



COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are there any special requirements to enter Germany besides my ID card, passport and orders?

A. Yes. Stay up-to-date on all European country entry requirements by visiting the websites: [Re-Open EU](#) and [U.S. State Department COVID-19 Country Specific Information](#).

Q. Where should I be vaccinated?

A. Make your vaccination appointments by visiting: <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/COVAX> or consult with your local medical service provider.

Q. Should I get the vaccine for influenza (flu shot)?

A. Yes, it is very important to get the influenza vaccine, particularly this season when both influenza viruses and COVID-19 will infect people. Contact your local health clinic for appointments.

Q. Should children get the vaccine?

A. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine for use in adolescents aged 12 to 16 years old under the FDA Emergency Use Authorization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommends pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years old. Consult with your health care provider regarding the benefits of vaccination for your children. Appointments can be scheduled at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/COVAX/>.

Q. Should I get a booster shot?

A. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently amended the emergency use authorization to allow for a single booster shot of vaccines that are either fully licensed or authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration. Any FDA approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccine may be used to provide a single booster shot no matter what was received as a primary series, also known as “mix and match.” At this time, booster shots remain voluntary. Read the Centers for Disease Control booster shot statement at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>. Military Medical Treatment Facility and Department of Defense vaccination sites are authorized to begin administering vaccine booster shots to eligible individuals. Booster shot appointments can be scheduled at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/COVAX/>.

Q. Are Soldiers still able to receive their vaccine off-post from civilian medical providers?

A. Yes. If a Soldier completes an Emergency Use Authorization or World Health Organization authorized vaccine series at an off-post location, they should submit documentation to their medical treatment facility so their immunization records are updated.

Q. Are family members of Soldiers required to be vaccinated?

A. We encourage everyone to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting vaccinated but only uniformed Soldiers and Federal employees are required to receive the vaccine.

Q. What if a person has already completed an authorized series of COVID-19 vaccines, do they have to start over with the FDA approved vaccine?

A. No, anyone who has completed an EUA or WHO authorized series are considered fully vaccinated and are not required to start the series again with the FDA approved vaccine.

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Q. How long will protection last following vaccination?

A. We don't know yet how long protection lasts for those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick.

Q. What are the symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection?

A. Typical symptoms for COVID-19 can include, but are not limited to: a temperature at or above 100° Fahrenheit, night sweats or chills, a persistent cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, and/or sore throat.

Q. What should I do if I think I have coronavirus/COVID-19?

A. Do not go to work or send your child to school/daycare. Contact your health care provider before visiting a medical treatment facility. TRICARE beneficiaries should call the Nurse Advice Line at one of the following toll-free numbers based on your location:

- Bahrain: 800-06432
- Belgium: 0800-81933
- Germany: 0800-071-3516
- Greece: 00-800-4414-1013
- Italy: 800-979721
- Spain: 900-82-2740
- Turkey: 00-800-44-882-5287
- UK: 0800-028-3263
 - To access the Nurse Advice Line (NAL) from a cell phone in Europe you must first call your clinic appointment line and choose the option for the Nurse Advice Line.
 - Non-TRICARE beneficiaries should contact their primary care provider or Insurance Provider for advice.
 - As always, if you are experiencing respiratory distress, or believe you have a life threatening condition, please call emergency services or report to the closest emergency room.

Q. If you are already vaccinated, can you still test positive for COVID-19?

A. The risks of COVID-19 infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus. Vaccinated people could potentially still get COVID-19 and spread it to others. That's why it's so important for everyone to continue to practice COVID-19 safety measures like wearing a mask and practicing social distancing.

Q. If someone already had COVID-19, should they still get a vaccine?

A. Yes, because the duration of immunity following COVID-19 infection is unknown, and the vaccine may be effective in protecting previously infected people. Make your vaccination appointments by visiting: <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/COVAX> or consult with your local medical service provider.

Q. Are people who previously had COVID-19 considered vaccinated?

A. A person is only considered fully vaccinated two weeks post completion of a two-dose series vaccine or two weeks post completion of a single dose vaccine.

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Q. What if one person in a family is identified as having had “close contact” with a COVID-19 positive person, what does that mean for the rest of their family?

A. Close contacts of someone who is COVID-19 positive, are placed in quarantine for 10 days from date of exposure unless the close contact is fully vaccinated. The close contact should separate from the rest of the family, but as long as that individual doesn't develop symptoms - then family members are not categorized or restricted. Family members should maintain separate living space to the greatest extent possible. While this does not preclude all personal contact, limit proximity to at least six feet as much as possible. If the close contact begins to develop symptoms, he/she should also be placed in quarantine.

Q. What is the difference between Restriction of Movement (ROM), quarantine, and isolation?

A. Restriction of Movement is an umbrella term used for an individual or group to prevent or diminish the transmission of a communicable disease.

The following are categories of ROM:

- Isolation - You have COVID or are reasonably suspected because you are displaying symptoms. This ROM is the physical separation of an individual or group for a minimum of 10 days in an isolation facility or residence following the onset of symptoms. Release from isolation is cleared medically through testing.
- Quarantine - Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

Q. What's the difference between physical distancing vs social distancing?

A. Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Both terms are acceptable.

Q. What does quarantine mean?

A. Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. This is also referred to as Restriction of Movement (ROM.)

Q. How long does quarantine last?

A. Quarantine rules are different, based on individual circumstances and location. It is recommended you coordinate closely with your sponsor as the rules change often. Stay up-to-date on all European country entry requirements by visiting the websites [Re-Open EU](#) and [U.S. State Department COVID-19 Country Specific Information](#).

Q. Who does the quarantine apply to?

A. Quarantine rules are different, based on individual circumstances and location. It is recommended you coordinate closely with your sponsor as the rules change often. Stay up-to-date on all European country entry requirements by visiting the websites [Re-Open EU](#) and [U.S. State Department COVID-19 Country Specific Information](#).

Q. While an individual is in quarantine, will they be able to leave the isolation location?

A. No. All personnel are restricted from leaving their quarantine location during the quarantine period.

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Q. Who is responsible for supporting COVID-19 positive or quarantined individuals?

A. The unit is required to support COVID-19 positive individuals and those on quarantine. Support is a whole-of-command effort beginning with the individual's chain of command and the appointed sponsor.

Q. What should an individual do if they are directed to quarantine?

A. Individuals who have been directed to quarantine must:

- Contact their sponsor or supervisor.
- Stay within place of quarantine and monitor your health for signs of respiratory illness (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or fever exceeding 100 F).
- Do not travel, visit public/crowded areas, or use public transportation.
- If living with family members or roommates, maintain separate living space to the greatest extent possible. While this does not preclude all personal contact, limit proximity to at least 6 feet as much as possible.
- Increase hand washing frequency, particularly before and after personal interactions.
- Open windows to increase air flow.
- Use separate sleeping arrangements and hygiene areas when possible.
- Do not prepare food for quarantine individuals.
- Sanitize shared spaces after utilization.

Q. If a family member, DoD civilian, contractor or HN employee abides by the quarantine and remains at their residence and misses work, will he or she be entitled to any financial compensation?

A. Currently the time spent on quarantine will not count towards service member or civilian leave. Financial compensation will be determined on a case-by-case basis please work closely with your supervisors and chain of command.

Q. How will they get food, groceries, and other life necessities?

A. The Concierge program is available at both the Exchange and Commissaries to accommodate the needs of quarantined personnel accessing bare essential items. Contact your local Army Community Service office for details.

Q. Should I wear a face mask?

A. When on a DoD facility, fully vaccinated DoD personnel (at least 14 days beyond their final dose) are no longer required to wear a mask indoors or outdoors on/at DoD facilities, unless otherwise indicated upon entry. Personnel who are legally exempt and/or not fully vaccinated must continue to follow applicable DoD mask guidance, including wearing masks indoors and outdoors and social distancing. When not on a DoD facility, you must follow host nation guidelines.

Q. What if an individual is unable to wear a mask for health reasons?

A. In most cases, Soldiers or Federal employees who are not vaccinated due to disability or religious practices or beliefs will be able to follow the safety protocols for individuals who are not fully vaccinated. In the rare case where they cannot, or where it is otherwise required by law, other reasonable accommodations should be made, barring undue hardship.

Some individuals may require accommodations under applicable law relating to masking requirements, and such accommodations should be in accordance with existing Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidance.

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Q. Do commanders have the authority to require Soldiers to wear masks?

A. Yes. Commanders, in consultation with their medical leadership, exercise their authority to make deliberate, risk-based decisions that may be more stringent than surrounding community COVID transmission mitigation measures.

Q. What Soldiers will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and why?

A. Every Soldier who is not otherwise exempt will be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to ensure our Soldiers and units are ready to fight and win. This is a readiness, health, and welfare priority for the entire U.S. Army.

Q. Can commanders order Soldiers to be forcibly vaccinated?

A. There will be no involuntary [forcible] immunizations. However, orders to receive the mandatory vaccine are lawful, and failure to comply may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Q. Does the vaccination status of a Soldier determine their deployability?

A. The U.S. Army has not yet determined if COVID-19 immunization is required for medical deployability. However, commanders may continue to consider vaccination status when making decision regarding on-going deployment missions, other missions, and official travel.

Q. What COVID-19 vaccines will Soldiers be required to receive?

A. Currently, the only mandatory vaccine is the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine. Service members may choose to voluntarily receive any FDA Emergency Use Authorization or World Health Organization Emergency Use Listing vaccine to meet the vaccination requirement.

Q. Can Soldiers or Federal employees be required to receive a vaccine if the specific product was manufactured prior to full U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval?

A. Yes. The FDA approval applies to any batch of the approved vaccine, regardless of date of manufacture.

Q. When is the U.S. Army's deadline for full vaccination of Soldiers?

A. Active duty units are expected to be fully vaccinated by Dec. 15, 2021 and Reserve and National Guard units are expected to be fully vaccinated by June 30, 2022. The U.S. Army ordered all commanders to begin implementing the Secretary of Defense's order requiring all Service members to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 on August 24. The U.S. Army's vaccine mandate order provides further implementation instructions, and as with any other readiness requirement, commanders are responsible for ensuring their unit's overall compliance.

Q. What about Soldiers with medical or religious grounds to refuse the vaccine? Can they request an exemption?

A. There are two types of exemption: medical and administrative. Administrative exemptions include religious accommodations, as well as others enumerated in AR 40-562. Soldiers requesting an administrative exemption must speak to their commander. Soldiers who believe they require a medical exemption must consult with their primary care manager.

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Q. How does a Soldier request a medical exemption?

A. Soldiers who believe they require a medical exemption should consult with their Primary Care Manager as outlined in Army Regulation 600-20 and AR 40-562. Soldiers with previous COVID-19 infections are not automatically exempt from full vaccination and should consult their primary care managers. The PCM will determine a medical exemption based on the health of the vaccine candidate and the nature of the immunization under consideration. Medical exemptions may be temporary (up to 365 days) or permanent. Soldiers pending exemption requests must continue to comply with all other applicable force health protection measures applicable to unvaccinated people.

Q. Who approves temporary medical exemptions for Soldiers?

A. If the primary care manager indicates a temporary exemption is valid, the PCM will approve the temporary exemption. However, if no exemption is identified, the PCM will disapprove the request, administer the vaccine to the service member if the service member agrees to receive it and document into MEDPROS. If the service member declines to be vaccinated by the PCM, the service member will be referred back to their command for appropriate action.

Q. Who is the approval authority for permanent medical exemptions for Soldiers?

A. The approval authority for permanent medical exemptions for Soldiers assigned to U.S. Army Europe and Africa is the Regional Health Command-Europe Commanding General. The U.S. Army Surgeon General is the appellate authority. The Surgeon General's decision is final.

Q. How does a Soldier request a religious exemption?

A. Pursuant to AR 600-20, Appendix P-2b, Soldiers with religious practices in conflict with immunization requirements may request an exemption through command channels. Commanders will arrange for an in-person or telephonic interview between a Soldier requesting a religious accommodation and the unit or other assigned chaplain. The chaplain will assess the basis and sincerity of the belief and must provide a written memorandum to the chain of command pursuant to the requirements of AR 600-20, Appendix P-2B (2). A licensed health care provider will counsel the applicant to ensure the applicant is making an informed decision IAW AR 600-20, appendix P-2B (3).

Q. Who approves requests for religious exemptions for Soldiers?

A. The U.S. Army Surgeon General is the only approval or disapproval authority for immunization accommodation requests. The Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) is the final appeal authority. The ASA (M&RA)'s decision is final. Any religious accommodation request for an immunization exemption must comply with the requirements described in AR 600-20, Appendix P-2b, and DODI 1300.17, "Religious Liberty in the Military Services," September 1, 2020.

Q. Will Soldiers who request an exemption receive adverse action while awaiting a decision?

A. Commanders will not take adverse action against Soldiers with pending exemption requests. Soldiers with pending active requests for an immunization exemption submitted IAW AR 40-562 and AR 600-20 are temporarily deferred from mandatory immunization, pending the outcome of their request or any appeal of a denied request.

Q. Who can impose administrative actions on Soldiers?

A. Non-judicial, and judicial actions is withheld to O-6 commanders and to the 1-star level for units without an O-6 commander. Regardless of any other action considered, commanders will request a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (GOMOR) be initiated for Soldiers refusing the vaccine without an approved or pending exemption request.

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Q. If a Soldier receives a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (GOMOR) will this become a part of their permanent record?

A. All administrative and non-judicial punishment actions are considered on an individual basis.

Q. What happens if a Soldier refuses to receive the vaccine?

A. Soldiers who refuse the vaccine order will first be counseled by their chain of command and medical providers. Continued refusal to follow this lawful order will include adverse measures such as a mandatory general officer reprimand, potential relief of duties, non-judicial and judicial punishment, and separation from service. Soldiers have the ability to request an exemption from receiving the vaccine, if they have a valid medical, religious or administrative reason through their command. Soldiers who are pending exemption requests will not be subject to adverse actions until the exemption is fully processed.

Commanders, command sergeants major, first sergeants and officers listed for Command Select List (CSL) positions who do not have an approved exemption and are not pending an exemption request will be suspended from command, notified of pending relief from duties, counseled, and provided the opportunity to be vaccinated before they are subject to being removed from their positions by a general officer. Officers, noncommissioned officers, and senior enlisted Soldiers who have been selected and are waiting to assume CSL command, key billet or nominative sergeant major positions will likewise be subject to removal from the list for those assignments should they refuse to be vaccinated without a pending or approved exemption.

Q. When do Federal employees need to be vaccinated?

A. By November 22, 2021, all Department of Defense employees must be fully vaccinated. The only exception is for individuals who receive a legally required exception approved under established agency processes. All Federal employees must also attest to either being vaccinated, unvaccinated, or requesting an exemption.

Vaccination appointments can be scheduled at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/COVAX/> or through a preferred provider. Vaccination status can be attested to on [milConnect: Update COVID Vaccination Status \(CAC access only\)](#).

Q. How can a Federal employee request an exemption?

A. Department of Defense employees may request a reasonable accommodation through their local Equal Employment Opportunity office as outlined in AR 690-12, appendix C. Reasonable accommodation covers a wide range of requests for exemption, consult your local Equal Employment Opportunity office for more information.

Q. Will Federal employees who request an exemption receive adverse action while awaiting a decision?

A. Department of Defense employees awaiting request for accommodation decision will have no adverse actions taken against them but will be subject to twice weekly COVID-19 testing, physical distancing, the wearing of masks in the workplace, and restrictions on official travel.

Q. If a Federal employee is unvaccinated, has an exemption or is awaiting a decision for reasonable accommodation, do they need to be tested for COVID-19?

A. Yes. Federal employees must be tested twice weekly with an FDA approved COVID-19 test kit. These kits can be purchased by their employer.

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Q. When can the enforcement process be initiated for Federal employees for failure to comply with the requirement to be fully vaccinated?

A. The enforcement process began November 22, 2021, unless the employee has received an exception or the agency is considering an exception request from the employee. Federal employees who are unvaccinated, exempt, or awaiting a decision on an exemption must be tested twice weekly with an FDA approved COVID-19 test kit starting Nov. 22, 2021, provided by their employer.

Q. What if a Federal employee refuses to be tested?

A. According to [Force Health Protection Guidance \(Supplement 23\) Revision 2 - Department of Defense Guidance for Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Attestation, Screening Testing, and Vaccination Verification](#), starting Nov. 22, 2021, if an employee refuses to be tested on a twice weekly basis, disciplinary action will progressively be enforced. Starting Nov. 29, 2021, if a Federal employee continues to refuse to be tested on a weekly basis, they will be barred from the workplace with more stringent disciplinary action will be enforced. Specific guidance on this disciplinary process will be issued in the near future.

Questions and answers on Federal government contractors or subcontractors can be found at: [COVID-19 Workplace Safety: Guidance for Federal Contractors and Subcontractors](#)