



**Armed Forces Retirement Home
Chief Operating Officer
3700 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20011**

September 29, 2021

**MEMORANDUM FOR AFRH RESIDENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND
CONTRACTORS**

SUBJECT: Modification of COVID-19 Protective Measures (Change #2)

Summary of change 2

Updates vaccination, quarantine, and isolation protocols and adds vaccination requirements due to:

- Revised Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on vaccinated individuals¹ and in healthcare settings², including new guidance on booster shots
- Executive orders 14042 and 14043 and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance

Previous version dated May 17, 2021 obsolete.

Overview

This memorandum provides updated guidance to both AFRH campuses for protective measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with updated Federal guidance.

Definitions

Exposure: Means close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19.

Fully vaccinated: Means two weeks have passed since the final dose of vaccine.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> (9/1/21 rev.)

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html> (9/10/21 rev.)

Quarantine vs isolation: Quarantine keeps someone who *might have been* exposed to the virus away from others. Isolation keeps someone who *is sick or tested positive without symptoms* away from others. Those on quarantine must limit their movements and interactions with others to essential activities only.

Staff: Includes Federal employees and contractor employees.

Required core infection prevention protocols

All residents, staff, volunteers, and visitors **must** maintain core infection prevention protocols:

- Properly wear face masks per current campus guidelines
- Maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing per current campus guidelines
- Wash or sanitize hands frequently
- Complete sanitizing and screening steps when arriving in campus
- Self-monitor at all times for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (i.e., fever or chills, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, headache, fatigue) and if they occur, immediately self-isolate and notify the Wellness Center staff who will provide further instructions

Staff will wear N95 masks and full personal protective equipment as indicated when in close contact with a person with diagnosed COVID-19.

Residents and staff are encouraged to request COVID testing at the Wellness Center at any time. Testing is advised 3-5 days after exposure, such as participating in activities off-campus that involve close contact with the general public.

All are reminded that the vaccine, while being 95 percent effective in preventing symptomatic illness from COVID-19 during limited clinical trials, is not a complete shield against the disease. Furthermore, immunity appears to wane after 6-8 months depending on the vaccine. As research continues to evolve and new variants emerge, it is important not to take unnecessary risks and to maintain the core infection control protocols.

Adjusting protective measures

It is important to understand that AFRH priority remains to keep the two communities safe, and that some limits will remain in place while others will be adjusted in response to conditions at either campus or their surrounding communities. Key conditions are:

1. **Local case and positivity rates**, as reported by CDC. Protective measures will be modified in response to local trends.
2. **Positive cases on campus**. If any resident, staff, or contractor has a confirmed positive case, protective measures will be implemented.

Measures may vary depending on the location of any outbreak and campus vaccination status.

AFRH consults the CDC county view positivity rates and other data available online at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>. For Gulfport we consult Harrison County, MS. For Washington we consult Washington, DC as well as Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland.

Conduct

Failure to observe core infection prevention protocols or vaccination requirements may result in disciplinary measures or exclusion from certain areas.

The ability to be vaccinated, or wear masks or other protective devices, may involve personal and private health or other factors. AFRH will continue to respect the privacy and health of all residents, staff, contractors, and visitors, and promote practices that lead to a safe, respectful, and healthy environment for all.

As part of this respectful environment, only supervisors and healthcare providers have a need to query any individual regarding infection prevention protocols or their vaccination status. Concerns about another person's conduct should be directed to supervisors or healthcare providers.

Protocols expanded

Vaccination

Initial vaccination

AFRH's experience since vaccinations began in early 2021 aligns with the CDC's guidance that "COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19."³ AFRH has had fewer cases which have been less severe than those earlier in the pandemic. The AFRH community is widely vaccinated, at rates higher than in our surrounding communities and for retirement homes in general.

In September 2021, President Biden signed two executive orders (14042 and 14043), with implementation guidance issued by OPM, making full vaccination mandatory for Federal employees and contractors by November 22, 2021.

Walter Reed and Keesler Medical Centers provide AFRH with Pfizer vaccines, so to be fully vaccinated by 22 November, individuals that receive the Pfizer vaccine will need their first dose by 18 October and their second dose by 8 November. If an individual wants to receive another brand of vaccine, they will need the first Moderna dose by 11 October and the second dose by 8 November, or the single Johnson and Johnson dose by 8 November.

Additionally, the District of Columbia now requires its licensed health care providers to be vaccinated and will sanction licenses for those not in compliance. Other cities or states may adopt similar requirements. All licensed healthcare providers at AFRH should keep up to date with their licensing jurisdiction's requirements. Any staff member who has their license sanctioned by a licensing board must inform their supervisor immediately.

Pfizer booster shots

Third-dose booster shots of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine will soon be offered to residents and staff who received the Pfizer vaccine and at least 6 months have passed since the last dose in the two-dose series.

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html> (8/19/21 rev.)

Residents and staff who have been partially vaccinated with a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine or were fully vaccinated less than 6 months ago should inform their supervisor, nurse, or chief of healthcare services if they would like a Pfizer booster dose once 6 months have elapsed since the second dose.

Residents and staff who have already received a third dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine due to an immunocompromised state or with certain underlying medical conditions will NOT receive another booster dose at this time.

AFRH strongly encourages all eligible residents and staff to receive boosters when offered on campus as we cannot guarantee that booster doses will be available in the future. As with the initial doses, boosters offered on campus will be free of charge.

Individuals receiving the booster dose are requested to bring their CDC vaccination card with them to their vaccination appointment so that the booster dose may be properly recorded on the card.

Vaccination after monoclonal antibody treatment or COVID-19 illness

Individuals should wait 90 days after monoclonal antibody therapy or recent COVID-19 infection to receive a Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot.

Co-administration with influenza vaccine

COVID-19 vaccine may be given regardless of timing of influenza vaccine. The influenza vaccine campaign for 2021 begins October 1, 2021. All residents and staff who are medically cleared and medically eligible to take the influenza vaccine are encouraged to do so.

Face masks and social distancing

Residents, staff, visitors, volunteers, must properly wear face masks and observe 6 feet or more of social distancing per current campus guidelines.

Residents must wear masks while receiving individual services from staff, and only remove the mask when directed by the staff member providing the service. Staff will wear masks while providing individual services to residents.

Fully-vaccinated residents may visit a different level of care, but must wear masks and maintain social distance throughout their visit. Visits may need to be scheduled in advance due to space and staffing limitations and to aid contact tracing.

Residents should limit the number in an apartment to 4 individuals.

Staff must maintain social distance of at least 6 feet from others to the maximum extent possible.

Testing

Targeted testing will be done immediately on those who are symptomatic or 3-5 days after exposure for asymptomatic individuals identified through contact tracing. Symptomatic individuals will receive both rapid and PCR tests; asymptomatic individuals will receive a rapid test.

Unvaccinated staff will be tested every Monday, or the first duty day after leave, prior to entry into AFRH buildings.

Exposure protocols

Residents

Symptomatic residents will immediately receive both rapid and PCR tests and be placed into isolation.

- Fully vaccinated residents may exit isolation after 10 days if they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior
- Unvaccinated residents may exit isolation after 14 days if they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior

Asymptomatic residents will immediately quarantine in their room and receive a rapid test after 3-5 days.

- If the test result is negative, they may exit quarantine
- If the test result is positive, they will receive a PCR test and be placed in isolation
- Fully vaccinated residents may exit isolation after 10 days if they have remained symptom-free

- Unvaccinated residents may exit isolation after 14 days if they have remained symptom-free

Staff

Symptomatic staff will immediately receive both rapid and PCR tests and go into home isolation.

- Fully vaccinated staff may exit isolation and return to work after 10 days if they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior
- Unvaccinated staff may exit isolation return to work after 14 days if they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior; they will receive a rapid test upon return to work

Asymptomatic staff with exposure identified by contact tracing will immediately quarantine at home and receive a rapid test after 3-5 days.

- If the test result is negative, they may exit quarantine and return to work
- If the test result is positive, they will receive a PCR test and go into home isolation
- Fully vaccinated staff may exit isolation and return to work after 10 days if they have remained symptom-free
- Unvaccinated staff may exit isolation and return to work after 14 days if they have remained symptom-free; they will receive a rapid test upon return to work

Reduced quarantine or isolation period

The AFRH Chief Medical Officer may authorize a shorter quarantine or isolation period based on individual circumstances at the request of a campus administrator or chief of healthcare services.

Off-campus activities

Fully vaccinated residents will be able to come and go without a requirement to quarantine upon return to campus. Unvaccinated residents must quarantine for 14 days and obtain a COVID test 3-5 days after returning to campus.

Fully vaccinated residents and staff are encouraged to interact off-campus with fully vaccinated family and friends.

All residents and staff should make every effort to avoid off-campus areas with known high positivity rates or concentrations of people. These include restaurants, bars, shopping malls, events, and entertainment venues such as casinos and theaters. Look for places that are well-ventilated—outdoor is better than indoor.

The CDC continues to endorse masks and social distancing even among fully-vaccinated individuals as additional protection against the virus. This applies to those who have received the Pfizer booster as well. Despite relaxation of local requirements on mask wearing, gatherings, and capacities, we encourage all residents and staff to continue observing these protocols at all times when off campus.

Drivers and passengers in shuttle buses or shared vehicles must sit so as to maintain 6 feet separation, wear masks at all times, and maximize ventilation.

Travel

Travel increases your chance of spreading and getting COVID-19. If you travel, AFRH strongly recommends you take these actions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- Contact the Wellness Center prior to your trip if you will travel internationally
- Check <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view> prior to making any travel plans to avoid areas with high local transmission rate
- During travel, wear a mask over your nose and mouth, avoid crowds and stay 6 feet or more away from anyone not traveling with you, and wash or sanitize your hands often
- After travel, self-monitor for symptoms; quarantine yourself and contact the Wellness Center immediately if you develop any symptoms; request a rapid test 3-5 days after returning

Visitors

AFRH will continue to assume that visitors are unvaccinated and COVID-exposed. Campus Administrators may permit visitors outside the buildings and in designated areas inside the buildings, subject to the following:

- Visitors must follow core infection prevention protocols and screening procedures per current campus guidance at all times while on AFRH grounds
- Campuses will explain the risks associated with visitation to residents and visitors so they can make an informed decision about participation
- Visitors must remain in designated areas to minimize contact with other residents and staff
- Indoor visits may need to be scheduled in advance due to space and staffing limitations and to aid contact tracing if needed
- Indoor visitation for unvaccinated residents, or vaccinated residents in quarantine or isolation, will be limited to compassionate care situations as permitted by the campus Administrator

Volunteers

Campus Administrators may allow fully vaccinated volunteers on campus for activities in Independent Living and common areas. Volunteers will not be permitted in Assisted Living, Long Term Care, and Memory Support at this time. Volunteers must follow core infection prevention protocols and screening procedures per current campus guidance at all times while on AFRH grounds, and remain in designated areas.

Tours for prospective residents


Prospective residents who are vaccinated will be allowed to tour the facilities. They will not be permitted in upper levels of care.

New admissions

Incoming residents will follow protocols including testing for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to arrival, having a health screening upon arrival, and quarantining for 14 days if not fully vaccinated. Incoming residents will also follow all outlined rules if a companion is needed to assist them with their move-in, or if a moving company is needed.

Conclusion

AFRH will continue to assess the safety of the Home and local conditions, and adjust protective measures as necessary, in consultation with Department of Defense, CDC, and other applicable Federal guidance. Our ultimate goal has been, and continues to be, to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our residents and staff.



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