



DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY
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**MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY MILITARY MEDICAL AND
DENTAL TREATMENT FACILITIES**

**SUBJECT: Guidance on Coronavirus Disease 2019 for Military Medical Treatment Facilities
and Dental Treatment Facilities**

This memorandum rescinds the Defense Health Agency (DHA) memorandum dated February 16, 2023 “Guidance on Coronavirus Disease 2019 for MTFs” and the update of the same name dated April 3, 2023. It provides guidance for military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) and dental treatment facilities (DTFs) based on Department of Defense “Force Health Protection Guidance - Coronavirus Disease 2019 and Other Infectious Respiratory Diseases” dated July 26, 2023.¹ Although the Public Health Emergency in the U.S. has ended, the virus that causes COVID-19 remains in wide circulation.

Vaccination: The DHA strongly encourages members of the workforce to remain up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel² (HCP) with Symptoms of an Infectious Respiratory Disease, Including Colds, Influenza, and COVID-19. Follow CDC guidance for HCP.^{3,4} MTFs and DTFs will not transition to use of “contingency” or “crisis” strategies for staffing shortages related to COVID-19 without prior approval from the Assistant Director, Health Care Administration.

Infection Control Recommendations: MTFs/DTFs will use measures to protect the workforce from and reduce the spread of infectious respiratory diseases. Such measures may include basic source control (e.g., masking, hand hygiene, social distancing), increasing telework, limiting meetings and gatherings, improving building ventilation, disinfecting common surfaces, and implementing screening testing in high-risk settings (e.g., hospitals and retirement homes). At a minimum, MTFs and DTFs will follow CDC guidance for healthcare settings.

¹ <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Jul/28/2003270467/-1/-1/0/FORCE-HEALTH-PROTECTION-GUIDANCE-CORONAVIRUS-DISEASE-2019-AND-OTHER-INFECTIOUS-RESPIRATORY-DISEASES-SIGNED-JULY-26-2023.PDF>

² HCP refers to all paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, including body substances (e.g., blood, tissue, and specific body fluids); contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air. HCP include, but are not limited to, emergency medical service personnel, nurses, nursing assistants, home healthcare personnel, physicians, technicians, therapists, phlebotomists, pharmacists, dental healthcare personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the healthcare facility, and persons not directly involved in patient care, but who could be exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted in the healthcare setting (e.g., clerical, dietary, environmental services, laundry, security, engineering and facilities management, administrative, billing, and volunteer personnel).

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/stay-home-when-sick.htm>

MTFs and DTFs should have resumed all clinical services at this point, including pulmonary function testing using infection control risk-based criteria.^{5,6} In the event an MTF or DTF has been unable to meet the requirements needed to safely resume routine functions (e.g., spirometry for occupational health exams), a Director’s Critical Information Report (DCIR) must be submitted to the appropriate Market Lead.

Masking in DoD Medical and Dental Treatment Facilities (MTFs, DTF): Base MTF/DTF mask-wearing decisions on CDC guidance for healthcare settings, and local epidemiologic data, to protect patients, visitors and the workforce and reduce the spread of infectious respiratory diseases. Considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Installation Health Protection Condition
- Number of positive cases at the facility and the installation
- Hospitalizations, deaths, emergency department visits and test positivity by geographic area: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>
- Data from the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division: <https://carepoint.health.mil/sites/AFHSB/IB/dashboards/M2W/Pages/default.aspx> to include infectious respiratory disease cases, hospitalizations and deaths
- Trends from the Respiratory Virus Hospitalization Surveillance Network RESP-NET: <https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/resp-net/dashboard.html> and the CDC National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS)
- Seasonality (i.e., consider maximal masking during respiratory illness season, approx. Oct – Apr in the Northern Hemisphere)

MTFs and DTFs that distribute N95 respirators to personnel must follow an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) respiratory protection program: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134>.

Signage: MTFs and DTFs should post signage about current infection prevention and control recommendations, and date them to ensure people know they reflect current recommendations.

Recordkeeping and reporting: DoD Components must preserve previously collected DD Forms 3150⁷, 3175⁸, 3176⁹, and 3177¹⁰ in accordance with the Federal Records Act and other recordkeeping requirements. Because these completed forms may be subject to litigation holds or additional records retention requirements, personnel should not delete or destroy such records without appropriate disposition guidance from component records managers and counsel.

⁵ Defense Health Agency Deputy Assistant Director for Medical Affairs Memorandum, “Outpatient Pulmonary Function Tests (PFT) During COVID-19 Pandemic,” August 18, 2020, found at: <https://info.health.mil/sites/DADMA/Shared%20Documents/DHA%20Memo%20-%20Outpatient%20PFT%20during%20COVID%2019%20Pandemic.pdf>

⁶ American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Occupational Spirometry and Fit Testing in the COVID-19 Era: 2021 Interim Recommendations, found at: <https://acoem.org/Guidance-and-Position-Statements/Guidance-and-Position-Statements/Occupational-Spirometry-and-Fit-Testing-in-the-COVID-19-Era-2021-Interim-Recommendations-from-the-A>

⁷ DD Form 3150 – “Contractor Personnel and Visitor Certification of Vaccination”. A previous version of this form was used for both civilian personnel (before publication of DD Form 3175) as well as contractors and visitors.

⁸ DD Form 3175 – “DoD Civilian Employee Certification of Vaccination”

⁹ DD Form 3176 – “Request for a Medical Exemption or Delay to the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement”

¹⁰ DD Form 3177 – “Request for a Religious Exemption to the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement”

Ensure continued safeguarding of personal identifiable information and protected health information recorded on these forms.

MTFs will report cases of respiratory infections in the Disease Reporting System-internet (DRSi) per the Armed Forces Reportable Medical Events Guidelines and Case Definitions located at: <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness/AFHSD/Reports-and-Publications/Armed-Forces-Reportable-Medical-Events> and will continue to report COVID-19 hospitalization data to DHA via established means.

COVID-19 remains a recordable and reportable occupational illness under part 1904 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations. Supervisors should record work-related confirmed cases of COVID-19, and report occupational illness from COVID-19 resulting in hospitalization or fatality following the requirements in the regulation.

Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems: In addition to the requirements for existing HVAC systems, building managers should consider other measures to improve ventilation as set forth in guidance from the CDC and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). This information can be found within the, “Optimize the Use of Engineering Controls and Indoor Air Quality” section at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>.

For more information on ventilation requirements at MTFs/DTFs, see the Technical Information Paper at: <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/PHC%20Resource%20Library/cv19-engineering-controls-verification-for-mtfs.pdf>.

Testing: Follow CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>. Pre-procedure or pre-admission testing for patients and expanded screening testing of asymptomatic healthcare personnel without known exposures are at the discretion of the facility.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, please disseminate to all MTF and DTFs under the authority, direction, and control of your respective organization. Direct questions or concerns regarding this memorandum to dha.ncr.clinic-support.mbx.ipc-consult@health.mil or dha.ncr.pub-health.mbx.operation@health.mil.

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Director