



Team McChord,

8 May 2020

Two weeks ago, we convened a planning team, which brought together outstanding Airmen from Team McChord to assess and provide recommendations to move forward, while still operating under COVID-19. When we first established our posture, we knew we needed a swift solution that would last for a few months to continue to execute our mission. We were not ready to commit to a 12-18 month posture. It is now evident we need to make the adjustments that account for this extended timeline.

To begin with, we provided the planning team a set of initial assumptions to help frame their mindset. Echoing the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the protection of our Airmen is paramount. Additionally, we have to be able to return members to the workplace in order to continue executing our mission long-term. We should expect to live with COVID-19 for the next 12-24 months, with limited testing availability, and no vaccine. COVID-19 cases will be cyclical and thus require us to ramp up and ramp down operations based on local circumstances. Lastly, the team was asked to provide flexibility while incorporating direction from the Department of Defense, Department Air Force, and the Washington State government.

The team analyzed a variety of functional areas to build a framework of tasks, services and capabilities that we will roll out with a phased approach. It will create a flexible, scalable set of options to help guide your leadership teams to make data-driven decisions that will slowly, and deliberately, enable us to return to the workplace.

Per the planning team recommendations, we will make decisions to shift our posture based on the following criteria. The first data point we are watching is the rolling average of positive cases in the surrounding counties and across JBLM. The second criteria is the ability for public health to execute contact tracing. Then, we are closely monitoring the health of our personnel both physically and mentally. We will continue to monitor the expanding testing capacity at Madigan and assessing the effectiveness of protective face coverings and our additional preventative measures. Finally, we will continue to look at the posture of Washington State.

Using the above criteria, we are calling our current state Phase 1. Phase 1 looks very similar to what we have been operating under for the last 6 weeks. This phase will continue with mission essential manning but include a few important changes. Phase I will incorporate mission essential programs or work that can no longer be paused. This means members who were not initially deemed mission essential, will be required to return to the workplace and members remaining at home may now be asked to telework. Unit commanders have the authority to execute changes to their manning posture provided they adhere to the guidelines established by the planning team. Expect more detailed guidance from your immediate Commanders over the next 10 days as we roll out this plan.



During Phase 1, specific force development classes like ALS and FTAC will resume under a combination of virtual and in-person sessions that adhere to Public Health's mitigation measures. We will continue to ensure deployers are ready to go and we will resume some delayed OJT with mitigation measures.

Equally important, we have asked your commanders to begin preparation for Phase 2A. We will ramp up efforts to reconfigure and retool your workplaces to enable and encourage physical distancing wherever possible. We need your help and innovative ideas, especially as we bring more people back into the workplace, in order to get to Phase 2A and beyond.

Under all phases, units will wipe in and wipe out at their workspaces, physically distance themselves when at work, and when necessary, wear personal protective equipment. Units will place hygiene reminder placards on the entrances of buildings and setup hand sanitizer or washing stations at or near points of entry.

Having laid out these initial guidelines, we cannot stress enough how deliberate our approach will be. As with Governor Inslee's phased approach announced last week, there is no specific date attached to transitioning beyond Phase 1. However, to give you a target we are striving to move into Phase 2A before 30 June. Of course, we are also well prepared to ramp down operations if we determine the threat from COVID changes. Your leadership team will meet weekly to assess the current state of affairs and make data-driven decisions that protect our forces.

Our mission essential posture has been effective at protecting the force and decreasing the spread of infection, but we're not out of the woods yet. We're posturing to deal with COVID-19 over the long term. Be assured that we will continue to conduct the Air Forces business on behalf of our nation over the coming months. We need you to continue to be both patient and flexible as we go through this process. I guarantee we won't get it 100% right the first time but will continue to learn and evolve.

Chief and I are committed to a plan that gets Airmen back into the workplace. But we also won't lose the great lessons we've learned about the flexibility that telework offers and about how to prioritize the work that our Airmen should be doing. We are proud of you and proud to be your teammates.

Stay healthy,


ROBERT C. SCHULTZ, CMSgt, USAF
Command Chief


ERIN M. STAINE-PYNE, Col, USAF
Commander