

FAQ – TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

(As of April 20, 2020.)

Q1. What is being done to ensure our service members are safe in their travels and keep them healthy?

A1. The actions outlined in Secretary Esper’s April 20 memo are done to protect our personnel and their families. The Department will take several measures to enhance traveler safety, such as establishing pre- and post-travel screening and reception procedures and transitioning to military and DoD contracted aircraft. Additionally, DoD has instituted domestic and international official travel restrictions through June 30, 2020 (e.g., Permanent Change of Station and Temporary Duty) to safeguard our people. We encourage all DoD personnel and families to visit <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/> for tips on staying healthy.

Q2. Why did DoD institute travel restrictions on its people?

A2. In order to help limit COVID-19’s spread and its impact on the force, the Secretary of Defense has issued updated travel restrictions for both international and domestic travel.

Q3. Who do the travel restrictions apply to?

A3. All DoD service members and civilians, and their family members will stop all official travel – such as Permanent Change of Station or Temporary Duty – through June 30, 2020. Exceptions may be given for compelling cases where the travel is: (1) determined to be mission essential; (2) necessary for humanitarian reasons; or (3) warranted due to extreme hardship.

Q4. When do the travel restrictions go into effect?

A4. This is an amendment and extension of existing restrictions put in place in March 2020.

Q5. If somebody is already TDY or a family has departed for their CONUS PCS, what should they do?

A5. Those who have already begun their travel may continue on to their final destination. Individuals whose TDY ends within stop movement period may return home. They should still be mindful of the health protection measures like social distancing and handwashing during their travels.

Q6. Does the travel restrictions affect those who must travel for medical treatment?

A6. No. Travel for medical treatment is still allowed.

Q7. Can military members still take leave?

A7. Service members may only take leave in the local area. This is being done to limit the spread of and potential exposure to COVID-19. Exceptions may be given for compelling

cases where the travel is necessary for humanitarian reasons or warranted due to extreme hardship.

Q8. When the restrictions lift, will everyone begin moving?

A8. DoD is working with the Services to determine prioritization to balance the needs to individual service members, families and maintain operational readiness. Additionally, Secretary Esper has specifically directed that PCS moves for uniformed personnel with school-age dependents should be prioritized to minimize school year disruption and education costs, or considered for in-place assignment extensions.

Q9. Will DoD designate specific locations that service members returning CONUS must travel to in order to be placed under the 14-day restriction of movement?

A9. There is no designated location for returning personnel. Each service member will stay at home or other appropriate domicile coordinated with the parent command for 14 days, practice social distancing, and conduct self-monitoring. All required pre-travel screening will be adhered to in accordance with the Force Health Protection guidance supplement #4: <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Mar/11/2002263241/-1/-1/1/FORCE-HEALTH-PROTECTION-GUIDANCE-SUPPLEMENT-4.PDF>

Q10. What about individuals who have had their household goods picked up but haven't departed their location?

A10. Each situation is different. Individuals will need to contact their shipping office to determine if their household goods are still in the local area and whether or not they may have access to them. If their household goods are in transit to the new location they should contact their servicing personnel office to verify if their orders still authorize continuing on the previous move or if they need to be amended.

Q11. What about my POV? I have an upcoming appointment to drop my car off at the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC). What should I do?

A11: If you are unsure if the stop movement order applies to you, contact your chain of command. If the stop movement order does not apply to your PCS—or your chain of command has approved an exception to the order—proceed to the VPC as planned.

Q12: I've already dropped my POV off, but my PCS has been delayed. Can I get my car back?

A12: If you're interested in retrieving your vehicle, contact the VPC immediately. VPCs are postured to assist customers with changing appointments, vehicle retrieval, and answering any other POV-related questions you have.

Q13. Is DoD planning to assist service members who have already terminated their leases in anticipation of a move within 30 days?

A13. DoD will use all means available to assist service members who were impacted by COVID-19. Please contact your chain of command for assistance.

Q14. Will the military cover their temporary housing until they can travel? Can they put the charges on their government travel card?

A14. DoD will use all means available to assist service members who were impacted by COVID-19. Approved reimbursable travel expenses are authorized to be placed on the government travel card. Please contact your chain of command for assistance.

Q15. What kind of help is out there for a service member and family delayed in his/her PCS?

Q15. For service members: If a service member is ordered to temporarily return to the old PDS or to an alternate location, then the service member could be issued TDY orders and may be authorized standard travel and transportation allowances in accordance with Joint Travel Regulation (JTR), Chapter 2. If the service member is ordered to remain in place or to an alternate location to await transportation, then per diem may be authorized in accordance with JTR Chapter 5, Part A. If lodging in kind or meals in kind are provided, then per diem is not payable.

For dependents: If the service member's dependents remain in place awaiting transportation, then per diem may be authorized in accordance with JTR Chapter 5, Part A. If dependents do not remain in place awaiting transportation, then per diem is not authorized. If the dependents are authorized to temporarily return to the old PDS or to an alternate location to await transportation, then the dependents may be authorized standard PCS allowances from the location where notified of the delay to the location named in the amended PCS order, in accordance with JTR, Chapter 5, Part A. If lodging in kind or meals in kind are provided, then per diem is not payable.

Q16. Is there a freeze on civilian hiring in the affected locations?

A16. Yes, there is a freeze on hiring actions that involve PCS overseas. DoD Components may continue local hiring. In the United States, only candidates within the local commuting area may onboard because of DoD's restriction on official domestic travel that lasts through 30 June. As stated in the travel restriction guidance, exceptions may be granted for compelling cases where the travel is: (1) determined to be mission essential; (2) necessary for humanitarian reasons; or (3) warranted due to extreme hardship.

Q17. Does this travel memo affect contractors traveling to and from those locations?

A17. We advise contractors to check with their companies.

Q18. What does government-funded leave actually mean?

A18. Government-funded leave is leave by a military member or DoD civilian employee whose leave involves Government-funded travel. One example is renewal agreement travel by civilian employees.

Q19. Can service members currently on leave in CONUS return overseas to a country they are stationed in?

A19. Service members should contact their chain of command.

Q20. Can service members ETS and retire within the directive window?

Q20. Individuals who separate or retire are exempt from the travel restrictions.

Q21. Will Reserve service members who are deployed be permitted to redeploy CONUS upon completion of orders?

A21. Yes, unless extended to meet mission requirements.

Q22. How does this affect your relationship with host nations?

A22. We are working with partner nations in impacted regions to ensure the health and safety of our members as operations continue.

Q23. Who is the waiver authority for travel exceptions?

A23. Approval authority for these exceptions belongs to the combatant commander for those assigned to combatant commands. The Chairman may approve exceptions for the Joint Staff. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned and the Chief Management Officer, in the case of Defense Field Activities and Field Agencies, retain the authority for all other individuals. They may delegate the authority to no lower than the first general officer, flag officer, or member of the Senior Executive Service in the traveler's chain of command or supervision.

Q24. How does this affect service members who are about to deploy, are deployed, or are about to redeploy home?

A24. In partnership with host nations, the Services and Combatant Commands will make decisions based on the circumstances of each deployment and the status of COVID-19's spread. The intent is for the Department to continue to move forces as required to meet operational needs and our alliance commitments.

Q25. What should service members do if they are already on leave outside of the local area?

A25. They should contact their supervisor to get instructions on how to proceed.

Q26. Do have to cancel their leave early?

Q26. DoD employees should contact their supervisor.

Q27. Does the leave restriction apply to family members?

A27. The leave restriction applies only to service members. However, we encourage family members to follow the local authorities and CDC guidance, which may advise limitations on travel.

Q28. If service members are TDY in the United States can they come back home?

A28. Service members should contact their supervisors to get instructions specific to their circumstances.

Q29. Will this affect people waiting to go to Basic Military Training / Officer Training School?

A29. The services will continue to recruit and assess new members of our military. The Services are putting procedures in place to safely continue recruiting and training.