

Navy Sets Rules for Lifting COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs,

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WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Navy announced a phased plan for resuming official travel and transfers as well as allowing local commanders greater leeway in granting personal leave and liberty.

The message, released June 12, follows the Secretary of Defense May 22 memo outlining the transition to a conditions-based, phased approach, to COVID-19 personnel movement and travel restrictions.

NAVADMIN 168/20 does not lift any of the current travel restrictions. Instead, the message details the roadmap for making those decisions, the conditions that must be met beforehand, and the rules for how all types of travel will resume once those benchmarks are met.

This message cancels NAVADMIN 116/20, which has served as travel guidance since April 21. For this reason, it reiterates which types of travel are restricted, what is exempt, as well as how to obtain waivers. All those rules are still in effect Navy-wide. Sailors are strongly encouraged to read through the message carefully and in its entirety.

“This conditions-based, phased approach prioritizes the safety and security of our personnel, their families and our communities while balancing the need to advance Service member career opportunities, unit rotational deployments, and other imperatives,” wrote Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the Navy’s top uniformed personnel official.

“Moving forward, it is incumbent upon COs and OICs to balance risk to mission and risk to force to ensure we, as a Navy, can continue to meet our mission while simultaneously preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the Navy to the greatest extent possible.”

When and where unrestricted travel resumes will be a decision made by Navy leaders on a location-by-location basis, based on current conditions in local areas. Essential to this approach is real-time tracking of the COVID-19 operational picture world-wide, which leadership is already assessing using ADVANA, a new database developed and maintained by the Department of Defense.

This database provides the current infection and associated data for most city, state or territories and even for overseas host nations. The database also includes military installations and facilities.

ADVANA is a very new and emerging capability and access is limited at the moment. For now, Navy officials will post extracts of information required to implement the NAVADMIN on MyNavy Portal at <https://www.mnp.navy.mil/group/don-covid-19-travel-tracker>.

In this tracking system, once conditions have been met, individual areas will be given a color code of green and permission to resume unrestricted travel. In general terms, travel will usually be permitted between areas having green ratings. All other areas will still be subject to the existing stop movement restrictions.

When given approval for movement, commanders are also being asked to understand how Sailors will be traveling. For example, stopping at locations with increased risk of COVID-19 exposure needs to be taken into account to determine the requirement to ROM.

“Commands and individual Service members should remain vigilant and implement reasonable measures to reduce risk of exposure and infection where appropriate,” Nowell wrote.

Approval for unrestricted travel starts when local areas meet the White House’s guidelines for opening up, which include a 14-day downward trajectory of new COVID-19 cases and positive tests as well as a concurrent drop in flu-like and COVID-19-like symptoms being reported before lifting local travel restrictions.

Installation-level factors are also tracked in the ADVANA database and factor into decisions. This includes any local area local travel restrictions, the availability of essential services such as schools, childcare and moving services, the capability for household goods packing and moving and a Health Protection Condition (HPCON) Level of C or below.

Once Navy installations meet this baseline, they will be considered for resumption of unrestricted travel to and from their location. The lifting of restrictions may not be permanent and will be constantly reassessed through local condition database updates.

“Any subsequent significant change in factors due to temporary localized breakouts will be assessed for travel restrictions being reinstated at the installation level,” Nowell said.

For complete details, Sailors and their commands should consult NAVADMIN 168/20 available on the Navy Personnel Command Website. Questions which can’t be answered by the NAVADMIN should be directed to MyNavy Career Center’s contact center at 833-330-6622 or by emails to askmncc@navy.mil.

Nowell called for “continued leadership at every level,” and, “personal responsibility.” He encourages everyone to stay the course with protective measures in the continued battle against the spread of the virus, including “social distancing, frequent hand-washing, and use of face coverings.”

“Avoiding complacency using these simple, low-tech, solutions will ensure continued success on Mission One -- the operational readiness of today’s Navy so that we maintain what our nation expects – a ready Navy – ready to fight today – and our commitment to the training, maintenance, and modernization that will also ensure a Navy ready for tomorrow,” he wrote.

The latest DoD policies can be found at <https://www.defense.gov/explore/spotlight/coronavirus>.

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