Health and receive a written order from a military authority to be granted administrative leave for their period of absence. The written order will be either a temporary bar to post (off-post residents) or an order to quarantine (on-post residents). Soldiers are required to consult Public Health for an assessment of their condition, regardless of the information they may have received from external sources. Commanders have the discretion to order individual Soldiers to quarantine briefly while the Soldier is waiting for their Public Health consultation.

Q13. I have been in self-quarantine based on medical advice but have no documentation. What do I need to provide to my supervisor?

A13. Employees or Soldiers who have been in a voluntary (or "self-") quarantine should be directed to call Public Health for an assessment. Public Health will affirm the need for quarantine provide an order dated to the initial date of quarantine, if required. The date of each order reflects the date the quarantine was imposed and may be backdated to accommodate individuals who have self-quarantined.

Section 2: PCS

Q1. Some of us are without HHG, homes & living in a space no bigger than a barracks room with children & big Army says we qualify to continue with our PCS because it is a hardship but you are denying those ETP's. It is very frustrating.

A1. Requests to continue to move on to a gaining unit are being reviewed at the Army Staff level considering the risks of the COVID-19 outbreak. Many ETP requests are being disapproved; the focus is on protecting the health of all Soldiers, Civilian employees and Family members at both the losing and gaining installations, including travel routes. To be clear, the ETP process is not quick. It requires Commander consideration at every level from the Soldier

to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. The Army priority is protecting the Force and the Army from the COVID-19 hazards.

Q2. It sounds like USARAK is saying that ETP's are going to be denied. There are several Fort Wainwright families in the hotel praying their ETP's get approved but this live sounds like we are hopeless until May 11th if this stop movement ends then. Families with pets and Families with children under 5 that don't understand. Why does USARAK not agree?

A2. PCS status alone does not qualify as a hardship. USARAK endorsed several ETPs for hardship and sent them for approval. The Command will review on a case-by-case basis. The command's and ultimately the approving authority's focus is on the health and safety of Soldiers, Civilian employees, and Family members. Limiting travel is encouraged around the United States and hardship ETPs need to be evaluated at a high standard to ensure the military is ensuring safety and preventing the exposure to and spread of the virus.

Q3. USARAK has a large number of families in PCS limbos and the ETP has been the most difficult process. Are you saying it is likely these families won't get approved to continue to PCS?

A3. Hardship ETPs have a high standard for approval focused on the safety of personnel at the losing and gaining installations, as well as route of travel. Personnel may re-look at their ETP to see if there is a hardship that is unique and not caused by the normal PCS situation. However, if you are in temporary lodging beyond the allowable 10 days, contact your military personnel office to transition to a TDY en route status to cover lodging expenses.

Q3. Are Soldiers allowed to request a one-year extension in place of PCSing?

A3. Yes, IAW ALARACT 031/2020, Soldiers can request an extension of up to 1 year in cases where PCS during the COVID-19 period will cause hardship or compassionate or extreme Family problems. The Soldiers must be on Assignment Instructions/Orders, under stop move due to COVID-19, and must not have shipped household goods. Because USARAK is considered OCONUS and our departures are driven by DEROS, requests will be submitted as Foreign Service Tour Extensions. Officer eligibility is limited to those scheduled to move from present to 30 September 2020. Officers en route to resident professional military education, advanced civil schooling, training with industry, or the Career Intermission Program are not eligible.

Section 3: Travel

Q1. Are U.S. military on orders still considered essential travel and exempt from Canadian 14 day quarantine?

A1. U.S. military personnel on travel orders are considered mission essential travel by the U.S. Army; however, a sovereign country is not obligated to recognize a "mission essential" declaration and international travel restrictions are subject to change. At this time, it is likely that personnel entering Canada will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon entering Canada.

Section 4: Gyms

Q1. Some units want to start shoving large amounts of Sweaty, Heart pounding, mouth breathing, sweating, grunting, possibly asymptomatic people... in the gyms... 6 feet or 10 feet

apart. The Virus sticks to surfaces from 24-72 hours doesn't matter how far apart a person is if you touch a virus infected surface and touch a membrane while at the (gym) eyes, mouth , open pores while sweating.... You are possibly putting so many lives at jeopardy!

A1. Soldier readiness (maintaining Soldier fitness) is a priority. Soldiers are required to clean equipment before and after each use. That, along with social distancing is how we can prevent the spread. Keeping healthy and fit is also a defense to ensure our immune systems stay strong. The facility managers incorporate social distance set ups; if health standards cannot be maintained the command will reconsider.

Q2. Why are gyms still open and while the gyms are still open how many Soldiers are allowed in the gym?

A2. Soldier readiness (maintaining Soldier fitness) is a priority. As a result, the gyms are only open to active duty personnel and have modified procedures to include eliminating group physical fitness sessions and exercise classes, stationing a senior enlisted Soldier on-site to enforce social distancing and equipment cleaning, and increased cleaning by the entire staff. Restricting access to military personnel only reduces risk, improves adherence to safety standards, and enables the command to enforce standards. We provide the safest facility we can so that those who willingly and voluntarily choose to use the gym can do so safely.

Section 5: Child Development Centers:

Q4. Do we need to put in leave so we can stay home to watch our kid? Or when it's said we must come in it is expected to bring him in with us to work. Dual Military and we pulled him from the CDC last week.

A4. Duty locations and hours are subject to a commander's or supervisor's decisions in support of Army directives on maintaining our mission essential functions. Contact your chain of command and the CDC for additional information that may address specific concerns.

Section 6: 1/25 SBCT FAQs

Q1. Has anything changed with the redeployment timeline?

A1. Currently there has been no change to the redeployment timeline. We are continuously working and coordinating with our high headquarters as the Covid-19 situation develops. If anything changes we will pass information through command and SFRG channels.

Q2. Is the 60-day stop movement order from the Pentagon delaying when Soldier's will be returning from deployment?

A2. The 60-day stop movement order by the Pentagon will expire 24 May, so it currently does not have an extreme impact on the redeployment timeline.

Q3. Will block leave still be in July?

A3. Currently, block leave is still planned for July; however, the training schedule that we planned for the rest of the year is being looked at as we continue to adapt to the evolving situation.

Q4. Are Soldier's returning from deployment going to have to quarantine?

A4. Yes, Soldier's returning from deployment will have to quarantine for a one-time 14-day period. We are looking at many different options where the quarantine will take place.

Q5. How is the brigade currently quarantining Soldiers?

A5. We have set aside a couple of barracks to house Soldiers who are in need of quarantine. While we have not had a confirmed case of COVID-19 at Ft. Wainwright, we conducted rehearsals about how we would react and isolate someone who tests positive.

Q6. Am I allowed to go hunting outside the Fairbanks/North area to go hunting to provide food for my family?

A6. Soldiers may not. Consult your chain of command on local leave and travel policies, which currently limit leave and travel to the Fairbanks/North Pole area. In addition to Army standards, State and local authorities implemented travel mandates that affect off-duty activities, including Civilian employees. All orders and mandates in place are intended to protect the public health.

Section 7: Civilian Leave Questions

Q1. For civilians, what changes to leave and leave approval have occurred because of the current situation?

A1. Supervisors or designated individuals still approve civilian leave (no change to current policy). The U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Questions and Answers on Human Resources Flexibilities and Authorities for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) provides additional options for employees and supervisors to account for work, health, and safety conditions. For example, sick leave is appropriate for someone showing symptoms of the virus (or any other illness). Other types of leave may be appropriate, such as administrative leave when the conditions satisfy OPM guidelines. The OPM guidance is posted at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/covid-19/questions-and-answers-on-human-resources-flexibilities-and-authorities-for-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19.pdf>.

Q2. If a civilian employee has received a temporary bar to post or written order to quarantine from Public Health, what leave should the employee request to take?

A2. Administrative Leave (PS code is weather/safety).

Q3. If a civilian employee must stay home to care for an asymptomatic (no symptoms) Family member who was exposed to a quarantinable communicable disease, such as COVID-19, what type of leave should they request to take?

A3. The employee may request annual leave, other paid time off (e.g., earned compensatory time off), or leave without pay. Telework guidelines may also apply.

Q4. If a civilian employee, who has been on Admin Leave after receiving a written order from Public Health, and then becomes symptomatic (ill), should he or she continue to receive Admin Leave?

A4. No. Sick leave would be used to cover such a period of sickness, as provided in 5 CFR 630.401(a)(2) and OPM guidelines.

Q5. If a civilian employee runs out of sick leave, can the employee receive advanced sick leave?

A5. Maybe. While sick leave may be advanced at the organization's discretion, it is not an automatic employee entitlement. Supervisors and approving authorities will review each case in accordance with Army and OPM standards.

Q6. Do civilian employees need a doctor's note if requesting to use sick leave 3 days or more due to COVID-19?

A6. Not necessarily. Under OPM's regulations (5 CFR 630.405(a)), an organization may grant sick leave only when the need for sick leave is supported by administratively acceptable evidence. An organization may consider an employee's self-certification as to the reason for his or her absence as administratively acceptable evidence.

Q7. A civilian employee is awaiting the results of Public Health or Nurse Advice Line consultation, what type of leave is appropriate?

A7. If an employee has attempted to contact Public Health but not yet received an assessment of his/her risk level, his/her supervisor may request a temporary bar to post for a period of 48 hours. The temporary bar must be in writing and ordered by the Installation Commander. The written bar is a prerequisite for an employee to take administrative leave (PS code is weather/safety) pending a Public Health consultation. If the employee is notified they are cleared to go back to work, they must return or take leave. Telework guidelines may also apply.

Q8. If a civilian employee is sick for any reason (to include having symptoms of the virus), what type of leave should they take?

A8. Sick Leave.

Q9. If a civilian employee wants to stay home to care for a family member who is sick for any reason (to include having symptoms of the virus), what type of leave should they take?

A9. Sick Leave (care for family member). Telework guidelines may also apply.

Q10. When a civilian employee is arriving from outside of Alaska, what should they do?

A10. All persons arriving in Alaska will contact Public Health (see Civilian Flow Chart) prior to coming to work, and follow Public Health direction. All employees must contact their supervisor to inform them of travel arrangements, which may result in a temporary bar to post for a period of 48 hours. The temporary bar must be in writing and ordered by the Installation Commander.

Q11. If my employee or Soldier has consulted an off-post medical provider and been advised to self-quarantine at home, what should I do?

A11. A civilian employee may take sick leave based on documentation from an off-post provider. To be granted administrative leave for their period of absence, a civilian employee must consult Public Health and receive a written order from the Installation Commander. The written order will be either a temporary bar to post (off-post residents) or an order to quarantine (on-post residents). Soldiers are required to consult Public Health for an assessment of their condition, regardless of the information they may have received from external sources. Unit Commanders have the discretion to order individual Soldiers to quarantine pending their Public Health consultation. Soldiers and employees must report to commanders and supervisors if they have been tested for the virus, or a member of their household has been tested for the virus.