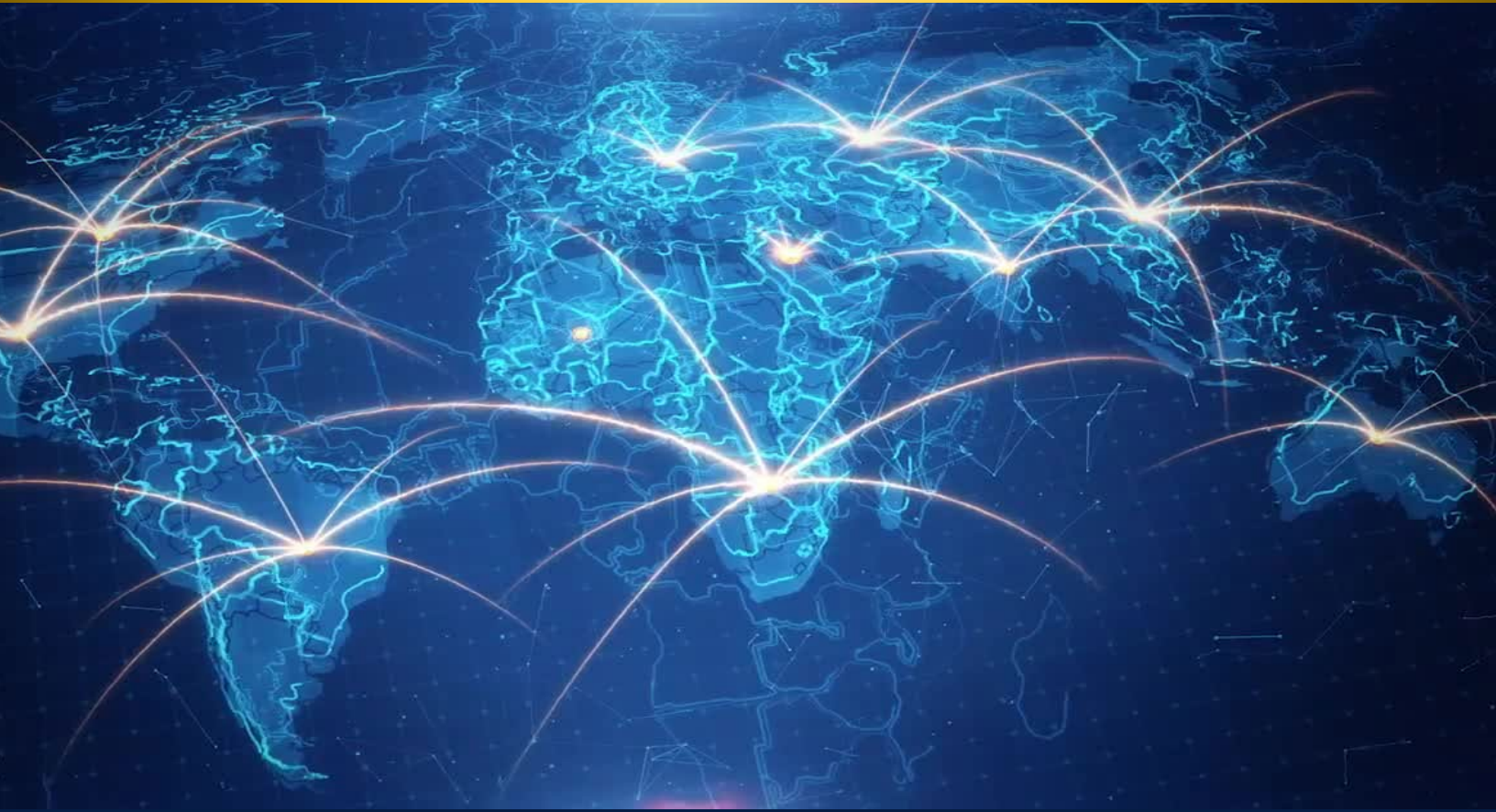




# Navy Foreign Area Officer **Overseas Life Handbook**



Summer 2025

Edition #2

## **The Navy Foreign Area Officer Overseas Life Handbook 2nd Edition, Summer 2025**

The Navy FAO Community Leadership and Management Team compiled this Overseas Life Handbook from multiple U.S. DOD, DoS, and other sources. This guide is meant as an initial reference for FAOs and their families to thrive in a career of overseas service.

**All information in this handbook is UNCLASSIFIED**

This handbook is a guide – IT IS NOT A POLICY DOCUMENT.  
It is also a snapshot – references are not static.  
The prudent FAO will check the current publications.

DISCLAIMER: This publication provides an overview of overseas life from a Navy perspective. It should not be construed as legal, tax, or investment advice. Consult a professional when needed. Some chapters contain information that changes rapidly and could be time sensitive. Always check the current regulations before taking actions that could have legal or financial consequences. The U.S. Government does not endorse any commercial products or services. Any listings found in this publication are for informational purposes only and in no way constitute an endorsement, expressed or implied, by the Department of Defense or Navy. Links to websites outside the U.S. federal government or the use of trade, firm, or corporation names are for the convenience of the user and do not constitute an official endorsement or approval of any private sector product, service, website, or privacy policy.

### **We want to thank the following for their help and contributions:**

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This handbook relies on feedback and is only as effective as our Community makes it. Please submit recommendations, additions, updates, or concerns to the Navy FAO Policy Advisor (see kneeboard card).

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# Introduction

*The Navy Foreign Area Officer Community created the Navy FAO Overseas Life Handbook as an introductory reference for Navy FAOs and their families moving overseas. This handbook borrows heavily from the Joint Military Attaché School, Defense Security Cooperation University, The State Department's Foreign Affairs Manual and other training products, Military OneSource, Navy Family Readiness, and the collective experience of senior FAOs and their families to provide initial advice and resources for navigating life overseas. This handbook expands information from other sources and informs FAOs going to Embassy AND Staff assignments. As Navy FAOs, our experiences with overseas life are unique and stand apart from the fleet and our colleagues from other parts of the US Government.*

**Note:** This handbook was created by Navy Foreign Area Officers, primarily for the Foreign Area Officer Community. However, much of the information will be valuable to sailors and families of any Navy community faced with an overseas move.

Navy FAOs' mission, and our value to the Navy and the joint force require us to be deployed forward, often beyond the support structures we are used to at fleet or Department of Defense (DoD) concentration areas. Life overseas can be a challenge, but some find life overseas without the usual DoD support mechanisms daunting. This handbook aims to provide resources to ease that transition.

Families are integral to what we do, and they are the building blocks of support for our community. Family health is community health, therefore family preparation for life overseas is **essential** to mission accomplishment, and key to helping FAOs thrive in new and often challenging environments.

There are numerous resources and references to assist you, whether you go overseas with a family or without. We encourage you to become familiar with the resources identified in this guide. There are many ways to thrive overseas. Your needs will evolve over the course of your career, and you will likely be called to provide guidance to people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life.

We have combined references and resources from the Department of Defense and the Department of State to provide as comprehensive a picture as we can. Things to keep in mind:

- **You represent the U.S. Navy and the United States.** The FAO mission requires iron clad ethics and morals, hold yourself to the highest ethical standards, and take fierce pride in being above reproach. The farther you serve from the Fleet concentration areas, the more you **are** The Navy to everyone you meet. Conduct yourself to be above reproach.
- **Navy Core Values are FAO core values.** Our values guide our behavior and are immutable whether you are working overseas or with people from a different culture. You will be exposed to people, cultures, and situations that may be different than what you are used to--perhaps even things you disagree with. Remember: respect is the minimum. We treat **all** people with respect regardless of whether they are Navy, US military, interagency partners, or foreign citizens.
- **Senior FAO's views on life and society may be different than what you have experienced to this point in your career.** Know the instructions and references but realize there may be alternative views on living that are well within the moral, legal, and ethical center of our world.

# Chapter 1: FAO Community Resources

While FAOs serve in hundreds of billets in many nations around the globe, a FAO is never truly alone when stationed overseas. There are multiple Community Resources that FAOs can utilize to stay connected on a day-to-day basis, and to reach out to in case of questions, or emergencies.

## Navy FAO Community Leadership Management Team (CLMT)

The CLMT consists of 10 senior FAOs who report to the Community Leader, including the FAO Chief of Staff (COS), Officer Community Manager, Junior and Senior Detailers, and FAO Policy Advisor. The CLMT members recommend, guide and oversee actions and policies that foster community and individual professional excellence and leadership development. The CLMT contact info can be found on the [Navy FAO APAN](#) or the last page of each month's FAO Dispatch newsletter (FAO Kneeboard Card).

## Council of Captains Regional and Alternate Leads

The Council of Captains (CoC) is a separate body from the CLMT but coordinates closely with the CLMT to advance community interests. The CoC serves as a mechanism for designated senior FAO Captains to accomplish the key mentorship and communication tasks.

## Commander's Critical Information Reports (CCIRs)

FAO Community CCIRs are standardized to run in parallel with a FAO's reporting chain of command, and ensure the Community Leader, COS, and Council of Captains reps are aware of issues impacting global FAOs. The most current CCIR reporting requirements are found on the [Navy FAO APAN](#) or the last page of each month's FAO Dispatch newsletter (FAO Kneeboard Card).

## FAO Community Family Ombudsmen

The US Navy's FAO Community achieves higher mission readiness as global strategic operators via improved family readiness, enabled by the FAO Community Ombudsman Program. A strong FAO Community Ombudsman Program helps ensure FAO families have the information necessary to meet the unique and ever-evolving challenges of working at duty stations not co-located with traditional military infrastructure, relocations to distant or isolated duty stations, unaccompanied or hardship tours, and accumulated stress that impacts FAOs and families. The FAO Community Ombudsman Program is based on the Navy Family Ombudsman Program but adapted to the unique and globally-dispersed structure. Ombudsmen serve both Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component FAOs, FAOs with dependents, and FAOs without dependents (Ombudsman can assist with issues involving extended families, chosen families, pets, or other situational-dependent issues). The Ombudsman Program is a distinct resource for FAOs and FAO families but does not preclude or replace standard communications between FAOs, the Council of Captains (COC), the Community Leadership Management Team (CLMT) formal communications. The Community Leader appoints six volunteer Ombudsmen for each FAO region (plus CONUS) who work with a regional Council of Captains representative to advocate for FAOs and families.



## Chapter 2: Where We Serve

Navy FAOs should expect to serve the majority of their assignments overseas. Most of these overseas assignments will be within the assigned region, but cross-region assignments will happen in line with minor regions and the needs of the Navy.

### Embassy and State Department (DoS) Introduction

Most FAOs will spend at least one tour working as an Attaché, a Security Cooperation Officer, or a similar position on a Country Team in an American Embassy abroad. The Department of State (DoS, sometimes the State Department, or “State”) is the Department within the Executive Branch that exists to assist the President, through the Secretary of State, in formulating and executing foreign policy.

A U.S. mission exists to manage U.S. diplomatic and consular activities within a country. A “mission” may consist of an embassy, consulate general, consulates, and other offices. Where the United States does not have full diplomatic relations with a nation, it may be represented by a liaison office or interests’ section. The United States maintains more than 270 embassies, consulates general, consulates, and special missions in over 190 countries.

**Note:** Every U.S. Embassy or Consulate is different. There is an apocryphal DoD saying: “if you’ve seen one Embassy then you’ve seen one Embassy.” Your experience dealing with or working in an Embassy will undoubtedly be different than is described here. The structural information should be valid most places but your experience will certainly vary with size of diplomatic mission, size of DoD mission, and Area of Responsibility (AOR).

The U.S. embassy is the basic unit for conducting U.S. diplomacy overseas. The chief of mission (CoM, usually an ambassador) personally represents the President of the United States, while reporting to and receiving instructions through the Secretary of State. The CoM directs all U.S. programs and personnel, except for those under the command of a U.S. area military commander, under the authority of another U.S. diplomatic post, or detailed to an international organization. The CoM thus carries ultimate responsibility for executing U.S. foreign policy goals and coordinating and managing all U.S. government functions in the host country.<sup>1</sup> In short, no U.S. activities should happen in a foreign nation without the ambassador’s awareness and approval.

### The Embassy Staff and Sections

At an embassy, if the ambassador leaves post even temporarily, the person acting in the ambassador’s place is called the Chargé d’Affaires (CdA) or “chargé.” At consulates and consulates general, the consul or consul general is in charge and reports to the ambassador at the embassy in country. Heads of consulates are also known as principal officers.

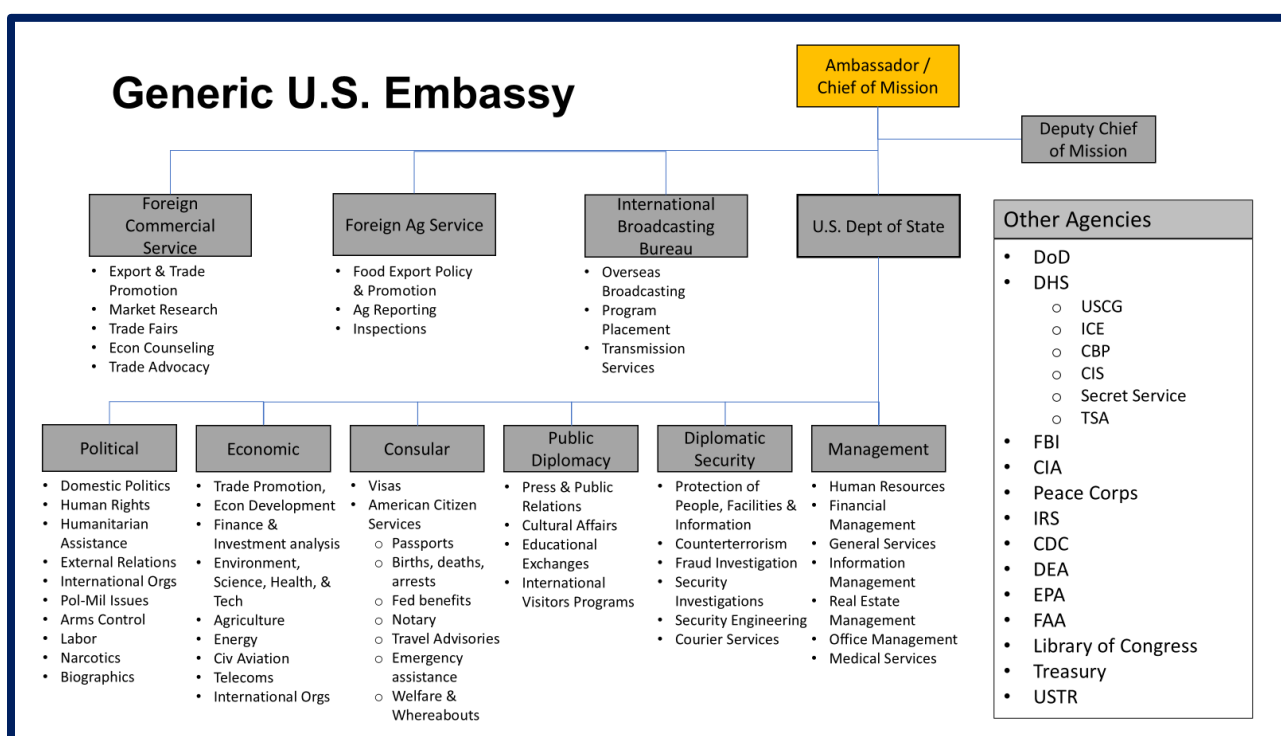
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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt From: United States of America Department of State - Foreign Service Institute. “FSI Transition Center - Foreign Service Assignment Notebook Revised 2022.” Apple Books.



Ambassadors manage the work of a mission through the country team, which is made up of the heads of each Department of State section and representatives of all other agencies. The country team meets regularly to discuss local conditions and mission activities, review management and security issues, coordinate programs, and plan and evaluate progress on meeting mission goals.

**The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM)** is the second most senior person in the mission. The DCM has primary responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the mission and coordination between the various agencies at post under CoM authority.



2

Every U.S. embassy and diplomatic post is different. And even the same post changes over time. The following paragraphs aim to describe the most common embassy sections in a generic manner. The number of people assigned to an embassy or consulate usually depends on the size of the foreign country and depth and breadth of U.S. bilateral relations with that country. In addition to the head(s) of the mission, staff includes employees from the four foreign affairs agencies - the Department of State, Agency for International Development, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture - and other U.S. government agencies. The largest group of employees by far consists of Locally Employed (LE) Staff hired within the country. U.S. missions employ eligible family members (EFMs) of foreign affairs

**Note:** EFM is a false cognate acronym between the State and Defense Departments. In DoS parlance, an EFM is an Eligible Family Member. In the DOD an EFM usually refers to an Exceptional Family Member, someone in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) related to educational or medical needs. DoS uses “EFM” to mean the same thing that DoD means when we say “dependent.”

<sup>2</sup> Based on: Dorman, Shawn, Ed.; *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*; Foreign Service Books; Washington, DC; 2011; p8.

agency employees, U.S. citizens living in the host country, and citizens of other countries, known as third country nationals. Every mission includes at least one U.S. Citizen employee from the Department of State.

**Management Section:** The management section provides the support that allows the other sections and agencies to do their jobs. Management handles areas such as:

- Financial management
- Information management/Diplomatic Technology (DT), including radio, mail services, telephone, and computers
- General services (buildings, maintenance, purchasing, supplies, customs and shipping, and transportation)
- Health and medical provisions
- Customer Service Center (CSC) handles things like cell phones, home internet, etc.
- Community issues, often through the community liaison office (CLO) coordinator

*You will work with management on an almost daily basis – especially when you first arrive. Management will handle your housing, household goods (household effects to DoS) your office equipment, and all the things that you use in the mission. Management will also have the labor, know-how, and connections that you will need to accomplish your mission. Your operations coordinator, or 'ops support staff's work through the management section to ensure your office pays its bills and keeps things running.*

**Consular Section:** The consular section provides services and assistance to U.S. citizens living in or visiting the country. American Citizen Services are a major mission of the Consular section and include passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA), deaths, and marriages of U.S. citizens, visiting U.S. citizens who have been arrested, assisting in emergencies such as deaths or natural disasters, and providing U.S. voting and tax information. 'Consular' also issues visas to citizens of other countries who want to enter the United States for work, tourism, or immigration.

**Note:** The process to issue visas for foreign citizens to visit the US is tightly controlled. You will be briefed on your (very limited) role in the 'visa referral' process when you arrive at post.

*FAOs will work with Consular regularly, ensuring host nation international military students and senior leaders are able to travel to the United States for training and events. They will also be your first call for American Citizen Service help when you have American teams who need passport or departure help.*

**Political and Economic (POL/ECON) Sections:** These sections analyze political, social, and economic developments within the host country and region. Employees working in these sections meet with the host government, political parties, non-governmental organizations, etc. They make recommendations on foreign policy, and work with foreign government officials to promote U.S. interests. Some posts will have a Foreign Service Officer specifically assigned as the Political-Military Affairs Officer.

*FAOs will work with the Political section routinely and should be hand in hand with them concerning security cooperation efforts, political and local reporting, and overall awareness of events and trends in country. Your relationships with these officers drive how effectively DoD and DoS programs support each other.*

**Public Diplomacy (PD) Section:** The section administers cultural and educational exchange programs, manages information research centers, and serves as the official media contact point, handling all inquiries from the local news media.

*FAOs should maintain good connections with the public affairs section to ensure that Mission, Combatant Command, and fleet messaging efforts are aligned and amplify each other. In some posts, the PD Section's capacity is heavily consumed with exchange programs. If getting your programs into the local press is important, a good relationship here is key. Combatant Command and Fleet Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) generally rely on Embassy PD shops for in-country messaging.*

**Security Section:** Typically known as the Regional Security Office (RSO), the security section develops and maintains systems to provide a safe, secure workplace for everyone at the mission and safe, secure homes for U.S. staff and their family members. This section provides access controls such as guards, security for visiting dignitaries, and security information to U.S. businesses situated in the country. The RSO will liaise with local law enforcement and will manage all law Enforcement interactions between local police and Mission personnel. The security section also liaises with local schools attended by U.S. mission children. The Marine security guard detachment plays an important role in protecting many U.S. missions.

**Note:** DoD personnel assigned to US diplomatic missions are usually under Chief of Mission Force Protection authority – not that of the Geographic Combatant Commander. This means you must follow the RSO's security guidance and requirements. Visitors from Headquarters typically fall under the Geographic Combatant Commander's FP authority. This is covered by the 1997 DoD DoS Universal MOU

*FAOs will routinely coordinate with the Regional Security Office for movements, security for Distinguished Visitor (DV) events, and threat awareness in the host nation. The RSO generally has the lead for coordination with local law enforcement agencies. DoD programs often overlap here. Some Embassies have a Force Protection Detachment (possibly Naval Criminal Investigative Service/NCIS) that works closely with the RSO.*

**DOD at an Embassy:** Our Navy FAOs and their families will fall under the responsibility of the Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT). The SDO/DATT is the direct representative of the Secretary of Defense and the senior diplomatically accredited military officer assigned to a U.S. diplomatic mission. The SDO/DATT acts as the principal military advisor to the CoM on defense issues and defense aspects of national security issues. All DoD elements under COM authority are under the coordinating authority of the SDO/DATT, except the Marine security guard detachment and other like units, and has coordinating authority for all DoD activities in the country. U.S. military under combatant command authority are required to coordinate their bilateral activities in the host country with the SDO.

The SDO will usually have a defense attaché office (DAO) and security cooperation organization (SCO) to engage with the host country and any other countries for which they are regionally accredited and responsible. The generic term Security Cooperation Organization (SCO) encompasses all DoD elements, regardless of actual title, located in a foreign country to carry out security cooperation and security assistance management functions. The SCO also manages DoD Security Cooperation (SC) programs under the guidance of the Combatant Command (CCMD). Servicemembers assigned to a combatant command or component command, e.g. Fleet Liaison Officers, Special Operations Forces Liaison Elements, Civil Affairs Teams, etc., are also responsible to the SDO/DATT and will coordinate with the DAO or SCO.

The Marine Security Guard (MSG) DOES NOT report to the SDO/DATT. They are supervised by the Embassy Regional Security Officer (RSO). Though a direct chain of command relationship does not exist, MSGs will still look to the DOD Senior NCOs and Officers in the Embassy for advice, mentorship, and leadership.

U.S. Navy Seabees support the DoS and the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) by assisting security engineer officers with the installation and maintenance of specialized equipment, including closed-circuit tv cameras, alarm systems, electromagnetic doors, vehicle barriers, and other special equipment in sensitive areas of U.S. embassies. Seabees are supervised by the Embassy Engineering Service Officer but enjoy being included in DoD events when appropriate.

## DoS Support Before Departure and at Mission

The embassy and State Department provide a robust complementary support network for families and individuals serving abroad. The DoS places specific emphasis on family resiliency and spouse employment. Some of the best resources you can access from DoS are the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) and Community Liaison Officer (CLO) at post.

**Note:** OBC materials reference Department of State perspective and practices. Specific policies, authorities, and funding mechanisms differ from DOD. Please reach out to your service representative for service-specific information.

**Overseas Briefing Center:** Once you have official orders to a U.S. Embassy placing you under CoM authority, the [Overseas Briefing Center \(OBC\)](#) is available to assist U.S. Government employees and their family members with preparation for an assignment to a U.S. Mission abroad. To support entry into the Foreign Affairs community, transitions from post to post, and a return home, the OBC creates, curates, and collects resources for successful transitions.

**The Community Liaison Office (CLO):** At a U.S. Mission, the [CLO](#) provides morale-enhancing support to U.S. government employees and family members of all agencies who are assigned to U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. The CLO is primarily focused on eight areas of responsibility: providing community liaison, crisis management and support services, education liaison, employment liaison, events planning, guidance and referral, information, and resource management, welcoming and orientation. CLOs serve as community advocates for employees and family members. They advise post management on quality-of-life issues, recommend solutions and family-friendly post policies, and assist in crises.

The CLO coordinator at post is one of the first contacts you should make when you receive your new assignment—well before you arrive at post. The CLO is your “eyes and ears on the ground,” and is best equipped to give you post-specific and up-to-date information you need to know before you pack your bags. The CLO will provide pre-arrival information, a sponsorship and orientation program, and assistance with settling in after you arrive at post. You can expect to get relevant information about life at post, school options, the employment situation for family members, housing, and more. At most posts, you are assigned a social sponsor shortly before arrival. The social sponsor will be able to help you navigate your arrival logistics; answer questions about your neighborhood, schools, shopping, and points of interest; and help you settle into your new community.

**Note:** The CLO position requires a security clearance; many spouses serve as CLOs and gain a federal security clearance. This clearance can be maintained between diplomatic assignments through membership in the Family Reserve Corps; see Chapter 8 for more information.

Community liaison office coordinators (CLOs) and assistant CLOs are positions that are filled by eligible family members (EFMs) of employees serving at post and are advertised through a vacancy announcement when a position becomes available. Get to know your CLO!

**Note:** All CLO emails follow the same format [CLOPostName@state.gov](mailto:CLOPostName@state.gov); example: U.S. Embassy Montevideo, Uruguay would be [CLOMontevideo@state.gov](mailto:CLOMontevideo@state.gov).

## Training Opportunities

Training for overseas assignments will be based on the type of assignment and the officer’s previous training and career path. However, it may typically include some combination of language training and job-specific training.

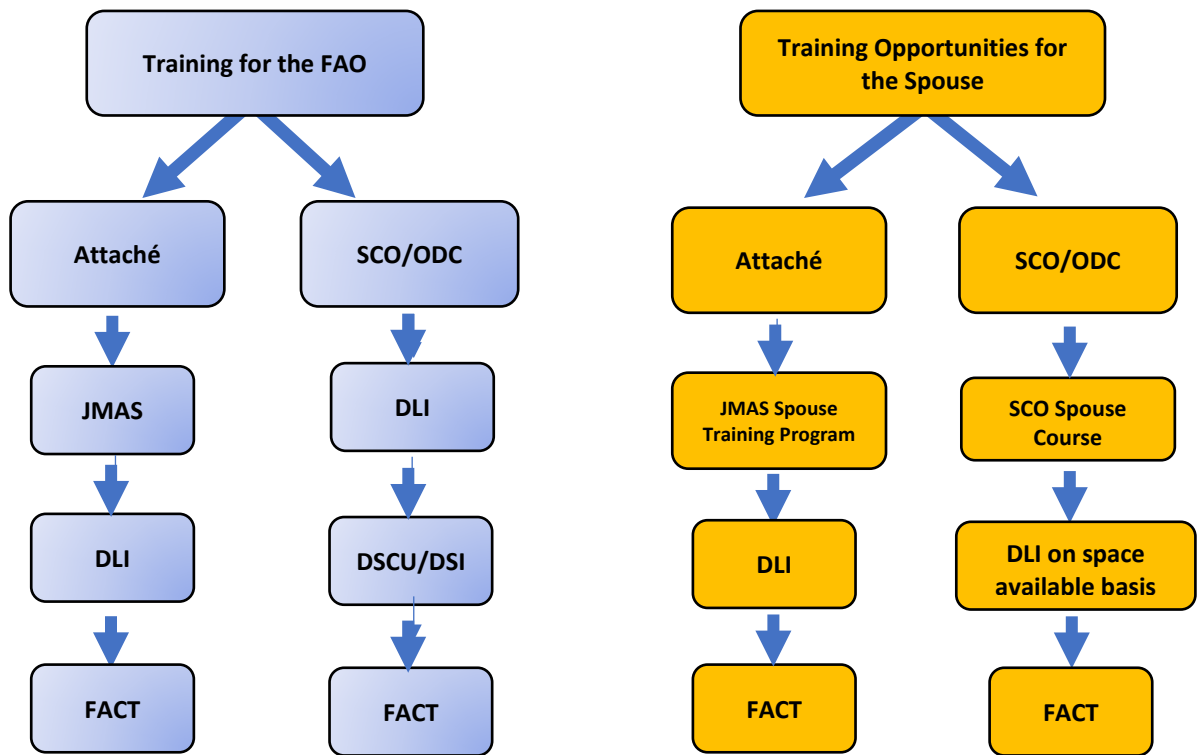
**The Defense Language Institute (DLI):** Most FAOs will receive their initial language training with the [Defense Language Institute](#), either at the Defense Language Institute-Foreign Language Center ([DLIFLC](#)) in Monterey, CA or at [DLI-Washington](#) in Washington, D.C. [High density languages](#), like Arabic, Chinese-Mandarin, French, Russian, Japanese, Indonesian or Korean will usually be taught in Monterey. Less common languages (to the DOD) like Turkish, Portuguese, Hindi and others will usually be taught through contracts managed by DLI Washington.

Spouses may have the opportunity to attend DLI with restrictions and on a **space available basis**. Spouses will need to complete a Defense Language Aptitude Battery test (DLAB) and commit to the entirety of the course. If you would like to attend training, have the member reach out to the Navy DLI representative a few months prior to the language training start date to inquire about space available for your spouse. Since our spouses will often need some level of language proficiency in country, they will have opportunity to use the target language as often or more than the FAO. Therefore, we encourage spouses to take advantage of DLI courses when able to make the transition overseas as smooth as possible for the whole family. Additionally spouses may be able to utilize language training resources available to FAOs from the Navy Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Office (OPNAV N13F). FAOs can contact the office at [ALTN.N13\\_FAO@navy.mil](mailto:ALTN.N13_FAO@navy.mil) for info sheets on available resources.



## Job-Specific Training Tracks

SCO and Attaché billets are inherently different for the service members, but the training pipeline and timing for the spouse are somewhat comparable. These additional billet-focused courses are primarily for Navy FAOs headed to embassy assignments. Attaché training is typically conducted as a stand-alone PCS, while SCO training usually involves intermediate stops of 20 weeks or less in route from one permanent duty station to the next. NOTE: Language training can occur before or after JMAS/DSCU depending on school availability. Language instruction is sometimes curtailed or waived altogether.



SCO= Security Cooperation Office  
 DLI= Defense Language Institute  
 DSI=Defense SCO Institute  
 JMAS=Joint Military Attaché School

ODC = Office of Defense Cooperation  
 DSCU= Defense Security Cooperation University  
 FACT= Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Training

**Joint Military Attaché School:** FAOs should expect to serve in the Defense Attaché Service (DAS), an arm of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). While Attaché Duty is a primary line of work for the FAO Community, not all Attachés are FAOs, and FAOs will compete for Attaché Billet assignments with officers from other warfare communities. Navy Attaché Affairs will select the most qualified and capable officers to fill these demanding and rewarding positions, which play a vital role in supporting the national interests of the United States.

While serving in Defense Attaché Offices (or DAOs) in U.S. Embassies worldwide, FAO attachés are expected to: represent the U.S. Navy; analyze and report on developments in the host country, shaping U.S. military policy and security cooperation efforts; advise diplomatic officials based on the attaché's



operational experience and strategic perspective; and support theater security cooperation or assistance programs with the host nation.

Keep in mind that to apply for the Defense Attaché program, [the servicemember and all immediate family members must be U.S. citizens](#). Residency requirements and naturalization process for U.S. citizenship can take anywhere from 2-5 years. Additionally, to avoid conflict of interest, current Defense Attache Service policy ensures servicemembers are not placed into a country where the service member or the service member's family was born or previously was a citizen, has family currently living there, or has business ties there. NOTE: This does not apply to Security Cooperation Office (SCO) tours.

The exact Attaché role depends on the Embassy location and the rank required. FAOs may serve as:

- Assistant Naval Attaché (A/ALUSNA)
- Naval Attachés (ALUSNA)
- Senior Defense Official / Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT)

Prior to beginning attaché duty, FAOs must successfully complete JMAS. The JMAS mission is two-fold:

- 1) Train military and civilian attachés and attaché support personnel for worldwide duty in the Defense Attaché Service (DAS); and
- 2) Offer a unique opportunity for spouses of DAS personnel to receive training in preparation for their tour.

Each program incorporates instructor-led training, seminars, senior guest speaker briefings, student presentations, discussions by JMAS faculty and other subject matter experts. Written and practical exercises allow students to apply and demonstrate what they have learned and ensure they are well prepared for the myriads of DAO missions. Throughout the program of instruction, students receive performance feedback and coaching from the faculty.

Spouse participation is voluntary but highly encouraged; spouses are essential contributors to the mission success of their partners and their active participation in the voluntary Spouse Training Program (STP) program greatly enhances the family's enjoyment and understanding of their time in the DAS. Limited childcare is available to facilitate spouse participation. Contact JMAS for additional information.

- [JMAS Training Website](#)
- [JMAS Welcome Brochure \(MAR 2025\)](#)

#### Attaché Training Program (ATP)

ATP prepares selected military officers and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians for duty as Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés (SDO/DATT), Service Attachés, and Assistant Defense Attachés (A/DATT). These highly visible and influential positions require dynamic critical thinking, strong communication and leadership skills and an ability to remain diplomatic under pressure.

#### Attaché Staff Training Program (ASTP)

ASTP prepares selected officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and civilians for Defense Attaché Office (DAO) staff positions as Operations Coordinators. The Ops team manages the daily

operations of the DAO and serves as the critical backbone. These positions require individuals to multitask while maintaining an eye for details in a fast-paced setting.

#### Spouse Training Program (STP)

STP provides tailored training to U.S. citizen spouses of military and civilian Attachés and Attaché Staff. STP is designed to support in-person participation by students from every background and walk of life.

**Defense Security Cooperation University/Defense SCO Institute:** DSCU provides online and in-residence training to support personnel working in security cooperation organizations (SCOs) from their main campus in Arlington, VA near the Pentagon. There is also a hybrid (virtual with in-person portion) SCO Spouse training course. The latest information on DSCU courses is available [here](#).

**Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Training (FACT):** FACT training is a general security awareness program designed to prepare personnel and adult family members from all backgrounds to live and work overseas while serving under the DoS Chief of Mission (CoM) authority. The program is a student-centered approach to security awareness and situational response training which includes classroom sessions and practical applications culminating in final exercise scenarios. Many of the topics covered are listed on the [FACT website](#).

Attendance at FACT training is highly encouraged for spouses heading overseas to assignments under CoM authority. Family members attending JMAS will have FACT funded for them. Family members moving on other orders can try to attend via Space-A, check with FACT organizers. This training is considered highly valuable for the spouse because oftentimes, the spouse is the primary agent for conducting routine business and errands out on the economy. FACT is also often a requirement for family member employment at the Embassy. The Detailer is the primary point of contact for information about FACT.

**Note:** FACT training may be required for certain spouse employment situations. See the [Foreign Affairs Manual](#), Section 13 for more information.

**PEP tours, Foreign War Colleges and other tours:** Several early overseas FAO assignments are available through the Personnel Exchange Program ([PEP](#)), Foreign War Colleges, or other tours and will also require DLI and FACT training. Again, it is highly encouraged that spouses participate in the applicable training when offered, because often these tours are the most remote and farthest from US installations and support. During many of these tours, it may be possible that your member is serving with a host nation unit and you, and your family will be reliant on the host nation for means of support. Communication with the incumbent, reporting senior's staff, and review of pertinent Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding and international agreements governing these positions is key.

**Department of State Foreign Service Institute (FSI):** FSI makes certain "non-tuition" courses available to FAOs, spouses, and kids who have orders to serve under chief of mission. The list of courses is available [here](#). FAOs/dependents can email the [Transition Center's Training Division](#) to register.

As of May 2025, courses include:

### *Preparing for Foreign Affairs Life*

- **Maintaining Your Identity as a Globally Mobile EFM/MOH | Non-Tuition**  
This webinar will explore strategies for maintaining a sense of identity while navigating ever-changing circumstances such as, frequent moves, adapting to new environments, and adjusting to the ups and downs of employment options.
- **Ready Set Return to the United States | Non-Tuition**  
This webinar will address preparation and the unique challenges when returning to the United States from an overseas assignment. The webinar will provide foreign affairs community members with essential information about the many questions and considerations presented when returning home: Permanent Change of Station (PCS) vs. Temporary Duty (TDY) status, lodging, Home Service Transfer Allowance, per diem, travel and transportation logistics, employment for family members, childcare, and schooling.
- **Ready Set Travel | Non-Tuition**  
A must-attend if you are preparing for a domestic to overseas transfer. Learn about resources at your disposal to prepare for an international move and get tips from subject-matter experts from the Office of Logistics Management's Transportation Policy and Travel Management Divisions, the Passport Office, and the FSI's Overseas Briefing Center.
- **Young Diplomats Overseas Preparation | Non-Tuition**  
In this course, foreign affairs agency children in grades 2-12 are divided into their respective cohorts and introduced to the world of diplomacy and the realities of living overseas as an American using age-appropriate lessons and activities.

### *Employment for Family Members*

- **Teaching and Working in Education Overseas for EFMs/MOHs | Non-Tuition**  
This webinar will provide an overview of working in the education field overseas. The course will cover information about teaching opportunities overseas, how to navigate the international hiring system, and relevant licensing requirements.
- **Virtual Work Opportunities for EFMs/MOHs | Non-Tuition**  
This webinar will cover an overview of key considerations when choosing virtual work options, where to look for telework opportunities, general telework trends, and an overview of the Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (DETO) option.

### *Financial Planning*

- **Personal Finances and Investments for the Foreign Affairs Community | Non-Tuition**  
This webinar series will explore the unique financial situation that comes with a career in the Foreign Service. The series consists of two parts. Part I (Personal Finances) will cover planning for a successful retirement, and investing in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Part II (Financial Investment) will cover topics including how to stay informed while overseas, and how to plan for your children's education.

### *Foreign Affairs Families with Children*

- **Advocacy Tools for Parents of Children with Special Needs | Non-Tuition**  
Join the Bureau of Medical Service's Child and Family Program (CFP) and mental health teams, and the Office of Overseas Schools, for an informative webinar designed for parents/guardians of children with special needs. The sessions will provide information, tools, and resources that support accessing educational services overseas.
- **Educating Your Foreign Service Child: K-12 Education Overseas | Non-Tuition**  
In this webinar, the Office of Overseas Schools will give a broad overview of educating your child

overseas (K-12) including: the variety of school options at posts, different education programs schools offer, transitioning between school systems, and things to think about when trying to decide which school is “right” for your child.

- **Educating Your Child with Special Needs in the Foreign Affairs Community | Non-Tuition**

Join the Bureau of Medical Services and the Office of Overseas Schools for an informative webinar that will include information on the Special Needs Education Allowances (SNEA) and how to navigate finding a school for your child with special educational needs. This webinar is specifically designed for parents of children who are or will be assigned to a U.S. mission abroad.

- **Educating Your Foreign Service Child: The Boarding School Option | Non-Tuition**

Join us for this webinar which will outline key considerations for sending your child to boarding school. The webinar will explore factors to consider in determining if boarding school is right for your child, how to select the right boarding school, and navigating financial considerations and the admissions process.

#### *Foreign Affairs Life with Pets*

- **Traveling with Pets for the Foreign Affairs Community | Non-Tuition**

## **AFRICOM Families Forward (AFF) Program**

United States Africa Command’s (USAFRICOM) Families Forward Program is designed to officially welcome and integrate command sponsored dependents to USAFRICOM for in-processing prior to traveling to their new assignment on the African continent. Implemented January 2017, AFF is designed to prepare dependents for the challenges they may face while serving in certain locations in Africa. This is a partnership between J5 and Family Readiness Group. Dependents are invited travel to Stuttgart in-route to Africa with the Service Member to participate in AFF. Family receives training and medical readiness, in preparation for tours in Africa, often in remote locations without typical DoD support. Over 100 Families have participated (in-person and virtually) as of February 2025. Only Combatant Command with sponsorship program for families, recognizing the unique environment of Africa. FAOs with orders to AFRICOM should email [africom.stuttgart.acj5.list.dscs-sco-support-admin-branch@mail.mil](mailto:africom.stuttgart.acj5.list.dscs-sco-support-admin-branch@mail.mil) or their AFRICOM POC to learn more about AFF.

## Regional Resources

	<p><b>US Africa Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">USAFRICOM</a>  <a href="#">AFRICOM In-processing in Stuttgart</a>  <a href="#">Office of Security Cooperation In-processing</a>  <a href="#">USAG Stuttgart Newcomers page</a>  <a href="#">US Naval Forces Africa</a>  <a href="#">US 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet</a>  <a href="#">NSA Naples Welcome Aboard Information Packet</a></p>
	<p><b>US Central Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">CENTCOM</a>  <a href="#">CENTCOM FAMILY CENTER</a>  <a href="#">Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command</a>  <a href="#">NSA Bahrain</a>  <a href="#">NAVCENT Newcomers Portal (CAC Required)</a></p>
	<p><b>US European Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">EUCOM</a>  <a href="#">CNIC Europe</a>  <a href="#">EUCOM HQ Newcomers Info</a>  <a href="#">USAG Stuttgart Newcomers page</a>  <a href="#">US 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet</a></p>
	<p><b>US Indo-Pacific Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">USINDOPACOM</a>  <a href="#">INDOPACOM Newcomers Info</a>  <a href="#">PACFLT Newcomers Check-In Info</a>  <a href="#">7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Welcome Aboard</a>  <a href="#">CFA Yokosuka</a>  <a href="#">US Forces Korea / Commander Naval Forces Korea</a>  <a href="#">US Forces Japan / Commander, Naval Forces Japan</a></p>
	<p><b>US Southern Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">SOUTHCOM CONUS Newcomers</a>  <a href="#">SOUTHCOM OCONUS Newcomers</a>  <a href="#">NAVSOUTH/Fourth Fleet Facebook Page</a>  <a href="#">U.S. Fourth Fleet USNAVSOUTH</a>  <a href="#">Naval Station Mayport</a></p>
	<p><b>US Northern Command Resources</b></p> <p><a href="#">NORTHCOM</a></p> <p>Note: US Northern Command is responsible for theater security cooperation with Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas. <b>For Navy FAOs headed to Mexico or the Bahamas, work with Navy FAO detailers and SOUTHCOM regional representatives for points of contact and reference information.</b></p>

# Chapter 3: Preparing for an OCONUS Move

Congratulations on your next orders overseas! You are headed to your first FAO assignment. Many elements of your first FAO tour Permanent Change of Station (PCS) may be like your previous experiences in the Fleet. However, an overseas PCS into an embassy environment present some distinct differences that will be covered in this section.

Nearly every situation is covered by DOD instructions. Reference [DOD Instruction 1315.18](#), the Procedures for Military Personnel Assignments, for what is, or is not, allowed in terms of transfers and dependent orders. This is implemented by the Navy under [OPNAVINST 1300.15B](#), Navy Military Personnel Assignment Policy.

Reference the [Joint Travel Regulations](#) (JTR) for weights, travel methods, and travel allowances. The JTR implements policy and laws establishing travel and transportation allowances of Uniformed Service members and Department of Defense (DOD) civilian travelers. The JTR applies to Uniformed Service Active and Reserve Component members and their dependents.

The Navy [published a PCS Guide in 2025](#) that provides general information about PCS and specific timelines and guidance for OCONUS moves.

**Note:** Knowledge and understanding of the JTR is imperative for overseas moves. Know what is in your orders and know what the JTR allows!

- Local Travel at the Permanent Duty Station (PDS), Chapter 2
- Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel, Chapter 3
- Government-funded Leave Travel, Chapter 4
- Permanent Duty Travel (PDT), including Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel, Chapter 5
- Evacuation Travel, Chapter 6

## Orders

Everything begins with orders. Broadly speaking, your orders tell you where you'll be moving – either CONUS or OCONUS. CONUS moves are inside the **C**ONTinental **U**nited **S**tates. OCONUS moves are **O**utside the **C**ONTinental **U**nited **S**tates. These are typically international destinations, but also include Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. territories. Your orders will also include issue date, an issuing command's name, an order number, and an authorized location or locations. You will need this information handy as you coordinate your move through the military.

Your PCS orders are legally binding and trigger many processes within the U.S. Government. Most importantly, they contain funding information to pay for things like passports, household goods shipments and storage, tickets, and many other things.

Occasionally, your detailer will not be able to issue a set of orders right away. In those cases, they may offer a Letter of Intent (LOI). An LOI is an official memo stating that the Navy intends to send you to a new location. Note that your PCS is not final or official until your actual orders have been published. An LOI lets

you start some processes to move your PCS along. Don't be surprised, however, if there are administrative items that still require formal orders to set up or execute.

**Command sponsorship** is the permission needed for your family to accompany you overseas if you have recently gotten married during an assignment. If you are recently married or have a change in family members, you should apply for [command sponsorship](#) as soon as you can, especially if expecting PCS orders. **Always ensure all your dependents are included on your orders.** If approved, you will receive an additional allowance, reimbursement for moving expenses and more weight in your moving shipment. Follow all instructions carefully when applying and keep strict records of your expenses once approved. More information on the administrative requirements of the overseas screening process can be found in Chapter 6 of this manual.

Family members command sponsorship status will directly impact reimbursement of Non-DoD Dependents Schools (DoDDS) Schools or DOD Educational Activity (DoDEA) eligibility if the sponsor departs. Contact Non-DoD Schools Program ([NDSP](#)) before making decisions.

**Delayed Dependent Travel** authorizes dependents to remain at and draw Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) at their current permanent duty station. This can be helpful in allowing children to finish the school year before executing a government-funded move. However, financial care must be taken in that the servicemember will NOT receive additional housing compensation at the new permanent duty station. The location can affect how long a dependent may remain. Some Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) will limit the amount of time Dependents can remain in country without the sponsor.

**Designated Places.** PCS orders may sometimes state that an OCONUS Commanding Officer can authorize a Designated Place (and BAH) for dependents remaining in CONUS. OPNAV N130 is the approval authority for Designated Places OCONUS. More information on this can be found in OPNAV Policy Memo dated 29 July 2010. To be eligible for a Dependent Designated Place move, the member must be assigned to either: Unusually Arduous Sea Duty (OPNAVINST 4650.17), or an OCONUS unaccompanied tour.

**The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)** formerly known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, is a federal law enacted in 2003, that restricts or limits actions against military personnel currently serving on active duty. The SCRA was designed to ease the financial burden for active-duty service members, active reservists, and active Guard—especially those who are deployed. This can be helpful in terminating home rental, car leases, and utilities contracts. Military personnel are eligible for SCRA benefits starting on the date when their active-duty orders are received, and SCRA coverage typically terminates within 30 to 90 days after their date of discharge from active duty. Find out more information [here](#).

## **OCONUS to OCONUS Moves with CONUS Training Stops Less Than 20 Weeks**

One of the most challenging evolutions of FAO life is an OCONUS to OCONUS PCS with a CONUS Intermediate Stop (I-STOP) for ~7 weeks at the SCO Course with a family. Normally the family can't remain behind at the OCONUS origin and can't go early to the new Embassy assignment. The following resources are provided to reduce the stress and financial impact of these complicated moves:

**Navy FAO OCONUS to OCONUS PCS with CONUS I-STOP Family Support Checklist.** The purpose of this checklist is to inform FAOs embarking on this type of PCS (typically SCO training) with dependents. FAOs



are responsible for their own PCS and must ensure all items are taken care of. The checklist is provided to inform you about the latest resources and policy updates, but FAOs should contact the appropriate POCs for the latest information. If this checklist conflicts with official guidance from the JTR, Navy Policy, or other guiding documents, the official policy should be followed. The latest checklist is available on [Navy FAO APAN](#) under PCS resources or by contacting the FAO Policy Advisor.

**Enhanced NAVPTO Travel Assistance.** Navy and FAO Community “Get Real, Get Better” problem solving initiatives resulted in an agreement for NAVPTO to provide enhanced, personalized travel assistance to FAOs ordered to conduct these types of PCSs. FAOs should contact the FAO Policy Advisor immediately upon receiving orders for this type of PCS to be assigned to a NAVPTO case manager.

**Priority Orders Issuance.** FAOs in this situation can request a “Letter of Intent” / “Memorandum in Lieu of Orders” and an exception to policy for early issuance of orders from their Detailer. These items, while not guaranteed, can assist in planning the complicated move and obtaining visas/passports sooner.

**Short Term Furnished Housing at Training Location.** The CLMT collaborated with the Department of State contracted housing options to facilitate FAOs to reserve and utilize the corporate housing options in the DC-area when PCSing with the family in tow. FAOs should reserve the lodging just as they would any I-STOP lodging, save receipts, and request reimbursement on the travel claim. FAOs must negotiate the rates with the property managers and ensure they don’t exceed max lodging, which varies by month in the National Capital Region (example: JUN 2025 is \$276, while JUL 2025 is \$183). Not all options are convenient to public transportation, and rental cars are not included in SCO I-STOP orders. FAOs should work with their Detailer to discuss possible exceptions to policy. The JTR part 020303 states reimbursement is authorized only when the traveler provides a documented itemized receipt for room costs from the hotel or online booking agent showing the following charges: Daily hotel room costs, Daily hotel taxes, Daily miscellaneous fees, if applicable. Only itemized charges are considered for reimbursement. Online booking receipts often break out the cost of the room but combine taxes and fees. In such cases, only the room cost is reimbursed because the receipt does not itemize taxes and fees.

**Consecutive Overseas Tour (COT) Leave.** This entitlement provides a FAO and dependents transportation CONUS between two OCONUS duty stations. Not all tours are COT eligible, so FAOs should contact their detailer to confirm that the orders will contain the COT entitlement. More info is provided in Chapter 9 of this handbook.

**BAH-Transit.** BAH Transit, also known as BAH RC/T (BAH Reserve Component/Transit) or BAH Non-Locality, is a type of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) paid to service members in specific situations where a fixed location-based BAH rate doesn't apply. This includes FAOs in transit between duty stations. It's a non-locality allowance, meaning the rate is determined by a national average and doesn't vary by location. Prior to a PCS, FAOs should look up the BAH-T rate and use it to budget for the family's lodging requirements. FAOs should also coordinate with the Command Personnel and Pay Administrator (CPPA) to ensure that BAH-T is started and stopped appropriately.

## Finances

Build savings and have an emergency fund. Having savings available allows for immediate decisions and actions during your PCS and if/when unexpected events come up while you are living overseas. Many moves will require initial upfront expenses that are reimbursed (sometimes only partially) later. Having

savings available to dip into allows for immediate decisions and immediate actions if events demand while you are overseas. Contact your installation or command [Personal Financial Management Program](#) office for more information and assistance. FAOs should notify their Council of Captains Regional Lead (RL) via a Critical Information Report (CCIR) as soon as possible in the event of a delay in reimbursement for travel claims of more than 30 days, or of a financial hardship more than \$3500.

## Pay and Benefits

**Specialized FAO Support from Regional Support Center (RSC) Guam.** RSC Guam handles the cases for FAOs transferring CONUS-OCONUS, OCONUS-OCONUS or from OCONUS to CONUS. The RSC Guam OIC is committed to providing FAOs with quality service, including answering individual questions, and understands FAO PCSs can be complicated. FAOs should use their local admin chain of command and CPPAs, but RSC Guam is willing to help FAOs before, during and after PCS for anything that FAOs need. Contact them via email [rsc\\_guam@us.navy.mil](mailto:rsc_guam@us.navy.mil) or phone (671)-339-7311 or DSN (315)-339-7311.

In addition to support offered by your installation [Relocation Assistance Program](#), here are some benefits and resources available when you are moving OCONUS. Note that the source reference for many of these allowances is the [JTR](#).

- **Dislocation Allowance (DLA)** is meant to help with miscellaneous moving costs. It is generally paid once per PCS. It is not paid if you are reassigned to government quarters or are unaccompanied.
- **Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)** may be available to offset the cost of living off-base. It is based on rank and dependents and is available to unaccompanied service members only if government housing is unavailable.
- **Move-in Housing Allowance (MIHA)** helps cover the cost of miscellaneous expenses like appliances, lease taxes, or one-time rental or security-related expenses. It varies by currency rate and location.
- **Family Separation Allowance (FSA)** is paid when your family members can't live with you at your permanent duty station – most commonly when transportation isn't authorized, housing is unavailable, you're aboard a ship, or your family can't move because of a medical condition. This allowance is paid as a flat, monthly rate.

In certain locales, or depending on the orders, Navy FAOs may also be eligible for special, and incentives pays. These may include:

- **Hardship Duty Pay (HDP)** for service members assigned to places where the standard of living is significantly below that of the continental United States. HDP Locations are listed in [this link](#).
- **Hostile Fire Pay/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP/IDP)** for those assigned to specific regions where they may be subject to hostile actions like enemy fire or mines.
- **Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP)** for service members on extended tours or certain unusual assignments. This is primarily focused on assignments in Iraq and Afghanistan, however some tours in South Korea may be eligible as well.

- **Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP)** for those on specific types of duty such as flying, parachute jumping, flight deck duty or experimental stress duty.
- **Combat Zone Tax Exclusions (CZTE)** depending on the TAD orders, and some PCS orders (looking at you Djibouti), earnings received while in the combat zone are excluded from taxable income. This exclusion is limited to \$7368.30 per month for officers. If you spend a single qualifying day in the combat zone, your pay for the entire month is excluded from taxable income. CZTE locations are listed [here](#), Designated Direct Support Areas of a Combat Zone are listed [here](#).

**Advances** are available to help cover the cost of moving. Remember, these must be paid back upon arrival and that garnishment usually starts on the paycheck following your arrival at post. You can apply for an advance of basic pay to cover:

- Basic allowance for housing
- Overseas housing allowance
- Moving-related expenses
- Travel allowances (varies by service branch)

Before taking an advance, be sure to do some research about repayment, and contact the experts at your [Personal Financial Management Program office](#) to help with budget planning. Financial counselors can also help with information about financial aid organizations and emergency assistance.

**Use of Government Credit Card During PCS.** The Navy authorizes use of the Government Travel Credit Card (GTCC) during PCS for certain expenses: vehicle expenses like fuel, lodging expenses including hotel taxes, parking and meals. **Do not use it for personally procured transportation, medical expenses, or personally procured moves (PPM).** Members should request GTCC extensions and credit increases for the maximum time allowable by detaching command before executing PCS orders. If you need a credit limit increase or your PCS is longer than 120 days between duty stations, contact our APC to process the increase or extend your Mission Critical status ahead of the 120 day mark. If it's an emergency or time sensitive, call My Navy Career Center (24/7) for immediate assistance (1-(833) 330-MNCC (6622)). After your travel voucher has been approved, ensure your GTCC balance has been paid off in full. **Keep all itemized receipts for easier reimbursement!**

## Passports

Almost all diplomatic posts require FAOs and accompanying dependents to hold a black diplomatic passport. FAOs going to overseas staff assignments may require a brown official passport for themselves and blue no-fee tourist passports for dependents. Diplomatic passports and blue no-fee passports require PCS orders for the passport application. The key document driving all passport, visa, and other entry requirements is the [Foreign Clearance Guide](#) (FCG). It contains detailed entry requirements for every country. These will be different for TDY/TAD, assignment to a U.S. base, or to an Embassy. They may also be different for dependents.

**Note:** While FAOs assigned to embassies hold black “Diplomatic” passports, typically only attachés and SCO chiefs are fully credentialed with diplomatic privileges. See this [State Department website](#) for more information.

All passport and visa applications must be submitted through the local DOD Passport and Visa Acceptance Agent. The local Agent may be in Navy Passenger Travel Office (NAVPTO), the local Personnel Support Division (PSD), or may be a separate office. The local Passport Agent will provide you with detailed submission information. The key with all Passport Agents is to make contact early and adhere to the recommended timelines for submission for passports and visas (generally at least 45-60 days from travel) and passport applications (as soon as you get your orders).

First you need to determine which type of passport is required for your PCS. This is governed by the DoDM O-1000.21 and the Foreign Clearance Guide.

1. **“No Fee” Official / Brown Passports.** FAOs/families requiring no-fee passports should apply not later than 14 days after assignment notification (verbal orders). Personnel **should not wait** for orders to be published. A “Memorandum in Lieu of Orders” provided by the Detailers may be submitted with the passport application packet to avoid delays.

2. **Diplomatic Passports.** Applications for diplomatic passports may not be issued until the Special Issuance Agency receives finalized PCS orders. FAOs can work with their detailer to request an exception to policy on a case-by-case basis to expedite release of orders to obtain diplomatic passports sooner (exceptions to policy (ETPs) are not guaranteed and won’t be requested for all PCSs).

**Note:** Passports and visas are a common source of stress on international moves. They require vigilant attention. Remember that while issuance of the right kind of passport is something you chain of command can assist with, the issuance of visas is the prerogative of a foreign government. We have varied influence, and sometimes visas are denied or delayed for reasons outside the control of anyone in the USG. But the bottom line is, you must follow the process and stay engaged.

**Visas:** Many countries’ visa requirements differ depending on the nature of your travel and the type of passport you will use. Some countries that do not require visas for tourist travel will require one for travel on an official or diplomatic passport. There are also differences between TDY travel and PCS travel. PCS travel to places where we have Status of Forces Agreements that only require a U.S. military ID and orders may still require a visa. A country-by-country list of general visa requirements is kept here: [DOD Passport Matters](#) which has process-related information on the visa application (e.g. expected times). Be sure to check the FCG for any additional information.

For both passports and visas, reach out early and often. Do not underestimate the time these processes can take. Pay attention to the FCG; follow the detailed instructions and if you start to approach deadlines, keep your detailer and gaining/losing commands informed.

*Do not travel without the right documents. If you don’t have the correct documents, request an ORDMOD to delay at your current location until the correct documents arrive.*

**NAVPTO:** The Navy Transportation Offices (NAVPTO) in the various servicing Personnel Support Detachments (PSDs), take care of most transportation needs when it comes to executing a PCS. If leaving a Navy command, they will help you apply for official or diplomatic passports, help coordinate any visas you may need, and they will issue your commercial air tickets for you and your command sponsored family members.

NAVPTO can also assist with Circuitous Travel. [Circuitous travel](#) (Page 6, Section K) is when a service member takes leave in conjunction with an OCONUS PCS move. This means you can procure your travel, through [CWT SATO Travel](#) and in accordance with the [Fly America Act](#) meaning you must use a U.S. flagged carrier when available, fly wherever you want to take leave, and the Navy will cover what it would have cost the U.S. government to send you and your family directly to your next duty station. The FAO Community developed a “Circuitous Travel Gouge” document that serves to guide FAOs in the process, and it can be found on [Navy FAO APAN](#) under PCS resources.

Before you and your family are authorized to execute circuitous travel, NAVPTO must endorse your orders with a government cost estimate. This endorsement will tell your next PSD and NAVPTO how much it would have cost the US government to fly you and your family to your next duty station. Without this endorsement from NAVPTO, you will not get reimbursed for your travel expenses (up to what it would have cost the government) from your gaining PSD. **CAUTION:** Ensure that you have the correct constructed cost estimate and that your flight legs are in accordance with the Fly America Act. Without these verifications, you may not be reimbursed for the entirety of your itinerary.

**Note:** *This information is fluid. Before you spend your money for circuitous travel on your next PCS, read the Joint Travel Regulations, specifically Chapters 2 and 5 and talk with your losing and gaining commands. See also: DoD 7000.14-R Financial Management Regulation Volume 7A, Chapter 26 for ‘Service Member in Transit’, (261010).*

## Shipments

All moves overseas, whether to a staff or to an Embassy, will start by logging into the Defense Property System ([DPS](#)), easily accessed through that link or through the [Military One Source](#) webpage. The DPS site will direct you to the initial setup of your PCS shipments. For most FAO moves, you will need to consider several different shipments, including: a Household Goods (HHG) shipment, an Unaccompanied Baggage (UAB) shipment, a Non-Temporary Storage (NTS) shipment, and potentially a consumables shipment and vehicle shipment.

The DPS application will require order information and desired moving dates. The application will also help prepare several forms for your move. You will need hard and soft copies of these forms for move counseling and tracking your shipments throughout their shipment.

Some FAOs choose to include a reporting device (i.e. Apple Air Tag) in their shipments to allow for real-time tracking of the location of their various shipments, vehicles and luggage.

**Department of State-Arranged Moves:** [Appendix F](#) from the Defense Transportation Regulation, Part IV outlines responsibilities for the movement and processing of the household goods (HHG), privately owned vehicles (POV), consumables (CNS), and unaccompanied baggage (UB) of DoD military personnel to, from, and between DoS diplomatic missions for customers who are assigned under the CoM, and delineates responsibilities where DoD continues to arrange the movement of personal property shipments to, from, and between remaining locations worldwide.

DOD to DoS moves use the same forms used in DOD only moves. DOD services will provide the front-end management of DOD service member shipments and will provide coordination with the DoS. These shipments are started in DPS the same way a DOD-only move is started, but once handed off to DoS, the shipment in Move.mil will be cancelled. DOD will remain responsible for settling any move claims from the service member and will also collect any over-weight charges the service member owes.

DoS will manage the movement of DOD shipments once received at DoS departure points, will provide the most cost-effective method of shipping, and will provide initial move counseling for DOD service members as they depart their diplomatic post. DoS will reference DOD weight allowances from the JTR for movements to and from diplomatic posts.

- EUCOM, AFRICOM, CENTCOM, and moves to India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka use Baltimore as their point of departure. Their organizational email is: [DODPP@state.gov](mailto:DODPP@state.gov)
- Eastern INDO-PACOM shipments are dispatched through Seattle. Their organizational email is: [dispatch\\_agency\\_seattle@state.gov](mailto:dispatch_agency_seattle@state.gov)
- Shipments for the Western Hemisphere are shipped from Charleston. Their organizational email is: [dispatch\\_agency\\_miami@state.gov](mailto:dispatch_agency_miami@state.gov)

Reference table F1 on page IV-F-18 from [Appendix F](#) for contact information for shipment management offices.

**Note:** Awareness of the shipping route and offices for your shipments can provide the opportunity for intervention in the middle of a move should orders change. Navy FAOs should only contact intermediate shipping offices in dire or emergency circumstances. This is NOT the method for checking up on the status of your shipments.

**Household goods (HHG) move,** is a move completed by a government-furnished moving company, also called a transportation service provider (TSP). During a HHG move, your TSP is responsible for packing all your belongings and transporting them to your new location. Your PCS weight entitlement depends on your rank, whether you are traveling with or without dependents and the type of assignment you are heading to. See JTR (Chapter 5, Table 5-37) for additional information.

**Note (1):** Diplomatic missions are governed by a specific table for weight allowances. Copied below and available on page 10 here.

**Note (2):** If your HHG shipment includes storage-in-transit you may have the option to request the use of a container. Shipments in containers are dependent on what the moving and storage industry is able to provide at the time of your move. To learn more about shipments in containers, visit the Crating section of Frequently Asked Questions for PCS and Military Moves.

**Administrative Weight Limitations:** Weight allowances can be administratively restricted at a PDS OCONUS based on factors at that location. Such factors include whether HHG is supplied at the PDS, if there is limited space for HHG in Government quarters or private-sector housing, and if there is limited storage for excess HHG in the area. See Administrative HHG Weight Allowance Locations. Services establish item allowances for a specific location. Services must coordinate so that allowances are uniform for all Service members of all Services by grade and dependency status in the area.



When the new PDS is an administrative-weight-limited location, the Service member is authorized HHG transportation to a designated place or to NTS for the remainder of the HHG weight allowance in Table 5-37 that could not be shipped to the new PDS.

**When Administrative weight limits do not apply:** HHG shipments from non-foreign areas OCONUS to any location where there is no administrative weight limitation. Service member assigned as a COCOM Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché, unless otherwise directed by the source agency, or if the post is identified as a Special Shipment Allowance Post.

Check JTR section **051402 paragraphs C through F** for specific situations and procedures for exceptions.

**Unaccompanied baggage (UB or UAB):** An option for shipments where a small subset of your total weight allowance is expedited to your new location, typically while you wait for the rest of your belongings to arrive later. UB shipments are approved for CONUS TDY and OCONUS TDY and PCS. Unaccompanied baggage is part of the Service member's authorized HHG weight allowance. When the shipment is to an area that has an administrative weight limit for HHG, the unaccompanied baggage weight is part of the administrative HHG weight limitation. Unaccompanied baggage is subject to specific limitations. See Section 051403 of the JTR for specific allowances and more information on unaccompanied baggage. While the UAB shipment is sometimes called the "express shipment," arrival time can vary. UAB shipments- especially those from overseas Fleet concentration areas- are flown to/from CONUS via Space A on military or military-contracted air. There is no "Inconvenience Claim" mechanism in case of late arrival.

**Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) shipment and storage:** Available for some moves. In general, if you are traveling overseas or outside of the contiguous United States the government may pay to ship one POV to your new duty station or store one POV during your OCONUS tour. You will need to make an appointment with the global POV contractor and take it to a vehicle processing center, or VPC, for transportation to your new duty station or to a contracted storage facility. You can find global VPC locations, schedule your turn-in or drop-off appointment, and view POV shipping and storage documentation requirements on IAL's website, [PCSMYPOV](#) or on the [USTRANSCOM site](#). Due to shipping and customs processing times, it may be optimal to purchase a car locally instead of shipping a car. It is recommended to talk to your sponsor at Post to determine your options. You won't receive reimbursement for transportation while you await the arrival of your car. Some Posts offer shuttle transportation to and from the Embassy; this shuttle sometimes requires reimbursement by DoD or the individual.

**Note (1):** *Some OCONUS countries do not allow POV transportation into the host country, or have specific restrictions (e.g., no cars older than 5 years permitted; only right-hand drive cars, etc.). Check with your local transportation office for country-specific restrictions. In these situations, you can store your POV at government or personal expense for the length of your OCONUS tour. Contact your [local transportation office](#) for storage authorizations and reimbursement options.*

**Note (2):** *Due to the frequent turnover of embassy personnel, many missions will have a supply of second-hand vehicles available for purchase. Contact the CLO or check the embassy newsletter.*



**Consumable Goods Allowances Eligibility:** A Service member assigned to a PDS OCONUS designated in the JTR is authorized transportation of consumable goods in addition to HHG. A post requiring a consumables shipment is one where conditions make it difficult to locally obtain the consumables required by employees and their eligible family members. Consumables are referred to as expendable personal property because they are used up as opposed to wearing out. See JTR 052002 para. F.

## Pets

Pets can be important members of our families. International travel with pets will require detailed planning for their shipment, health certification, documentation, micro-chipping, and vaccination requirements. When planning your PCS travel with pets, consider several of the factors mentioned by DoS's Overseas Briefing Center [here](#).

The [JTR](#) considers household pets to be cats or dogs only. Transportation of a household pet can be a reimbursable expense. See section 050107 of the [JTR](#) for more information.

**International Pet Travel on American Carriers:** This information pertains to cats and dogs. Airline policies regarding other pets may vary. The information below provides only general guidelines. Contact the airline directly for additional information. The travel policies of U.S. airlines regarding shipping animals are subject to change at any time. If your pet must be shipped as cargo using a commercial shipper, contact one early in the moving process, using International Pet and Animal Transportation Association ([IPATA](#)). Review all considerations with the airline and, if necessary, the pet shipper you plan to use. OBC recommends that you request written confirmation of reservations you make for the shipment of your pet.

There are generally three ways you can ship your pet via the airlines:

1. **Your pet can travel on the plane with you** (either in-cabin, as accompanied baggage, or as checked baggage in the cargo hold). Your pet will be charged accordingly. Some airlines no longer offer this option, and some countries do not allow pets to enter the country in-cabin.

**Note:** If checking as baggage, most airlines have strict guidelines regarding forecast temperatures for embarkation/debarkation and layover locations. If forecast temperatures exceed, or are below published guidelines, the airlines will not accept your pet, and you will have to rebook. This can be extremely difficult to manage when trying to make a report no later than date overseas.

2. **You can book your pet on a separate flight (depending on the origin/destination).** You will be charged the cargo rate, which is considerably more than excess baggage. You can ship your pet as cargo on a separate flight. You will be charged a cargo rate based on the size and weight of your pet in its crate. You will book this through the airlines cargo department which is different from the regular passenger booking desk. You may need to drop off and pick up your pet from the cargo terminal of the airport and may not be able to coordinate doing this on the same day as your own departure/arrival.

**Note:** Most foreign countries will only allow animals to enter from certain specified points of embarkation. Check with CLO to know which ones your country expects. This can be difficult to manage unless Circuitous Travel is authorized.

3. **You can have your pet shipped through a licensed commercial shipper.** You will be charged the cargo rate plus the pet shipper's fee.

**Note:** This can be extremely expensive (thousands of dollars). Careful planning is necessary to avoid financial pitfalls, particularly when establishing a new household abroad. To help offset the costs of moving with household pet, the JTR allows for reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per OCONUS PCS for expenses related to the cost of moving one cat or one dog. Expenses can include but are not limited to cargo or shipping fees, quarantine fees, microchipping fees, travel certificates, etc. FAOs moving with multiple pets will only be eligible for reimbursement for the costs associated with one pet. For more information, visit JTR Chapter 5 050107: Pet Expenses Due to a PCS <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Jan/04/2002917147/-1/-1/0/JTR.PDF>

As a rule, animals 100 lbs. or larger (**including** the weight of the cage) will be charged as cargo even if they travel on the same plane as you. Check with the airline if your pet is close to that weight and determine if the airline policy may vary from this general 100 lb. rule.

For FAOs heading to staff assignments at US bases, check the newcomer's guide for the base for information on bringing pets to your new duty station. For FAOs heading to embassies and consulates, contact your CLO or social sponsor for information specific to bringing pets into the host country."

For FAOs returning with pets to the United States, please visit OBC [Returning to the United States with Pets](#) and USDA-APHIS [Bring your pet into the United States from a foreign country \(Import\)](#) webpages. There will likely be micro-chip requirements, exams, and travel health certifications required immediately before travel. We encourage pet owners to review and carefully plan their international travel or international moves with pets.

## Mail Overseas

**If you are stationed OCONUS on or near a US base**, you will almost certainly have access to **Fleet Post Office (FPO)** or **Army Post Office (APO)** services. This service ships to a PO Box at your base through the normal US Postal Service as if you were at home. When overseas, and shipping to another overseas location, you may be able to take advantage of the Military Postal System as well, for point-to-point mail and parcel service. Most online ordering services and retailers will ship to FPO and APO addresses. Visit the [USPS website](#) for more information.

**At an Embassy post**, you may have either a [Diplomatic Post Office \(DPO\)](#) service (almost exactly equivalent to FPO/APO) or you may need to rely on [Diplomatic Pouch](#) service. Employees assigned to a post that provides DPO service must send and receive all personal mail and packages via the U.S. Postal Service through the DPO system rather than the unclassified diplomatic pouch. If a vendor will not send items to a DPO address, then customers must find alternate means or vendor (use a web search for "APO/FPO/DPO Shipping Company"). Parcels or flats sent by FedEx, UPS, Airborne, DHL or any other private carrier cannot be addressed to a DPO address. Packages are limited to 70 pounds and 108 inches (length and girth combined). Mail options vary by post and your CLO or social sponsor can give you up to date accurate information about mail options available to you at your new duty station. **Chapter 21** in the [Foreign Service Assignment Notebook](#) for more information and references.



## Chapter 4: OCONUS Housing

“Where will we live?” is usually one of the first questions that comes to mind when you hear of a new set of orders. Overseas housing options will vary from tour to tour, whether on a staff or moving to an Embassy. A plethora of factors play into where you will live, many of them well outside your control. For instance, if you are posted to an Embassy, instead of you choosing where you will live, a housing board may decide where and in what type of housing you will live. Remember to be flexible and communicative about your needs.

Communicate with your sponsor at your new post, on staff, or at an Embassy, to find out what you need to bring and what you need to leave behind. Asking what appliances are provided, what power sources are used (110V or 220V, 50 or 60Hz), is furniture required and how much? What kind of car makes sense there? What does your sponsor wish they had or had not brought?

### Military Community Housing

If moving to an overseas staff, you may be living on base or out in town. Many times, that decision will not be entirely up to you and will depend on the base, your grade, housing availability, family-size, timing, and the local security situation. Most military bases overseas have information available online through their newcomer sites describing the housing locations, conditions, and expectations for new arrivals. Early research and conversation with your new command will help point you in the right direction.

Off-Base housing, or living on the economy, will be handled through the base housing office. The ability for service members to live on the economy will often be dependent on how full on-base housing is at the time. If you’re able to live off, the base housing office, or an associated rental and leasing office will help with finding housing options on the economy and help ensure that local landlords comply with local and DOD requirements and regulations.

When living off-base overseas, you will likely be entitled to Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), rather than BAH. The Overseas Housing Program enables military members assigned overseas to privately lease housing on the economy. This program encompasses a reimbursement system designed to partially defray housing costs when on-base or government leased housing is not available. This allowance will pay up to a set amount for rent and whatever utilities may be included with the lease. Outside utilities that are not captured in the lease are not figured in the OHA amount or allowance. You may also be eligible for Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA). MIHA is available only outside the continental United States. It helps cover the cost of miscellaneous expenses, like appliances, lease taxes, one-time rent-related expenses or security expenses. It varies by currency rate and location.

[Check the DTMO site](#) for more information.

### Embassy Housing

For diplomatic assignments, for DOD members under CoM authority, housing availability will depend on the mission. Most embassies maintain a housing pool, with a set of houses or apartments that are routinely rented or owned by the embassy for members to live in. If service members are assigned to a

U.S. mission abroad under chief-of-mission (COM) authority, they may receive housing in U.S. Government-owned/-leased (GO/L) properties, or through the Military Overseas Housing Allowance (LQA and OHA) programs. The objective of the housing program is to provide safe and secure housing that meets the personal and professional requirements of employees, at a cost most advantageous to the U.S. Government. Adequate housing is defined as housing comparable to what an employee would occupy in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area, with adjustments for family size and locality abroad. The Foreign Affairs Manual chapter discussing housing pool details and policy is here: [15 FAM 211: HOUSING ABROAD POLICY](#).

After receiving orders to an embassy, contact the CLO to ask for a housing questionnaire. Most embassies have housing pools and assign housing according to your State Department-equivalent rank and family size. Unless reporting for certain positions like SDO/DATT, the embassy's interagency housing board will determine your housing assignment.

Your responses to the housing questionnaire are an important factor in the board's determination for your residence. Prior to submitting the form, try to find out about distance to the Embassy, the community, and other essentials like schools, supermarkets, or shopping. Do you like big vibrant communities, or would you rather have a quiet place? Do you have pets and need a yard? Is a pool your #1 requirement? Or is it being close to the Embassy? The questionnaire will ask you to rank the characteristics most important to you, so carefully consider what that means for you. The housing board will do its best to put you in a residence that suits your priorities; but realize that in hardship areas, housing will always be limited, and you may not get everything you want.

When you've settled on the priorities for you and your family, ensure you talk with your housing board representative. That person is your advocate, arguing for your housing assignment. Finally, approach your housing assignment with an open mind and realize that being reassigned will only be done for health or safety reasons. FAO duty overseas is an adventure! And your housing assignment is one of the biggest. General details and policy guiding Embassy housing overall can be found in [15 FAM 230](#), realize this general guidance is then interpreted and applied to local conditions.

Once you have a house assigned, your sponsor can work with the General Services Office to conduct a walkthrough and send you pictures. This person will conduct a pre-move walkthrough, schedule any maintenance, ensure your welcome kit arrives before you do, and pick up initial groceries for your arrival. This is part of the sponsor's job, and something you will perform when you are established at post as well.

**Welcome Kits:** Post usually provides basic welcome kits with sheets, towels, pots, pans, tableware and miscellaneous kitchen items to allow employees to immediately occupy their assigned housing prior to the arrival of their air freight and/or household shipment. To minimize temporary housing costs, every effort is made to move incoming employees directly into their assigned housing upon arrival at post. Employees are strongly encouraged to use their air freight allowance to include those items needed immediately upon arrival at post. Welcome kits must be returned to GSO in clean and usable condition.

**Embassy Furniture:** If posts maintain Government owned or Leased Housing, the post usually maintains a furniture pool for household furnishings. This means you will have restricted weight allowance and will NOT need to pack furniture in your HHG. For details on furniture pool standards, check [6 FAH-5 H-500](#) for more details.

**The Interagency Housing Board:** Once you've settled into post, you may be offered an opportunity to be a member of the post's Interagency Housing Board (IAHB). The IAHB oversees the implementation of the housing policy and ensures they are equitably applied to employees of all agencies. Because of its representative composition and familiarity with local housing conditions, post's IAHB is the best vehicle to administer housing policy. The IAHB consists of personnel representing all U.S. Government agencies at post, and should include the range of personnel assigned, i.e., large and small agencies, senior and junior personnel, and families and singles. Agencies' representation on the board should reflect their respective number of U.S. personnel at post. Post's IAHB should exercise its best collective judgment to reconcile employees' housing requirements with the intent of U.S. Government regulations and to make decisions that are in the best interests of the U.S. Government. See [15 FAM 212](#) for more information.

## Domestic Staff

A creature comfort and benefit of living overseas is the potential of hiring domestic staff. Whether you require a maid, chef, driver, nanny, and/or gardener, domestic staff can be a godsend when living so far from family, friends, and established support networks, but can also a headache. The two most important resources when deciding whether to accept house help are the Regional Security Office (RSO) and the Community Liaison Office (CLO). All domestic staff must be cleared by the RSO who conducts a background check on prospective personnel. The CLO maintains a database of cleared people who have worked within the Embassy community. The CLO database should have the prospect's curriculum vitae, references, and the RSO clearance along with a copy of the person's national identification (host nation dependent). It is very important that you hire cleared personnel who come with a lineage of positive recommendations that you can call to verify.

Oftentimes, domestic staff are Third-Country Nationals. The CLO can help ensure that their passport and work visa are in order along with ensuring that they are legally sponsored to work in host nation.

If you are looking forward to hiring domestic staff, read Chapter 22 in the Foreign Service Assignment Notebook. Also, if you are assigned to a CoM position you are subject to [3 FAM 4128](#) which stipulates that all personnel under CoM authority (including family members and members of household) are expected to ensure that any personal domestic workers employed in their homes are treated fairly. In addition, [3 FAM 4128.2-2](#) stipulates that personnel under CoM authority who locally hire personal domestic workers to work for more than 20 hours per week are required to have a written contract. All employee contracts with a locally-hired personal domestic worker must be in accordance with local law and post policy, and must include the terms of description of duties, hours of work, wages, overtime work, and living conditions. Please take the time to review these important regulations to ensure you are compliant with post requirements as they can open you to significant legal and security jeopardy if not scrupulously adhered to.

Another important step in the hiring process is creating a contract that contains duties to be performed and salary, keeping in mind host nation employment laws. The CLO is your resource for this. Many countries require income tax to be paid by either the employer or employee. Ensure your contract states who pays this. Also, in the contract, there should be a clause that allows you to terminate employment. In some countries, fortune favors the employee. This clause may save you from someone who looked good on paper but is just not working out. Another clause to consider is an observation period where you observe performance over the course of month and then determine whether to continue service and a “military clause” if you receive orders unexpectedly.

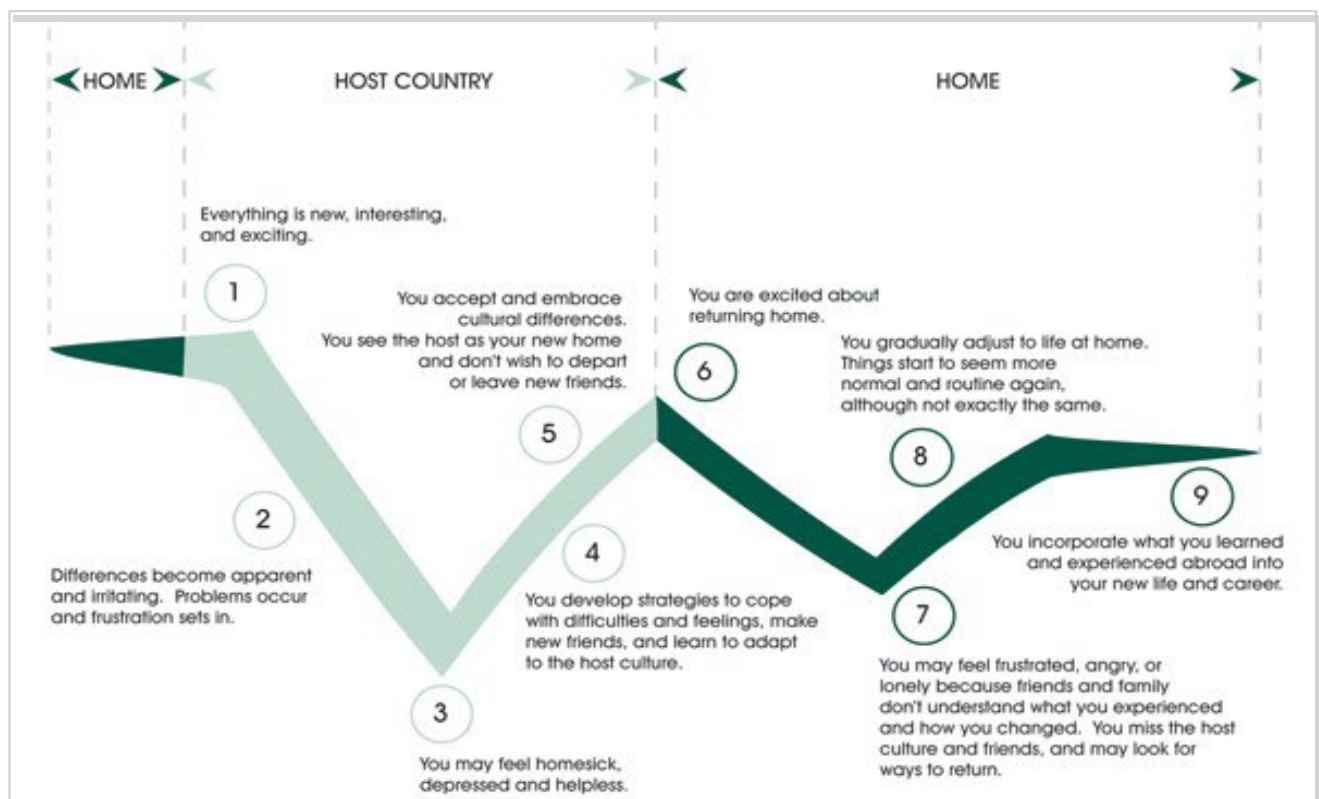
Once you have hired domestic help, keep in mind this person may be in your home for significant periods without observation. Trust is a very important part of this relationship to build. This is often complicated by the fact that English is not their native language. Build trust through open and frequent communication. Determine what the most effective communication method is. Often writing your requirements down will help your local staff interpret what you mean. Culturally, it might be very difficult for your house help to ask questions when they do not understand you verbally. Written communication can often alleviate this. Having a written record will also come in handy should complications arise, trust is broken, and employment terminated.



## Chapter 5: Preparing For New Cultures

In cross-cultural training and living, the goal is learning about yourself and others. Just as you want to learn another language so that you can communicate with local people and make sense of the new world around you, you will also want to learn the silent language of cultures— your own and others. Cross-cultural training involves not only learning about the new country you're going to, but comparing it to where you've come from, to include the assumptions and values that have shaped you. In other words, knowing what you think, feel, and believe and why. This will help you understand how others view you and your culture. Recognize that others think, feel, and believe differently than you for various reasons. Neither of you are necessarily right or wrong, but your openness to understanding these differences is a requisite attitude to increasing your knowledge, developing your cross-cultural skills, and improving the quality and effectiveness of your communication and behavior. Taking the time to expand your cross-cultural skills will pay dividends during your family's FAO tour.

When you move to a new country, you might have to adapt to multiple new cultures. Culture shock can happen inside the Embassy as well. Keep in mind you will be working in a different U.S. culture than you may be used to. The Country Team is made up of many different agencies who have their own languages and acronyms, customs and rituals. Remember you represent the Navy and Department of Defense, so strive to build positive relationships and consensus to advance U.S. interests.



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<sup>3</sup> Graphic sourced from Culture Shock: A Challenge of International Travel Experiences (<https://www.globalexperiences.com/blog/culture-shock>)

## Handling initial culture shock

People who enter a new culture can expect to go through a process of cultural adjustment. If you experience “culture shock” (emotional or physical discomfort experienced when dealing with unfamiliar environments and cultural dissimilarities), you are not alone – other FAO families have had similar experiences. Experiencing culture shock is normal. Even though the adjustment process is described in stages, not all people go through each stage and not necessarily in the order mentioned. The length and intensity of each stage will vary with each individual. Sometimes people go through these stages more than once.

<i>Time</i>		1 month	1-3 months	3-12 months	13-24 months	24+ months	Month before PCS
	<b>Pre Departure</b>	<b>Arrival</b>	<b>Realization</b>	<b>Shock</b>	<b>Recovery</b>	<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>Preparation</b>
<i>Significant Events</i>	Planning. Packing. Processing. Partying. Parting.	Big welcome. New office. New peers. New housing. Eager to ‘get going.’	Increased interaction with culture. Unfamiliar starts to stand out (sights, sounds, smells).	Expected to know responsibilities. Unfamiliar may become offensive, or unacceptable. Reality of cost of living sinks in.	Similarities and differences recognized and legitimized. Increased understanding of people.	Full duty. Internalized appreciation of host nation.	May feel less invested in work.  Anticipation of next activity.
<i>Emotional Reactions</i>	Excitement. Anticipation. Enthusiasm. Trepidation (of the unknown). Sadness about leaving.	Enthusiasm. Feels culture is fascinating. Excitement. Positive. Enthusiasm for colleagues.	Discouraged. Bewildered. Disenchanted. Restless. Inpatient. Uncertain. Neutral towards host country.	Negative feelings peak. Lethargy. Homesick. Irritability/Anger. Resentful. Feels “stuck.” Boredom.	Emotions even out and return to one’s “normal” baseline state. More comfortable. May have some burnout. Less lonely.	May occasionally feel burnt out.  Emotions should feel more stable.	Disinterest in local affairs. Worry. Disenchantment. Distracted.
<i>Observable Responses (Behavior and Attitudes)</i>	Feeling that you don’t want to leave. Doubting decision to leave. Detaching from friends. Interest in current responsibilities wanes.	Strong sense of mission. Tourist activity. Attempts to use language. Curiosity towards nationals. Suppresses negative views of country.	Complaining. May want to go home. Wishing for security in familiar activities. Withdrawal. Skepticism. Questions values (self, others, job). Increased alcohol use. More critical of culture.	Distrust of local nationals. Withdrawal. Rebellious attitudes towards local norms. Hostility. Hypercritical of local customs. Antagonistic. Antipathy toward host country. Stereotypes others.	More interest. Sense of humor about mistakes. May have resignation. More objectivity. Emerging, constructive attitudes and ideas. Feeling more competent with the language & customs.	More competent with host culture. Accepts one’s own cultural mishaps. May prefer host country to one’s own culture. May adopt new values or behaviors.	Move Planning: Household organization, packing, new location, schools, turning over job.  Decrease in productivity. Lack of interest in job or the opposite (high production).
<i>Physical Responses</i>	Trouble sleeping.	GI distress. Restlessness. Sleep problems.	Colds headaches. Increasing fatigue.	Insomnia/Excessive sleeping & fatigue. Appetite Changes. GI Distress,	Health stabilizes to “normal.”	Health stabilizes to “normal.”	Trouble sleeping.

## Cultural Adjustment

The Joint Military Attaché School Spouse Training Program developed the table above to describe the various stages of adjustment to life at a new post in a new cultural environment.

## Ethnic Identity and Adjustment<sup>4</sup>

Where are you with your adjustment to living overseas as an American? Have you considered your ethnic identity? Ethnic identity is a concept that refers to developed aspects of self that are the result of integrating values from the cultural environment. Where we were born and have lived, our upbringing, language, religion, media, food preferences, and celebrated holidays all contribute to the concept of ethnic identity.<sup>5</sup>

Integrating and adjusting to living overseas is an exciting opportunity for personal growth. If you have always lived within the same country that you ethnically identify with, the values and culture you inherited from your parents and the environment may not have ever been challenged. As we adjust to the host nation, we are forced to take inventory of our ethnic identity and develop, manipulate, or ignore aspects of who we are.<sup>6</sup> We must consider what behaviors and values will we stick with or hold onto, and which will we either temporarily or permanently discard. We may question who is right and whether we should compromise or alter our ways of thinking about the world. At the very least, we must determine how we will manage to temporarily adapt to the new environment and new realities in which we find ourselves. Whether you choose a temporary change in thinking or behaving; or adopt a more permanent outcome depends on many factors, including how culturally, socially, and psychologically committed you are to your ancestry and personal beliefs or values.<sup>7</sup> It may also depend on how much distance there is in the differences between our cultural identity and the general culture of the host nation.

For some, the host country values or beliefs and yours, to say it bluntly, may clash. You may be living in an environment where changing or being flexible with your ethnic identity is just asking too much. You may find it challenging to adapt to the host nation's sense of time, fashion preferences, and or social restrictiveness. You can decide to remain committed to the culture and values of your ancestry and coexist; however, when doing this, it is important to consider the psychological side effects that naturally result and remember not to completely detach.

Consider the following:

- Our behavioral expectations (if I do "x," I can expect "y") are influenced by our ethnic identity. Learning as much as possible about the host nation will help your sense of efficacy and confidence when navigating the social and cultural terrain.

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Karen E. Eberwein, Doctor of Psychology, developed this content for JMAS.

<sup>5</sup> Phinney, J. (1990). "Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research." *Psychological Bulletin*, 180(3), 499-514.

Phinney, J. (1992). "The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A New Scale for Use with Diverse Groups." *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7(2), 156-176.

Laroche, M., Kim, Ch., Tomiuk, M., & Belisle, D. (2005). "Similarities in Italian and Greek Multidimensional Ethnic Identity: Some Implications for Food Consumption." *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 22(2), 143-167.

Unger, J., Gallaher, P., Shakib, S., Ritt-Olson, A., Palmer, P., & Johnson, C. (2002). "The AHISMA Acculturation Scale: A New Measure of Acculturation for Adolescents in a Multicultural Society." *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 23(3), 225-251.

<sup>6</sup> Ruble, B. (1989). "Ethnicity and Soviet Cities." *Soviet Studies*, 41(3), 401-414.

<sup>7</sup> Constant, A, Gataullina L, & Zimmerman, K. (2006). *Ethnosizing Immigrants*. Institute for the Study of Labor. Bonn Germany

- Being different from the host or dominant culture impacts our sense of belonging and may leave us feeling lonely, different, and isolated. Because of this, it is very important to find a group of people with whom to identify; as tempting as it may be, do not isolate yourself.
- Consciously look for the reasons behind everything in the host culture that seem strange, difficult, confusing, or threatening. There are reasons the behaviors exist within the culture—seek to understand rather than criticize.
- Try to take every aspect of the experience and consider it from the host culture's perspective.
- Venting is fine, but be careful not to commiserate with those in a permanent state of culture shock and only focus on the negative. Additionally, keep in mind to whom you are speaking and in what context.
- Don't disparage the host culture. If possible, laugh off your mistakes and the cultural faux pas.
- Make friends with foreign nationals and try to develop connections to them – at your discretion and with a mind to safety and security.
- If feeling culture shock, strategize ways to stay connected and to give your mind and heart some respite.

### **Reverse Culture Shock.**

Whether you choose to integrate the host country's cultural values, assumptions, and beliefs with yours or not, and even if you are returning to your country of origin, know that you and your ethnic identity have changed. The process of reentry is different for different people. Many factors contribute to what you may experience when you return:

- Length of time away
- Positive or negative attachments to the country or post you are leaving
- Positive or negative attachments to the country or post you are returning too
- Is this a voluntary or involuntary return?
- Is this the first, third...time one is returning to the US?
- In addition to the cultural environment, have stages of life issues changed you while abroad (your age, your work role(s), did you become a parent or empty nester, are you facing the challenge of aging parents, etc.)?
- What are your extended family's circumstances now that you are returning to the US?

It is not uncommon to have reentry myths. Consider the following:

- Things work better at home (or in the US)
- It's cleaner at home (or in the US)
- People are more efficient at home (or in the US)
- Things will be the same as they were
- The personal relationships you left will be resumed
- People will be interested in hearing about our experiences
- People will value us because of our experiences
- People will be interested in our experiences
- We can cope more easily because it's "our" culture
- We have kept up to date with what is going on and know what to expect
- We can readily apply what we learned overseas to live in the US

To help with your reentry, make sure you get proper closure at your present location and attempt to avoid leaving with "unfinished business." Accept the stress that is coming, remember it is normal, and try to keep the trials and tribulations in perspective. Set your expectations low to make it easier on

yourself. Consider the physical environment you are leaving; tasks as “simple” as shopping at the grocery store may feel overwhelming because of the sensory differences you experience on reentry. Remember to be patient and not expect too much too soon.

**Some resources on reentry (courtesy of Department of State):**

- Pascoe, Robin. **Culture Shock! A parent’s guide**. Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company. 1993
- **Homeward Bound: A Spouse’s Guide to Repatriation**. North Vancouver, BC: Expatriate Press Limited. 2000
- Pallack, David C. and Van Reken, Ruth E. **Third Culture Kids**. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc. 2001.
- Storti, Craig. **The Art of Coming Home**. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc. 2001.
- [The Expat Expert](#)
- [Expat Exchange](#)
- [Global Nomads Virtual Village](#)
- [Associates of American Foreign Service Worldwide](#)

**Other Useful Websites & Resources (listing does not imply endorsement of the Department of the Navy or DoD)**

- [What’s Up With Culture?](#)  
Organized in modules, this excellent site is designed for American university students planning to study abroad and has sections related to adjustments overseas and upon return to the US as well as additional resource referrals.
- **Culture Shock!** This book series offers country specific information for individuals living and working abroad – they even offer a volume on the U.S.
- [Tales From A Small Planet Magazine](#) offers “what it’s really like to live there” reports on life from a variety of lenses in every country with U.S. diplomatic presence. These reports are available to the public and provide real-time, up-to-date information that may be useful prior to PCSing. You can also fill out a report once you’ve completed your time overseas.

# Be Proactive. Promote your adjustment!

## Before you leave

- Take time to say goodbye to the people who are important to you
- Be aware of your own feelings about leaving, as well as your expectations of the new assignment
- If possible, anticipate as many changes as possible in the upcoming move and plan ahead of time for them
- Prepare a will and leaving a power of attorney with someone you trust
- Select books about your country and remember to take language guides with you
- Think about what has worked for you in times when you have had to change
- Be prepared to try new things – language, making new friends, new foods



## On Station, Consider People as a Resource

- Find a confidant — someone you can trust
- Reach out for support from others in your new community
- Search for long-time American and foreign residents
- Are your neighbors a possible option?
- Follow up contacting friends-of-friends and families of foreign visitors you hosted while living in the US
- Keep in touch with your classmates
- Keep in touch with friends and family back home
- Remember: relationships take time to develop—also, it's tough (and takes time) to fit into an already established or bonded group

## Think About What Organizations You Would Enjoy Being a Part of?

- Bi-national centers and associations
- Churches
- College and alumni groups
- International or American spouse groups
- International organizations
- Post orientation programs
- University courses, lectures, or library activities
- Study groups: language, museum, arts & crafts, history & culture
- Movies, theatre, concerts, radio, & TV
- Tours of the city & country, local markets, restaurants, & shops
- Sporting events as spectator or participant
- Cultural programs, celebrations, or festivals Exchange programs



## **Make Use of Internet or Published Resources**

- Local newspapers, magazines, websites
- Tour books, handbooks, websites, blogs
- Host country literature: novels, short stories, historical fiction, history
- Subscriptions to US publications, International Herald Tribune

## **Cultivate the Proper Attitude**

- Learn the language
- What I am feeling is temporary and normal
- Focus on the positive
- Be empathic
- Look for the logic behind seemingly *strange* things
- Understand why the cultural differences exist
- Accept that you may have to change
- Accept you will make mistakes, you are human!
- Be forgiving of yourself
- Focus on what you can control
- Make sure you are being realistic (of yourself and others)
- Don't expect overnight changes and acceptance from those on station or in the community



## **Take Care of Yourself**

- Be kind to yourself (and those with whom you live and work)
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat properly
- Stay fit/yoga
- Meditate
- Take a break: read, play, relax
- Take breaks from the local environment/travel
- Find something you like to do, and do it



## Cross-Culture Etiquette and Protocol Resources

In addition to globally accepted norms within the diplomatic community, there are also many regionally specific cultural customs and norms with which you should begin to acquaint yourself. We recommend starting your research well ahead of time and casting a wide net. Below are a few websites that will help you get started. Keep in mind the intended audience of any site you visit as some information may not apply to your exact situation and circumstances. One of your best assets -- both before you go and during your time overseas -- is your curiosity. While we hope that we have answered some of your questions during our time together, our larger objective is to provide you a foundation for future questions.

## Web Resources for Etiquette & Protocol

To find the national and local national holidays for your country, visit: [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov) Click on the link for the embassy of your choice. Under the tab "About Us" click on "About the Embassy". From this page you can click on Holidays and find the list of holidays observed.

[Etiquette Scholar](#): provides information about the many challenges of the international dining events you may participate in. Note that the international dining etiquette button on the sidebar provides information on dining customs in individual countries.

[Kwintessential](#): provides global information on cultural customs and etiquette.

[eDiplomat](#): a useful reference for country or region-specific protocol. While not every country is represented, every region is covered. You can also discover the demographics and country information in the Post Reports. While they are not as current as those listed on the State Department's intranet, they are more accessible.

## Cross-Cultural Resources

- [CIA World Fact Book](#)
- [Library of Congress Country Studies](#)
- [Overseas Security Advisory Council](#)
- [Peace Corps](#)
- [Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets](#)
- [U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and Diplomatic Missions](#)
- [State.gov](#): Explore and discover regional and country specific information for everything from US policy to travel guidelines.

## Tips for Helping Adults Adjust to a New Culture

- The Department of State has opened a new group of coaches for overseas family living. Check out the [Big Purple Blob](#) for resources and video podcasts discussing overcoming challenges of life overseas.
- Keep your family traditions going to provide a sense of stability and continuity (e.g. pizza/movie nights, Saturday pancakes), but also look for new adventures to build your memories. CLO trips are a great way to ease into local outings but also ask some of the local staff what they recommend and how/where you might be able to best enjoy their country.
- Keep an eye on weight limitations but make room for the pieces of your home that make it a home. Take pictures, books, games, hobbies or gym equipment that you rely on. Ensure you can make your new place your own home at your new post.
- This is a great time to try new things, activities, outings. Join a poker group, host a game night, or participate in a local sports group. You don't have to be good at it, just be willing to keep an open mind. If you would rather do something on your own, what a great time to take up a new hobby – Embassy tours have created many a home brewer or cake decorator. See what you might be capable of doing when you can't just run to the store and buy it.
- Conversely, have a special skill to teach others? More than likely, there are at least a couple of folks interested in learning from you.
- Stay flexible, keep cool. Problems and frustrations will happen! Things might not get fixed on your timeline; American customer services are, well, American. You might run into a herd of cows on the highway. Things happen, and while often frustrating at the time, they might just become some of your favorite memories of your time there.
- Try local foods, different foods from the grocery store. Yes, you can buy almost anything on Amazon these days, and it's a blessing. But you might also find something new to love, and years later, randomly find it elsewhere and experience the enjoyment all over again. Stretch yourself.
- Feeling homesick? That's OK, we all do at some point. 6 months into a tour tends to be the low point. The honeymoon period has worn off, and everything is annoying you. Take a step back, breathe. That's a great time to start planning a FEML trip or other travel; something to look forward. Need to order a bunch of peanut butter and re-watch all of Friends? Do it, give yourself some time, but don't wallow. It will get better, and believe it or not, you might even come to miss some of the things that were annoying you so much.
- Potluck power: What's your potluck superpower? If you have something that's a winner every time, make that your "thing" for Embassy potlucks. Don't hesitate to share your culture and heritage with others! And head's up, international days at the international schools are the best!

## Single or Dual-Military Parenthood<sup>8</sup>

**Single Parents:** Single parents are assigned using the same procedures as other Service members. Navy Personnel Command recognizes the unique situations that occur when single parents are assigned to some types of duty and duty locations; however, a preferential assignment policy regarding single parents would be discriminatory toward other members.

**Dual-mil parent considerations:** Every reasonable effort will be made for military couples to move together and establish a joint household whenever possible. Assignments will be made to fill valid Navy requirements, considering the needs of the military family, as well as the manning of the losing and gaining activities; therefore, collocation and immediate reassignment may not always be possible.

**Family care plans:** [The family care plan](#) is a blueprint that describes how your family should be cared for while you're away. Although family care plans aren't required for all service members, they are required if you're a single parent, a dual-military family with children younger than 19, or if you have sole responsibility for caring for a disabled or elderly family member. You and your designated caregiver should work together on this document to be sure it includes all necessary information.

Also keep these documents current and available to your designated caregiver:

- **Power of attorney:** This authorizes your caregiver to make parenting decisions on your behalf for a specified period of time, including decisions related to medical care. A POA is required as part of your family care plan.
- **Military ID cards:** Make sure each family member age 10 and older is registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and has a current ID card. Caregivers do not get their own ID cards while caring for your family. If heading overseas, service members may be able to obtain ID cards for their children younger than 10. Check with your local CAC office.
- **Agent letter of authorization:** Caregivers can access on-installation facilities to support your family members in their care, but they must have a letter of authorization signed by the commanding officer of the installation. You can request this letter through the ID card office at your installation.

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<sup>8</sup> MILPERSMAN 1300-1000 should be your first stop for instruction and Navy policy references. From the MILSPERSMAN 1300-1000 and other sections.

## Tips for Helping Kids Adjust to a New Culture<sup>9</sup>

Once you have your assignment, continue your research and get your child involved. Learn as much about your new country as possible, using books, videos, websites, and other resources. Ask the community liaison office (CLO) coordinator, or your sponsor, to put you in contact with others at post with children of similar ages so your child can begin connecting to new friends. If possible, obtain photos of your new house and school. Help alleviate any fears by providing your child with visuals of your new environment.

**Getting Ready for The Move.** For those headed to Diplomatic Posts, connecting with the Community Liaison Office can provide a wealth of post-specific information including about KidVids, videos made by young foreign service videographers between the ages of 10 and 18. Videos illustrate life at post from a kid's perspective and cover housing, schools, activities, shopping, and more. You can find them once you have orders by contacting the DoS Overseas Briefing Center. Kids who watch these videos can better envision what life at post might be like, helping to calm fears and set realistic expectations.

For those going to Overseas Staffs, work with your sponsor, explore the available online resources, and reach out to the Fleet and Family Service Center, MWR, and local schools for information about life at that base.

Arrange for some training to support the transition to your new location. In a study of what Foreign Service youth liked least about overseas life, 35% mentioned moving, 28% leaving behind friends, and 28% language barriers. How do you make moving less stressful? Encourage curiosity and discovery, arrange for age-appropriate language training, whether via videos, books, phone apps, computers, tutors, or formal classes. Register them for family classes at the Transition Center so they learn what to expect of embassy and overseas life.

In our community, we know that assignments can change at the last minute due to the needs of the service. Wait until the FAO has orders before making definite statements about your destination. For children, reality sets in when a move timetable is put in place. Share with your child what that timetable looks like for the family. Are you moving directly to post with no stops after leaving your present home? Are you visiting family and friends along the way? What plans involve your child's preferences? Keeping kids involved, even at an early age, can help them to find the excitement in moving to a new place.

Moving is a process and does not happen in one day or even one week. Moving involves preparation, packing and shipments, airplane travel, and arrival at a new post where it takes several more weeks until shipments arrive. Talk with your child about every aspect of the move, the projected timing given where you are assigned, and the different shipments that may be involved.

The Transition Center also offers a downloadable resource. [The Amazing Adventures of \[Me\]: A Children's Guided Journal to an International Move](#) along with the [Parent's Companion](#) to help your child navigate this change. For elementary school-aged children, this resource helps facilitate discussion between children and parents as they process and prepare for international relocation. Journal activities encourage curiosity and discovery and games prompt discussion and exploration. The journal, based on resilience literature, leads children through the phases of an international move and grows their sense of belonging in the process. In addition, the journal offers quotes from real kids who live overseas! Parents will also find

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<sup>9</sup> This section borrows directly from the [Foreign Service Assignment Notebook](#), 2022.

a Parent's Companion Guide which provides information and context to help facilitate discussion and understand the emotional process and journey of your child.

No matter what their age, encourage conversation about how your child is feeling. Listen carefully to them. It is normal to be sad about leaving friends, excited about going to a new place, worried about a new school, anxious during move day, and more. Try to maintain the daily routine; this can help children feel more secure. You may want to start new rituals or traditions that can be continued wherever you are.

During the rush of pre-departure preparations, take time to help your children say goodbye to the people and places they love most. Suggestions from families include collecting contact information from friends, creating a family online webpage so friends can follow new adventures, and having a goodbye party for each child and his or her friends. Creative ideas for maintaining connection abound in today's interconnected world.

How to say goodbye is a great conversation to have. Saying goodbye makes your child focus on "who" they consider as their good friends. Pay attention to how your child is feeling about not seeing their best friend every day. Talk with your child as they take time to consider which people in their life they will miss. Find ways to give closure by saying goodbye to friends, neighbors, teachers, babysitters, and extended family. Emphasize to your child that it does not necessarily mean these important people are gone forever. It is important for your child to understand that although you are moving, their immediate family will remain the same. Family goodbyes are a bit different because you most likely will see family again.

A technique that can help over the long term is emphasis to young children that they will see friends again in other parts of the world. Then, make the effort to stay in touch and in contact with friends you've met at post or on staff. This can help ease apprehension for subsequent tours overseas and reinforces that friends are made for life, not just a tour.

**Pack Out Tips.** Involving your kids in the pack out can help provide them with a sense of control, the ability to make some decisions on their own, and letting them generate ideas about how to decorate their new rooms or what items they can show and share with new friends.

Visual aids like checklists or charts of things to be done can be helpful; draw pictures and use stickers for the youngest kids.

Allow your child to select items for their suitcase. For the unaccompanied air baggage (UAB), allow your child to "include one small box of their favorite items (toys, books, favorite pillow, etc.). The rest comes as household goods. Use the [Parent's Companion to "The Amazing Adventures of \[Me\]"](#) to help your child understand the differences in shipping speeds and involve them in small choices about the shipments.

You may also identify some items that your child can donate or give away to charity. Knowing that belongings are going to a good cause encourages the gift of giving, kindness, and social responsibility. Make this event a collaborative effort within your family.

Pack outs and the actual moving day are always very intense times. Explain the moving process to your child. As a parent, consider what happens to your child during moving day. Do they watch the packers or stay at a friend's or relative's house? If they are home, who keeps an eye on them? If you feel it is important for your child to be part of the pack out day, explore letting them stay home from school (with

the school's permission and understanding of the emotional importance of being home for the big move day!).

Some suggested items for inclusion in your air freight (unaccompanied air baggage or UAB) or carry-on bags:

- Children's books, especially large story collections, which give lots of mileage
- Tablet, MP3/4 player, laptop computer, and/or e-book reader
- Audio books, very comforting in a new environment
- A few videos or DVDs (while old technology, many families still rely on DVDs overseas, with DVD player – you can check with post to see if streaming U.S. channels is possible)
- Building toys (LEGO®-type bricks), they are small, light, and enjoyable for a range of ages
- Extra clothes and shoes for the start of the school year
- Board games, travel sizes are best
- School supplies, Crayons, markers, colored pencils, sketchbooks, coloring books, sticker books
- Stuffed animals for comfort and familiarity in a new bedroom
- Lightweight sports equipment, other small outdoor toys
- Decorations for your child's bedroom that make the new house feel like home

If your household effects are delayed—and it is wise to assume that this may happen — find out if you can mail additional packages to yourself. Since storage space at post's "mail room is typically limited, check with someone at post and arrange for boxes arriving early to be picked up."

**Travel With Children.** When able, take your children's needs into account when scheduling travel. Some families prefer to arrive shortly before school starts so children will have the chance to make friends and adjust to their new time zone and routine. If arriving during a holiday period, try to arrange for your children to meet others their age. Single parents may want to make prior arrangements for time off upon arrival to locate childcare options, help children adjust, or schedule travel for a time when a trusted friend or family member can come along and help for a week or two.

Make sure you know the regulations concerning rest stops, upgrades, and other travel details so that you can choose the best option for your family. Check the JTR. Some families prefer to travel directly to post, feeling that they are all too exhausted to enjoy a vacation. Other families plan travel breaks to enjoy time for family togetherness and relaxation after the rush of getting everything ready. If you expect a long wait at an airport, research the facilities in advance. Make note of observation decks, play areas, hotels that allow you to use the facilities (many now offer "day passes"), or other kid-friendly features.

Planning can make long journeys easier. Below are tips from seasoned travelers:

1. Explain your travel plans at each child's level, including length of flights, stops, what you will do, people you will see, and so on. It may help to write plans on a calendar so they can visualize the trip. Agree upon and review an easy-to-remember contingency plan in case your family gets separated at any point. If you have a pet, explain to your child the pet travel plan (when the pet will arrive).
2. Expect challenges. Your children may not sleep well, they may be fidgety, they may be nervous and curious at the same time and exhibit different behaviors. Being attentive to their needs can help make for a smoother flight and travel experience.
3. Get as much help from the airline as possible. If you have a stroller or infant carrier, ask to gate check it so you can use it right up until boarding the plane. Request help if you need to change

planes, particularly if you are traveling alone with children. The airline may be able to transport your family in a motorized airport vehicle.

4. Some families make a point of requesting bulkhead seats. These seats offer advantages such as more leg room and a place for smaller children to take a break from sitting. There is no one in front of these seats to be annoyed by talking or kicking. There are, however, downsides to bulkhead seats that may negate the advantages: inaccessible carry-on bags during take-off and landing; arm rests that cannot be raised; the fact that other passengers may cut through the space; and the policies of some airlines that require the floor to always be clear. Weigh the advantages against the disadvantages and determine what will work best for your family.
5. Pack at least one change of clothes for each person (including adults) in accessible carry-on luggage. Increase this to two or more outfits for longer trips. Consider putting your children in “disposable clothes,” old t-shirts and leggings that you can throw away at the end—or in the middle—of the trip. Pack sweaters or sweatshirts for cold planes and air-conditioned airports.
6. Order children’s meals from the airline when you confirm your flights but bring enough food for mealtimes anyway. Meals may not arrive when your child is hungry, and the food offerings might not be to your child’s liking.
7. Technique only: bring cups with lids or sports bottles for each person (including adults). Immediately transfer any airline beverages into these containers to avoid spills. Bring plenty of water, especially if you are traveling to or through countries without potable water. Keep in mind that airport security rules may dictate that your containers must be empty at the checkpoints and then can be filled afterwards.
8. For small children, many airlines allow for the installation of car seats in the standard airline seat. If your child is used to sacking out in the car, you may want to bring your car seat into the cabin for the trip. Adapters such as from [gogobabyz.com](http://gogobabyz.com) convert car seats into a rolling seat that make air travel much easier. For older kids, Child Airplane Travel Harness adapters are key pieces of kit to keep your little ones safe.
9. Let your children choose some items for the carry-on bags, then finish packing them yourself. Adapt the following suggested items to the most recent security constraints, your child’s interests, and your tolerance for cleaning up:”
  - Snacks, drinks (something for your children to eat, drink, or chew during takeoff and landing to help relieve ear pressure)
  - Wipes
  - Thick paper towels or whatever you prefer to clean up spills and messes
  - Resealable plastic bags (for wet or dirty clothes, trash, wet towels used to clean up spills, etc.)

Toys or activities that have worked for other families include:

- Books
- Travel-sized magnetic drawing boards
- Tablet or laptop computer with games or movies (remember the charger!)
- Other electronic handheld games, with extra batteries
- E-book readers and headphones
- Paper, coloring books, or sticker books, crayons, markers, colored pencils, or small packs of other favorite art materials

- Travel-sized board games

**Arrival at Post.** During the first few days, be considerate of your child’s “settling in” experience. If invited to “no kids” social events, feel free to decline such invitations until you can identify a reliable caregiver to watch your children. Ideally, you have already explained your circumstances to your sponsors or new colleagues before arriving, and they have thoughtfully scheduled events accordingly.

Explore your surroundings with your children. As soon as you can, find something new and fun to do as a family. It will help turn your minds away from what you left behind and toward the new adventures ahead. Also schedule in some quiet family time together to do the same sorts of activities you have done in the past. Keep up the family rituals. Something as simple as reading a chapter each night from a long book that you started in the United States can give a sense of continuity and sameness during the upheaval of moving.

## Age-Related Issues

**Infants and Preschoolers.** This age group is the easiest to move in terms of their adjustment to a new country. Young children take their cues from their parents. If you are comfortable with the move, they usually will be too. Young children may regress for a time during a move. Do not be surprised or upset if toddlers behave badly, wet the bed, want bottles, cling to your legs, or become weepy and cranky. Routines and familiar objects and food will help ease the transition to the new, unfamiliar environment. Give them extra loving care and attention and take care of yourself. Moving is stressful so take a deep breath and give yourself and your family time to adjust.

**Elementary School Children.** From this age on up, schools play an important part in choosing assignments. Children are a wonderful bridge to the people your family meets at a new post. School communities are often an important part of a U.S. mission community. Recognize that kids will more readily explore this new community without fear and be eager to introduce you, as parents, to their newfound friends. Embracing these new friendships gives work/life balance to your family setting. Getting together with other families teaches children how to interact with people of all ages and to create new bonds where extended family is absent.

Children in this age group may have difficulty leaving a familiar house or packing up their things. They are beginning to develop lasting friendships which make separations more difficult. Find ways to help them stay in touch with the friends they are leaving while developing new friendships at your new post.

Since there will be many things they do not know how to do in a new country, focus on acquiring abilities that make them comfortable in their new country such as what coins look like and counting in a new currency. If school is a challenge initially, work with the school to identify a tutor, get books that support their learning, use the school library, and meet with your child’s teacher on a regular basis.

**Pre-Teens.** Pre-teens are in the process of developing a cultural identity, which will become a big part of who they are. If your family lives primarily overseas during these years, consider frequent trips so pre-teens can reconnect with their “home” culture. Keeping in touch with peers may also help.

Sports teams and sports clubs, youth groups, school clubs, involvement in the school play, the robotics team, musical groups, music lessons, dance and theater, and many more help to keep pre-teens active and engaged in the community.



Finding a peer group is also of great importance. Help connect with other parents to create fun activities for your children. Host or attend family game nights! The resilience lessons of these gatherings - family connection, communication, good sportsmanship, celebration, and forgiveness - create positive memories, teach children problem-solving, and encourage family communication.

A Youth Sponsor can also help with the transition. For our elementary, preteen, and teen community, the Youth Sponsorship Program adds in an element of social support. We strive to contact youths before they move, so when they arrive, we can immediately connect them with peers who are already participating in the installation, school, or community programs. Connect through your School Liaison Officer for School-Based Programs and your Youth Program for installation programs. Additional information can be found at [Navy Child & Youth Education Services](#) website.

**Older Teens.** Many will agree that the older a child gets, the harder it is to transition from post to post or post to the United States. The “routine” of their schooling, as well as preparation for college may be disrupted. Families have found success when planning assignments whereby the last two years of high school are not interrupted by a move. Involving your teenager in transition planning and school choice can avoid high levels of frustration.

If your teen will complete high school overseas, be sure to check on potential colleges well in advance. Plan to visit colleges and universities on summer or spring breaks, attend virtual tours and explore websites. If you are transitioning to the United States during high school, make sure that all credits earned overseas will transfer and all requirements will be met for graduation. It is estimated that the average military family moves three times more often than the average non-military family. These frequent moves can cause children to miss out on extracurricular activities and to face challenges in meeting graduation requirements.

The [Military Interstate Compact](#) will ensure that the children of military families are afforded the same opportunities for educational success as other children and are not penalized or delayed in achieving their educational goals by inflexible administrative and bureaucratic practices. States participating in the Compact would work to coordinate graduation requirements, transfer of records and course placement and other administrative policies. The [Service School Liaison](#) can also help with transition challenges.

Getting a driver’s license, having a part-time job, and participating in specialized school activities, including sports teams, are all “normal” teenage activities in the United States. These are not always possible overseas. When looking at new assignments, identify schools with programs that match your child’s interests. Research “on the ground” opportunities to expand your child’s knowledge of the world. Regardless of whether the post is large or small, help your child discover a group of potential friends and activities. Mobility is important for this age group, so try to find places where your teen can get around safely alone, whether walking, cycling, or using public transportation (if post’s security posture allows).

**Your "Home" Culture.** Regardless of where one was born, we all have connections with family in a “home” country with its own unique culture, be that the United States or another country of birth. Make every effort for your children to experience life in the “home” culture. Plan to make trips back to the “home” country and keep in touch with relatives and friends. Make a point of celebrating U.S. holidays in traditional ways or holidays from another country either represented in your family or from a past assignment. Children who grow up overseas do not have a lifetime of experience in the United States or any other country. They only have the experience you provide them with.

**Leaving Post.** When your assignment nears its conclusion, make time to follow the same leaving and preparation procedures as before. If assigned to Washington, DC or another U.S. city, your children may face difficulties in returning to the United States. We often forget that after years away, the United States is another foreign country to them. They are not returning home in the same way that you are. Prepare them as thoroughly as you would for any other post.

**Outcomes for Our Children.** Children can benefit tremendously from their overseas experiences. They learn other languages, experience other cultures first-hand, enjoy travel opportunities, meet people from diverse backgrounds, and embrace an international lifestyle that ultimately makes them Third Culture Kids (TCKs). Research shows that TCKs tend to become resourceful, open-minded, and flexible. They are adaptable and usually communicate well with adults. They often have a greater understanding and tolerance of differences, as well as a more developed social conscience. They have an extended network of friends and stay in touch via email, social media, and other methods. They enjoy close family ties. They benefit from outstanding educational opportunities. They may gain strong feelings of self-confidence from their abilities to adapt to new situations. Their international experience and expertise may provide a competitive advantage in an increasingly global economy.

It's amazing what children pick up as they move around the world that later impacts who they become as adults. Children are naturally keen observers of all that surrounds them. As a result, children who grow up with the influences of foreign lands display heightened cultural understanding. Adventure abounds when children combine curiosity about the world with the experience of an internationally mobile childhood. And when celebrated and embraced by family, children can thrive. Parents who set a positive example for dealing with the ups and downs of the foreign affairs lifestyle help their children develop a resilient outlook – one that allows them to benefit from the challenges and unique experiences that come from living abroad.

## Additional Resources to Help Kids Adjust Overseas

- Military OneSource for [Moving with Children](#)
- [Service School Liaison](#) Officers at US bases can also provide support to parents and children acclimating to the new location.
- The U.S. Department of State provides valuable resources for families navigating international relocations through its [Living Abroad and Returning Home](#) page. This resource offers guidance on adjusting to life in a foreign country, coping with cultural transitions, and managing the challenges of repatriation. It includes practical advice for individuals and families, particularly those with school-aged children, to ensure a smooth transition both when moving abroad and upon returning to the United States.
- Additionally, the Department of State provides [Child Mental Health Resources](#). This page offers a collection of materials designed to support the mental well-being of children and adolescents living overseas. It includes expert guidance on topics such as managing stress, addressing emotional and behavioral challenges, and finding professional support when needed. These resources aim to assist parents, educators, and caregivers in fostering resilience and emotional health in children adjusting to international environments.

# Chapter 6: Living in a New Culture

No two FAO families are alike, but since 100% of the FAO Community's readiness is connected to our people, we want to ensure that every FAO and FAO family member is safe and thriving wherever they are stationed.

## Transportation Options and Considerations

FAOs experience varying situations when PCSing to Embassies worldwide. Sometimes it can take months for a shipped vehicle to arrive, be diplomatically accredited, and released for use from customs. When returning to the US, vehicles purchased overseas may not be allowed to be imported into the US, or may take months to arrive and be delivered. Based on these different circumstances, FAOs should consider:

1. **What's Best Based on my Orders?** Talk to the people who are at your new duty station ahead of time. See if they recommend shipping a car, or if you can buy a new or used one there. You could store your current car in the US, depending on regulations. Maybe you don't need a car where you are moving, and you could use public transport.
2. **What's Available to me from the Embassy or Command?** While you wait for your car to arrive or be authorized for use, you could possibly use public transportation (depending on the country), schedule an Embassy-funded motor pool or carpool, or discuss the options for GCC approval of DAO or SCO vehicles for Duty-to-Domicile use. CAUTION: Duty-to-Domicile policies must be thoroughly reviewed to ensure that all required approvals are met prior to use.
3. **Can I take advantage of legislation to help me lower my costs?** For your next PCS from the US, you could consider use of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), which allows an active-duty member to terminate a US vehicle lease agreement without paying early termination charges or penalties. The SCRA even allows the servicemember's dependents to break the lease. This law can be used only in certain cases, including CONUS to OCONUS PCS orders.

The government provides Dislocation Allowance (DLA) to partially reimburse a servicemember, with or without dependents, for the expenses incurred in relocating the member's household during a PCS. This allowance is in addition to all other allowances authorized by the JTR and may be paid in advance. The 2024 DLA for an O-4 is \$3916 (without dependents) and \$4504 (with dependents). FAOs may consider using some of this money to apply to a rental vehicle while awaiting the arrival of a shipped vehicle, or putting a down payment on a different vehicle in the case of a vehicle sale.

You may be required to obtain special auto insurance (or multiple policies) based on your location, local laws, and Embassy policies. The best source of information is the person you are replacing.

## Friendships, Dating, and Joint Social Environments

One of the most human things we do is form attachments. It is an essential part of mental health. Establishing your personal life so that you can form those attachments, platonic or not, is perhaps the most important thing you will do at Post. For those of us without a ready-made family, this can feel like a daunting task. Take into consideration embassy size, your rank, position at the embassy, security

clearance, and physical security environment. All these factors influence, and can limit, your potential friendship and dating pool.

As members of the military, we have several regulations that guide and often restrict who we can enter familiar relationships with. If we seek out foreigners, we may have reporting requirements. If we make connections with other service members, we may run up against regulations that affect those relationships. And connecting with Americans at the Embassy or out in town can have restrictions as well.

So where does that leave us? As FAOs persistently move forward, we rely on our good character, moral compass, and intuition to make the right decisions. If in doubt, seek advice from a FAO mentor. Many have gone before you and no doubt have encountered a similar situation.

Love may be blind, but you do not have to be! When beginning a relationship or friendship with a foreigner, consider what motivations that person might have in entering a relationship with a U.S. military member. Though we may want to believe altruistic motives, that may not be the case. This is why if you enter into “close and continuing contact” with a foreigner, you have to report this through State and Defense channels. Every embassy has a counter-intelligence working group (CIWG). The CIWG will have definite right and left limits on contact with foreigners. The CIWG may further refine what that embassy’s definition of “close and continuous contact” may be, down to the number of nights you spend with that person. This may seem intrusive. As officers with security clearances, we are foreign intelligence targets. This includes people affiliated with our closest allies and partners. Complying with State and Defense Departments’ counter-intelligence directives is the cost of doing business for FAOs overseas.

As FAOs, we know building relationships to further the defense relationship brings us into contact with foreigners including host nation military and government employees, diplomatic missions, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, and expatriates. It is a delicate balance between self-care and effectively doing our jobs. Relationships with foreigners can be very fulfilling. Just realize it is not that simple. You have a host of requirements should the relationship cross into “close and continuous.”

When it comes to the other military members at Post, your position will likely dictate who you can establish friendships with. At smaller embassies, it may very well be that the person you have the most in common with is another military member. But if you are the Senior Defense Official, it is best to keep it professional. That aside, if the friendship is with another military member in another small unit, you need to consider how this relationship affects good order and discipline. Keeping it professional inside the office is required, particularly when the friendship transgresses enlisted and officer ranks. If the relationship does cross that boundary, be the leader we expect you to be and approach the SDO or FAO mentor for guidance.

## Single FAOs Overseas

Being single abroad has its moments. While your colleagues are juggling partner work schedules and children’s school events, you can explore new countries with no agenda but your own. Being stationed overseas also often creates a tight knit community of colleagues and coworkers that become like family.

Dating in a foreign country can be fun as well and provide unique opportunities to immerse yourself in a new culture. Facing a move to a foreign country while single though entails vastly different challenges than moving with a partner and/or family. Not only is it difficult to physically pack and move on your own, but there's a very different set of emotional and social challenges to overcome to achieve a fulfilling single social life abroad.

Single FAO anxiety over moving abroad often revolves around questions of loneliness: How will I make friends? Will I have a social life? Will I be able to date? How will I maintain my current family or partner relationships over long distances? This anxiety is normal but deserves attention. If you're single, it's imperative that you prioritize your social health early on at overseas assignments to ensure you have friends or colleagues you can turn to when struggling. Everyone gets lonely, regardless of their relationship status, but being overseas can make feelings of isolation seem extreme. Distance and time zones make it more challenging to reach out to friends and family in times of social and emotional distress. So, before you move to an overseas assignment, think through your own coping mechanisms for social isolation, plan ahead for maintaining your social health, and consider these tips:

- You won't be the only single one. There will be other single people at your Post/Base and in the diplomatic community you interact with. Opportunities to be social and make friends will be available, so don't panic.
- Utilize Embassy services. The Community Liaison Office (CLO) is there to support all members of the Embassy community, regardless of their familial/relationship status. If you need a boost making friends and meeting new people, ask your CLO to arrange a singles-only event and suggest they coordinate events with other diplomatic missions to widen the social network.
- Research where to live. Having neighbors with similar lifestyles/interests as you or having the ability to easily reach social settings can impact your morale. If you're part of an embassy housing pool, you may not have a choice in housing, but a good housing board will do its best to give you some options and accommodate your requests.
- Keep up your clubs, hobbies, and interests. Wherever you're stationed, you're likely to find a social circle similar to what's in the U.S. based on hobbies and interests. Even in the most remote countries, there will be local sports teams, hash runners, book clubs, churches, cross-fit gyms, etc.
- Make a long-range leave plan. If there are certain holidays or events that are important to your mental and social health, plan ahead to spend those with family and friends. Be upfront with your leadership and mentors about these types of social and familial priorities.
- Dating and marrying foreigners is (usually) ok. Meeting the love of your life while overseas is absolutely possible and does happen. Be smart, though, about deciding who to date and what you share with them (see below for warnings). There are several Navy FAOs who can provide advice on the administrative process for marrying a foreign national if you need it.
- Keep in touch with family and friends back home. Modern technology has made video chatting and maintaining communication over distance easier than ever. If regular communication is important to you, set up a schedule for phone/video calls with your family and/or friends and

prioritize maintaining that schedule. If you're struggling with loneliness, consider asking family or friends to visit or even live with you (see Member of Household section below).

- Ask for a mentor in a similar situation as you. Whatever your relationship status and goals are, there is a FAO who will understand. Ask your detailer to help you find a mentor that can provide advice based on your specific circumstances. You should never feel alone.

**WARNING:** Unfortunately, there are times the romance may drain out of your foreign relationship.

Counter-intelligence and 'honeypot' threats are real. Be conscious of what you're sharing with new friends and dates. If you are entering into a relationship with a foreigner, you are required to declare that to your SSO. At an Embassy, you also have to declare that with the RSO and they may request details about your new significant other.

- Marrying a foreign national can also affect what orders you'll be eligible for in the future. Ask your detailer for specifics.
- If you're at a joint base or an Embassy with a large military presence, be mindful of fraternization and know that fraternization rules differ between services.
- Secrets don't stay secret. This is especially true at small Embassies. Overseas posts tend to create small, close-knit communities amongst Americans. The downside of that unity is that gossip and rumor can (and often does) run rampant. Your relationships may not stay private.

Remember that the FAO Community Family Ombudsmen don't just serve FAO spouses and children. You can reach out to your regional Ombudsman via the Community Kneeboard card and ensure that you are added to the distro list.

## Getting Married Overseas

Getting married overseas to a foreign-born spouse is a unique process with special considerations. Below are some guidelines to help you during the process. Additionally, the Navy FAO Community Developed the “Spouse Citizenship Gouge” which can be found on [Navy FAO APAN](#).

**Note:** *Keep in mind that if you are at an embassy and fall under COM authority, you have to report/seek permission from both the military chain of command and the Embassy. This section is intended to guide you but you are responsible for ensuring you meet all current requirements and policies.*

**Foreign Contact Report:** If you’re in a committed relationship with a foreigner national (i.e. cohabitating, long term relationship, etc.), you’ll need to report this through your various security chains of command. The SSO’s office at your Combatant Command can assist you through the process of filing all required documentation. Also touch base with the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the embassy and/or the Air Force Office of Special Investigations/Naval Criminal Investigative Service/Army Criminal Investigative Service (AFOSI/NCIS/ACID), as required.

**Permission/Application:** All members contemplating marriage outside the United States to a foreign national will apply for permission to the area commander in the area where the foreign national lives. [MILPERSMAN 5352-030 Marriage of Military Personnel to Foreign Nationals](#) and the pertinent area commander instruction which may outline the required steps: Counseling, Application, and Background investigations.

The application will need to be endorsed by your command on letterhead and then sent to the pertinent naval component command for approval.

### **Pre-Marriage Considerations:**

- **Create a USCIS Account:**
  - Start gathering data for the [I-130 Petition for an Alien Relative form](#) to begin the visa process for your spouse.
    - Note: You cannot file the petition until officially married, but a draft of the form should be submitted as part of the permission request.
- **Request Permission for Embassy Housing:**
  - Get permission for your future spouse to live in embassy housing.
    - Common Requirement: Typically involves HR/RSO at the embassy and a security screening/background check of your spouse.
- **Review Embassy Requirements for Marriage:**
  - Visit your relevant usembassy.gov website to understand the marriage requirements for U.S. citizens in your host country.

- Common Requirement: Likely need an Affidavit of Eligibility to Marry, signed by a consular officer at the embassy and countersigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **Fulfill Local Marriage Requirements:**
  - Follow the local requirements for marriage, such as medical tests, blood tests, and scheduling a registered officiant.

#### **Post-Marriage Considerations:**

- **Certified Translation of Marriage Certificate:**
  - If your marriage certificate is not in English, get a certified translation.
- **Register Spouse in DEERS:**
  - Go to the local ID card office to register your spouse in the DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System).
- **Update Page 2 RED/DA in NSIPS:**
  - Update your Page 2 RED/DA in the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS).
- **Apply for Command Sponsorship:**
  - Note: 36 months at your duty station is required to be eligible for command sponsorship.
    - Without approval, your entitlements are for single rate (not dependent) and your spouse may not be eligible for FEML or travel allowance.
- **Update SGLI:**
  - Ensure your Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) reflects your spouse as a dependent.
- **Begin the Visa application Process:**
  - Submit the [I-130 Petition for an Alien Relative form](#) to start the visa process.
    - Be aware that visa processing times can be long, so start the process as soon as possible.
    - Once approved, USCIS will send your file to the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC). The NVC will guide your spouse's case to the U.S. consulate for a visa interview.
    - For more information, refer to the DoS Bureau of Consular Affairs' [The Immigrant Visa Process](#) guide.

Keep in mind that to apply for the Defense Attaché program, [the servicemember and all immediate family members must be U.S. citizens](#). Residency requirements and naturalization process for U.S. citizenship can take anywhere from 2-5 years. Additionally, to avoid conflict of interest, current Defense Attache Service policy ensures servicemembers are not placed into a country where the service member or the service member's family was born or previously was a citizen, has family currently living there, or has business ties there. NOTE: This does not apply to Security Cooperation Office (SCO) tours.

The process is long and challenging. This article is meant to guide you through the process' and make you aware of the myriad factors to consider. If you'd like a sample application memorandum, check with OPNAV N51 FAO Policy POC.



## LGB Considerations and Same-Sex Couples

DOD Instruction 1315.18, *Procedures for Military Personnel Assignments*, states that “Assignments will be made for all Service members without regard to their color, race, religious preference, ethnic background, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender, consistent with requirements for physical capabilities”, except in cases where SOFA protections are not extended to same sex spouses. For further information and country specifics, please refer to the [Foreign Clearance Guide](#), or contact your Detailer with questions.

**Note:** Realize that assignments to Country-Team positions will rely on Department of State’s policy for assignments, and these policies can modify or trump SOFA considerations. Upfront conversation between the FAO, family members, and the Detailer is essential for assignments to less tolerant locations.

**Department of State (DoS) LGB Information:** LGB travelers can face unique challenges when traveling abroad. Laws and attitudes in some countries may affect safety and ease of travel. Legal protections vary from country to country. Many countries do not legally recognize same-sex marriage. More than seventy countries consider consensual same-sex sexual relations a crime, sometimes carrying severe punishment.

Consult the [LGB Travel Information](#) page and [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) webpages for country-specific potential challenges.

The following resources from DoS are available for LGB personnel:

- The Overseas Briefing Center (OBC): Maintains resources for LGB employees and their family members. Members of the foreign affairs community can email [FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov](mailto:FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov) for more information.
- DoS [Resources for LGB Adoptions](#): While the U.S. federal law does not prohibit LGB U.S. citizens or same-sex couples from being adoptive parents. However, some foreign countries do not permit LGB individuals or same-sex couples to adopt so additional research is required.
- Country Specific [LGB Traveler Information](#): Consular Affairs maintains Country Specific Travel Information. To learn about LGB considerations in a specific country, navigate to that country, and click “Local Laws & Special Circumstances.”

## Military adoption benefits, process and other considerations

Adopting a child can take several months to years and can cost thousands of dollars. But the happy returns of a child are limitless. Military life is no longer a barrier to adoption as it once was, and service members have several military adoption benefits. Check Military One Source’s information on [Eight Things Service Families Should Know](#). Also see [NAVADMIN 008/23](#) and [DTM 23-001](#) for updated paternal leave policy for non-birth parents, in the cases of adoption or foster care placement.

## Birth of U.S. Citizens and Non-Citizen Nationals Abroad

If you are a [U.S. citizen \(or non-citizen national\) and have a child overseas](#), you should report their birth at the nearest [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) as soon as possible so that a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) can be issued as an official record of the child's claim to U.S. citizenship or nationality. This includes all FAOs having children at overseas bases as well.

CRBAs are issued to both U.S. citizens and non-citizen nationals. A CRBA documents that the child was a U.S. citizen at birth. The CRBA neither serves as proof of the identity of the child's legal parents nor is it intended to serve as proof. In general, the name or names listed on the CRBA are the U.S. citizen or national's parent(s) who have a genetic or gestational connection to the child. The name of the parent(s) through whom the child's claim to U.S. citizenship is made must be listed on the CRBA.

### Learn more about the CRBA

- You can apply for a CRBA by contacting the nearest [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) in the country where your child was born and navigate to the U.S. Citizens Service section.
- The Department only issues CRBAs to children born abroad who acquired U.S. citizenship or nationality at birth and, in general, are under the age of 18 at the time of the application.
- You can learn more about the process [here](#).

## Divorce

Some of us will be confronted with the challenge of getting divorced while serving overseas. Aside from the very personal and psychological implications, processing a divorce while abroad introduces some unique challenges. Often, divorce proceedings require service members to travel back to the United States to meet with mediators, legal personnel, and courts to finalize the process. For support information, to include legal guidance, FAOs abroad can reach out to their respective combatant command Family Readiness Programs (FRP) who are poised to assist in matters such as this. Point of contact information for each Family Readiness Program will be available through the various command support teams.

In addition to the FRPs, it is critical that FAOs notify their leadership of the situation as soon as possible so the community can support and so that operational interruptions are mitigated while allowing the service member the necessary time to address the disruptive nature of divorce proceedings. You are not alone in this process.

The FAO Community Manager and Detailing team maintains a list of FAOs that are available to discuss their own personal experiences with divorce while serving overseas. These FAOs understand the significant challenges involved and are willing to offer their insights.

Finally, additional general information on divorce abroad can be found [here](#).

# Chapter 7: Medical

**Overseas Screening.** The overseas screening process (OSS) is designed to identify personnel or family members who have special medical, dental, educational and/or other needs that cannot be provided at austere OCONUS duty stations. You should immediately begin the process of overseas screening for you and your family as soon as you have orders in hand. With a Letter of Intent/Memorandum in Lieu of Orders from the detailee, you can (and should) start this process without hard copy orders. [OPNAVINST 1300.14 \(Series\)](#) and [BUMEDINST 1300.2 \(Series\)](#) are the primary references for the overseas screening process, and they direction completion within 30 days of the receipt of orders for servicemembers and 60 days of the receipt of orders for dependents. [NAVPERS 1300/16](#) is the overseas screening checklist. It is time-consuming and requires approval of the local Military Treatment Facility (MTF) and the servicemember's chain of command. Suitability determination is based on all information available, including but not limited to:

- (1) Medical
- (2) Dental
- (3) Educational
- (4) Psychological
- (5) Behavioral
- (6) Financial
- (7) Professional performance factors
- (8) Family stability
- (9) Completed with a personal interview

**Important:** If you or a family member are found non-suitable, you must notify your Council of Captains Lead via an official CCIR using the standardized non-suitability report found on [Navy FAO APAN](#) under PCS Resources. This ensures that the CLMT can provide any support necessary for a reconsideration request or waiver.

The CLMT continually works to ensure Navy and Community policy are aligned to maximize FAO mission effectiveness OCONUS. Please communicate any barriers in the OSS process with your Council of Captains lead and FAO Policy, as they can often assist in resolution.

## Exceptional Family Member Program

When a servicemember's dependent is identified with a chronic medical, mental health, or special education need, the member should enroll the family member in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). The EFMP is a detailing tool that ensures service availability to the greatest extent possible. Information regarding the [Navy's EFMP](#) is first catalogued in [MILPERSMAN 1300-700](#), additional information can be found in [SECNAVINST 1754.5 \(Series\)](#), [OPNAVINST 1754.2 \(Series\)](#), [DOD Instruction](#)

**Note:** In DoS, an EFM is an Eligible Family Member, in DOD an EFM usually refers to an Exceptional Family Member, someone in the Exceptional Family Member Program.

[1315.19](#), [DOD Instruction 1342.12](#) and the [BUMEDINST 1300.2 \(Series\)](#). Navy policy states Family members with medical conditions or disabilities requiring specialized medical, dental, or educational services will not be transferred to areas where those needs cannot be met. However, having dependents enrolled in EFMP does not immediately disqualify a servicemember (and dependents) from overseas duty.

## Normal Medical Care OCONUS on Base

If you are at a location with a strong military presence such as a Combatant Command or Fleet Headquarters, you will receive much of your medical care on base through the local military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF). Similarly, if you are stationed at the embassy, you will receive much of your routine or immediate care at the Embassy. For those in much more remote locations, you will receive your care out in town with a local doctor. It is imperative to understand your TRICARE Overseas plan because you may be billed directly from your provider if you need treatment outside of base or post.

**Tricare Overseas.** The type of medical coverage and your access to medical facilities will be dependent upon your specific location. You will most likely fall under the [TRICARE Overseas program](#). [TRICARE Overseas Prime](#) works like the stateside TRICARE Prime program with similar benefits, requirements, and costs. [TOP Prime Remote](#) provides TOP Prime benefits to Active-Duty Service Members (ADSMs) and their eligible family members residing with them in remote overseas locations. Enrollment is required, and there are no enrollment fees. Family members stationed overseas must enroll in TOP Prime or TOP Prime Remote and there are no enrollment fees. It is imperative that you research your specific plan option (TRICARE Overseas Prime or Select) before arriving in country and update your status and plan as soon as you arrive in country. TRICARE resources are available at [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil).

**Note:** When checking into your Military Treatment Facility and your TRICARE region, inquire about local requirements for translators when receiving medical care on the economy. Reimbursement for these required services can sometimes be an issue. Continued staff work on this concern is underway within Navy BUMED.

Depending on the treatment needed and the size of the MTF on base, you may be referred out in town to local clinics or specialists for more specialized care. These referrals will work through a TRICARE/ International SOS referral system. Follow the directions from the referral system at the time and ask pointed questions. TRICARE should generally only send you to someone that is one of their contracted providers.

If you are billed directly, then you will need to [file a Claim](#). That means you are required to make the payment first, and then submit your claim to TRICARE via the [MHS Genesis](#) (Login Required with proof of payment). This process can be lengthy and can add up quickly when you have multiple appointments out in town or multiple family members receiving treatment.

## Medical Care at Post (U.S. Embassy)

Following health unit check-in as part of the New Arrivals Check-in procedure, the Med-Unit staff will offer advice and explain local medical services, including how to obtain medical care after regular working

hours, the location of local hospitals (if recommended for use) and provide you with the duty medical provider emergency contact cell phone.

In general, any Navy FAO assigned to the Post under CoM Authority will first start their medical care through the Embassy Health Unit. The level of care available inside the Health Unit will vary post to post. When a FAO or their family needs care beyond the capabilities in the Health Unit, they may be referred out in town. Following that decision by the Health Unit Doctor, you and the Health Unit will work with TRICARE to complete the referral process to ensure the care will be covered. This is all highly dependent on the location.

All posts should publish a Health and Medical Information booklet, updated annually. These are available through the MED intranet website. Navy FAOs will need to reach through the CLO or their on-station sponsor for a copy in advance. Look as soon as you have a firm assignment, so that you can adequately prepare for life at post. Many posts offer annual CPR training, food and safety training, and other helpful courses. Topics to explore for a new assignment might include:

- Safe drinking water
- Foods to avoid or special preparations needed
- Local restaurant precautions
- Recommended training or pre-employment screening for domestic help
- Laundry procedures
- Health recommendations related to climate (measures to deal with extreme heat or cold, if needed)
- Information on dangerous animals or insects
- Precautions related to swimming pools and beach water safety
- Malaria/Dengue Fever and other mosquito-borne diseases
- HIV
- Tuberculosis
- Common complaints and remedies
- Other post-specific information

Read and review your post's handbook so that you can enjoy a safe and healthy assignment overseas.

Additional services can also be available at post or in region. These services, if offered, will usually be available to all CoM personnel who need them. They can include:

- Mental Health Services (ECS)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program (ADAP)
- Deployment Stress Management Program (DSMP)

## **TRICARE Overseas Additional References**

- [TRICARE Overseas](#)
- [TRICARE Overseas Prime Remote](#)
- [TRICARE Preventive Services Listing](#)

- [TRICARE Overseas Pharmacy Services: Express Scripts](#)
- [TRICARE's Military Health System Nurse Advice Line](#) is available for care advice at any hour or day of the week. They can assist you in finding local care services as necessary. If you're traveling overseas, you may contact the MHS Nurse Advice Line for health care advice. If you need care outside the military health system, the MHS Nurse Advice Line will coordinate with the TRICARE Overseas Managed Care Support Contractor.
  - Specific [Overseas resources](#) are also available.
- [Dental: United Concordia](#)
  - Specific [Overseas resources](#) are also available.

## Emergencies

The details of how to deal with medical emergencies are location-specific and should be covered during your in-processing. However, generally emergency medical care on base or at post will first stabilize the patient at the local MTF (at a base) or the local Post Health Unit and then use local facilities as needed. Follow-on specialty care will then be directed and coordinated by the MTF or Health Unit. Contact International SOS and TRICARE after the initial emergency but before leaving the treatment facility to help coordinate continued or follow-on care. Contact information is below.

**Emergency Care.** A medical emergency is anything that threatens life, limb or eyesight. Prior authorization is not required. If you are admitted, you must call International SOS before you leave the facility, preferably within 24 hours or on the next business day to coordinate authorization, continued care and payment. The ISOS call center can be reached at toll-free: 0800-589-1599 or CIV: 0044-20-8762-8384 (International rates apply).

**Urgent Care.** Is defined as an illness or injury that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately but does require professional attention within 24 hours. PRIME beneficiaries must contact International SOS before receiving urgent care after hours on the economy. Obtaining pre-authorization is required.

**Traveling Beneficiaries.** Additional information with regards to servicemembers and dependents travelling outside of their coverage area (i.e. TRICARE Overseas Beneficiaries Traveling in the United States or vice versa).

## Obtaining Mental Health Care While OCONUS

FAOs are never alone! If you need help, you can always refer to the kneeboard card and contact the Community Leader, your Regional Council of Captains Leads, the FAO Community Chief of Staff, the Policy Advisor or another trusted mentor.

**Differences between Embassies / DAO & SCO for Mental Health Care.** Two DoD officers from the same service at the same Embassy may have different resources available to them and their families, depending on the agency they work for. For example, DAO personnel have access to the Defense Attaché Service (DAS) resources, which include the DAS Family Readiness SME / Field Support Office. Contact your DAS

support team to get in touch with the Field Support Office experts, who are well-versed in mental health resources. SCO officers may contact the Defense Security Cooperation Service team to determine what resources may be available to them. All OCONUS personnel can utilize the Truman Group (see below).

**Different Embassies offer Different Resources.** Services provided via DoD ICASS depend on the post and what services are available. Some posts will work in coordination with a local or military hospital, some will have regional medical staff, some will have a staffed health unit, some will have contract staff, and some will rely on regional support and/or local facilities.

**Truman Group Mental Health Care.** The FAO Community received confirmation from Defense Health Agency (DHA) that TRICARE will authorize mental telehealth services from [Truman Group](#) providers for OCONUS beneficiaries. The Truman Group provides high quality remote psychotherapy and mental health consultation to expatriates living outside the US. They work with individuals, couples, families and children in regions of the world that have few local English-speaking resources available for mental health. For beneficiaries looking for psychological care from Truman Group. The Truman Group, or its associated “authorized” providers do not work with any insurance plans; therefore, they will not submit claims to TRICARE. Beneficiaries must pay upfront for the services (to one of the authorized providers listed below) and submit a claim to TRICARE for reimbursement

- Behavioral health visits **DO** require an authorization for Active Duty Service Members (ADSMs)
- Behavioral health visits **DO NOT** require an authorization for Active Duty Family Members (ADFMs)
  - If using one of the providers “authorized” under the Truman Group, no need for an authorization
  - TRICARE will reimburse up to the TRICARE allowable charge; **out-of-pocket expenses may exceed reimbursable authorizations**, keep an eye on explanation of benefits statements

**Other Resources.** Behavioral health in the local country or through telemedicine services locally: if available – authorization is recommended to obtain “cashless claimless” services and not have to pay out of pocket; however, prior authorization is not normally needed. Consult your agency to ensure you are in alignment with DAS or DSCS policy. Providers who have been approved by International SOS anywhere overseas are specifically tagged in their system so that they and the claims processor know that the provider meets all TRICARE requirements for telemedicine as required by the contract and TRICARE manuals.

- Telemedicine services may be limited in remote areas around an embassy
- There are cross-border restrictions for telemedicine
- The embassy has been given the allowance to utilize a CONUS provider, if authorized, but only when services are provided within the embassy compound (legal restriction).

FAOs/families can also use [non-medical counseling from Military One Source](#). They provide up to 10 sessions per issue. Keep them as a resource if need be. The best thing about using Military One Source is that they do not involve TRICARE; therefore, virtual services can be received while in embassy housing.

**Does Psychological Health Care Impact Your Security Clearance?** The Defense Department wants you to know that getting help for a psychological issue is a sign of strength. Speaking up can be a sign of good judgment, responsible behavior and a commitment to performance. Service members, contractors and civilians are often required to have a security clearance, so the department has taken actions to eliminate



negative stereotypes about psychological health problems and any impact of treatment on your career. When someone applies for security clearance, they need to fill out the “Questionnaire for National Security Positions,” Standard Form 86. To protect privacy, and to assure there are no negative repercussions because of treatment or counseling for a psychological health issue, DOD has made changes to the form.

Question 21 of Standard Form 86 asks, “In the last seven years, have you consulted with a health care professional regarding an emotional or mental health condition, or were you hospitalized for such a condition?”

You can answer “no” if:

- You’ve received counseling strictly related to adjustment from service in combat.
- You’ve received counseling strictly related to marital or family issues (not court ordered or related to violence you have committed), or grief issues.
- You’re a victim of sexual assault who received counseling related to that trauma.

An applicant cannot be denied an interim security clearance solely due to a “yes” to Question 21.

There are more ways that DOD protects your privacy during security clearance:

- A security investigator can only ask your health care provider to answer yes or no to the question, “Does the person under investigation have a condition that could impair his or her judgment, reliability or ability to properly safeguard classified information?”
- When the provider’s answer is “no,” the investigator is not allowed to ask further questions.
- When the provider’s answer is “yes,” a security investigator may interview the provider and the applicant confidentially to gather additional information to determine the security risk.
- Commanders, supervisors and security managers are not authorized to ask an applicant or anyone else about psychological health care revealed in response to Question 21.
- Applicants may report any unauthorized questioning about psychological health care to the DOD Inspector General Hotline at 800-424-9098.

If you’re ready to seek help for any type of psychological or personal issue, you have many counseling service options. Remember, seeking help early to improve your performance is a sign of strength and commitment. Contact a Military OneSource non-medical counselor at 800-342-9647 to help you identify the kind of help you need and put you in touch with the right services. OCONUS/International? View calling options.

*Note: Military OneSource does not provide medical counseling services for issues such as depression, substance abuse, suicide prevention or post-traumatic stress disorder. Military OneSource can provide referrals to your local military treatment facility, TRICARE or another appropriate resource.*



The banner features the Veterans Crisis Line logo with a star and the text "Veterans Crisis Line DIAL 988 then PRESS 1". To the left is a circular icon with "24/7" and a clock arrow. Below the logo is a blue button that says "Dial 988 then Press 1 or Text 838255". To the right, under the heading "Support for All Who Serve", is a paragraph stating: "The Military Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource for all service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and Veterans, even if they're not enrolled in VA benefits or health care." At the bottom, it lists regional access numbers: "Europe: Call +1 844-702-5495 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)", "Southwest Asia: Call +1 855-422-7719 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)", and "Pacific: Call +1 844-702-5493 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)". On the far left, it says "Always Available Accessible 24/7/365."

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

**Support for All Who Serve**

The Military Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource for all service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and Veterans, even if they're not enrolled in VA benefits or health care.

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## Medical Evacuations (MEDEVACS)

Authorized medical travel, often referred to as a medical evacuation (medevac) or Out of Country Medical Referral (OCMR), occurs when adequate medical facilities do not exist at post to treat an individual's medical problem and medical care cannot be postponed until an individual's next scheduled travel. For DOD members, medical travel will usually be to a regional military treatment facility like Landstuhl, Yokota, or Tripler but may also bring the FAO or family members back to the states or to an international hospital elsewhere. This section is biased towards Navy FAOs at Embassies; medical travel for FAOs and Families on staff will normally be managed through your local servicing MTF.

Medical Travel for service members is outlined in JTR 03301. If the traveling patient is a family member (especially a child), they can also be eligible for travel and per diem expenses, as well as authorization for a medical attendant. Please see JTR Chapter 3, section 033101 for Dependent Medical Care Travel OCONUS. It is important to note that OCMR dependent travel expenses are funded by the Navy vice DAO/SCO administrative commands. All travel is authorized/funded by the Navy's Field Support Activity at the Washington Navy Yard. The GCC J5 or DIA will start the liaison process with FLDSUPACT and then turn the conversation over to you and FLDSUPACT.

In cases of Emergent MEDEVACs from Posts, most immediate travel will be arranged through International SOS and admin details will be completed afterwards. If the MEDEVAC is merely Urgent or Routine, there be a coordination conversation between the FAO, the Embassy Health Unit, the parent administrative Command, International SOS, TRICARE, and the receiving medical treatment facility.

Reference [OPNAVINST 7200.1 \(Series\)](#) for further medical travel details.

## Having a Baby in Remote Locations

When you learn that you are pregnant, the service member needs to formally let your command and posting (if at Embassy) know, in writing, when the pregnancy is considered viable IAW Navy Policy. Work with your provider to ensure that you know the recommended times for pre-natal examinations and how you are going to access that care. The number and timing of visits are determined by you and your provider. Higher risk pregnancies may require more frequent visits. IAW MILPERSMAN 1300-306 Navy Policy states mothers MUST PCS prior to giving birth if serving in a remote location where TRICARE will not cover the birth event. The service member needs to coordinate with TRICARE for pre-natal appointments in country, then coordinate transfer a care to the new PCS location. In the Pacific, mothers may head towards US Naval Hospital Okinawa or US Naval Hospital Yokosuka. Mother need to coordinate with TRICARE on birth location of child- TRICARE will not approve all locations for birth- changing birth locations from the nearest authorized location (when in a non-remote location) requires justification that includes a letter from Navy Medical.

For FAOs in SCO assignments, they will need to work through their servicing combatant command J5 office (transitioning to DSCS) for assistance. For FAOs in Attaché assignments, they will work with DAS headquarters to arrange initial assistance. Both offices will reach back to Field Support Activity (FLDSUPACT) Washington to determine the best way to accommodate families. Once a destination is determined, a medical support timeline is developed and a DTS authorization is available, FLDSUPACT will fund and approve orders for the mother, and potentially a medical escort, to a military medical

facility. Orders will authorize the following: airfare, lodging, and actual meal expenses up to the cost of the local per diem rate (must save itemized receipts). If member returns to CONUS they will only be reimbursed for travel.

As of 2023, the U.S. Navy updated its parental leave policies to provide more comprehensive support for service members. [NAVADMIN 008/23](#) and [DTM 23-001](#) state that both maternity and paternity leave have been standardized to 12 weeks following the birth, adoption, or long-term foster care placement of a child. This standard applies to both birth and non-birth parents. Parental leave will be taken following any period of convalescent leave. Service members may be authorized convalescent leave as recommended by their DoD health care provider.

For additional guidance, please reference [MILPERSMAN 1300-1306](#), [MILPERMAN 1050-180](#), and the [MyNavyHR Parental Leave Fact Sheet](#).

**Active-Duty Service Members** - Inform your Command at the earliest possible time to ensure that your duty activities are appropriate for pregnancy. You will be required to deliver at the medical facility recommended by your military health care provider. If you want to choose to give birth at another location OTHER than the closest medical facility recommended by TRICARE, cost may be out of pocket. You need to coordinate early with TRICARE SOS and your command. If enrolled in TRICARE Global Remote Overseas (TGRO), this recommendation will come from the TAO-Pacific Medical Director and the recommendation will either be the nearest capable host nation medical facility or a military treatment facility (MTF). If care is arranged outside of a TRICARE/TGRO-authorized provider, there may be a significant out of pocket expenses.

**Active-Duty Family Members** - You should determine where you wish to deliver your child. For those in areas with robust medical support, you can usually remain in place for delivery. For others in areas of limited medical support or for those with higher risk pregnancies, we will recommend that you move to a more capable location. International SOS and the TAO-Pacific will advise you on choosing a location. If you decide to move to another location for delivery, you can go to the nearest capable civilian facility, or MTF with Stork's Nest (lodging) capability awaiting delivery. You may also elect to return to a U.S. location to deliver where you may have more support such as family and friends. For health and safety reasons, pregnant patients cannot fly after a certain point in their pregnancy and there are specific dates and requirements depending on the airline. For most uncomplicated pregnancies, that travel needs to occur before 36 weeks of pregnancy. If this is a high-risk pregnancy, then the "Travel No Later Than Date" may be much earlier, perhaps 30 weeks or earlier, depending on the mom's particular needs.

TRICARE covers the medical costs of prenatal care and delivery, as long as the provider is a TRICARE/TGRO-authorized provider. To ensure coverage, TGRO patients should coordinate care through the TGRO Call Center or, if the intended delivery location is in the States, the TAO-Pacific. If care is arranged outside of a TRICARE/TGRO-authorized provider, there may be a significant out of pocket expenses.

Travel and per diem costs for the patient and any attendants are covered by the Sponsor's unit/service if the delivery is at the nearest capable medical facility or an MTF. The Sponsor should work with his/her command to arrange the funding no later than one month before the anticipated travel date. Recommend starting at least six months out due to complex budget conversations with command and

COMPTROLLER, and possibly OPNAV. Travel and per diem costs for patients electing to travel back to the United States are the responsibility of the Sponsor and the Sponsor should inform their Command of this intention and seek any support available.

## Chapter 8: Children's Education and Care

When overseas, Navy FAO families can expect education for their children to be provided by either a DOD Educational Activity (DODEA) run school, or education to be paid for by the DOD through the Non-DOD Schools Program (NDSP). FAOs at overseas fleet concentrations or headquarters staffs will usually have a DOD school to take advantage of. FAOs at diplomatic missions will typically have either an Embassy-sponsored international school available locally or may have the option to home-school or send kids to international boarding schools. These options will vary post-to-post and will almost always be covered by NDSP.

**Note:** Pre-K is any education provided more than a year prior to kindergarten. Pre-K has not historically been authorized under the NDSP. Consult the [NDSP website](#) for forthcoming updates to this policy. DoDEA currently only authorized to enroll and provide financial assistance to eligible dependents in grades K-12. The only exception is when a child between the ages of three and five is identified with special education needs and Pre-K services are included in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). This policy is consistent across DOD and DoS.

**CONUS Childcare:** Militarychildcare.com is a great resource for local CDC's - be sure to get on the waitlist as soon as you can. Also, the same website can lead to resources which help subsidize childcare for non-military programs. If a CDC doesn't have availability for your children after PCS, there may be funding for you to bring in family help (<https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome/travel-reimbursement>)

**DODEA** operates 160 schools in 8 Districts located in 11 foreign countries, 7 states, and 2 territories across 10 time zones. There are more than 66,000 military connected children of all ages enrolled worldwide in DoDEA schools, taught by more than 8,000 educators. All schools within DoDEA are fully accredited by U.S. accreditation agencies. You can find the [full DODEA website](#) here.

**The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP)** provides academic support and funding for the education of authorized command sponsored dependents of the U.S. Department of Defense military members and civilian employees assigned to overseas areas where no U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity School (DoDEA) is available. Typically, NDSP will fund attendance to the international school attended by DoS kids as well. You can find additional information in the [NDSP Orientation Brochure](#).

**Department of State helps** 193 overseas schools through direct and indirect support programs designed to promote an American-style program. You can find fact sheets regarding all 193 [Assisted Schools](#), organized by location.

Separately, DOS maintains a list of [ALL available schools near their posts](#). This list contains schools at posts, both assisted and non-assisted. Schools assisted by the U.S. Department of State are highlighted in red. All other schools are neither assisted by nor have official endorsement from the U.S. Department of State but may be an option for families. This list includes U.S. and non-U.S. curriculum, religious, proprietary, and local public schools.

Wider concerns and tools for helping children of all ages cope with moves, shifting schools, and other educational topics, can be found on the [DoS GCLO](#) website here:

**The Interstate Compact.** The Interstate Compact makes changing schools easier for military children. When moving to a new duty station means going to a new state as well as a new school for your kids, rest assured that the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#) is designed to make the transition smooth. The Department of Defense, in collaboration with the National Center for Interstate Compacts and the Council of State Governments developed the compact to address the educational transitions for military families. All 50 states have committed to helping your children enroll in school, register for the classes they need, and graduate on time.

Through the compact, states are working together to provide a consistent set of policies that will make getting started in a new school, joining extracurricular activities and meeting graduation requirements as easy as possible for military children. Military parents can help their families access this support with a few simple steps. Visit the [Military OneSource Interstate Compact page](#) for additional resources and links.

**EFMP and Particular Educational Needs.** A particular focus for the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is special educational needs that require specific attention or care that may not always be available at more remote overseas locations. Identification of these requirements prior to arrival at the overseas post is part of the overseas screening process (covered in Chapter 6) and is important for identifying ensuring dependents get the care or support they need. Realize that Navy FAO does not normally assess officers into the community who have an EFMP concern, however conditions or challenges can develop over time.

There is a wealth of resources available for military families working with special or particular educational needs. The below links document what is available for students while overseas. Follow this hyperlink for an overview of [Military OneSource's Education Resources](#) for military families with special educational requirements.

- In DoDEA, [special education](#) and related services are available to eligible students, ages 3 through 21 years of age. DoDEA schools provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities by implementing reasonable 504 Accommodations upon establishing that a student has a disability requiring such 504 Accommodations. 504s are accommodations for students with documented disabilities that do not require additional resources, e.g. desk placement in the classroom, additional time for tests/homework, perhaps for ADHD, anxiety, and dyslexia).
- DODEA schools are also prepared to assess students into special education programs and [accommodate individual education programs](#). IEPs (Individual Education Program) are for students whose disabilities require additional resources, e.g. classroom aid, speech therapy, etc., think more along the lines of autism or physical disability.
- [NDSP Special Education Provisions](#): The NDSP is committed to the provision of appropriate special education and related services for DOD dependents who are space-required and eligible for NDSP. Availability of services varies from site to site, so careful planning and open communication with your NDSP Education Specialist is critical to meeting the educational needs of your child. Special education services in overseas schools can be limited and require advanced approval for reimbursement. Many NDSP sites do not have adequate special education services in place, and schools are not required to follow the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

International schools will approach available services on a case-by-case basis. The peculiarities of each case will require early discussion with post to evaluate and advise if the receiving school can support. This conversation needs to be between the receiving school, with the parent GCC or Fleet and with the Detailer to see if particular concerns can be addressed in that location.

## Chapter 9: Family Member Employment

Employment opportunities for FAO spouses will often be one of the overarching concerns after initial arrival at post or on staff. Employment opportunities, like most things, will vary from location to location and will often be subject to local agreements and guidelines. Please realize there is a distinction between employment resources open to Navy FAO families assigned to an Embassy and those assigned to an overseas military staff.

**Note:** For diplomatic assignments, it is important to note that spouses must obtain permission from the embassy to work and/or volunteer outside the mission. The CLO and HR office at post can advise more on this topic

Employment while overseas can present unique challenges – what you experience in one country may look very different in another. It is important to start early to understand the employment circumstances at your post – Are you eligible to work on the economy? How competitive is the embassy job market? Can I continue to telework? What is the timeline from application to start date? Will I be able to work during our in-region/country training due to the shortened timeline?

It is important to think creatively and to work proactively to research your options. A good place to start is the Department of State, [Global Community Liaison Office \(GCLLO\)](#) and their [Global Employment Initiative \(GEI\)](#). Please bear in mind that access to many of the experts and resources from the Dept of State are restricted to individuals who are at post under Chief-of-Mission Authority.

Lastly, a word on volunteering. When options at post are limited, consider strategic volunteering to bolster your resume, contribute to your community and improve your future employment prospects.

### In and Around the Embassy

*Borrowed from Department of State's Global Community Liaison Office; the GCLLO encourages you to start early and learn about employment programs and resources at:*

#### [DoS Guide to Overseas Employment](#)

- Obtain a Copy of the Family Member Employment Report (FAMER)
- Contact Post Early
- Reach Out to the Global Employment Initiative (GEI)
- Consider Applying for Special Employment Programs

- Explore Training and Distance Learning Opportunities
- Inquire About Teleworking Your Present Position

### Employment Options

- Family member employment at diplomatic posts overseas is divided into two categories:
  - **Employment [Inside the Mission](#)** refers to jobs held by family members working at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Specific eligibilities and requirements pertain to these positions.
  - **Employment [Outside the Mission](#)** refers to employment opportunities to include, but not limited to, self-employment, telework, jobs on the local economy, etc. FAOs can check to see if there is a bilateral work agreement that allows dependents to work more easily.

**Research.** Request a copy of the Family Member Employment Report (FAMER). The FAMER is a post-specific overview of both inside and outside the mission employment. The FAMER is available through GCLO or post's Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator. It includes filled, pending, and vacant positions and work permit information at the time of the report. Before moving, attend briefings, watch webinars, and contact GCLO's regional Global Employment Advisor (GEA). Ask your sponsoring employee to download the FAMER for your current or prospective post(s) from the Department of State intranet site or contact [GCLOAskEmployment@state.gov](mailto:GCLOAskEmployment@state.gov). FAMER reports are a great resource when considering follow-on assignments if spousal employment is a priority. Watch this [short video](#) to learn about useful employment resources.

## Working Inside the Mission

**Prepare.** Visit the Family Liaison Office (FLO) website to learn about the Foreign Service Family Member Reserve Corps (FSFRC), hiring preferences, special employment programs, and Professional Development Fellowships available to Eligible Family Members serving overseas.

**Contact Post Early.** The Community Liaison Office Coordinator (CLO) at post is a great source of information on post-employment. Let the CLO know you are interested in working. If you are interested in federal employment at post (inside the mission) contact the HR office at post to find out how jobs are advertised and when you can apply. Request to be added to the CLO distribution list to view job announcements and employment information. Every CLO has a unique email that is [CLOCityName@state.gov](mailto:CLOCityName@state.gov)

**Reach Out to the Global Employment Initiative (GEI).** Global Employment Advisors (GEAs) provide free career coaching, resume assistance, networking support, and mock interview practice. They facilitate skills development for a job search inside the mission and on the local economy (outside the mission). Email [GEI@state.gov](mailto:GEI@state.gov) for contact information for the GEA responsible for advising family members at your post.

**The Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps (FSFRC)** was created to improve efficiency in the hiring of U.S. citizen spouses (see definition for Appointment Eligible Family Member (AEFM)). Joining the FSFRC allows

an AEFM to keep their DoS security clearance while moving from post to post. When family members are accepted into the FSFRC, they will be in a nonpaid status until accepting a position at a local assignment. Family members who join the FSFRC will be permitted to remain in the FSFRC if they continue to meet eligibility requirements. FSFRC members in Categories One or Two will retain their eligibility for access to classified information based on their FSFRC position as they move from post to post. To determine eligibility and apply for the FSFRC visit the [FSFRC Website](#) and use [form DS-5137](#). If you leave a post and are not directly going to a new post but will likely return to an Embassy position in the future, the FSFRC will need additional documentation from the Navy. The Navy FAO Policy office has a template to provide a letter certifying that there is an expectation to assign the FAO to a future U.S. Embassy tour overseas.

**The Expanded Professional Associates Program ([EPAP](#))** provides professional level, full-time Foreign Service positions to U.S. citizen EFM's serving overseas. These positions can range from medical, to facilities management and direction, to political or economic reporting, through public relations and diplomacy, to education. Program information is available through the hyperlink above or via email [GCLOAskEPAP@state.gov](mailto:GCLOAskEPAP@state.gov)

**The Consular Affairs-Appointment Eligible Family Member ([CA-AEFM](#))**. Consular Program provides opportunities for family members to fill entry-level Consular officer positions at select posts. Applications are accepted by CA year-round. All questions regarding eligibility, application procedures, or other questions should be sent to [AEFM-CA@state.gov](mailto:AEFM-CA@state.gov).

**Inquire About Teleworking Your Present Position:** Finding employment overseas in your chosen field can be challenging. Telework can be one of the best ways to maintain your skills, salary, benefits, and professional contacts. Discuss this option with your current employer. Through the CLO, contact HR at post regarding any restrictions and approvals.

## Working Outside the Embassy or Consulate

Many Navy FAO family members assigned to US diplomatic posts have professional skills and qualifications that may be better suited for employment outside of the embassy or consulate when they are assigned overseas. The experience of working overseas outside of the embassy or consulate can provide challenging and unique opportunities for family members who wish to maintain or broaden their professional skills. Family members are encouraged to explore all their options when moving overseas. Most employment options for working outside the embassy or consulate fall into two categories: [working on the local economy](#), or [pursuing a portable career](#).

Working on the local economy means physically working in an office of a private sector company, non-government organization, or volunteering for an organization in the host country. The host country must have an established [Bilateral Work Agreement \(BWA\) or de facto work arrangement](#) in order to pursue this option.

A portable career is taken from post to post and is not dependent on a BWA. There are numerous avenues for pursuing this option including consulting, self-employment, teleworking, teaching, etc. Employment outside an embassy or consulate may provide family members with the freedom to continue in a chosen field and/or the opportunity to pursue a new field. Employment opportunities eligibility,



compensation, and taxes will likely vary depending on the country of assignment and in some cases may be significantly different than comparable employment in the United States.

## Employment While Overseas at the Staff

[Commander, Navy Installation Command's \(CNIC\) Family Employment Readiness Program \(FERP\)](#) provides no cost consultations, programs and services to help families in the job search process. Consultants are available to guide spouses and family members on career planning, job seeking and resume writing, as well as help preparing for interviews and negotiating offers.

[Military OneSource Education & Employment for Spouses](#) page provides comprehensive education and career guidance, support and resources to military spouses pursuing employment or an advanced degree. Explore the site regularly for fresh content related to career exploration; education, training, and licensing; and employment readiness and career connections. Check out tips and strategies for military spouses that help match your interests, skills and goals with a degree or occupation that's compatible with your mobile military life.

Realize these programs will often provide a Navy or DOD wide overview and not all services may be available at a particular overseas location.

Military OneSource's Information and links are available for a range of topics and highlight the standing benefits for military family members overall. Links include:

- [MyCAA: Scholarship for MilSpouses](#)
- [Education & Employment for Spouses](#)

Particularly tailored information on Military OneSource for overseas support is available at [Military Spouse Jobs Overseas](#). Additionally, the [Military Spouse Employment Partnership, or MSEP](#), can connect you with employers worldwide that are interested in providing you with long-term meaningful employment opportunities.

**The Military Spouse Preference program:** With the help of the [Military Spouse Preference program](#), you could be eligible for certain preferences when applying for Department of Defense civilian jobs, including civil service careers overseas. Learn how to find [portable employment opportunities](#).

**Working on the installation:** Depending on your interests and skills, there could be job opportunities on your new installation. Be sure to check [the installation's website](#) for job listings.

**Working off the installation:** Chances are you can also work locally off the installation. Before applying for jobs:

- **Check the Status of Forces Agreement:** In some foreign countries, the Status of Forces Agreement allows military spouses to work in the local economy.
- **Consider taxes and fees:** Before starting work in the local economy, make sure you have a clear understanding of what local taxes or other fees you may have to pay.

**Flexible jobs, telecommuting and home businesses:** Be open to the possibility of working a non-traditional career:

- **Home business:** Be sure to consider any licenses, permits or housing requirements you may need. Meet with the Family Service Center or Legal Assistance Office at your installation to make sure you're covering all your bases.
- **Virtual work:** Moving overseas might be the perfect opportunity to develop a telecommuting career.
- **Volunteer work:** Volunteering is a great way to test out new career tracks, learn about your new community and meet new friends. It can often be a great way to break into a new field and potentially earn a paying position.

**Transferring Your Professional License:** The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act allows each service branch to reimburse spouses up to \$1,000 for re-licensure and certification costs resulting from relocations or PCS moves that cross U.S. state lines – to include OCONUS to stateside moves.

- Where can I learn more about the Navy's reimbursement policy? Read the Navy's [announcement about the new policy](#). Further information can be found [here](#).

**Licensing overseas:** In some occupations, your state-issued license — no matter where it's from — is valid for government and contracting jobs. To learn more about transferring certifications overseas, check with that installation's hiring authority.

**Tips for transferring certifications:** The Department of Defense is committed to making it easier for military spouses to find and follow a meaningful career.

- Find information about the progress of licensing issues that affect military spouses in your state on the Defense-State Liaison Office's website, [Military State Policy Source](#). DSLO partners with state policymakers and leaders to help reduce or eliminate licensing barriers for military spouses as they move with the military.
- Connect with other military spouses on the [Blue Star Neighborhood](#) to share professional information and get the scoop on state licensing requirements.
- Identify occupations with good job portability. Search for open positions with hundreds of employers committed to hiring military spouses through the [Military Spouse Employment Partnership Job Search on MySECO](#).

Moving overseas can open new and exciting opportunities. Just remember to do your prep, give yourself time to get settled and investigate all your options.

## Finding Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities

Not all locations and family situations will permit family members to find paid employment. Family members may be able to find meaningful volunteer opportunities during the tour that allow a balance between flexibility and fulfillment.

**FAO Community Opportunities.** The FAO Community Family Ombudsman program relies on six FAO spouses to serve as important representatives in their region (and CONUS). These positions are official Navy volunteers, and Ombudsmen are asked to execute funded travel to Monterey, CA up to twice each year for the Joint FAO Course Phase I events as part of the FAO family on-boarding training. While OCONUS, the Ombudsmen work with regional families and FAOs to ensure maximum mission effectiveness.

**Mission-Connected Opportunities.** Each Embassy may have different volunteer opportunities. You can have a huge impact on building a sense of community!

*U.S. Supported Initiatives.* The Public Diplomacy Section often builds relationships with charities and hospitals locally. Inquire about volunteer opportunities (e.g. donating your time at neo-natal facilities, serving as an English instructor at the U.S.-supported library).

*Within the Embassy.* The Community Liaison Office often requests support for events like Halloween or Independence Day celebrations. The Marine Security Detachment may need support with the Marine Corps Ball or the Christmas Toys for Tots Drive.

*Within Team DoD.* Normally the DAO and SCO teams do not have a formal spouse organization, like a traditional Navy unit's Family Readiness Group (FRG). Nevertheless, there are always opportunities for spouses to help build esprit-de-corps and strengthen the family network by connecting across sections and within the military community. One example is to host young Marine Corps Security Guard detachment enlisted personnel to your home during holidays to ensure they are taken care of while they are stationed far from family.

# Chapter 10: Travel and Leave Information

**Funded Environmental Morale Leave.** FEML provides Government-funded transportation from the duty location to the designated FEML destination. FEML is established for locations where conditions of life are such that the Service member and his or her family are subjected to significant, identifiable difficulties having a harmful effect on physical well-being or mental health of sufficient severity to justify temporary relief during a period of assignment. The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy (DASD(MPP)) shall designate the authorized FEML duty locations, which shall be limited to those locations that are truly isolated, austere or unhealthful, and designated FEML destinations. Normally, FEML applies to Service members assigned to a prescribed tour outside the United States (typically at an embassy) who incur a tour length of at least 24 consecutive months, to include voluntary extensions.

A member assigned to a 24-month tour is eligible for one round trip under FEML. A member assigned to a 36-month tour is eligible for two round trips. No more than two FEML trips are authorized for any overseas tour including extensions to that tour. In addition, the Service member's dependents, to participate, must be command sponsored. FEML travel may not be taken within 6 months of the beginning or end of the Service member's tour of duty. The Combatant Commanders are authorized, on a case-by-case basis, to waive the 6-month rule, when appropriate. See [DOD Instruction 1327.06](#) for more details.

FEML programs and locations are managed by each of the Combatant Commands but funded by each of the services. FEML travel will provide a cost-constructed amount from the overseas location to an American port of debarkation. That amount then provides the cap for cost-construction to other locations. [AP-FEML-01](#) outlines the connections worldwide, planned back to U.S. airports.

- MILPERSMAN 1050-210 discusses Navy elements of Environmental Morale Leave.
- JTR 040401, Nov 2021

**Note:** *There are wide differences between DOD and DoS over FEML and funded R&R travel entitlements*

**Consecutive Overseas Tour (COT) Leave.** Service members stationed outside the continental United States (OCONUS) who are ordered to a consecutive tour of duty at the same duty station or reassigned permanent change of station (PCS) to another overseas duty station may be paid travel and transportation allowances in connection with authorized leave from their last duty station. You must still use your accrued military leave (you won't receive specific COT leave days). The travel allowances can help defray costs when you are moving in between two OCONUS stations and your family can't remain behind, or go ahead to the new duty station, while you are conducting CONUS training (see discussion in Chapter 3).

Travel expenses are funded for the service member and accompanying dependents from the overseas location back to the Service member's home of record (HOR) or an alternate place to which transportation is no more expensive than to the HOR. If transportation to the selected alternate place is more expensive than transportation to the HOR, the Service member is financially responsible for the additional cost, unless transportation to the more expensive alternate place is authorized or approved by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), Military Pay and Compensation Policy Branch (N130C).

When planning COT travel between tours, review [MILPERSMAN 1050-410](#), and then coordinate procedures with your detailer. Meanwhile [this reference](#) outlines Tour Lengths and Tours of Duty Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) and Navy specified prescribed sea tours (PST) per MILPERSMAN 1301-110, MILPERSMAN 1300-308, and current sea-shore flow NAVADMIN.

**Circuitous Travel (CIRC TRAVEL).** Circuitous travel is when a service member takes leave in conjunction with an OCONUS PCS move. This means you can procure your travel, through CWT SATO Travel and in accordance with the Fly America Act and JTR 020206 (meaning you must use a U.S. flagged carrier when available), and fly to whatever destination overseas that is not included on your orders that you want to take leave (IAW the FCG), and the Navy will cover what it would have cost the U.S. government to send you and your family directly to your next duty station. The FAO Community Developed “CIRC Travel Gouge” that is available on [Navy FAO APAN](#) under PCS resources.

Before you and your family will be authorized to execute circuitous travel, you must provide your detailer with a “complete enroute travel itinerary” IAW [MILPERSMAN 1320-308](#). After you receive circuitous travel orders changing the verbiage of your orders from “GOVERNMENT AIR/GOVERNMENT-PROCURED AIR IS DIRECTED” to “GOVERNMENT AIR/GOVERNMENT-PROCURED AIR IS AUTHORIZED VICE DIRECTED”. After you receive orders, NAVPTO or a DOD Transportation Office must use your orders and requested flight date to provide you with a with a government constructed cost memo or GCC memo. This memo will tell your next PSD how much it would have cost the US government to fly you and your family to your next duty station (JTR 050202). With this memo, you can book your travel with leave enroute by calling CWT SATO or utilizing an option in JTR 020207 paragraphs E, F, or G.

**Note:** *This information is fluid. Before you spend your money for circuitous travel on your next PCS, read the Joint Travel Regulations, specifically Chapters 2 and 5 and talk with your losing and gaining commands. See also: DoD 7000.14-R Financial Management Regulation Volume 7A, Chapter 26 for ‘Service Member in Transit’, (261010).*

**Military Travel Services:** [CWT SATO Vacations](#) can book leisure travel for service members using the same travel booking system for official PCS or TAD travel. Availability will vary but these prices can dampen out the price swings you may experience with international travel otherwise.

**Military Space-Available** travel is available to service members and their families when on a leave status and allows service members and families to fly onboard US military flights from location to location if there is room. Service members must remain on a leave status throughout the trip. Space-A works best when flying between military hub locations (i.e. Ramstein, Yokota, Rota, Hawaii, etc.) and with time available for flight scheduling hiccups. Follow this link from [USAF’s Air Mobility Command](#) for additional information and tips on Space A travel.

# Chapter 11: Evacuations

Yes, it can happen to you! Evacuations are not just an event for higher threat locations; they can be triggered by a natural disaster, pandemic, civil unrest, foreign invasion, etc. There are common threads that run through all emergency situations. Preparation and information are key to managing the crisis. Thinking through plans well ahead of time will make responding easier. No two evacuations are the same, some evacuees have had weeks to prepare, while others only hours. Some service members, employees, and family members return to post after a short time, while others do not. Some initial thoughts to consider:

- **Many FAOs will be deemed essential and required to remain at post or shift to a Combatant or Component headquarters to carry on work during or after an evacuation. Otherwise, they may be expected to evacuate to DIA or service headquarters in the Washington area to continue the fight from there.**
- Realize that DoS biases for all their employees to evacuate back to the Washington DC area. This is effectively higher headquarters and evacuated FSOs will continue working at Main State.
- Determine the “who” and “where” with your family. Who should be contacted in the United States and where should you and your family go during an extended evacuation? This is particularly important for single parents and dual-military couples.
- Families can usually go to a location of their choice, so consider where your family might be best supported during a tumultuous time. Nearby or with family, friends, former neighborhoods and schools? You don’t have to pre-commit to any of those but thinking through the process ahead of time will pay dividends should your family need to depart quickly. Make arrangements for who might care for your children if an evacuation occurs and one or both parents need to remain at post and the children must leave.
- Financial preparedness: If on an authorized or ordered departure, you will receive lodging and per diem for each family member at the designated location, and the allowances are usually more than sufficient. However, there could be a delay between the outlay and reimbursement. Try to avoid making an already stressful situation even more stressful by adding money worries. We recommend maintaining a good emergency savings amount in case of such contingencies.
- Pets are family too! Whether you bring a pet with you, or adopt one overseas, that’s another family member to account for. The JTR does provide for some limited pet transportation costs in the event of an evacuation. Ensure that your pet records are kept current throughout your tour and that you have the right kennels, etc., for ready transport. Keep your pets in mind when considering possible safe-haven locations.

## Stay Bags and Go Bags

When a major crisis at post occurs, employees and family members may be asked to shelter in place. Evacuation procedures may follow.

**Stay Bag:** Your stay bag is your shelter in place home emergency kit. Supplies should last for three to four days and be stored in an easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or duffle bag.

**Go Bag:** Your go bag is your evacuation emergency bag. It is your bag that is ready to grab n' go when you get a phone call to evacuate. One of the most important things to hand carry in a go bag are your personal documents and records.

**Note:** Printable checklists for Stay and Go Bags are provided in **Appendix 4 and 5** for easy reference.

More details on go bags, evacuations and building resilience, and a customized personal crisis preparedness aid, can be found in the Transition Center's free online resource [Overseas Crisis Readiness](#).

## Evacuation Authorities and Entitlements

Overall authority and responsibility for the safety of US citizens overseas rests with the Secretary of State, who is supported by the Secretary of Defense. This relationship is codified in the "Memorandum of Agreement [Between the Departments of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation](#) of U.S. Citizens and Nationals and Designated Other Persons from Threatened Areas Overseas." From a DOD perspective, this relationship and definitions are further defined in [DOD Directive 3025.14](#) "Evacuation of US Citizens and Designated Aliens from Threatened Areas Abroad."

You should receive more information on evacuation during your JMAS or SCO training. You can also contact the DoS Overseas Briefing Center to learn more. Realize that the contact information is useful but many of the allowances and procedures are specifically for Foreign Service civilians. There are often parallel, but differently titled allowances and authorities for military members. Check the JTR Chapter 6.

Evacuation will generally correspond to protection and evacuation plans established by DoS as follows. It is important to note that diplomatic or other considerations may make the use of certain terms, such as "noncombatant evacuation operation" (NEO), inadvisable and require the use of other terms instead. These definitions are from the DODD 3025.14:

**Standfast:** All military dependents, nonessential DoD civilian employees and their families, families of essential DOD civilian employees, and DOD Dependents Schools (DoDDS) staff and faculty are required to shelter in place and take appropriate precautions to limit harm since immediate movement will involve unacceptable risks.

**Stop Movement:** DoD issues an order to stop forward movement of military dependents, nonessential DOD civilian employees and their families, families of essential DOD civilian employees, and DoDDS staff and faculty.



**Authorized Departure:** Voluntary departure of command-sponsored military dependents, nonessential DoD civilian employees and their families, families of essential DOD civilian employees, and DoDDS staff and faculty to an announced safe haven is encouraged and authorized at government expense, with return also at government expense. These government authorized expenses do not apply to local U.S. citizens who do not have service agreements for return transportation to the United States at government expense.

**Ordered Departure:** Mandatory departure of some or all categories of personnel and dependents (such as military dependents, nonessential DoD civilian employees and their families, families of essential DOD civilian employees, and DoDDS staff and faculty) to designated safe havens is directed by DoS, with implementation of the theater evacuation plan. Historically, DoS accomplishes most ordered evacuations using commercial transportation (scheduled or chartered), without the use of military personnel or assistance. However, DoS may request a DOD-assisted NEO (using DOD organic or chartered transportation assets) based on the nature of the threat or the lack of availability of alternative forms of transportation.

**Drawdown: (This is a DoS term and may be used at Post)** The evacuation of family members and non-emergency staff; emergency personnel remain at post. One of the tasks of the Emergency Action Committee at post is to determine which staff positions would be necessary during a crisis. In an evacuation, the post would be drawn down to that number, unless the crisis required the temporary closure of the post.

Realize that any of these events will trigger movements of DOD dependents out of a particular location. They will also trigger certain evacuation allowances to be provided, outlined in the JTR.

Once a Post is evacuated, DoS will re-examine conditions at post every 30 days to see if families may return. By law, an evacuation cannot exceed 179 days. Once it is deemed safe for return, DoS will publish a cable and DOD will follow with a memo that outlines how long evacuation allowances will continue, usually an additional 10 days from the date of the DOD memo. Should DoS determine it is not safe for families to return to the host country, DoS will declare the post unaccompanied and families will not be allowed to return to post. This decision can come at any time during the evacuation but usually does not happen until the evacuation has gone for the entire 6 months. Families will need to stay in constant contact with their Command POC and their service member during these procedures.

For military families, if the post is declared unaccompanied, they will be directed to find a designated place and can either convert their safe haven to a designated place, or they can relocate to a permanent location at government expense. Families are given 30 days to make the necessary arrangements and settle into their designated place/permanent location. Orders will need to be cut and families may qualify for Dislocation Allowance (DLA.) Families can have their HHG shipped from station and/or non-temporary storage (NTS), as well as their car.

**From the JTR:** An evacuation is the authorized or directed departure from an area threatened by unusual or emergency circumstances in the continental United States (CONUS), at a non-foreign location outside the CONUS (OCONUS), or at a foreign location. The authority to evacuate an area depends on whether it is in the CONUS, a non-foreign location OCONUS, or a foreign location. Sections 060101 Authority to Order an Evacuation, 060102 Identifying Evacuees, and associated tables provide details about entitlements associated with evacuations.

## General DOD Evacuation Information<sup>10</sup>

The information provides basic tools for planning and can be modified for local and specific conditions while OCONUS. An evacuation can be declared due to political unrest, war, natural disaster, epidemic or any other hosts of reasons. Although no one can predict when or where an evacuation may happen, knowing what steps to take to prepare for an evacuation, and knowing what to expect after you have evacuated will help to ease your anxiety and worry. Everything in this guide is addressed in both the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) chapter 6 for military members and families. When an evacuation occurs, military members will be placed on TDY/TAD orders and family members will proceed as evacuees.

**Note:** The emergency evacuation checklists, outlining essential steps before leaving station and after arriving at safe haven, are available in **Appendix 6** for printing and quick reference.

**1. PERSONAL PAPERS:** Always keep important papers together in a safe place, and most importantly, up to date. Keep them in a separate container/briefcase so they will be ready at a moment's notice. Listed below are many (but *not* necessarily all) of those important papers that you will need to hand carry from station to your safe haven:

- Passport, visa, and military identification card
- DD Form 1610 Evacuation Travel Orders (filed at the sponsor's office)
- Will and Power of Attorney
- Medical and dental records, shot records, pharmacy prescriptions
- Insurance policies and financial papers/documents
- Pet records (specifically current shot records)
- School records, transcripts, test scores, recommendations
- U.S. driver's license, auto insurance policies, car registration and title
- Cash in both U.S. and local currencies
- Birth certificate(s), naturalization certificate(s), adoption papers, marriage license
- Spouse's personal papers, resumes
- Household goods inventory list (pictures-digital or hard copy of possessions/furniture)
- Duplicate address book
- Listing of regular billing dates for all recurring expenses
- Listing of names, addresses, and phone numbers of doctors, dentist, lawyers, and other professional services personnel
- This Evacuation Guide

**2. FINANCES:** Family members should talk now about finances. For example, who will pay the bills, and will it be on-line or by check? If the spouse currently works outside the home, how will this affect your family's income? The bottom line is that families plan how to handle the monetary issues that arise from an evacuation. Evacuees will receive allowances during an evacuation, but families will need to pay most expenses up front and get reimbursed later. Be prepared for the possibility that all expenses may not be covered.

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<sup>10</sup> This section is drawn extensively from DLA's Evacuation and Safe Haven Guidance and uses the JTR Chapter 6 as its primary reference.

**3. PERSONAL PROPERTY INVENTORY:** Have an up-to-date inventory of all personal property and household goods with appraised values. The inventory should list the item, quantity, cost, and date purchased of each item. Keep receipts of high-value items. You might want to photograph the more valuable items and either tape the information to the back of the photo or keep a CD of your pictorial inventory filed with the inventory list. Keep one copy of the inventory with you and another copy at a safe location in the U.S. The list should be amended periodically for additions and deletions.

**4. POWER OF ATTORNEY:** A child's well-being is always of concern during an emergency/evacuation. In case you might be away at the time of an emergency (any kind, not just an evacuation) you should have a Special Power of Attorney prepared. This will give someone on station the authority to make decisions on your child's behalf and to escort your child back to the States if you are absent or unable.

**5. TRAVEL ORDERS:** Someone in your sponsor's office should prepare a [DD Form 1610](#) Travel Order for your family; (1 form per family) shortly after your arrival on-station. For Attaché assignments, the OPSCO should ensure this is prepared for everyone in the DAO. For OSC assignments, this is often managed by the Support Office at the GCC who handles OSC support and admin. This preparation may occur during GCC check-in prior to arrival at post. You will need to provide your name and social security number and your children's names and birth dates. You will also have to decide where you want to safe haven (discussed later in this guide) and provide the location. The DD Form 1610 will be filed and used only if an evacuation is declared. If not used while you are on your overseas assignment, the document will be destroyed upon your departure.

**6. AUTOMOBILES:** In an evacuation where the Service Member or DOD Civilian employee must also leave station, instructions will normally be given as to what to do with privately owned vehicles. Cars may be gathered together in a safe, central location and reclaimed by their owners at a later date, or if the evacuation becomes permanent, shipped out when conditions permit. It might be necessary for you to leave a duplicate set of keys to the car with a designated person/office along with information on make, year and model of vehicle and the owner's name and U.S. address.

**7. PETS:** A service member or family on official evacuation orders from an OCONUS permanent duty station (PDS) are authorized funding to ship up to 2 pets to their safe haven location. If the Service member transports the pets at personal expense, then reimbursement is limited to the constructed cost that the Government would have incurred if it had transported the pets. A Service member traveling on a separation or retirement order is not authorized reimbursement for pet transportation or quarantine fees. No authority exists to reimburse expenses associated with transporting a pet, including its quarantine, for an evacuation in the CONUS or a non-foreign location OCONUS. See JTR 060204.

**8. SELECTING A SAFE HAVEN LOCATION:** Families should decide now where to go in the event of an evacuation. Department of State (DoS) will declare the United States as the safe haven location for the evacuees, but each family must decide where in the U.S. they want to go. The government will move families only once to a safe haven location so take into consideration things such as public transportation, availability of temporary lodging facilities, public schools, military support offices, as well as proximity to family and friends. Since evacuations can last as long as six months, it is important to consider carefully where you want to safe haven. For military and DOD Civilian families who are from Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico or other U.S. Territories (U.S. OCONUS locations), and for foreign-born spouses who want to safe haven in their native countries (foreign OCONUS locations), an approval process is required. Below are steps you must take and things you should consider if you are deciding this option.

- For foreign OCONUS safe haven locations you must get DoS approval prior to leaving your overseas PDS, a process that usually takes only a day or two. U.S. OCONUS locations (i.e. Guam, Puerto Rico) do not require DoS approval.
- All OCONUS safe haven locations require approval from Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) which can take several weeks. Once you have DoS approval you are authorized to travel to the OCONUS location, but in order to get reimbursed for your everyday living (per diem) expenses you must wait for OUSD approval. Although OUSD approves nearly all OCONUS requests, families must understand they are taking a risk. If OUSD does not approve their OCONUS request they will not get reimbursed for their living expenses (but travel expenses are still covered.)
- Support from your Service or Agency in foreign OCONUS and US territory safe haven locations is very limited.
- Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) will not fund education costs outside the members PDS. Therefore, any costs at the safe haven location associated with education are the family's responsibility.
- Families do not have access to the U.S. Embassy in the OCONUS safe haven location for things such as postal/pouch service, Health Unit, check cashing, etc.

**9. EVACUATION PROCEDURES/PREPARING TO LEAVE POST:** When DoS declares an evacuation they will indicate if it is an authorized or ordered departure. If it's ordered, families are required to depart post immediately or at the first reasonably available time. If it is declared an authorized (some refer to this as voluntary) evacuation, families can decide if and when they want to depart post.

**Please note: when a DOD family leaves post on evacuation orders (ordered or authorized) they will not be able to return to the overseas location until the evacuation has been officially lifted by DoS and announced by DOD.** There will be a designated person in your sponsor's office that is responsible for evacuation procedures, including obtaining your airline tickets. Make sure that person has completed the DD Form 1610 Travel order (and provides you with a copy) and give him/her the following information:

- Safe haven location, city, and state (actual address if you have it) or OCONUS location (if applicable)
- Name, phone number and/or email address of a Point of Contact (POC) for you in the U.S. (preferably at your safe haven location)
- Name and ages of your children

**10. FAMILY SUPPORT REPRESENTATIVE:** Each family who has chosen a safe haven within the 50 U.S. States and District of Columbia will be assigned a local Family Support Representative (FSR.) This person is located at the nearest military installation and is usually from the same military Service although sometimes from another Service when circumstances call for that. Either way, the FSR will assist the family with whatever needs they have in getting settled in their safe haven location and will remain in contact with the family throughout the entire duration of the evacuation. Civilian family members will be contacted by someone in their sponsor's state-side HQs who may or may not be close to the evacuee's safe haven location but will remain in contact with them throughout the evacuation. If you have not been

contacted by a FSR within 2 to 3 days of arriving at your safe haven, contact your sponsor's overseas office or state-side HQ. Each evacuating family must complete a DD Form 2585 Repatriation Processing Center Sheet. Check with the Evacuation POC at your sponsor's overseas office for a copy. Once completed return the form to your command POC.

**11. STOP MOVEMENT:** When DoS releases a cable declaring an evacuation, DOD will follow with a memo, part of which includes issuing a Stop Movement order. This will immediately suspend travel for all DOD dependents to the evacuated location/country. If a family is preparing to depart on their Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to the evacuated location, they will be prohibited from doing so. The Service member must request permission from DoS to enter the country, which is usually granted, but the family will not be permitted to enter the country anytime during the evacuation. If a family is caught in this situation, one of two outcomes will result.

- If the family has already sold/vacated their house, has an irrevocable contractual agreement for lease/resale of their residence, and/or had their household goods (HHG) packed, the family is identified as having disestablished their residence and will be placed on evacuation orders the day the family was scheduled to depart for their PDS.
- If the evacuation is declared prior to the family disestablishing their residence the family should immediately stop all moving preparations, i.e., vacating/selling their house and packing/shipping their HHG and car. Assuming the Service member is authorized to travel to the evacuated country, the family's situation will be treated the same as an unaccompanied assignment. The Service member will continue to receive a housing allowance for his family (as well as receive housing in the overseas location) and will also be entitled to separation pay.

A Stop Movement can also affect a family that has already PCSed and settled into their overseas location. If the family is away from the host country for any reason (personal leave/vacation, medical travel, Funded Environmental Moral Leave (FEMLE), etc.) at the time an evacuation is declared, the Stop Movement will apply to them as well. Again, the Service member will need to request permission to return to post, which is granted most of the time. Although the family can also request permission to return to post, it is rarely granted. Therefore, starting on the day the family had intended to return to post but is now prohibited from doing so, they will be considered evacuees and their evacuation allowances (and travel to their chosen safe haven location if it is different from where they are) will begin.

**12. DEPENDENT COLLEGE AND/OR BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENT:** If the command-sponsored dependent of a Service member is a student attending school away from post (either in the States or in another country) at the time of the evacuation, the student is not considered an evacuee until such time they would normally visit their family (Christmas break, summer vacation, etc.) at the overseas location. The student's evacuation allowances begin the day he/she departs school. Whether the student joins the family at their safe haven location or moves to a separate safe haven location, he/she is entitled to full evacuation allowances for his/her first 30 days, regardless of whether the family's allowances have already dropped.

**13. ENTITLEMENTS:** Evacuation entitlements for all command sponsored family members can be found in the JTR, chapter 6. Below is an explanation of these entitlements, you can also look on-line for further information. The sponsor's military Service funds the evacuation allowances for military families. Please note: non-command sponsored dependents are only authorized one-way transportation to their U.S. safe haven. Per Diem allowances and return travel to the PDS are not authorized.

**14. PER DIEM – MILITARY:** Per Diem allowances for military command sponsored dependents while in a safe haven status are based on the Lodging-Plus System which provides a fixed amount for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) and reimburses actual lodging costs up to a specified maximum amount. The applicable maximum per diem allowance is the rate prescribed for the safe haven location and depends on the age of the family members.

**15. UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE (UAB):** Check JTR to verify current entitlement. Evacuated families are entitled a UAB shipment in an amount not to exceed 350 pounds for each dependent age 12 and older, and 175 pounds for each dependent under age 12, with a **maximum family limit of 1,000 pounds**. The purpose of the shipment is for families to pack items they will need to sustain a temporary household, i.e. extra clothing, linens, toys, etc. However, please note that while UAB ships expeditiously, many times shipments take longer than expected, a month or two. Do not ship “must-have” items (medications, important papers, etc.) in UAB.

**16. AIR FREIGHT REPLACEMENT ALLOWANCE:** If UAB cannot be shipped, or the family would rather not hassle with a shipment, an air freight replacement allowance may be authorized to help defray costs of items ordinarily part of the UAB that must now be purchased. The flat amounts are: one evacuated dependent-\$250.00; two evacuated dependents-\$450.00; three or more evacuated dependents-\$600.00. No receipts are required for this allowance. Note: If/when the evacuation is lifted and families are allowed to return to their OCONUS PDS, the family is then eligible to ship the purchased items as UAB using the weight restrictions listed above.

**17. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION:** Local transportation allowances are paid as a flat rate of \$25.00 per day, per family regardless of the number of dependents in the family. No receipts are required. Command sponsored evacuated dependents are authorized reimbursement for transportation when required to travel from the safe haven location to obtain/renew a passport/military ID, or for medical screening required as a prerequisite to return to the member’s PDS.

**18. FILING VOUCHERS:** To receive reimbursement for evacuation expenses, families need to complete DD-Form 1351-2.

**19. CHANGING SAFE HAVEN LOCATION:** Changing a safe haven location can be difficult. It requires requesting/notifying the Service, DFAS, amending the family’s evacuation orders and establishing a new per diem rate based on the new location. Make sure you discuss any decision regarding changing safe haven locations with your Command POC.

**20. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING TERMINATION OF EVACUATION:** Every 30 days DoS reviews the situation in country to determine if it is safe for families to return to post. If it is not, the evacuation will be extended for another 30 days. When it is finally safe for families to return to the PDS, DoS will release a cable indicating on what day the evacuation will be lifted. DOD will follow with a memorandum allowing military families and DOD civilian families to return.

***Note: DOD military and civilian families must wait for the DOD memo authorizing a return to their PDS. This memo usually takes one to three additional days after the DoS cable is released.***

The memorandum will also indicate how long evacuation allowances will continue, usually an additional 10 days from the date of the DOD memo. Within this 10-day time frame families must:

- Give notice to vacate their lodging
- Contact travel with their orders (and DOD memo) to receive return tickets
- Contact transportation to arrange for UAB to be packed and shipped
- Disenroll the children from school and obtain their records
- Settle the last claim or save all contact POC information (name of person you've been dealing with, phone and fax numbers, email and mailing address, etc.) so the claim can be submitted after returning to the PDS
- Contact the FSR

If a family wishes to stay at their safe haven location beyond the 10 days following the lifting of the evacuation, they may do so, but per diem entitlements end after the 10th day. However, the evacuation order can still be used to obtain return airline tickets to the PDS even after this 10-day period.

There may be reasons a family cannot return to their PDS following the lifting of the evacuation. Examples of such reasons are:

- Service member/civilian employee has less than 60 days remaining on station and according to the JTR the family's return travel is not authorized. This can be waived but only with OSD approval.
- An evacuated family member is receiving medical care and is either too ill to return, is awaiting the results of a medical test or is waiting for follow-up treatment (get a doctor's statement indicating what the issue is.) Dependent children are nearing the end of their school term (usually within 30 days) and need to finish out the year in their current school (get a copy of the school calendar.)
- If a family cannot return to the PDS, they can request for their safe haven allowances to continue until such time they can return. The request, with justification and documentation must go through the appropriate approval offices (check with your FSR.) If approved, a written authorization will be provided. A copy of this approval must be submitted with the claim that covers the time beyond the 10-day grace period following the evacuation's termination.

**21. POST DECLARED UNACCOMPANIED:** Should DoS determine it is not safe for families to return to the host country, it will declare the post unaccompanied and families will not be allowed to return to post. This decision can come at any time during the evacuation but usually does not happen until the evacuation has gone the entire 6 months. By law an evacuation cannot exceed 179 days. Families should be in contact with their FSR during these procedures.

For military families, if the post is declared unaccompanied, they will be directed to find a designated place and can either:

- Convert their safe haven to a designated place

- Relocate to a permanent location at government expense

Families are given 30 days to make the necessary arrangements and settle into their designated place/permanent location. Orders will need to be cut and families may qualify for Dislocation Allowance (DLA.) Families can have their HHG shipped from station and/or non-temporary storage (NTS), as well as their car.

Once the family has established residency, or on day 31 following the date indicated on the DOD memorandum (whichever comes first) they will no longer be entitled to evacuation funding, but the sponsor will begin receiving a housing allowance and separation pay.

For further instructions recommend families review the JTR, chapter 6 and contact their sponsor's office. Please note: DOD families must wait for the DOD memorandum describing the post as unaccompanied and directing them to find a designated place. This memo comes from the Office of Undersecretary of Defense and is needed to generate orders. If families move prior to this memo they could be responsible for all moving expenses.

## 22. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What do I do if an evacuation is declared while I am traveling?** Before you travel, ensure your sponsor's office has a complete itinerary of your trip. Also, make sure your papers and documents are gathered into one location and that someone in the office knows where they are located. You might even consider leaving the keys to your quarters and car with someone in the office or American Embassy. If word of evacuation reaches you contact your sponsor's OCONUS office or CONUS HQ.
- Is an advance per diem authorized to evacuated dependents?** An advance payment of per diem is authorized, normally up to 80% of the estimated entitlement for 30 days at the safe haven location. However, usually that advancement is taken out of the first submitted reimbursement claim. Therefore, if an advancement is needed, recommend the smallest amount possible be taken.
- Why does the allowance decrease after 30 days?** The per diem rates were established to cover the cost incurred when living in lodging other than your home. Expenses during the first month are higher when dependents are getting settled (i.e., staying in high-cost hotel while searching for more suitable lodging, cost of utility hook-up, purchase food staples, etc.) Following this initial period 60 percent of the per diem rate is usually adequate to cover the cost of meals, lodging and incidentals. A waiver to increase the reduced per diem can be requested.
- Why do per diem allowances for dependents vary between families?** Per Diem at a safe haven is based on (1) safe haven location, (2) number of dependents, (3) age of dependents, and (4) amount actually spent for lodging. Any one of these factors will change the amount of the allowance.
- What expenses are covered by the lodging portion of the per diem paid?** Besides the cost of a hotel room or apartment, the lodging portion of per diem covers other charges that may or may not be added separately to your bill such as maid service, mobile home parking, utility connection, use and disconnection charges (electrical, gas, water, oil, sewer, etc.), monthly telephone user fees (not individual call charges), and cost of special user fees (cable TV and/or internet connection.) Please note: Be very careful with signing any kind of lodging lease. Check to be sure it



has a special clause permitting termination due to official government orders. Recommend you check with your finance office for specifics.

- f. **What entitlements are authorized to a dependent who turns 21 while at the sponsor's permanent duty station?** A dependent who was moved at government expense to the member's PDS outside CONUS and who turns 21 years of age at the PDS or at a safe haven location, will be considered a dependent for transportation.
  
- g. **How will I receive medical care while I'm an evacuee?** If you are a DOD civilian family member follow the guidelines for your personal health care coverage. Military family members are entitled to TRICARE prime coverage while at your safe haven. The location of your safe haven will determine where you receive that coverage. Contact TRICARE (on-line or by phone), explain your circumstances and find out what is available in your location. You can remain enrolled in your overseas TRICARE region for 60 days and still receive service anywhere in the US. Recommend that after DoS makes the decision to extend the evacuation at the end of the first 30 days that you enroll in your local safe haven region sometime before the 59th day of your evacuation. If you do not re-enroll in the new area, and the evacuation extends beyond 60 days, you will be automatically converted to TRICARE Standard. You may experience difficulties with TRICARE when trying to make an appointment in the States while still enrolled in your overseas TRICARE location. If you are unable to convince TRICARE that you are authorized to remain enrolled in your overseas TRICARE region, show the TRICARE official a copy of the TRICARE Portability Letter signed by the DOD Surgeon General. **Ask your FSR where to acquire this letter.** If you are safe havening in a foreign OCONUS location, there is no TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Prime in US OCONUS locations (i.e. Hawaii, Guam, etc.) varies so contact the regional TRICARE office for details. TRICARE Standard is always available but again, recommend you contact the regional TRICARE office for more guidance.

#### **DOD Resources:**

- [MilOneSource link](#) – This site is more focused on natural disasters but points towards many DOD focused resources.
  
- [DOD Emergency Preparedness Guide](#)

# Appendix 1: Acronyms

<b>ACS</b>	American Citizen Services
<b>ALUSNA</b>	American Legation U.S. Naval Attaché aka the Naval Attaché
<b>A/ALUSNA</b>	Assistant Naval Attaché
<b>AIRA</b>	Air Attaché
<b>A/AIRA</b>	Assistant Air Attaché
<b>ARMA</b>	Army Attaché
<b>A/ARMA</b>	Assistant Army Attaché
<b>ASTP</b>	Attaché Staff Training Program
<b>ATP</b>	Attaché Training Program
<b>Bs &amp; Cs</b>	Briefings and Consultations
<b>CCMD</b>	Shorthand for Combatant Command, may also see COCOM
<b>Chargé/CDA</b>	Chargé d'Affaires; acting Chief of Mission
<b>CLO</b>	Community Liaison Office
<b>CMR</b>	Chief of Mission's Residence (the ambassador's house)
<b>CODEL</b>	Congressional Delegation
<b>COGATT</b>	Coast Guard Attaché
<b>COLA</b>	Cost of Living Allowance
<b>CoM</b>	Chief of Mission (Ambassador)
<b>CONGEN</b>	Consul General; head of Consulate
<b>CONS</b>	Consular Section, U.S. Embassy
<b>DAO or USDAO</b>	Defense Attaché Office or United States Defense Attaché Office
<b>DAS</b>	Defense Attaché Service
<b>DATT or SDO/DATT</b>	Defense Attaché or Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché
<b>DCM</b>	Deputy Chief of Mission
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>DIA</b>	Defense Intelligence Agency
<b>DIAM</b>	DIA Manual
<b>DODEA</b>	Department of Defense Education Activities
<b>DSCU</b>	Defense Security Cooperation University
<b>DV/VIP</b>	Distinguished Visitor/Very Important Person
<b>ECON</b>	Economic Section of Embassy
<b>E&amp;E</b>	Emergency & Extraordinary Expenses
<b>EFM</b>	Eligible Family Member(s); State Dept term for family and dependents who can receive work for, and services from the Embassy.
<b>EFMP</b>	Exceptional Family Member Program, DOD program to ensure that special medical and educational services are available for DOD Family members.
<b>FAA</b>	Federal Aviation Administration
<b>FAO</b>	Foreign Area Officer
<b>FAMER</b>	Family Member Employment Report; State Dept annual summary
<b>FEML</b>	Funded Environmental Morale Leave
<b>FLO</b>	Foreign Liaison Office, the office responsible for coordination of international attachés working with the host government.

<b>FLO</b>	Family Liaison Office ( <i>Old name for the State Department' Global CLO, parent to CLO</i> )
<b>FM</b>	Facilities Management Office of an Embassy
<b>FMO</b>	Financial Management Office of an Embassy
<b>FSO</b>	Foreign Service Officer
<b>FSN</b>	Foreign Service National ( <i>formerly "LES," locally employed staff</i> )
<b>GCC</b>	Geographic Combatant Command
<b>GCLO</b>	Global Community Liaison Office
<b>GSO</b>	General Services Office of an Embassy
<b>HCN</b>	Host Country National
<b>HHE</b>	House Hold Effects ( <i>State department term for House Hold Goods (HHG)</i> )
<b>ICASS</b>	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
<b>ITO</b>	Invitational Travel Orders
<b>JTR</b>	Joint Travel Regulation
<b>JMAS</b>	Joint Military Attaché School
<b>LES/LE Staff</b>	Locally employed staff ( <i>now "FSN," foreign service national</i> )
<b>MARA</b>	Marine Attaché
<b>MGT</b>	Management Office(r), US Embassy
<b>MOH</b>	Member of Household; State Department term for someone living in the home who is not eligible to receive Embassy services.
<b>MSG</b>	Marine Security Guard at an Embassy
<b>NDSP</b>	Non-DOD Schools Program
<b>NFATC</b>	National Foreign Affairs Training Center
<b>NMFA</b>	National Military Family Association
<b>OBC</b>	Overseas Briefing Center of the State Department
<b>OCMR</b>	Out of Country Medical Referral
<b>OHA</b>	Overseas Housing Allowance
<b>OMS</b>	Office Management Specialist at an Embassy
<b>OPS ASST/NCO</b>	Non-Commissioned Officer or Petty Officer assigned to a DAO
<b>OPSCO</b>	Operations Coordinator in a DAO
<b>PAO</b>	Public Affairs Office
<b>PD</b>	Public Diplomacy Section of an Embassy
<b>PEP</b>	Personnel Exchange Program
<b>PNG</b>	persona non grata; host country demand for individual to leave
<b>POL/MIL</b>	Political/Military Section at an Embassy
<b>RMO</b>	Regional Medical Office(r)
<b>RMOP</b>	Regional Medical Officer Psychiatrist
<b>RSO</b>	Regional Security Office(r) at an Embassy
<b>SOFA</b>	Status of Forces Agreement, the bilateral international agreement governing how US forces are treated and handled by a host country. Not all partners have one.
<b>SC</b>	Security Cooperation
<b>SCO</b>	Security Cooperation Organization: <i>also known by other initials such as ODC, MILGRP, SAO, etc., depending on your country</i>
<b>SL</b>	School Liaison is a Service K-12 military point of contact on all installations
<b>STP</b>	Spouse Training Program at JMAS
<b>TLA</b>	Temporary Lodging Allowance
<b>U.S. Res</b>	United States citizen residing in your host country

# Appendix 2: MILPERSMAN Quick Reference Guide

All documents referenced below are readily accessible on [MyNavy HR](#).

This is a partial list of pertinent MILPERSMAN (MPM) articles used in Millington to reference career process policies and procedures. The MPM articles also refer to the appropriate Instructions and Directives that allow, dictate, or restrict our personnel actions overall. This list is current with CH-90 of the MPM.

	ARTICLE #	SUBJECT
<b>OMPF AND RECORD MANAGEMENT</b>		
	1000-150	Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR)
	1070-111	OMPF Submissions
	1070-320	Administrative Remarks
	1301-900	Subspecialty Codes and Education
<b>BOARDS</b>		
	1401-010	Correspondence to Admin Boards
	1420-010	Communication with Officer Promotion Selection Boards
	1420-050	Counseling of Officers Who Fail to Select for Promotion (FOS Counseling)
	1420-070	Promotion Withhold or Delay
<b>FAO-SPECIFIC</b>		
	1213-020	Suspension and Removal of Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Additional Qualification Designators (AQDs)
	1301-809	Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Assignments to Milestone Billets
<b>ASSIGNMENT AND DISTRIBUTION</b>		
	1300-010	Flag Level Review of Detailing
	1300-035	Outside DOD Detailing
	1300-500	Reassignment for Humanitarian Reasons
	1300-600	Twilight Tours
	1300-1000	COLO and Single Parent Assignment Policy
	1300-1100	Immediate Family Assignment Policy
	1300-1200	Safety Transfers
	1300-1205	Expedited Transfers
	1300-1306	Pregnancy Policy
	1320-300	Types of Orders
	1320-314	TDY Travel Orders
<b>OFFICER DETAILING POLICY</b>		
	1301-100	Officer Distribution – Overview

	1301-102	Officer Distribution – Process
	1301-104	Officer Distribution – Tour Lengths and Rotations
	1301-106	Time On Station
	1301-108	Retainability
	1301-110	Sea and Shore Tour Lengths
	1301-114	NAVPERSCOM
	1301-116	USNA Instructor Tour Lengths
	1301-120	JDAL Tour Lengths
	1301-122	Operational Screening – Officer
<b>OFFICER SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS</b>		
	1301-200	Officer Special Assignments – General
	1301-202	Nominative Billets
	1301-205	USNA
	1301-207	DAS
	1301-216	Joint Duty Assignments
	1301-217	NATO Billets
	1301-227	Officers Without Security Clearances
	1301-228	PFA Failures
	1321-040	COS, EA, Flag Sec, Aide
<b>PCS ORDERS EXECUTION</b>		
	1320-060	PCS Delivery, Interpretation, and Execution
	1320-090	Proceed Time
	1320-100	Travel Time
	1320-140	Reporting Policy
	1320-200	TDY Travel Entitlement Policy
	1320-210	Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY) Authorization for House Hunting
	1320-220	PTDY Authorization for Job/House Hunting
	1320-306	PCS Transfer Orders Delivery and Interpretation
	1320-308	PCS Transfer Orders Execution
	1320-310	PCS Transfer Orders Endorsement
	1320-311	PCS Mods and Cancellations
	1320-312	PCS Clarifications and Travel Claims
<b>PCS ENTITLEMENT POLICY</b>		
	1300-090	PCS Entitlements – Overview
	1300-100	PCS Entitlements – General and Specific Policies
	1300-130	Reimbursement for POC Travel
	1300-140	Unique PCS Entitlements
	1300-400	DLA Policy
<b>OCONUS ORDERS POLICY</b>		
	1300-302	OCONUS Suitability and Selection
	1300-306	OSS Deficiency Reports and Early Return
	1300-308	Overseas Tour Lengths and Types

	1300-310	Overseas Extensions
	1050-410	COT and IPCOT
<b>DEPENDENT OCONUS POLICY</b>		
	1300-150	Overview
	1300-160	Applicability and Definitions
	1300-170	Criteria and Status
	1300-180	Status Change, Prohibitions, and Entry Approval
	1300-190	Transportation at Government Expense
	1300-200	Overseas Station Allowances
	1300-210	Policies on Non-Command Sponsored Dependents
	1300-316	Dependent Entry Approval Info
	1750-010	Student Dependent Transportation CONUS-OCONUS
<b>LEAVE POLICY</b>		
	1050-010	Leave Policy
	1050-082	Leave, Proceed, and Travel Time
	1050-083	Leave During PCS
	1050-120	Separation Leave
	1050-150	Leave Enroute In Execution of Orders
	1050-160	Leave During TDY
	1050-170	Leave ICW TAD
	1050-200	R&R Leave
	1050-210	FEML
	1050-250	Foreign Leave Travel
	1050-415	Parental Leave
<b>EFM AND MISC MEDICAL STUFF</b>		
	1300-700	EFM
	1740-020	Info Concerning Pregnant Members
	1740-030	Maternity Care
<b>ADVERSE MATTERS</b>		
	1611-010	Officer Separations for Cause
	1611-020	Officer DFC
	1640-080	Officer Transfer for Confinement
	1920-260	Officer UA
<b>SEPARATIONS AND RESIGNATIONS</b>		
	1900-030	Surviving Family Member
	1900-120	Medical Condition Not Amounting to Disability
	1920-010	ADSEP
	1920-020	Involuntary Separation Pay – Overview
	1920-030	Involuntary Separation Pay – Definitions and Policy
	1920-040	Involuntary Separation Pay – Eligibility and Restrictions
	1920-050	Involuntary Separation Pay – Reserve Requirements and Obligations
	1920-060	Involuntary Separation Pay – Calculation and Documentation

	1920-080	Release Prior to Min Required Service
	1920-090	Release from AD Procedures
	1920-100	Early Release of Officers from AD
	1920-120	Separation by Other than Selection Board
	1920-130	Officer Separations – General
	1920-140	Separation Orders for Officers
	1920-180	Separation for Pregnancy – Childbirth
	1920-190	Types of Officer Resignation
	1920-200	Officer Resignation Procedures
	1920-210	Types of Discharge for Officers
	1920-230	Officer Separation – Other
<b>RETIREMENT</b>		
	1800-020	Retirement Orders and Authorization
	1810-020	Retirement Request
	1811-010	Retire/Retain
	1900-040	Retirement in a Restricted Status
<b>RESERVE COMPONENT</b>		
	1301-600	RC – Voluntary and Involuntary Recall or Mobilization
	1321-105	Indefinite Recall
	1321-110	Definite Recall

## Appendix 3: JTR Quick Reference Guide

You can find a copy of the [Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\)](#) here.

This is a partial list of pertinent JTR articles used to reference travel and transportation allowances, particularly during permanent changes of station. This list is current with the JTR dated 1 Mar 2025.

	SECTION #	SUBJECT
	33101	Dependent Medical Care Travel OCONUS
	33102	Medical Travel and Transportation Allowances When a Civilian Employee Is Assigned to a Foreign PDS OCONUS
	Chapter 5	PERMANENT DUTY TRAVEL
	050104	Dislocation Allowance (DLA)
	050105	Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE)
	050107	Pet Expenses Due to a PCS
	050203	POV Transportation
	050204	Indirect or Circuitous Travel OCONUS
	0503	PCS Per Diem
	0505	Dislocation Allowance (DLA)
	050601	TLE for Service Members
	0508	Moves Outside of The United States (OCONUS)
	051401	Authorized PCS Weight Allowances
	051403	Unaccompanied Baggage
	0518	HHG Storage
	0530	Shipment of a POV OCONUS
	0532	POV Storage
	Chapter 6	Evacuation Travel



# Appendix 4: Things to Pack in a Stay Bag<sup>11</sup>

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- ☐ Change of clothes
- ☐ Sensible shoes
- ☐ Rainwear
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Sleeping bags
- ☐ Pillows
- ☐ Pet Supplies
- ☐ Entertainment items
- ☐ Chargers/Batteries for electronics
- ☐ Small toiletry kit (*Toilet paper, paper towel, soap, wipes, sanitary products, etc.*)

## MEDICAL ITEMS

- ☐ Small First Aid Kit
- ☐ **ALL** Prescription medications
- ☐ Over the counter medications
- ☐ Glasses & Contacts

## FOOD AND WATER

### *Three-day supply per person*

- ☐ Reusable water bottle/
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Meal items (*nonperishable ready-to-eat*)
- ☐ Snacks

## EMERGENCY ITEMS

- ☐ Flashlight, LED
- ☐ Laminated list of emergency phone numbers
- ☐ Laminated building floor plan
- ☐ Multi-purpose tool
- ☐ Whistle

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<sup>11</sup> This checklist is provided by the Department of State [Global Community Liaison Office](#).

# Appendix 5: Things to Pack in a Go Bag<sup>12</sup>

## MEDICAL ITEMS

- ☐ Medical and dental records
- ☐ Immunization cards
- ☐ Glasses & contacts
- ☐ Prescriptions
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Small First Aid kit

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Toys, books, and games
- ☐ Pet Supplies (if they can come)
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Chargers/batteries for all electronics
- ☐ Small toiletry kit
- ☐ Photos and digital records (can be on a portable hard drive)
- ☐ Keys (unless otherwise instructed by GSO)

## FOOD AND WATER

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Snacks

## MONEY

- ☐ ATM & credit cards
- ☐ Checkbook
- ☐ Multiple currency
- ☐ Safe deposit keys
- ☐ Government Travel Card

## DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ **Passport(s) & Visas**
- ☐ **Marriage, birth, adoption and naturalization certificates**
- ☐ State Department ID
- ☐ Driver's license
- ☐ Auto insurance policies, registrations and titles (if applicable)
- ☐ Power of attorney & will
- ☐ School records
- ☐ Pet records
- ☐ Household effects inventory
- ☐ Account passwords

**Note:** *It is also important to consider setting up Power of Attorney for parents traveling separately with children*

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<sup>12</sup> This checklist is provided by the Department of State [Global Community Liaison Office](#).

# Appendix 6: Evacuation Checklist<sup>13</sup>

## Before Leaving Station:

1. You will need a DD Form 1610 travel order for yourself and children (one form per family.) This form may have been completed upon your arrival on station, but double check to make sure it is done and ensure the safe haven location is current/accurate.
2. Admin personnel in your sponsor's office on station will acquire your airline tickets.
3. The PDS admin office will be sending necessary information regarding your family to your sponsor's HQ. You will need to provide him/her with a state-side POC, phone number and email address either at your safe haven location or for a person living in the US with whom you stay in contact. If the personal email address you are using at your PDS is accessible at your safe haven location, be sure and provide it as well.
4. Let the admin person know if someone will be meeting you at the airport of your final destination.
5. Prior to leaving country under evacuation orders, the admin personnel should provide you with a blank copy of a DD Form 2585 (which does not have to be completed prior to leaving post, but should be done before or shortly after arriving at your safe haven.) You should also receive a copy of the TRICARE Portability Letter.
6. Get an email address and web site from your children's school. Even if you enroll your children in a school in the states, it is important for them to keep up with their classes overseas if there's any chance you might return to your PDS assuming the evacuation is lifted.
7. Normally you are allowed two checked-through suitcases per person (check with the airlines to make sure there are no unusual restrictions.) Recommend you use the full amount of baggage allowed. Since you are on official government orders you should not be charged a baggage fee, but if you are it is reimbursable (keep the receipt.) However, you are not authorized excess baggage or overweight baggage.
8. You are also entitled to an unaccompanied baggage (UAB) shipment. Check with your sponsor's admin office (and this guide) for weight specifics and shipping procedures.
9. If you are unable or don't want to ship UAB you are then entitled to the Air Freight Replacement Allowance. Check with the admin office or this guide for specifics. Note: you get UAB or Air Freight Replacement Allowance, not both.
10. If no one is planning on meeting you at the airport of your final destination let your sponsor's office know so he/she can relay that information to the HQ repatriation POC back in CONUS.

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<sup>13</sup> This checklist is taken directly from the [DLA's Evacuation and Safe Haven Guidance](#).

## After Arriving at Safe Haven:

1. If at all possible, a DOD representative should have met you at the airport of your safe haven destination (unless the HQ repatriation POC was notified that family or friends were meeting you.) This person will collect the DD Form 2585 (or let you know where to send it) and provide you with his/her phone number and/or email address (if not, ask for it.)
2. Within a day or two of arriving at your safe haven you will be contacted by a Family Support Representative (FSR) from either your sponsor's Service or DOD HQ. This person may be the same DOD representative that met you at the airport or someone different but will stay in contact with you throughout the duration of the evacuation.
3. If you are not contacted within a day or two after arriving at your safe haven by the above individual call your sponsor's designated HQ repatriation POC and let him/her know.
4. Ask what finance office you need to work with for filing your vouchers either through your FSR or your spouse's HQ Repatriation POC.
5. Contact your FSR if you are going to be away from your safe haven for more than a few days and provide a telephone number as to where you can be reached (or make sure your cell phone has coverage in that other location.)

**Note:** Check the expiration date of your passport, visa, ID card, etc. If you think they might expire while you are out on evacuation, give yourself plenty of time to renew them.

## General Reminders:

1. Keep all lodging receipts (hotel bill, apartment rent, etc.) and receipts associated with lodging (electric bill, phone/cable hook-up charges, etc.)
2. If you realize the cost of your lodging will exceed the maximum allowable rate once the per diem drops, (which is most likely if you are a single evacuee (i.e. spouse only, meaning no children) contact your FSR for assistance in the process for requesting the lodging remain at a rate that will cover your costs. Please note: you must also show why you were not able to find lodging that stayed within the per diem rate (i.e. needed lodging close to public transportation, your safe haven location has seasonal rates which increased after the first 30 days, etc.)
3. You do not need receipts for your "in and around" transportation, or the air freight replacement allowance, but don't forget to list the transportation on each voucher, and the airfreight replacement allowance on your first voucher.
4. The cost of renting furniture, car seat, vacuum cleaner, and other such items, is reimbursable (check with your FSR and finance officer), but the cost of purchasing these items is not; NO EXCEPTIONS. Keep all receipts.
5. If you are enrolled in TRICARE overseas you are eligible to use TRICARE Prime in the States. If the local TRICARE office questions your eligibility because you are not enrolled in the local region, contact your FSR or the regional TRICARE office. Because this happens quite often, it is recommended that you print a copy of the TRICARE portability letter and carry it with you. It is also recommended you enroll in the local TRICARE region if the evacuation is extended beyond 30 days.