

February 13, 2020 Novel Coronavirus update (COVID-19)



Homeland
Security

February 13, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to provide you with an update about the novel coronavirus, now called COVID-19. First, let me note that the United States is experiencing limited occurrences of the virus—Americans remain at low risk. As you can imagine, this situation will continue to evolve. I will always share the latest information and resources available to keep you and your families safe.

The United States Government as a whole is taking this global health event seriously. In addition to the work DHS is doing to screen all applicable travelers at air, land and sea ports, DHS officials are also participating on the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Additionally, the White House has pledged \$100 million to help fight the outbreak, and we have offered experts to the World Health Organization team in China. Additionally, the State Department facilitated delivery of almost 20 tons of medical supplies donated by U.S. companies to help with the outbreak. We are also taking every measure to get Americans and their immediate family out of China and back to the United States where they will be appropriately screened, monitored, and if needed cared for.

As of today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has not changed its previous guidance regarding how to prevent exposure and infection. Basic guidelines about good handwashing, getting a flu shot, and practicing other non-pharmaceutical [daily health habits that minimize the spread of germs](#) are still the primary tools we have to combat illness. In addition, those of you on the frontlines of DHS working with the public every day are trained to incorporate protection against contagion into your daily duties. But I also know that when I was in the field, I routinely checked for other news needed to keep myself and my family informed. The CDC's [COVID-19 website](#) is updated frequently with information, [printable flyers](#), and frequently asked questions—most in English and Spanish—so that you and your loved ones can remain confident that you have the latest information.

In addition, you and your families can find information about resilience, work-life balance, and physical and mental health on our public-facing [employees resources](#) page. If you are feeling concern or stress about the coronavirus, please contact our [employee assistance programs](#) at any time.

As always, if you become sick with any contagious illness, please coordinate with your supervisor to take sick leave or make alternative work arrangements in order to protect

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others. Your good health and confidence in the information provided to you are very important to all of the leadership here at DHS. Our mission is critical, but it is nothing without you.

Thank you for your service, today and every day.

Sincerely,

R.D. Alles
Deputy Under Secretary for Management

With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.