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LIVING SMART.



The who, what, where, when and why behind PCS season

The term Permanent Change of Station, or PCS as it's more commonly known by service members and their families, means more than just a change of station.

It means a change of location, living situation, work environment, and possibly a change of schools, medical care providers, employment, and so much more, especially if you are a family member PCSing with a service member.

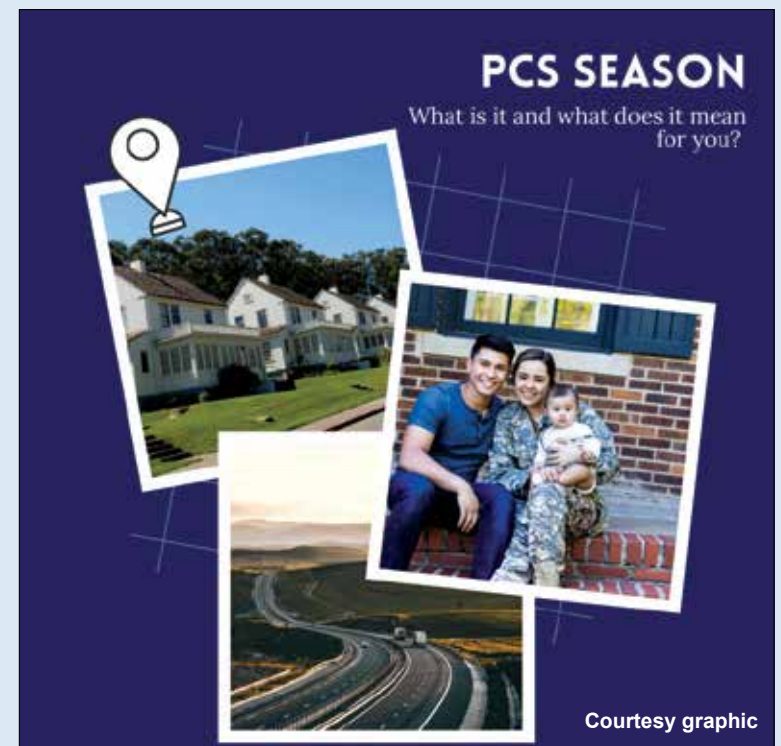
As with many things, there is a season for change, and PCS season is one of them. The term "PCS season" loosely describes the time of year when service members most often PCS, and it falls roughly between the months of May and August. This is because, like many other families making a major move, moving in the summer months may make the move less disruptive. A move in the

typical PCS season means children can usually finish their school year in place and start fresh at their new location, and the weather is optimal for travel, etc.

Although a move may not make sense on the surface, a move allows the opportunity to grow and develop in new roles throughout one's career, fill a position after someone has retired or separated, and may provide an opportunity to see new places.

Ultimately, the PCS aims to place the right person in the right job when the need arises, and in the case of the military, that means moving roughly 400,000 service members every year.

Efficiency is key to any PCS. Learn more in this special issue, and explore helpful resources like www.militaryonesource.mil to make your PCS move a success.



App for military resources available to service members, families

by
DAVIS VERGUN

DOD News

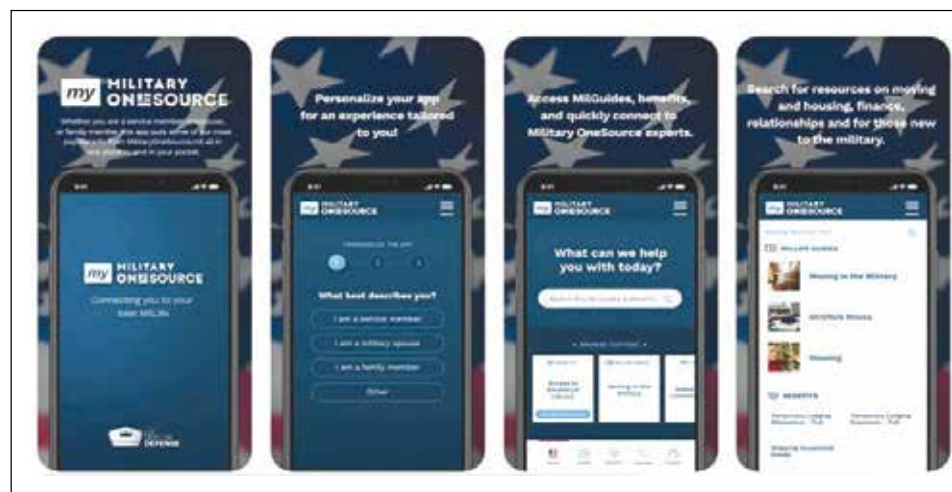
The "My Military OneSource" mobile app is available for service members and their families for free by downloading it on Google Play or Apple's App Store.

The purpose of Military OneSource is to put as many resources as possible in one place, so people have an easier time finding what they need. The app makes it more convenient when users are away from their computers and are only carrying a smartphone.

Each year, Military OneSource connects hundreds of thousands of service members and their families to resources to help improve their quality of life, Slaton said.

Resources offered include:

- Child care options
- Relationship counseling
- Domestic violence awareness
- Parenting tips
- A Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program digital library
- Tips for communicating in a long-distance relationship
- Moving and housing



Courtesy graphic

- Tax services
- Confidential help
- Financial and legal assistance
- Education and employment
- Confidential non-medical counseling
- Health and wellness
- Benefits finder
- Recreation, travel and shopping
- Installation program directory

The user-friendly design of the new "My Military OneSource" app is based on com-

prehensive data analysis and user input, including in-depth interviews with more than 300 service members, spouses and service providers; analysis of user satisfaction data input from military leadership and program managers; and a thorough review of best practices, Slaton said.

Besides the app, users can visit the Military OneSource website on their computer. There's also a toll-free call center manned 24/7/365.

Users can trust the "My Military One-

Source" app, website and call center because it guarantees their confidentiality with a few mandatory exceptions, Slaton said. Military OneSource must disclose illegal activities and situations to prevent harm to self or others.

Those eligible for Military OneSource are Defense Department service members, including National Guard and Reserve irrespective of activation status, DOD expeditionary civilians, Coast Guard members when activated for the Navy, survivors, veterans up to 365 days post-separation or retirement, and family members of all the categories listed.

Military OneSource is a DOD-funded program that is both a call center and website that provides free comprehensive information, support and resources on every aspect of military life.

Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for establishing quality-of-life policies and programs that help our guardians of country, their families and survivors be well and mission-ready. Military OneSource is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of the 5.2 million service members and immediate family members of the military community. These DOD services can be accessed 24/7/365 around the world.



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Take command of your move with these tips

Courtesy of militaryonesource.mil

Moving can be the start of a great family adventure, and it can also bring challenges.

No matter where your orders are taking you, Military OneSource and the military Relocation Assistance Program provide comprehensive information, resources and services to help you master your move. Use the following tips to help make your next move easier so you can focus on the exciting opportunities that await at your new home.

1. Start planning right away.

It's never too early to start planning. Learn more about arranging a personal property shipment and start with the following:

- Visit the Moving Your Personal Property page. Military OneSource now offers comprehensive moving information, resources and services all in one place. Find content from the former Move.mil website, including moving guides, videos, FAQs, entitlement brochures, DPS log in and more.

- Use the Plan My Move online tool to create customized checklists, filled with important to-dos, tips, and information to help you stay organized throughout the moving process. Whether its locating a new school, securing new housing or preparing financially for the move, the Plan My Move checklist will help ensure you won't forget a thing, including EFMP & Me assistance at your new installation and making sure your pets are ready for the move.

- Learn about your new installation and the com-

munity around it with MilitaryINSTALLATIONS. This online tool has contact information, articles, maps and photos about installations worldwide. Learn more about how to explore your base and beyond with MilitaryINSTALLATIONS.

- Contact your installation Military and Family Support Center for assistance before, during and after your move. Resources include Smooth Move and newcomer briefings, loan closets, information about child care, youth programs, confidential non-medical counseling and more.

- Learn about housing options for service members and families.

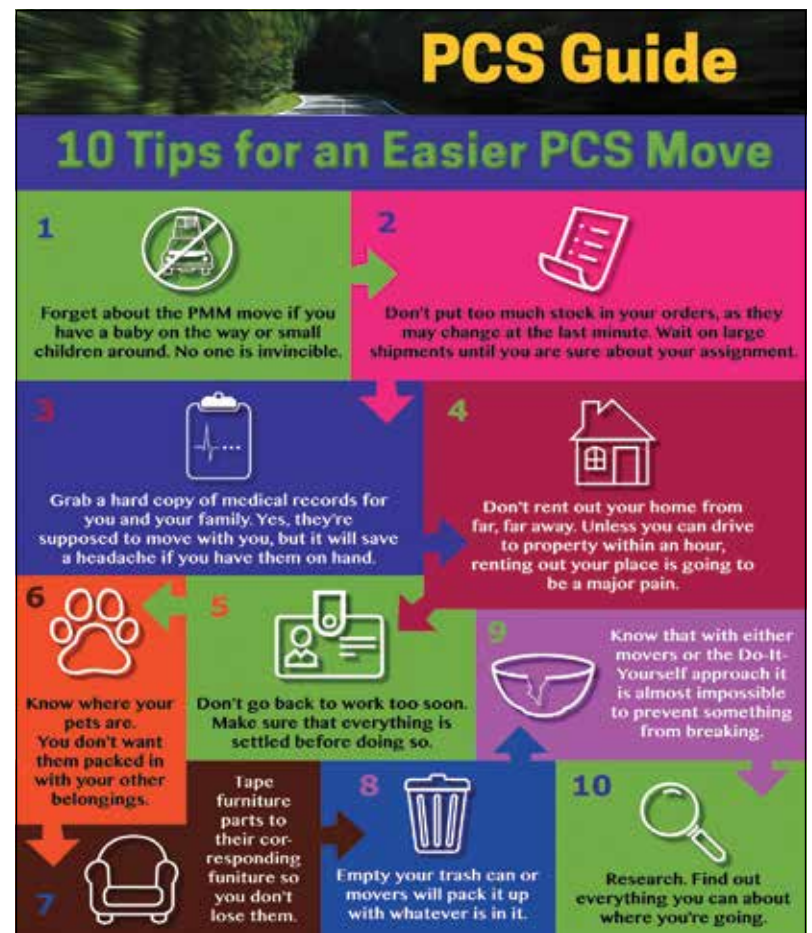
2. Prepare your children.

Moving can be a challenging experience for children. Learn more about making the move easier for military children and ways to help children cope with moving. You can also check out resources to help young children through life milestones from Sesame Street for Military Families including the Big Moving Adventure mobile app and more.

3. Take inventory.

A key part of a successful move is knowing exactly what's going with you. Learn more about PCS entitlements so you know what and how much you are allowed to take with you. Once you know what you're taking, you can make your inventory. With a smartphone

See **COMMAND**, on Page 6



Courtesy graphic

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For more information visit
www.CityOfPalmdaleCA.gov/FieldOfHonor.

WHAT KIND OF PCS AM I MAKING?

When you get your orders, you will find out whether you have a short tour, long tour, unaccompanied or accompanied assignment.

If you are authorized to take your family with you, that is an accompanied assignment; if you are not, you have an unaccompanied assignment.

Typically, unaccompanied assignments last for 12-18 months and are overseas. Accompanied assignments can be stateside, or overseas.

There are times when a PCS move can cause hardships to military families. There are, however, programs and steps you can take ahead of time to alleviate some of the worry.

PCS assignments can include Dual Military/Joint Spouse, Humanitarian, the Exceptional Family Member Program, Divorce/Co-Parenting options, and the High School Senior Assignment Deferral program.

Follow-on assignments

Service members who have orders for a dependent-restricted short tour, and it is your second or later assignment, you can apply for a follow-on assignment.

Follow-on assignments are designed to provide family stability, as well as to decrease PCS costs for the government.

If you are authorized a follow-on assignment, your family can either stay at your current stateside location and move when your short tour is complete, or move to the follow-on location.

For more information, visit myPers.af.mil.

Dual-military couples/Joint Spouse Assignments

PCS season can be a time of stress when both spouses are active duty. However, the Air Force makes every effort to assign these couples at the same base, or at bases close enough to maintain a joint home.

The key to making sure you stay together is planning.

Couples need to present their marriage certificate to the Military Personnel Section, to update their marital status in the Military Personnel Data System and

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. They also need to update their joint spouse intent code and assignment preferences at myPers.af.mil to indicate their intentions as a couple and whether or not they wish to be reassigned together.

Humanitarian Assignments

If any service member is experiencing a long-distance family emergency, they may qualify for a humanitarian assignment.

The Humanitarian Reassignment and Deferment Program, run by the Air Force Personnel Center, assists active-duty airmen in resolving severe, short-term problems involving a family member, while they continue to meet the needs of the Air Force. If they qualify, those troops can use the program for an extra military move or to stay at their current location.

The definition of "family member" for the Humanitarian Program is limited to spouse; child; parents, to include in-laws and step-parents; person in loco parentis; or other persons actually residing in the household who are dependent on the Airman for more than half of their financial support.

An important thing to remember is that the Air Force doesn't pay for a humanitarian move. Additionally, there must be a vacancy at the gaining base, and the Airmen must meet retainability requirements for a PCS move.

Contact your personnel center for more information.

Exceptional Family Members Program

If you have a family member who has specialized medical or educational needs, you may qualify for an assignment under the EFM Program.

www.militaryonesource.mil can help service members navigate the program with the EFMP & Me tool. It helps the service member quickly navigate services, connect with resources and advocate for yourself or your family member with special needs — anytime, anywhere.

Designed for military families with special needs and with the caregiver in mind, EFMP & Me can be used by both families enrolled in EFMP and those who are

eligible to enroll. The website also gives EFMP Family Support providers and military leaders another tool to guide families to the resources they need.

EFMP & Me can help you understand and find medical and educational resources, offers step-by-step support for EFMP enrollment, PCS preparation, deployment and other military life moments, and offers convenient 24/7 access to EFMP resources and services from a range of programs.

Divorce and co-parenting

Airmen who are parents have the ability to defer an assignment, or be stationed near their children with a court-ordered child custody decree.

Assignment authorities are able to consider requests for an assignment or deferment to a location near their children, even if the co-parents are not married.

Service members are still required to fill valid manning requirements, perform the duties for which they are trained, and meet all PCS eligibility requirements without waivers.

Service members who are named as a parent, either biological or adopted, and have a court-ordered child custody agreement are eligible to apply. Assignment matches will be made when possible, and must meet the best

PCS Guide

PCS season can be a stressful time, especially if you have a family to think about. The following information may help you answer the most important question:
How am I going to do this?

Types of PCS

- A Government Contract, where your local Traffic Management Office (TMO) will verify your orders and contract a commercial moving company to pack, ship, and unpack your stuff.
- Personally Procured Move (PPM) or Do-It-Yourself, allowing you to pack, ship, and unpack all of your own stuff. In exchange the government reimburses 95% of commercial move costs.
- Or a combination of BOTH.

Advantages of PPM Move:

- Reimbursement of 95% of commercial move costs.
- PPM applicants receive additional time to handle a move.
- PPM program allows you to take control at every step of the move.

AEROTECHNEWS.COM

Courtesy graphic

needs of the Department of the Air Force.

In order to apply, Airmen can submit their application through myPers.af.mil.

High School Senior Assignment Deferment

The High School Senior Assignment Deferment is designed to increase stability for military families with dependent children entering their senior year of high school. Members who meet eligibility requirements can defer an assignment for up to one year. HSSAD requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, with the goal of approving as many requests as possible while meeting mission needs. For more information on the HSSAD program, contact your local Force Support Squadron, or visit the MyPers.af.mil website.

For more information, visit www.militaryonesource.mil, mypers.af.mil — and make sure your personal information such as marital status etc. is up-to-date.

COMMAND, from Page 4 —

or computer, you can record the name, description and condition of everything in your home. Learn more about how to inventory your belongings.

4. Hand carry your essentials.

There are a few essential items that you'll need to keep with you at all times, especially vital documents. Learn more about what to hand carry when you move, including:

- Orders
- IDs, driver's licenses, Social Security cards and passports for every member of your family

- Marriage, divorce, birth and naturalization certificates
- Medical information and medication for each family member
- Housing information, including your insurance information and inventory
- School and employment records
- Vehicle documents
- Precious or irreplaceable items such as jewelry

5. Be a smart packer.

See the packing tips 19.

6. Be as flexible as possible.

Part of mastering your move is

expecting the unexpected. There are a lot of variables to consider when planning — and each of them can mean changes, delays or even an expedited move. Don't finalize your personal plans until you have orders in hand.

When you are ready to schedule your move, consider moving on less popular days. Historically the worst times to move are the last week of any month, and the last week of June to the first week of July. If you can move mid-month, you may increase your chances of getting a date that works with your timelines and getting your preferred moving company. Don't assume move dates are set until they are confirmed. Learn more about the new Seven-day Scheduling

Window policy for booking your shipment pick up date.

7. Know where to turn for answers.

• Your installation Military and Family Support Center is your go-to source for a wide range of assistance and programs, including newcomer briefings, loan closets, child care information, spouse education and career counseling, financial services, and much more.

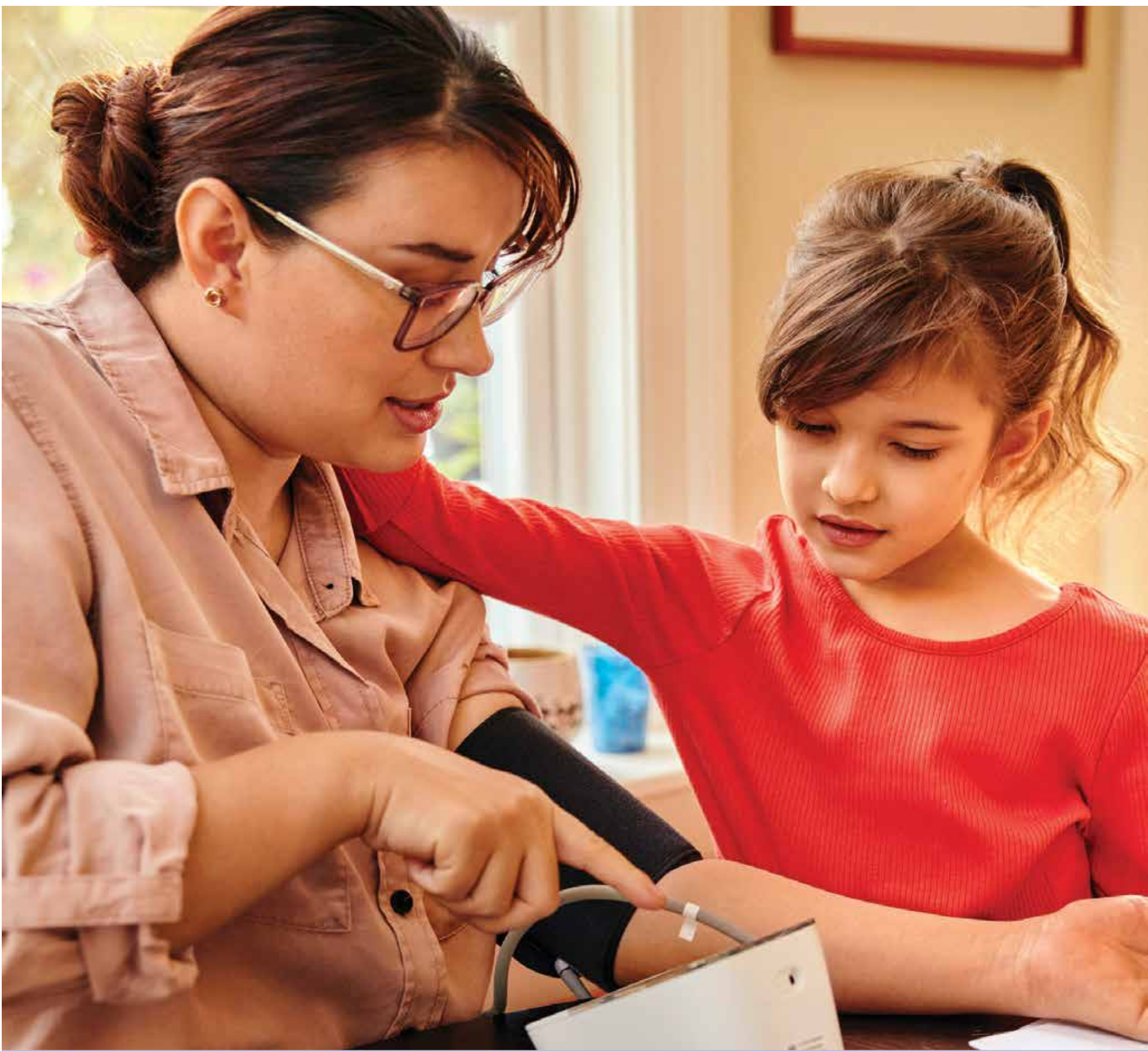
• Your military sponsor can help you and your family learn about your new duty station and get settled in your new community.

• Your installation transportation office can help with moving issues, such as trouble with ship-

ments or if anything is damaged or lost during the move. Learn more about filing a claim after your PCS shipment is delivered. For service branch specific contact information, visit Personal Property Customer Service Contacts.

• Military OneSource consultants are available 24/7/365 to answer your questions and connect you with resources you need. Call 800-342-9647, use OCONUS calling options, or schedule a live chat.

With some preparation and a bit of luck, your next move can be worry-free. Seize your adventure and master your move by tapping into the professionals and resources available from Military OneSource and your local Military and Family Support Center.



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Military housing options in a difficult market made easy

by
JENNA BIGHAM
special to Aerotech News

A permanent change of station for a service member means making the decision to buy, sell, or rent a house every few years.

Considering the ever-changing markets across the country, the ease of making this decision may vary.

When it's time to PCS, one of the first things to evaluate is your basic allowance for housing, along with your unique financial situation. To calculate the BAH for your new location, visit defensetravel.dod.mil

After calculating what your allowance will be for your rank, with or without dependents, you will need to look at you and/or your family's needs. Is base housing a good fit or would you be happier off-base?

Base housing

Living on the installation may be a good fit and provides an opportunity to be closer to those in similar situations for a greater sense of community. Additionally, it could mean a shorter commute to work, being closer to base services and amenities, and more. This living arrangement may also be a great fit if the housing costs in the local off-base area could end up costing more than your monthly BAH.

On-base living also means lower upfront



Courtesy photo

and monthly costs, as applicants do not pay an application fee, security deposit or pet deposit. When living in base housing, utilities like water, sewer, gas, and electric are also included, along with trash, recycling and pest services. Housing maintenance is taken care of, and playgrounds, pools and outdoor recreational spaces are often included as well.

When considering the perks of living on base, this may be a great fit for those new to the military or the most seasoned service members. Contact the housing office for more information on your installation as

wait times, amenities, etc. may vary from installation to installation.

Off base housing

If on-base living is not available, or you simply want to explore the surrounding area with an apartment or home outside the gates, consider your monthly BAH and how far it will stretch. Both purchase and rental prices have gone up tremendously in much of the U.S. over the last two years, and chances are the community you're moving to, if stateside, has been affected. Where

some areas have seen increases from 10-20 percent, others have seen increases of 30 percent or more.

If purchasing is off the table, consider starting your rental search with a visit or phone call to your installation's housing assistance office to obtain a list of options in your area. Once you settle on a desired area, make sure the rental meets your needs and falls within budget. Don't forget to include the security deposit, potential pet fees, monthly rent payment, internet, electricity, gas, water and sewer, trash and recycling, fuel, or monthly public transportation costs, etc. Some expenses may be included in the rent but other agreements may not include anything, so be sure to read the fine print and ask questions before committing to a home or apartment lease. Another issue to consider could be the length of the lease versus the length of your orders.

Purchasing is another alternative to living on base and may be the right fit for you and/or your family. A quick search online will provide a rough idea of market prices in the area, and then consulting with a professional for specifics may be in your best interest. As mentioned previously, home prices have increased significantly in some areas. Housing markets have become competitive, with more people moving and looking to buy following pandemic-related

——— See **HOUSING**, on Page 12



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What allowances am I entitled to when making a PCS move?

by **Stuart Ibberson**

Aerotech News

From the moment you raise your right hand, moving is an inevitable part of military life.

And whether it is your first PCS or your 10th, there are certain pay and allowances you are entitled to. Some allowances vary based on rank and marital status, while some are fixed by location.

Other than advances in pay or housing allowances, most costs involved with your PCS move will be reimbursed once you have completed your move.

Either way, you should be aware of what you are entitled to.

Travel and relocation allowances

DOD provides travel and relocation allowances to help you with moving expenses.

- **Per Diem:** Per diem will reimburse you for meals, incidentals and lodging while you are traveling to your new duty station. Per Diem varies from country-to-country, state-to-state, and even communities

within countries and states. For current rates, visit the Defense Travel Management Office at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm>

- **Monetary Allowance in Lieu of Transportation:** MALT is used as mileage reimbursement when you or your family drives to your new duty station.

- **Dislocation allowance:** DLA partially reimburses you for miscellaneous moving costs and is usually paid once per PCS.

- **Advances:** You may be authorized an advance of basic pay or allowances such as, Basic Allowance for Housing or Overseas Housing Allowance. These can be requested to help cover moving related expenses. Before taking an advance, be sure you understand the ins and outs.

Temporary lodging allowance and expense

- **Temporary Lodging Allowance:** TLA partially defrays the cost of temporary lodging and meals while you wait for housing outside the continental U.S., for a maximum of 60 days upon arrival and 10 days when leaving.

Some exceptions can apply.

- **Temporary Lodging Expense:** TLE partially reimburses the cost of temporary lodging and meals during moves with the continental U.S., and is payable for five or 10 days, depending on circumstances.

Dislocation Allowance

Some service members may be entitled to a Dislocation Allowance.

A DLA partially reimburses service members for incurred household moving expenses. The household move must be required by a PCS, evacuation or — in some cases — ordered for the government's convenience. Generally, only one DLA is permitted in a fiscal year.

Below, find the answers to some frequently asked questions about DLA.

Any service member moving their household on PCS orders and who is not assigned to live in single-type government housing — such as the dormitories or barracks — should receive a DLA.

Basically, if you receive a Basic Allowance for Housing,

or are above pay grade E-5 and choose to not stay in single-type government quarters, you will probably receive a DLA.

However, if you are in an E-5 or below and are assigned to live in the dormitory or barracks, you will not be eligible.

Nor will you receive DLA when moving from your civilian home (the place you lived when you entered active duty) to your first duty station — unless you move with dependents. And finally, DLA is not authorized when leaving active duty service.

DOD travel perks

Service members and families can also take advantage of these travel perks:

- **DOD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards** is a program that allows DOD travelers to earn points every time they use their Government Travel Charge Cards to pay for meals at participating restaurants while on official travel. Rewards points can then be redeemed for gift cards. With a one-time enrollment, your Government Travel Charge Card is linked to the

Traveler Rewards program, and your points are automatically tracked. Since DOD policy requires travelers to use GTCCs for all official travel expenses, including meals, it's easy to participate. The program includes an available mobile app to find nearby participating restaurants. To learn more about DOD Dine Smart, visit <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/dinesmart.cfm>.

- **TSA PreCheck:** TSA PreCheck is free for DOD civilians and service members. This includes reservists, National Guardsmen, members of the Coast Guard, and students at the U.S. service academies. When booking travel, service members just need to insert their CAC ID number in the Known Traveler Field and they automatically qualify for TSA PreCheck. This works for official travel, like PCS, or for leisure travel. Dependents ages 12 and under can go through airport security with a participating traveler.

See **ALLOWANCES**, on Page 12



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Permanent Change of Station Tips

•**SECURE MOVING DATES** immediately after PCS orders are in hand. (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are recommended)

•**PEAK MOVING MONTHS** are June, July and August. Plan to be flexible when selecting a household goods pickup date.

•**TAKE CLOSE-UP PICTURES** of furniture and electronics to record working condition and appearance of expensive and/or valuable items in case of damage during move.

•**EXPENSIVE VALUABLES** (e.g. artwork, collectables, coins, heirlooms) should be appraised and smaller items should be hand carried.

•**AVOID MAJOR DECISIONS** or commitments until move dates are confirmed.

•**NEVER SCHEDULE PICKUP** on the last day of residency. Scheduling this day leaves no room for unforeseen problems.

•**TIMING IS KEY.** Sit down with TMO specialist with adequate amount of time to plan ahead. Face-to-face counseling and briefings are the most important piece.

Visit www.Move.mil for more information



HOUSING, from Page 8

changes to the economy, remote work options, housing availability, increased investor purchases, etc.

Where some service members have had success purchasing, others have faced challenges in buying a home. Every situation is different and must be carefully examined. Current interest rates should be factored into your budget when running the numbers, and can vary based on credit score, debt-to-income ratio, credit history and more.

If financing, home buyers should compare 15 to 30-year mortgages, fixed rate vs. adjustable rate mortgages, total closing costs, insurance needs, property taxes, and monthly payments. The cost of home repairs and typical upkeep expenses should also be estimated, in addition to looking at long-term plans for resale or renting if another PCS comes up.

A representative at the Airman and Family Readiness Center may be available to assist with budgeting, and real estate professionals in the local area could help with housing-specific questions.

Consider all housing options while deciding to rent or buy, and when looking for an interim space to stay while moving to or from a new installation. The first place will likely be your installation's lodging facility. Websites such as Airbnb.com or VRBO.com may be helpful as well. However, keep in mind not all options are reimbursable and service members should always check with their local finance office prior to booking. Each listing should also be read thoroughly, as expectations and amenities vary greatly, and ensuring a good fit for your short-term housing needs is vital.

To help plan your move, evaluate housing options, find cost calculators and more, visit militaryonesource.mil.

ALLOWANCES, from Page 10

Shipment of household goods

The government pays for you to ship your household goods, unaccompanied baggage, privately owned vehicle, and professional gear. Weight limits are based on your rank and dependent status. For more information, see Page ••.

Personal financial management programs

Making a PCS move can cause financial headaches, and leave many service members scratching their heads. Experts at your local personal financial management services office can help, as they offer one-on-one counseling, classes, education and additional information to help service members and their families successfully manage their personal financial responsibilities.

As with all PCS-related matters, contact your Transportation Management Office as soon as possible, and visit www.militaryonesource.mil.



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Let it go — and tame the clutter

by KC Rawley

Aerotech News

So, you've received or you're expecting PCS orders.

As you look around your home, the realization hits: you've got too much stuff.

Being in one place for a while can mean accumulating clutter you don't even know you have until you contemplate moving it all.

When you know your weight allowance, it may mean forcing yourself to part with the outgrown sports equipment, clothes, accessories, books, games, gadgets you just "had to have" from Amazon, as well as other purchases.

"De-cluttering" is in vogue these days, mostly because of Marie Kondo, author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, even among people who don't have to move their household across the country.

But if holding possessions in your hand one-by-one and asking yourself if it "sparks joy" in you sounds too metaphysical, there are other ways to make that weight limit.

Kondo has a point: American homes are filled with items we don't need but are loath to part with. One in 10 U.S. households pay for storage space and 25 percent of people with two car garages can't fit even one car inside, according to *BecomingMinimalist.com*.

You don't have to be a hoarder or a Great Depression survivor to have difficulty letting go of physical possessions. In a TEDEd video, Christian Jarrett explains Why are we so attached to our things? It turns out that the "endowment effect" — the idea that we value things more highly when we own them — runs deep in the human race and starts early. Like, when we are babies.

The "sunk cost fallacy" is another stumbling block to de-cluttering — the idea that since we paid good money for something, we shouldn't get rid of it because we might need it.

Perhaps the hardest are "family heirlooms," items of little intrinsic value that belonged to people we love who are no longer with us, and we cling to these things because of the memories tangled up with them. But keeping the items won't bring our loved ones back. "Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff," by Matt Paxton is an excellent book on becoming detached from objects with sentimental value.

Truly paring down our "stuff" begins in our heads. Know that the problem is not just yours, and that understanding these psychological quirks can help us overcome them.

The often-used phrase "If you haven't worn or used it in a year, get rid of it," is a good place to start.

Most organizational experts suggest going through your possessions room-by-room with three boxes marked: "keep," "give away," and "seasonal/put in storage."

Keep is obvious. These are things you use frequently or every day. Tell yourself that to keep it, it must have a home. You will have to find a place to put it away, and then do it. Consistently.

Put like things together

"Get rid of" can mean several things: throw away, give away, or sell. If it's broken and you want to keep it, repair it right away. If you can't repair it, or repairs would be inordinately expensive, throw it away. Don't say, "I'll get around to fixing it." Search your heart and realize that you probably won't fix it.

Make room in your life for new things. If you keep saying you'll fix it, you'll never replace it, because you already have one.

Be ruthless with yourself

If it works and has lots of life left in it, but you want a new one or don't use it, give it away. Often you can get a better version of whatever it is when you get where you're going.

On-base Airman's Attics and thrift stores provide items at low or no-cost to families who need them and can always use donations and volunteers.

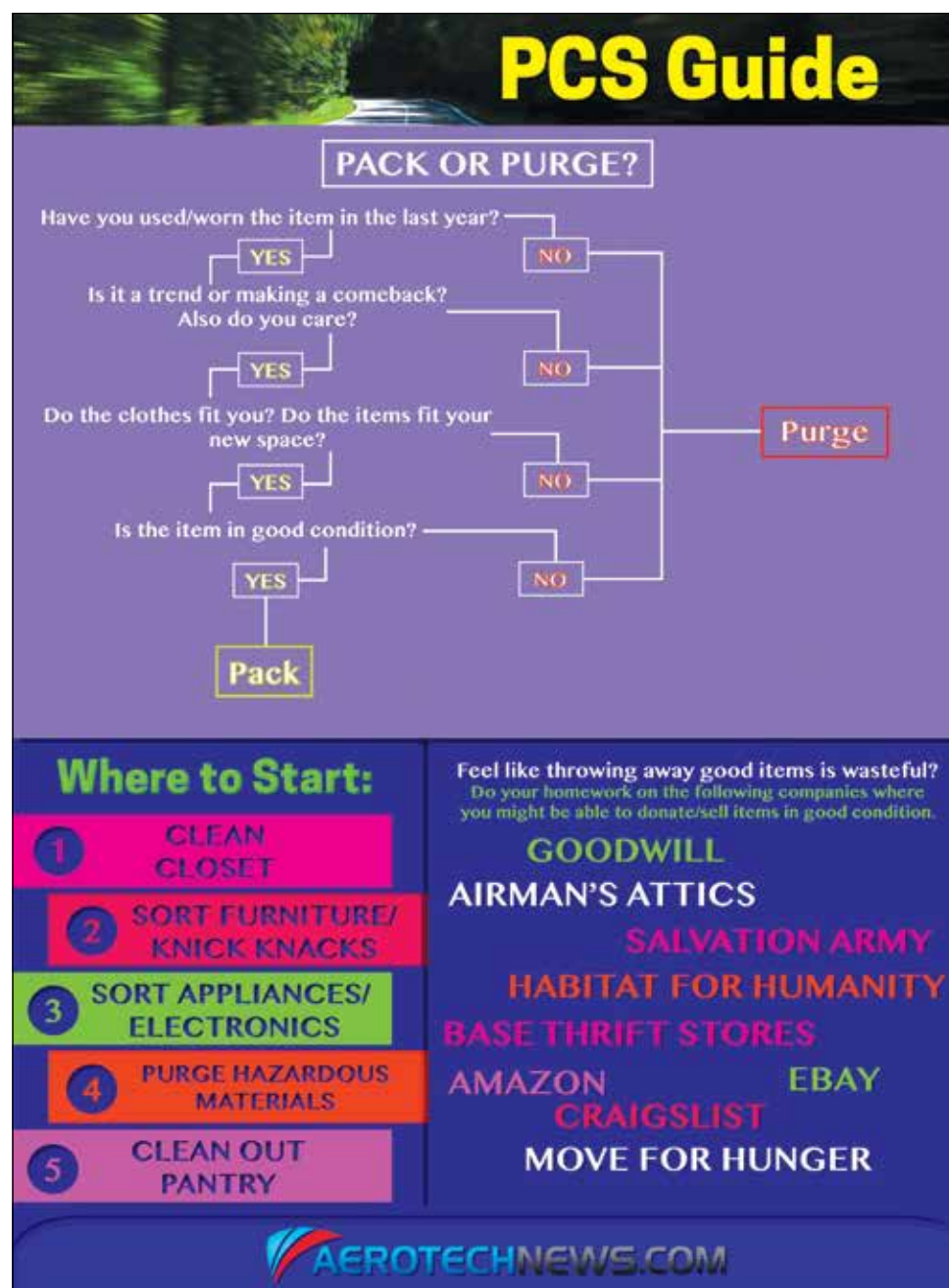
If you have time, selling on Amazon Marketplace, Facebook or eBay has never been easier. And who couldn't use a little extra cash?

Clothes: The average woman in the United States has enough clothes to wear a new outfit daily for a month, but we never do; do we ladies? The 80/20 rule has so many applications, and here it says we wear 20 percent of our wardrobe 80 percent of the time. If we tend to change body size, it's even worse. We may have wardrobes at three different sizes, but would we honestly want to wear those Size-10 styles if we ever got back there again? Probably not.

And gentleman: how many T-shirts commemorating 10-K runs, auto races, concerts by now-defunct rock bands, microbreweries, and Triple-A baseball teams does one man need?

Outgrown kids' clothes can be sold in consignment shops. Look around for a clothes-swap or organize one yourself if you have enough lead time.

Kitchen equipment: Look for items that can do double duty, and see what you can do without. If you have an Insta-Pot, do you really need a slow-cooker? Not really. Ask



Courtesy graphic

yourself if you really entertain enough to warrant packing fancy china, chafing dishes, and separate serving dishes? If you do, great. If not, consider that there are stories all over the internet that Millennials aren't buying fine china and don't want to inherit it, either.

Sporting equipment: If your family is still involved in the sport but have outgrown some of the equipment, see if someone else on the team has items they can swap, or maybe someone just starting up can use yours. There are consignment shops, or you can just give it away. If the interest in baseball has waned, and the kids are interested in some other sport or interest, don't keep equipment hoping they will pick it up again. If they do, the cost of restarting is on them; they can save their allowance.

The same goes for art supplies, knitting, crochet, jewelry making, and whatever toys, games or interests your children have. They are notorious for being fickle. If they haven't used it in six months, find it a new home. (Same goes for you, Mom and Dad).

Sentimental: This is the really difficult one. Often, we still have eyeglasses, books, special articles of clothing, musical instruments, bric-a-brac, and other keepsakes from old loves,

friends, or deceased relatives. Sometimes it's kids' trophies or uniforms that we can't bear to part with. Try taking pictures of them and dispose of the actual item.

If we are afraid that without the item, we will forget the memories, paste the photo in an album and jot down the attendant reminiscence with some details. Then you can browse it at your leisure and show it to your kids. That way, even when you're gone, they can remember what you said about great-grandma and Aunt June.

Eyeglasses can be donated to Lion's Clubs, WalMarts, and some optometrist offices to help others see.

Letting go

Often, people who lose all their material possessions find that after grieving their loss, they find a new relationship with the "things" in their life. If you are interested in exploring this issue more, you can start with this article from the Minimalism Made Simple website, "The Truth About Material Possessions." [<https://www.minimalismmadesimple.com/home/material-possessions/>]

After all, paring down your lifestyle now would make your next PCS much simpler.



Courtesy graphic

Are PCS expenses tax deductible? Sometimes!

by
STUART IBBERSON

Aerotech News

While many PCS expenses are paid for or reimbursed by the military, you may be able to deduct some non-reimbursable expenses from your federal taxes.

The key is to keep all your receipts, so when you file your travel claim or your taxes, you will have them handy.

For more information and examples, check out IRS Tax Topic 455, Moving Expenses available at www.irs.gov.

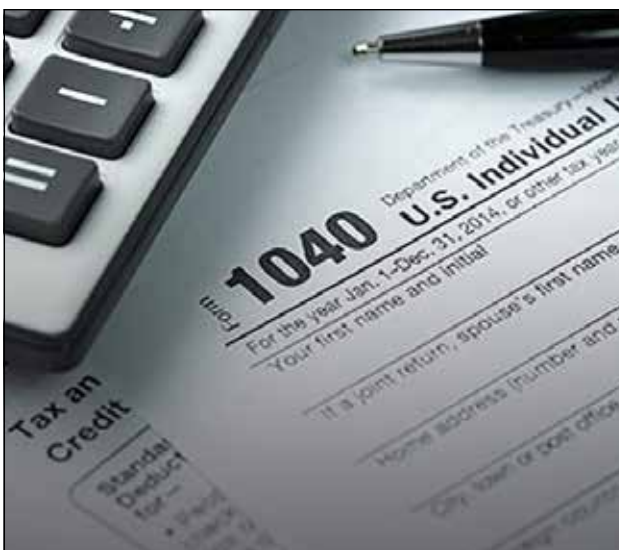
Only active duty military members who are PCSing or, in some cases, their unaccompanied family members, can deduct moving expenses. This includes moving to your first duty station, or when separating or retiring from the military.

MilitaryOneSource.com's MilTax's tax preparation and e-filing software is available from mid-January through mid-October, and can help with filing your taxes electronically — for free.

So what expenses can be deducted?

In general, you can deduct unreimbursed expenses directly related to the moving and storage of your household goods, as well as costs (subject to approval) related to travel from your old location to a new one. This includes expenses for the taxpayer and any member of their household.

Among the costs you can deduct as part of your move are:



Courtesy photo

- Packing materials
 - Shipping of vehicles
 - Transporting pets
 - Stopping and starting essential utilities
 - Some storage fees
 - One night's lodging at your old location if your furniture has been moved
 - First night's lodging at your new location
 - Moving of household goods, whether by car, container, or via a moving contract
- To be considered a reasonable travel expense, the

route you take, for example, must be the shortest, most direct one available from your previous home to your new one.

What expenses cannot be deducted?

The following costs are not deductible:

- Meals
- Temporary lodging after the first night you arrive at your new location
- Vehicle registration
- Driver's licenses
- Purchasing or renting a new home
- Other expenses for stopovers, side trips or pre-move house-hunting expenses

The IRS has a wealth of additional information to guide you with deducting moving expenses.

How to report deductible expenses

Deductible moving expenses are reported on IRS Form 3903, and any deduction on that form is reported on your regular federal income tax return.

The IRS website provides additional information on the forms used to report moving expenses.

Reimbursements

Many moving expenses are fully or partially covered by military allowances. You cannot claim any expenses paid for by the military, whether paid directly or reimbursed. For example, you cannot deduct mileage and lodging that was reimbursed under the military's Monetary Allowance in Lieu of Transportation, typically called mileage, or the PCS Per Diem rates.



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WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH ALL MY STUFF?

by
STUART IBBERSON

Aerotech News

You've got your orders in hand, and you are excited about your new assignment.

But as you look around your living space, you start to wonder — what am I going to do with all this stuff?

Whether PCSing from one stateside base to another, or from stateside to an overseas location, there are multiple options available.

You may first want to consider downsizing — a PCS move is the perfect opportunity to sort through your possessions and decide what to keep, what to donate and what to throw away (see related article on Page 14).

The government will pay to move your household goods, your unaccompanied baggage, your professional gear, and privately owned vehicle.

However, the amount of household goods (by weight) you are allowed to ship is determined by The Joint Travel Regulations [https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/JTR.pdf#page=268] issued by the Defense Department. The weight allowance will vary depending on rank and whether you are single or have dependents.

More information is available at the Transportation Management Office or by visiting www.militaryonesource.mil.

Household goods

Household goods are all the things you will need to set up home at your new duty station, and are typically shipped by moving companies under contract to DOD.

You will need to schedule an inspection so the company representative can estimate the total weight of your household goods and submit and estimate to the government.

Once this is done, you will also need to schedule a pick-up date — when PCS out; and once you arrive at your new assignment, a delivery date.

1. Items that you need to do your job, such as your professional books, papers, and equipment, do not count against the weight limit for your household goods shipment. Make sure you separate those items from the rest of your belongings, and clearly mark the boxes in which they are contained.

2. The service member may request that professional books, papers and equipment belonging to his or her spouse be shipped at government expense on a PCS move. If approved, the weight limit is not to exceed 500 pounds for your spouse's belongings.

3. Begin weighing your items to determine if the belongings you plan to move fall within the weight limit long before you are expected to move. Each room potentially has enough items to roughly equal 1,000 pounds.



Courtesy photo

4. Don't over pack. If you go over your allotted weight limit, you are responsible for paying the extra expenses incurred.

5. Make sure to hand carry important documents like your orders, birth certificates, housing information, financial information, medication, phone charger, school or employment records, vehicle documentation or anything else that you or your family will need immediately. Do not pack these items with the rest of your belongings because they could get lost.

6. Make sure to include as "unaccompanied baggage" things that you will need right away such as seasonal clothes, kitchen items and baby equipment.

7. On packing day, make sure to set aside

any important items you need to keep with you, such as car keys, important documents, etc. Put those items somewhere the movers do not have access to, such as your car, or a closet clearly marked as "Do Not Pack."

8. Household goods shipments can take weeks to months to be delivered, so be prepared to wait for your stuff. If you arrive at your destination before your belongings do, you can usually borrow basic items like pots and pans, utensils, coffee makers, etc. from the Airmen's Attic loan closet. Services vary by installation, and some installations put rank restrictions on who can use the program.

See **STUFF**, on Page 18

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STUFF, from Page 16

Unaccompanied baggage

Unaccompanied baggage, commonly called "hold baggage," consists of items you will need to set-up home immediately upon arrive. Household goods can sometimes takes weeks or several months to arrive at your new assignment, so it is essential you plan ahead for what you will include in your unaccompanied baggage.

The term "hold baggage" is actually throwback to the time when most military moves were by ship, and what is now considered unaccompanied baggage would be stowed below decks.

What to hand carry

To help you get settled in as smoothly as possible after your move, important items should be carried with you for safe keeping and easy access. From important documents to items you need when you arrive, here's what to keep close.



Courtesy photos

- **Valuables** — If you can't imagine living without a family heirloom or treasured item, carry it with you for safe-keeping.

- **Home items** — If you are doing a state-side PCS and you have your vehicle with you, pack a box with items you are going to need as soon as you arrive at your new house: toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap, cleaners, toilet brush, broom, mop, drinks, snacks, diapers, paper plates, etc. Then pack an extra bag with sheets, towels and an air mattress. Even if your belongings are scheduled to arrive "door-to-door," it's a good idea to plan for an extra day or two without your things because moving delays happen, especially in summer.

Unaccompanied baggage is typically picked up several weeks ahead of your household goods pickup.

One tip I learned when I was on active duty, is that I would designate one room in my home and put all the items I wanted to include in unaccompanied baggage in one room. That way, when the packers arrived, I could direct them to the room and say "everything goes."

Similarly, when it was time for my household goods to be picked up, I would pre-pack the suitcases I planned on traveling with – and lock them in the bathroom. That was to make sure essential items like uniforms didn't get packed up with my household goods.

Firearms

While you are allowed to ship firearms in your household goods shipment during a stateside move, they must comply with all local and state laws. If moving overseas, you must abide by the laws of the host country. For more information, contact your local Transportation Management Office.

In 2022, DOD updated the Joint Travel Regulations that exempted the weight of gun safes — up to 500 pounds — from the total weight allowance of household goods.

- **Keep in mind** that you are not allowed to ship or store a gun in a locked container/safe due to the need for inspections at ports,

customs, borders, storage locations, etc. Be sure to review the rules and regulations during your counseling session to ensure you understand all the details related to moving a firearm.

Professional books, papers and equipment, or pro-gear

Pro-gear can include books or military reference materials; professional tools for your job, including instruments; specialized clothing; military communication equipment; individually owned or issued gear; or clothing.

Service members can move up to 2,000 pounds of professional gear, and family members can move up to 500 pounds of professional gear

Personally procured moves for do-it-yourself movers

If you prefer to organize your move yourself, you may be able to choose a personally procured move, or PPM. You are eligible for a PPM when you have PCS orders, a temporary duty assignment, or face separation, retirement or assignment to, from or between government quarters.

During a PPM, you coordinate the move of your household goods yourself without using any military moving services. This means that you are responsible for all the planning and communications that a military-coordinated move usually handles. Doing it all yourself can mean added stress and possible problems.

But military moves don't have to be exclusively one or the other. You can use some military moving services and manage other parts of the move yourself. For more information, contact your local transportation office or ask a Military OneSource moving expert.

Whether this is your first PCS or you're a seasoned professional, let Military OneSource help you master your move so you can get on with your mission.

Important documents

The most important items to keep with you during a PCS are your vital documents. Check off each item in this list and make multiple copies, as appropriate. Electronic copies can be convenient, but make sure to have physical copies as well.

- **Orders** — Keep your original set of orders with you at all times and make more than one copy.

- **Identification for each family member** — Bring your military IDs and driver's licenses, but also Social Security cards, passports and birth, marriage and naturalization certificates.

- **Vehicle documentation** — Carry your vehicle title or lease information and proof of vehicle inspection, registration and insurance.

- **Financial information** — Bring personal checks, any hard copies of recent bank statements, and all credit and debit cards — even the ones from department stores you never use.

- **Housing information** — Carry the household inventory list your moving company provided, as well as lease or mortgage paperwork.

- **Legal documents** — Bring divorce or annulment paperwork from a previous marriage, wills, custody or adoption paperwork, and any active power of attorney documents.

- **School or employment records** — Carry

all transcripts, report cards or grade sheets your children may need for school registration. If your child has an individualized education program, or IEP, it's important to carry this with you. If you are moving with a child with special needs, learn more about support provided by the Exceptional Family Member Program.

- **Medical and physician information** — Previous medical and dental records and vaccination records will likely be needed for school registration and for some employment, as well as prescription medications.

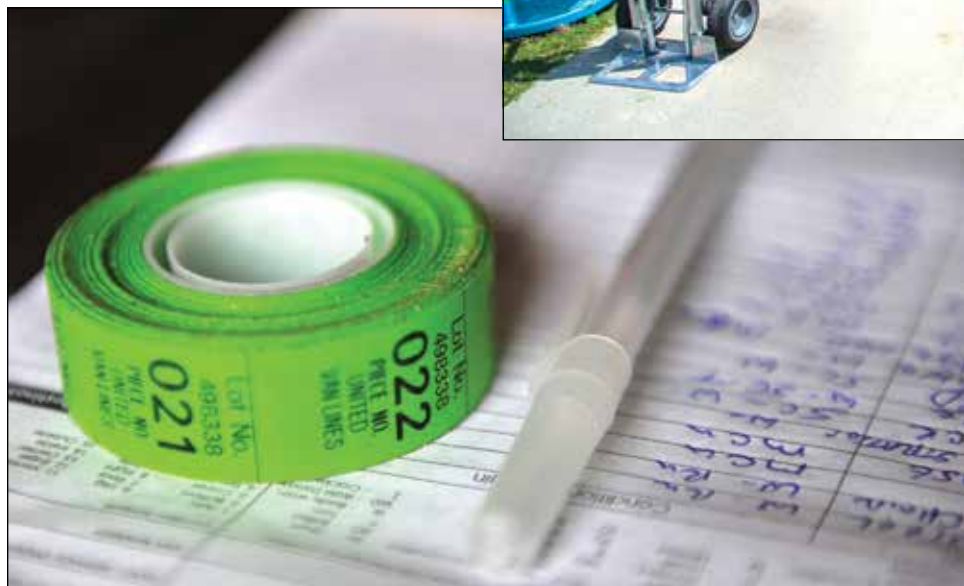
- It is also advisable to hand carry valuable items such as watches and jewelry.

Essentials for your trip and first nights in your new home

Because moving delivery delays can happen, it's a good idea to carry essential items with you. Some items to consider carrying with you are:

- **Medication for each family member** — Prescription medications for each family member should be close at hand. You might want to bring some headache meds for you, too, in case of a sibling screaming match on the way there.

- **Phones and chargers** — Surviving without your smartphone and charger today is almost inconceivable.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY PACKING/UNPACKING

Courtesy of militaryonesource.mil

Whether this is your first PCS or you're a seasoned pro, moving can be a challenge. Here are some tips from service members, civilians and their families to help ensure your transition goes as smoothly as possible.

Preparing for your move

Stay organized by creating a moving binder. During a move you are going to need ready access to lots of paperwork, such as copies of your orders, birth certificates, Social Security cards, mortgage documents, rental agreements and other hand carry documents.

Create your own photo inventory. A great way to make a record of everything you own is to open doors, cabinets and drawers and take pictures. You can do the whole house in about an hour. If you end up needing to make a claim, a photo is hard to dispute.

Use clear, resealable bags to collect loose hardware during furniture disassembly. Nothing gets lost quicker than the hardware that keeps beds together or mounts a TV to a bracket. Use clear resealable bags to tape hardware from beds to bed frames so they all arrive together and make reassembly after delivery much easier.

Don't move still-packed boxes. If you haven't used an item in two years, you probably don't need it anymore.

Remove items from the walls before the packers arrive. Your packers are not responsible for removing wall-mounted items, so make sure all pictures, curtains, curtain rods and mounted TVs are down and ready for the movers to pack. Use clear, resealable plastic bags to tape the mounting hardware to the back of items.

Move on less popular days. Historically the worst times to move are the last week of any month, and the last week of June to the first week of July. If you can move mid-month, you may increase your chances of getting a date that works with your timelines and getting your preferred moving company.

Prepare drawers and toy bins for packing by placing contents in clear resealable plastic bags before the packers come. Think silverware, spices, kitchen utensils, mark-

SHIPPING FIREARMS

- Make the firearm inoperable by removing the bolt, firing pin, trigger assembly and other arming parts.
- Remove all ammunition from your firearms. You cannot ship any privately owned live ammunition in your household goods shipment.
- Remove all firearms from your safe to allow for separate packaging during shipment and storage.
- Ensure the firearm information is written on the inventory including make, model, serial number, unique characteristics, caliber or gauge. Make sure to hand carry a copy of this information with you.

ers, pencils and toy bins. Having small, sorted items in clear, resealable bags can help make unpacking much easier.

Photograph the condition of your home on moving day before the packers arrive. Make a video record of the walls, floors and appliances so you'll have a digital record of the condition of your home before the packers arrive in case any damage is done.

Block off a "Do Not Pack" area. Put aside any items that you'll need on your road trip or that you want to transport yourself. Place these items in a location away from the packers, such as in a closet or your vehicle, and mark the area with a "Do Not Pack" sign. Make sure the packers and your family are aware of the "Do Not Pack" area so that important hand carry items — like your car keys — don't end up in a moving box.

Packing and loading

Don't sign the mover's inventory until you understand and agree with everything listed. If you disagree, make sure to write it in the remarks section. No one likes doing paperwork, but if you spend a few extra minutes reviewing the inventory sheets on

MOTORCYCLES AND DIRT BIKES

- For CONUS: Motorcycles and dirt bikes can be shipped as household goods. That weight is included in your total authorized household goods weight. You may be able to ship a motorcycle as a POV to some locations. Check with your local transportation office if you have questions.
- For OCONUS: One motorcycle can be transported as a POV. If you ship your motorcycle or dirt bike as household goods, the weight is included in your total household goods weight.
- Check the country requirements before you ship your motorcycle or dirt bike overseas. There may be import restrictions or prohibitions for bringing your specific motorcycle or dirt bike into the country you're moving to. Contact your local transportation office if you have questions.
- Motorcycle(s) shall be drained of all the gasoline and battery removed prior to pick-up for storage.
- Drain the bike of fuel. Carbureted models must be drained down to reserve.
- Disconnect battery and tape ends with electrical tape.
- Properly inflate tires and repair any fluid leaks (oil, transmission, fuel) as applicable.
- Empty saddlebags. Helmets, saddlebags and windshields can stay on the bike provided these items are securely strapped to the bike.
- Unlock bike so that it can be rolled on and off the moving truck.

the front end, it will make life much easier during delivery of your goods.

The movers will identify any preexisting damage such as dings, dents and scratches on the inventory form. Make sure that their description is accurate. For valuable items, make sure the inventory specifies the make, model and serial number of the item. Generic labels like "Electronics" or "TV" should be a red flag for you. If they miss something, you can request that they unpack the item so that specific details can be added to the inventory. If you disagree with the inventory, write that in the remarks section and don't be afraid to call your transportation office if you have questions.

Clean out your trash cans before the packers come. This avoids having dirty items packed and delivered. It's also a good idea to throw out items such as used toilet brushes, old mops and any other items that are easily replaceable.

Empty the medicine cabinet and plan to take those items with you. To avoid any problems with prescription medications going missing, it's best to transport these items yourself. Grab a small clear, resealable bag and pack them away to take with you if possible.

Have the packers show you the inside of each box before they tape it. You can make additional notes on the outside describing exactly what is in there. Adding a few detailed notes to the boxes — such as pots and pans, utensils, toy trucks, hammer, etc. — can help make the unpacking process easier.

Carry your "first day" necessities with you. Don't let them go on the truck. Even if your belongings are scheduled to arrive "door-to-door," plan for an extra day or two without your things because delays happen, especially in summer. Pack a box with items you are going to need as soon as you arrive at your new house: toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap, cleaners, toilet brush, broom, mop, drinks, snacks,

diapers, paper plates, etc. Then pack an extra bag with sheets, towels and an air mattress.

Unpacking and unloading at your destination

Document any preexisting damage and plan where you want your furniture to go. Take photos of your new empty house before you move in. It is easier to document the damage to walls, flooring or the carpet if you take pictures before the movers arrive and start unloading.

The movers are only responsible for placing items one time. Make sure you know where you want them to put the couch and other large items before they unload.

Pre-clean the new bathroom and kitchen. Allow enough time to clean before the movers arrive so you don't have to clean around all those boxes.

Unpack one box at a time. It is easy to open a box, decide you have no idea where all that stuff should go and then move it to the next box. Resolve that once you open a box, you will empty it completely then break down the box to avoid having unpacked boxes everywhere.

Document and report any damage your mover as items come in the house. Footprints on your mattress? Nicks on your table leg? As things are unpacked immediately photograph any damage to the item and how it was packed in the carton. Make sure you point out the damage to the movers and document the damage on the Notice of Loss or Damage at Delivery form they should provide to you. List the inventory number, description and whether it was missing or damaged. For example: #101 (piano) missing; #45 (box with kitchen item) crushed; #236 (TV stand) broken in half; inventory #36 (mattress) not in carton; greasy fingerprints. This can help with any claims negotiations later on.

FLAT-PANEL TVS AND MONITORS

- You are responsible for any pre- or post-move expenses related to your TV such as disconnection/dismounting and reconnection/remounting.
- Subject to approval, crating charges may only apply to flat screen televisions in excess of a 75-inch diagonal screen size. Contact your local transportation office for more information.
- The moving company is responsible for wrapping and packing your TV, however, there is less chance of damage if you can ship your TV in its original packaging.
- Make sure you inform your moving company if your TV is a plasma display type, because it must be shipped upright.
- For OCONUS: There is no additional compensation for flat/curved screen televisions with a 75-inch diagonal screen size or less. Subject to your local transportation office approval, crating charges may only apply to flat/curved screen televisions in excess of a 75-inch diagonal screen size.



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To ship, or not ship; that is the question

by
STUART IBBERSON

Aerotech News

Service members PCSing from one stateside base to another will typically drive to their new duty assignment.

However, if you have orders for an overseas assignment, you need to decide whether to ship your vehicle, or not!

As with anything PCS related, the first call on your list should be to the local Transportation Management Office. They will be able to give you up-to-date information on the why, how and when to ship.

But before you decide to ship a vehicle overseas, there are some things to think about.

1. The Department of Defense will cover the cost of shipping one vehicle to your final destination. You are, however, limited by your vehicles' size. The government will pay to ship a vehicle up to 20 metric tons. For any vehicle weighing more (that could be an oversize truck or SUV), the service member may incur additional costs.

2. Modified vehicles. Many people take pride in after-market modifications to their vehicles, but these could cause issues in other countries. One example that comes to mind is that in Turkey, after-market window tinting is not legal.

3. Time restraints. As you get ready for your PCS move, you will find there are deadlines for many things – scheduling hold baggage and household goods pickups; scheduling a time to move out of government quarters, etc. There will also be deadlines to be met when shipping a vehicle — from when and where to drop it off for shipping, to when and where to pick it up at your new duty station.

4. Packing your vehicle. You may be tempted to load up your car or truck prior to shipment, rather than include them in your household goods. The only things you can "ship" in your vehicle are items used for operating the vehicle or transporting passengers. These include:

- a. Jacks, tire irons, tire chains, spare and snow tires.
- b. Jumper cables and luggage racks.
- c. First aid kits, and
- d. Portable cribs, children's car seats and strollers.

A full list is available at https://www.ustranscom.mil/dtr/part-iv/dtr_part_iv_app_k_3.pdf

5. Licensing. Local licensing laws will apply once you arrive at your new duty station. These laws vary by country, and there may be strict deadlines on when to register. Some countries may require you to register your vehicle locally, some may require you to get a U.S. military license plate. Again, contact your Transportation Management Office for more information.

6. Buying a second car. Once you arrive at your new duty station, you may find that two cars are a necessity for your family.

a. Buying a secondhand car. Many people opt to buy a secondhand car once they arrive. Many bases, both stateside and overseas, have a Lemon Lot where service members can buy and sell secondhand cars. If you do decide to sell your vehicle (either stateside or overseas), make sure you allow enough time for it to sell before you have to leave.

b. Buying a new car overseas. Some decide to buy a new vehicle once they arrive overseas. Oftentimes, the prices can seem like you are getting a good deal but you need to remember that if you ship your "new" vehicle back to the States you will have to make sure it meets U.S. standards.

7. Think about what it will take to ship your Ameri-



Courtesy photo

can POV stateside after your tour is over. Several years ago, unleaded gasoline was not readily available in the United Kingdom, so everyone had to use leaded fuel. When shipping their U.S. vehicles back to the United States, service members had to pay for a new catalytic converter to be installed.

As with any other aspect of your PCS move, check with your local TMO, or request a sponsor from your gaining unit and ask them for advice and information.

Still have questions? www.militaryonesource.mil has the following

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What is a POV?

A. A POV, or privately owned vehicle, is any motor vehicle that provides personal transportation and is owned by, or on a long-term lease to (12 or more months), a customer or a customer's dependents. A POV can have four or more wheels, like a car or truck. The POV must be:

- Self-propelled
- Licensed to travel on public highways
- Designed to carry passengers or household goods

Q. Will the government pay to ship a POV?

A. You may have an entitlement to ship or store one POV at government expense when you receive permanent change of station orders.

For CONUS to CONUS:

The cost of transporting your POV to your new duty station is largely your responsibility for a CONUS to CONUS move. There are exceptions, so if you're unsure, contact your local Transportation Management Office (for military members). Civilian employees can contact their human resource office.

If you can't drive from your previous CONUS duty station to the new CONUS location because of medical or personal reasons, or if the travel time exceeds your report-in date, contact your local Transportation Management Office.

For OCONUS to CONUS; CONUS to OCONUS; OCONUS to OCONUS:

Only one POV owned or leased for personal use may be shipped at government expense. To inquire

about exceptions, or if you would like to make your own arrangements to ship more than one POV to your new duty station, contact your local Transportation Management Office.

Q. Is a motorcycle considered a POV?

A. It depends. A motorcycle or moped can be considered a POV if you are not shipping a vehicle at government expense on the same authorization or travel orders. Remember, if shipping a motorcycle, the service member must ensure there is NO fuel left in the bike. Before shipping, run the bike until it stalls. If shipping with your household goods, advise the TMO and the TSP ahead of time as there are special steps the TSP must take. If you have questions, contact your local Transportation Management Office.

Q. What documents do I need to turn in or pick up my POV?

A. Visit <https://pcsmypov.com/> for more information.

Q. Who do I contact regarding my POV shipment?

A. Please contact the Vehicle Processing Center nearest your present duty station. You can find out where your nearest VPC is by visiting <https://pcsmypov.com/>

Q. How do I know if there are restrictions when shipping my POV to a foreign country?

A. Contact your local Transportation Management Office.

Q. How full can my fuel tank be when I ship my POV?

A. U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (Title 49, Transportation, Carriage By Vessel, section 176.905, paragraph A (2) specifically states: "The fuel tank of a motor vehicle or mechanical equipment powered by liquid fuel may not be more than one-fourth full."

Q. Do I have to clean my POV before it is shipped?

A. The exterior of your POV must be washed and clean of all dirt. The interior of your vehicle must be vacuumed clean (dry vacuumed only).

Q. How long do I have to pick up my POV?

A. You have 21 days from the day your POV is available to pick it up. The destination Vehicle Processing Center will notify you within 24 hours via email or postcard when your vehicle is ready for you. You can also track your vehicle's progress to its final destination on PCSmyPOV.

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PETS ARE FAMILY MEMBERS TOO!

by **Stuart Ibberson**
Aerotech News

The terms "pet parents" and 'fur babies' are familiar to everyone and pets are often considered "part of the family."

Moving can be stressful for the human members of your family, but it can even more so for our four-legged family members.

While the service member, spouse and children are excited about an upcoming move, looking forward to exploring different areas of the United States or foreign countries, making a PCS move can be traumatic for pets.

Your first reaction is probably "my pets are going with me." However, there are a lot of things to consider before you make that decision.

If you are a "pet parent" and receive orders, the first thing you should do is contact your local Transportation Management Office.

If you are moving from one CONUS base to another, you

may feel you can just load Fido in the car and head to your new duty station.

However, many states have different licensing and quarantine requirements, some communities may have breed restrictions, and you will need to find out what health documents you will need.

Throw into the mix that once you arrive, housing may not be readily available and you (and your family) may have to live in the TLF for a while, or find an off-base apartment which could have pet restrictions.

You need to contact your new base as early as possible and find out if the TLF allows pets, and if not, will a statement of non-availability be issued? If the TLF allows pets, you're okay — if not, and a statement of non-availability will NOT be issued, any temporary accommodation you need will be your own expense.

— See **PETS**, on Page 24



Air Force Airman 1st Class Taylor D. Slater
Air Force Staff Sgt. Corey Klucker, right, and Air Force Senior Airman Jeff Cannella carry a dog to a commercial aircraft outside the passenger terminal at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, May 29, 2020. Klucker and Cannella are passenger service specialists with the 721st Aerial Port Squadron.



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PETS, from Page 23

The key is to know before you go, and do your research. The DOD-sponsored militaryone-source.mil can give you resources and information.

Now if you are PCSing to Alaska, there's a different set of challenges.

If traveling by air, some airlines restrict pet shipment due to extreme temperatures. Most will not fly a pet if the temperature is more than 85 degrees or less than 20 degrees at any point in the trip. These temperature variances cover most of the year in Alaska, so be sure to call the airline in advance.

If you decide to travel by privately owned vehicle, you will be required to present shot records and health certificates at the Canadian border.

And if you decide to take the ferry, the Alaska Marine Highway System does allow pets on board — but each pet must have a health certificate within 30 days of travel, a fee of \$35 is charged per animal, and animals must remain on the card deck.

PCSing to Hawaii with pets brings a whole new set of considerations and requirements.

Hawaii is a rabies-free state and in order to maintain that status, there are strict rules on bringing pets to the islands, and some length of quarantine will probably be necessary. More information can be found at <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/ai/files/2019/08/aqbrochure-08.2019.pdf>.

In some instances, while the cost of air travel is covered by the service member, the cost of quarantine may be reimbursed by the government. As stated before, the best advice is to check with your local TMO as soon as possible.

International travel

There are more things to consider if you are PCSing overseas.

The first thing you need to do is see what kind of overseas tour you are going on. Is it a limited time unaccompanied tour? Is it a 2- or 3-year command sponsored overseas tour? Or is it non-command sponsored but you want to take your family (at your own expense) with you?

If you have orders for an unaccompanied tour you will NOT be able to take your pet(s) with you. Why you may ask? Because you are more than likely going to be living in the dorms or barracks and pets are not allowed.

If you are heading overseas for an accompanied tour, you need to research the requirements and laws for bringing pets into the country you are moving to.

U.S. military members serve in a foreign country under a Status of Forces Agreement. This is an agreement negotiated by the U.S. government and the host nation



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Taylor D. Slater
Staff Sgt. Corey Klucker, 721st Aerial Port Squadron passenger service specialist, places a cat on a conveyor belt outside the Ramstein Passenger Terminal at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

that covers all aspects of living and working in said country as a member of the U.S. military.

In some countries, the SOFA also covers pets, in some it does not.

Some countries will also require a period of quarantine for arriving pets as long as six months, and oftentimes the service member will be required to pay for it.

Again, check with TMO to find out what you need to do if you want to take your pet overseas with you.

On Jan. 1, 2024, the Defense Department instituted a new policy allowing service members to receive reimbursement for costs incurred for moving one dog or one cat during a PCS move (see related article).

However, remember, when traveling by air, whether on a commercially scheduled flight, or on a Patriot Express flight, the cost will be paid for initially by the service member. A Patriot Express flight is a commercial airline contracted by DOD to fly military members to specific destinations. The two U.S. airports that Patriot Express flights leave from are Baltimore/Washington International (for flights to Europe), and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (for flights to Asia).

Check with your Travel Management Office/Installation Travel Office for current fees. For more information, visit <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Support/ALL-FAQs/Article/3624131/pet-transportation-allowance/>.

Please remember, that if you are flying with pets, they will more than likely need to be in an approved carrier, loaded in the hold, and will only be allowed out once you have reached your destination. Some smaller animals can fly in the cabin — but must be in an approved carrier, must be stowed under the seat in front of you, and are not allowed out of the carrier while on the flight. You will also need to make sure that there is enough food and water for the duration of the flight and that the food and water are fixed inside the

container, or attached to it making sure your pet has access to both; and that your pet can stand up, turn around and lay down with normal posture.

When selecting a kennel

- Make sure your kennel has adequate ventilation and your pet is free of respiratory problems. The door for the kennel cannot be on the top of the container.

- Allow your pet to get accustomed to the kennel before departure so he/she will be more comfortable in his/her temporary home during flight. Animals travel under less stress when they become accustomed to their shipping container before they travel. Use their kennel as a bed or feed your pet in the kennel for several days before your trip. A familiar article of clothing or toy in the kennel may help placate your pet.

- Mark the kennel with your pet's name, your name, destination or unit address, and phone number (if available). An ID tag for your pet is also recommended.

For more information on traveling with pets on a Patriot Express flight, visit <https://www.amc.af.mil/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Pet-Travel-Page/>

Service animals

A recent Memo outlines new guidance on Service Animals and Service Animal Handler Responsibilities.

No later than 48 hours in advance of the date and time of departure, the service animal handler must provide the departing DOD passenger terminal a signed Statement of Assurance:

- Service animal handlers name, email address, and phone number
- Service animal user's name if different from the handler and phone number
- Service animal name and description that includes appearance, height, and weight
- Current service animal information:

- Rabies vaccination date and date vaccination expires
- Other health, disease, or conditions such as fleas, ticks or a disease that could endanger people or other animals.
- Veterinarian's name and phone number.
- Name and contact information of service animal trainer or training organization that provided training to do work or perform tasks for the service animal user.

My pet will not be PCSing with me!

If your pet will not be traveling with you, there are, again, a lot of things to think about.

- If heading for an unaccompanied tour, and your family is not going with you, your pet(s) can stay with the family until you return. Many times, Airmen on an unaccompanied tour will have a guaranteed follow-on assignment (they know where they are going when they return to the United States) so you can relocate your family, and your pet, to your next duty station.

- Family: You can ask your family to look after your pet until you return. You should, however, make

sure that your family members are able to look after your pet. A young puppy that needs lots of walks may not be a good match for elderly parents who don't get out much.

- Friends: Not an ideal option, unless you trust them implicitly! If you know the person who will look after your pet well, this may be an option. But be aware, your friends' situation may well change (they may also get PCS orders), and are not able to take care of your pet. And you should communicate ahead of time whether this will be a temporary or permanent re-homing of your pet.

- Adoption: Throughout the United States, there are many "pure" breed societies that will facilitate an adoption, and have strict standards to follow including home visits, suitability assessments, etc. And some bases have pet adoption organizations that may help facilitate an adoption.

The one thing you should NOT do is abandon your pet. You wouldn't leave your young child behind to fend for itself and you should NOT leave your pet to fend for itself.

But — before you make any decisions, check with TMO!

Service members get new benefit: Pet travel allowance

by
DAVID VERGUN

DOD News

As of Jan. 1, 2024, active-duty service members are now authorized to receive reimbursement for costs related to relocation of one household pet due to a permanent change of station move.

The relocation expense for either one dog or one cat includes travel costs within the United States or overseas and any other travel requirements, according to the Joint Travel Regulations Office.

Since taking office, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has prioritized efforts to strengthen support for Defense Department personnel and family members under

his "Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families" campaign.

Those efforts include key initiatives to improve the lives of service members and their families through access to quality and affordable child care and by easing the burden of relocation for military families, among other things.

"DOD recognizes that pets can be a source of stability and security to service members and families who often move. Defraying the cost of PCS moves involving a pet acknowledges the role played by these emotional constants and will improve quality of life for the force," said Jennifer McPherson-Todd, director of the Defense Travel Management Office.

Other travel expenses covered under the regulations

- Quarantine fees
- Mandatory microchipping
- Boarding fees
- Hotel service charges
- Licensing fees at the new duty station
- Shipping fees if the service member flies, rather than drives

Also, service members' dependents, DOD civilians, and DOD civilian employees' dependents who are ordered to evacuate from a foreign duty station are authorized for transportation and quarantine fees for up to two pets — dogs or cats.



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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY STUFF IS DAMAGED?

by Stuart Ibberson

Aerotech News

As with any move, there will be times when things don't go as planned.

If your personal property is lost or damaged, or there is a lapse in service, you are entitled to compensation. However, to receive compensation, you must file a claim.

Sometimes moves don't go as smoothly as you would hope. You are entitled to receive compensation for lost or damaged property, and expenses incurred due to a lapse in service. You are highly encouraged to file claims in these instances and can find more details about the various types of claims and how to file for each in the information below.

Personal property claims

If you arrive at your new duty station and find some of your household goods lost or damaged, you may be entitled to the full replacement value, or the cost of repair.

This includes items that have been transported via the following move types:

- Household goods, or HHG
- Unaccompanied baggage, or UB
- Non-temporary storage, or NTS
- Direct procurement method, or DPM

You must give notice of loss or damage with 180 calendar days from the delivery date, unless the loss or damage is noted on the Form 1850. You can file a claim for items on your Forms 1850 up to nine months from delivery date.

The first step in initiating a claim is to give your Transportation Service Provider written notice listing all the missing or damaged items for which you intend to file a claim. This notice does not need to give full details about each item — that will be done when you file your claim — but the notice should include the item name, inventory number and a brief description of the loss or damage.

Most people do not unpack every box on the day they are delivered, so you can give multiple notifications as long as it is within the 180-day period.

The notice can be submitted:

1. By reviewing and signing the “Notification for Loss and Damage at Delivery” form (DD Form 1850) given to you by the delivery crew on your delivery day.
2. By submitting the “Notification of Loss and Damage After Delivery” form in the Defense Personal Property System at dps.move.mil

The next step after giving your notice of loss or damage, is to file an itemized claim

Defense Personal Property
Management Office
Publication Date: March 2023

PERSONAL PROPERTY CLAIMS FACT SHEET

HOUSEHOLD GOODS CLAIMS

1 ☐ Give notice of loss/damage within 180 days from delivery date

Provide your Transportation Service Provider (TSP) a written notice via:

- 1) "Notification of Loss or Damage AT Delivery" form completed with TSP on delivery day, and/or
- 2) "Notification of Loss or Damage AFTER Delivery" form in the Defense Personal Property System (DPS)

2 ☐ File a claim within 9 months from delivery date

File an itemized claim in DPS for every lost or damaged item. (For non-temporary storage (NTS) and direct procurement method (DPM) shipments, your claim may be emailed or mailed (contact your NTS or DPM contractor who handled your shipment to confirm where to send your claim).

- The TSP must confirm receipt of your claim within **15 days**.

Alternative Filing Option - Quick Claim Settlement:

If offered on delivery day, you may file paperwork in-person with the TSP to promptly resolve minor loss or damage. Quick Claim amounts **will not exceed \$1,500 total for shipments**. Payment is made within **5 days** of claim submission. You may still file other claims for loss or damage discovered after delivery, excluding the items filed under a "quick claim."

3 ☐ Work with the TSP to assess your claim

The TSP may send someone to inspect your items to determine payment or repair amount. For lost items, a tracer action will be initiated. Every effort will be made by the TSP to locate your missing items prior to advising you to file a claim.

- The TSP has **30 days** to make an offer or deny liability for claims under \$1,000 and **60 days** on claims over \$1,000. You can make counteroffers and the TSP must respond to each reply within **7 days**.
- If repairing an item, the TSP must hire a repair company within **20 days** and have that company inspect the item within **45 days**.
- Offers for claims entered in DPS or communicated via email will be honored. If there is a dispute between two differing offers, the offer that is most advantageous (i.e., higher dollar value) to the customer will be honored. TSPs will update DPS with the final dollar amount when settled.
- For NTS and DPM shipments, the delivering TSP must notify you and the Military Claims Office (MCO) within 3 business days if denying liability. It is then recommended to transfer your claim to the MCO.
- If the TSP has stopped communication, DO NOT dispose of damaged items, obtain an estimate, or repair any items without first contacting the MCO for approval.

4 ☐ Finalize the settlement or transfer to MCO

You may settle a claim by accepting in full or accepting and rejecting the offer for separate items. Individual items you reject can be transferred to your MCO for further review.

TSPs (to include NTS and DPM contractors) are required to:

- 1) Make payments within **30 days**.
- 2) Pick up salvage items within **20 days** from inspection or within **30 days** after being deemed "beyond repair."

DO NOT FEEL PRESSURED - only accept an offer if you are completely satisfied.

NOT FULLY SATISFIED?

Consider contacting the MCO if the TSP has denied your claim, you choose not to accept the TSP's offer, or you have not heard from the TSP in 30 days.

Please note all transferred claims are handled by the MCOs outside of DPS. After transferring your claim in DPS, do not dispose of any items. Note any further communication with the MCO will occur external to DPS.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

Local Transportation Office:

<https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/>

DPS Technical Help Desk:

800-462-2176

Military Claims Office (MCO):

Air Force:
877-754-1212 or 937-656-8044
afscs.ja@us.af.mil

Coast Guard:
D05-SMB-HHG@uscg.mil

Army:

Contact via email below:
usarmy.knox.hqda-otjag.mbx.cpcs@army.mil

Navy/Marine Corps:
888-897-8217 or 757-440-6315
norfolkclaims@us.navy.mil

PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE(S) CLAIMS

Option 1: Onsite Settlement

- File a claim (valued at \$1,500 or less) at the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) during pickup.
- Payment will be sent electronically to your bank account.

Option 2: International Auto Logistics (IAL) Claim

- Obtain an estimate from a repair facility of your choice and submit to the IAL claims office.
- IAL will review, process, and settle your claim within **40 days** from the date you filed a claim. However, you will have **10 business days** to file a claim for loss and / or damage discovered after picking up your POV from the VPC.

For more information, contact the IAL Claims department toll free at (855) 389-9499 and select "claims" from the voice menu. Claims may be emailed to claims@ialpov.us.

NOT FULLY SATISFIED?

Transfer your claim to the MCO for assistance.

RESIDENTIAL DAMAGE CLAIMS

Step 1: Document any damage on the day it occurs

- Conduct a pre and post walk-around with the TSP noting any damages (interior and exterior) in writing. Take pictures for your records.

Step 2: Submit a claim

- Contact the TSP directly within **7 days** from the last date they were at your residence. The TSP may require you to submit a real property damage claim form.

Step 3: Conduct an inspection

- The TSP may schedule an inspection within 15 days of notification. The repair estimate will be shared with you to determine payment. However, the TSP may pay your claim up front without an inspection being completed.

NOT FULLY SATISFIED?

Contact your local transportation office or consult with an attorney for guidance. MCOs do NOT handle residential damage claims.

Courtesy graphic

in DPS for every item that was lost or damaged during the moving process.

You have up to nine months to file a claim for full replacement/repair value of the item(s) you are claiming. If the claim is filed more than nine months from the delivery date, you will only be eligible for a depreciated value.

It may be best to gather as much information as you can before logging into DPS to file your claim. Information should include:

- Description of item (including manufacturer, make and model);
- The inventory number of the item;
- The amount you paid when you bought the item;
- The year you bought the item;
- A description of the damage, and an estimate for repair of the item if available).

It is also advised to provide photographs and receipts if you have them of the damaged items. These can be uploaded with your claim on the DPS website.

Once the claim is filed, the TSP must confirm receipt within 15 calendar days. The TSP is then responsible for assessing the value of your property and may send someone to inspect the damage. If property is lost, TPS will start a trace to locate it. TSP must pay, deny, or make an offer within 30 days on all claims of \$1,000 or less, and 60 days for claims over \$1,000.

When TSP provides an itemized listing of their offer, you can accept or reject the offer for each item. This step should be completed in writing via email to the TSP representative.

Remember, do not feel pressured to accept an offer unless you are completely satisfied with the amount offered. You have the right to offer one rebuttal to the TSP offer. The TSP has seven business days to respond to your rebuttal.

If, after your rebuttal, you are unable to come to an agreement with the TSP, you should transfer your claim to your military claims office. The MCO will then take over the process.

Instead of using the traditional filing method described above, if the delivering TSP offers, you may file a quick claim settlement outside of DPS to promptly resolve minor loss or damage (not to exceed \$1,000). You will file paperwork on delivery day with the TSP. While you cannot file claims on those specific items later, you may still use DPS to file claims for other lost or damaged items discovered after delivery.

Note: What does “full replacement value” mean?

When you are moving with the military, your items are insured at “full replacement/repair value,” or FRV, at no additional cost to you. Essentially, this means that if an item is lost or destroyed during the move, the TSP is obligated to pay the lesser of the replacement/repair costs.

If replacement cost is offered, it should replace the item with the same or similar item. The replacement item could be new or used. The TSP will still require proof of the item's value, quality and evidence of the cost to replace it.

If the item can be repaired, as determined by a qualified inspector, and the repair cost is less than the replacement, the TSP may pay for the repair.

Salvage

For any items that have been designated as “salvage items,” the TSP must take pos-

————— See **DAMAGE**, on Page 27

Settling In: Top 10 to-dos after your PCS move

Once you arrive at your new duty station, you'll have to tie up all the loose ends before you can get settled into your new community. Use these top ten "to-dos" to help you.

1. File your travel voucher.
2. Connect with your Relocation Assistance Program.

3. Check out your installation loan closet.
4. Register for child care.
5. Enroll children in school.
6. Complete your moving customer satisfaction survey.
7. File a claim for items damaged during your move.
8. Make sure your health care moves with you.
9. Get to know your new installation and community.
10. Start your job search.

Getting settled after your military move can be a challenge, but Military OneSource experts are available 24/7 to connect you with information and resources to help you and your family thrive. Call 800-432-9647, use OCONUS dialing options or schedule a live chat.

For more information, visit <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-pcs/plan-to-move/moving-checklists-for-military-moves/>

DAMAGE, from Page 26

session of those items at your residence or other location you deem acceptable.

Essential items option

Some damaged items may be deemed "Essential Items." These are only those items necessary for everyday living. Items used solely for entertainment purposes are not considered essential.

Fungible items that are regularly used up or worn out and must be routinely replaced are not considered essential. (Examples of fungible items include unopened products such as food, cosmetics, cleaning supplies, etc.)

Essential items include, but are not limited to:

- Refrigerators or other appliances necessary for the safe storage and preparation of food
- Necessary medical equipment
- Mattresses (including cribs)
- Washer and dryer

If one of your essential items is lost or damaged, you should notify the TSP within seven days of delivery. The TSP has two business days from notification to review and respond to your claim.

Depending on the item and the damage, the TSP may make you an offer, which could include either a payment, a permanent replacement item, or a temporary replacement item (e.g., rental) to use while your damaged item is undergoing repairs. Keep in mind that every situation is unique, and the TSP will help select the option that best fits your situation.

If you have questions or concerns about a claim regarding an essential item, contact your service's Military Claims Office for assistance.

Residential damage claims

If your TSP causes any damage to your home or residence, you can file a Real Property Damage claim to be reimbursed. A property damage claim must be filed within seven days of the damage occurring. Follow these steps to file a Real Property Damage claim.

Step 1: Document the damage on the day it occurs

Conduct a pre and post walk-around with the TSP and note any damage, both interior and exterior, in writing. Take pictures for your records. An example of damage might include scratched hardwood floors, dented walls, torn grass, etc.

Step 2: Submit a claim

Contact the TSP directly within "seven calendar days" from the last date they were at your residence. The TSP may require you to submit a "DP3 Real Property Damage Form."

Step 3: Conduct an inspection

The TSP may schedule an inspection within "15 calendar days" of notification. They will arrange for a repair firm to inspect your property damage. The repair estimate will be shared with you to determine payment.

Inconvenience claims

If your household goods arrive late, you may be entitled to an inconvenience claim.

An inconvenience claim is authorized and payable when:

- The TSP fails to pick up a shipment upon the agreed date.
- The TSP fails to deliver on or before the required delivery date, provided you are in possession of residence and are available to receive the delivery.
- The TSP places your shipment into storage in transit, or SIT, without you being notified.
- You have requested for your shipment to be released from SIT and the carrier is unable to deliver the shipment out of SIT within the following dates:
 - Within seven government business days from the date you make your first contact requesting delivery or
 - Within two government business days, when your requested delivery date is more than seven business days out.

You will be notified by your TSP if a delay is expected to occur with your shipment. This normally happens a few days prior to the scheduled delivery day but could be as late as on the day of scheduled delivery.

It is important to note that unaccompanied baggage shipments are flown on U.S. Air Force aircraft (Air Mobility Command) both to and from the United States. Some unaccompanied baggage shipments may be delayed because AMC did not load/transport your shipment in a timely manner. In these instances, the TSP is not liable for inconvenience claim payments as the delay was outside their control. Check with your TSP to see if you fall into this category.

Vehicle claims

There are two options for filing a POV loss or damage claim:

1. Onsite settlement: File a claim (valued at \$1,500 or less) at the Vehicle Processing Center during pickup. Payment will be sent electronically to your bank account.

2. International Auto Logistics, or IAL, claim: Obtain an estimate from a repair facility of your choice and submit to the IAL claims office. IAL will review, process, and settle your claim within 90 days. For more information, contact the IAL Claims department toll free at (855) 389-9499 and select "claims" from the voice menu. Claims may be emailed to claims@ialpov.us.

You can access IAL's claims information at PCSMYPOV.org or review the "POV Claims brochure" for more details on this topic.

If you are unable to settle your claim directly with IAL, you can transfer your claim to your service branch military claims office, or MCO.

POV inconvenience claims

As with a late delivery of household goods, you may be entitled to an inconvenience claim if your shipped vehicle is delayed. This could include rental care and lodging expenses. The government will reimburse you up to \$30 per day for the first seven calendar days, not to exceed \$210. After that time, the contractor may be responsible for paying inconvenience claims over the government's maximum allowance.



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The Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area is a United States Army Corps of Engineers Facility and a unit of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation System.

Making the move easier for children

Information courtesy of militaryonsource.mil

Moving to a new home can be both exciting and overwhelming for adults and children alike.

Advance planning whenever possible helps ensure there will be plenty of time for transition and adjustment for your child. Connecting to friends, family and your military community can help ease the stress of uncertainty. Military OneSource offers a variety of resources and assistance to help make your next move a smooth one for the entire family.

- Tell your children about the move as soon as possible. Give your children time to adjust to the idea of moving and to say goodbye to their friends.

- Listen to your children. They may have lots of questions, or they may need some space during this transition.
- Answer their questions as best you can, and be patient with yourself and them.

- Allow everyone to express their feelings, and try to give everyone the time they need to adjust to upcoming changes.

Prepare for your move and anticipate your child's needs and concerns. Planning ahead is key to a smooth move.

- Visit the Military OneSource Plan My Move page to create a personalized checklist for you and your family. Keep your list of tasks in one convenient location, organized by topic or timeline. Whether it's locating a new school, securing new housing or preparing financially for the move, the Plan My Move checklist will help ensure you won't forget a thing.

- The checklist includes tasks to help families with special needs find assistance at your new installation. Families can also consult the EFMP & Me tool to help with securing resources and assistance.

Let your children help.

- Let them contribute to the Plan My Move list.
- Have them research new schools, or read about school liaisons with them.
- Find your new home on a map, then zoom in to see what's around it.
- Teens can search online for housing and scout out their new school or fun things to do on the new installation.
- Older youth and teens can help pack household goods, and younger children can pack their own belongings, favorite items or a "first day box."

Reassure your children.

- Tell them you love them.
- Let them know that together the family will adjust to their new home.
- They'll have a new home address, but the important things in life — such as how much you love each other — won't change.
- Stay positive and keep them involved.
- Try to emphasize the exciting parts of change, such as learning about new places and meeting new people.



Courtesy photo

- Your children take their cues from you. Remind them that you're a strong family and that new adventures await.

Celebrate your children's favorite things.

- Before the move, visit the library, your favorite ice cream shop or the park.
- Have them take something special or a photo from one of those places to the new house.
- After the move, encourage your child to find a new favorite place in your new location, which can give them a sense of security and familiarity.

Moving is part of military life. The more you talk about your new home ahead of time, the easier the relocation will be for your children — and you.

Pilot program covers certain child care costs after PCS move

by C. Todd Lopez

DOD News

In 2024, the Department of Defense kicked off a three-year pilot program meant to reimburse service members up to \$1,500 for travel-related expenses incurred for a temporary child care provider following a permanent change of station move.

When an active duty service member makes a permanent change of station move to a new duty location and finds that child care at the local child development center won't be available within 30 days of their report date, they can hire their own provider, typically a relative or family friend, and then later file for reimbursement of transportation-related expenses.

The process begins with a service member visiting the military child care website to apply for child care at their new duty location, said Christopher Woods, chief of the policy branch within the Defense Travel Management Office.

"If the scheduling shows that care could not be provided within 30 days of the member's report date, then the member would become eligible to bring a child care provider to their permanent duty station to look after the child while the member reports to work and their spouse begins to do all those things like unpacking or finding their next job," Woods said.

The military child care website is the DOD's official tool to sign up for child care. When the program begins in October, the website will provide instructions to affected service members and generate the necessary forms that allow service members to obtain the needed child care.

"What would happen at that point is the member takes that documentation that they have from MilitaryChildCare.com ... and they begin to coordinate with their local travel office to treat that child care provider much like they would treat a dependent to begin to make the commercial travel reservations," he said.

Reimbursement is limited to commercial transportation expenses, including flights, rail tickets, transportation to or from an airport and an en route and departure rental car. Reimbursement for privately owned vehicle mileage is not authorized, while reimbursement for fuel used in a privately owned vehicle is.

For a permanent change of station move between locations within the continental United States, reimbursement is limited to \$500. For a move to or from a duty station outside the continental United States, the reimbursement is limited to \$1,500.

Typically, a child care provider in these situations would be a relative or family friend, Woods said. But it could also be an au pair, for instance. But Woods also said that reimbursement is for transportation only — both at the start of the period needed for child care and at the end, to send the child care provider home. There is no reimbursement to pay a child care

provider a salary or to provide for room and board.

As part of the program, only one child care provider is authorized per military family, and only one service member in a military-to-military couple can request reimbursement.

The pilot program, which lasts three years and runs Oct. 1, 2024, through Sept. 30, 2027, comes after direction by Congress in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, Woods said.

While the program is active, said Heidi E. Welch, the associate director for child and youth programs operations, it's expected to relieve a burden on military families.

"Coming from the child care perspective, this is going to help families, so they have less strain," Welch said. "PCSing is a challenge and it's very difficult. I think this is going to relieve some of the strain and burden that families have as they're making those PCS transitions."



Air Force photograph by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

DOD offers reimbursements for breast milk shipping expenses

In January of 2025, the Department of Defense approved an updated policy to cover additional expenses related to the transportation or shipment of breast milk for service members and civilian employees on Temporary Duty and service members during a Permanent Change of Station who are breastfeeding their child up to 12 months old.

Service members and civilians who are on TDY and service members on PCS may now be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for disposable storage bags or non-durable containers, cold shipping packages, and refrigeration. These new expenses are in addition to commercial shipping, excess baggage fees, and dry ice or regular ice expenses, which were already

authorized.

Authorization must be included on the TDY and PCS orders prior to any expenses being incurred by the Service member. Receipts must be submitted for all expenses, regardless of the amount (the "\$75.00 rule," which allows most expenses to be claimed without receipt for amounts under \$75.00, does not apply).

For more information, see the JTR.

RIGHT: A mother and her newborn daughter snuggle following an evaluation of the infant at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Okinawa, Japan, July 18, 2023.

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Helping your child change schools

Moving can be stressful for the service member, but it can also be stressful for school-age children.

But you can make your child's transition to a new school in a new location easier for both the parent and the child.

School liaisons are your primary point of contact for all school-related matters, especially a school transition. The school liaison at your current installation can connect you to your new installation school liaison who will help smooth the transition to your child's new school. Let your school liaison help you and your family navigate school selection and youth sponsorship during this time of change.

School records

When leaving your current school district, obtain a copy of your student's unofficial school records to carry to the new school. Thanks to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, this documentation is sufficient to place your child in comparable classes until the student's official paperwork arrives at the new school.

The Interstate Compact is designed to make school transitions easier for military families. Currently, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA, have committed to helping students enroll in school, register for the classes they need and graduate on time. Learn more about the Interstate Compact below.

Extracurricular activities

Many times, if your student is eligible,



Courtesy photos

the new school can facilitate participation in extracurricular activities — even if application deadlines or tryouts have passed.

Graduation

For teens in high school, a move may cause anxiety about graduation. Thanks to the Interstate Compact, changing schools will not impact their graduation.

The compact helps with:

- **Course waivers:** If your child has already completed similar coursework, the new school may waive courses required for graduation. In some states, schools can deny the request to apply past coursework. If the school

denies applying that coursework toward graduation, it must provide an alternate means of obtaining required coursework to be completed for on-time graduation.

- **Exit exams:** The new school district may accept your student's exit exams and achievement tests required to graduate from his or her previous school. If the school does not, it will provide an alternate means of providing exit exams for the student.

- **Senior-year transfers:** If your student changes school during his or her senior year, the two school districts will work together to get a diploma from the former school to ensure on-time graduation.



Exceptional family members

If you are traveling with Exceptional Family Member, alert the new school and your medical provider at least 30 days ahead of your move. You should request a copy of your child's complete educational and medical records and submit it to the new school as soon as possible. If your student is covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, federal law protects your child's right to receive the same services identified in his or her existing individual education program, or IEP. The receiving school may perform subsequent evaluations to assess eligibility and ensure appropriate placement. Your local school liaison can also help with this transition by connecting you to your new school's special education department.

Editor's note: Information compiled from www.militaryonesource.mil.

Preparing children for PCS season

by Army Lt. Col. Melissa Boyd

Defense Centers for Public Health

For military families, moving can occur during any time of year but generally takes place during the peak months of May through August.

During this transition of saying goodbye to friends and family and moving to a new community, there is generally an increase in stress for parents as well as children.

A permanent change of station, or PCS, is defined as movement from one duty location to another and is a core aspect of military life that generally occurs every two to three years. According to a 2018 RAND Corporation report, each year approximately one-third of service members move to a new duty location. A PCS move involves leaving employment, finding a home, building new social support networks, establishing new routines, and adjusting to an unfamiliar place. For military children, a PCS move also means starting classes in a new school, building new friendships, and finding new social activities.

How to best prepare for a PCS move

According to the Blue Star Families' 2019 Military Family Lifestyle Survey, relocation is cited as a top stressor for military families, particularly among children. Although relocation can be challenging, there are some helpful strategies to limit stress and foster positive benefits, such as building family resilience and making the most of the moving experience.

1. Open Communication — Inform children about the move as soon as possible. Have an open, sit-down discussion

about the move, and allow time for everyone to talk about what excites and worries them about it move. Develop a calendar as a visual reminder to help count down the time to moving.

2. Active Listening — Encourage children to talk about their feelings and ask questions. Listen to their concerns and normalize the pros and cons of a PCS move, including feelings of excitement, sadness, worry, and confusion.

3. Explore Calming Techniques — To help manage stress, establish a routine to practice healthy coping skills as a family, such as journaling, reading, deep breathing, exercising, etc. Teaching coping skills to children regularly can help them tolerate, minimize and manage anticipated and unexpected stressful situations in life.

4. Be Creative — Prior to moving, develop fun activities such as visiting favorite locations and restaurants, creating a scrapbook including pictures of friends and a to-do list to explore the new location.

5. Encourage and Empower — Involve children in researching new homes, schools, extracurricular activities, and fun facts about your new community.

6. Assign Special Roles — Provide children particular roles in the moving process, such as packing boxes, hosting a yard sale, organizing items for donation, etc. Including children in the moving process can help lessen anxiety and foster a sense of pride in helping with decision-making in preparation for upcoming changes.

7. Stay Connected — Discuss ways for children to stay connected to friends. In particular, depending on the child's age, discuss both safe and unsafe options for communicating with friends and family.



Graphic illustration courtesy Defense Centers for Public Health-Aberdeen

Open Communication — Inform children about the move as soon as possible. Have an open, sit-down discussion about the move, and allow time for everyone to talk about what excites and worries them about it move. Develop a calendar as a visual reminder to help count down the time to moving.

Additional resources to help children

Awareness of supportive websites and military community programs designed to aid relocation challenges can serve as a protective factor for military families during the PCS season.

Sesame Street for Military Families offers relocation resources and downloadable activities to help families maintain a sense of comfort through the changes associated with military life.

PCSgrades provides trusted reviews written by fellow military families about on- and off-base housing options, schools, moving companies, youth sports, real estate agents, and more.

Military OneSource lists relocation assistance planning tools, free resources, and support to help plan a PCS move.

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Moving overseas can be exciting, challenging

An overseas PCS can be an exciting opportunity for your family to live abroad.

While you may be focusing on the opportunities to experience new languages, foods and cultures, remember to include moving logistics in your relocation plans.

Planning and preparation are key to any military mission. An OCONUS PCS move is no different. Planning is very important. Keep in mind that although you can start planning early, you will need orders to take certain actions. Here are some things to consider:

- **Command sponsorship:** If you intend to take your family with you overseas, you'll need to obtain command sponsorship. This designation, which will appear on your orders, ensures that your family will receive travel compensation, housing support and legal protection in your host country.

- **Moving logistics:** Your local transportation office can help you set up the logistics for your move as soon as you receive PCS orders. The office can provide help with understanding entitlements and moving allowances, scheduling household goods shipments and any problems you may encounter with your moving company during packing, moving and delivery. For specific contact information, each service branch has its own customer service contacts for your military PCS.

- **Housing:** Contact your new installation housing office to find out what housing will be available to you. They can also provide information about an Overseas Housing Allowance if installation housing is not available.

Resources to ease your move overseas

Even if this isn't your first OCONUS move, remember there are resources available to assist you. Take advantage of these resources to help you with your move:

- Contact your installation Military and Family Support Center to talk to a relocation assistance service provider. They can offer comprehensive moving



Courtesy photos



support, including one-on-one consultation as well as information and referrals to workshops, classes and other resources to meet your needs. Ask about newcomer

programs — such as cultural offerings — to learn more about the language, customs and local community.

- Request a military sponsor. The mili-

tary sponsorship program is different from command sponsorship. A military sponsor helps you and your family settle into your new duty station, and can be especially helpful if you are moving to a new country. Your unit will assign you a sponsor, typically a service member of similar rank and family status, to help you learn the ropes at your new location. For more information, check out the Sponsorship and You: Sponsorship Awareness course, which is now available on MilLife Learning in Word format for those in slow internet areas.

- Check out MilitaryINSTALLATIONS, an online directory of information about U.S. military installations worldwide, where you'll find detailed information about your new installation, contact information for programs and services and more.

- Contact TRICARE to notify them of your move and discuss your options for health care at your new location.

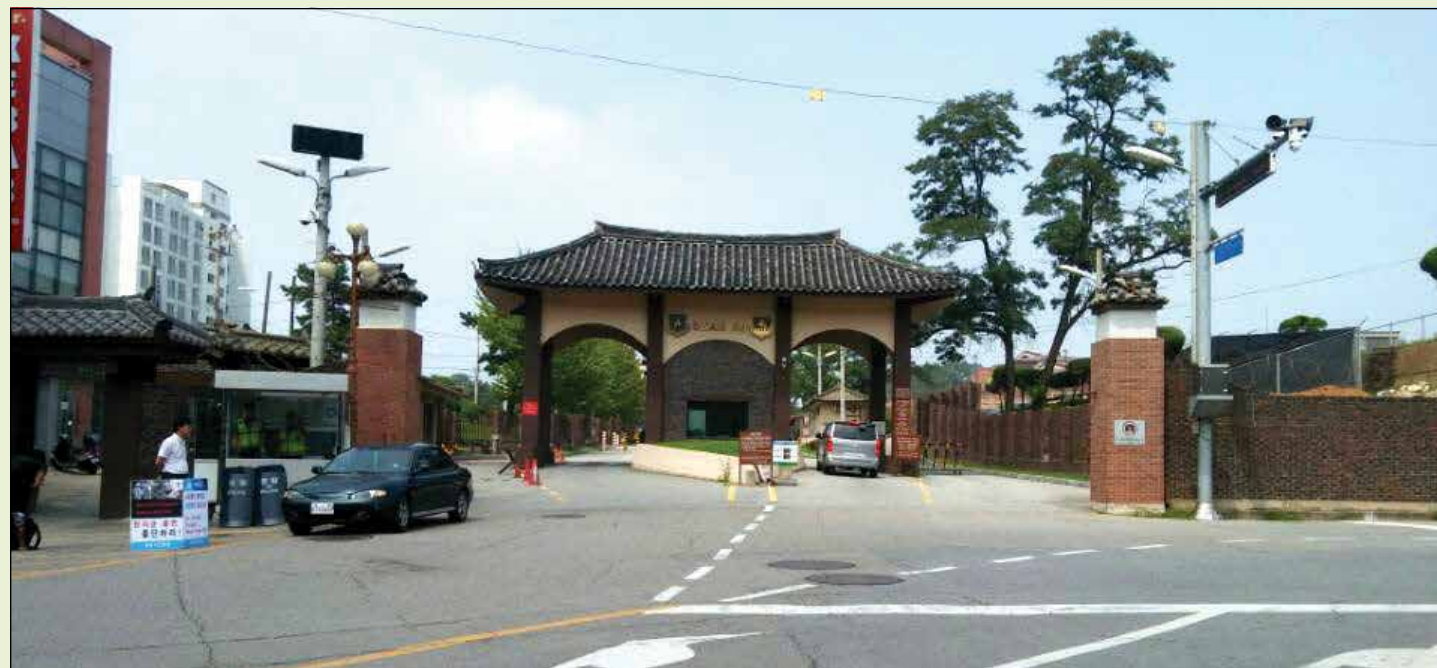
Tips to prepare for your new home, community

Living overseas gives military families a wonderful opportunity to experience the world as very few others can. Even the most seasoned travelers may experience surprises when moving to a new country. It may take some work, but with the right preparation you can have the adventure of a lifetime.

- **Prepare for a new culture:** A new language, new food and different customs can take some getting used to. The Mango Languages application available from the DOD MWR Libraries offers online courses in more than 70 different languages and tips for adjusting to a new culture.

- **Get to know your new community:** Explore ways to lean on your military community to settle into your new home. Visit your Military and Family Support center or ask your sponsor.

Editor's note: Information compiled from www.militaryonesource.mil.



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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR NORTHERN HUB DEVELOPMENT, TOLICHA PEAK WATER FACILITY AT THE NEVADA TEST AND TRAINING RANGE, NEVADA

The United States Department of the Air Force (DAF) and Nellis Air Force Base (AFB) announce the availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluating the proposed Tolicha Peak Water Facility within the Northern Hub of the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), which receives logistical and organizational support from Nellis AFB. The Proposed Action involves the construction and operation of a new well and water treatment facility at the Tolicha Peak Electronic Combat Range (TPECR) Operations & Maintenance (O&M) compound. The new facility is needed to provide adequate access to a consistent and safe supply of water at the TPECR O&M compound in compliance with state water draw limitations.

The EA, prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA), and the Air Force's Environmental Impact Analysis Process, evaluates potential impacts to the environment from the DAF's Proposed Action at the NTTR. Based on analysis in the Draft EA, no significant adverse impacts would be anticipated from the Proposed Action. Accordingly, the DAF has prepared a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to document its findings.

Copies of the Draft EA and Draft FONSI are available for review at the following area libraries:

- Beatty Library District, 400 North 4th Street, Beatty, NV 89048
- Centennial Hills Library, 6711 N. Buffalo Drive, Las Vegas NV 89131

Electronic copies of the draft documents are also available on the Nellis AFB website:

<https://www.nellis.af.mil/Public-Affairs/Community-Engagement/Partnerships/Environment/>.

Nellis AFB is coordinating consultation under Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* with the NEPA process, per 36 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) § 800.8(a). As such, the public may also comment on effects to historic properties through the Section 106 process, as described in 36 CFR § 800 et seq.

The public is encouraged to submit comments during the public comment period, which ends 25 June 2025. Comments received after this date will be considered and, to the extent practicable, addressed in the Final EA and FONSI. Comments or inquiries may be sent to Nellis AFB, ATTN: Ms. Sirin Toksoz Jewell, NEPA Manager, 6020 Beale Ave., Nellis AFB, NV, 89191-6520; by phone (702) 652-9366; or email (preferred) sirin.toksoz_jewell.1@us.af.mil

PRIVACY ADVISORY NOTICE

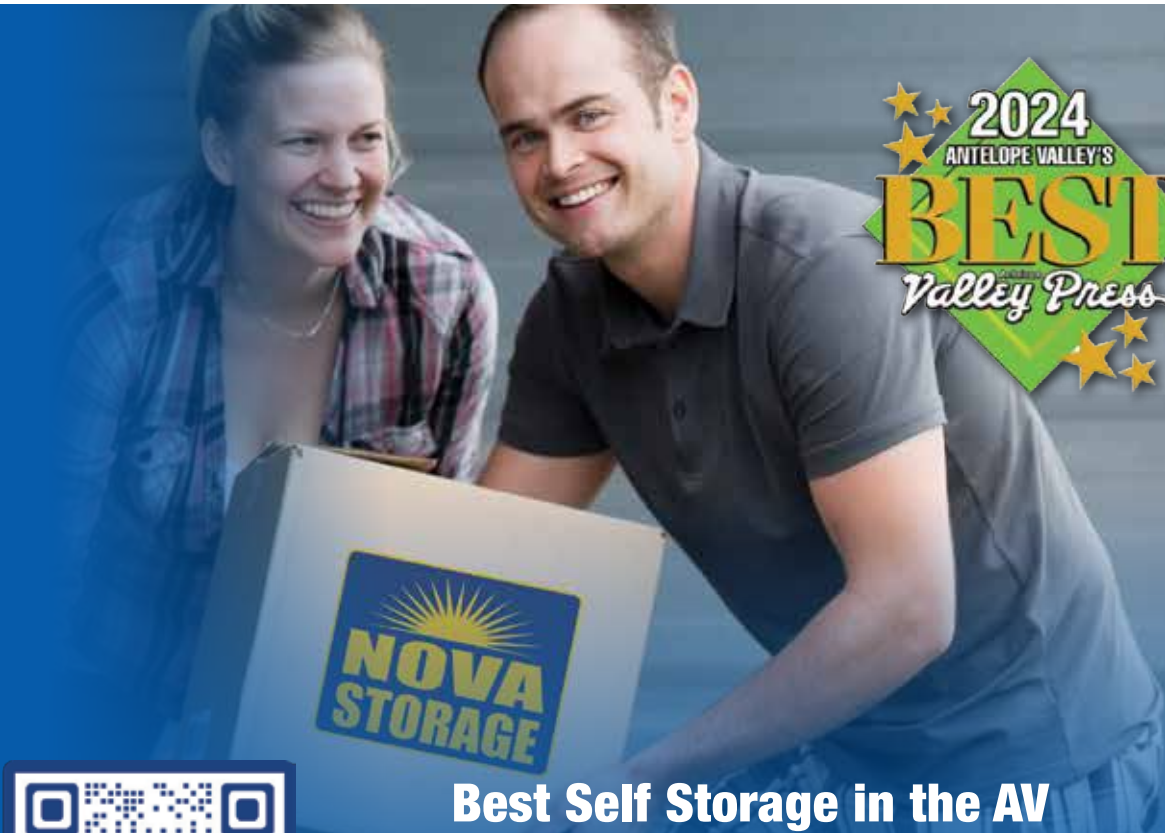
This Draft EA and proposed FONSI are provided for public comment in accordance with NEPA and 32 CFR Part 989, the Air Force's Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP). The EIAP provides an opportunity for public input on Air Force decision-making, allows the public to offer inputs on alternative ways for the Air Force to accomplish what it is proposing, and solicits comments on the Air Force's analysis of environmental effects.

Public comment allows the Air Force to make better, informed decisions. Letters or other written or oral comments provided may be published in the EA. As required by law, comments provided will be addressed in the EA and made available to the public. Providing personal information is voluntary. Any personal information provided will be used only to identify your desire to make a statement during the public comment portion of any public meetings or hearings or to fulfill requests for copies of the EA and associated documents. Private addresses will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting hard copies of the EA; however, only the names of the individual's making comments and specific comments will be disclosed. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the EA.

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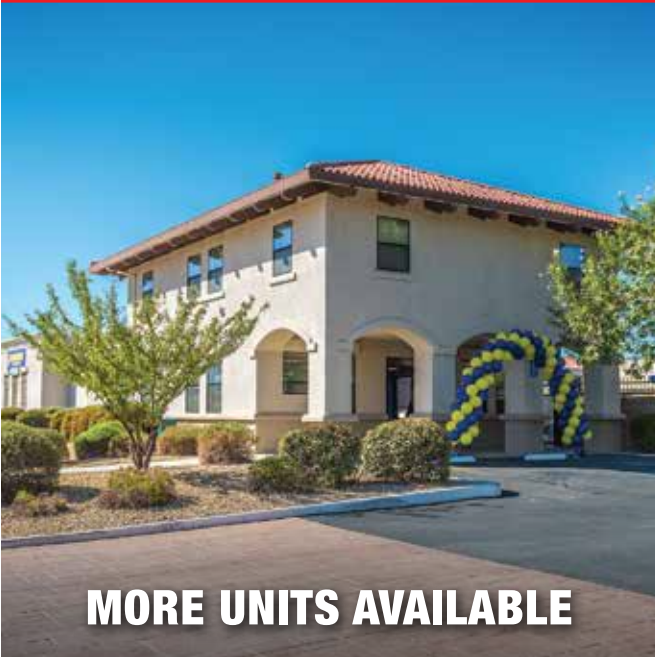
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