



MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

3/27/2020

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER  
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Approval for Basic Allowance for Subsistence and Meals At No Cost Due to Unique  
and Unusual Circumstances Related To Coronavirus Disease 2019

References: (a) Presidential Proclamation 9994, "Declaring a National Emergency Concerning  
the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak," March 13, 2020  
(b) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Travel Restrictions for DoD Components  
in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019," March 11, 2020  
(c) Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Stop Movement for all Domestic  
Travel for DoD Components in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019," March  
13, 2020

In response to the continued spread of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the President and the Department of Defense have taken extraordinary measures. The President issued a proclamation declaring the spread of COVID-19 a national emergency (reference (a)), and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense have imposed significant travel restrictions, imposed stop movement for military members, and restricted leave (references (b) and (c)). Secretary Esper has also stated the Department has three priorities in responding to COVID-19: protecting our troops, their families and our personnel; safeguarding our national security missions; and supporting the administration's whole-of-government approach to addressing this national health emergency.

Within this context, I find that the pandemic resulting from the spread of COVID-19 constitutes a unique and unusual circumstance under section 402(f) of title 37, United States Code. As result of this finding and as an exception to policy (Department of Defense Directive 1418.05, "*Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) Policy*" of April 23, 2007), members of the armed forces (both officer and enlisted), who are not entitled to the meals portion of a per diem and who, in response to the spread of COVID-19, are restricted in their movements—for self-monitoring, to protect the health of our personnel and their families, or to assure essential mission function capability— and, as a result of such restriction of movements, are housed in Government quarters (unaccompanied or leased) and subsisted through Government-provided meals (from a Government/appropriated fund dining facility or a Government-contracted vendor), may be authorized by the Secretary concerned (to be delegated no lower than to commanders of installations, bases, stations, or ships), to receive those Government-provided meals without charge and also receive BAS at the applicable standard monthly rate without automatic deduction. This memo is effective immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded.

My point of contact is Commander Russ Mayer, who can be reached at (703) 695-9363 or at [Russell.D.Mayer.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Russell.D.Mayer.mil@mail.mil).

Virginia S. Penrod  
Acting

cc:  
Commandant of the Coast Guard