



FACT SHEET

Space-A (Space Available)

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Background

Also known as “Military Hops,” Space-A travel is a benefit available to Uniformed Services members (active duty and retired) and their dependents. It allows authorized persons to occupy unused seats on Department of Defense (DoD) aircrafts after duty-related (space-required) passengers and cargo have been accommodated. Space-A flights are mostly provided by the US Air Force Air Mobility Command (AMC), but may also be offered at naval air bases and other places where DoD-owned or -controlled aircrafts are used. Space-A travel is a privilege, not an entitlement, and may not be used for personal financial gain or in connection with business enterprises or employment.

Eligibility

- ▶ Eligibility is organized under 6 categories of priority, depending on who is traveling and the reason for travel:
 - Category I (highest priority): Emergency leave (e.g., serious illness or impending death in family)
 - Category II: Environmental morale leave (EML), including accompanied dependents
 - Category III: Ordinary leave, Permissive TDY (house hunting)
 - Category IV: Unaccompanied dependents on EML, DoD Dependent school teachers, or family members on EML during summer break
 - Category V: Other unaccompanied dependents in selected situations (other than EML), Permissive TDY (other than for house hunting)
 - Category VI: Retired Uniformed Service Members and their accompanied dependents, Military Reserve, ROTC
- ▶ Listing of Space-A eligible/authorized persons can be found in Section 4, Table 3 “[DoDI Regulation 4515.13](#)”

Highlights

- ▶ To find Space-A flights, identify nearby departure locations or “gateways” (usually airports or military airbases) with flights to desired destinations. A listing of AMC bases, along with their passenger terminal contact information, is available on the [AMC website](#)
- ▶ How to sign-up for Space-A travel:
 - Best method: [send an email to the “gateway” location](#). Must be on approved leave at time of sign-up; send it as early as midnight on the morning of the official start of your leave period, not before. Your priority is determined by comparing date/time of sign-up with others in your Space-A category (print your email before travel; time/date stamp will be honored if AMC priority list has a mistake)
 - Register concurrently (options: email, online, in-person, fax, mail) at more than one location to maximize chances. However, be prepared to facilitate your travel between AMC locations
 - Several AMC bases have Facebook pages that post the anticipated number of available seats and the time for “roll call” (to receive your seat assignment [i.e., boarding pass]).
 - Monitor Facebook pages to view flight schedules as they may change unexpectedly
- ▶ Check-in for a Space-A flight 24 hours in advance:
 - Must have all required documents (e.g., CAC card, leave slip, visa, passport, immunization record)
 - Mark yourself “present” by speaking to the Passenger Service Agent (PSA or “Pax” Agent) at passenger terminal within 24 hours of expected travel time. This is not “Roll Call.”
 - Once checked-in, you must participate in Roll Call. Some terminals have Virtual Roll Call (email notification for Space-A seat assignments) but if you don’t have access to email, you must attend Roll Call in person and be travel ready (i.e., have your luggage ready to be placed on the aircraft)
 - Ask Pax Agent if boxed lunch during flight can be purchased in advance
- ▶ Making the most of “down” time on an AMC base:

- AMC Passenger Terminals are family-friendly (refrigerator, microwave, play area, televisions, etc.)
- Sleeping in a passenger terminal overnight while you wait may not be permissible in a given terminal, so have a list of local hotels ready
- Many AMC bases are quite large. Some bases have commercial rental car companies (such as Hertz); otherwise you may need to rent a car before coming onto base in order to get from the AMC Terminal to Base Exchange for anything you might need (diapers, food, extra suitcase, etc.). Alternatively, AMC base may have long-term parking available if you wish to park your own vehicle.
- ▶ Aircraft logistics:
 - Type of aircraft varies: commercial jet with traditional seating with in-flight meals and beverages (eg: BWI Airport to Ramstein) vs. cargo plane with limited seats and minimal accommodations.
 - Consider sleeping bags, extra jacket or blanket. Your comfort will depend on what you bring. If on cargo plane, you may have space to lie flat. Prepare for hot or cold temperatures during travel
 - Noise-cancelling headphones or good earplugs because military aircraft can be noisy
 - Flashlight or head lamp; interior of cargo plane may not be well-lit
- ▶ What to do when you get “there”:
 - Do your homework in advance. Some forward military bases are in remote locations – if final destination requires a connecting commercial flight, you may need to secure local transport (i.e., rental car, taxi, shuttle) to get to nearest commercial airport. Some locations (e.g., Ramstein Air Force Base) have established shuttle services (e.g., Ramstein to Frankfurt International Airport) just for this purpose
- ▶ Sign-up for your return Space-A flight if you plan to travel home via Space-A
- ▶ Some things to keep in mind:
 - The primary purpose of military flights is to support military missions. Therefore, unexpected changes can occur at any time, even en route to the original destination. Plan accordingly:
 - Add extra days into the leave request (for both departure and return flights)
 - Have adequate funds to arrange for alternate commercial flights or temporary lodging while waiting for the next available flight. Even after a Space A-seat is assigned, you may be “bumped” if additional space is needed for space-required travelers or cargo
 - Fees
 - Flights on military aircrafts are generally free. However, some flights are DoD-chartered flights with commercial airlines, and a small fee (federal inspection fee) may be charged
 - Head tax is another fee that applies to Space-A passengers who arrive/depart Customs Territories of the United States to/from overseas locations on a commercial mission arriving CONUS from overseas.
 - Baggage
 - [Transportation Security Agency](#) regulations are applicable on Space-A flights. Baggage weight may be further limited due to type of aircraft or other restrictions.
 - Liquid items greater than three ounces in volume (e.g., medications, baby formula and food) may be declared for inspection at the checkpoint
 - Pets are not allowed (except service animals or for permanent change of duty station travel)

Resources

- ▶ [AMC Space-A handbook](#)
- ▶ Private website maintained by a former uniformed service member (has listing of possible departure locations in other airbases, in addition to AMC bases): <http://www.spacea.net/>

Note: Feedback and suggestions for this fact sheet are welcome and may be sent to PPACBenefitsSC@gmail.com.

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