

Fort Carson Department of Public Health (FCPH) Technical Information Paper - COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Travel FAQ

Updated 24 July 2020



Purpose: This technical information paper (TIP) informs beneficiaries and stakeholders about screening and testing processes for COVID-19 on Fort Carson.

How does Fort Carson Test? *Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR)*

- **Process and Usage:** Evans Army Community Hospital (EACH) conducts tests in-house and through external laboratories. Samples are collected by a swab and positive results indicate current infection. False-positives are possible, but rare – if you test positive, you can say reliably that you have COVID-19.
- **Concerns:** Current estimates indicate a 10-30% false-negative rate for these tests. Therefore, a negative test result does not guarantee that there is no infection. A negative test also only provides a snapshot assessment of COVID-19 status, as illness may remain undetectable in the very early stages.
- **Actions:** Fort Carson does not consider a negative test result as a mechanism for release from either Isolation or Quarantine.

When Does Fort Carson Test?

- **Symptomatic / Clinically-Indicated.** Follows assessment for COVID-19 symptoms by clinical personnel. Results in placement of the patient into Isolation, regardless of the lab result. Close contacts, as determined by FCPH, are placed on Quarantine.
- **Asymptomatic AND Directed for CENTCOM Deployment, Training (Specifically CTC Rotations), or Mission Essential Official Travel.** Must be pre-coordinated through 4ID G3 and EACH Operations in order to keep well and symptomatic people separate. If test results are positive, individuals go into Isolation. If test results are negative, individuals follow appropriate guidance from supporting directive(s).

When Does Fort Carson NOT Test?

- **Asymptomatic Close Contacts.** At this time, asymptomatic close contacts are not tested, unless they fall into one of the categories described above (Deployments, CTC Rotations, Mission-Essential Official Travel) or as identified by FCPH. **Individuals may NOT test out of Quarantine.**
- **Asymptomatic Population Surveillance.** Random community testing to determine disease prevalence.

What Types of COVID-19 Restrictions Exist?

- **Isolation.** Category for all COVID-19 positive cases and symptomatic negative cases. Eligible for release by medical personnel after 24 hours fever-free AND at least 10 days since symptom onset, with improvement in symptoms. A longer isolation period may be required for individuals with severe illness, who were hospitalized, or have another medical condition impacting their immune system. It is currently not recommended to apply a test-based strategy when releasing an individual from isolation.
- **Quarantine.** Category for well persons with exposure risks for COVID-19 (ex: close contacts and travel-related). The standard Quarantine time period is 14 days from last known/potential contact with a COVID-19 case, to include return from high-risk travel. Fort Carson currently maintains a local policy for 7 days of Quarantine after all commercial air travel. If you receive a negative test during the 14 days following an exposure, it does not eliminate the need to complete the full 14-day quarantine. A negative test only indicates that the person was unlikely to be infectious at the time the test was collected. **Individuals may NOT test out of Quarantine.**
- Restriction under deployment, training, or travel orders depends on the applicable guidance directing testing

How can leaders mitigate COVID-19 risk when personnel (DOD Civilians, Service-members, contractors) travel to Ft. Carson, and quarantine is required on arrival?

- Quarantine personnel prior to travel, recommend at least 7 days if from a high risk location.
- Have personnel wear an N95 mask while on commercial air flights. Ensure personnel take direct flights, with minimal stops and layovers.
- Assign arriving personnel in a manner that minimizes their contact with others:
 - Maintain physical distancing (>6 feet) among personnel at all times.
 - Allow work at non-typical duty hours, times, and locations.
 - Assign arrivals to cohort groups, reducing time spent in close contact with existing Ft. Carson personnel.
 - Clean work areas, including shared devices and all ‘high touch’ surfaces, thoroughly after use.
 - Prevent sharing of devices used near the face or mouth, like communication equipment or protective gear.
 - Direct arriving personnel to quarantine according to current travel guidelines.
- Perform twice daily symptom checks, one prior to arrival at the work site
- Consult with Ft. Carson Department of Public Health, (719) 526-9929, or via email at usarmy.carson.medcomeach.list.fcph@mail.mil, with questions regarding planning and implementation of the above mitigation measures, or to determine if the individual situation warrants testing.
- Commanders are strongly encouraged to apply the above measures to the greatest degree feasible, and must understand that risk mitigation does not eliminate the possibility that travelers will arrive and become ill.
- Sick travelers and their close contacts will be advised to Isolate or Quarantine according to applicable guidance or directives. ***Individuals may NOT test out of Quarantine.***

Points of Contact and Locations for Care

- Non-emergency clinical assessment: Centralized Screening and Testing Center (CSTC), located at the east side of EACH (M-F, 0700-1500); *after-hours go to the EACH Emergency Room*
- Emergency medical care: EACH Emergency Room, 24/7
- Units requiring testing support for deployment, training, or official travel must email their requests to 4ID G3 at usarmy.carson.4-id.list.4id-g3@mail.mil.
- General questions: Please call the COVID-19 Hotline at 719-524-2684.