



DOW MANUAL 1315.21, VOLUME 1

MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS: PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

Originating Component:	Office of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness
Effective:	May 21, 2026
Releasability:	Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/ .
Approved 04/10/2026 by:	Timothy D. Dill, Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Purpose: This manual is composed of two volumes, each with its own purpose. In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5124.10 and the policy in DoW Instruction (DoWI) 1315.18:

- This manual implements policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides procedures for assigning and reassigning Service members to a new permanent duty station (PDS).
- This volume:
 - Prescribes procedures for assignment selection.
 - Prescribes continental United States (CONUS) time-on-station (TOS) and retainability requirements.
 - Prescribes first-term Service member move and former Peace Corps member assignment limits and criteria for concurrent family member, dual military couple, single parent, military mother of a newborn, and critical acquisition position assignments.
 - Provides information regarding the dislocation allowance (DLA) and housing flexibility during permanent change of station (PCS).
 - Prescribes authorities and procedures for assignments to OSW, the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and Defense Agencies and DoW Field Activities (DAFAs).

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SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

1.1. APPLICABILITY.

a. This volume:

(1) Applies to OSW, the Military Departments (including the Coast Guard at all times, including when it is a Service in the Department of Homeland Security by agreement with that Department), the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of War, the DAFAs, and all other organizational entities within the DoW (referred to collectively in this volume as the “DoW Components”).

(2) Does not apply to Service members detailed to non-DoW activities in accordance with DoDI 1000.17.

b. The procedures in this volume do not apply to the tour lengths of general officers/flag officers (GO/FOs) whose assignments are generally 24 months, except those procedures pertaining to:

(1) Major defense acquisition program managers, as described in Section 3.

(2) Assignment to OSW, the Office of the CJCS and the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and DAFAs, as described in Section 5.

1.2. POLICY.

a. In accordance with the policy in DoWI 1315.18, assignments will be made for all Service members without regard to their sex, color, race, religious preference, ethnic background, national origin, age, marital status, or sexual orientation, consistent with requirements for physical capabilities. This applies equally to both PCS and temporary duty (TDY) assignment actions. This does not apply to unit moves. Exceptions to this policy include:

(1) The religious practice of chaplains.

(2) Marital status for military couples.

(3) Cases where status of forces agreement protections are not extended to same sex spouses.

b. The primary considerations in reassigning a Service member will be the Service member’s current qualifications and ability to fill a valid mission requirement. A secondary consideration will be achieving co-location of dual military couples. The Military Services may consider other factors (e.g., spouse employment, spouse and child educational activities, volunteer activities, and circumstances that minimize personnel turbulence) when in line with mission requirements and Service member career development. Exceptions include:

(1) When necessary to relieve a Service member or dependent's personal hardship because a dependent needs access to specialized medical treatment or educational services, in accordance with DoDIs 1315.19 and 1342.12.

(2) When otherwise required by law in instances in which a prohibited conflict of interest may exist between a Service member's official duties and a family member's employment.

c. Service members who are convicted of sexual assault are not reassigned and are processed for administrative separation for misconduct in accordance with DoDIs 1332.14 and 1332.30.

d. Service members who report being a victim of domestic violence may request an expedited transfer in accordance with DoDI 6400.06.

e. Service members and adult military dependents (age 18 years and older) who file an unrestricted report of sexual assault may request an expedited transfer pursuant to Volume 1 of DoDI 6495.02. Procedures for doing so are in Paragraph 3.4.s. of this volume.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. ASW(M&RA).

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness, the ASW(M&RA):

- a. Develops and maintains this manual.
- b. Establishes PCS policies and procedures for the Military Services to maintain an equitable assignment system for:
 - (1) Enhancing career attractiveness and professional development.
 - (2) Sustaining an assignment base for tours of duty outside the continental United States (OCONUS).
 - (3) Achieving stability for tour completions.
 - (4) Developing tour lengths consistent with maintaining a high degree of combat capability and readiness.
 - (5) Maximizing TOS stability.
- c. Provides for career life cycle management of Service members, including assignment to OSW, the Joint Staff, and DAFAs.
- d. Will adjudicate exception to policy requests as required.

2.2. DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICES (WHS).

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Director of Administration and Management and in addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.3., the Director, WHS:

- a. Assigns, reassigns, and releases Service members to and from OSW, the supported Defense Agencies, and the supported DoW Field Activities. The Director, WHS, may delegate these functions no lower than the Assistant Director, Military Personnel Division.
- b. Ensures records and information established and created in accordance with this volume are retained in accordance with DoDI 5015.02 and DoW Component records management disposition schedules.

2.3. PRINCIPAL STAFF ASSISTANTS (PSA) AND DAFA DIRECTORS

The PSAs and DAFA Directors ensure the procedures in Section 5 of this volume are implemented within their respective DoW and OSW Components.

2.4. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

- a. Establish procedures within their respective Military Departments to implement the requirements of this volume and to monitor and measure TOS.
- b. Provide PCS data as specified in Volume 2 of DoD Manual (DoDM) 7730.69.
- c. Review and analyze the results of exit and retention survey data annually to assist in review of assignment policies that balance the Service mission with the needs of Service members and their families.
- d. Nominate and assign qualified Service members to OSW, the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, and the DAFAs within the prescribed suspense dates. Qualified Service members:
 - (1) Meet security, education, and experience requirements.
 - (2) Clear sexual offense-related and domestic abuse incident screening requirements reflected on personnel requisitions.
- e. Establish procedures and a communication strategy with the other Military Departments to coordinate dual military couple inter-Service PCS transfers.

2.5. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.4., the Secretary of the Navy establishes tour lengths for sea duty and for dependent-restricted duty assignments with deployment-related units of the United States Marine Corps operating forces.

2.6. CJCS.

The CJCS assigns, reassigns, and releases Service members to and from the Joint Staff.

SECTION 3: ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

3.1. ASSIGNMENT SELECTION.

a. PCS assignment of a Service member will be authorized only to support national security mission requirements and to ensure professional development of all Service members. Unless specifically authorized by this volume, no Military Department will deny transportation allowances or entitlements associated with a PCS movement of a Service member and their family from one duty station to another.

b. When a Service member is needed to fill a requirement in CONUS and multiple Service members meet the assignment qualifications, the Service member with the longest TOS will be considered first for selection.

c. Qualified Service members who volunteer to PCS should be considered for all assignments. Volunteers who have not met TOS requirements may be considered before qualified non-volunteers who have met TOS requirements. Such qualified volunteers will require a TOS waiver.

d. Service members:

(1) Will complete prescribed tours of duty.

(2) May voluntarily extend an assignment beyond the prescribed tour based on:

(a) Service needs.

(b) Service member needs.

(c) Need for Service member or family stability.

e. Up through the grade of O-5 for officers and E-7 for enlisted, promotion will not be the only reason for PCS reassignment before tour completion.

f. Sequential training assignments will be consolidated geographically to the greatest extent possible.

g. Unless otherwise required by law, PCS moves in CONUS will not be required solely because a stipulated time period has passed. This does not preclude reassignment after less than a stipulated time period for reasons such as:

(1) Career progression;

(2) Professional development;

(3) Fresh expertise;

- (4) Assignment diversity; or
 - (5) Personal hardship.
- h. Within a designated occupational specialty and grade, the Military Services will:
- (1) Equally and equitably distribute OCONUS duty assignments.
 - (2) Minimize periods of forced family separation when dependent-restricted OCONUS tours are required for mission requirements.
 - (3) Minimize the potential adverse effects of OCONUS duty assignments that Service members and their dependents may encounter.
- i. Service members determined to be in excess at one location for any of these reasons will be reassigned, in a reasonable length of time, elsewhere on the same installation or to the nearest installation in need of their skills due to:
- (1) Unit inactivation or deactivation;
 - (2) Base realignment and closure;
 - (3) Organization or staffing changes;
 - (4) Reclassification or other actions changing a Service member's occupational specialty or skill designator; or
 - (5) Disqualification for duty due to:
 - (a) Loss of security clearance, professional certification, nuclear certification, or medical qualification to perform; or
 - (b) Relief from duty for cause.
- j. When choosing a Service member for an assignment, the Military Service will reasonably consider PCS costs.
- (1) When other considerations are not overriding, each assignment will be made with the least expenditure of PCS funds.
 - (2) The Military Services will also consider cost and suitability for dependents living OCONUS when developing OCONUS assignment procedures.
- k. In the interest of efficient administration, the Military Services may reassign Service members within the 60 calendar days before the end of the Service member's prescribed tour OCONUS. At that point, the Service member will be considered to have completed the prescribed tour length.

l. While executing PCS reassignment for dual military couples (for both intra-Service and inter-Service), the Military Service(s) will assign both Service members in the same geographic location when within operational and other military requirements. If co-location of the military couple is not possible due to operational and other military requirements, the final approval authority for those assignments will be no lower than the Service(s) headquarters level directors of officer and enlisted assignments.

m. When practicable within operational and other military requirements, PCS reassignments for Service members:

(1) Who are pregnant or whose spouse is pregnant should not be executed after a medical travel restriction for pregnancy (normally 36 weeks or more gestation) has been imposed. PCS reassignment should not occur until after the birth of the child, and the convalescent and parental leave provisions covered in accordance with DoDI 1327.06 have been granted.

(2) Who have school-aged dependents (i.e., kindergarten through the 12th grade) should occur at times that avoid disrupting the dependent's school year and minimize educational costs.

(3) Who are in the process of adopting a child under 18 years of age should occur at a time that allows for adoption completion or avoids disrupting the proceedings.

(4) Who have spouses that are in the process of receiving assisted reproductive technology (ART) should occur at a time that allows for completion or avoids disrupting the proceedings.

n. The Military Services should establish a goal to provide PCS orders to Service members (except those departing basic and initial skills training) not later than 6 months before the PCS move date, which provides the Service member and their family adequate time to plan and execute the upcoming PCS move.

o. Reserve Component Service members ordered to active duty for training for 140 days or more, or active duty for other than training at one location for greater than 180 days, should be authorized PCS travel and transportation allowances. However, the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may authorize TDY allowances beyond these limits in accordance with Paragraph 010206 of the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR).

3.2. CONUS TOS REQUIREMENTS

a. TOS requirements are established to enhance operational readiness, through Service member stabilization in CONUS units, which reduces PCS costs and improves quality of life by reducing Service member and family turbulence.

(1) The minimum TOS requirement for all assignments within or from CONUS is 36 months.

(2) When all other factors are equal, TOS will be a primary consideration in selecting Service members for reassignment.

(3) TOS will be computed inclusively from the month of arrival through the month of departure.

b. See Section 3 of Volume 2 of this manual for guidance regarding curtailment of tours of Service members assigned OCONUS.

3.3. TOS EXCEPTIONS.

Notwithstanding the limitations outlined in Paragraph 3.2.a.(1), if not prohibited elsewhere in this volume, under certain circumstances the Military Services may reassign Service members before they complete the minimum TOS requirements. The authorized exceptions to minimum TOS requirement at a CONUS assignment are:

- a. A Service member reassigned to an OCONUS tour of duty or sea duty.
- b. A Service member with a sea-intensive skill who is assigned from shore duty to sea duty. The Service member must complete at least 24 months TOS.
- c. A newly accessed Service member reassigned to a different duty station for initial skill training or who is being separated.
- d. A Service member reassigned to a different duty station for training or educational purposes.
- e. A move resulting from a major weapon system change or unit conversion (e.g., a change from one type of aircraft to another or infantry to mechanized infantry). This exception will not cover moves associated with replacing a Service member selected for a new weapon system or unit.
- f. A Service member who is given the option to retrain into a new specialty at another location in conjunction with reenlistment. The minimum TOS will be 12 months.
- g. A Service member who is given the option to select another location in conjunction with an established program to keep a dual military couple together.
- h. A Service member assigned to OSW, the Joint Staff, or a DAFA where the tenure is limited to fewer than 36 months in accordance with applicable law or this volume.
- i. A Service member reassigned pursuant to DoDI 1315.19 or for humanitarian or compassionate reasons.
- j. A Service member reassigned to a different duty station in preparation for a unit deployment or move or rendered in excess due to such a deployment or move.
- k. A first-term Service member who is considered for assignment and meets the move limitation requirements in Paragraph 3.6.

l. A Service member in a professional skill (e.g., doctor or lawyer) who serves in a current assignment designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned to:

(1) Validate their professional credentials; or

(2) Develop expertise in selected specialized skills before being assigned to independent duty without supervision.

m. A Service member disqualified for duty due to loss of security clearance, professional certification, nuclear certification, or medical qualification. The Military Service must determine that no vacant position exists within the limits of the same geographic location in which the Service member may serve, pending re-qualification or re-certification.

n. A Service member reassigned as a prisoner, including an assignment to and from confinement or reassignment to stand trial.

o. A Service member reassigned from patient status.

p. A Service member reassigned to accomplish PCS travel before a medical travel restriction for pregnancy (normally 36 weeks or more of gestation) is imposed on the member or their spouse. This includes reassignment to receive adequate medical care, including reassigning a Service member from an unaccompanied tour due to lack of adequate obstetric care.

q. A Service member involved in an incident that may cause serious adverse publicity or embarrassment to the U.S. Government that may jeopardize the mission or indicates the member is a potential defector.

r. A Service member who is, or who has dependents who are, threatened with bodily harm or death and the circumstances are such that military and civilian authorities cannot provide for their continued safety. The appropriate investigative agency (i.e., the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Army Criminal Investigation Command, or Naval Criminal Investigative Service) and a local judge advocate will verify the threats and circumstances.

s. A Service member who makes an unrestricted report of being sexually assaulted and is granted an expedited transfer pursuant to Volume 1 of DoDI 6495.02 and Section 673 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), or a Service member who is an alleged offender of a sexual assault whom the Service-designated approving authority selects for expedited transfer.

t. A Service member who makes a report of being a victim of domestic violence is granted an expedited transfer pursuant to DoDI 6400.06 and Section 673 of Title 10, U.S.C., or a Service member who is an alleged offender of domestic violence whom the Service-designated approving authority selects for expedited transfer.

u. A Service member completing or being eliminated from a training or education program.

v. A Service member reassigned under a short distance move.

w. A Service member with an approved joint duty assignment waiver processed in accordance with DoDI 1300.19.

x. A Service member rendered excess in accordance with Paragraph 3.1.i.

y. A Reserve Component Service member, other than an Active Guard and Reserve Service member, ordered to active duty other than for training.

3.4. TOS WAIVERS.

a. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned reviews TOS waivers and may waive the minimum TOS requirement outlined in Paragraph 3.2.a.(1) on a case-by-case basis for assignments other than those indicated in Paragraphs 3.3.a. through 3.3.x., if it is determined the Service member is the most qualified Service member available.

(1) Delegation approval authority is no lower than the Service headquarters level directors of officer and enlisted assignments for Service members who have or will have less than 24 months TOS.

(2) Delegation approval authority is no lower than an O-6 commissioned officer or General Schedule (GS) Grade 15 DoW civilian employee for Service members who have or will have less than 36 months but at least 24 months TOS.

b. For assignments from or between tours of duty at sea or dependent-restricted tours with deployment-designated United States Marine Corps operating forces, the Secretary of the Navy may delegate TOS waiver authority in the same way as for OCONUS assignments in accordance with Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1300.15B.

3.5. RETAINABILITY REQUIREMENTS.

Service members may not depart CONUS or other departure ports unless they have the service retainability required to complete the assignment. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may waive the restrictions in this paragraph on a case-by-case basis, or on a group basis when a unit move, unit inactivation or deactivation, base closure, or surplus personnel are involved. Waiver authority is delegated no lower than the Service headquarters level directors of officer and enlisted assignments for Service members who have or will have less than 12 months of service retainability. Waiver authority is delegated no lower than an O-6 commissioned officer or GS-15 DoW civilian employee for Service member who have or will have 12 or more months of service retainability.

a. CONUS-to-CONUS Moves.

For CONUS-to-CONUS moves, 24 months retainability is required after arrival at the gaining installation. Service members who are assigned from shore duty to sea duty, sea duty to sea duty, unit moves, or change occupational specialty or skill designator due to retraining must have at least 12 months of service retainability.

b. CONUS-to-OCONUS and OCONUS to OCONUS Moves.

Except pursuant to this volume, Service members may not depart CONUS or other departure ports unless they have the retainability required for the prescribed tour, whether it is accompanied or unaccompanied length.

c. OCONUS-to-CONUS Moves.

For OCONUS-to-CONUS moves, 12 months retainability is required with these exceptions:

(1) Service members stationed OCONUS who, on their scheduled return to CONUS, have 1 to 12 months retainability before their separation date may receive an early separation from military service. Separation must be in conjunction with an approved early release program authorized by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned based on a determination by the Military Service concerned that the Service member is surplus to its requirements; or

(2) To better employ Service members with limited retainability, the Military Services are authorized to involuntarily extend a Service member's OCONUS tour under these conditions:

(a) Service members within 12 months of separating, who are stationed where an accompanied tour is authorized, may be kept at that duty station until their scheduled separation date.

(b) Service members within 6 months of separating, who are stationed where there is a dependent-restricted tour, may be kept at that duty station until their scheduled separation date.

d. Exceptional Moves.

Service members reassigned CONUS-to-CONUS or OCONUS-to-CONUS should have at least 6 months retainability at the gaining installation if their reassignment is due to:

(1) The Exceptional Family Member Program or for humanitarian or compassionate reasons;

(2) Release from prisoner status;

(3) Patient status when the Service member cannot effectively be used at, or in, the vicinity of the installation; or

(4) Service members returning from operational contingencies OCONUS (e.g., operations in hostile environments).

3.6. LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF FIRST-TERM SERVICE MEMBER MOVES.

a. Pursuant to Section 671 of Title 10, U.S.C., Service members will not be assigned to active duty on land outside the United States or its territories or possessions until they complete their Military Service's basic training requirements. In time of war or a national emergency

declared by Congress or the President, required basic training or its equivalent must not be less than 12 weeks, except as specified in Section 671 of Title 10, U.S.C.

b. First-term enlisted Service members serving initial enlistments of:

(1) Three years or less will be given only one PCS assignment following basic and initial skills training and before their expiration of term of service. If the Service member must serve in a dependent-restricted OCONUS tour, they will be given no more than two PCS assignments.

(2) More than 3 but no more than 4 years will be given only one CONUS PCS assignment following basic and initial skills training and before their expiration of term of service. If the Service member must serve an OCONUS assignment, they will be given no more than two PCS assignments.

(3) More than 4 but no more than 5 years will be given no more than two PCS assignments following basic and initial skills training and before their expiration of term of service.

(4) More than 5 years will be given no more than two PCS assignments following basic and initial skills training and before their expiration of term of service. If the Service member must serve an OCONUS assignment, they will be given no more than three PCS assignments.

c. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may waive the criteria in Paragraph 3.6.b. for first-term Service members. Waiver authority may not be delegated below the O-6 or GS-15 level official who directs enlisted assignments at the headquarters for the Military Service concerned.

d. Reassignments not subject to the limitations outlined in Paragraph 3.6.b. include:

(1) Service members who are reassigned to a different duty station to or from training based on their Military Service's needs.

(2) Dual military couple assignments.

(3) Service members reassigned under the Exceptional Family Member Program or for humanitarian or compassionate reasons.

(4) Service members disqualified for duty due to loss of security clearance, professional certification, nuclear certification, or medical qualification.

(5) Service members reassigned to or from patient or prisoner status.

(6) Service members rendered excess in accordance with Paragraph 3.1.i.

(7) Service members considered for expedited transfer pursuant to DoDI 6400.06 and Volume 1 of DoDI 6495.02.

3.7. CRITICAL ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS.

Assignments of officers to critical acquisition positions, defined in Section 1731 of Title 10, U.S.C., will be made in accordance with Section 1734 of Title 10, U.S.C., as implemented by DoDI 5000.66.

3.8. LIMITATION ON FORMER MEMBERS OF THE PEACE CORPS.

a. Service members who are former Peace Corps members must not be assigned to permanent duty or TDY in the military intelligence field for 4 years after serving in the Peace Corps.

b. If Service members who are former Peace Corps members (or were trained but did not go overseas with the Peace Corps) later acquire an intelligence specialty, they must not be assigned duties in an intelligence capacity in any foreign country in which they previously served, or were trained to serve, as a Peace Corps member. This limitation cannot be waived.

3.9. ASSIGNMENTS OF FAMILY MEMBERS TO THE SAME SHIP OR UNIT.

a. Concurrent assignment of Service members from the same immediate family to the same military unit or ship will not be prohibited.

b. The Military Service will consider good order and discipline in determining whether family members may be assigned to the same unit or ship.

c. Requests for reassignment to a different unit or ship may be approved for all but one Service member from the same immediate family. Approval of such requests will be based on Service-specific requirements.

3.10. ASSIGNMENT OF DUAL MILITARY COUPLES AND SINGLE PARENTS.

a. Dual military couples and single parents should fulfill their military obligations on the same basis as other Service members.

(1) They will be eligible for worldwide duty and all assignments for which they qualify, including assignments to imminent danger or hostile fire areas.

(2) To ensure they will be available for worldwide duty, they must have an up-to-date family care plan to ensure continuity of care and support for dependent family members when the requirements of military service result in leaving their family behind.

(3) Family care plans must be developed and submitted in accordance with DoDI 1342.19.

b. When a Service member's family care plan becomes non-viable, they must develop another care plan.

(1) To help Service members develop an alternative care plan, commanders may consider approving leave for the Service member or helping them apply for a humanitarian reassignment, depending on the situation's duration and severity.

(2) If the Service member cannot, or will not, develop an adequate family care plan, the commander will process them for separation in accordance with applicable Service regulations.

c. Unless the Service member waives the deferment period, a single Service member or dual military couple adopting a child will be deferred from assignment to a dependent-restricted tour or an accompanied OCONUS tour when concurrent travel is denied for at least 12 months from the date the child is placed in the home as part of a formal adoption process.

(1) If operational and military requirements permit, the Military Services may authorize deferment exceeding 12 months.

(2) The same deferment period will also apply to TDY or temporary assignment away from the PDS or homeport, which the single Service member or dual military couple may waive.

d. For at least 12 months after the birth of the child, a military mother will be deferred from assignment to a dependent-restricted OCONUS tour or an accompanied OCONUS tour when concurrent travel is denied.

(1) The same deferment period will apply to deployments or TDY away from the PDS or homeport, which the military mother may waive.

(2) If operational and military requirements permit, the Military Services may authorize a deferment period exceeding 12 months.

e. When a Service member becomes a single parent due to hardship or humanitarian circumstances (e.g., the death of a spouse), they may apply for humanitarian or hardship deferments and assignments in accordance with applicable Service regulations.

f. Service-specific guidance governing Ready Reserve activation will:

(1) Provide for the deferral of parents who are designated the military mother from involuntary activation for at least 12 months after childbirth.

(2) Defer the involuntary activation of single parents and dual military couples for at least 12 months after a child is placed in the home as part of a formal adoption process.

SECTION 4: DLA AND HOUSING FLEXIBILITY DURING PCS

4.1. DLA.

A DLA:

- a. Partially reimburses a Service member for expenses incurred in moving a household. The household move must be required by a PCS, ordered for the U.S. Government's convenience, required due to an evacuation, or otherwise required pursuant to Section 0505 of the JTR.
- b. Is a flat amount and may be paid as a primary DLA, a secondary DLA, or a partial DLA, depending upon the circumstances of the household move.
- c. Is mandatory when the conditions in Section 0505 of the JTR are met. Only one DLA is permitted in a fiscal year unless the situation qualifies as an exception covered in Paragraph 050501 of the JTR.

4.2. HOUSING FLEXIBILITY DURING PCS.

a. Effective October 1, 2018 and pursuant to Section 403a of Title 37, U.S.C., Military Department regulations will permit eligible Service members to request the housing flexibility options specified in Paragraph 4.2.c. while undergoing a PCS within the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii), as implemented by Paragraph 261014 of Volume 7A of DoD 7000.14-R, also known and referred to in this volume as the "DoD Financial Management Regulations."

(1) When housing flexibility options are used during a Service member's PCS, the covered relocation period will begin 180 days before the PCS date (i.e., the date the Service member leaves their current PDS) and will end 180 days after the PCS date.

(2) The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may adjust the covered relocation period based on the Military Service's needs.

b. Service members eligible for housing flexibility options specified in Paragraph 4.2.c. during the covered relocation period will include Service members who:

(1) Have one or more dependents enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program;
or

(2) At the beginning of the covered relocation period:

(a) Have a spouse who is gainfully employed or enrolled in a degree, certificate, or license-granting program;

(b) Have one or more dependents attending an elementary or secondary school; or

(c) Are caring for an immediate family member with a chronic or long-term illness.

c. Housing flexibility options will include:

(1) Continuation in U.S. Government-owned or -leased family housing of the Service member's spouse or other dependent if they are residing in such housing at the beginning of the covered relocation period.

(a) The spouse or other dependent may continue to reside in such housing during the covered relocation period.

(b) Requests for this option should be approved only if approval will not adversely affect other Service members who will arrive at the current PDS during the period of continuation in housing.

(2) Early housing eligibility when the Service member is eligible to reside in U.S. Government-owned or -leased family housing at the new PDS. The spouse or other dependent may move into such housing at any time during the covered relocation period if it is available, even if the Service member has not arrived at the new PDS.

(3) Occupancy of U.S. Government-owned or -leased unaccompanied housing by a Service member with dependents.

(a) If a Service member's spouse or other dependent relocates at a time different from the Service member, the Service member may elect to reside in such housing until:

1. Their detachment date from the current PDS; or
2. Their spouse or other dependents arrive at the new PDS.

(b) Occupancy in such unaccompanied housing will be provided on a space-available basis and may not displace a *bona fide* unaccompanied Service member with no dependents at such housing.

(4) Equitable basic allowance for housing.

(a) The Service member's basic allowance for housing cannot be lower than the amount payable in accordance with Section 403(d)(3)(A) of Title 37, U.S.C.

(b) If a Service member's spouse or other dependent relocates at a time different from the Service member, the amount of basic allowance for housing may be based on any of the areas prescribed in the DoD Financial Management Regulations, or determined by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned to be the most equitable:

1. The area of the duty station to which the Service member is reassigned;
2. The area in which the spouse or other dependent resides, but only if they reside in that area when the Service member departs for the next PDS, and only while they reside in that area; or

3. The area of the Service member's former PDS, but only if that area is different from the area in which the spouse or other dependent resides.

d. Relocation assistance programs are required by law and should minimize the adverse effects of stressors associated with PCS moves. These programs must provide information and education regarding these housing flexibility options during PCS to Service members and their families. Specific relocation assistance policy is prescribed in DoDI 1342.22.

SECTION 5: ASSIGNMENT TO OSW, THE JOINT STAFF, COMBATANT COMMANDS, AND DAFAS

5.1. GENERAL.

a. All positions in the OSW, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and the DAFAs will be evaluated to determine if Service members will fill the positions.

(1) Positions designated for Service members will be filled to represent the Military Services equitably if such distribution is in accordance with Service resources and approved manning documents.

(2) Most standard-joint duty assignment positions will be considered non-rotational among the Military Services unless the position is nominative and open to all Military Services.

b. The normal tour of duty for Service members assigned to the OSW, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and the DAFAs will be 36 months, unless otherwise specified by an established OCONUS tour length or arranged with the Military Services. Extension requests should be approved by the Military Service concerned if they are consistent with Service requirements and career progression of the Service member and if they are not in conflict with statutory limitations.

c. In accordance with Section 155 of Title 10, U.S.C., an officer assigned or detailed to duty on the Joint Staff may not serve a tour of duty of more than 48 months. Once such a tour of duty is complete, an officer may not be assigned or detailed to permanent duty on the Joint Staff for 24 months. The Secretary of War may approve exceptions to these restrictions; this authority is not delegable.

d. Service members may be released before completing a normal or extended tour of duty with the concurrence of the CJCS or the PSA, Combatant Commander, or DAFA Director concerned. Requests for early release from the Military Services for reasons of operational necessity should be approved if a timely replacement action is submitted and routed through the appropriate military personnel office.

e. When a GO/FO is assigned duties as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of War, their authority is limited in that they may not act for, or perform the duties of, the Assistant Secretary of War.

5.2. PROCEDURES.

a. Functional Charts, Organizational Charts, Staffing Plans, and Position Descriptions.

(1) The CJCS, the PSAs concerned, and the DAFA Directors (except for the Director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service (DIRNSA/CHCSS)) will prepare and approve information required for organizational charts, functional charts, and staffing plans based on approved authorizations for their respective organizations, including:

(a) Identifying each position as either military or civilian.

(b) Submitting a completed military position description for each military requirement. Supporting staff plans will be included when revising a position's title or content.

1. For OSW only, military personnel requirements will be submitted on the Secretary of Defense (SD) Form 37, "Office of the Secretary of War Request for Nomination and Position Description of Military Personnel" (available at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/forms/sd_forms/), to WHS, Human Resources Directorate, Military Personnel Division. Except for unusual circumstances, nominations will be requested from only one Military Service for each requirement.

2. When requesting nominations for Deputy Assistant Secretary of War positions, the SD Form 37 must say, "the incumbent must not act for or perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary." This requirement does not apply to the Defense Agencies, except for the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

3. The procedures for nomination, approval, and appointment of senior defense official/defense attachés (SDO/DATTs) are prescribed in DoDD 5205.75. Procedures for establishing SDO/DATT OCONUS tour lengths and selecting and assigning actions are in Volume 2 of this manual.

(c) Conducting a continuing review of organizational charts, functional charts, staffing plans, and military position descriptions, and updating them as changes occur.

(d) Providing organizational charts, functional charts, and staffing plans to the Director, WHS as changes occur or upon request.

(e) Providing each Military Service with current organizational charts, functional charts, staffing plans, and military position descriptions. The Military Services will incorporate positions designated as "military" into their manpower and personnel systems.

(2) The DIRNSA/CHCSS, in coordination with their Military Department counterparts, will provide for manpower documentation and review, including:

(a) Providing organizational manuals, charts, organization titles, and designators to the Military Services on a limited distribution basis and making the National Security Agency/Central Security Service Table of Distribution available for review through Service cryptologic agency liaison offices and the DIRNSA/CHCSS representative in the Pentagon.

(b) Providing detailed military requirements to SDO/DATTs or the Military Services by Military Service, grade, skill, and organizational assignment, and providing additional supportive descriptions of all officer and top-three enlisted manpower requirements.

(c) Providing organizational charts identifying key civilian and military positions by grade.

(d) Providing periodic billet incumbency information to facilitate manning procedures and annually reviewing key-position assignments, in coordination with senior Service representatives and SDO/DATs.

(e) Periodically reviewing and coordinating manpower resource program adjustments and resulting impacts on personnel manning plans and referring any unresolved issues to OSW for decision.

b. Filling Positions.

(1) The CJCS; the Director, WHS, on behalf of OSW and other WHS-supported activities; and the other DAFA Directors (except for the DIRNSA/CHCSS) will submit personnel requisitions with a military position description to the Military Service concerned through personnel channels approximately 12 months before the incumbent's scheduled rotation date.

(a) The personnel requisition will indicate all special qualifications, including security clearance level or special access requirements for the position.

(b) New or additional personnel requirements will be forwarded to the Military Service concerned when approved.

(c) Requisitions for positions in Paragraph 5.2.a.(2) will be submitted after clearance is obtained from the Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Deputy Secretary of War.

(2) When filling positions that the CJCS, Director, WHS, or other DAFA Directors have designated as "nominative," the Secretaries of the Military Departments will provide the nominee's qualification records or a brief description of the nominee's military history and performance to the requesting personnel office at least 180 days before the proposed reporting date.

(a) Exceptions to this are in Paragraph 5.2.b.(1).

(b) Qualification records of individuals assigned without prior nomination will be provided when the assignment is made.

(3) The CJCS, PSAs concerned, and the DAFA Directors (except for the DIRNSA/CHCSS) will determine the acceptability of Service members and advise the Military Services concerned through prescribed personnel channels within 15 calendar days of receiving the qualification records.

(4) The CJCS; the Director, WHS, on behalf of OSW and DoW Field Activities; and the DAFA Directors (except for the DIRNSA/CHCSS) will inform the Secretary of War, the Deputy Secretary of War, and the OSW Executive Secretary of projected vacancies that may have a policy-making impact on the DoW. This will at least include positions equivalent to that of Deputy Assistant Secretary of War.

(a) The OSW Executive Secretary will take formal or informal action to fill the projected vacant positions. Where the anticipated loss is on a programmed basis, this notice should be given in sufficient time for the Military Departments to nominate and reassign in an orderly manner and avoid personnel turbulence.

(b) Appropriate officials should recommend candidates to fill positions to the OSW Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary will advise the Secretary of War and Deputy Secretary of War on candidate interviews.

(c) No commitment to accept any candidate may be made without clearance by the OSW Executive Secretary, who will obtain the concurrence of the Secretary of War or the Deputy Secretary of War.

(d) No commitment to accept any candidate not nominated by their Military Service will be processed without an official release from the Service member's current organization. This release must accompany the SD Form 37.

(5) The Military Services will conduct security checks and investigations to meet each position's security requirements and publish orders effecting the assignment of Service members to the gaining organization.

c. Rotation and Release of Service Members.

The Secretary of the Military Department concerned will reassign Service members for duty (or release them from duty) when notification from the CJCS; the Director, WHS; or the Combatant Commander or DAFA Director concerned is received.

d. GO/FO Positions.

(1) Assignment actions involving GO/FOs that require CJCS advice, specific approval from the Secretary of War or the President, and confirmation from the U.S. Senate will be processed in accordance with DoDI 1320.04.

(2) The CJCS, PSAs, and the DAFA Directors will:

(a) Evaluate the qualifications of the GO/FOs the Military Services nominate. When feasible, nominees will be interviewed.

(b) When required, transmit actions recommended for approval by memorandum, to the Secretary of War.

(3) Except when required by law, the CJCS, the appropriate PSA, or DAFA Director concerned approves assignment of officers to GO/FO positions below the rank of lieutenant general and vice admiral, in accordance with these provisions:

(a) Assignments of DAFA Directors and Vice Directors will be approved by the Deputy Secretary of War. All other assignments to GO/FO positions in Defense Agencies will be approved by the appropriate PSA and the Director, WHS.

(b) Assignments to OSW will be approved by the appropriate PSA and the Director, WHS.

(c) The CJCS will approve assignments to the Joint Staff.

(4) Nominations for GO/FOs as SDO/DATTs will be made in accordance with DoDD 5205.75 and approved by the Secretary of War.

e. Delegation of Authority.

The functions in Paragraphs 5.2.a. through 5.2.c. may be delegated to officials in the respective organizations, when necessary; such delegation must be done in writing.

5.3. EXCEPTIONS.

The CJCS, the Director, WHS, and the other DAFA Directors may approve tour extensions within existing billet authorizations and consistent with Section 155 of Title 10, U.S.C., in instances when qualified individuals of the designated category or grade are not available to fill authorized positions.

GLOSSARY

G.1. ACRONYMS.

ACRONYM	MEANING
ASW(M&RA)	Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
ART	assisted reproductive technology
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CONUS	continental United States
DAFA	Defense Agency and DoW Field Activity
DIRNSA/CHCSS	Director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service
DLA	dislocation allowance
DoDD	DoD directive
DoDI	DoD instruction
DoDM	DoD manual
DoW	Department of War
DoWI	DoW instruction
DoWM	DoW manual
GO/FO	general officer/flag officer
GS	General Schedule
JTR	Joint Travel Regulations
OCONUS	outside the continental United States
OSW	Office of the Secretary of War
PCS	permanent change of station
PDS	permanent duty station
PSA	Principal Staff Assistant
SD	Secretary of Defense (forms)
SDO/DATT	senior defense official/defense attaché
TDY	temporary duty
TOS	time-on-station
U.S.C.	United States Code
WHS	Washington Headquarters Services

G.2. DEFINITIONS.

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this volume.

TERM	DEFINITION
accompanied tour	An OCONUS duty station assignment where the Service member may be authorized to be accompanied by command-sponsored dependents.
active duty	Full-time duty in the active service of a Military Service. Includes full-time training duty, annual training duty, and attendance, while on active duty, at a school designated as a Service school by law or by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned. Does not include full-time National Guard duty as described in DoDI 1215.06.
active duty other than training	Defined in DoDI 1215.06 as “ADOT.”
ART	<p>Ovarian stimulation and egg retrieval, including any needed medications and procedures required to retrieval, processing and utilization for ART or cryopreservation.</p> <p>Sperm collection and processing for ART or cryopreservation.</p> <p>Intrauterine insemination.</p> <p>In vitro fertilization, including these procedures for beneficiaries when clinically indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In vitro fertilization with fresh embryo transfer.Gamete intrafallopian transfer.Zygote intrafallopian transfer.Pronuclear stage tubal transfer.Tubal embryo transfer.Frozen embryo transfer.
compassionate or humanitarian reassignment	Reassignment of a Service member to another duty station based on humanitarian factors (e.g., family emergency, hardship, or other situations in which a Service member’s presence at another duty station is warranted).

TERM	DEFINITION
CONUS	The contiguous 48 continental States and the District of Columbia. This definition specifically excludes Alaska and Hawaii as they are not part of the contiguous continental States and are described as non-foreign, OCONUS locations.
critical acquisition position	Senior positions carrying significant responsibility, primarily involving supervisory or management duties, in the DoW acquisition system.
curtailment	The action of shortening or reducing a Service member's tour of duty from their current assignment.
dependent	Defined in Section 401 of Title 37, U.S.C.
dependent-restricted tour	Any OCONUS duty station with an established tour that does not permit command-sponsored dependents. Includes stations where command-sponsored dependents may be authorized, but where the Service member is not eligible to serve the accompanied tour (e.g., the Republic of Korea), or when dependent movement is denied due to location age restrictions.
DLA	An allowance to partially reimburse a Service member for the expenses incurred in relocating their household on a PCS ordered for the U.S. Government's convenience or incident to an evacuation. This allowance is in addition to all other PCS allowances pursuant to the JTR and may be paid in advance.
dual military couples	Active duty Service members married to each other, both of whom are in any of the Military Services. They cannot be dependents of each other.
dual military couple assignment	Assignments made to allow active duty Service members in any of the Military Services of the United States to establish a joint household.

TERM	DEFINITION
Exceptional Family Member Program	<p>A program that supports military families with special medical and educational needs, described in DoDI 1315.19. The program has three components:</p> <p>Identification and enrollment of a family member with special medical or educational needs.</p> <p>Assignment coordination to determine the availability of services at the projected duty station.</p> <p>Family support to help families identify and access programs and services.</p>
excess	<p>The assigned number of Service members exceeds the authorized strength required at a military installation or location.</p>
expiration of term of service	<p>The date a Service member completes the military service required by an enlistment contract.</p>
family care plan	<p>Defined in DoDI 1342.19.</p>
first-term Service member	<p>Any Service member not included as a career Service member.</p>
former Peace Corps member	<p>Includes former Peace Corps volunteers, volunteer leaders, and staff members. This does not include individuals who attended Peace Corps training but did not go overseas with the Peace Corps.</p>
GO/FO	<p>U.S. military officers in the grades of O-7 through O-10. Actions required in this volume to be completed by a GO/FO must be performed, at a minimum, by officers serving in a GO/FO grade.</p>
household	<p>The Service member and those dependents, as defined in Section 403 of Title 37, U.S.C., who reside with the Service member or are dependent on the Service member for over one-half of their support.</p>
immediate family	<p>Defined in Volume 2 of this manual.</p>
inter-Service	<p>An action taken between two of the Military Services.</p>
intra-Service	<p>An action taken within a single Military Service.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Military Services	The Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, the Space Force, and the Coast Guard.
OCONUS	All foreign countries and locations outside the contiguous 48 adjoining U.S. States and the District of Columbia. Non-foreign OCONUS includes the States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories and possessions (excluding the former Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).
PCS	The assignment, detail, or transfer of a Service member or unit to a different PDS under a competent travel order that does not specify the duty as temporary, provide for further assignment to a new PDS, or direct return to the old PDS. A PCS assignment or reassignment does not always create an entitlement to travel and transportation allowances (e.g., movement of the Service member, relocation of dependents, or shipment of household goods).
PDS	The installation of duty or official duty station of a Service member or invitational traveler, including a ship for the purpose of personal travel and transportation of the Service member's unaccompanied baggage located on board the ship. The homeport of a ship or of a ship-based staff to which a Service member is assigned or attached for duty other than TDY is the PDS for dependent's transportation, transportation of household goods, mobile homes or privately owned vehicles, CONUS cost of living allowance, and geography-based station allowances and overseas housing allowance.
prescribed tour length	The time period established for tours in specific geographic locations in CONUS, OCONUS, or at sea.
PSA	The Under Secretaries of War, the Assistant Secretaries of War who report directly to the Secretary of War or Deputy Secretary of War, the General Counsel of the Department of War, and the Assistants to the Secretary of War. Includes the Inspector General of the Department of War; the Under Secretary of War (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Department of War; and the Directors or equivalents who report directly to the Secretary of War or Deputy Secretary of War.
religious practice	Defined in DoDI 1300.17.

TERM	DEFINITION
sea duty	Assignment to a ship or deployable unit stationed ashore.
sea tour	The time period established by the Secretary of the Navy for members of the Navy and the Marine Corps assigned to sea duty.
separation date	The date a Service member leaves the active Military Service, including mandatory separation or approved retirement date; mandatory release date; expiration of service agreement date; or completion of enlistment date.
sex	An individual's immutable biological classification as either male or female.
sexual assault	Defined in Volume 1 of DoDI 6495.02.
short distance move	Movement of household goods between residences or a non-temporary storage facility within the same PDS or metropolitan area.
single parent	A Service member who has one or more dependent children but does not have a spouse.
TOS	The elapsed time a Service member has been permanently assigned to an installation, naval vessel, or other authorized assignment location. This also includes being assigned to multiple units, installations, or naval vessels that are in the same geographic location.
tour of duty	Military duty when assigned to a military installation or activity permanently located at a land station. Military duty when assigned to a ship or unit during a prescribed sea tour.
unaccompanied tour	The authorized tour length at a specific OCONUS duty station for Service members who are not accompanied by command-sponsored dependents. A tour at a location with only an unaccompanied tour authorized is considered a dependent-restricted tour.
unit move	The synchronized relocation of a designated military organization to another duty station.
United States	The 50 States and the District of Columbia.

REFERENCES

- DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, “Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation: Military Pay Policy – Active Duty and Reserve Pay,” current edition
- DoD Directive 5124.10, “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASW(M&RA)),” March 14, 2018
- DoD Directive 5205.75, “DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies,” December 4, 2013, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1000.17, “Detail of DoD Personnel to Duty Outside the Department of Defense,” October 30, 2013, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1215.06, “Uniform Reserve, Training, and Retirement Categories for the Reserve Components,” March 11, 2014, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1300.17, “Religious Liberty in the Military Services,” September 1, 2020
- DoD Instruction 1300.19, “DoD Joint Officer Management Program,” April 3, 2018, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1315.19, “Exceptional Family Member Program,” June 23, 2023
- DoD Instruction 1320.04, “Military Officer Actions Requiring Presidential, Secretary of Defense, or Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Approval or Senate Confirmation,” January 3, 2014, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1327.06, “Military Leave, Liberty, and Administrative Absence,” August 7, 2025
- DoD Instruction 1332.14, “Enlisted Administrative Separations,” August 1, 2024
- DoD Instruction 1332.30, “Commissioned Officer Administrative Separations,” May 11, 2018, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1342.12, “Provision of Early Intervention and Special Education Services to Eligible DoD Dependents,” June 17, 2015
- DoD Instruction 1342.19, “Family Care Plans,” May 7, 2010, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1342.22, “Military Family Readiness,” August 5, 2021
- DoD Instruction 5000.66, “Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program,” July 27, 2017, as amended
- DoD Instruction 5015.02, “DoD Records Management Program,” February 24, 2015, as amended
- DoD Instruction 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” December 15, 2021, as amended
- DoD Instruction 6495.02, Volume 1, “Adult Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Procedures,” March 28, 2013, as amended
- DoD Manual 7730.69, Volume 2, “Uniformed Services Human Resources Information System: Supplemental Reporting Requirements,” September 1, 2023
- DoW Instruction 1315.18, “Procedures for Military Personnel Assignments,” May 21, 2026
- DoW Manual 1315.21, Volume 2, “Military Personnel Assignments: Outside the Continental United States Duty and Dependent Travel,” May 21, 2026
- Joint Travel Regulations, current edition

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1300.15B, “Navy Military Personnel
Assignment Policy,” November 19, 2018

United States Code, Title 10

United States Code, Title 37