



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissaries worldwide selling reusable, disposable protective masks

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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Note: To read this release online, go to the DeCA [website](http://www.commissaries.com).

FORT LEE, Va. – Commissaries worldwide are now selling reusable and disposable protective masks, the Defense Commissary Agency’s (DeCA) director of sales announced.

Two brands of masks, one reusable and the other disposable, became available to most stores worldwide in late June, said Tracie Russ, the agency’s director of sales. Commissaries in Hawaii are selling a reusable mask from a local supplier.

“The safety of our customers and employees is a top priority for the commissaries,” Russ said. “Providing these masks for purchase is one of many protective measures we’re taking to help reduce exposure to COVID-19.”

The following brands and types of masks are available for purchase in commissaries:

- **Hanes:** 10-pack, reusable, adult size, 3-ply 100-percent cotton, washable up to 20 times



- **Midwesttrading:** KN95 1-pack disposable mask and a 10-pack, 4-ply mask, fit adjustable, inner layer contains air filter
- **Puna Noni:** (available only in Hawaii commissaries), reusable, 3-ply cotton/poly shell, removable felt filter

“Commissaries are selling masks to meet our customers’ needs, especially during this pandemic,” said LaRue Smith, a category manager. “We don’t want our customers taking an extra shopping trip for something they can get in their commissary and at a lower price.

“There is an expectation that the supplies will be plentiful in the future,” Smith said, “but at this time we ask our customers to limit their purchase to only what they will need so that the supply will be available for all of our customers.”

Since April 6, commissaries have required some form of face covering for its store employees to comply with the April 5 Department of Defense directive mandating that standard for anyone entering military facilities. By April 10, commissaries expanded the face covering requirement to include customers or anyone else entering a commissary. The DeCA guidance does not supersede the existing installation policies. It applies to all agency stores and other facilities worldwide where no local directive has yet been issued.

Since the start of the outbreak, most retail stores experienced a run on anything resembling personal protective gear (PPE). In those days, the closest that agency stores had for PPE were disposable gloves. Through May, glove sales increased by nearly 32 percent. In addition to sales of masks, commissaries have also increased its volume of disposable gloves and hand sanitizers.

Army Lt. Col. Angela Parham, DeCA’s director of health and safety, reminds customers that wearing PPE is only one part of the preventive measures required to help combat COVID-19.

“DOD’s face covering mandate aligns with CDC guidance to help prevent asymptomatic people, who may not know they’re infected, from spreading the virus to others,” Parham said. “Even when you wear a mask or other face covering, it is still important to practice good hand hygiene, social distancing and refrain from touching your face.”

Commissary customers should continue to refer to the [federal government’s response to coronavirus, COVID-19](#) website and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Coronavirus site](#) for updates and guidance regarding this virus. Updates related to the commissaries can be found on DeCA’s [Coronavirus page](#).

-DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Commissaries provide a military benefit, saving authorized patrons thousands of dollars annually on their purchases compared to similar products at commercial retailers. The discounted prices include a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*

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