



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

## UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

APR 08 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE  
SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
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AFFAIRS  
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC  
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DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 7) – Department of Defense  
Guidance for the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment, and  
Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

References: (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, “Department of Defense Guidance on the  
Use of Cloth Face Coverings,” dated April 5, 2020 (copy attached)  
(b) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness  
Memorandum, “Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 3) –  
Department of Defense Guidance for the Use of Personal Protective Equipment  
and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions during the Coronavirus Disease 2019  
Outbreak,” dated March 10, 2020 (hereby rescinded)

This memorandum implements reference (a). The DoD continues to rapidly adapt its  
response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to protect the force and ensure  
the continuation of DoD missions. This memorandum rescinds reference (b), and replaces it  
with the guidance below on cloth face coverings and updated guidance on personal protective  
equipment (PPE) and non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs).

### **Cloth face coverings:**

We now know a significant proportion of individuals with COVID-19 are asymptomatic  
and can transmit the virus before showing symptoms. As a result, the Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings  
where social distancing is difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and workplaces). Cloth face  
coverings will slow the spread of COVID-19 by reducing transmission from people who do not  
realize they are infected.

In accordance with reference (a), to the extent practical, all individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities are required to wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain 6 feet of social distance in public areas or work centers. Exceptions to this requirement, for reasons such as impracticality, health, or other bases, may be approved by commanders, supervisors, and contracting officers, as appropriate. Exceptions should be documented in writing and a copy provided to the recipient and the next higher level of command or supervision. Upon request, individuals will lower face coverings at security checkpoints to allow their identities to be verified. Components will comply with applicable labor obligations (to the extent such obligations do not conflict with the agency's ability to conduct operations during this emergency).

A cloth face covering shall extend above the nose without interfering with eyewear, and below the chin to cover the mouth and nostrils completely. It shall fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face and be secured (e.g., by being tied in place or with ear-loops). Cloth face coverings shall be laundered regularly to maintain good hygiene. The Military Departments will issue guidance on uniform wear for Service members. Pending that guidance, Service members will wear cloth face coverings in neutral colors. CDC guidance on use and instructions for homemade face coverings (including no-sew options using common household items) may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Medical PPE such as N-95 respirators or surgical masks will not be issued for this purpose as these items are reserved, as described below.

### **PPE:**

Due to increasing medical care requirements for COVID-19 patients, follow these guidelines to prioritize and optimize the use of PPE in this supply constrained environment:

- Respirators, including N-95 respirators. These items are not recommended for use outside of healthcare, discrete COVID-19 support missions, and other specifically authorized settings. N-95 respirators must be fit-tested on the user to provide optimal protection.
- Surgical Masks. These items are intended to reduce the spread of viruses when worn by patients and healthcare workers.
- Gloves, gowns, and eye protection. These items should be used primarily for patient care (e.g., en route care during patient transport). Between patient encounters, non-disposable eye protection must be cleaned and disinfected, and gloves and gowns must be changed at prescribed intervals.

To optimize the supply and use of PPE, Components should follow CDC-published strategies found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>. Additionally, the below table prescribes prioritized categories for PPE use, subject to available supply and direction from local commanders and supervisors.

Priority	Category	Examples	Measures
1	Source control	A COVID-19 patient or person under investigation (PUI)	Surgical Masks
2	Healthcare Delivery	Military Treatment Facility Patient Care Requirements Emergency Medical Services Ancillary Healthcare Providers (e.g., Dental, Veterinary)	N-95 Respirators/ Surgical Masks Eye Protection Gowns Gloves
3	Discrete COVID-19 Support Missions	COVID-19 Patient or PUI Transport Quarantine and PUI Support Mortuary Affairs Teams	N-95 Respirators/ Surgical Masks Eye Protection Gowns Gloves
4	Increased Risk in performance of official duties	Commanders, in consultation with their Public Health Emergency Officers, may include special public-facing duties and incorporate CDC considerations for other special groups.	Gloves Cloth Face Covering

### **Non-pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI):**

Cloth face coverings and PPE are part of a larger strategy for using NPIs to limit transmission of COVID-19. Further CDC information on NPIs may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>. It is important to continue to consistently practice the following NPIs:

- Frequent hand sanitation using soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Properly covering coughs and sneezes.
- Social distancing, staying home when sick, and use of telecommunications in place of face-to-face interactions.
- Frequently cleaning and disinfecting common touch points, including gym equipment, keyboards, laptops, door handles, etc.

Proper and consistent use of cloth face coverings, PPE, and NPIs reduce risk to DoD personnel and our communities. This guidance is consistent with CDC COVID-19 guidance, which should be checked regularly at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. My point of contact for this guidance is COL Christopher Warner, who may be reached at (703) 697-2111 or christopher.h.warner.mil@mail.mil.



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Attachment:  
As stated