



## FACT SHEET

### Benefits for Officers Stationed Overseas

September 20, 2018

#### Background

Officers stationed overseas are entitled to benefits that may differ from officers stationed in CONUS areas. Eligibility will vary according to location and time served. However, benefits generally pertain to pay, allowances, leave, and health care. Your time of service overseas may qualify for a PHS Service Award. Some federal agencies place limits on total consecutive years served overseas at any given time.

#### Eligibility

Benefit eligibility and timelines can vary by circumstance, as summarized below.

#### Highlights

##### PAY AND ALLOWANCES

“Things you may gain”

- ▶ Overseas Housing Allowance: for posts with non-government housing only. OHA calculator [here](#).
- ▶ Dislocation Allowance: one-time, nontaxable to cover relocation expenses. Rates available [here](#).
- ▶ Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA): monthly, nontaxable allowance to maintain CONUS standard of living. COLA calculator is available [here](#).
- ▶ Educational Allowances: for dependents (K-12) stationed with you. Covered costs include tuition, fees, textbooks, school supplies, and exceptional education costs. As of 2018, International COA is advocating to change the advance/reimbursement policy to direct program payment similar to other uniformed services. Additional information is available [here](#).
- ▶ Hardship Duty Pay: eligible overseas sites and pay rates are available in Chapter 17 [here](#).
- ▶ Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay: for eligible locations, visit Chapter 10 [here](#).
- ▶ Additional allowances (e.g., temporary lodging or per diem) may be available; visit [here](#).
- ▶ Officers stationed in duty stations overseas may be eligible for Family Separation Allowance (FSA) if not all eligible dependents are able to accompany the officer. See Chapter 27 [here](#).

“Things you may lose”

- ▶ If your overseas post has government-furnished housing: Basic Allowance for Housing

##### SERVICE AWARDS

- ▶ Foreign Duty Award (FDA) requires serving OCONUS for 30 consecutive or 90 non-consecutive days.
- ▶ Global Health Initiative Service Medal (GHISM) requires 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days on a Global Health Initiative (GHI) assignment. A “GHI assignment” is determined by the Surgeon General (historically includes PEPAR, President’s Malaria Initiative, and joint service missions with U.S. Navy). Officers are eligible for one GHISM per GHI assignment.
- ▶ Global Health Campaign Medal (GHCM) requires 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days on a GHI assignment. GHCM and GHISM are mutually exclusive; receiving GHCM precludes officer from receiving FDA. Officers are eligible for one GHCM per GHI assignment.
- ▶ Hazardous Duty Award requires serving in a position with frequent and significant risk to the officer’s safety for at least 180 consecutive days. Officers who received hazard duty or imminent danger pay qualify for the HDA. An officer qualifies only once for a particular type of duty.
- ▶ Isolated/Hardship Award (ISOHAR) requires serving at least 180 consecutive days in an isolated or remote assignment. Officers who receive Hardship Duty Pay for at least 180 consecutive days while serving OCONUS qualify for ISOHAR.

- ▶ Additional information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

#### LEAVE

- ▶ Funded Environmental and Morale Leave (FEML) — certain OCONUS locations may be eligible for commercial air transportation to specific locations (usually CONUS) for officer and dependents.
  - A 24-month assignment OCONUS typically qualifies for one round trip under FEML. Trips may not typically be taken within six months of beginning or ending the tour of duty.
  - FEML locations and destinations are available [here](#); DoD Instruction 1327.06 is [here](#).
- ▶ Consecutive Overseas Tour Leave — officers and their dependents stationed OCONUS who start a consecutive overseas tour either by renewing for another two years at their current OCONUS station or by being reassigned PCS to another OCONUS station may be eligible for paid travel to their home of record in connection with authorized leave. DoD Instruction 1327.06 is [here](#).
- ▶ Rest/Recuperation Leave — deployment in combat theater might be eligible for government-funded transportation. Officers can utilize a maximum of 15 days of non-chargeable annual leave over a 270-day assignment. Eligible officers must be specifically stationed in an area authorized to receive Imminent Danger and Hazardous Duty Pay. Additional information available [here](#).
- ▶ Special Leave Accrual — officers stationed in an area authorized to receive Imminent Danger and Hazardous Duty Pay for at least 120 days may accumulate up to 120 days of annual leave; DoD Instruction 1327.06 is [here](#).

#### HEALTH CARE

- ▶ Overseas relocation approval requires Department of State medical clearance.
- ▶ PHS officers and their beneficiaries are covered by the [TRICARE Overseas Program](#). You are responsible for contacting TRICARE to notify them of your relocation/new duty station.
- ▶ Your Primary Care Manager will likely be the health provider at the U.S. Embassy's Health Unit.
- ▶ If appropriate non-urgent medical or dental care is not available in an OCONUS area, upon the Regional Tricare office's approval, transportation to a location with appropriate care would be authorized by the sponsoring program. Medical evacuations are approved when medically necessary. The evacuation location is often selected based upon the complexity of medical service required, including maternity services. Additional information is [here](#).

#### FAMILY

- ▶ General information (*e.g.*, local employment for spouses/partners, schools, hiring local household employees) is available in the [Foreign Service Assignment Notebook](#).
- ▶ Locale-specific information may be available from the Embassy [*e.g.*, Community Liaison Officer (CLO)]. Officers who are departing their post can help you contact the CLO. The CLO has helpful information about schools, housing, job postings, and things for sale – including cars.
- ▶ Explore Facebook/social media — most embassies have private Facebook pages for diplomats.

### Resources

- ▶ Commissioned Corps' website on [Permanent Change of Station](#)
- ▶ PPAC Benefit Subcommittee's [Fact Sheet on Permanent Change of Duty Station](#)
- ▶ International Branch of Commissioned Officers Association
- ▶ [International Assignments Specialty Interest Group](#)

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**Note:** Feedback and suggestions for this fact sheet are welcome and may be sent to [PPACBenefitsSC@gmail.com](mailto:PPACBenefitsSC@gmail.com).

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