

Procedural Guide for Marriage, Benefits and Entitlements

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I. Instructions for Procedures to Marry

With the cancellation of MCBJ/III MEFO1752.1C, you are no longer required to submit a marriage packet (Authorization to Marry) to your command if:

1. You are a Marine assigned to MCBJ/III MEF and are planning to marry a Japanese foreign national (or other foreign national) in Japan.

Until the new Premarital Order has been signed, you are required to adhere to the following:

- 1) Notify your respective command of your intent to marry; and**
- 2) Attend the monthly Premarital Seminar**

COMNAVFORJAPINST 1752.1T and COMNAVMARIANAS 1700.1 still apply for the following:

- 1. Navy Personnel (must review and comply with COMNAVFORJAPANINST 1752.1T); Or**
- 2. Plans to marry in the area of the Pacific outside of Japan (such as Philippines, Hong Kong, Macau, China, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Australia, New Zealand, and India), service members must review and comply with COMNAVMARIANAS 1700.1.**

Once command signs off on marriage paperwork, the next step is to contract marriage.

II. Marriage Paperwork for Japan

If you plan to marry in Japan, you must register your marriage with a local city hall office. Even if you plan to have a religious ceremony on a military installation, the only way to legalize your marriage is to register it with the government of Japan.

A. Affidavit of Competency to Marry

Japanese law requires all foreigners who marry in Japan to first prepare a sworn Affidavit of Competency to Marry, affirming they are legally free to marry from their own country's embassy or consulate in Japan. If you are a U.S. Citizen Service Member, you may obtain your affidavit free of charge from the nearest legal office. Bring in your approved marriage packet and the legal assistance staff will help you prepare your document. If you are marrying a civilian U.S. citizen or other foreign national who does not have access to base legal facilities, they will need to get their affidavit from their consulate or embassy. Other countries, such as the Philippines, may require additional documentation before issuing the affidavit. Please contact the relevant embassy or consulate to learn more. If you are marrying a Japanese national, they will not need an Affidavit of Competency to marry since they already have a Koseki Tohon or family register on file at their city hall office.

B. Registering Your Marriage

Since you are marrying in a Japanese-speaking country you will need to translate your English documents in Japanese. This includes your Affidavit of Competency to Marry and your birth certificates. If you are using a passport instead of a birth certificate, you do not need to translate it. A Notification of Marriage form (Konin Todoke) has to be completed prior to the marriage being registered. This form is in Japanese and must be completed in Japanese. A translation office or Japanese friend may be able to assist you in completing this form. Two witnesses, 20 years of age or older are required. If they are not Japanese citizen, they must provide proof of citizenship in the form of a birth certificate (with translation) or passport.

Take your translated Affidavit(s) of Competency to Marry to the city office closest to where you reside or work. If you are marrying a Japanese national, you must go to the city hall office where he or she is registered. The city hall officials will register the marriage and issue a Japanese marriage certification. The fee is approximately 350 yen for small marriage certificate and 1,400 yen for the large marriage certificate. This is your official marriage certificate. Have your marriage certificate translated into English and take it to your personnel office. The information will be entered into your service record.

III. Marriage Paperwork Outside of Japan

If you plan to marry in the United States, you will need to abide by the laws governing the state in which you wish to register your marriage. Please conduct your own research online to determine what your state requires for marriage (this may vary depending on the State). If you plan to marry in a foreign country, you will also need to find out what documentation or forms you need. These requirements may vary greatly from country to country, so it is important for you to do thorough research prior to taking leave to get marriage. The U.S. Embassy and U. S. Consulate websites for the country in which you plan to marry are often your best resource.

IV. Changes in Benefits

Depending on where your spouse resides following your marriage, you may be eligible to receive a variety of benefits. These may include housing allowances, family separation pay, COLA, etc. Your new family members will also be entitled to military I.D. cards to provide them access to most military bases, TRICARE Insurance, and other entitlements. For information on changes in benefits following marriage, please contact IPAC at 645- 4038/5742.

A. IPAC Audit

In order to be eligible for the benefits and entitlements related to marriage, your first step is to visit your IPAC and conduct an audit. During your audit, your new spouse and other dependants will be listed in your Record of Emergency Data (RED) and your benefits and entitlements will change accordingly. You can reach the IPAC Audit Section at 645-6008. Bring your marriage certificate and other relevant documents with you.

B. Military ID Cards

Your spouse and dependent children are entitled to military ID cards following your marriage. If your new spouse accompanies you to IPAC, following your audit, you may get his or her ID card from the ID Card Section. If your spouse remained behind in the states or their home country, after you finish your audit, your IPAC ID Section will issue you a DD Form 1172 for you to send to your spouse. Your new spouse can take this form to the closest base or detachment (of any branch of service) along with two forms of ID and get their military ID card. Please call the IPAC ID section at 645-4038/5742 for more information. **If you DID NOT change your last name at the time of your marriage, you CAN NOT change your last name (use your spouse's last name) at IPAC for military ID cards purpose.**

C. TRICARE/DEERS

Following your audit, your new spouse will automatically be enrolled in DEERS and be eligible for TRICARE Standard. Depending on where your spouse lives following your marriage, he or she may be eligible for the TRICARE Prime managed care option. For more information, please contact TRICARE at 643-7539.

D. Changes in Allowances

If you marry and you choose not to do a tour conversion, you may be eligible for Basic Allowance for housing (BAH) or Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) for your spouse. If your spouse lives in the United States, they will automatically be eligible for BAH depending on their zip code. If your spouse lives overseas, they will need to have their house inspected and provide a copy of the lease or rental agreement in order to be eligible for OHA (See current regulations regarding OHA). If you choose to remain in Okinawa, separated from your spouse on an unaccompanied tour, you will also be eligible for the Family Separation Allowance.

V. Living With Your New Spouse in Okinawa

A. Tour Conversions

If you want to live with your new spouse in Okinawa and receive housing entitlements at the dependant rate, you will need to modify your orders from “unaccompanied” to “accompanied.” Please contact your unit Career Retention Specialist for more details. Once you change your orders you will begin a three year accompanied tour on island, starting from the date your new orders are cut. These orders will list your spouse and any other dependants (like children) and give them Command Sponsorship.

B. Command Sponsorship

Your family members will be command sponsored once they are listed on you accompanied orders. This designation allows your dependants to stay in Japan longer than the 90 days tourist visa by permitting them to obtain a SOFA reentry permit in their passport. It also helps them to receive priority treatment in base hospitals and dental clinics, apply for on-base jobs, obtain a SOFA driver’s license and operate a “Y” plate car.

C. Area Clearance

In order to be eligible for Command Sponsorship, family members must pass a medical screening. This screening known as Area Clearance and is a medical questionnaire that must be completed by a military doctor. For information on Area Clearance, please contact IPAC Area Clearance Section at 645-8512. If you do not wish for your spouse to live here with you in Okinawa, they can visit up to 90 days on a tourist visa.

D. Housing

With an accompanied tour you will be eligible for on-base housing. Your spouse will have up to 60 days following a tour conversion to move to Okinawa. They can collect BAH or OHA (if approved) for no more than 60 days until they arrive on island. You will need to visit the DoD Family Housing Office on Kadena Air Base to apply for on-base housing. Their phone number is 634-0582.

E. Permanent Change of Station

Your Permanent Change of Station (PCS) travel compensation as well as compensation for your dependents(s) will depend on where your dependent(s) are located as well as your current type of tour. For more information you can refer to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) or call IPAC PCS Outbound Section at 645-5742.

VI. Marriage to Foreign Nationals

If you are planning to marry a foreign national, it is very important that you understand how the immigration visa system works. Just because you marry a foreign national does not mean that he or she automatically has the ability to live in the United States. He or she must first obtain an immigration visa; otherwise, they will not be able to PCS with you back to the states. This visa will allow them to get a green card upon entry into the United States and in a few years they will be eligible for citizenship. You must be married before you can initiate the visa application process with your spouse. The immigration visa process has two main steps. You must first submit the I-130 Petition for an immigration visa. Once this petition is accepted, you then need to schedule an interview for your spouse, preferably between 6-8 months of your PCS back to the states. After this interview, your spouses will have up to a year to enter the United States. If you have further questions regarding immigration, you may look on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration-USCIS website (<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>). USCIS has established a toll-free military help line, 1-877-CIS-4MIL (1-877-247-4645), exclusively for members of the military and their families. USCIS customer service specialists are available to answer calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (CST), excluding federal holidays.