



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

December 20, 2019
Incorporating Change 6, December 19, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
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UNDER SECRETARIES OF WAR
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WAR
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR FOR LEGISLATIVE
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ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR FOR PUBLIC
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DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Directive-type Memorandum (DTM) 19-012 – “Expansion of Patronage for Certain Veterans and Certain Caregivers for Veterans”

References: See Attachment 1

Purpose. In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02 and Section 1065 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), this DTM:

- Establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides procedures for the implementation of patronage expansion pursuant to Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C.
- Is effective December 20, 2019; it will be incorporated into DoD Instructions 1015.10, 1330.17, 1330.21, and 1015.11. This DTM will expire effective December 20, 2026.

Applicability. This DTM 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 and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of War.

Definitions. See Glossary

Policy.

- In accordance with Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C., the following new patron groups are authorized access to DoW commissary, exchange, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) Category C revenue generating activities on the same basis as a member of the Military Services entitled to retired or retainer pay, effective January 1, 2020:
 - Veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart.
 - Veterans who are former prisoners of war (POWs).
 - Veterans classified by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as having a service-connected disability rating below 100 percent.
 - Individuals assessed, approved, and designated as caregivers or family caregivers for veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. These caregivers are only eligible for these privileges during their period of active enrollment as the caregiver or family caregiver for a veteran. Further guidance concerning additional caregivers and family caregivers who may be eligible under Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C., will be provided in a separate issuance.
- Members of the new veteran, caregiver, and family caregiver patron groups are also provided access to:
 - Official DoW temporary duty and permanent change of station lodging facilities on a space-available basis. This DTM does not apply to DoW privatized lodging facilities.
 - MWR Category B bowling activities.
 - MWR Category B camping activities, equipment check-out, marinas, and other Category B activities that are combined or co-located with similar Category C activities and are indistinguishable from a customer perspective (e.g., equipment check-out and equipment rental combined as a single activity).
 - Additional MWR Category B activities authorized by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned in accordance with Attachment 3.

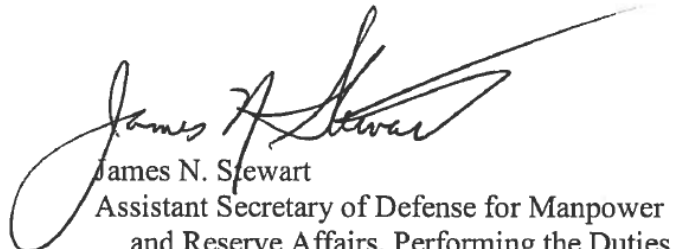
- Further guidance concerning access to MWR Category A activities will be provided in a separate issuance.
- Family members of the new veteran and caregiver patron groups eligible solely under Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C., who are not otherwise authorized privileges as a caregiver or a family caregiver under this DTM, are not eligible for the privileges authorized by this DTM.
- Patron access to commissary, exchange, MWR, and lodging facilities authorized by this DTM applies to the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) and Military Service facilities in the United States and the U.S. territories and possessions. Access to facilities located in foreign overseas locations is subject to the limitations of applicable host nation law and applicable international agreements, such as status of forces agreements.

Responsibilities. See Attachment 2

Procedures. See Attachment 3

Releasability. Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

Summary of Change 6. This change extends the expiration date for the DTM to December 20, 2026, and updates organizational secondary titles in accordance with the October 10, 2025 Secretary of War Memorandum.



James N. Stewart
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower
and Reserve Affairs, Performing the Duties
of the Under Secretary of Defense for
Personnel and Readiness

Attachments:
As stated

ATTACHMENT 1

REFERENCES

- DoD Directive 5100.87, “Department of Defense Human Resources Activity (DoDHRA),” February 19, 2008, as amended
- DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1015.10, “Military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Programs,” July 6, 2009, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1015.11, “Lodging Policy,” October 6, 2006, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1330.17, “DoD Commissary Program,” June 18, 2014, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1330.21, “Armed Services Exchange Regulations,” July 14, 2005
- DoD Manual 5200.08, Volume 3, “Physical Security Program: Access to DoD Installations,” January 2, 2019
- Secretary of War Memorandum, “Department of War Secondary Titles,” October 10, 2025
- Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Memorandum, “Installation Access Control: Section 621 and 626 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2019,” August 5, 2019
- United States Code, Title 10
- United States Code, Title 38

ATTACHMENT 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY. Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness, the Director, Department of Defense Human Resources Activity provides a central capability to verify veteran benefits eligibility, in accordance with DoD Directive 5100.87.

2. DIRECTOR, DECA. Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness, through the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Director, DeCA:

a. Establishes procedures to verify commissary benefit eligibility for the patron groups authorized by this DTM.

b. Establishes processes and updates systems necessary to scan authorized identification credentials. Established manual verification of authorized identification credentials that are not scannable will be used until they are converted to a format that can be scanned or scanning systems are updated to read authorized identification credentials.

c. Establishes process and updates systems necessary to collect and deposit with U.S. Treasury user fees related to commercial debit/credit card use in commissaries in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Attachment 3 of this DTM.

d. Oversees full implementation of this DTM for commissary access by January 1, 2020.

e. Establishes processes to monitor and assess impacts of this DTM on applicable commissary operations.

f. Implements commissary credit/debit card user fee requirements.

3. UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR FOR INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY. The Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security oversees the implementation of procedures that facilitate installation access for the patron groups authorized by this DTM.

4. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS. The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

a. Establish procedures to verify exchange and MWR benefit eligibility for the patron groups authorized by this DTM.

b. Implement this DTM for installation, exchange, and MWR access by January 1, 2020.

c. Establish processes to monitor and assess impacts of this DTM on applicable exchange and MWR operations.

d. Determine which, if any, additional Category B MWR activities are accessible to patron groups authorized in this DTM in accordance with Attachment 3.

ATTACHMENT 3

PROCEDURES

1. IDENTIFICATION FOR BENEFIT ACCESS. The DoW will accept the following VA documentation to differentiate and verify eligible veteran and caregiver patrons for commissary, exchange, and authorized MWR access pursuant to Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C.:

a. Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC).

(1) VHIC-eligible veterans eligible solely under this DTM will be identified and verified in person by a current VA-issued VHIC having one of the following acceptable identifiers: "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED." The VHIC will also be scanned for electronic verification at the register when making commissary purchases.

(2) Further guidance concerning veterans currently ineligible for a VHIC will be provided in a separate issuance.

b. Caregiver Letter. Caregivers and family caregivers eligible solely under this DTM will be identified and verified in person by presentation of an acceptable credential authorized in Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.08, and a VA-issued letter certifying they are currently enrolled as a caregiver or family caregiver for a veteran in the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The VA-issued caregiver letter will expire annually on December 31, and will be reissued annually by the VA to verify continued eligibility. This letter is a temporary proof of eligibility until the VA creates an official identification card for caregivers. Once an official caregiver identification card is created, these caregivers must obtain the new card to facilitate access to these benefits.

c. Electronic Verification for Access to Online Benefits. Eligible veterans and caregivers under this DTM will be authorized access to online exchange and MWR activities through Defense Manpower Data Center data verification.

2. INSTALLATION ACCESS. Eligible veterans and caregivers will obtain installation access in accordance with Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.08 and the August 5, 2019 Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Memorandum.

3. COMMISSARY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD USER FEE.

a. Only patrons of groups newly authorized privileges by this DTM must pay a user fee when using a credit or debit card to pay for commissary purchases to offset additional costs charged to the U.S. Treasury associated with credit or debit card use.

b. The user fee will be set as a transaction-based flat rate, calculated within a range of the average annual rates of credit and debit card transaction costs incurred by the Department of

Treasury on behalf of DeCA and in compliance with applicable card network rules. One rate will be set for credit and signature debit card transactions, which are processed as credit cards. Another rate will be set for personal identification number debit card transactions. These rates will be reviewed annually and adjustments may be made as necessary to meet the requirements of Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C.

c. Purchases made with electronic benefit transfer cards (e.g., Women, Infants, and Children or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the MILITARY STAR card are not subject to this credit/debit card user fee.

d. No user fee reimbursement will be made on customer return of merchandise.

e. All credit/debit card user fee amounts collected in commissary stores will be deposited in the General Fund of the Treasury.

4. ADDITIONAL MWR CATEGORY B ACTIVITIES. The Secretaries of the Military Departments may authorize access to additional Category B MWR activities (except child development programs) to veterans and caregivers authorized pursuant to this DTM on a space-available basis when there is excess capacity and user fees cover the majority of operational expenses. This authority will not be delegated below the installation commander.

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DoW	Department of War
DTM	directive-type memorandum
MWR	morale, welfare, and recreation
OSW	Office of the Secretary of War
POW	prisoner of war
U.S.C.	United States Code
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VHIC	Veterans Health Identification Card

PART II. DEFINITIONS

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

caregiver. Defined in Section 1720G(d) of Title 38, U.S.C.

Category B. MWR activities that have the ability to generate nonappropriated fund revenues, but not enough to be sustained without appropriated fund support.

Category C. MWR activities with the business capability of generating significant nonappropriated fund revenue to cover their operating expenses.

family caregiver. Defined in Section 1720G(d) of Title 38, U.S.C.

former POW. Defined in Section 101 of Title 38, U.S.C.

service-connected. Defined in Section 101 of Title 38, U.S.C.

veteran. Defined in Section 101 of Title 38, U.S.C.