**PEO EIS COVID-19 // Coronavirus Q&A**

*“[Coronavirus] would be the first pandemic in history that could be controlled. The bottom line is: we are not at the mercy of this virus. The great advantage we have is that the decisions we all make – as governments, businesses, communities, families and individuals – can influence the trajectory of this epidemic."*

*-- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General,*

*March 11, 2020*

**Q. What is COVID-19?**

A: This novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/types.html) and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning [how it spreads](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html), the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

**Q. How can I protect myself?**

A. The [CDC provides guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html) for individuals, families and employers to help slow the spread of the disease.

**Q. What are Army medical facilities doing to educate, prevent, screen and manage COVID-19?**

 A. Army medical facilities are protecting the force in accordance with OSD Force Health Protection Guidance.

The U.S. Army Medical Command COVID-19 hotline provides trusted information and a link to resources. The hotline is part of the Army Medical Readiness Assistance Program and is intended to connect callers to trusted COVID-19 information sources and answer questions. The hotline will be manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can be reached by calling 1-800-984-8523. Callers can also reach the line by calling:

Overseas: DSN (312) 421-3700

Stateside: DSN 421-3700

Stateside Commercial: 210-295-3700

[Military Health System (MHS) Nurse Advice Line](https://tricare.mil/ContactUs/CallUs/NAL.aspx)

[Department of Veterans Affairs Guidance](https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/72615/vas-recommendations-help-slow-covid-19-virus/) or call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

[TRICARE COVID19 Guidance](https://tricare.mil/coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR3LZXv0FD2_jnSIrXqNNxpuTW7vTJoOVkCUc0-lIWj9w_4WPKbzMUR4s8k)

How to [request Army Emergency Relief assistance](https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/news/applying-for-aer-assistance-during-covid-19-quarantine/) due to COVID-19

**Q. What should I do if I think I have coronavirus?**

 A. [If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html) with the virus that causes COVID-19, you should take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.

**Q: What steps can I take to mitigate the risk of Coronavirus?**

A: The following preventative measures are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO):

-Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects/surfaces with a 99.9% disinfectant solution
-Wash your hands often with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds (sing Happy Birthday twice)
-Avoid close contact with people who are sick
-Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

**Q: What is the status of the Federal Government?**

A: For up-to-date OPM guidance and operating status, please visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/current-status/>

You can also download the OPM app to receive alerts.

**Q: What is the status of my garrison?**

A: Based on your location, please visit your garrison command website and social media pages for the latest updates.

**Q: Most area public schools are closed indefinitely. Is it permissible for a telework program participant to perform telework with a child in the home?**

A:PEO EIS has adjusted the telework policy to allow, as a special exception, accommodating childcare during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Under such an exception policy, a teleworking employee would be expected to account for work and non-work hours during his or her tour of duty, to work irregular hours if necessary to cover core hours spent caring for children, and to take appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for time spent away from normal work-related duties (e.g., to care for small children). (For additional information please see OPM Guidance on Telework and Dependent Care at: [https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-guidance/telework-and-](https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-guidance/telework-and-dependent-care/) [dependent-care/](https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-guidance/telework-and-dependent-care/).)

**Q: What happens if an employee does not have a sufficient amount of work to perform to cover the entire telework day during incidences of COVID-19?**

A: An employee must always have a sufficient amount of work to perform throughout the workday when he or she teleworks. An employee performing telework who does not have enough work must notify his or her supervisor and receive additional work or discuss leave options such as annual leave, advanced annual leave, other paid time off (e.g., earned compensatory time off, earned credit hours), or leave without pay.

**Q: What if I or a family member gets sick and I don’t have enough sick leave?**

A: The sick leave regulations allow an employee to be advanced sick leave for exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease, subject to the limitations below:

* + 240 hours (30 days) may be advanced if the employee would jeopardize the health of others by his or her presence on the job because of exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease;
	+ 104 hours (13 days) may be advanced if the employee is providing care for a family member who would jeopardize the health of others by his or her presence in the community because of exposure to a quarantinable communicable disease.

**Q: During a pandemic health crisis, can an agency order an employee to work from home (or an alternative location mutually agreeable to the agency and the employee) if the employee does not have a telework agreement?**

A: Yes. An agency may order an employee to work from home (or an alternative location mutually agreeable to the agency and the employee) without regard to whether the agency and the employee have a telework agreement in place at the time the order to evacuate is issued.

**Q: What type of work may an agency assign to an evacuated employee?**

A: Under OPM regulations, an agency may assign any work considered necessary without regard to the employee's grade or title. However, an agency may not assign work to an employee unless the agency knows the employee has the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work.

**Q: Can an agency mandate an employee exposed to a quarantinable communicable disease or infected with COVID-19 to remain away from the workplace for a specified period?**

A: ***An employee who is quarantined under the direction of health care authorities should not be reporting to the normal worksite.***

The CDC or other health agency will provide information related to the length of time an individual remains contagious, as well as current recommendations for social distancing, etc.

For information specific to COVID-19, please view CDC’s web site at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

 **Q: What are the current travel policy restrictions for Army personnel?**

A: The Army is complying with the DOD directives and supplemental “Force Health Protection Guidance for the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak” (<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>) with the two major objectives of ***Protecting the Force*** and ***Ensuring Readiness***.

For PCS/TDY travel questions Soldiers can contact HRC’s 24/7 Army Service Center at 1-800-582-5552 or visit www.hrc.army.mil. See also, [Frequently Ask Questions on the DOD Domestic Travel Restriction](https://media.defense.gov/2020/Mar/19/2002266939/-1/-1/1/COVID-19-TRAVEL-RESTRICTIONS-FAQ.PDF).

[TRANSCOM Guidance for Personnel Affected by DOD Stop Move](https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2115048/transcom-guidance-for-personnel-affected-by-dod-stop-move/). See also, [Frequently Asked Questions](https://move.mil/sites/default/files/inline-files/FAQs%20Information%20for%20DP3%20Customers%20Impacted%20by%20%E2%80%98Recent%20Stop%20Movement%E2%80%99.pdf) for customers affected by the recent stop movement order.

**Q: Who can approve an exception to policy for movement?**

A: Exceptions may be granted for the following compelling cases: If the travel is determined to be mission-essential, necessary for humanitarian reasons, or warranted due to extreme hardship. Approval authority for these exceptions belongs to the combatant commander if the individual is assigned to a combatant command. The Secretary of the Army retains the authority for all other individuals. This authority may be delegated no lower than the first general officer or member of the Senior Executive Service in the traveler's chain of command or supervision. These exceptions are to be done on a case-by-case basis, shall be limited in number, and shall be coordinated between the gaining and losing organizations.

**Q: Who can approve TDY to CONUS for special circumstances?**

 A: Exceptions may be granted for the following compelling cases: If the travel is determined to be mission-essential, necessary for humanitarian reasons, or warranted due to extreme hardship. Approval authority for these exceptions belongs to the combatant commander if the individual is assigned to a combatant command. The Secretary of the Army retains the authority for all other individuals. This authority may be delegated no lower than the first general officer or member of the Senior Executive Service in the traveler's chain of command or supervision. These exceptions are to be done on a case-by-case basis, shall be limited in number, and shall be coordinated between the gaining and losing organizations.

**Q: I am already approved for TDY. Can I still travel?**

A: As of March 16, 2020, all TDY is cancelled, unless a waiver is granted at the ASA(ALT) level. Those who have not yet reported to their TDY site may not depart; those who have already reported to their TDY location are permitted to return to their home/duty station.

**Q: What is the guidance to commanders for quarantine of Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, contractors and dependents in CDC-defined Alert Level 2 and above Countries?**

A: Commanders will not hold personnel scheduled to return to CONUS. These individuals will isolate or quarantine at CONUS-approved locations.

 **Q. Will there be any daycare, school or commissary facilities closed as the virus spreads?**

 A. The decision whether or not to close Child Development Centers, schools, or AAFES facilities will be made by senior mission commanders based on their local environments at the installation level. Please refer to your local garrison for specific information.

**Q: What is PEO EIS doing to ensure a safe working environment?**

A: The health and safety of the PEO EIS workforce is our priority. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published guidance and recommended measures to help prevent occupational exposure to COVID-19 in Federal workplaces, which we are employing in our facilities. See OSHA’s COVID-19 guidance at [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html) [19/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html).

See also CDC guidance: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html) [groups/guidance-business-response.html.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html)

**Q: How will I receive notifications and updates on operating status?**

A: PEO leadership will continue to provide regular updates via workforce distribution emails, the [PEO EIS SharePoint site](https://peoeis.kc.army.mil/Pages/Home.aspx) – where guidance and Q&As are provided – and the [PEO EIS website COVID-19 page](https://www.eis.army.mil/coronavirus). In addition, senior leader guidance on COVID-19 is available on the [Army’s home page](https://www.army.mil/coronavirus/?from=hp_spotlight).

The Fort Belvoir Garrison provides regular updates on their [website](https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php) and [their Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/fortbelvoir), which we will also share on the [PEO EIS Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/peo.eis/). OPM status is also regularly updated on the [OPM website](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/current-status/). You can also download the mobile app for up-to-date notices to your phone on OPM operating status.

**Q: What is the guidance for contractors?**

A: The health and safety of all of our workforce, including our support contractors, is our priority. Contractors should stay up to date on OPM and installation guidance and follow their company’s guidance regarding telework and safety.

**Q: What is the status of the AFCEA Belvoir Industry Days Conference April 29 – May 1?**

A: Right now, a decision has not been made to cancel the AFCEA Belvoir Industry Days (ABID), but the AFCEA Belvoir board is monitoring the situation closely and looking into rescheduling options and they will make a decision soon. The Strategic Communication Directorate will notify the workforce and our industry partners via internal communications and our external social media platforms (PEO EIS website, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn).