



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
CIVIL AIR PATROL  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112-6332

30 April 2020

Dear Civil Air Patrol Volunteers and Staff –

In a recent meeting, one of our national staff members made a comment that really resonated with me. Regarding our willingness to come out of our stay-at-home environments as restrictions are eased, she said that we would need to overcome fear with fact. Exactly! Fear is a normal part of our human condition, and the level of fear that some people are dealing with is amped up given that the current world of COVID-19 can seem to be a pretty scary place. How can we combat the fear we might be feeling?

Perhaps the best way to overcome fear is for us to arm ourselves with the facts. Facts are like a bright light dispelling the darkness of fear. For COVID-19 information, let's rely on reputable sources, such as the CDC, White House Task Force, and our state and city authorities. As restrictions ease, people who are in high-risk categories will be wise to continue to stay at home. People in hot spot areas will see restrictions ease more slowly. Social distancing will probably be with us for a while. Sound safeguards based on facts from reliable sources should serve us well.

Let's keep that in mind as we begin providing the means by which we can start easing the restrictions we are currently under in Civil Air Patrol. I will soon provide wing commanders with guidelines for how to determine the appropriate levels of restrictions in their wings, consistent with the restrictions being levied by their state and local authorities. I will have a team of experts who will review wing commander recommended courses of action.

The guidelines I will be providing mirror the three-phase approach developed by the CDC and White House Task Force on COVID-19. Thoughtfully prepared and thoughtfully executed, this fact-based approach can help us to set fear aside and slowly ease ourselves into a less restrictive position for performing our Civil Air Patrol duties.

You know that I like quotes. Here's one for us to consider as we gently set aside fear and move forward: "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." Nelson Mandela

Thank you. Be well. Be safe. Be strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Smith".

MARK E. SMITH  
Major General, CAP