

Message from the American Legion National Commander Regarding the Corona Virus

To All Departments of the American Legion,

The nature of the corona virus pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes. We are all learning here, and I ask that you be patient, flexible and strong as we get through this. And we will get through this because our American Legion Family has proven our toughness throughout our first 101 years.

We must be smart about how we approach this. I have suspended all official travel for all American Legion national officers and staff unless it is absolutely imperative. This policy pertains to me as well and will last at least through the end of March. Travel beyond that date will be reassessed in a timely fashion. While I do not have the authority to mandate that departments take action, I would like to share with you how your national headquarters will be operating for the temporary future. Keep in mind, these policies are also recommended by medical professionals at the Center for Disease Control and other experts throughout the health care and emergency response communities.

We are providing a liberal leave policy for employees who are ill or who have family members who are ill. We are also providing liberal leave or tele-work options for those experiencing daycare issues because of school cancellations. The workplace at national headquarters will be even cleaner than its usual high standards and there will be plenty of hand-sanitizers available for workers and visitors to use. We have also temporarily halted public tours of the headquarters. We have many national youth programs, meetings and other events scheduled for the weeks and months ahead. Some will likely be cancelled or postponed. These decisions will not be easy to make but will be thought out with safety being the number one priority. Cancellations and postponements of national American Legion events will be announced promptly on our national website, www.legion.org, and by email to all departments once such decisions are made. I will keep you advised of any new measures at the national level as they occur.

I am asking every department to respect their local civil authorities as well. Different states have different measures in effect. Like veterans, they are risking their health and well being in order to keep us safe. This is a new kind of crisis for them as well.

The Buddy Check program is perhaps more important now than ever before. Rely on telephone, email or social media to communicate since person-to-person contact is not the safest option. Please be particularly attentive to seniors, a population that is especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of this virus.

I do realize that some of the measures we have taken will inconvenience many of you. Nobody wants this to last any longer than necessary. And once it is determined that the conditions are safe, operations will return to normal. I thank you in advance for your patience, resilience and continued service to our great organization and country.

Sincerely,

James W. "Bill" Oxford
National Commander