

COVID-19 RAFM Townhall March 20, 2020

Where can people get the most consolidated amount of information:

Col. Pananon: We are putting the information on our website, which will also have a COVID-19 button with links to appropriate sites as well as the square D app, which will also have information.

Explain the testing procedures and processes:

Medical: The testing procedures and processes continue to evolve on a day-to-day basis, based on approval methods and the availability of testing kits. Right now, testing starts with a call to our hotline or to the appointment line from a clinical standpoint to make sure that patients meet the criteria for COVID-19 testing. The testing itself does not offer any protection, it is a snapshot in time someone could potentially test negative today and then after a week from exposure retest and be positive. So we need to be very careful about the folks that we bring in and make sure we follow the CDC guidelines for testing criteria. Since February 1st, we have tested 96 people across the tri-base area and we have no positives at this point. We are very conscious of the resources needed to do that, both in terms of the testing kit and the length of time to get the response back. And what patients have to go through while they're in that waiting period. Which is a strict isolation with no leaving the home even to get food and other things and being completely dependent on other folks to take care of those items for them. So we are not taking testing lightly at the 48th medical group we are hoping to expand our testing capabilities. Because we know we're just at the front end of this pandemic and we will likely need to ramp up those efforts in the near future.

Can you explain the process and procedures for individuals who want to telework?

It varies from your category, LNDH or GS. There is a training on OPM.gov the link is on our share point. You take the training and discuss it with your supervisor. If there is sufficient work for you to perform from home, as long as you can meet your hours requirement with the approval of your chain of command you are good to go. At this point only squadron commanders have delegated approval authority, it just depends on the type of work you do not all positions are telework eligible, but if you have any type of administrative duties that you can perform from home and you're supervisor approves as well as your squadron commander then you are good to go. An agreement must be in place and is temporary in nature for the COVID period. You can telework to supplement childcare during the COVID period as well as if you're sick.

How often do your shelves get restocked and what restrictions are put on some purchases?

Victor from the commissary: We get deliveries at Lakenheath six days a week. We get deliveries at Mildenhall three days a week. We have ramped up our ability to order we've also ramped up our ability and times we can receive supplies and deliveries. We do not foresee any slowdown, everything is fluid of course, but right now we're looking pretty good. We do have restrictions on some sanitation items we currently are out of wipes and sanitizer solution. However, other sanitizing and clean supplies and paper products including toilet paper and Kleenex are limited to two per visit to the commissary. That is a change from yesterday which was three. We are cutting back a little bit to make sure that we have products for everyone. We do not have limitations on other products like meat but we ask the community to be respectful so that everyone gets a chance to shop, and even though there's no formal restrictions on there, we will be paying attention to make sure that people are only buying those items they need for a short period of time. Once again we receive deliveries every day of the week except Sunday at Lakenheath and there will be some limitations but I think there's nothing to worry and we're working around the clock to get the shelves filled.

Can you detail what spiritual and mental health practices are in place?

Col. Pananon: There have not been any impacts to our church services or our planned engagements with the community. So all those services are available to and for our families. If there's ever a concern please don't hesitate to reach out and talk to your leadership we will be there and we will be there as quickly as we can to help support your needs. We do realize that this is an ever-changing and dynamic situation we may in the future try to conduct services via this medium alone and that is an opportunity to continue to ask us and bring up things on a daily basis so we can adjust because we do have the resources available.

1. Chaplains will continue to be available at the chapel during normal duty hours for appointments by calling DSN 238-2822 or COMM 01638-542822.
2. Chaplains will continue to be available after normal duty hours (24/7) by calling the Command Post at DSN 238-2121 or COMM 01638-542121.
3. Virtual counseling is also now available 24/7 by phone or skype.
4. Chaplains will continue to be available in units as requested.
5. Although Protestant services and programs are suspended, they will continue to meet virtually by connecting to virtual services and small groups via Facebook.
6. We encourage all Catholic families to stay connected to the RAF Lakenheath Catholic Community at: [Facebook.com/OurLadyoftheSkyCatholicCommunityatRAFLakenheath](https://www.facebook.com/OurLadyoftheSkyCatholicCommunityatRAFLakenheath)
7. All other faith groups can still call the chapel for more information.
8. RAF Mildenhall Chaplain Corps Contact Information:
 1. Chapel Email: 100ARW.HC@us.af.mil
 2. General Chapel Info: [Facebook.com/RAFMChapel](https://www.facebook.com/RAFMChapel)
 3. Protestant Community Info: [Facebook.com/RAFMildenhallChapelProtestantParish](https://www.facebook.com/RAFMildenhallChapelProtestantParish)
 4. Protestant Women of the Chapel: [Facebook.com/PWOCMildenhall](https://www.facebook.com/PWOCMildenhall) and MildenhallPWOC@gmail.com

5. Campus Life Student Ministry: blandrum@yfc.net
6. Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS): RAFMilitaryMOPS@gmail.com
7. Airmen's Ministry: cieromark@gmail.com or mebjciero@gmail.com
8. Boy Scout Troop 215: scoutmaster.rafm.215@gmail.com
9. Catholic Community:
[Facebook.com/OurLadyoftheSkyCatholicCommunityatRAFLakenheath](https://www.facebook.com/OurLadyoftheSkyCatholicCommunityatRAFLakenheath)

Can you detail when the CDC and the youth centers will be reopened? Priority of care?

Lt Col. G: Unfortunately, at this time I do not have an estimated date of when the centers will reopen. It will very much depend on the current situation locally as well as guidance that comes down for us when we do reopen it will most likely be a phased approach where we allow mission essential, dual mil and single military parents first access to care. We will be in communications with your leadership as well as the parents who are currently enrolled as new information comes out.

Question regarding movement of household goods personal property and POV shipments

Maj. L: As of the Secretary of Defense stop movement memo dated 13 May, we have had a change of what we consider normal at this time. However there are three exemptions of personal property and household goods that are authorized to get. First, personal property pack outs that are already started will remain, shipments for members with a general Officer waiver to PCS due to mission requirements and of course shipments for retirees and separatees with an approved date prior to 11 May. For all other exemptions, the environment continues to change and we get more information please contact our personal property and shipping office at DSN 238-2201 or go ahead and go to our Facebook page which is RAF Mildenhall TMO traffic management office our normal hours right now are Monday through Friday 0730 to 1630 will be glad to answer any of your questions. Additionally, myPERs has been a great resource for us if you have any questions regarding the guidance for the start movement please let us know. Additionally, the question had to do with personal vehicles the vehicle processing center or VPC if you did PCS in and your vehicle was in route already it will continue on its way to come in as normal with any delays that might happen in route. Additionally those folks that set up their vehicle to PCS out and the vehicle has left already and is in transit it will continue on its way. However, if your vehicle right now has not left we can assist you with recalling that vehicle as you may need it in the coming months.

Will we be allowed to carry more than 60 days of leave due to the current situation?

Chief G: this is already been addressed and they are working on it all the way up to higher headquarters, a special leave accrual. It's in the works and we expect to see it up for everyone.

Can you go into a little bit more detail about the virtual classroom look like?

School liaison: A digital learning platform is new the good news is we are the last to receive it and we are learning from other peoples challenges. There's a digital plan in place that outlines what each classroom and grade level will look like. This is not anticipated to be something that mirrors the classroom setting, children will not sit in front of the screen for seven hours. For example, you might meet with the teacher for 20 minutes online. There will be synchronous and asynchronous types of learning synchronous being unscripted and live and asynchronous meaning someone taped a lesson and then post sit for the students. It's going to be fluid and it's going to be something that's going to be different from school to school and each grade level. Younger students up to grade two, the platform will be student and parent, whereas the older students will have their lessons plans laid out in different ways. Each school, classroom and teacher will have things slightly different. It will be very important for you to attend the Facebook live sessions that each school will be doing on Monday and Tuesday next week go to their Facebook site and find out when the sessions are and please attend that way your specific questions may be answered more thoroughly.

Is there going to be any restrictions for civilian contractors getting on base?

Col. Pananon: Currently, as we stand, there are no restrictions for contractors coming onto base. We must always continue our mission and so those contracts that have been left, we expect those contractors will show up and perform the work that we've asked them to do. There may be a time in the future where we will have public health involvement Depending on where those contractors are coming from, if they come from a different area or country. And those are the things that we might consider but currently with the contract we have in place there are no restrictions whatsoever.

Is there any guidance for pregnant women to minimize the exposure to Covid 19?

Medical: As of right now the CDC has no data to differentiate infection risk or severe illness being elevated in pregnant women. Pregnant women do have a higher propensity to have a reaction or sicker response to influenza but this has not been shown in COVID-19 some of that is based on the lean numbers of a pregnant woman that have been exposed and endured so far. That being stated the recommendations are very simple because they follow the same recommendations that we have for anyone else which is: CDC guidelines on hygiene, avoiding contact, keeping physical distance between you and others avoid social gatherings frequently disinfect surfaces which can harbor COVID-19 for up to 72 hours. Taking those precautions can decrease your chances of contracting COVID-19. We encourage anyone who has a capacity to

work from home to do so. Spend less time at work and less crowded spaces, pregnant women included in that, because distancing interaction with other individuals will decrease the overall spread and risk of contraction of this disease.

Please explain PT testing and its current status

Lt Col. G: PT testing is suspended until June. From that date, you'll have six months to retest. Right now units are putting all members in exempt status individuals under current fail PT tests that are due to PT test during this time, should be working an exception to policy through their leadership

What about WAPS testing?

Lt Col.G: At this time there are no current delays for testing if you have a scheduled test, you will test. After the testing next week we will be at a bit of a stop for a while before the next testing cycle begins. If there will be a delay, during that next testing cycle, we will put that out as soon as we know. But this time we anticipate no further changes.

Interruptions at the Exchange

David: At this time we do not expect any interruptions at the exchange. Our team is working diligently to ensure the sanitation efforts are being met in order to make sure our customers are in a clean safe environment. At this time we have a few interruptions in food but we are working on opening up those facilities very soon.

Victor: we are working to make sure we provide a safe environment both for the employee and the customer. We are practicing the safe distancing and hoping that the customers do the same we are adjusting our entrances and exits to minimize the flow of traffic and control it better but we do not for see any change in our operating hours or any of the services we provide. Except for the in dining portion of our salad bars and sandwich making bars you cannot die inside anymore but you can get the salads in the sandwiches from our serving areas. Other than that there will be no restrictions or changes in our operations.

What's the process if someone had to go home for emergency leave?

Col. Pananon: In cases such as this, the process hasn't changed from what she would normally do for emergency leave. First contact would be your supervision and your first sergeant to make that request there will be a Red Cross notification as required and from there we would work as necessary through our first general officer to get formal approval From them but those exceptions to policy and authorizations to travel would be approved after we fall through, so there would be one extra step but nothing fundamentally has changed.

Where can people find more information for people who are in PCS status and TLA?

Maj. P: If you're in TLA, you'll have to reach out to the 48th housing office to see what your options are. If you're stuck in PCS status you can always go and get a short let or we can extend your TLA up to 60 days. This is case by case, so you can check out the housing office and work with finance to take care of it. You can call us at DSN_2385581.

Is there a plan for relax dress and appearance standards because social distance we will make it hard to get haircuts

Chief G: At this time there are no formal changes to our dress and appearance standards however this is something that is on our minds and in our conversations not just here but across all of USAFE and our sister basis. More to follow on that.

Will the Hardstand in Northside fitness Center's remain 24 hour access?

Lt Col. G: At this time is our intention to keep our gyms open for as long as possible the only thing that would drive a potential closure is if the risk became too much for the general populace. Of course we will keep general communication lines open to let you know if that changes.

If a member's PCS is two days after restriction of movement lifts, is it realistic to assume to leave on time?

Col Pananon: If you have already started your move people are there packing your boxes that move will continue and completed, however if you have scheduled a pack out that has not been started yet that will be delayed. We will start to get more formal information from the department of defense about the movement of personnel, again this is a moving target and we will try to get you the information as soon as it comes out. For those that are pending PCS actions or move actions we will try and stay in contact with you all the time and please if you don't hear from us as the questions talk to your leadership and let them know that they've got a pending and what is the realistic timeline so that I can help plan for my family. Stay engaged with your leadership that's imperative right now.

What about operations for the 727 Air Mobility Squadron?

Right now we don't expect any change to our to our normal operation hours we will adjust accordingly if necessary. We have a global mission and we want to keep that running as long as we can going forward. No changes right now, but there may be in the future.

I understand about the stop movement from one country to another but what about local moves?

Maj L: at this time there's a stop movement at all PCS however in the event it falls under a few of the exemptions please contact the TMO office or go to TMO Facebook page as Col. Pananon mentioned the environment is very fluid and a lot of changes are coming down and we are reacting to those changes. So definitely if you could contact our offices at 238 2201. At this time based on the gate guidance or PCS moves are at a stopping point with the exception of the exemptions.

What engagements are being taken with our British counterparts?

Col Pananon: We always try to stay actively engage with our British counterparts we have a station commander here keeps us plugged in with the Royal Air Force and we also have a really rich relationship with our British American Council and that has been a long-standing relationship for more than 30+ years. So those are main contact conduits for us to stay engaged with the local community and of course The most important thing is that our airman and their families live within the communities they are great ambassadors and I hope that you find that relationship is continuing to be fostered each and every day the goal here is to make sure that we stay connected to what is going on in the local area. For every instance we need we have a public affairs team that stays engage with the local media so those are the areas that we try to focus on but if there's concerns or questions don't hesitate to reach out to the base.

How much of a delay are we expecting for our mail?

Lt Col Gegg: I can't give you an exact time frame I can tell you that a new contract mail service was put in place this week so while we were previously anticipated quite a large delay in mail coming here we are no longer anticipating that so I would say anticipate a small delay in mail at this time.

How will our current COVID-19 posture affect off-base or stateside referrals?

Medical: The states referral process is very easy to route an exception to policy under the current stop movement action for anyone who has pressing medical needs the justification flows from the medical group through higher headquarters command and thus far we have not had any resistance in those folks that have needs to go back to the states for continued medical care.

The off-base is a little more tricky, because there's always challenges navigating the NHS even when we are not dealing with a pandemic situation those efforts are currently complicated somewhat by the increase and influx of patients into the NHS system certain specialties will likely still be available and have easy access To our neighboring facilities and other specialties especially those that are dealing with heart long and other

diseases are likely going to see some increases in times and waits because of increased demand on them.

Can you explain the local travel restrictions?

Col Pananon: what we put on into policy is for all military members' active duty and members of team Mildenhall you will only stay within the isle here so United Kingdom/Great Britain. You are restricted from going to London, we are currently placing restriction for active duty members they cannot go to the London and the London suburb area so defined by the M-25 ring that goes around London you are to avoid that area. We are also considering if this pandemic continues placing further restrictions on other high congested areas.

How does this affect dependents who want to leave?

Capt: At this time I would strongly suggest against it as they will be held to whatever the CDC measures are back in the states. However, based on the stop movement we strongly advise they stay put until the stop movement has been lifted because there's also issues that with possibly entering into the country as this changes and adapts so we would strongly urge that dependents stay in place until the stop movement has changed.

Retirements and separations are exempt from the normal policies at this time we will continue to process them as needed and contact MPF, we will still final them out and they are able to proceed one caveat to that is if they are returning back to the states they are subject to screening from The CDC as they enter the country.

Question regarding social distancing and actions taken at the medical group. Who can be in the room during birth and labor?

Medical: In this case everything is based on recommendations there are no strict directives however related to visitors we have instituted policies limiting the age of those who can visit as well as limiting that we have one adult member accompanying someone else during the labor process usually that is the spouse or another adult member. We are cognizant of trend patterns of this disease and that the folks of who are older and age tend to have a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and having a more severe disease so we're very conscious of that and recommend that people over the age 50 and certainly over the age of 70 don't risk coming into the hospital because of higher risk of infection with them.

Will TRICARE approved virtual format therapies such as speech therapy?

Medical: I will have to defer to my experts in the referral process for those answers in the fine details of the TRICARE process and rules. I can state that virtual appointing is expanding and growing in momentum across the department of defense so I expect that

it is something we will definitely be able to explore I will have to post an answer to that a little bit later.

At this time is the 100th ARW being placed on minimum Manning?

Col Pananon: The Chief and I continue to travel around the base and it's kind of almost like a ghost town, there's a lot of teleworking it's been quiet but we what we are asking for is the commanders to make these strong and sound decisions we've got several ways to make sure that the mission continues and that's what we asked the commanders to do. Leadership has made really smart recommendations and decisions on how to best employ the force.

Chief G: Absolutely, everyone we talk to so far has gotten quite creative with their days. The good news is that our supervisors and commanders have been making good decisions out there making sure that we keep all of us safe.

If there are more questions that were answered during the session how can they get answered?

Col Pananon: What I encourage everyone to do is to continue to send in your questions and we will answer those as quickly as we can some we will be able to answer immediately and some we might have to refer to the experts that you have seen here today. Once we get your questions that come in we will post those answers and if they need to be directly messaged to an individual specifically, if there's certain cases or scenarios that affect only you, we will answer those directly to you, but if they affect a broader audience then we will make sure that we post that to the same session or forum but we do appreciate getting those questions and we are trying to provide as much clarity as we can.

And are we going to continue our daily updates? I think the answer is yes. Enjoy those opportunities and we hope that they provide you with tidbits of information That we have learned through the day essentially to tell you how our day starts we usually have a round of meetings we have with our sister wing at the 48th and the 501st and we share information about what the current state of affairs is and what we're doing to mitigate and make sure that our force is protected and that our mission continues and then usually near the end of the day we meet in a small group to talk over the future of what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. We continue with contingency plans that we're doing to protect families and so at the end of the day that's where we typically go find a location to create a highlight for the day and we hope you enjoy it and we look forward to seeing you again on this channel. But I can promise you is that I think this is a great way and a great venue to share information and hear from you so we're going to look for next time to start another session and will announce that on our one holiday or W command team page so standby for the next virtual Townhall I want to thank all our subject matter expert in our moderators. Until we see you thanks for everything you do stay safe and have a great weekend.

Further FB Comments and Replies

It's frustrating that the main advice is to get a short term let and go to your chain of command for people stuck in between PCSing. Is there any kind of support for people who will now have to pay for 2 places to live since we bought a house at our next duty station? We have nothing except what's in our suitcases, and if we get pushed back too long we won't be able to ship our dog because of the heat. It's very stressful being in this situation

Per the leadership team, there are exceptions to policy that can be made based on certain hardship criteria but requires approval from the first general officer in the chain of command. I recommend you work this through your chain of command for further guidance. You can always direct message the command team page or the RAF Mildenhall page if you need further assistance.

How long are the CDC's expected to be closed?

We will take a look at the situation weekly and as soon as it's safe to re-open we will! We will start with dual military, single parents and mission essential.

Will Lodging be impacted in any way? As they are a 24/7 operation, will opening time's change? How is lodging practicing social distancing?

Lodging will be going to split shifts with cleaning services reduced during this time. At this time we will maintain the 24/7 capability.

Why are TMO deliveries halted?

There has been no guidance regarding the stoppage of deliveries, any shipments that were in transit at the time of the stop movement should continue as normal. If members are receiving conflicting information from the company handling their shipment they should reach out to TMO to resolve any issues.

Does a local PCS still need 3rd AF permission?

Local moves authorized by the housing office on RAF Lakenheath and shipments for PCS movements within the UK will continue as normal and do not require an exception to policy.

How many people have been tested for covid-19 in the tri-base area?

As of March 20, 2020, 96 members have been tested.

Can you please define those considered high risk and what is the expectation for them to be released?

Anyone who would fall into these categories should speak with their supervisor to come up with an appropriate plan in line with established guidance. It is difficult to provide a blanket answer as specifics may vary depending on whether you're active duty, contractor, LNDH, etc.

Is it true that you want to re-open the Galaxy Club on RAF Mildenhall?!?!?! I'm hoping this is a rumor?? You can't possibly be considering putting people's lives at risk for a burger and fries??? The advice of the experts is STAY AT HOME!!!! I'd like an answer ASAP please!!!!

The Galaxy club is currently closed and there are no definitive plans to re-open. FSS facilities will only be considered for re-opening as the situation evolves and it is deemed safe to do so in line with guidance from higher headquarters. It's our goal to do what's best for the health and well-being of our personnel, families and community.

I understand confidentiality, but can we know if these individuals visited the ER when they showed symptoms? Because of the doctors not taking in patients, some of us have resulted needing to go to the ER for care. I feel like we deserve to know if these individuals have followed protocol and called the helpline, or if they went to the ER to be seen and diagnosed.

We understand your concern, but you are correct in that individuals experiencing symptoms should remain home and call the hotline as opposed to visiting the ER. Currently, military public health professionals are conducting the contact tracing process to notify those who may have come into contact with the positive individuals. We will also look at providing additional information during our live town hall this coming Monday.

**Will you be testing those airmen who have been placed in isolation?
It seems a reasonable thing to do for confirmation and additional contact tracing.
Otherwise, how will you know the true numbers?**

Thank you for your question. I'll pass it along to the leadership team to see if they can address it during this afternoon's town hall. If you're unable to tune in, we'll be sure to post all the Q and As on our website afterward --
<https://www.mildenhall.af.mil/Info/COVID-19/>

Once the facilities are clean, do the staff of the CDC get to stay home?

We understand that the circumstances are difficult and stressful everyone. Management's goal is to aid employees as much possible while maintaining sufficient support to the Force and remaining mission ready. All local administrative and operation decisions must be made in accordance with regulating authorities.

The RAF-Mildenhall Child and Youth Services flights are adhering to the required distance within the workspaces and have a set maximum number of personnel for any classrooms, training, playgrounds and common room areas. If you have specific concerns within your work unit regarding social distancing limitations, we encourage you to elevate these within your chain of command or contact your servicing NAF Human Resources Office or Civilian Personnel Section.

Please note, if an employee is sent home by leadership based on command direction, employees may be asked to Telework or placed on as Weather and Safety Leave (i.e. administrative leave) as appropriate. Should management consider the work area to be safe and require an employee to return to work, the employee would be obligated to return. Should an employee be unable to return due to personal reasons, then a request for the appropriate personal leave category should be submitted for management decision. It's important to note that each installation may vary in their administrative and operational decisions based on mission specific requirements. For installation specific information, employees should reach out directly to their servicing NAF Human Resources Office or Civilian Personnel Section.

Link to NAF guides that address leave availabilities and guidance relating to COVID19: <https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/10042/Pages/HR/COVID19.aspx>

Link to OPM COVID-19 FAQs: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/covid19/frequently-asked-questions-on-evacuation-payments-during-a-pandemic-healthcrisis/>

Are Med Group and Dental still taking routine appointments and have they suspended?

Effective immediately, the dental clinic will only be seeing patients for dental emergencies, identified pain, and readiness examinations. All routine and non-essential care will be deferred for a minimum of two weeks in order to minimize exposure risk to staff and patients. For all dental emergencies, questions, or concerns, please contact the Dental Clinic at 632-5060 during normal duty hours (0730-1530). For patients who have a dental emergency after hours (severe pain, trauma, bleeding, or suspected infections) please call 335-848-2558.