



Reserve Info Bulletin



MESSAGE FROM THE COAST GUARD'S CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REGARDING COVID-19

The below message is from RADM Dana Thomas, our Chief Medical Officer, regarding some of the ways we can help to stop the spread and cope with this devastating pandemic. Her letter was originally posted in the USCG.MIL webpage but we thought it was important enough to send out via email as you can never over communicate in a time like this. Remember to always be vigilant and stay safe - Semper Paratus.

Dear Shipmates,

As your Chief Medical Officer, I am reaching out to acknowledge the many ways in which COVID-19, a face-less enemy, is changing the way we live. We each make sacrifices, for the good of the whole. Prevention requires patience...the alternative is truly unfathomable.

Less than two weeks ago, one of our Master Chiefs lost her mother. Patsy was the rock for her family – a loving wife and nurturing mother. She was an active listener who raised four successful children and cared for twice as many grandchildren. A vibrant soul, she made the world more beautiful by creating art and teaching others to do the same. Patsy was no stranger to bronchitis in the winter, or using a nebulizer. She lived in a small town, hated hospitals, and had family to care for her nearby. And they were by her side, through a short illness and shockingly sudden death.

A few days later they were notified their mother had COVID-19. No one suspected this invader in central Massachusetts in mid-March. All family members present were tested for the virus and quarantined. They are unable to grieve together physically the loss of their matriarch, the woman who taught them how to care for and love each other. They share memories and photos daily through text, email, video and phone. With current movement restrictions, Patsy's memorial service has been postponed. They celebrate each negative test result, knowing their mother would want nothing more than the family's health and safety. These are COVID times.

My heart goes out to the Master Chief, and all who are suffering. Everyone is under a different level of stress. Use technology to your advantage and stay connected as we weather this storm together.

If you or someone you know feels helpless or hopeless, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline is: 1-800-273-8255. You can also text HOME to 741741. Check out the Coast Guard's CGSUPRT resources on our app (CG SUPRT or USCG HSWL) for additional options – you are not alone! ([attachment 1](#) & [attachment 2](#))



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Adopt rigor with techniques used to decrease the spread of virus and look after our shipmates. Months from now, the challenges with teleworking and frustration with restricted movement will fade. What will be remembered are the creative acts of kindness we bestow upon one another. I strongly encourage you and your family review the training modules located here:

<https://www.northeastern.edu/covid-19-how-to-be-safe-and-resilient/#/> also available in Spanish: <https://www.northeastern.edu/covid-19-how-to-be-safe-and-resilient/spanish/#/> This series reviews safe hand washing, cleaning techniques and how best to keep yourself safe in public and private. Empower yourself and others to take every possible preventive action #KILLTHEVIRUS.

In addition to COVID-19, it is also cold, influenza, and allergy season. These symptoms can overlap and increase confusion and fear, attached is a graphic produced by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, which outlines various symptoms and how common they are with particular ailments. **(attachment 3)** Please keep in mind, that for COVID-19, we are also concerned if you have a significant decrease in your senses of smell or taste. A person infected with the virus may be contagious for more than 48 before showing symptoms. An infectious person may never display symptoms. Since virus can be spread by forceful exhalation during normal conversation, not just coughing or sneezing, ensure you maintain six feet of space between yourself and others and minimize the amount of time spent in public settings.

Prevention is the daughter of intelligence. – Sir Walter Raleigh

As our circle of direct care becomes smaller, our circles of concern and influence can grow larger. Share how you have remained physically distanced, NOT socially isolated. Have you cared for others, or been cared for, using your heart not your hands? Make sure you are following the U.S Coast Guard Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UScoastguard/> for an upcoming post where you can upload your difference-making photos with captions. Keep up with the latest Coast Guard communications and our Medical Monday update at <https://www.uscg.mil/coronavirus/> or on our Community of Practice portal page <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cgcp2/SitePages/Pandemic.aspx>.

Semper Paratus,
RADM Dana Thomas

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