

Chief of the Defence Staff



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To the Best Sailors, Soldiers, Aviators and Special Forces Operators in the World and your Families,

I will be issuing direction very soon that will posture the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to respond effectively to the current COVID 19 pandemic. These orders will have an impact, and in some cases a significant impact to personal, professional and family plans. Rest assured that the measures we will take are entirely aligned with the best practices recommended by Canadian health authorities and our Surgeon General. The CAF does not see any greater threat to ourselves or Canadians than what has been described by health authorities. However, we have a unique and existential obligation to Canada to continue operations, to be ready for known operations and contingencies, and for any unknown challenges we could face. Therefore, we must adopt best practices as a matter of obligation for readiness. We must, as well, not become an unwitting vector due to travel and routine that would contribute to the spread of the contagion within Canada that could harm our most vulnerable citizens and severely impact critical force generation activities.

The orders I will promulgate will restrict all travel, business and personal, to Canada. There will be no international travel for military personnel. Although there will be some exceptions for critical activities, as a rule, there will be no travel outside Canada. Those returning from leave will, if presenting a risk of infection, be directed to self-isolate. Those serving outside Canada are to remain in place and adopt a protective posture and regime. All gatherings and routines that put people in close contact for voluntary or duty reasons, except essential force generation activities and exercises, will be suspended. This will include a prohibition on ceremonial events, conferences, routine unit activities and team sports.

Where possible, and as directed by commanders, we will adopt a posture much like block leave, where essential unit level tasks continue, but otherwise CAF members are to remain at home. While at home, or on leave in Canada, I will ask you to adopt an approach that protects you and your family from the virus. There is a great deal of publically available information that works to keep you and your family safe. I expect our command and control headquarters to continue operations, albeit at reduced levels, and some units may be able to stand down to essential administration and command functions only. We will keep our