



COMMANDER, NAVY REGION HAWAII/  
NAVAL SURFACE GROUP  
MIDDLE PACIFIC

COVID-19 AWARENESS  
May 19, 2021



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COVID-19 Awareness – May 19, 2021

Region Ohana,

We have seen changes concerning the mandatory use of face coverings related to COVID-19, and it is important to understand what rules apply where. President Biden announced the relaxation of guidelines on the federal level, and many states are moving towards wide-spread implementation. Here in Hawaii, Governor Ige has taken a more conservative approach, keeping in place the state's mask policy, at least for now. What is the impact on the military Ohana, both active duty and civilian, on Oahu and Kauai? Admiral Paparo, the Pacific Fleet commander, recently released new guidelines. Following is the Commander's intent:

*"Through our collective efforts to vaccinate the force, we have achieved a significant milestone in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. As a direct result of your contributions to slow the spread of the virus, we are now at a point where masks for immunized individuals are no longer required on non-healthcare DOD facilities. However, in certain operational and tactical settings, more restrictive force health protection measures may be required for mission assurance.*

*"Unvaccinated personnel will continue to use masks, as mask wear protects vulnerable populations including other unvaccinated personnel and high risk populations. Shipmates and colleagues should treat others who continue to wear masks with sensitivity and respect."*

What does this mean? If it has been two weeks since you received your final vaccine dose, you are considered to be fully vaccinated and are no longer required to wear a mask indoors or outdoors at non-healthcare DOD facilities.

Is it okay to throw away your collection of face coverings? No. The rules are different off-base, where you are required to continue to adhere to federal, state, local mask guidance, including local business and workplace guidance. As residents of Hawaii, it's important for us to continue to respect these guidelines. As you know, some of our facilities are in off-base locations, and guidance for the use of face coverings will be forthcoming.

With this change, we will see our major facilities like the commissaries and exchanges remove face cover requirements, but at the same time, restrictions will remain for some on-base business that are considered "high-touch." At JBPHH this includes child and youth programs, galley's, barber/beauty shops, eye-care facilities and tailor shops. At PMRF, the restrictions may differ. There are many other facilities that are being considered, and as that list continues to be defined, we will ensure updates are posted to our COVID-19 Resource and Update webpage and to our social media sites (links provided below). As a reminder, face coverings are still required in DOD healthcare facilities.

Does this mean you have to stop wearing your face covering once you have been immunized? Absolutely not. It is a personal choice. If you feel you are better protecting yourself or others around you by wearing a mask, then continue to wear it. Keep a face covering with you – on your person, in your vehicle – in case you need it

at a business or facility that you're visiting. Be prepared.

COVID vaccinations remain voluntary and readily available. For those who been on the fence about receiving the vaccine, now is the right time to reconsider. I can assure you that the vaccination is a safe and an effective weapon in our long battle against the virus. If you are Tricare-eligible, you can easily make an appointment for vaccination at any military health care facility by logging onto [www.operationcovidshot.com](http://www.operationcovidshot.com). If you want the vaccine but are not covered by TRICARE, consult with your regular health care provider, or check the Hawaii Department of Health's portal at <https://hawaiiicovid19.com/vaccine/>.

Continue to make us proud and as always, take care of yourselves and your families

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
COS

Darren B. Guenther  
Captain, US Navy  
Chief of Staff  
Navy Region Hawaii

Stay up-to-date on the latest developments at the following links (Copy & Paste):

- CNRH COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cnrc.navy.mil/regions/cnrh/om/coronavirus-disease2019.html> -

CNRH Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NavyRegionHawaii/>

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