



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

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

August 16, 2021
Incorporating Change 2, August 26, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Directive-type Memorandum (DTM) 21-005 – “Deployment-to-Dwell, Mobilization-to-Dwell Policy Revision”

References: DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008
DoD Instruction 1235.12, “Accessing the Reserve Components (RC),” June 7, 2016, as amended
DoD Instruction 8260.03, “The Global Force Management Data Initiative (GFM DI),” February 19, 2014, as amended
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) Deployment-to-Dwell, Mobilization-to-Dwell Policy Revision,” November 1, 2013, hereby cancelled
United States Code, Title 10

Purpose. In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02, this DTM:

- Establishes policy for a consistent set of standards to characterize and manage the employment of the total military force to prevent personnel’s overexposure to deployments and time away from their homeport, station, or base.
- Defines “deployment” and “dwell time” under a single Department-wide standard in accordance with Section 991 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.). It also defines “deployment-to-dwell ratio for Active Component (AC),” “mobilization-to-dwell ratio for Reserve Component (RC),” and associated goals and thresholds.
- Cancels the November 1, 2013 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum.
- Is effective November 10, 2021; it will be incorporated into a DoD instruction. This DTM will expire effective January 10, 2027.

Applicability. This DTM applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office

of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense.

Definitions. See Glossary.

Policy. To understand the employment of the total military force, Combatant Commanders must register the use of assigned forces.

- The intent is for Combatant Commanders at every level to ensure that individual Service members, regardless of unit assignment, are not repeatedly exposed to combat, do not experience disproportionate deployments, and do not spend extended periods of time away from their homeport, station, or base unless required by operational necessity.
- For the AC, the Secretary of Defense's goal for the deployment-to-dwell ratio is 1:3 or greater. The deployment-to-dwell ratio threshold is 1:2. Secretary of Defense approval is required to deploy an AC unit, detachment, or individual with a ratio of 1:2 or less.
- In accordance with DoD Instruction 1235.12, for the RCs, the Secretary of Defense's goal is a ratio of 1:5 or more. The mobilization-to-dwell ratio threshold is 1:4. Secretary of Defense approval is required to mobilize an RC unit, detachment, or individuals with a ratio of 1:4 or less. These ratios apply only to dwell time for Service members who have completed a deployment of 30 days or more.
- In accordance with DoD Instruction 1235.12, the time RC Service members are ordered to be on active duty under Sections 12301(b) and 12301(d) of Title 10, U.S.C. is considered dwell for the purpose of calculating the mobilization-to-dwell ratio. However, to understand the employment of the total military force, RC personnel deployments, pursuant to Sections 12301(b) and 12301(d) of Title 10, U.S.C. will continue to be recorded.
- This DTM is not intended to be used as a force-shaping tool.

Responsibilities. Secretaries of the Military Departments. The Secretaries of the Military Departments manage their forces to meet the desired deployment-to-dwell and mobilization-to-dwell ratios. If they are unable to meet this goal, the Secretaries of the Military Departments must adhere to threshold ratios. If unable to meet the threshold ratios, the Secretaries of the Military Departments follow existing policies and processes to request Secretary of Defense approval to break the threshold.

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

Summary of Change 2. This change extends the expiration for the DTM to January 10, 2027.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia S. Penrod". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "V".

Virginia S. Penrod
Acting Under Secretary of Defense for
Personnel and Readiness

Attachments:
As stated

GLOSSARY

PART I. ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	MEANING
AC	Active Component
DTM	directive-type memorandum
RC	Reserve Component
U.S.C.	United States Code

PART II. DEFINITIONS

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

TERM	DEFINITION
deployment	<p>A Service member of a Military Service within the DoD is considered deployed or on a deployment on any day on which, pursuant to orders, the Service member performs service for an operation at a location or under circumstances that make it impossible for them to spend off-duty time in the housing in which they reside when on garrison duty at their permanent duty station or homeport. In accordance with Section 991 of Title 10, U.S.C., if an RC Service member is performing active service pursuant to orders that do not establish a permanent change of station, that housing is any housing, including the Service member's residence, that the Service member usually occupies during off-duty time when on garrison duty at the Service member's permanent duty station or homeport.</p> <p>A deployment begins when a unit, detachment, or individual not attached to a unit or detachment leaves a homeport, station, or base or leaves from an en-route training location to meet a Secretary of Defense-approved operation to meet an operational requirement. An event is an operation if it is recorded in the joint capabilities requirement manager or contained in the annual Global Force Management Data Initiative-compliant tool under the Global Force Management Data Initiative reporting structure specified in DoD Instruction 8260.03. Forces deployed pursuant to Executive orders, operational plans, or concept plans approved by the Secretary of Defense are also considered deployed.</p> <p>A deployment ends when most of the unit or detachment, or an individual not attached to a unit or detachment, returns to their homeport, station, or base. Forces operationally employed by Secretary of Defense's orders or in "prepare-to-deploy order" status at their home station are not deployed. Movement of forces that do not meet operational requirements (e.g., movement of forces to meet training, readiness, or exercise requirements) are not considered deployments and, therefore, are not subject to deployment-to-dwell and mobilization-to-dwell limits and specified goals.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
deployment-to-dwell ratio for AC	The ratio of time a unit, detachment, or individual is deployed to the time the unit, detachment, or individual is in dwell. For example, an AC unit that is deployed for 7 months and in dwell for 21 months has a deployment-to-dwell ratio of 1:3.
dwell time (AC)	In accordance with Section 991 of Title 10, U.S.C., dwell time (“dwell”), for the purposes of calculating the AC deployment-to-dwell ratio, is redefined as the time a unit, detachment, or individual not attached to a unit or detachment is not on a deployment. Dwell begins when most of a unit or detachment, or an individual not attached to a unit or detachment, returns to their homeport, station, or base from a deployment. Dwell ends when the unit or individual leaves on a deployment. An AC unit or individual is either on a deployment or in dwell.
dwell time (RC)	Defined in DoD Instruction 1235.12 as the term “dwell.”
mobilization-to-dwell ratio for RC	For Reserve units, detachments, or individuals, the mobilization-to-dwell ratio is defined in DoD Instruction 1235.12.