

Team USAFA,

Since the month of May, Colorado Springs experienced a marked decrease in the number and infection rate of COVID-19 cases; however, after the country began relaxing some of the previous COVID-19 restrictions, we are now witnessing a rise in cases as social interaction has increased. This disease does not stop at our gates; therefore, we need your continued diligence in keeping USAFA healthy. We cannot become complacent, and we cannot reduce our prevention measures against the virus. We are all a part of a greater community, and we share a role in keeping each other safe. For this reason, I ask you to do the following:

- Continue to practice social distancing; avoid close contact (within 6ft) for extended periods of time (longer than 15 minutes)
- Wear a cloth face covering when around others, particularly in confined spaces and when you cannot social distance
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid sharing personal items
- Frequently clean surfaces that have been touched
- Share information with our public health specialists if you or someone in your household has contracted COVID-19; this process helps track and slow the spread of the virus

To highlight how important these practices are, our cadets are signing their names to a document and acknowledging their understanding of the Summer Cadet Wing COVID Rules of Engagement and Restriction of Movement directives. We have to hold ourselves and each other accountable. To break these rules risks the health of your fellow Cadets and can cause others to be placed into quarantine.

Since we first encountered COVID-19 at USAFA we have grown smarter, more capable, and ready to prevent and mitigate the virus, but we must continue to adhere to our public health professionals' guidance. We do not yet have a medication to use in the outpatient setting like we have to treat patients with similar illnesses. Numerous studies continue to look into medication options, but production of a valid vaccine is expected to take up to a year or more, targeting widespread availability in 2021. In the meantime, our main defense is prevention, and this effort is a responsibility we all share. This is not just an issue for our cadets. COVID-19 affects our families, our friends and neighbors, and our entire community. Our vigilance with good hygiene, the wearing of face coverings, physical distancing, and proper sleep and nutrition, is crucial to keeping USAFA and our community healthy. This applies to all of us.

We recognize that it is hard to find the perfect balance between our preventive efforts to limit COVID-19 on base, and our desire to achieve social connectedness and the freedom to execute our training mission. We have learned many lessons over the past months and have the capabilities in place to succeed. Your continued support in following preventive measures is key in this effort. Our actions will pay off with lower COVID-19 infection rates, will support a healthy USAFA campus in the coming academic year, and will help us protect the greater community.

This Thursday, in lieu of our usual 1530 Live Stream, I will lead a mandatory virtual Teams meeting during this time slot with key staff across the base (invitation forthcoming). This includes ME leads, Vices and Chiefs; Group AOCs; Department Heads; Head Coaches; A-Staff Directors; and others. The goal of this meeting is to provide some tools to help leaders reinforce this message with Permanent Party and cadets on the installation and to answer questions. We cannot afford to let the mission fail due to our complacency. That is an unacceptable option.

Thank you for heeding this message and for being a great partner.

Stay healthy, stay connected, JS