

CNO Gilday Self-Quarantines as COVID-19 Precaution



CNO Adm. Mike Gilday (center), acting Navy Secretary James McPherson (right) and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith (left) visited Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois, on May 7 to observe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. Navy/Communication Specialist 1st Class Spencer Fling

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's top officer has self-quarantined himself after coming in contact with a family member who tested positive for COVID-19, the Defense Department announced.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday "had contact with a COVID-positive family member and, although testing negative, will be quarantining this week," U.S. Army Lt. Col. Chris Mitchell, a Defense Department spokesman, said on May 11.

Gilday is personally following guidance he issued to the Navy as a whole on May 6: "Each of us must continue to practice and follow all public health measures necessary to minimize risk to our force and our families. Take responsibility. Show courage in speaking up if you see shipmates falling short. We have obligations for operational readiness and stringent requirements for health protection measures."

Below are more excerpts from the CNO's May 6 message to the fleet:

"Each of us must continue to practice and follow all public health measures necessary to minimize risk to our force and our families."

Gilday, in May 6 guidance to the fleet

“As we continue to learn about this virus and how to mitigate its risk, the widespread public health measures you are actively practicing – physical distancing, face coverings, minimizing group events, frequent hand-washing, sound sanitation practices, a questioning attitude on how we are feeling – must be our new normal. We must harden our Navy by continuing to focus on the health and safety of our forces and our families. The health and safety of our Sailors and their families is, and must continue to be, our No. 1 priority. Fleet operations depend on it.

“As the forward deployed force of our country, we have a duty to ensure we are ready to respond. We cannot simply take a knee or keep everyone in port until this enemy is defeated. We are America’s away team. The uncertainty caused by COVID-19 makes our mission of protecting America at sea more important than ever. That is why the U.S. Navy continues to operate forward every day.”

“When we entered this pandemic, we quickly closed down services to minimize interactions and the spread of the disease. We will need to take a measured approach to opening up these services to prevent a recurrence of the disease.

“I expect local commanders to understand area conditions and to communicate prudent expectations and guidance up and down the chain of command. I trust our Sailors to follow these guidelines.”

Special Correspondent John M. Doyle contributed to this report.