



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

MAR 13 2020

To the Women and Men of the United States Coast Guard,

During times of uncertainty throughout history, the Coast Guard has consistently risen to the challenge of protecting the American people and our way of life. As our Nation and the global community confront the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19), our Coast Guard continues to perform critical missions that protect our national interests, promote economic prosperity, and ensure public safety.

I realize, however, that while you selflessly serve as a member of our Mission Ready Total Workforce, you are also spouses, parents, sons and daughters, and members of your local communities. We all have people we care about, and a responsibility to maintain both our individual and family readiness. Amidst this backdrop of uncertainty, an important word that is foremost in my mind is “resiliency.” While the word has various definitions, I think of the following: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulty/challenge; toughness; elasticity, or the ability to bounce back. Through this challenging period, we must be resilient.

Your senior leadership team is committed to the operational readiness of the Service, and our ability to balance the health and safety concerns of our extraordinary workforce. While COVID-19 has global impact, it demands local actions. I am empowering commanders to tailor their approach to best meet mission needs while taking care of our members and their families/loved ones. This approach rightfully places great trust in the judgment of our leaders, and in their ability to govern with common sense. If you find that your ability to conform to normal work patterns is significantly impacted, communicate up your chain of command.

While this virus may be new, the Coast Guard’s skilled and practiced response to all threats is not. THIS IS WHAT WE DO. We surge our resources, we focus our efforts, we take care of each other, we adjust as conditions require, and above all we remain calm. Emergency management expertise and a disciplined approach to contingencies are part of our organizational DNA and will successfully navigate us through the uncertain days ahead.

Coast Guard leadership is working closely with CDC, DHS, and DOD leadership, and we have established a Coronavirus Coordination Team (CCT) at Coast Guard headquarters to think ahead of COVID-19 challenges, and address issues as they arise. Informed by the expertise of our Chief Medical Officer, the Deputy Commandants for Operations (DCO) and Mission Support (DCMS) will strive to keep you informed so that you can remain confident and calm while performing our critical work and tending to your personal circumstances. Rest assured, our policy and human resources experts are working hard to develop guidance on issues important to you such as leave, telework, TDY and PCS policies. It is your responsibility to stay alert and aware, and to be ready to adapt your work routine should the need arise. I recommend you visit the following website frequently for guidance and general information related to coronavirus efforts: <https://www.uscg.mil/Coronavirus/>.

While we don’t know how long the effects of COVID-19 will endure, I assure you that we will continue to maintain situational awareness and plan for potential impacts. The American public counts on us to remain “Always Ready” to defend our nation, safeguard our citizens, and facilitate our economy – just as we’ve done for nearly 230 years. This is why we serve!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl L. Schultz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karl L. Schultz
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard