



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Clarification of Guidance Related to Attendance at Religious Services

References: (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Guidance for Commanders on Risk-Based Changing of Health Protection Condition Levels During Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic," May 19, 2020
(b) Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) message, "Religious Liberty and HPCON Guidance," July 7, 2020

In reference (a), the Secretary of Defense reiterated his three priorities for the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic response and provided guidance for commanders to consider when making decisions to change health protection condition (HPCON) level as COVID-19 pandemic conditions on and adjacent to Department of Defense installations change. Reference (a) included a table of measured activities that commanders should consider allowing at each HPCON level.

In reference (b), the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) advised that nothing in reference (a) should be construed to restrict attendance at places of worship where attendees are able to appropriately apply COVID-19 transmission mitigation measures, specifically social distancing and use of face covering. CDC has suggested precautions here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>.

Accordingly, I am directing you to ensure that all Service guidance reflects the reference (b) message and to inform Commanders to incorporate this clarification allowing attendance at religious services where COVID-19 transmission mitigation measures may be appropriately applied.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Slavonic", is located below the text.

Gregory J. Slavonic
Acting