

**USNA COVID-19 FAQs - (Last Updated 1200, 16 June)**  
**THIS GUIDANCE IS FOR APF CIVILIANS**

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## **TELEWORK & ACCESS TO USNA CAMPUS**

### **Q. If I prefer to work from my office, can I still choose to work from the yard?**

USNA remains open to appropriated civilians at this time. However, we should now attempt to move as many civilians as possible to a remote posture. If you can work from home, but prefer to be in your office, USNA leadership strongly encourages you to work from home. All employees physically reporting to work on the Yard must answer the COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire form daily, and submit responses to their supervisor. Anyone answering “yes” to any of the questions may not come on the Yard.

Cost Center Heads retain the authority to establish essential functions and schedule work on the yard which may require a physical presence. When such work is necessary, rotating schedules and shifts should be established to minimize on-site personnel, to limit the potential for spreading the COVID-19 virus on the yard, and to maximize employee safety to the extent possible. Employees should consult with their supervisors to discuss their individual circumstances.

### **Q. Am I required to wear a facemask when accessing the yard? (New)**

Effective 6 April 2020, to the extent practicable, all individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities are required to wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain 6 feet of social distance. This order includes all: military members, Navy civilian employees, family members, Navy contractors. Face coverings will: fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face; be from nose to chin, full face coverings (like ski masks) are not authorized; be secured with ties or ear loops; preferably include multiple layers of fabric if material is cloth; allow for breathing without restriction. If you plan to wear your face covering when coming through the gate, you may be required to lower it for gate guard identification.

### **Q. Where can I get a copy of the COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire to physically report status prior to accessing the installation?**

Employees can obtain the questionnaire from their supervisor.

### **Q. Where should completed telework agreements be sent?**

Signed telework agreements should be emailed to Human Resources at [usna-telework-group@usna.edu](mailto:usna-telework-group@usna.edu) Supervisors have been provided direction to withhold PII from the form in order to enable electronic submission.

### **Q. Can I come in to pick-up my monitor/keyboard and other things I might need? (Updated)**

While the Naval Academy is currently open, civilian employees are being told to telework to the greatest extent possible, and to do this we understand additional materials from physical offices may be needed. All employees physically reporting to work must answer the COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire form daily, and submit responses to their supervisor. Anyone answering “yes” to any of the questions may not come on the Yard. Please consult with your supervisory chain to ensure adherence to cost center specific requirements.

**Q. Are employees required to forward their work phones while teleworking?**

It is recommended that USNA senior leadership and other "essential" personnel forward their work phones to an alternate number where they can be reached. In an effort to avoid overloading the phone system, all other faculty and staff are encouraged to provide an alternative home/mobile number (e.g. via their voicemail greeting and/or other distribution means) and/or adopting a routine practice of remotely retrieving voicemails via 410-293-0123 at an appropriate periodicity.

**Q. My child's school is closed until further notice. Am I able to telework while caring for a child?** Telework and childcare can be performed concurrently under DoD policy.

**Q. What if I cannot find enough work to fill in an 8-hour workday?**

Each employee is expected to put in the utmost effort to complete a full 8 hour workday. Please understand USNA is being extremely flexible with telework rules in light of the COVID-19 situation. Employees are encouraged to be creative in filling their work day through personal development (e.g. reading), professional development (e.g. online training), mandatory training, checking emails, writing standard operating procedures (SOPs), practicing their job skills, and updating their respective USNA webpages (if they can do this from home). Subject to supervisor discretion, employees may also participate in the civilian fitness program (CFP) as a way to fill in their work day and improve health and well-being. Contact HR for CFP policies and guidance.

**Q. Do teleworking employees need to check-in or submit daily accomplishment summaries to their supervisors?**

Supervisors shall establish daily check-ins with all employees during normal duty days. In addition, it is a good practice for employees to maintain a record of hours worked and tasks completed throughout each work day. Employee's may be required to provide evidence of work completed and should consult with their supervisors to discuss expectations, work requirements, needs, resources, etc.

**Q. What if I am unwilling to establish a telework arrangement?** The employee and their supervisor should contact the HRO to work toward a solution (e.g. requesting annual leave, etc).

**Q. Is there a shelter in place order for Maryland?**

As of March 26, 2020 there is no current order to shelter in place. Maryland State executive orders can be found [here](#) and there is an exclusion for federal facilities.

**Q. What should I do if my CAC is due to expire in the next 30 business days? (Updated)**

The ID Card Office in Bldg 168, Metzger Hall on the North Severn will be limiting services to appointments and time-sensitive services for walk-ins. Services will be limited to: Initial CAC issuance, Lost/stolen CAC or Teslin ID cards, CAC/Teslin Cards due to expire in the next 30 days. Save time by making an appointment for Identification Card Services and DEERS updates at:

<https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>

Update: In accordance with DoD policy, as of 7 April 2020 CAC transactions shall be limited to initial issuance or reissuance of an expiring CAC within 30 days of expiration; CACs shall not be reissued

due to printed information changes (e.g., promotions, name changes). The policy memorandum allowing transferring DoD civilian employees to retain their CAC will be reissued.

**Q: Will the Navy cover additional costs incurred by employees as a result of telework (DSL lines, additional phone lines, increased utilities expenses, etc.)?**

An agency may not use appropriated funds to pay for items of employee personal expense, such as home utility costs, home maintenance, or insurance premiums. (68 Comptroller General 502, B-225159, June 19, 1989)

**Q: May employees who have been disciplined or who are on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) be allowed to telework?**

Yes. However, there are a couple of exceptions. Employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisor and HR for further guidance.

**Q. Can TWMS be accessed without VPN?**

Yes, TWMS can be accessed without VPN, here: <https://twms.navy.mil/login.asp>. However, you will need a CAC and CAC reader to log in. NOTE: the TWMS website works best using Internet Explorer.

**TIMEKEEPING & LEAVE RELATED INFORMATION**

**Q. How should teleworking employees record their time in SLDCADA?**

For employees who are teleworking, select TS (for “telework situational) under the EHZ section and select RG in the THC section.

NOTE: We understand that due to the COVID-19 response, some of you may be facing challenges due to VPN issues and network connectivity. We want to remind you that you can also connect to SLDCADA from any CAC-enabled connection (not just NMCI VPN) via <https://www.sldcada.dc3n.navy.mil/>. Having the ability to connect through a regular internet connection may alleviate those network challenges.

**Q: What timekeeping code should be used for individuals teleworking due to a reasonable accommodation?**

Employees that are teleworking due to a reasonable accommodation should use the telework code TS (situational telework).

**Q. When should I input my hours?**

It may be advisable to recommend that your employees enter their time in SLDCADA **early** to avoid overloading network resources.

**Q. Does an employee performing work during a pandemic health crisis need to use his or her accrued leave to take time off?**

Yes. If an employee cannot perform assigned work due to personal reasons, the employee is required to request leave or other time off. For example, if an employee becomes ill, he or she will need to take

sick leave or other time off to cover the absence. Remember “assigned work” can and should be a flexible approach to mission, professional development, and personal development, depending on each person’s role and individual telework capabilities.

**Q. If an employee calls out sick for any reason, is a doctor's note required to confirm they are fit to return to work?**

Current OPM policy states, for absences in excess of 3 days, or for a lesser period when determined necessary by the agency, an agency may require a medical certificate or other administratively acceptable evidence. An agency may consider an employee's self-certification as to the reason for his or her absence as administratively acceptable evidence, regardless of the duration of the absence. Employees should consult their agency-specific human resources guidance and review applicable policies set forth in collective bargaining agreements for information specific to their agency. As a practical matter, however, doctors and other health care professionals may be too busy during and immediately after a pandemic outbreak to provide fitness-for-duty documentation. Therefore, new approaches may be necessary, such as reliance on local clinics to provide a form, a stamp, or an e-mail to certify that an individual does not have the pandemic virus. **As a best practice it is always recommended that you consult with Human Resources if you need further clarification on this matter.**

**Q: Are civilian employees allowed to take annual leave during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Civilian employees have a right to request and take accumulated leave. Supervisors may schedule the time the employee may take annual leave based on mission requirements.

**Q: If an employee’s leave is disapproved to meet mission requirement, is the DON responsible for any cancelled airline tickets?**

No. Citing Comptroller General precedent, the General Services Administration Board of Contract Appeals has ruled there is no authority to reimburse personal travel expenses resulting from an agency’s cancellation of leave. (ROD W. SCHMIT, General Services Administration Board of Contract Appeals, 16146-TRAV, August 6, 2003)

**Q: If an employee is unable to use leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will leave be Forfeited?**

If an employee schedules “use or lose” annual leave in writing before the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year, and the leave is canceled due to an exigency of the public business (i.e., an urgent need for the employee to be at work), the employee may request restoration of the forfeited annual leave. (5 CFR 630.306(a)(2))

**Q: What is weather and safety leave?**

Weather and safety leave *may* be granted when telework is not an option. Current Department of Navy guidance (found on the HR webpage) helps redefine “work” which can be performed remotely as nearly anything which supports the mission, develops new skills, and improves the effectiveness of the organization. The Human Resources Office must be consulted when considering the use of weather and safety leave. Several hundred Naval Academy civilian employees have already succeeded in

“thinking outside the box” by finding remote work opportunities that fall within the Department of Navy guidance.

**Q: Is Weather and Safety Leave an appropriate leave category when an employee is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and test results confirm COVID-19?**

If an employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, the employee should use sick leave. Sick leave covers a period of sickness, as provided in 5 CFR 630.401(a)(2). Agencies must grant sick leave when an illness, such as COVID-19, prevents an employee from performing work. Supervisors are encouraged to advance sick leave, upon the employee’s request, if the requesting employee does not have a sufficient balance to cover the time off requested.

**Q: May a civilian employee who identifies as “high risk” who is not experiencing symptoms of illness be granted sick leave if they are telework eligible and ready?**

No. Sick leave is only appropriate for absences related to illness of the employee or family members as prescribed in 5 CFR 630.401. Civilian employees who are “high risk” to COVID-19 as identified by the Centers for Disease Control should telework if they are telework eligible and ready.

**Q: May an asymptomatic employee use sick leave because they have underlying medical conditions which makes them “high risk”?**

No. Sick leave is only appropriate for absences related to illness of the employee or family members as prescribed in 5 CFR 630.401. Civilian employees who identify as “high risk” should telework if they are telework eligible and ready.

**Q: May an employee identified as “high risk” be advised by their doctor to stay home? How should a supervisor proceed if the employee is telework eligible but does not want to telework?**

An employee who is identified as “high risk” by a medical professional should telework, if s/he is telework eligible and ready.

**Q: Can employees take leave outside of the local area.**

Yes. However, leave outside of the 150-mile radius must be approved by the Superintendent's office. A leave request for those traveling outside of the 150-mile radius can be obtained through the employee’s chain of command. Please note that employees traveling to an area impacted by the COVID-19 virus may be asked to quarantine upon return.

**STAFFING/RECRUITMENT**

**Q: May EOD dates be set for new employees outside of the local commuting area?**

No. EOD dates should not be set to be effective prior to 11 May 2020, for new employees outside of the local commuting area.

**Q: What are mission essential positions?**

A position may be designated as mission essential, consistent with the criteria described in DoD Instruction (DoDI) 3020.42, "Defense Continuity Plan Development," dated 17 February 2006, certified as current as of April 27, 2011, and any other component-unique policies or Definitions. Mission essential positions are those that are needed to ensure the continued operation of mission essential functions of an activity. The determination of which functions are "essential" is typically a local or command decision. This decision is based on the type of work and supporting activities necessary to ensure organization or facility continuity of operations and/or completion of tasks that are considered essential to the mission. The USNA-AFGE collective bargaining agreement addresses emergency & specific mission essential designation procedures.

**COMPENSATION**

**Q: If an employee's schedule changes to maxiflex and they work between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., are they required to get paid night differential pay?**

No. Per 5 CFR 550, if a flexible work schedule includes 8 or more hours available for work between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., the employee is not entitled to night differential pay for voluntarily working flexible hours between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m, including while earning credit hours. An employee is entitled to night pay for those hours that must be worked between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. to complete an 8-hour daily tour of duty. An employee is entitled to night pay for any non overtime work performed between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. during designated core hours

**LABOR RELATIONS**

**Q: Is there any flexibility on labor-management agreements during an emergency?**

Yes. There is some flexibility. In an emergency, management has the right to alter working conditions without bargaining prior to implementing the change pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §7106(a)(2)(D). However, post-implementation bargaining may be required. In this regard, if management follows applicable procedures contained in existing collective bargaining agreements, bargaining would not be required over the procedure. In situations where an agency wishes to use different procedures, or where there are no existing contractual procedures or past practices covering the action, an agency may have post-implementation bargaining obligations.

**BENEFITS**

**Q: Will retirement packages continue to be processed?**

Yes. The Civilian Benefits Center at OCHR-Norfolk will continue to process retirement packages. Questions and inquires about retirement packages should be directed to the benefits center at 1-888-320-2917, navybenefits@navy.mil.

For more information, contact the USNA Human Resources Office at 410-293-2825 or 410-293-2698.