



## FLAG VOICE #558

### COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination for Military Personnel – Update #1

08 September 2021

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Colleagues, yesterday, Acting DCMS released the Commandant-approved ALCOAST 315/21 “MANDATING COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR MILITARY MEMBERS – UPDATE 1.” This ALCOAST provides additional guidance beyond the initial communications on mandatory vaccination in ALCOAST 305/21 and my Flag Voice #557. Please consider those communications as the “Warning Order” for mandatory vaccination. Now, we have reached the “Operation Order” stage of mandatory vaccination and your leadership is vital to the successful implementation of this direction for the readiness of our Service to meet mission and protect the whole force and our loved ones.

In this ALCOAST, there is specific language that establishes this vaccination requirement as a lawful order to military members and prescribes timelines and expectations for those who remain unvaccinated and those who may further violate this order in the future by failing to get fully vaccinated. Vaccinations for the Active Component and Ready Reserve should be scheduled as soon as practicable relative to operations, contingencies and drill schedules. This order is made with the full understanding of the uncertainty among unvaccinated members and possible challenges to morale.

It is with this understanding and our sworn duty as military leaders that we must exercise engaged leadership to ensure maximum vaccination with minimum impacts on retention and good order and discipline. This will require hard and honest conversations with the workforce; in-person engagements by leaders at all levels are necessary and expected – this is too important to assume it has been transmitted by an email or a message. I hope all of you will join me in engaging your appropriate subordinate commanders face-to-face in a cascading approach to this messaging. There remain senior officers and enlisted, as well as Commanding Officers, Officers in Charge, Medical Officers and others who have yet to personally receive the vaccine. These individuals are expected to lead by example; failure to do so makes them similarly subject to a variety of actions.

A full suite of tools is at your disposal to assist you with these conversations, and for you and our personnel to better understand medical exemptions and religious accommodations. First and foremost, your Medical Officers are standing by to answer any questions and discuss the medical efficacy of the vaccine. Next, your Chaplains are ready to assist members who have previously declined the vaccine on asserted religious grounds. It is critical we provide these engagements to help our personnel make informed decisions. Updated Internal Communications Bulletins, FAQs, and standard Administrative Remarks templates have been developed and promulgated. Additional medical guidance is forthcoming.

Soon Update #1 will be followed by #2, which will constitute the “Execute Order” for mandatory vaccination. It will establish administrative separation and disciplinary considerations; risk mitigation measures including limits on official travel and training; and next steps in documentation for members continuing to refuse the vaccine. Every one of us should seek to make it unnecessary to actually carry out the EXORD through impassioned leadership in the coming days. I will share this Flag Voice with MCPO-CG and further ask him to discuss with your Badges and Chiefs’ Messes. Thank you for your leadership in this critically important endeavor to safeguard the readiness of our total workforce.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric C. Jones".

Eric C. Jones  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Assistant Commandant for Human Resources