

## **\*UPDATE\* FAQ: COVID-19 Impacts to BMT and Technical Training**



The COVID-19 pandemic is a dynamic and rapidly evolving situation. The information below is current as of **1 May 2020**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges that require adaptability, but our team has taken an aggressive approach against this invisible enemy in order to protect our people and maintain mission readiness. Our Military Training Instructors and BMT cadre remain dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment, while ensuring the quality of training required to produce an Airman who is ready to join our ranks. Click [here](#) for a message from the 37th Training Wing Commander.

See below frequently asked questions for the 37th Training Wing, including Basic Military Training at the 737th Training Group and Technical Training at the 37th Training Group.

### **Additional resources**

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[DOD COVID-19 Response Page](#)

[Air Force COVID-19 Page](#)

[Joint Base San Antonio COVID-19 Response Page](#)

[City of San Antonio COVID-19 Page](#)

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# **\*UPDATE\* FAQ: COVID-19 Impacts to BMT and Technical Training**

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## *\*UPDATE\** FAQ: COVID-19 Impacts to BMT and Technical Training

### Key Terms

#### ***Restriction of Movement (ROM) vs Quarantine:***

Healthy individuals with no known exposure or illness, administratively placed on restriction of movement. This is to “prove their health” prior to introducing them into a previously healthy population. Separate living quarters and limiting their exposure to other populations is imposed. There is no medical requirement for temperature checking or other active surveillance. Members are to monitor their own health status and immediately notify their Chain of Command of any decline in their health.

Quarantine is a medical form of Restriction of Movement for healthy individuals who were exposed to contagious material (e.g. COVID-19). Quarantined individuals are separated from others until a sufficient incubation time from their potential exposure occurs (for COVID-19 14 days).

#### ***Persons-Under-Investigation:***

Individuals who have become symptomatic and are awaiting test results for COVID-19 (currently 24-48 hours). These members need to be isolated while awaiting test results.

#### ***Isolation:***

Isolation is a medical form of Restriction of Movement. COVID-19 positive individuals are isolated from other healthy individuals to prevent spread.

#### ***Screening vs Testing:***

Screening is a series of questions about recent travel, contact with people who have tested positive for COVID-19, and symptoms of illness you may have. Screenings help doctors determine if a patient should have further testing if they are sick.

Testing is a laboratory test to find out if a person has COVID-19. To be tested, a person will first be screened and likely tested for other infections and viruses. If a COVID-19 test is needed, a long stick will be used to swab the inside of the patient’s sinus area. The sample will then be sent for testing and the patient is notified of results as soon as possible.

## **\*UPDATE\* FAQ: COVID-19 Impacts to BMT and Technical Training**

### **General**

#### **Why is the military still sending people to BMT and technical training?**

Lieutenant General Webb, the AETC commander, declared Basic Military Training (BMT), Technical Training, and Flight Training as mission essential. Training in the “non” mission essential category is suspended. In order to meet Air Force requirements around the world, we must continue training. These are unprecedented times, with the situation evolving daily. Leaders at every level are making continuous assessments in order to protect the force’s health and safety.

#### **What if someone is feeling sick but doesn’t tell anyone for fear of getting held back in training?**

Our concern is for the greater good and health of our entire population – student, instructor, and all our support personnel from civil engineering to our food service teams in the dining facilities. To that end, we highly encourage all our Airmen to be mindful of the risk they could pose if they don’t self-report or seek medical attention as soon as possible. The 37th Training Wing and leadership at all levels highly encourages all members of the wing to self-report symptoms of COVID-19 to their chain of command as soon as possible.

Additionally, a drive through screen process has been established at Wilford Hall by the 59th Medical Wing, more information can be found at <https://www.37trw.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2119059/whasc-opens-drive-thru-covid-19-screening-testing/>.

#### **What arrangements are available for military training instructors (MTIs) during this time?**

We have canvassed our instructor corps (across BMT and technical training) and all members with concerns of family members exposure are offered on-base accommodations at no cost.

#### **What happens if there is a positive case?**

If someone tests positive, the medical community will conduct contact tracing and identify all areas which were impacted. The positive trainee is immediately placed in isolation status and will receive the required medical care. The other trainees who were exposed to that member will be placed in a 14-day quarantine and monitored for symptoms. The areas impacted will undergo extensive professional deep cleaning. Once individuals clear the incubation period without symptoms, they can return to training.

#### **Have staff and trainees been provided masks/face cloth coverings?**

The 37th Training Wing has procured masks for all mission essential staff and trainees/students to ensure safety guidelines are met and limit the spread of COVID-19.

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### **Basic Military Training, 737th Training Group**

#### **What quarantine/isolation measures are taking place for the BMT flights?**

BMT, in coordination with the 59th Medical Wing, screens all recruits upon arrival and monitors every member during their time at BMT for symptoms. BMT has increased cleaning measures across the BMT campus and adjusts those procedures as guidance evolves. For the first 14 days of training, all trainees are placed in Restriction-of-Movement status. While in ROM, Trainees are segregated from the larger trainee population, while continuing to practice physical distancing and wear face masks.

Throughout the entire training, schedules have been adjusted to reduce interaction with other flights and the layout of flights across the BMT campus have been reorganized to limit interaction between flights in different weeks of training. We continue working with our medical and support partners to ensure the health and safety of our Airmen.

\*also see (If there is a positive case, what will be the decontamination process of barracks/dormitories/common spaces/etc. and will others in the same squad be isolated?)

#### **Can I still send mail to my BMT trainee?**

Yes, trainees may receive standard mail (letter envelopes only). Mailing of face masks is permitted, however all BMT trainees will wear the standardized mask they are issued by BMT.

#### **Are BMT trainees able to call home to update their families?**

Yes, effective March 23, 2020, all trainees, regardless of week of training, are allowed to call home weekly to update family members on their status.

#### **How can I watch my loved one graduate from Basic Military Training?**

BMT graduation is live streamed on the USAF Basic Military Training Facebook page [@USAFBMT](#) and will be archived for later viewing on the 37th Training Wing YouTube Channel, [GatewayWing](#). Photos from each week's graduation ceremony will also be uploaded as an album to the [Gateway Wing Flickr](#) page.

#### **Why is BMT graduation now on Thursdays?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BMT graduation will take place on Thursday's to allow Airmen to transition to Technical Training on Friday, creating additional space on the BMT campus. This allows BMT to have additional cleaning time for the dormitories.

#### **Is there still an Airman's Coin Ceremony?**

The coining ceremony is a significant moment for each Airmen and BMT flights are celebrating this accomplishment in separate flight ceremonies. At this time, BMT coining ceremonies are

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conducted individually within each squadron and are not live streamed to the public. However, you can watch the BMT graduation ceremony, live, on the USAF Basic Military Training Facebook page [@USAFBMT](#).

### **How has BMT changed to accommodate shortening to 7.5 weeks?**

To prioritize safety while providing ready Airmen to fuel tomorrow's Air Force, BMT shortened the training timeline to 7.5 weeks from the standard 8.5 weeks. The revised schedule facilitates an extended training day, with some weekend activities, in order to compress the schedule. Every day, at BMT, MTIs are developing lethal and ready Airmen who fuel the Air and Space Force. To prioritize safety, we transitioned from large-classroom settings to small-classroom settings, when applicable.

Read more [here](#):

<https://www.37trw.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2143207/bmt-adapts-during-covid-19-adds-masks-shortens-pipeline/>

### **Will trainees still participate in BEAST (Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training) week?**

Yes, all trainees still participate in BEAST (Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training) week. Our training objectives were modified to ensure we mitigate any health and safety risk to our trainees.

### **Will those who are to return home after graduating BMT be able to do so (e.g. Air National Guard and Reserve recruits)?**

Yes, we will adhere to the established policies by the Air National Guard and Reserve for trainees to return home.

### **How do I find out when my Airman's flight graduates?**

The graduating training squadrons (TRS) and flights by date are:

7 May 2020: From 324 TRS: Flights 349 through 362

14 May 2020: From 737 TRSS: Flights 363 through 376

28 May 2020: From 326/333 TRS: Flights 377 through 389

\*The graduation schedule for each week and the live graduation timeframes are posted as an event on the [@USAFBMT](#) Facebook page and are later archived to the 37th Training Wing YouTube Channel [@GatewayWing](#).

### **When can the public expect to attend BMT Graduation again?**

As soon as it's deemed safe according to DoD guidance.

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### **During the 14-day ROM, what are recruits doing from a training perspective?**

In ROM status, trainees remain in a dedicated area of their squadron, while continuing to practice physical distancing and the wear of face masks. Trainees are still introduced to the basics of Air Force life in a BMT learning environment. Academics, drill, and physical training are modified but continue to occur. Instructional courses are adjusted to small class settings to accommodate physical distancing. Other aspects of training that takes place during ROM include: core value lessons, military bearing, customs and courtesies, Air Force heritage and history, chain of command, weapon familiarization, stress management, nutrition, and financial readiness.

### **Since spouses can no longer attend graduation and the new spouse orientation brief, how can I still get that information?**

Great question and welcome to the Air Force family! We are excited for you and your next chapter of your Air Force journey. Under normal circumstances, the key spouses from the 737th Training Group (TRG) hold a weekly briefing especially for fiancés and spouses of graduating airmen. As you know, the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic has altered our normal ceremonies. However, the 737th TRG Key Spouses want to welcome you to the Air Force family, answer your most frequently asked questions, and provide resources available to Air Force families. See more [here](#):

<https://www.37trw.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2160553/new-spouse-orientation-for-spouses-by-spouses/>

### **After BMT graduation will Airmen still transition to tech schools that are outside of JBSA?**

Currently, yes. The training pipeline is deemed mission essential, BMT graduates are transitioning to Technical Training schools both inside and outside of JBSA.

### **How will BMT graduates get to their technical training? How do you mitigate travel risks?**

BMT works with each Technical Training location to ship Airmen in a variety of transportation means. All departing Airmen receive a pre-departure health, morale, welfare and safety briefing from leadership to ensure the latest DoD travel protocols are being met. These briefings are modified as needed to mitigate risk as the situation changes.

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### **Technical Training, 37th Training Group**

#### **Why is Technical Training continuing during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

We understand the concerns being expressed for the safety of all those attending technical training at JBSA. At this time, the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) has deemed technical training to be mission essential and will continue on as planned. We take the safety and well-being of our personnel and trainees very seriously and will continue to re-evaluate as needed. Please visit the following link for more information on AETC mission essential training the following article: AETC issues official COVID-19 mission essential training determination, authorizes travel.

#### **Technical Training is continuing because it is considered mission essential, what is being done to keep them and those around them safe?**

All standard COVID-19 protective measures are taking place and being enforced, to include handwashing, cleaning routines, social distancing and wearing cloth face coverings when necessary. Commanders at every level are charged with maximizing health & safety during these unprecedented times.

#### **How can I watch my loved one graduate from Technical Training?**

At this time not all technical training graduations are streamed to the public. However, the 343rd Training Squadron does live stream the Security Forces Apprentice Course graduation on the 343 TRS Security Forces Academy Facebook. Regardless of family members being allowed to attend graduation, we are very proud of your Airman and what they have accomplished. We can assure you they will be celebrated within their units.

#### **Can Airmen who do not have orders and are in between BMT graduation and tech school go home to be with their families?**

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and to limit unnecessary exposure risks, the DoD has implemented a domestic travel suspension June 30, 2020, this includes leave for Airmen at BMT awaiting technical training. Please know your son's, daughter's, and every Airman's, health and safety is our top priority. For updates to JBSA Commander Guidance visit:

<https://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus/>

#### **Are Technical Training Airmen allowed to PCS to their first duty station?**

All technical training and specialized undergraduate pilot training graduates will continue to out-process and travel to their first duty station upon completion of training. Losing units are coordinating with the gaining units to work specific mitigation and travel issues as needed. Overseas travel will be coordinated in accordance with DoD guidelines.

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### **Will Technical Training students be allowed off base during tech training?**

That depends on the location of the Technical Training school. The owning installation commander will determine when it is safe for Technical Training Airmen to travel off base, based on the current health protection conditions and DoD guidance.

### **Will Technical Training make exceptions for families to visit their new Airmen in the next few weeks since they were not able to see them graduate?**

Once Airmen arrive at Technical Training, their new Squadrons will provide them an update on the ability to travel off base or have visitors come to visit based on the direction of the Installation commander and DoD guidance. This determination is based on the priority of keeping them safe and the completion of their technical training requirements. For JBSA updates visit: <https://www.jbsa.mil/coronavirus/>

### **Where is the best place for Airmen in Technical Training to seek out answers about his/her next assignment and how they'll get there?**

The best answer is to continue to discuss your individual situation with your instructor, supervisor and chain of command.

### **What measures are being taken if a Technical Training Airman is sick? Are they being tested for the coronavirus, placed into quarantine, etc.?**

As determined by medical professionals, Technical Training Airmen are being tested for COVID-19 if they are symptomatic. Once tested, the Airmen are placed in isolation until their test results are returned. During that time food and essentials are provided to our Airmen. Airmen are routinely checked on and have access to their personal items, including cell phones, so they can make contact with their family.

Questions/concerns? Visit: <https://www.jbsa.mil/Information/Feedback-Fridays/>