



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## DeCA guidance requires employees, customers to have a face covering to enter commissaries

*By DeCA Corporate Communications*

**Note:** Go to the DeCA [coronavirus page](#) to see a video related to this release. Go the DeCA website to read this news release [online](#).

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Commissaries are requiring some form of face covering for store employees and customers to enter a commissary.

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) guidance is effective April 10 and applies to all agency stores and other facilities worldwide where no local directive has yet been issued, said Rear Adm. (Ret.) Robert J. Bianchi, DOD special assistant for commissary operations.

“If an installation commander has already issued a directive to require face coverings in DeCA commissaries, this order shall not supersede their policy, and all patrons and employees shall adhere to current rules,” Bianchi said. “Many bases have already imposed this



*A store worker at the Daegu, South Korea, Commissary wears personal protective equipment as he wipes down a checkout area. (DeCA photo)*

requirement, but at locations where there is no guidance, this is protection of our employees and our customers.”

DeCA’s guidance falls in line with April 5 [Department of Defense guidance](#) mandating that “all individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities will wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain 6 feet of social distance in public areas or work centers.”

On April 3, DeCA announced to employees it was working through the procurement process to purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to stores as fast as possible.

The commissary agency is purchasing disposable masks and gloves through the commercial supply system that will be made available to employees.

As supplies of masks and gloves make their way to commissaries, store employees are wearing their own masks or some form of material such as scarfs, bandannas, clean t-shirts or cloths to cover the nose and mouth.

Army Lt. Col. Angela Parham, DeCA’s director of health and safety, emphasized that PPE is only one part of the preventive measures required to help combat COVID-19.

“DOD’s face covering mandate aligns with CDC guidance to help prevent asymptomatic people, who may not know they’re infected, from spreading the virus to healthy folks,” Parham said. “Even when you wear a mask or other face covering, it is still important to practice good hand hygiene, social distancing, and refrain from touching your face.”

In addition to requiring face coverings for employees and customers, commissaries have implemented the following operational policies to help make stores safer during this pandemic:

- Commissaries are installing clear, acrylic sneeze shields in all regular checkout lanes to add extra protection for customers and cashiers.
- Commissary personnel are wiping down checkout areas, product display cases, restrooms and shopping carts with disinfectant, and practicing routine hand washing and other basic sanitation measures to reduce transmission risk.
- Hand sanitizer is provided at each register and staff are encouraged to use it at the end of each patron transaction.
- DeCA encourages its employees to closely monitor their health, and asks them to stay home if they, or someone in their household, are sick.
- Stores are working with their installations to implement procedures regarding social distancing.
- A “no visitors” policy was instituted to reduce the number of people in the stores.
- Early bird hours were suspended to allow stores more time to clean and restock the store

- Patrons cannot bring reusable bags into the commissary to help reduce the risk of virus.
- Cashiers no longer handle patron ID cards. Instead, customers will be asked to scan their own ID or cashiers can use the handheld scanner if available.
- DeCA encourages the use of credit or debit transactions to limit the use of cash and coins
- Local commissaries work closely with the public health assets on the installation to monitor transmission risk related to staff and patrons.
- Commissaries have temporarily suspended the requirement to sign credit card receipts to prevent multi patron handling of the credit card reader pen.

“We will continue to follow the highest standards of DOD health protection in our stores,” Bianchi said. “DeCA’s objective is always to deliver the necessary goods our customers need in stores that are safe and clean for them and our employees.”

Commissary customers should continue to refer to the [federal government’s response to coronavirus, COVID-19](#) website and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Coronavirus site](#) for updates and guidance regarding this virus. Updates related to the commissaries can be found on DeCA’s [Coronavirus page](#).

**-DeCA-**

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Commissaries provide a military benefit, saving authorized patrons thousands of dollars annually on their purchases compared to similar products at commercial retailers. The discounted prices include a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*

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