

Greetings, Arctic Warriors.

I'm here today to talk about why the decision was made to return to HPCON Charlie.

JBER has been in HPCON Bravo+ since 26 May and we have had low numbers of COVID cases in our community for several months, however over the last 7-10 days we've seen significant increases on base, mirroring what we're seeing in Anchorage and across Alaska.

As we studied how COVID is spreading, we're seeing increases in transmission in the work-place, at off-duty social gatherings, including at large outdoor gatherings, and case-specific poor adherence to general mitigation measures, such as the use of cloth face-coverings/masks, 6-foot physical distancing, and staying at home when experiencing symptoms.

My priorities as JBER's installation commander are: 1) the health and safety of our military and civilian personnel who work on JBER and their families; 2) safeguarding and preserving our national security capabilities; 3) and supporting our local community and the state of Alaska's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is my responsibility to make every effort to protect our service members, civilian teammates and families while preserving our ability to accomplish the homeland defense mission the nation relies on us for. I take this responsibility very seriously and a change to HPCON Charlie is necessary to keep our personnel & families safe, maintain our military readiness, and preserve JBER's warfighting capabilities. This decision was made in consultation with senior mission commands across JBER.

As the COVID-19 environment continues to evolve, this HPCON Charlie will not look the same as it did in the spring, and it's based on current conditions in our community and our expanded knowledge of how to control infections. We have learned that effective strategies to control COVID-19 include keeping a physical distance, wearing a mask, good hand hygiene, and staying home when you are sick. Services and programs, with effective mitigation strategies and screening measures in place, that support mission essential functions, such as childcare, will continue to operate under HPCON Charlie. Examples include: indoor fitness centers, dining facilities and pools; independent/small-scale outdoor active recreational activities, and Childhood Development Centers and School Age Programs. Over the last 7 months we've demonstrated that these functions have effective mitigation strategies in place, and with discipline, can be operated safely.

Given the increases in work-place transmission, individual commands will take action to limit the physical presence of personnel in the work place and ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place - this includes strict adherence to our mask policies. Personnel may be required to telework or be restricted from workplaces subject to command and supervisor determinations in order to reduce spreading the virus. Questions about your individual work schedule must be directed to your chain of command. Additionally, questions about individual leave requests need to be addressed with your unit's chain of command.

I need you all to understand we cannot afford complacency in the health and hygiene habits we've cultivated over the past several months and the need for increased controls are necessary. COVID numbers in Anchorage and Alaska are on the rise — we are part of this community and must do our part to slow the spread.

We must have strict adherence to Quarantine/Isolation procedures, as advised by Public Health. All individuals accessing JBER should notify their chain of command and Public Health if they have been tested for COVID-19 off-base, and should remain at home until further instruction from Public Health. This includes pending, positive, or negative results. Even negative results may carry additional quarantine requirements.

Furthermore, all individuals with a household member who tested positive, or who is awaiting a test result, should stay at home, contact their supervisor, and await a disposition from Public Health.

All individuals working on JBER should complete a daily questionnaire and follow questionnaire procedures before reporting for work each day.

A complete list of changes to services is available... in the stoplight chart that's pinned to the top of this Facebook page.

However, I want to highlight a few items. Installation visitor pass procedures remain unchanged. Beginning tomorrow, 17 Oct, the Gov't Hill Gate will be temporarily closed. No other gate impacts are anticipated at this time, however given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 environment, gate changes could occur at any time.

AAFES and the Commissary will continue to allow guests. AAFES food courts and installation run eateries will not offer dine in service. DFACs are mission essential feeding activities and will retain capacity and mitigation controls.

A decision on Halloween activities authorized on the installation will be made next week and will be informed by the current COVID environment.

Please know that every effort is being made to protect our personnel and families. We all have learned a lot over the last several months. We will continue to work together as a team while providing realistic expectations and predictability to the maximum extent possible to combat the COVID-19 threat. We are stronger together.

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