



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITY-JAPAN
UNIT 45005, APO AP 96343-5005

MCHB-RP-J

28 September 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR Public Health Activity–Japan (PHA–J) All Personnel

SUBJECT: Health Protection Condition (HPCON) Guidance for PHA–Japan

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the response of PHA–Japan to the various HPCON levels. The goal is to safeguard U.S. personnel and their Families while ensuring warfighting readiness. Our nested priority is to support warfighting readiness via public health efforts on multiple fronts.

2. PHA–Japan developed this policy to preserve the essential core missions of (1) Safeguarding the food supply (2) Responding to Military Working Dog (MWD) emergencies (3) Preventing zoonotic disease. In order to preserve these abilities, our personnel must remain healthy.

a. PHA–Japan leadership will ensure appropriate personnel are coded as mission essential at the installation levels to ensure base access should base access be restricted. Mission essential personnel are those needed to ensure our essential core missions (listed above) are fully supported.

3. At **HPCON A** (community transmission start), PHA–J will:

a. Counsel all personnel (Soldiers, civilians, and NAF employees) to call their first line supervisor and stay at home if individual has a fever, cough, or feeling sick. Before reporting to the medical treatment facility, call the appropriate department and follow medical personnel's advice prior to reporting in person. Follow branch-level COVID-19 risk reduction control measures as set forth in Deliberate Risk Assessment Worksheet (DD Form 2977).

4. At **HPCON B** (increased community transmission), PHA–J will adjust mission as follows:

a. Veterinary Treatment Facility (VTFs) will remain open for privately-owned animal (POA) care and routine operations. Follow branch-level COVID-19 risk reduction control measures as set forth in Deliberate Risk Assessment Worksheet (DD Form 2977).

b. Headquarters (HQ) Operations, subsistence receipt inspections, and routine installation support plan inspections – no change from normal operations.

c. Food protection audits will be performed as long as operators can comply with branch-level COVID-19 risk reduction control measures as set forth in Deliberate Risk Assessment Worksheet (DD Form 2977).

d. Personnel traveling for food protection audits will self-screen for symptoms and fever. Any sick individuals will not travel. Travelers will avoid contact with any visibly ill individuals and will do their best to maintain social distance and practice good hand hygiene.

5. At **HPCON C** (sustained community transmission), PHA–J will take the following actions aimed at supporting our essential core missions with minimal manning to limit viral spread. Personnel will adhere to all policies of social distancing, hand washing, and face mask wearing IAW DoD guidance issued 05 April 2020: Department of Defense Guidance on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings. **PHA–J personnel teleworking at home are in duty status and will remain available for duty, if called upon.**

a. VTF staff will follow DoD VTF risk mitigation strategies. They will maintain social distancing with a six-foot distance from clients and each other when possible. All staff will follow branch-level COVID-19 risk reduction control measures as outlined in Deliberate Risk Assessment Worksheet (DD Form 2977).

b. VTFs will only provide POA care if they are able to comply with branch-level COVID-19 risk reduction control measures as outlined in Deliberate Risk Assessment Worksheet (DD Form 2977). Teleworking is authorized where appropriate. Telemedicine may be utilized IAW APHC and GVMP guidance.

(1). If a pet owner is placed in human quarantine or restriction of movement (ROM), the owner(s) will **NOT** physically report to the VTF on installation for pet's initial animal quarantine examination. Instead, pet owners must call the local VTF within 72 hours of arrival to receive health and quarantine screening of pet(s) over the phone. Within 72 hours of completion of pet owner's human quarantine or ROM, the pet must be brought to the VTF or examined over a virtual health appointment for initial physical quarantine examination.

(2). The 30-day quarantine and final quarantine examinations may be delayed until immediately after reduction to HPCON B or lower.

(3) The VTF will continue to provide the following care:

(a) Health Certificates for extenuating circumstances only.

(b) Rabies vaccines for adult animals whose vaccines will lapse prior to a decrease in the HPCON level.

(c) Urgent Medical Care: Threatening life, limb, or eyesight of a pet as determined by VTF personnel when triaged by phone. **This is not to exceed capacity and supplies necessary to treat MWD emergencies.**

(d) **Full MWD care IAW Veterinary Medical Standardization Board will be provided which includes, but not limited to, all emergencies; rabies vaccinations; annual physical examinations; and annual Comprehensive Oral Hygiene Assessment and Treatment to ensure future deployability. This is prioritized over POA care.**

(4) VTF leadership should also refer to the CDC website for further VTF operational guidance. For example, follow the 'Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics during the COVID-19 Response' guidance for COVID-19 related mitigation strategies and most updated information:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>

c. HQ Operations: The Command Team and one to two members of the Operations Section of HQ staff will be present in the office during normal working hours to ensure that phones are answered. The rest of the HQ team will work from home and remain available via email (telework). The HQ staff member present in the office is responsible for disinfecting surfaces at the end of the workday.

d. Food Inspection: Ongoing duties will include ALFOODACT recalls, refrigeration failures, receipt inspection, routine ISP inspections, and product extensions. Main methods of communication will be by email and telephone. Veterinary Food Inspectors (VFIs) will carry hand sanitizer during shifts to be used after contacting food or surfaces (door handles, etc.). VFIs should work in shifts with no more than two VFI per shift. Teleworking is authorized where appropriate. Perform internal food protection training online only. Ensure emergency contact roster is updated.

(1) Staffing: All VFIs necessary to cover entire food mission across Japan are required to be on duty.

(2) Satellite Site Inspections: Follow USAR-J, PHA-J, and local installation travel restriction policies. The more restrictive policy will be followed. Any exception to policy must be approved by the PHA–J Commander and local approval authority, when needed.

(3) Routine Audits: Can be performed under the following conditions:

(a) Facility is not in a travel restricted area.

(b) Facility allows visitors.

(c) Facility has COVID-19 mitigation strategies in place.

(d) Auditor and translator can maintain social distancing during the audit.

(e) All personnel wear a mask.

(4) Receipt Inspections: Commissary produce receipt inspections are priority and will be completed at minimum weekly. Naval vessel receipt inspections will be completed only when requested. Receipt inspections at other facilities will be completed during normal routine inspections.

(5) MILSAN Inspections: Inspections will be performed as travel restrictions allow and within local policy and guidance.

(6) Subsistence Receipt Inspections: At least one VFI will be present at the installation's receiving areas during the workday to perform subsistence receipt inspections. This will vary based on branch site and activities supported to include ship on-loading. Communicate with suppliers prior to scheduled deliveries to ensure delivery drivers meet health screening criteria (no fever or cough). Assign a limited number of establishment personnel to receive deliveries.

(7) Routine Installation Support Plan Inspections: Should be performed during the facility's least busy open hours or outside of the hours each facility is open to the public.

(8) Provide Installation and Agency Leadership with APHC TIP No. 91-100-0320, Recommended Actions for Food Establishments at Each Health Protection Condition Level for COVID-19 and APHC FS No. 91-002-0320, Enhanced Sanitation Practices for Food Establishments in Response to COVID-19. These documents are recommendations that can only be mandated by Installation Leadership. These documents are not intended to be VFI enforceable documents.

e. Travel.

(1) All MWD handlers and kennel masters should have access to the main installation of their supporting VTF. Work to ensure that gate access for handlers, kennel masters, and MWDs has been established in the case of an emergency.

(2) Leave: Restricted to local leave only.

6. PHA–J will continue to provide support to subsistence receipt inspections and emergency medical care to MWDs and other Government Owned Animals at ALL HPCON levels.

7. At **HPCON C and D**, PHA–J personnel will stand ready to assist as needed. If PHA–J Veterinary Corps Officers (VCOs) or 68Ts (Animal Care Specialists) are tasked to support human healthcare operations, one VCO and one 68T will be held back in

reserve as the unexposed MWD team to ensure readiness to respond to an MWD emergency.

8. At **HPCON D** (widespread community transmission), PHA-J will take the following actions to implement 'Shelter in Place' (SIP) to limit viral spread but aimed at supporting our essential core missions with minimal manning. Personnel will adhere to all policies of social distancing, hand washing, and cloth face masks IAW DoD guidance. Individuals will be expected to remain at home for extended periods of time due to restricted community movement, at-home isolation, and quarantine during SIP. Pet owners living on the installation may have severe illness and may not be able to care for their pets during SIP. **PHA-J personnel conducting SIP are in duty status and will remain available for duty, if called upon.**

a. VTFs will not provide routine POA care and will provide limited services as outlined above for **HPCON C**. Full Health Certificate issuance, rabies vaccination administration, urgent care, and MWD care will continue to be provided.

(1) As outlined in **HPCON C**, follow DoD VTF risk mitigation strategies of social distancing. **VTFs will be closed to the public** and no clients should enter the building unless scheduled with VTF staff to limit building access and appointments to decrease client density. Veterinary personnel will provide healthcare and are encouraged to perform telemedicine (IAW APHC and GVMP guidance) with considerations for triage, risk mitigation procedures, and screenings.

(2) Staffing: One VCO and one 68T will be on duty at the VTF.

b. HQ Operations: All HQ staff will be conducting SIP by working from home (teleworking) and will be available by email. The Command Team will also be available via duty cell phones.

c. Food Inspection: Follow measures in **HPCON C** in addition to the following:

(1) Provide all food protection support but only when requested by a facility or procurement agency and authorized by the PHA-J Commander.

(2) Commercial audit mission is suspended until a return to **HPCON C** status.

(3) Initiate processing of ALFOODACT through telephonic communication only. VFI must contact Activity HQ for approval to conduct visit. If more restrictive measures for travel are mandated by the local installation (GO), the more restrictive order must be adhered to and followed by PHA-J personnel as it supersedes this guidance. Any exception to policy must be approved by the PHA-J Commander.

d. Travel: Follow all measures in **HPCON C** in addition to the restrictions listed below:

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(1) Personnel should not leave their residence unless it is to perform mission essential duties outlined above and / or to conduct key essential functions as mentioned below:

(2) On-post essential life support: Only for groceries, gas, healthcare, postal services, ATM, and reporting for duty.

(3) Off-post SOFA personnel: Required to obtain essential life support on-post (groceries, gas, healthcare, postal services, and ATM), and if designated, report for duty.

(4) Outdoor activities: Restricted to be only within 100 meters of your residence to walk a pet (e.g. outdoor runs are not allowed).

(5) Leave: Not permitted.

9. For any further guidance related to food defense, food safety, and all food protection support which is not outlined in this memorandum, please contact the PHA–J FSO.

10. A copy of this policy letter will be individually distributed to all unit members (active duty and civilian). Leaders and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their subordinates are informed of this policy.

11. The Point of Contact is CPT Kimberly Santos at kimberly.m.santos2.mil@mail.mil, DSN at (315) 263-3504, or duty phone at +81-80-2348-6596.

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