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COMMANDER US NAVAL FORCES JAPAN  
COMMANDER NAVY REGION JAPAN  
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1050  
N00/Ser 0541  
25 Mar 20

MEMORANDUM

From: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan  
To: All Hands

Subj: LIBERTY RESTRICTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

We live in extraordinary times. The global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus is unlike anything our world has faced since the 1918 influenza. Living and serving in Japan, we quickly aligned with the Government of Japan to combat the spread of this virus. The Navy Region Japan team put out strong messaging on individual and collective health measures. We cancelled all non-mission critical travel, conferences, and community relationship events. We discouraged participation in all large gatherings. U.S. Forces Japan elevated Health Protection Conditions, and each installation team developed additional measures to minimize any potential virus spread. This has truly been an all hands effort – active duty Sailors, civilians, families, our host nation work force, and contract teams. Thank you!

To date we have been fortunate to have no positive virus cases amongst our personnel in Japan, Singapore, and Diego Garcia. However, now is not the time for complacency.

In just the past few weeks, the number of positive cases in the United States has exponentially increased and continues to rise. Hawaii and Guam went from zero cases to now multiple cases. In response, we took additional action across Region Japan to impose a 14-Day Restriction of Movement (ROM) for any personnel arriving into Japan from anywhere around the globe with the intent to access one of our installations. We imposed a local-only leave and liberty policy, and DODEA closed all schools. Over this past weekend, both Commander, Pacific Fleet and Commander, U.S. SEVENTH Fleet issued updated guidance to continue to align all of our actions as we respond to challenges created by COVID-19. Most recently, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued a Level 3 Warning for non-essential travel to Japan.

Throughout all of these changes, our mission has remained unchanged: (1) Ensure the health of our force (Sailors, civilians, contractors) and families, (2) Ensure we don't spread the virus to the homeland or our partners, and (3) Ensure we maintain our warfighting readiness.

What is exceptionally clear is that once any part of our world records their first positive case of COVID-19, more follow, usually exponentially so. Once that occurs, an exceptionally significant stop of all movement is the only way to stop further spread. We must treat this virus like an enemy, and we must view our actions like a military operation. This is not business as usual.

Therefore, as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan, the following order is issued to all U.S. Navy personnel in Japan:

- All liberty is restricted to on-base activities only. For personnel who live off-base, including residents in remote military family housing areas, travel is restricted to travel between work and home (duty to domicile and back). Regardless of domicile, exceptions for official business (e.g., off-base medical appointments, veterinary services, Japanese postal services, etc.) and essential necessities (e.g., gas, groceries, household items, etc.) are authorized. All off-base restaurants (take out is okay), bars, cafes, night clubs and like establishments, indoor fitness facilities, onsens, and public baths are off-limits. When making an official or essential stop off-base, all are reminded to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19 by practicing social distancing and minimizing exposure duration.

- Minimize the use of all public transportation except for traveling to and from work and the exceptions noted above. If using public transportation, personnel are encouraged to wear a mask and at least one glove while touching handrails, and then wash their hands immediately upon completion of travel.

- Personnel are reminded to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19 by practicing social distancing, and minimizing exposure duration while in transit.

- Local leave is authorized, however, the leave location is limited to the installation or off-base residence. Local leave shall not be used to circumvent the restrictions on off-base activities.

- Personnel shall continue to avoid large social gatherings of more than 10 people, to include on-base activities.

- In the instance of conflict with any other orders or guidance, personnel will follow the most restrictive policy. Local commanders may be more restrictive if necessary for their specific missions.

***Dependents of U.S. Navy personnel, and U.S. Government civilians/contractors and their dependents are strongly encouraged to meet the intent of this order. We are a total force and need to ensure the health of our force to execute our missions.***

I am exceptionally proud of your individual and team efforts, and I am honored to serve with you during these extraordinary times. This is a defining moment for our collective generations – from our children to all of us living and serving in our Forward Deployed Naval Forces today. We only beat this if we work together.



B. P. FORT  
Rear Admiral, USN