Background

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness first reported in China in December 2019 that has since been detected and documented as spreading from person to person in a number of other locations around the world. Initially many cases of the associated COVID-19 illness were associated with travel to or from mainland China or close contact with a travel-related case, but cases were documented in more than 60 countries by the end of February, with many locations reporting sustained and widespread community transmission. Sustained community transmission means that people have been infected with the virus, but how or where they became infected is not known, and the spread is ongoing. Widespread community transmission is similar to sustained transmission but has impacted most of the region or country.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to share information and policy guidance with the DLA community as it relates to the actual or potential impact of COVID-19 on DLA operations, personnel, and resources. For the most up to date information, please visit https://www.dla.mil/Info/Coronavirus/, which has links to key resources.

DLA has a critical mission to support the Military Services, Combatant Commands, and other Federal agencies; that includes supporting our nation’s response to COVID-19. The key to our success is our people, and while we will respond professionally and swiftly to mission requirements related to COVID-19, we will also take necessary steps to protect and inform our workforce.

About COVID-19

At this time, most people in the United States have little immediate risk of exposure to this virus. However, it is important to note that the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high in the United States and all DLA locations globally.

Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example, health care workers or close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
Quarantine is recommended for individuals exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine is separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms), in order to prevent the possible spread of the disease. For COVID-19, the recommended period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure.

If you are exposed to the virus or develop symptoms, call your healthcare professional without delay who can decide if quarantine is necessary, or refer you to the appropriate public health authority.

**Potential Impact to DLA Operations**

DLA is already providing support to the U.S. response to COVID-19 in the areas of materiel support, planning, and acquisition, and will continue to be a vital part of the worldwide logistics response. However, DLA is also a global enterprise, with resources and people around the world, both within and outside the Continental United States. As such, we are tracking the virus and its impact to military operations and locations, as well as how communities are responding to the threat.

As an employer, DLA will follow DoD policies and guidelines in taking any actions to address or mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19. This includes disseminating official information by appropriate public or military health authorities, leveraging workplace policies and flexibilities designed to protect our workforce, and activating “continuity of operations” plans should it become necessary.

**COVID-19 Prevention**

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to this virus and listen to guidance provided by public health officials. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Visit the CDC website for more information on protecting you, your family, and other DLA employees.

**Official Travel**

DLA is a global agency and travel is an integral part of how we do business. In response to COVID-19, we are reviewing all travel to areas with sustained or widespread community transmission on a case-by-case basis to ensure travel is mission essential.
We are also closely following guidance issued by the CDC and Department of State to assess local conditions and requirements. Supervisors should delay travel to areas with sustained or widespread community transmission if possible.

For all individuals traveling to areas with sustained or widespread community spread, we encourage you to read and follow guidance issued by the CDC, Department of State, the DoD Foreign Clearance Guide, and the Health Protection Condition (HPCON) requirements set by local commanders.

**Personal Travel**

DLA is issuing this guidance to ensure all employees understand COVID-19, the quarantine requirements, and risk of traveling to areas of sustained or widespread community transmission. Employees traveling unofficially (or personally) to an area with sustained or widespread community transmission must receive a travel-threat briefing from their local Antiterrorism Officer (ATO). Employees with a top secret/sensitive compartmented information (TS/SCI) clearance have additional requirements for travel and should consult their local security officer.

Employees should review the CDC and Department of State’s websites for travel alerts and warnings for countries with an elevated threat before traveling and follow CDC precaution instructions. The State Department’s site also has information on embassies and consulates; entry, exit, and visa requirements; local laws and special circumstances; and health and medical facilities for every country.

The Department of State also encourages enrollment in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program before traveling. This allows you to receive important information from the embassy and to be contacted in the event of a natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency. Enrollment can also help family or friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

**Leave Flexibilities**

DLA offers numerous leave and workplace flexibilities to assist employees and their families impacted by public health emergencies.

DLA may authorize weather and safety (administrative) leave in certain situations when an asymptomatic employee (i.e., healthy, not displaying symptoms) is subject to quarantine under the direction of public health authorities due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19. This determination is based on the significant safety risks for other employees and the general public that would be incurred if the employee were allowed to perform work at the employee’s normal worksite. Employees on personal travel who visit an area with a known quarantine requirement should consider deferring or canceling their travel, as weather and safety leave may not be granted during the quarantine period, depending on the circumstances.

Weather and safety leave may be granted only if an employee is not able to safely perform work at an approved location. Therefore, an employee who is not a telework-ready could be granted weather and safety leave for quarantine periods based on potential exposure.
However, in the case of telework-ready employees, the employee’s home is generally an approved location. Therefore, the employee would generally be expected to perform telework at home as long as the employee is asymptomatic. If a telework-ready employee in these circumstances needs time off for personal reasons, then the employee would be expected to take other personal leave or unpaid time off (e.g., annual leave or sick leave to care for a family member).

If an employee (telework-ready or not) is diagnosed as being infected, or likely has been infected, with COVID-19, use of weather and safety leave would be inappropriate. Accrued or advanced sick leave would normally be used to cover such a period of illness.

If the employee exhausts available sick leave, he/she may use accrued annual leave, request advanced sick or annual leave, request donated leave under the DLA Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP), or use any earned compensatory time off or credit hours. In addition, an employee may invoke his or her entitlement of up to 12 weeks to unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for a serious health condition. An employee may substitute accrued annual leave and sick leave, as appropriate, for unpaid leave under FMLA.

For additional information on leave for employees impacted by COVID-19 refer to COVID-19 Workplace Flexibilities. In addition, employees should consult with their servicing DLA Human Resources Office regarding these policies and programs, since many of these matters are addressed in the agency internal policies and/or collective bargaining agreements.

**Telework**

DLA uses telework, among other things, to promote continuity of operations by allowing employees to continue their work at an approved alternative worksite. Telework is a critical tool during emergency situations.

Telework can help ensure essential DLA functions continue during emergency situations, including a potential COVID-19 health crisis. Telework can be used to help slow the spread of disease by keeping face-to-face contact to a minimum (often referred to as "social distancing") while maintaining operations as close to normal as possible.

If DLA implements the use of telework for Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) purposes, employees will be notified and receive guidance from their supervisors. DLA Human Resources (J1) maintains a telework webpage that includes links to existing policy and guidance related to telework.

**Additional Information**

As this is rapidly evolving, we will continue to monitor the situation closely and update the DLA COVID-19 website as developments emerge. We encourage you to visit the page frequently. Other reliable sources of information include the CDC, DoD Spotlight page, Johns Hopkins tracking map, or the World Health Organization.