



With Pride & Distinction

Junior Officer Advisory Group

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Pride and Distinction while Teleworking

As an officer, you know that it is not uncommon for United States Public Health Service (USPHS) officers to be asked about the USPHS: what it is and what roles do USPHS officers play in advancing the public health of the nation? Although it has been a trying year for many, some good things have come as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of which is the attention it brought to the USPHS. This attention provided many opportunities for officers to showcase to the nation how we are America's health responders.

Since the Assistant Secretary of Health, US Surgeon General and US Vice President of the former administration were often seen on mainstream media early on in the pandemic, our service was jettisoned into the public eye. The pandemic supported an "All hands on deck" approach in terms of response and while this meant many officers would represent the USPHS by wearing their ODUs on physical deployments, many officers transitioned to working remotely as a result of social distancing recommendations. Officers on remote work status also have many opportunities to represent the service by displaying their uniforms on web-based platforms during meetings and video conferences. As remote work became more common during the pandemic (and for some, may even continue as the pandemic evolves), it is important to remember some basics as they relate to uniform wear and etiquette while working remotely.

- ◆ As an officer, one of the most important things while teleworking is to ensure you have a telework agreement in place. For specific requirements, reach out to your agency liaison.
- ◆ If you are on duty and will be visible on a video-based platform, wear a uniform that is appropriate for the call. A good rule of thumb is to wear

whatever uniform you would wear if you were attending this meeting in person.

- ◆ Wear the entire uniform, not just the top half. Most of you have probably seen a meme or internet video of a person who forgot they were on camera and stood up only to be nicely dressed from the waist up but are wearing their pajamas (or less...yikes!) from the waist down. Don't let that be you! Remember – you are representing the Corps!
- ◆ Unless you are speaking, always ensure your mic is on mute. Do not rely on the host to have everyone automatically muted. How many times have you been on a call and it has to be interrupted due to a hot mic? Not only is it disrespectful to the host/presenter, but it is embarrassing when you figure out it is you.
- ◆ Although most people are understanding that many people have been displaced from their normal work stations as a result of the pandemic, if at all possible, make arrangements to prevent family members and pets from making unexpected cameos during your call. Some web-based platforms even allow you to adjust the settings in order to eliminate background noises (e.g., barking dogs, screaming kids).
- ◆ Consider your background. If you are in a location with a questionable background, try and find an empty wall to use as a background. Some web-based platforms now have the option of using a virtual background. If using a virtual background, make sure it works with the color of your clothing as not to morph your image and make sure the background is appropriate for your setting.



Trivia

Q.1 My supervisor wants me to come into the office on my telework day—is this permitted?

Q.2 Does my supervisor have the final say on my telework request?

Q.1 Yes. An officer may be called to respond/report at any time, including while teleworking.

Q.2 Yes. The authority to approve/disapprove a telework request is at the discretion of the supervisor or program to which an officer is assigned.

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