

4 Wing members, family, and community of Cold Lake,

On March 26<sup>th</sup> the Wing Chief and I hosted a Facebook Live event to answer some questions from the community related to COVID-19 and 4 Wing's response. We really appreciated the huge community interest, number of questions and all the feedback from the event! Unfortunately we were unable to answer all your questions during our one hour and have tried to provide those answers to you below. We look forward from hearing from you during our **next event, planned this Thursday, April 16!**

**1. What is 4 Wing doing about the COVID-19 outbreak?**

4 Wing, in line with the Canadian Armed Forces, is focused on maintaining our critical functions while preserving the health and safety of our forces. That includes increasing the number of people working from home to meet social distancing requirements, finding creative ways to employ critical personnel in functional teams while being kept separate from others and following direction from medical experts on hand washing, isolation and treatment (as required). Many routine functions on the base have been modified to minimize face-to-face contact between military members and new hours or methods to access these services have been posted on our splash page or disseminated through the chain of command. Below you will find a table with the details of many base services, their hours, availability and contact points.

Service	Status	Details	Contact
CANEX	Open	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm	
		Sat/Sun: 12pm-5pm	
Postal Office	Open	Mon-Fri: 10am-12pm	
SISIP	Open	10am-2pm	
CFHA	Call only	Mon-Fri: 8am-4pm	780-594-4325
Dining Hall	Open for pick up only (no dine-in)	Breakfast: 8am-9am	
		Lunch: 12pm-1pm	
		Dinner: 4pm-5pm	
Col J.J. Parr	Closed	BMO ATM can be access 0900-1500.	
MFRCS	Closed	Email	4wingmfrc.reception@gmail.com
Padre Assistance	Chapel closed	Chaplain services provided	
		Call COC for referral to duty chaplain	780-840-8000 x 8595
Language School	Closed	Email for minimized functions	Helene.Perreault@forces.gc.ca
Clothing Stores	Closed		
Messes	Closed		
Financial Services	Minimized	Call duty phone	780-813-0364
Claims	Minimized	Call duty phone	780-813-1995
DJA Services	Closed	Email	Michael.Gough@forces.gc.ca
Air Reserve Office	Minimized	Call duty phone	780-826-8629
Transition Center	Closed	Call duty phone	780-813-1915
Wing General Safety	Minimized	Call duty phone	780-594-1122 / 780-813-0010
		Email	Christie.Strazza@forces.gc.ca

**2. How will COVID-19 affect the Active Posting Season for this year? Is my posting cancelled?**

Given the unique challenges of COVID-19 I can say that there will be an impact to the 2020 Active Posting Season (APS). Since the Facebook Live event a letter has been put out from the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in addition to a Canadian Forces General message (CANFORGEN) on postings. House hunting trips (HHT) will be postponed until at least 30 April 2020, the APS has been extended until 31 December 2020 to give members more time to execute a move, and those with posting dates in July or August will have more flexibility to push their date later in the year as required. If you have already conducted an HHT and secured accommodations in your new location, expect that your posting will go forward as planned as it is already 'underway'. CANFORGEN 049 gives modified guidance for members in this situation. For those who have received a posting message but not conducted an HHT, pause your efforts, make no additional financial commitments and wait for further direction.

At 4 Wing we have implemented a tool for tracking members who had planned to move as part of this APS and supervisors will be reaching out to members to discuss their individual concerns in the near future. Please be patient and if you have special circumstances or a significant issue bring it to your chain of command as soon as possible.

**3. My family is posted outside of Canada this summer. Should I continue my screening?**

Yes, continue with your screening. Services may be modified but will be available to you either by email or phone, or through appointment booking. Follow the same guidance about not making financial commitments until there is further direction.

**4. I am posted this year, I have a posting message, and I've listed my house. What should I do?**

If your house is listed I do not recommend that you take it off the market. The Cold Lake market is challenging enough without an interruption to your listing. That said I would ask that you be prepared to seek an update and clarification from your chain of command before making any kind of financial commitment such as accepting an offer. Many members have exceptional cases that are being considered individually and we are ensuring that decisions are made as quickly as possible to relieve as much stress and anxiety from members and their families. I know an APS can be a very stressful time for families with uncertainty and worry about relocating, and COVID-19 has brought up some unique challenges. Please communicate your unique needs to the chain of command and we will do our best for your situation.

**5. I want to go to Edmonton for the weekend to do some shopping. Can I go?**

The short answer is no. Non-duty travel outside of the local Cold Lake area (50 km from the City) is limited to essential reasons such as medical appointments, compassionate situations, or approved duty. If you believe you have a justifiable reason to travel beyond 50 km from Cold Lake, submit a leave pass using a standard CF100 form or email through your supervisory chain. Considerations will be made on an individual basis.

**6. My grandmother just passed away and I want to go to the funeral in Ontario. Can I go?**

During the COVID-19 outbreak, members may experience situations in their personal lives which require special consideration. Compassionate leave is available but travel outside of the 300 km limit must be authorized by Ottawa. This does not mean it will not be approved, but consider that getting the approval may take several days.

When considering travel, even for compassionate reasons, please think about the safest and most effective means of getting there (commercial air travel versus driving yourself), the limitations in place about social gatherings and if there are other options for your involvement (video conferencing), and the likelihood of you being ordered to self-isolate upon your arrival at your destination and return to Cold Lake. We are not trying to deter people from compassionate travel, but the health and safety of our members and the community must remain our priority. Recognizing travel restrictions can place a particular strain on members and their families, especially if your family is in another province, we continue to encourage everyone to seek mental health support.

For CAF members seeking mental health services, please call 22 Canadian Forces Health Services Centre (780-840-8000 ext. 8707), the 4 Wing Duty Chaplain (780-840-8000 ext. 8595), or (after hours) call the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Plan (CFMAP) at 1-800-268-7708. For family members seeking mental health services, please call CFMAP at 1-800-268-7708 or the Family Information Line at 1-800-866-4546.

**7. Can I accumulate leave since I was forced to go into self-isolation after my deployment to the US and could not take my leave as planned?**

The CDS stated in a letter on March 27<sup>th</sup> that he recognized many people had experienced disruption to their leave. Some of these disruptions were unfortunate and unlucky, but 4 Wing aimed to ensure members were treated reasonably and fairly. Note that any time you spent in self-isolation was duty time and you were expected to be either working remotely or, if you had annual leave remaining, using your leave. If during your period of self-isolation you were deemed essential by your Commanding Officer, and denied from using your leave due to operationally imperative reasons, this meets the criteria for accumulating leave. There is not likely going to be a perfect solution and we need to look at each case individually, but the units and Wing have been committed to finding the best possible options for our members.

**8. My spouse just lost his civilian job and we're running low on money. What is 4 Wing doing about my situation?**

There are a number of programs available to military members through [SISIP](#) to provide financial assistance for members experiencing financial hardship. The SISIP offices remain open on modified hours of 1000-1400 Monday to Friday, with restrictions of two clients at a time in the office. There is a [Support our Troops](#) program in place specific to COVID-19 relief. [Cold Lake City Council](#) has also offered a number of relief programs including deferment of property tax payments and utility bills until June 2020 without interest or penalties.

Lastly, if you and your family are finding yourself close to or in financial distress, please contact your chain of command. We cannot provide help if we don't know the issues.

**9. Why haven't you closed the parks on base?**

Following the guidance of Alberta Health Services and the City of Cold Lake, 4 Wing intends to remain consistent with the City in our decision to open or close our parks and playgrounds. At this time although we have not explicitly closed the parks and playgrounds on base, we nonetheless discourage their use, ask our residents to respect social distancing, and supervise children at all times. It is important to note that as of March 27<sup>th</sup>, Alberta closed all facilities (washrooms, play structures and buildings) and vehicle access to Provincial parks. Additional information about Alberta Environment and Parks can be found at their [FAQ](#) page.

#### **10. What are you doing about child care? Will MFRCS be open again soon?**

The MFRCS daycare is licenced by the Province of Alberta and was ordered to be closed, along with schools and other childcare facilities on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. There is no planned date for the resumption of services for the general public. In the event that there was a recall of military members for any operation, consideration would be given to ensure individuals were not burdened by a lack of childcare options. The Government of Alberta has assured 4 Wing that they consider military operations an essential service, and at the time that our need to re-establish child care is identified, the Wing will have the Province's support. At this time, the Wing Commander has directed that the Wing will accommodate military members who need to remain home due to child care needs vice pursuing the re-opening of MFRCS daycare services. We are in close discussions with the MFRCS Executive Director and we are re-assessing the situation regularly.

#### **11. I have more questions. Who should I contact?**

Your chain of command is always the best resource for questions! However, in anticipation of our next Facebook Live event (planned April 16<sup>th</sup> 2020) you can send your questions to Emily Reiman [emily.gillis@forces.gc.ca](mailto:emily.gillis@forces.gc.ca). We aim to answer all your questions but will try to deal with issues applicable to the larger community during the group discussion. Thank you for your interest and stay healthy!

Colonel Dave Moar  
4 Wing Commander, Cold Lake

#### **Helpful external links**

- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) info line or website: 1-833-784-4397, or at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- DND/CAF information page: [DND/CAF COVID-19 web site](https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/campaigns/covid-19.html)  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/campaigns/covid-19.html>
- Federal and Provincial link: <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Home/COVID-19-Government-Links.aspx>
- Alberta Government: [www.alberta.ca/COVID19](http://www.alberta.ca/COVID19)  
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/page16759.aspx>
- New self-isolation regulations: <https://www.alberta.ca/self-isolation.aspx>
- City of Cold Lake: <https://www.coldlake.com/content/covid19>
- Support Our Troops financial Government of Canada programs  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>
- The Courier CAF newspaper (facility and service info): <http://couriernews.ca/covid-19-updates/>

- CFMWS online PSP programs (i.e. Health Promotion classes):  
<https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/Health/Health-Promotion-Program/Health-Promotion-Webinars.aspx>
- Commander Military Personnel Command: Queries/issues related to APS, Releases and Compensation, and aspects related to COVID-19 decisions: [CMPARC.CRACPM@forces.gc.ca](mailto:CMPARC.CRACPM@forces.gc.ca) or call 1-833-445-1182.
- Conflict & Complaint Management Services (CCMS): [CCMSColdLake@forces.gc.ca](mailto:CCMSColdLake@forces.gc.ca)