

March 17, 2020

USMMA Coronavirus Update #5 – Maximum Telework

Faculty and Staff:

We hope you have been able to keep up with the communication updates we have issued recently concerning the rapid development and spread of the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19. Our latest communication (COVID-19 #3) delayed the return of the Regiment of Midshipman from Spring Break. We are currently developing plans for the way ahead and will continue to communicate breaking information and guidance as appropriate. Today we would like to clarify the Academy guidance on telework and workplace presence.

The Office of Management and Budget has been proactive in sharing guidance about workplace presence, telework and social distancing. We are providing for reference the most recent memos in the event you have not yet been able to review them:

M-20-15 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M20-15-Telework-Guidance-OMB.pdf>

M-20-13 <https://chcoc.gov/sites/default/files/M-20-13.pdf>

The first and most recent memo directs maximum use of telework for those eligible and gives alternatives for others. The second describes the Administrations guidance on higher-risk employees and how to support them appropriately during this time.

Yesterday, the White House took aggressive action to slow the spread of the Coronavirus, issuing nationwide guidance entitled, “15 Days to Slow the Spread” ([click here](#)). We support this aggressive action intended to flatten the curve of infections over time, and will continue on-campus initiatives that minimize exposure and maximize alternatives to close individual or group contact, while allowing us to move forward with the education and training of midshipmen remotely. We encourage all recipients of this message to do the same.

We are fully committed to your safety, health and well-being during this uncertain time of virus spread, and the purpose of this memorandum is to articulate our commitment to maintaining that healthy environment and how members of our workforce can and should protect themselves. As a reminder, we have not had any cases of COVID-19 at the Academy, and we continue to encourage all members of the community to maximize preventive measures and to practice social distancing to the extent possible.

USMMA guidance on telework and workplace presence during the COVID-19 outbreak is below. Please be advised that while this guidance is designed to provide employees the maximum opportunity to practice social and workplace distancing, USMMA cannot force anyone to work remotely. We ask that you follow this guidance out of an abundance of caution, and concern for not only your own personal health, but that of your workplace colleagues:

For those employees with an active telework agreement, we expect you to make use of that agreement and work from an alternate location to the extent mission requirements allow. Please communicate early and often with your supervisor with respect to your work requirements and place of duty.

For those employees eligible for telework, but with no agreement in place, we ask that you make every effort to complete the certification requirements to formalize an active telework agreement. Supervisors are allowed liberal latitude to grant telework authorization for those employees in the process of certifying a telework agreement. Teleworking employees should remain in close contact with their supervisors to ensure work requirements and place of duty expectations are clear, current, and well understood.

For those employees at higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19, we expect you to maximize alternate work options and minimize exposure in the workplace. As with the above, please communicate regularly with your supervisor to ensure work requirements and place of duty needs are well understood. “Higher risk” personnel have been identified by the CDC as those over the age of 55 or those with chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or compromised immune systems. The CDC has also

designated pregnant women as being in a special population of increased risk. Employees do not need to show medical proof of increased risk factors, but can self-identify with their supervisors.

For those employees not eligible to telework, but find themselves in the higher risk category, you may be granted leave for safety reasons. Should you find yourself in this category, consult with your supervisor and Human Resources on options available to you.

For employees not eligible for telework, we will make every effort to maximize resources and functional support areas to safely and efficiently deliver mission-critical functions to the Academy. To the extent possible, supervisors have the discretion to modify support plans for these services in coordination with Department Heads and Human Resources, including the use of safety leave.

For faculty members operating on a maxi-flex schedule, please continue to coordinate in-person and on-line work flow with the Academic Dean and Provost, department heads and supervisors.

For any others not mentioned in this memo, coordinate directly with your supervisors to ensure your work requirements and locations are well understood during this time of uncertainty.

Supervisors and Department Heads have discretion in coordination with Human Resources on how best to staff mission requirements during this crisis. It is critical that we “assertively safeguard” our employees as the COVID-19 develops. If you have questions regarding your capability to support your employees, please see your leaders of the Human Resources department.

Should you have any questions about these categories, please contact Cicel Anderson, Director of Human Resources, 516-726-6175.

Thank you for your continued support as we work to maintain a high level of safety, health and transparency in communications during this period of increased vigilance. We will remain in touch.

Regards,
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