

JBER PHE Q&A

MEDICAL

Q1: How many cases of COVID have been confirmed on JBER since March?

A1: We cannot discuss specific case counts for JBER. However, we continue to see sustained community transmission of the virus, albeit not at any level that would prevent us from being fully ready to accomplish our mission. DOD guidance has directed consolidated numbers be released at a higher level. Air Force COVID data can be found here: <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2184415/air-force-update-for-covid-19/>

DOD COVID data can be found here: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>

All impacted individuals have followed and are following all CDC and DHHS isolation protocols. The 673d MDG is working with affected chains of command and completing contact tracing. Appropriate notifications have been / are being made to those family members, coworkers and employees who require restriction of movement and quarantine.

Q2: Why is wearing masks still not being enforced by leadership at the lower levels?

A2: Every chain of command on JBER is charged with enforcement of these orders. We must all do our part in ensuring the safety of ourselves and those around us. If you observe individuals or groups not adhering to these guidelines, please elevate your concern to the next level in your chain of command. Do not be intimidated by rank--mask wear is required of every member of Team JBER.

Q3: What is the survival rate on COVID-19 virus, based on different age groups?

A3: Please check the CDC's website for statistics including current infection and mortality rates.

Q4: Have the policies in place since we initiated HPCON C been working? If not, what numerical value would consider HPCON D?

A4: The Public Health Emergency Officer assesses levels of viral transmission and makes recommendations to the Commander on raising and lowering Health Protection Conditions. Changes in HPCON levels are driven by multiple factors, not just the case count. These factors includes number of cases, the availability of medical facilities, potential mission impacts and other factors. All this is weighed before making any changes. Vigilant adherence to the current restrictions should eventually reduce rates of transmission and thus allow for some easing of restrictions as long as people take appropriate measures to protect themselves and others around them.

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LEADERSHIP

Q1: What is leadership's priority?

A1: Leadership's priority is the health and safety of the installation and the community while executing our national security mission. JBER leaders know that we are in a difficult time that is getting even harder the longer this goes on, and they're doing all they can to make smart, safe decisions that balance risk mitigation with resilience.

Q2: How many attempted suicides and suicides have occurred on JBER since March? And how are you measuring the current mental health of our Armed Forces and their families?

A2: Like COVID-19 cases, we don't release these numbers at the installation level. JBER has many mental health resources, most of which are available 24/7. We understand that this can be a difficult time for some. We encourage anyone who is feeling depressed or alone or who feel like they need to talk to someone to reach out for help.

Air Force Chaplain - (907) 552-4422

Army Chaplain - (907) 384-1461

JBER Suicide Hotline - (907) 440-0160

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

JBER Hospital main number - (907) 580-6260

Q3: With increased positive COVID tests, should all the squadrons go to lower manning split shifts? It seems like not all squadrons are following the same protocols.

A3: Which individuals need to report to work in-person is up to the discretion of each unit commander. Commanders are balancing the safety of their people with their imperative to execute their mission. This may drive different solutions for different units.

Q4: What is JBER doing to control the army units that are still doing 100% manning despite all the restrictions, multiple positives in the unit and performing non mission critical duties?

A4: Unit commanders are responsible for effectively and safely executing the mission. If you have specific concerns with COVID-19 mitigation measures in your unit, please address those concerns with your chain of command.

Q5: Why is it that my unit can go TDY for 2 months and maintain flying, providing Air Superiority CMR status and support the CAC mission at full manning but shops deemed non-essential are in a COVID schedule, some of which are in maintenance back shops that we need to continue our mission. If you're sick don't come to work. If you're not sick come to work like the rest of us that have been. It's neat that it works for them but it seems unnecessary to hinder their support mission, while we continue to maintain the flying mission.

A5: While the term essential is used often, no one is non-essential because everyone plays a key role in our mission success. Some mission sets do have more flexibility in their manning structure and design as well as in person requirements. Unit commanders are responsible for determining how best to execute the mission. Questions and concerns with mission execution or lack of available support should be addressed with your chain of command.

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ACTIVITIES / LEAVE

Q1: Why are we having to limit our off-base activities, yet on-base non-essential facilities are still operational (bowling alley, pool, arts & crafts, etc.)?

A1: We have more control over health and safety measures and enforcement on base. We do not have the ability to monitor and enforce such measures off base. We realize this does create some differences, but our goal is to minimize risk while maximizing the number of safe activities our service members and their families can still participate in.

Q2: Are soldiers going to be allowed to go home for the holidays?

A2: Leave approval is at the discretion of Air Force unit commanders and USARAK leadership. Please address specific concerns with your respective chain of command.

Q3: For families who are going home for the holidays or on a vacation to get a mental break, are they allowed to go eat out and be around more than two families at a time if they are wearing a mask? If the spouse went alone on vacation without the active duty member and did all this, would she/he be allowed back on base if she/he has a negative test and follows the base 14 day quarantine rule?

A3: This PHE and ROM are local policies, and don't apply to your leave location. If you leave the local area for any reason, make sure you know and comply with the COVID measures of wherever you are going. Yes, anyone who lives on base will be able to return to base after taking leave. Service members and civilian workers will still be required to follow the 14-day ROM before returning, or as determined by their chain of command. Anyone in that situation, regardless of test results or approval to return to work, will still not be allowed to go into any JBER storefronts or community facilities until 14 days have passed.

Q4: With Thanksgiving coming, will we be able to have people over for Thanksgiving dinner?

A4: Yes. Private gatherings are allowed; they are limited to a maximum of two family groups at a time. Please refer to the Restriction of Movement memo for details on what constitutes a family group.

Q5: Why can't we follow the state guidance when it comes to traveling such as testing prior to returning or at the airport, and quarantining until results are back? It is not easy for civilians to travel out of state and then having to use an additional 80 hours of sick leave or annual leave to quarantine for 2 weeks regardless of testing, especially the ones that cannot telework. We have military members coming to Alaska from other bases yet our guidance is stricter.

A5: Situations vary across the country and the globe. Commanders, relying on the guidelines in our Public Health Emergency guidance and linked orders, are responsible for managing risk at the unit level. Our Public Health Emergency Officer advises senior leaders on updated guidance from the CDC, AK Department of Health and Social Services, and Municipal Health Departments and makes recommendations on how this guidance should be incorporated with installation guidance. Commanders have options for other duty statuses for quarantining civilians if personnel have been cleared to take leave out of the local area.

Q6: How does what we do today impact the restrictions and controls put in place? Are there stricter controls that might be implemented if we don't adhere to appropriate measures?

A6: Restrictions associated with our Health Protection Condition are directly linked to the risk of viral transmission in the community. Vigilant adherence to the current restrictions should eventually reduce rates of transmission and thus allow for some easing of restrictions as long as people take appropriate measures to protect themselves and others around them. Yes, there are more strict controls than could

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be implemented but with everyone's support and diligence we sincerely hope we will not have to implement them.

Q7: When will our troops be able to go home and visit family? There are people here who haven't been able to go home yet and have been here for well over a year. It's severely affecting their mental health. Many other bases allow it.

A7: Leave approval is at the discretion of Air Force unit commanders and USARAK leadership. Please address specific concerns with your respective chain of command.

Q8: Are we allowed to still go to Alyeska during the PHE? Skiing and snowboarding there is an outdoor event with masks and social distancing, and positively affects morale and fitness for members.

A8: Yes, you are allowed to, as this meets the criteria for engaging in safe off-base exercise while wearing masks and social distancing. Be aware that lift lines and Gondola rides may result in unsafe situations, so remain vigilant and remove yourself if an area becomes too crowded.

Q9: With the recent hunker down order in Anchorage closing indoor dining and reverting back to outdoor dining lift the previous measure of "to go only" allowing military members to use outdoor dining at businesses or restaurants now that we had in HPCON B+ or will this still be in effect?

A9: The restriction of dining at off base establishments is still in effect regardless of indoor or outdoor facilities.

Q10: I'm a little confused on the gathering restrictions. We aren't supposed to gather more than two families but we can gather if it is a base wide function. How is that different from gathering with our neighbors?

A10: All approved base functions have strict risk mitigation measures in place. Events like Spooky Forest and the upcoming Winterfest have oversight with strict physical distancing, mask wear, hand sanitizing, gathering size and additional safety protocols built in. These differ greatly from social engagements with neighbors. Commanders are responsible for reviewing plans and mitigating risk during all unit activities.

Q11: Have the installation restrictions implemented a few weeks back in regards to off base dining and drinking establishments slowed the transmission of COVID on the installation you were hoping for or are you still seeing an uptick of cases?

A11: We do not discuss specifics on the rate of COVID-19 transmission beyond confirming that we still continue to see sustained community transmission of the virus and continue to monitor the situation to take appropriate measures.

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FITNESS

Q1: Can we please open back up hanger 5?

A1: Stay tuned! There are some construction projects going on right now inside Hangar 5 to improve the facility.

Q2: Will there be physical fitness tests still taking place starting January 2021? I believe the local Anchorage gyms have reduced their gyms to 25% capacity due to COVID.

A2: The Air Force has made the decision to resume Physical Fitness Assessments starting in April 2021, as well as to remove the abdominal circumference measurement component of the test. We have authority from our headquarters to adapt our testing program taking local conditions—including the ongoing Public Health Emergency—into consideration. We will not begin testing again until we are certain we can do so in a manner that is safe, fair, and consistent. We will announce the plan to all Airmen as soon as it is approved.

Q3: Commanders have the authority to deem “official functions” per the last ABW policy. With that being said, if a Command can deem a thanksgiving or a mandatory Suicide intervention training class of 15 personnel/15 different families an “official function” why are we not declaring the use of Hangar 5 and all of its resources especially for AF PT tests coming back online in January an “official function” at a base level?

A3: See questions above on PT testing and ongoing Hangar 5 construction projects

Q4: Just please don't close the fitness centers to dependents and retirees. These folks have been following the rules and are using those facilities at the slowest times. This is the coldest and darkest time of the year where outdoor exercise is impractical for many. The fitness centers are much needed to help stay in shape and avoid more cabin fever than usual.

A4: Fitness centers are still open to dependents 16 years of age and older and retirees.

Q5: What process can we come up with so people using both fitness centers during peak times don't have to queue up outside in these temperatures?

Q6: A: We take fitness -- as well as health and safety -- very seriously. Fitness is a mission-essential function, and fitness requirements must be met in a way that reduces risk. We encourage patrons to adjust their routines to avoid peak fitness times. Both Buckner and Elmendorf Fitness Centers are open and staffed seven days per week with varying hours, along with 24/7 access available on weekdays. Reservations are available to use the Buckner Fitness Pool seven days per week for lap swimming. Additionally, the Arctic Oasis Community Center offers reservations to use their new fitness equipment 1200-1800 on Wednesdays through Sundays. Please see facility Facebook pages for sign-up instructions.

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BASE ACCESS

Q1: Do you anticipate the no visitor/no new visitor passes rule to be extended beyond the 30 days?

A1: Base leadership will work with medical experts and the local community to determine if the PHE needs to be extended beyond the initial 30 days. At this time, numbers are not trending in a direction that would support curtailing the PHE or limiting it to only 30 days.

Q2: When will the visitor policy be relaxed to allow our families to come see us since we cannot fly to see them?

A2: Visitors may be allowed depending on the situation. Personnel may apply for an exception to this "Base Access" policy based on humanitarian (to potentially include holiday visits) or unusual situations from the installation commander or 673 AWB vice commander with the appropriate paperwork with an endorsement from their unit commander in the grade of O-4 and above or comparable director level supervisor. Each case is handled individually. Submit requests to 673abw.cc@us.af.mil.

Q3: Why can people still take leave and travel across the states and just quarantine when they get back, but we can't have any visitors? Couldn't we have visitors and just quarantine while they are here and after they leave?

A3: Visitors may be allowed depending on the situation. Personnel may apply for an exception to this "Base Access" policy based on humanitarian or unusual situations from the installation commander or 673 AWB vice commander with the appropriate paperwork with an endorsement from their unit commander in the grade of O-4 and above or comparable director level supervisor. Submit requests to 673abw.cc@us.af.mil.

Q4: I'm a civilian contractor working on JBER and my roommate works at a local restaurant. Am I allowed to go to work on the installation or does living with someone who works at a brewery/restaurant disbar me?

A4: Yes, you would still be allowed to access base. Your roommate's employment is considered an essential activity.

Q5: Can you please consider the gate closures and times. Over here on the Elmendorf side our daily commute has doubled because after 6pm we have to go to the closest open gate miles away. It's just rough that Government Hill gate is down and then the Post Rd gate has limited hours. Perhaps not having two that are closest to one another affected? Less driving in the winter is much safer.

A5: Government Hill Gate will reopen Monday, 7 December, at 0600. Balancing mission requirements with available manning informs our decisions to open and close installation gates.

Q6: Are you guys allowing visitors/family on base with DOD sponsors? For the holidays?

A6: Requests for family visits over the holidays are part of the Exception to Policy process. Requests are submitted through the member's unit commander to the vice wing commander for consideration.

Q7: My daughter is coming home from college and she actually lives here on JBER with us. She is too old for a DBIDs ID card. What form do I use for a pass? She is flying in mid-month.

A7: Please contact the installation Visitor's Control Center for more information.

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CHILD CARE

Q1: Why does the memo given from the CDCs sound like it's optional for us to keep our kids at home if we're teleworking but instead we're told, by CDC staff it's mandatory to keep our kids home if we're teleworking?

A1: The most effective action parents can take right now to preserve CYP care capacity is to keep children home if possible. Changes to the CYP fee structure allows parents, especially those that telework, to do this and only pay for the days that care is needed. We understand the work schedule for some parents does not afford them the ability to take advantage of this option, and we have a commander endorsement mechanism in place for these parents.

Q2: Why are we not going back to the COVID schedule? And why aren't you pushing for CDCs to be open for only mission-essential parents to reduce the number of children in CDCs?

A2: We have worked closely with healthcare professionals and the local community to determine the best and most effective COVID mitigation measures are in place. It is up to each chain of command to determine who needs to physically be at work to successfully complete the mission -- this is a decision which may or may not look the same as it did earlier in the year. Health screenings are continuing at the CDCs. We ask that customers continue to be patient and flexible, and comply with all preventive measures our staff implement. Our ability to continue to provide this vital service depends on compliance with these measures.

Q3: With the changes to the state restrictions to being close to what they were before will CDC/SAP be going back to single mil or dual/mil only?

A3: Any changes to CYP service levels will be based on capacity and risk and will be announced by CYP staff.

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RULES

Q1: Will grooming standards relax again as done previously in the year? We have hair shops closing and the shops that are still operating can only operate at 25 percent capacity.

A1: Leadership continually assesses the need to modify policies to execute the mission. At this time, grooming standards remain unchanged.

Q2: Have the installation restrictions implemented a few weeks back in regards to off base dining and drinking establishments slowed the transmission of COVID on the installation you were hoping for or are you still seeing an uptick of cases?

A2: Guidance from the Department of Defense prohibits us from releasing COVID-19 case counts and transmission rates; however, we continue to observe sustained community transmission of COVID-19.

Q3: With the new restrictions just put on Anchorage to start next week, will these rules apply to base as well more specific for the part about retail and the commissary being only 25 percent capacity allowed at one time?

A3: The Installation Commander sets rules for the installation. At this time no changes have been implemented.

Q4: What do the updated city restrictions on the number of households allowed to be together, as well as the number of people limited at each gathering, mean for soldiers stationed at JBER during the holiday season? Does JBER and/or USARAK anticipate modifying base restrictions for soldiers to align with new local restrictions?

A4: Team JBER members must comply with PHE orders and Anchorage Emergency Order 16 during activities within the Municipality. Local restrictions inform installation decisions but are not the only factor. Current policy provides guidance on gatherings and the exception to policy process.