



Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National President

Jeremy A. Lannan
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

March 16, 2020

Ms. Virginia S. Penrod
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
1500 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1500

Dear Ms. Penrod:

On behalf of the employees of the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), I write to ask that you take several precautionary steps to protect the health and welfare of Commissary employees and the customers they serve in the midst of this dangerous Coronavirus pandemic. Unnecessary and avoidable exposure to COVID-19 of active duty personnel and their families, veterans and others who utilize commissaries should be a priority of the highest order.

I am asking that you immediately implement the following safety precautions:

- Reduced retail hours and/or staggered hours of operation in stores to allow for proper cleaning throughout the day for the entire store. This will allow cleaning contractors adequate time to make sure that every effort has been made to minimize any accidental exposure to the virus. It will also allow employees to have adequate time to clean their own work areas and departments.
- Provision of adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all Commissary employees who, in the course of their duties, have direct contact with customers and suppliers.
- Paid leave for all Commissary employees who fit the criteria for self-quarantine or who have been ordered to quarantine by a certified medical professional. This paid leave would be in addition to all paid leave guaranteed to our members by law, regulation, or contract.
- Establishment of a labor-management task force so that there is an opportunity for constant communication between representatives of the workforce and store and department leadership. Our members want and need information about infections among patrons, workers and their family and social circles.



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We understand that these are extraordinary requests, but the Coronavirus pandemic is an extraordinary event. DeCA employees are proud of the important service we provide to the military, veterans, National Guard, and others with commissary privileges. We are more than willing to continue to provide these services in this time of national emergency, yet we want DeCA to provide the utmost protection to its workforce as it carries out the agency's mission.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter further with you. I can be reached through my assistant Ms. Wanda Manson at 202-639-6455 or Wanda.Manson@afge.org. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Everett B. Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Everett B. Kelley
National President

cc: Rear Admiral (Ret.) Robert J. Bianchi
Chief Executive Officer
Defense Commissary Agency
Fort Lee, Virginia