

## **"MUST KNOW" FOR MARINES COMING TO JAPAN**

### **1. PCS ORDERS**

Review the permanent change of station orders to ensure awareness and understanding of all applicable entitlements to include current household goods weight restrictions and allowances, military pay and allowances, local housing policies, Government of Japan pet importation regulations, and additional information as may be necessary on a case-by-case basis, immediately upon receipt.

### **2. ELECTRONIC WELCOME ABOARD PACKAGE**

Access electronic Welcome Aboard package to obtain more information at:

<http://www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard/>

### **3. OVERSEAS SUITABILITY SCREENING (OSS) FOR FAMILY MEMBERS**

Upon receipt of PCS orders to Okinawa, service members with ACCOMPANIED orders must start the Overseas Suitability Screening (OSS) process for **ALL** family members.

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhoki/Patients/OSS/Pages/default.aspx>

Once the family member completes the OSS process and is found SUITABLE to come to Okinawa, the paperwork must be submitted for area clearance approval.

### **4. AREA CLEARANCE/DEPENDENT ENTRY APPROVAL**

Family members must have **an approved** area clearance/dependent entry approval before departing to Okinawa. Service member should not detach from the losing command until his/ her family has received an approved area clearance message from MCB Butler.

- Upon initial receipt of Permanent Change of Station Orders (PCSO) that directs a Marine and his/her family members to any Monitor Command Code (MCC) on Okinawa; the current Command will submit the request for Area Clearance approval. Requests must be submitted via the Defense Messaging System (DMS) using the following Plain Language Address (PLA) to: CG MCB CAMP BUTLER JA//G-1A) per MCO P1000.6 (Series).
- Naval personnel assigned with the Marine Corps on Okinawa will submit for Dependent Entry Approval via DMS to: PERSUPP DET OKINAWA KADENA JA//N-1// per the current editions of NMPCINST 4650.3 (Series) and MCO P1000.6 (Series). Additional information concerning Dependent Entry for Naval personnel maybe directed by calling DSN: 634-9337.

## Area Clearance Points of Contact

- Marines: Mrs. Kerry-Ann Francis, IPAC Inbound Section, 645-8512  
Email: [kerryann.francis@usmc.mil](mailto:kerryann.francis@usmc.mil)  
Also handles green side Sailors
- Navy: PS1 Charlene Blackstock, PCS Inbound, 634-6310/6316  
Email: [Charlene.Blackstock@fe.navy.mil](mailto:Charlene.Blackstock@fe.navy.mil)

**Once the inbound service member receives the approved area clearance, he/she must verify if all family members are listed on the area clearance. In addition, they must check if all information is correct (SSN, DOB, etc.). If the information is incorrect, the service member must request it to be corrected departing to Okinawa.**

## 5. DOCUMENTS

Inbound service members should verify that all their documents are up to date and all IDs are valid at the time of departure. Name and initials should match on all identification. All dependents, regardless of age, must have a passport. Dependents 10 years of age or older must also possess a valid military ID. Failure to provide these documents will prevent an individual to board a flight.

## 6. PETS

The process to bring a pet to Japan can be very extensive (6-9 months). We recommend that service members start this process as early as possible by visiting a Veterinary Facility (preferable on-base vet clinic, if available). All steps of the process must be completed in order to avoid delay. The pet process includes the following: 1) Microchip, 2) Vaccines, 3) Fluorescent Antibody Virus Neutralization (FAVN) rabies blood test, 4) Quarantine, 5) Health Certificate, 6) Advanced Notification. There are a couple of websites that you can visit to obtain information about bringing your pets to Okinawa.

- MCCS Okinawa Electronic Welcome Aboard Package located at <http://www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard/>, click on "Housing & Pets" and then click on "Pet Information" link which will access a booklet called "Importing Pets into Japan". This booklet covers the pet importation process step-by-step.
- Japan District Veterinarian Command website located at: <http://www.usarj.army.mil/organization/vet/import.aspx>.
- Japan Animal Quarantine Service website located at: <http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/contactus.html>

AMC flights will take pets and cages weighing a total of 150 lbs. However, space for pets is limited on AMC. If traveling commercially, pets with their cage weighing over a combined of 100 lbs will probably have to go cargo, which is much more expensive. If this situation

applies to an inbound family, we recommend they research the cost flying their pet via cargo. As mentioned above, this option is a much costlier option. They might be able to get a spot on AMC to come to Okinawa, but there is no guarantee that they will have a spot on AMC when they depart Okinawa, especially during the summer months. Most airlines (other than AMC) have severe restrictions regarding flying any pets during the summer months. Please check with the airlines to find out what restrictions/regulations they have regarding flying pets.

Airlines may also have restrictions regarding flying short-nosed dogs (Shih-Tzus, Lhaso Apso, Bulldogs, etc). Check with the airlines for regulations/restrictions/policies regarding short-nosed dogs before starting the process to bring a dog(s) to Okinawa. Most commercial airlines will not fly these dogs due to the high fatality rate. At this time, English Bulldogs, Old English Bulldogs, or mixes of these breeds, may only fly to and from Okinawa on the AMC flight.

## **7. BANNED DOG BREEDS**

According to AFI 32-6001\_AFGM2 and MCBJO 10570.1, certain dog breeds are prohibited in all Military Family Housing (MFH) on Okinawa. In addition, the Memorandum for all MFH in Okinawa (<http://www.housing.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120525-022.pdf>) combines the restricted breeds and identifies them as follows:

- Pit Bull (full or mixed breed)
- Rottweiler (full or mixed breed)
- Canid-wolf hybrid (full or mixed breed)
- Doberman Pincher (full or mixed breed)
- Chow (full or mixed breed)

Please note, having one of these breeds is NOT justification to be granted permission to reside in off-base housing.

## **8. MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING (MFH) FOR ACCOMPANIED PERSONNEL**

The Air Force is the DoD Executive Agent for all MFH on Okinawa. According to the 18 WG Policy Letter No. 38, all DoD personnel are mandated to live on-base, unless housing reaches the occupancy rate of 95% or more based on service member pay grade/family status.

Eligible personnel (36 months accompanied tour) can submit an Advance Housing Application (Form DD 1746) to the Housing Management Office. Newcomers must also report to the housing office within 2 days after arriving on island to receive the housing briefing and more information on their housing assignment. When visiting the Joint Housing Office, ensure copies of orders and Area Clearance/Dependent Entry Approval are brought to this appointment.

Members can submit the application (Form DD 1746) via email prior to their arrival along with a copy of their web orders to establish themselves in the housing waiting list database. A copy of their approved Area Clearance message will be required upon check-in. The Advance Housing

Application (Form DD 1746) along with DoD Housing email addresses and phone numbers can be found at: <http://www.housing.af.mil/okinawa/index.asp>

## **9. BACHELOR QUARTERS MANDATORY POLICY**

The MCIPAC Letter 4-13, signed 11 February 2013, states that bachelor and unaccompanied enlisted military service members in pay grades E-1 through E-7, Warrant Officers in pay grades WO-1 through CWO-3, and Officers in pay grades O-1 through O-3 shall be assigned to live in on-base bachelor housing/quarters.

In addition, this policy also states that Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) will NOT be paid to an unaccompanied military service member already drawing Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) for family members back in CONUS. This policy applies to ALL ranks, including senior enlisted and officers on unaccompanied tours to Okinawa, who are not subject to the mandatory Bachelor Quarter assignment policy discussed above.

## **10. WEIGHT RESTRICTION**

- **Accompanied Marines** are entitled to 2,500 pounds (net) or 25 % (net) of the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) weight allowance, whichever is greater, which also includes your Unaccompanied Baggage (UB) shipment.
- **Unaccompanied Service Members** are entitled to 10% of their JFTR allowance.
- Neither the Distribution Management Office (DMO) nor the carriers are responsible for staying within this allowance. If a service member exceeds his/her allowance, the service member must pay all charges connected with the excess weight.
- For any exceptions regarding this policy, contact or visit the nearest DMO Office.

## **11. FURNISHINGS**

- **Accompanied Marines-** furniture and appliances will be provided for accompanied service members for the duration of their tour. Information about the items provided by the furnishings management office can be found at: <http://www.housing.af.mil/okinawa/furnishingsmanagement/index.asp>
- **Unaccompanied Marines Service Members-** bachelor and unaccompanied enlisted military service members should not ship their household goods to Okinawa. There is no space at the bachelor quarters to accommodate furniture. If member is provided a Certificate of Non-Availability from the billeting office (BEQ/BOQ) and given the permission to reside off-base, the member can look for off-base housing that is already furnished. More information please call the Housing Management Office at DSN (315) 634-0582/0583.

## **12. TEMPORARY LODGING ALLOWANCE (TLA)**

Sponsors are responsible for making lodging reservations at government approved Temporary Lodging Facilities (TLF) for the inbound family to reside at awaiting assignment to military housing. TLA is authorized to assist the service member in partially offsetting expenses incurred during the occupancy of temporary lodging. There is no entitlement to TLA while in a travel status or once permanent quarters are occupied.

**TLA is contingent upon**

- Marines **MUST** use a government TLF (i.e., WestPac, Courtney or Hansen Lodge) unless a Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA) is obtained stating that the facility closest to their place of work is not available for occupancy.
- If the member chooses to stay at an off base TLF and does not provide a CNA from the on base TLF, then the member's lodging reimbursement under TLA will be limited to the government TLF rate, not the rate of the off base TLF. For a family consisting of one active duty member and three dependents, the cost is currently \$125.00 per day for an on base facility and can be as much as \$300.00 per day in an off- base TLF.
- Upon arrival, Navy personnel should check with their personnel support detachment for current guidelines.

**PETS (Dogs & Cats) ARE NOT ALLOWED** in any of the Marine Corps camps military lodging facilities, so personnel will be required to obtain lodging on the local economy. **A Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA) will not be provided due to pets.**

**Single or unaccompanied service members are not entitled to TLA, unless the Billeting Office has issued a CNA.**

**If a service member arrives ahead of (or without dependents) he/she MUST reside in the BEQ/BOQ (Billeting). They are NOT ENTITLED to TLA under these circumstances. If billeting is not available, a Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA) must be obtained from billeting office prior to occupying any temporary lodging facilities. Without the CNA, TLA will not be reimbursed.**

Personnel accompanied by dependents must be prepared to pay \$1250 to \$3525 for temporary lodging and subsistence for the initial 10-day period. Personnel are eligible for TLA to offset costs until private or government quarters are obtained. TLA is paid based on the number of days temporary lodging is required and will be reimbursed in 10 day increments. Personnel assigned to Okinawa will not normally be authorized more than 30 days of TLA.

Advance payment of TLA is authorized and encouraged for personnel who may require temporary lodging. Advances may be requested prior to and immediately after arrival on Okinawa. The TLA payment process normally takes between 5-7 business days and payments will be made directly to the service member's direct deposit account. Personnel are required to pay the full amount of their final TLF bill upon check out. Therefore, requesting advance TLA is highly encouraged if adequate funds to pay the bill are not available.

### **13. NEWCOMERS' ORIENTATION WELCOME ABOARD BRIEF (NOWA)**

NOWA is mandatory in accordance with MCBJO 1754.1D. Attendance at NOWA must be confirmed prior to the MCB Safety Office issuing the SOFA POV Drivers' Licence (USFJ-4). NOWA is held every Wednesday from 0720-1400. To sign up for Newcomers' Orientation or to get more information, call 645-8395/9626/7494. NOWA attendees must bring at least 2 copies of PCS orders and 2 copies of area clearance/dependent entry approval.

- Civilian attire is appropriate to attend NOWA.
- FREE bus transportation is available, but must be reserved/requested when registering for NOWA.
- FREE childcare is available on a very limited space-available basis. Please contact the CYTP Resource and Referral Office (Bldg. 495, Camp Foster) at DSN (315) 645- 4117 for child care reservations. There is a child care package that must be completed by the inbound service member/family prior to NOWA. Childcare provided at the Child Development Center/School Age Care or by a Family Care Provider. For the NOWA package or for full time care, please visit <http://www.mccsokinawa.com> and click on Marine and Family, Resource and Referral link (under Family Care).
- **IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING TRICARE ENROLLMENT:** To enroll in TRICARE at NOWA, each service member must have the TRICARE enrollment form (provided during NOWA) filled out and signed, and turn it into the TRICARE representative along with one copy each of their Approved Area Clearance Message and PCS Orders. If the newcomer does not bring copies of these documents to NOWA, the newcomer can complete the enrollment process within 30 days of arrival at the U. S. Naval Hospital (Camp Foster) or 18 Medical Group (Kadena AB) TRICARE offices.

### **14. CONTRACTS (CELL PHONES)**

Cellular Phone companies in Japan have an AUTOMATIC Two year renewal contract, which means the existing or current two year contract, will automatically be renewed on its expiration date, unless otherwise communicated with the cell phone provider. Most of Japanese Cell Phone companies DO NOT have a "Military Clause", which cancels contract/penalties due to military orders/deployment. Because of this, the service member might end up paying a very costly penalty for canceling his/her contract before the 2 year contract is complete. Because of the automatic two year contract renewal, service members leaving after a normal three year tour might be subjected to costly cancellation and penalty fees. Please talk with to your cell phone provider on Okinawa to find out if the company has other options such as monthly and pre-paid agreements. Service members must also ensure they completely cancel their contacts before leaving Okinawa. Again, as with any contract, all service members should thoroughly read and fully understand their contracts before signing them.

### **15. DODDS SCHOOLS**

All Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) schools registration forms are available online at <http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu/>

\*\*\*Note: Registration must be completed in-person at the school after arrival on-island.\*\*\*

Before accepting housing, visit the DoDDS Okinawa Transportation website to confirm availability of school bus service in the area the service member is considering living in and to find out which school the child will attend. Go to <http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu/transportation.html> , scroll to bottom of page for the school zone map/information.

## **16. OPERATORS PERMIT FOR CIVILIAN VEHICLES (DRIVERS LICENSE)**

Ensure prior to departing from the states, your state issues drivers' license is valid and in good standing. **If you think you have a military exemption allowing your drivers license to be valid passed expiration, contact your state's Department of Motor Vehicles to confirm that is the case.**

The study guide for the licensing exam can be found on the MCCA welcome aboard website.