

Frequently Asked Questions

What are orders?

Orders are the official documentation that authorize and specify the dates and destinations for a PCS, TDY, or other travel for an individual or family.

What is the difference between an accompanied and unaccompanied tour?

An accompanied tour is when the active duty member can take their family with them to an assignment that is usually at least 36 months. An unaccompanied tour is usually 12 to 24 months long and the active duty member goes alone. This is also referred to as a remote tour.

What is Space A travel?

Space A stands for space available, and refers to “stand by” travel using official government flights. In most cases, the active duty family members cannot travel unless they are accompanied by the active duty member, and the travel is to or from an overseas area. Space A travel has a priority system that assigns a category to each person standing by. Active duty members on orders have the highest priority. If you take Space A travel, make sure you either have time to wait for available seats, or else have enough money to take a commercial flight in case you get bumped by someone with higher priority.

Can spouses of officers and enlisted be friends?

Yes. Remember that when spouses are civilians they don't wear their active duty spouses' rank.

Is it true that anything our family members do can negatively impact the active duty person's military career?

It depends. We all have problems and make mistakes. However, if there are recurring issues (such as check bouncing, family violence, juvenile truancy) that are not being remedied, then it will certainly reflect negatively on the active duty member because of the mission interference.

What do they have at the commissary?

The commissary has all the things a regular grocery store has. The baggers work only for tips. There is a 5% surcharge added to your bill to cover overhead (such as cashier's salaries, electricity, etc.) because all commissary items are sold at cost only.

What do they have at the Base Exchange (BX)?

The BX carries many items that a regular department store does. Catalog and special order items are available at the Customer Service desk. You can put items on Lay-away, and you can also apply for a STAR card (base exchange credit card).

What do they have at the Shoppette?

The Shoppette has many of the same items you would find in an off-base convenience store. The Class VI (liquor store) is located there, and you can also rent videos and DVDs at many Shoppettes.

What is the/a sponsor?

A “sponsor” can mean two things:

1. “The” sponsor of a military family refers to the active duty member. “The” sponsor’s (active duty member’s) social security number is needed to gain access to many military privileges, such as medical care, the BX, and commissary.
2. “A” sponsor is an active duty member assigned to help a military family when they are PCSing to a new duty station.

What is DEERS?

DEERS stands for the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. This is a database of everyone who is eligible for military benefits. It includes all the branches of the military (Army, Navy, and Marine Corps as well as Air Force), and is accessible by personnel specialists at any military base. For instance, if you need medical care while traveling, but the closest military base is a different service, your eligibility can be verified by looking up the active duty member’s social security number in DEERS. You must be enrolled in DEERS to get an ID card, so when you marry an active duty member, this is one of the first things that must be done. Remember to enroll your newborn child as soon as possible! Enrollment can be done at the Military Personnel Flight (MPF). Certain paperwork is required, such as marriage certificate, birth certificate, etc. Check with MPF before you go in!