

Pay & Personnel Newsletter

United States Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Center

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Government Travel Charge Card Program Updates and PCS Reminders

May 8, 2018 —08 MAY 18

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UNCLAS //N04600//

ALCGPSC 069/18

SUBJ: GTCC PROGRAM UPDATES AND PCS SEASON REMINDERS A. Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Program Policies and Procedures, COMDTINST M4600.18 (SERIES)

1. This message seeks to raise awareness of general programmatic concerns and provide GTCC guidance as we move into the summer transfer season.

2. Travel Card Use. In general, cardholders are required to use their travel card for all authorized, reimbursable travel expenses unless specifically exempt in Ref A. These exemptions include Temporary Duty (TDY) of more than 21 days, Permanent Change in Station (PCS) duration of over 15 days, cases where the card is not accepted by the vendor, or prohibited such as group meals where the check cannot be split. Provided below are specific examples where card use is not authorized:

a. Permissive Orders. Permissive orders do not include reimbursement for travel expenses and therefore card use is prohibited.

b. Team Gear or Equipment. Government material required by multiple members of a group or team is not considered a reimbursable travel expense for an individual member and must be paid for by other procurement methods.

c. Tuition. While conference registration fees including those for training conferences may be reimbursable travel expenses, tuition for regularly scheduled courses is not.

d. Local Travel. The travel card can only be used when the cardholder has travel orders and is not authorized for local travel expenses.

e. TDY Over 21 Days. For TDY travel over 21 days, the travel card shall not be used unless interim travel claims are submitted at least every 21 days which requires the travel orders to be document type 13 orders.

f. Leisure in Conjunction with Official Travel. Use of the member's GTCC or the CBA, and the GSA contracted fares for travel other than between official duty stations is not authorized. Special rules and fare restrictions apply to leisure in conjunction with official travel. Travelers are encouraged to review the Leisure in Conjunction with Official Orders (LICWO) FAQ sheet available at <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/CG-1/psc/bops/GovTrvl/Required-Use-of-TMC-Lodging-FAQs.docx> or contact their Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) prior to booking any leisure travel.

3. Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Issues. Relocation to a new duty station can be both exciting and stressful on the member and the family. Provided below are a few helpful reminders to ensure cardholders use their travel card correctly during the move:

a. PCS Duration. If the duration of the PCS travel will exceed 15 days, including leave, compensatory absence, proceed-time, and temporary duty in conjunction with the PCS, the card shall not be used. This does not apply to Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA). The card may be used to cover hotels and meals in conjunction with the TLA entitlement, but reimbursement claims must be submitted every 15 days to allow for timely payment of the GTCC bill. In the case of Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE), card use is subject to the 15-day rule addressed above. If PCS travel duration will exceed 15 days, ensure the traveler requests a travel advance to cover the expenses.

b. Dependent Travel. The GTCC shall not be used for dependent travel expenses such as meals, lodging, and transportation tickets. Instead members should request travel advances and ensure their PCS travel orders authorize the use of the Centrally Billed Account (CBA) for dependent travel.

c. Transportation of Household Goods. The GTCC is not authorized for the transportation of household goods (for example: U Haul rental), privately owned vehicles, mobile homes and boats per Ref A. This includes Personally Procured Moves (PPM).

d. Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) Reservations. Personnel traveling into or out of Alaska via the AMHS ferry system are encouraged to review the current data on reservations and cancellation policies detailed on the following

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website -

[https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/GOVTrvl/Traveler Information/#AMHS Reservation Policy Change.](https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/GOVTrvl/Traveler%20Information/#AMHS%20Reservation%20Policy%20Change)

e. Trailers/Recreational Vehicles (RV). Movement of a trailer (boat, camper, U Haul) or even driving an RV is not a reimbursable travel expense and therefore associated expenses are not authorized to be charged to the CBA or the Individually Billed Account. This is particularly important for travel within the northwest that involves the Alaska Marine Highway System. This would be considered part of a Do It Yourself (DITY) move and reimbursable under a separate process.

f. Lodging Reservations. Lodging reservations for PCS travel do not need to be made via the Travel Management Center (TMC) - ADTRAV.

g. City Pair Program Fares and Pets. Travelers are reminded of the requirement to purchase GSA City Pair Program fares for official travel via the TMC. In cases where the family includes pets and the GSA airline fares do not accommodate their travel, the member should consider the travel as LICWO for one or more travelers who need to travel with the pet on a non-GSA contract flight. This travel must be paid for with a personal credit card, cannot use other contracted government fares (often called DG fares), and the reimbursement would be limited to the lower of the actual cost or the GSA Contracted fare cost.

h. Credit Limit Increases. As part of your travel preparations, travelers should verify the credit limit on their GTCC is sufficient to meet their authorized, reimbursable travel expenses. Cardholders can view their credit limit in Direct Access under the Self-Service, Employee, View, My Credit Card Data or by contacting their Travel Manager who can also increase the limit if needed.

4. Critical Travel Card Address Updates. In the next few weeks, DHS will award a task order under the new GSA SmartPay3 contract to a new bank for the Travel Card Program. This bank will not be JPMC. It is critical that all cardholders ensure their mailing address in the current JPMC bank system is up-to-date through the entire summer. New travel cards will be mailed out during Sep-Oct 2018 by the new bank. GTCC cardholders are reminded that they need to contact the bank any time their mailing

address changes. There is no data connection between Direct Access and the bank system for the cardholder address so these updates are not automatic. The bank may be reached by calling the number on the back of the GTCC, 888-297-0781.

5. All questions should be directed as follows:

a. Cardholders shall direct GTCC questions to their unit GTCC Travel Manager. Members can determine who their supporting Travel Managers are under the contacts page located at <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/GOVTrvl/Contacts/>.

b. GTCC Travel Managers: direct questions to Ms. Carlene Curry at 703-258-5996 or Evelyn.C.Curry@uscg.mil or Mr. Matt Ruckert at [703-201-3080](tel:703-201-3080) or Matthew.T.Ruckert@uscg.mil.

6. Released: CAPT G. T. Prestidge, Commander, Personnel Service Center. The Service Center for our most important resource – Our People.

7. Internet release is authorized.

Defense Travel Management Office Allowances and Regulations Update

The Defense Travel Management Office has updated the following information for 01 June 2018:

[Basic Allowance for Housing \(BAH\)](#)
[Overseas Housing Allowances \(OHA\)](#)
[Overseas Cost of Living Allowances \(COLA\)](#)
[Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\) and Appendices](#)

To access this information, visit the [DTMO Website](#).

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Direct Access Guides and Tutorials Added or Updated in May 2018

This is a running list of known issues and procedural highlights for the past month.

23 May: Added a new video presentation to our "[On Demand Virtual Road Shows](#)" page. The presentation, recorded by Base Kodiak, covers [PCS information for personnel headed to Alaska](#). The presentation is about 8 minutes long and is suitable for members, dependents, unit administrative personnel, and Servicing Personnel Offices. The presentation is part of our [OUTCONUS PCS & Entitlements Workshop](#).

18 May: Added a tutorial for Command Users covering the [Reserve Annual Screening Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#).

16 May: The SPO Separations Guides for [Discharge - End of Enlistment](#) and [Discharge with a Separations Request](#) have been updated to clarify use of the leave carry over block.

15 May:

- The [SPO Guide for Allotments/Voluntary Deductions](#) has been updated. The procedures for stopping a deduction have been clarified.

Three Self-Service video tutorials added:

1. [Withdraw or Edit Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Request](#)
2. [Montgomery GI Bill Selected-Reserve \(MGIB-SR\)](#)
3. [View My Dependent Information](#)

11 May: The SPO PCS guide for [Entitlements Auto Start/Stop](#) has been updated.

07 May:

- Added a [video tutorial demonstrating how to clear the cache in Internet Explorer](#). This can often help solve issues with menus and permission denied errors in Direct Access.
- Added a [video tutorial, for Commands, showing how to process Reserve Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Drills](#).

03 May:

- The Unit P&A User Guide for [Maintaining Honors and Awards](#) has been updated.
- The [SPO User Guide for Career Sea Pay](#) has been updated. The issue with *deleting neutral time* has (described in the 06 April edition of the guide) has been resolved.

02 May:

- Added a Self-Service Video Tutorial for [Viewing and Printing Year-End Tax Forms](#) in Direct Access.
- Added a Self-Service Video Tutorial for [Maintaining Phone Numbers](#) in Direct Access.
- Added a Self-Service Video Tutorial for [Managing Thrift Savings Plan \(TSP\)](#) enrollment and elections in Direct Access.

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Web-TPAX/Travel Guides and Tutorials Added or Updated in May 2018

This is a running list of known issues and **procedural highlights** for the past month.

18 May:

- The [Evacuation Travel Claim Guide](#) has been updated

Evacuation Travel Voucher Assistance

Preparedness for unusual or emergency circumstances (e.g. hurricane season, flash flooding or wildfires) requires a review of evacuation allowances as well as the evacuation travel claim submission process. This overview is intended to summarize the important points but not replace guidance provided by the references listed below. If you have any questions please contact your travel manager or travel Authorizing /Approving Official (AO).

References:

- [Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\), Chapter 6](#)
- [Q&A for Civilian Employees Affected by Emergency Situations](#)
- [Federal Travel Regulations \(FTR\)](#)

Evacuation Terms: Allowances are provided to evacuees based upon the temporary or permanent nature of the evacuation event:

Evacuations are the authorized/ordered movement from a specific CONUS or OCONUS area, when authorized/ordered by the Area/District Commander or CG-1332. The evacuation order may specify evacuation from specific local evacuation zones (see Evacuation Claim Scenarios Appendix).

Limited Evacuations are the authorized/ordered movement from a CONUS residence to the nearest available accommodations when authorized/ordered by the Area/District Commander or CG-1332.

Safe Havens are separate journey locations anywhere in the world named in evacuation orders as destinations for *temporary* relocation from a member's evacuated PDS or employee's primary worksite to specific localities, areas or as a specific distance radius. If CONUS is the named safe haven in the evacuation order then an evacuee, upon arrival at the CONUS Port of Debarkation (POD), must select the exact CONUS safe haven location to which they are traveling at Gov't expense. This location must be included on the travel orders. DLA is not authorized.

Designated Places are separate journey locations that evacuees select within the range of possible locations allowed as the place where they should establish a *permanent* residence when the Area/District Commander or CG-1332 determines that return to the Active Duty Member's evacuated PDS or Civilian Employee's primary worksite should not take place or is not expected to take place in the near future. This location must be included on the travel orders. If evacuees are already at a safe haven then the orders must also include the end date of safe haven allowances. DLA is authorized. Fiscal year prohibition does not apply.

Evacuation Orders determine eligible dependents. The decision of the local civil official to evacuate an area is not sufficient to reimburse evacuation entitlement. Message, memo or oral evacuation orders from the Area/District Commander or CG-1332 provide the authorized beginning date and termination (if known) date, event location, units involved, safe haven or designated place. **Please copy PPC Travel on all message traffic concerning both the official evacuation order and evacuation termination.**

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Evacuation Travel Orders are issued by an AO to Active Duty Member dependents, Civilian Employees and Civilian Employee Dependents based upon the information provided in the evacuation order. The evacuation applies to dependents residing *in the vicinity of the member's PDS, authorized designated location or employee primary worksite*. Evacuations also apply to dependents residing in the vicinity of an Active Duty Member's prior PDS or dependents en route to establish a residence with the member. If a specific evacuation zone is indicated in the evacuation order then the evacuee's residence must be located in that zone. Evacuees located at non-foreign or foreign OCONUS evacuated locations must be command-sponsored to receive evacuation allowances.

PDS Vicinity is defined separately for a PDS CONUS or OCONUS and determines evacuation allowance eligibility based on the location of the dependent residence.

OCONUS PDS vicinity is defined under JTR Table 6-13:

- (1) A dependent is residing in the foreign location or non-foreign location OCONUS within which the PDS is located.
- (2) A Service member resides with the dependent in an area OCONUS and commutes to the PDS from a place located in an adjacent country.

CONUS PDS vicinity is to be defined according to PDS local area under JTR, par. 0206:

- (1) The area within the PDS limits and the metropolitan area around the PDS served by the local public transit systems.
- (2) The local commuting area as determined by the AO or local Service or Dodd Agency.

(3) The separate cities, towns, or installations among which the public commutes on a daily basis.

*The AO should submit issues through the trouble ticket process.

Travel and Transportation:

Active Duty Members ordered to evacuate must be TDY or PCS. TDY may be authorized within the PDS limits for emergency circumstances if eligibility is met as per JTR, par. 020602. Reserve Component Members who are not on active duty are not authorized evacuation or TDY orders.

Active Duty Member Dependents ordered to evacuate will travel under their own evacuation travel orders and are authorized transportation the same as that authorized for PCS. POV transportation is reimbursed at the Other Rate (PCS mileage rate). To identify eligible evacuees please see JTR, par. 060201 and Table 6-4.

Civilian Employees (Including NAF, PHS and NOAA but not contractors) ordered to evacuate will travel under evacuation travel orders and are authorized transportation the same as that authorized for TDY. POV transportation is reimbursed at the TDY mileage rate. Employees may be placed on TDY orders by their unit to report for duty at a location *other* than their safe haven.

Civilian Employee Dependents ordered to evacuate will travel under evacuation travel orders and are authorized transportation the same as that authorized for TDY. POV transportation is reimbursed at the TDY mileage rate. Eligible dependents are defined under 5 CFR §550.402 and FTR §300-3.

Escorts may accompany dependents incapable of traveling alone. Active Duty Members travel TDY as an escort under the JTR. Civilian Employees travel TDY as an escort under the FTR. Another persons as escorts are issued an

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Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) (see COMDTINST12570.3 (series)) and reimbursed TDY under the FTR. Escorts who are normally not eligible to claim evacuation payments on behalf of an evacuee cannot claim or be reimbursed for dependent travel.

Safe Haven reimbursement applies to days while at the safe haven not travel days. Government mess availability/use has no effect on per diem allowances for dependents. Standard CONUS Rate is a rate reimbursed to Active Duty Member Dependents who travel (even OCONUS) to a location other than the authorized safe haven without approval. Initial travel to the safe haven followed by travel to a non-authorized location is reimbursed at the initial safe haven rate with transportation NTE to/from the authorized safe haven. There is no provision to reimburse evacuation allowances to Civilian Employees and their dependents who don't travel to an authorized safe haven. Evacuation allowances terminate after 180 days unless specified by the District Commander or CG-1332. If evacuees are directed to move to another safe haven, the 180 day clock will restart. Safe Haven allowances terminate on the date as per JTR, pars. 060107-B or 060207-B whichever comes first.

Designated Place arrival causes safe haven allowances to immediately terminate once a permanent residence is established. When an evacuee is located at the designated place and a permanent residence has not been established then safe haven allowances at the authorized rate may continue for up to 30 days after arrival.

ADTRAV the USCG Travel Management Center (TMC) may charge dependent transportation tickets to the centrally billed account (CBA) using the travel order. It is mandatory to arrange transportation and lodging through ADTRAV per ALCGPSC 067/18. The toll free ADTRAV phone number is: 1-855-576-4781. Use of the government travel charge card (GTCC) for

dependents is *not authorized* and would constitute misuse.

Dependents Age 12 and Over are given the same per diem as an Active Duty Member on a Dyad the rate of 100% for the first 30 days. On the 31st day, the per diem rate drops to 60% of the full rate.

Dependents Under 12 are given an amount limited to one half of what an Active Duty Member traveling on a TDY receives at the rate of 50% for the first 30 days. On the 31st day, the per die rate drops to 30% of the full rate.

Local Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses:

- Active Duty Member Dependents are authorized local travel allowance paid at a rate of \$25.00 per day, *per family* only if the dependent has not taken delivery of a POV or did not drive a POV to the safe haven. No receipts are required. This may not be paid for any day reimbursed a rented motor vehicle. There is no provision for local travel allowance reimbursement to Civilian Employees and their dependents.
- If an evacuation travel claim contains more than one dependent, the lodging "cap" increases by the appropriate percentage. (e.g. one dependent over 12 + one dependent under 12 = 150% X lodging locality rate). CONUS tax is paid as a reimbursable expense.
- Civilian Employees/Dependents and Active Duty Member Dependents are not authorized miscellaneous TDY reimbursable expenses unless specified by regulation as they are in an evacuation status.
- Active Duty Member Dependents are limited to the free checkable baggage the carrier allows. Excess accompanied

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baggage must be authorized/approved by the AO on orders.

- Active Duty Members are authorized up to 2 household pet's transportation and quarantine reimbursement from a foreign PDS as per JTR, par. 060204. Foreign area and foreign country is defined under JTR, APP. A as any area or country **outside** the 50 States, District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and U.S. territories and possessions.
- An Active Duty Member who is TDY and takes leave to travel at personal expense to the safe haven where the dependent is evacuated, may be eligible for a lodging allowance if the Active Duty Member meets all of the following criteria:
 - Has an order to the TDY location for 31 or more days.
 - Receive per diem while at the TDY location to cover TDY lodging expenses because Government Quarters are not available at no cost to the Service member.
 - Return to the TDY location immediately after completing the authorized leave.

Claim Submission:

- There are a few ways that evacuation travel claims may be submitted:
- The Active Duty Member sponsor, Civilian Employee sponsor or their full signature proxy submits the evacuation travel claim in TPAX (*Recommended*). A guide for completing [Evacuation Travel Claims in Web-TPAX](#) has is available.

- The Active Duty Member sponsor or Civilian Employee sponsor mails the evacuation travel claim manually. Ensure the sponsor and AO signed 1351-2 form. The packet must include required receipts and AO signed evacuation travel orders.
- A complete manual evacuation travel claim packet in PDF form is submitted by the AO to PPC Travel from the AO's USCG.mil e-mail account to the Travel Support Team email program per PPPM Ch. 2-J. There are specific guidelines for this type of submission. AOs must follow these guidelines or risk exclusion from the program. AO questions may be addressed through the trouble ticket process.
- It is recommended that evacuation travel claims be submitted in TPAX. Manual claims **must** indicate in remarks whether travel is claimed for member/employee *and* dependents or for the dependents only. The dependent spouse or Active Duty Member's dependent age 18 or older may claim dependent travel. The travel order must include the sponsor's name and EMPLID, claimant's name, SSN and relationship to the sponsor, dependent's date of birth (DOB), spouse date of marriage (DOM), evacuation dates (may not yet include an end date), safe haven or designated place (may include a NTE distance radius) and AO signature when claiming evacuation travel reimbursement. The TONO for evacuations can be an 11 or 13 document type. Blanket orders are not authorized. When the evacuation is expected to exceed 21 days and incremental claims must be submitted they may be issued a doc-type 13.

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- All advances including travel debit cards or previous payments associated with an evacuation travel claim must be disclosed in block 9 of the 1351-2 claim form upon submission in order to avoid overpayment. To verify travel advance payments please visit the Coast Guard Finance Center Travel Payment Application at:
<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/fincen/SitePages/Travel.aspx>.
- If the traveler is overpaid, PPC will mail a debt letter to the address provided on the Travel Voucher DD-1351-2. The traveler has 30 days from the date of the letter to make payment in full, or the indebtedness will be referred to the U.S Treasury for collection.
- Please mail manual claims to:

Evacuation Travel Claims

Commanding Officer (TVL/TST)
U.S. Coast Guard
Pay & Personnel Center
444 S.E. Quincy St.
Topeka KS 66683-3591

Please allow an additional ten business days for the Finance Center to issue the payment once the claim is process by PPC Travel.

**NOTE: Any AO has permission to check the status of a claim through TPAX.*

Some Common Issues:

1. Duplicate or incorrect TONO
2. No SSN for dependent making the claim
3. Dependent does not reside in the vicinity of the sponsor member/employee PDS/Primary worksite area

4. Claimant names must be annotated the same on all claims (e.g. hyphenated last names)
5. Not including on the 1351-2 block 9 all advances, travel debit cards and prior payments
6. All dates of birth on travel orders for dependents claimed to have traveled
7. Travel claim itineraries provided as they were actually performed

Additional information may be found on the PPC Travel website at:

<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/ppc/travel/>

*Please see your AO for questions or assistance regarding evacuation travel claim issues

Listed below are examples of the Dependent Evacuation Documents.

- [Example Dependent Evacuation Travel Order](#) (PDF)
- [Example Dependent Evacuation Travel Claim](#) (PDF)

If you require additional guidance and/or further assistance contact your AO. If further assistance is required your AO should contact PPC Customer Care either by calling 785-339-2200 or 1-866-772-8724 or by [completing the on-line trouble ticket form](#).

- PPC Customer Care: (785) 339-2200
- CG Travelers calling from home: 1-866-PPC-USCG(772-8724).

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Servicing Personnel Office Consolidation Update: SMTC SPO Closed

The SPO located at SMTC ADMINISTRATION BRANCH (043790) has been disestablished in DA. All records previously serviced by the SPO at SMTC ADMINISTRATION BRANCH have been moved to BASE E-CITY SPO DIV (PS) (046017).

Please refer to the SPO Contact List page at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/ppc/Pages/SPO%20Contact%20List.aspx> for SPO contact information and previously issued updates.

Ensure all communications regarding the shifting of SPO records are routed through PSC-BOPS-R. The POC is Emily Jennings.

Reserve Bonus Programs and Special Incentive Pay

[ALCOAST message 184/18](#) cancels ALCOAST 108/18 and announces eligibility and amounts paid for SELRES Enlistment and Affiliation bonuses as authorized by 37 U.S. Code 331. It also announces the reinstatement of Designated Unit Pay (DUP), formerly known as High Priority Unit Pay.

Requesting Reserve Early Retirement

Use the [Reserve Early Retirement RET-1 Calculator](#) **UPDATED** to estimate a Reservist's eligibility date for Reserve Early Retirement.

Follow these steps to estimate a member's Reserve Early Retirement eligibility date:

1. Using Direct Access, verify all completed qualifying active duty periods (qualifying service types are listed below). For each aggregate 90 days (time does not have to be consecutive) **within a fiscal year**, the member can reduce their RET-1 eligibility date by 3

months. Prior to 30 September 2014 (FY 2014 and earlier) any remaining balance **cannot be carried over**. After 30 September 2014 (FY 2015 and later), any remaining balance can be carried over to the **next fiscal year only**. If it is not used in the next fiscal year, that time is lost. Each day may only be used once.

Creditable active duty periods include:

- (a) Title 10 performed after 28 January 2008 (includes ADOS; contingency, non-contingency and involuntary Title 10)
- (b) Title 10 performed after 28 January 2008 for medical hold
- (c) Title 14 performed after 31 December 2011 for response to domestic incidents
- (d) EAD performed after 28 January 2008 (not including RPA duties)

Non-creditable active duty periods include:

- (a) Active duty for training (IADT, ADT-AT, and ADT-OTD)
- (b) EAD for Reserve Program Administrators (RPAs)

EXAMPLE 1:

In FY 2014 a member completes 220 days of Title 10 orders. This results in two complete periods of 90 days (180 days). The member can be credited 3 months for each set of 90 days. For FY 2014, the member will receive 6 months credit towards Reserve Early Retirement eligibility and lose 40 days.

EXAMPLE 2:

In FY 2015 a member completes 220 days of Title 10 orders. This results in two complete periods of 90 days (180 days). The member can be credited 3 months for each set of 90 days. For FY 2015, the member will receive 6 months credit towards Reserve Early Retirement eligibility. The additional 40 days will be carried over to the next fiscal year (2016). If they are not used in FY 2016, they cannot be carried over

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again.

In FY 2016, the member completes 30 days of Title 14. The total qualifying days in FY 2016 is 70 (40 from FY 2015 + 30 from FY 2016). This does not reach the required aggregate 90 days. So, the 40 days from FY 2015 are lost, and the 30 days from FY 2016 are carried over to FY 2017.

2. Total the days of all the qualifying 90 day periods (Example 2: 90 days + 90 days = 180) and divide the number by 30 ($180 \div 30 = 6$). This will give you the total number of months by which the member can reduce their RET-1 eligibility date (6 months). The estimated retirement date may not be reduced below 50 years of age.

3. [Download and extract the Reserve Early Retirement RET-1 Calculator](#). The Security Warning bar will inform you that the Macros have been disabled. Choose Options, then Enable this content. Click OK. Follow the instructions listed on the spreadsheet. Use Direct Access to gather the dates of the member's orders. The spreadsheet will provide a breakdown of the data. Provide a copy to the member for their records.

4. Follow the procedures in [ALCGRSV \(All Coast Guard Reserve\) message #017/18](#) for requesting reserve early retirement.

Revised Conference Request Submission Procedures and Timelines

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, through the DHS Chief Financial Officer (DHS-OCFO), has issued new policy regarding conference approval timelines for conference packages requiring the DHS Deputy Chief of Staff (DHS-DCoS) approval. [ALCOAST message #197/18 provides more information these changes.](#)

Explaining TRICARE Annual Cost Increases

Population growth, aging, and price increases for medical goods and services drive many health care costs in the U.S. In any given year, these price increases are related to rising drug costs, using new medical technology, increasing provider rates or other factors.

In response, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which [tracks health care costs for the federal government](#), estimates spending on health care is expected to grow 5.5 percent each year through 2026.

TRICARE is not immune to these drivers. On Jan. 1, 2018, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) adjusted [TRICARE costs](#). The National Defense Authorization Act of 2017 set some of these rates. Others were based on unique factors, like the annual cost of living adjustment or average costs of covered health care services.

TRICARE cost changes vary and may change annually. Near the end of 2017, with the help of several military and veteran service organizations, DHA was able to recalculate and correct costs before Jan. 1, lowering 2018 patient costs for several types of care by \$3 to \$8. Other costs increased, like the [retiree specialty mental health outpatient copayment](#), which changed from \$12 to \$30.

As always, TRICARE costs depend on your plan and who you are (for example, whether you are an active duty family member or retiree). To make managing your health costs more predictable and transparent, DHA introduced more copayments under the new [TRICARE Select](#) program when using a TRICARE network provider. Copayments are fixed-fees; they let you know the out-of-pocket cost of a covered service before receiving a bill.

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Visit the TRICARE website to view [health plan costs](#) and to download a detailed [Costs and Fees Sheet](#). This is your benefit—take command of your health care by learning about the costs associated with your plan.

Coast Guard Special Needs Program Enrollment Reminder

In anticipation of the upcoming transfer season, the Office of Work-Life (CG-111) is providing information regarding the Special Needs Program. [Refer to ALCOAST 208/18 for more.](#)

Answers to your frequently asked moving questions

When your Coast Guard journey takes you to a new location, moving can be quite the adventure! To help you navigate the many facets of a military move, I've reached out to yeoman Chief Petty Officer Rikki Robson and transportation officer, Maxine Wilson-Bacon to obtain expert answers to some of your frequently asked questions. [Read the article in the Coast Guard All Hands Blog.](#)

Keep Your DEERS Information Up To Date

Do you or your family member expect to experience a [Qualifying Life Event \(QLE\)](#), including planning to move this summer? If so, you'll need to update your information in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System \(DEERS\)](#). To remain eligible for TRICARE coverage, you must keep your information current in DEERS. DEERS is a computerized database of active duty and retired service members, their family members and others who are eligible for TRICARE. Proper and

current DEERS registration is key to getting timely, effective TRICARE benefits.

It's essential to update and verify your information in DEERS anytime you have a [QLE](#). This is especially true during the summer moving season. After you [arrive at a new duty station](#) or location, update your information in DEERS. Your Social Security number (SSN) and the SSN of each of your covered family members must be included in DEERS for your TRICARE coverage to be accurate.

You have several options for updating and verifying DEERS information. You can make changes in person, by phone, online or by mail.

Add or Remove Family Members

- **In person:** Visit a local ID card office. Find an office near you at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsi.

Update Contact Information

- **Phone:** Call 1-800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-363-2883) or fax updates to 1-831-655-8317
- **Online:** Log into milConnect at <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>
- **Mail:** Mail updates to:
Defense Manpower Data Center
Support Office
Attention: COA,
400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA
93955-6771

Only sponsors can add a family member in DEERS. But family members age 18 and older may update their own contact information. Find more information about [DEERS](#) on the TRICARE website.