



2020 Holiday Block Leave Frequently Asked Questions



What is Holiday Block Leave?

HBL, unique to Initial Military Training, marks the time when students and trainees depart schools and training centers in mid-December for the two-week holiday. Getting our Soldiers home as safely as possible will be our primary focus in the days leading up to the holiday season. The holidays will give our Soldiers and instructors a much-needed and well-deserved break from training to reconnect with loved-ones. Rest, maintaining healthy relationships and taking prudent steps to protect against COVID-19 are all essential to Soldier health this year.

Why is HBL so important?

Getting our Soldiers home as safely as possible is the primary focus of our training centers in the days leading up to the holiday season. The holidays will give our Soldiers and instructors a much-needed and well-deserved break from training to reconnect with loved-ones. Rest, maintaining healthy relationships and taking prudent steps to protect against COVID-19 are all essential to Soldier health this year.

How does the Army plan to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as Soldiers-in-training travel nationwide?

Soldiers-in-training have become adept in those techniques proven most successful in containing the spread of the virus: frequent handwashing, wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, and avoiding areas with high infection rates. As they return home, we expect Soldiers to continue these virus mitigation measures while back home. Prior to departing, units will brief Soldiers on their responsibilities to mitigate risk during HBL. Soldiers will wear face masks during travel and training centers will position drill sergeants at airports to support and monitor Soldiers.

How does the Army plan to screen Soldiers leaving and returning to the Training Centers?

To mitigate the COVID-19 risk, the Army will deliberately and methodically re-establish installation and training bubbles through deliberate, focused efforts and ensure accurate information flow to the lowest level to protect our force and in turn protect our mission. Each Army training center has developed comprehensive mitigation measures that utilize a variety of testing, screening, restriction of movement and quarantine protocols for Soldiers and cadre upon return from block leave.

Can I come on post to pick up my Soldier-in-training for leave? If so, where can I find information?

Yes, family members will have the opportunity to pick up their Soldiers-in-training. Arrangements will need to be made with the Soldiers in advance. Units remain the primary source of information for individual Soldier circumstances.

What do I need to access the installation on family pickup day?

To access the installation, all adults must present state or federally issued photo identification, such as a driver's license or passport, as security personnel conduct 100 percent ID checks at all gates of entry. In addition, those operating a vehicle are required to have in possession a current driver license, proof of current vehicle insurance and current vehicle registration. More information about visitor access is at: <https://home.army.mil/lee/index.php/access>.

Are Soldiers allowed to depart on HBL if they test positive for COVID?

Soldiers who screen positively for COVID-19 symptoms or exposure will remain in the training center. They will not travel for Holiday Block Leave. Commanders are taking proactive measures to ensure the physical and mental health of Soldiers who will be spending their holidays away from family and friends.



2020 Holiday Block Leave Frequently Asked Questions



Are there any restrictions on what Soldiers can and can't do while on leave?

Travel increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. The CDC strongly recommends everyone wear a mask on public transportation. This recommendation includes passengers and workers on airplanes, trains, ships, ferries, subways, taxis, and ride shares and at transportation hubs such as airports and stations. The simple fact is that gatherings of any kind where people can't maintain six feet (or more) of physical distance or where masks aren't worn, significantly increases the risk of COVID transmission. So, wash your hands often, wear masks and maintain physical distancing to prevent the spread.

What happens with the students on Fort Lee who don't take leave? What things are there to do?

FMWR Facilities will remain open such as the bowling alley, various other sports and other leisure activities are planned. We will publish more of this information in the coming weeks. FMWR activity schedules for the students will be provided through their chains of command during the HBL period. Religious worship schedules and contact info can be found at <https://home.army.mil/lee/index.php/RSO> or https://www.fortleetraveller.com/news/holiday-worship-schedule/article_18d891bc-3a30-11eb-bd3a-8ba61438fde3.html

What happens if someone gets COVID while on leave? Do they remain at home through the quarantine period? What if it extends past their return date?

If a trainee develops COVID symptoms while on HBL they should contact a medical provider for COVID screening as soon as possible. COVID diagnosed Soldiers will be quarantined and not authorized to travel. Should that happen, that SM should immediately notify their respective chain of command for further instructions.

Will all Soldiers be tested when they return from HBL?

All Soldiers returning from Holiday Block Leave will be screened. Those who have symptoms (or who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive) will be tested and/or quarantined and isolated. Every Soldier who returns from holiday block leave will also be on restriction of movement for 14 days.

Trainees returning from HBL will be under a restriction of movement – what does this mean?

Restriction of movement (ROM) is defined as limited movement of an individual or group to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Soldiers-in-training will be on a 14-day ROM upon arriving to Fort Leonard Wood from HBL if they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and no known close contact with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case. Soldiers-in-training who are placed on ROM can travel to and from their barracks/hotel/home/medical and place of duty (which includes their unit footprint/DFACs) only for the 14 days following their return.

What procedures exist to protect workers, such as DFAC and transportation employees, etc.?

Employees on post will continue to wear cloth face coverings, follow all cleaning and hygiene protocols, and maintain distance as much as possible. Trainees returning will be screened and evaluated using approved medical protocols to ensure their safety and the safety of our employees. All personnel entering facilities will still be required to wear face coverings, further protecting themselves and employees. Employees will continue to report to supervisors if they are not feeling well.