

Pay & Personnel Newsletter

United States Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Center

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Members: Help DoD set the new COLA rates for all services

The Department of Defense sets new Continental U.S. (CONUS) cost-of-living allowance (COLA) rates every year for the Uniformed Services (including the Coast Guard).

These rates are based, in part, on a survey – the Living Pattern Survey (LPS) – of shopping patterns by CONUS-based active members and their dependents. The LPS is conducted once every three years and the next one launches on Jan. 1, 2021.

The survey is open to all active duty members (including Reserve members on long-term active duty) currently stationed at their CONUS duty station for at least three months.

Participation is voluntary, but we can't over-stress how important it is for all hands in CONUS to complete the online survey! The LPS is your only opportunity to influence CONUS COLA rates.

Your input will help the DoD understand where your household purchases groceries, clothing, household furnishings, entertainment, communications and transportation.

Everybody's input is critical, especially if you live in a high-cost location where DoD doesn't have a significant presence.

Members: Please look for the survey launch announcement in your inbox the first week of January. It will take you about 15 minutes to complete. The LPS can be completed on any computer with Internet access – you don't need a CAC.

Supervisors and leaders at all levels: Please help us get the highest possible response rate. Ensure your members see this MyCG article, and regularly remind them to take the survey.

The LPS will be available to respondents starting January 1 at the following site:

<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/conusColaSurvey.cfm>

Only CONUS-based active duty members and their dependents are eligible to participate. A family's principal shopper should be the one that completes the LPS and please, only one survey per household.

The 2021 CONUS Living Pattern Survey (LPS) will run through March 31, 2021.

Related

- Learn more about the [2021 Continental U.S. \(CONUS\) Living Pattern Survey](#)
- [Take the survey here, starting Jan. 1](#)
- [Fiscal Year 2021 Standard CONUS Per Diem Rate Announced](#)
- [CONUS COLA](#)
- [Overseas COLA](#)

2021 Military Basic Pay Increase

On, January 1, 2021, the full Senate overrode the President's veto of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2021. The House did the same on Monday. The bill is now law securing the 3.0 percent military pay raise for 2021.

[2021 Military Active & Reserve Component Pay Tables.](#)

Travel Authorizing /Approving Official (AO) Course Offline

The AO Course contains Adobe FLASH Media and has been temporarily removed as Adobe FLASH Media is no longer supported and deemed a cyber-vulnerability by CG-6. Please submit your CG-7421a without any attachments and permissions will be granted. As soon as the course comes back online, we will update our website and require proof of completion of the AO course for new AO's or proof the tests have been completed for renewing AO permissions.

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ALCGENL 003/21 May 2021 Service Wide Examination (SWE) Competition

[ALCGENL 003/21 May 2021 Servicewide Examination \(SWE\) Competition](#), announces the May 2021 SWE competition for all ratings except for BM2 and MU. for advancement to pay grades E-5 to E-8.

Keep DEERS Updated as New Plan Year Begins

Did you or your family member experience a change last year that may qualify a DEERS update? As 2021 begins, be sure your and your family's information is up to date in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System](#), or DEERS. DEERS is a database of active duty and retired service members. It also includes family members and others who are eligible for TRICARE benefits. If you don't keep your family's information current, it could delay their access to health care. Errors can also cause delays with your claims and prescription delivery.

When to Update DEERS

You should update your DEERS info anytime you experience a [Qualifying Life Event](#) (QLE). Some QLEs include [moving](#), [turning age 65](#), [getting married](#) or [divorced](#), or [having a child](#). These life events mean TRICARE health plan options for you and your family may change. As stated in the [TRICARE Qualifying Life Events Fact Sheet](#), your DEERS record lists your family status, service status, and more.

"If you don't keep your DEERS record up to date after QLEs, you may miss enrollment deadlines," said Mark Ellis, chief of the Policy and Programs Section of the TRICARE Health Plan with the Defense Health Agency. "Another reason to keep your DEERS information current, like your address and phone number, is so you don't experience a break in your coverage."

You should also keep your DEERS information up to date, so you don't miss important information, like [COVID-19 news](#). As more information around COVID-19 vaccinations becomes available, your information in DEERS will help make sure that you get the latest updates. And then you can act accordingly.

How to Update DEERS

You can make DEERS updates online, by phone, in person, or by mail. To add or remove family members, you must do so in person. If you're a sponsor or family member, you can make address changes and update other personal information. But only sponsors can add a family member in DEERS. You may need certain documents to do so, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or birth certificate.

Here are the ways you can view and update DEERS information for you and your family members:

- **Online:** Log in to [milConnect](#).
- **By phone:** Call 1-800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-363-2883) or fax updates to 1-800-336-4416.
- **In person:** Visit a local [Uniformed Services ID card office](#).
- **By mail:** Submit updates to:
Defense Manpower Data Center
Support Office
Attn: COA
400 Gigling Road
Seaside, CA, 93955-6771

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Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual - Chapter 7: Continuation of Service Published

PPC is in the process of converting the [Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual \(PPPM\)](#), [PPCINST M1000.2 \(series\)](#) to Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) format. New sections are promulgated as they are completed. [Chapter 7, Continuation of Service](#) is now available in TTP format. Chapter 7 (TTP) supersedes Chapter-3.

Update: Payroll tax payback will be spread out through 2021

If you are affected by the 2020 payroll tax deferral, your back taxes will now be collected over the course of the entire year.

Add in the 2021 pay raises for both members (3%) and civilians (1%), and your take-home pay may be a little higher than you anticipated.

In August 2020, President Trump issued an [executive order](#) to defer the Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) taxes for many federal employees, both military and civilian, for the months of September, October, November and December.

The IRS recently announced the back taxes will be collected the next 12 months. You don't need to take any action, since the Coast Guard's payroll providers will automatically collect the taxes from your paycheck.

Here's what you need to know.

Active duty members

- If you had payroll taxes deferred, the 2020 deferred OASDI taxes will be collected in 24 installments from your mid-month and end-of-month pay between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31.
- However, because of the 3% pay increase, you will actually see a slight

increase in your take-home pay beginning mid-January.

- If you have questions, contact Compensation@uscg.mil.

Reserve members (and those performing intermittent duty in 2021)

- If you had payroll taxes deferred, you will see an increase in the OASDI deductions beginning mid-January.
- The amount collected may not be the same every pay period.
- The Coast Guard will collect from each weekly, mid-month and end-of-month pay.
- These collections will continue until the deferred taxes have been repaid in full.
- If you have questions, contact Compensation@uscg.mil.

Civilians

- If you had payroll taxes deferred, you will see a decrease in your take-home pay beginning mid-January.
- The deferred taxes will be taken from wages paid between Jan. 1 through Dec. 19 2021 (PP 26, 2020, through PP 25, 2021), known as the repayment period.
- The total amount of the 2020 deferred OASDI withholding will be collected on a prorated basis from pay, divided evenly among these pay periods.
- The National Finance Center has computed the total deferred amount by employee, which constitutes the total amount to be repaid. This amount will be divided by the 26 pay periods to

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compute a per-pay-period repayment amount. During the repayment period, the payroll system will calculate the normal pay period OASDI taxes based upon the OASDI wages earned in that pay period, and then add the prorated repayment amount calculated as defined above.

- The OASDI withholding will be reflected on your Statement of Earnings and Leave (E&L), starting in PP 26, 2020, which will be paid out on January 11, 2021.
- If you have questions, contact your [servicing Human Resources Specialist](#).

Resources

- [ALCOAST 013/21](#)
- [Military members: Here's why your paycheck looks different](#)
- [Civilian payroll tax deferral starts now](#)
- [Reminder: Payroll tax deferral starts soon](#)
- [Federal government deferring payroll taxes for certain members, employees](#)
- Members and civilians can contact [CG SUPRT](#), the Personal Financial Manager at their Work-Life Regional Practice, or [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance](#) for support with the payroll tax deferral or any other personal financial issues.
- [Payroll Tax Deferral Guide](#).

Understanding Repayment of the Payroll Tax Deferment

As announced in announced in [ALCOAST 329/20](#), the Government deferred Social Security tax collection from September through

the end of 2020. Recent legislation changed the repayment period. Now, the 2020 deferred Social Security taxes will be collected in 24 installments (previously 8 installments) from your mid-month and end-of-month pay between January 15 and December 30 (previously April 30), 2021. To calculate the impact on your military pay, please see the [Payroll Tax Deferral Guide](#).

Collection Information on Tax Deferral

Will I be required to pay back the Social Security taxes that are deferred?

- Yes. Per IRS guidance (as modified by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021), any Social Security taxes deferred September to December 2020 will be collected from your mid-month and end-of-month wages between January and December 30, 2021.

I had taxes deferred between September and December 2020. How will the deferred taxes be repaid?

- For active duty military members, the 2020 deferred Social Security taxes will be collected in 24 installments, from your mid-month and end-of-month pay between January 1 and December 30, 2021.

How will a military member know the total amount of 2020 deferred taxes to be collected in 2021?

- Beginning in January 2021, your payslip within Direct Access will reflect the monthly collection amount and contain a note in the remarks section that shows the remaining balance of deferred Social Security taxes.

I am separating from military service, how will my deferred Social Security taxes be collected?

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- If you are planning to or have separated in 2021: If you separate or retire in 2021, before the deferred Social Security tax is collected in full, the unpaid balance will be collected from your final pay. If there are insufficient funds to collect the full amount, you may receive a debt letter with instructions for repayment.

Can I select my repayment terms, by lump sum or evenly?

- No. The guidance from the Internal Revenue Service (as modified by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021), directs employers to withhold the 2020 deferred Social Security taxes evenly from wages between beginning January 1, 2021, and ending on December 31, 2021

Assignment Year 2021 PCS and HHG Shipments - SITREP

[ALCOAST message 030/21](#) provides information and resources for Coast Guard members transferring in the upcoming assignment year. While the information provided in the message will be of particular interest to those transferring in AY21, it also includes critical information to commands, supervisors, and SPO/ADMIN offices to assist their members in planning, preparing for, and executing PCS orders.

Defense Travel Management Office Allowances and Regulations Update

The Defense Travel Management Office has updated the following information for 01 January 2021:

- [CONUS Per Diem Rates](#)
- [OCONUS Non-Foreign and Foreign Per Diem Rates](#)
- [Overseas Housing Allowances \(OHA\)](#)
- [Overseas Cost of Living Allowances \(COLA\)](#)
- [Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\)](#)

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

Payee Warnings Report for SPO

The purpose of the [Payee Warnings Report](#) is to provide a snapshot of SPO activity that may require additional review BEFORE payout in an effort to reduce any potential pay issues. The warning messages will cover pay and non-pay related items such as BAH/OHA, OCOLA, missing or pending contracts, and review of dependents over the age of 21, etc.

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February 2021 Military Payroll Processing Schedule

Event	Date	Notes
MID-MONTH CUTOFF:	08 Feb (Mon)	Cutoff time is 2000 hours. (Central time).
MID-MONTH FINALIZE:	09 Feb (Tue)	*NO* CALCULATIONS OR INPUT
MID-MONTH HOLDS DUE:	10 Feb (Wed)	BY 11:00 (Central Time)
TREASURY FILES TRANSMISSION:	10 Feb (Wed)	
PAYDAY:	12 Feb (Fri)	
END-MONTH CUTOFF:	18 Feb (Thu)	Cutoff time is 2000 hours. (Central time).
END-MONTH FINALIZE:	19 Feb (Fri)	*NO* CALCULATIONS OR INPUT
END-MONTH HOLDS DUE:	23 Feb (Tue)	BY COB
TREASURY FILES TRANSMISSION:	24 Feb (Wed)	
PAYDAY:	01 Mar (Mon)	

Refer to [E-Mail ALSPO B/20; Payroll Processing Schedule for Calendar Year 2021](#) for definitions of payroll processing terms and the schedule for the remainder of the year.

2021 PCS Mileage (MALT) and TDY Mileage Rates

Effective 1 January 2021, the MALT (monetary allowance in lieu of transportation) rate per authorized POC (privately owned conveyance) is \$0.16 (sixteen cents) per mile. This rate is effective for all PCS travel that commences on or after 1 January 2021 (i.e., the initial travel is started).

TDY mileage rates changed on 01 January 2021. The new TDY rates are:

POC:

- \$0.56** - Automobile (if no GOV is available)
- \$0.16** - POC use instead of a government furnished vehicle (if a GOV is available) when use of a government furnished vehicle is to the government's advantage.
- \$0.54** - Motorcycle
- \$1.26** - Airplane

Current and previous PCS & TDY mileage rates are posted at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/otherratesMile.cfm>.

Direct Access Guide Updates

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

- [Assignment Year 2021 PCS and HHG Shipments - SITREP: ALCOAST message 030/21](#) provides information and resources for Coast Guard members transferring in the upcoming assignment year. While the information provided in the message will be of particular interest to those transferring in AY21, it also includes critical information to commands, supervisors, and SPO/ADMIN offices to assist their members in planning, preparing for, and executing PCS orders.
- [State Tax Withholding Exceptions SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [Understanding Repayment of the Payroll Tax Deferment article](#) updated to include frequently asked questions.

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- [Basic Allowance for Housing \(BAH\) SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [Researching Pay Cases using Revised Calendars SPO tools guide added.](#)
- [Disciplinary Actions SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [Electronic Based Distributed Learning \(EBDL\) person profile user guide updated.](#) List of approved EBDL courses can be found on the [Commandant \(CG-R55\) website.](#)
- [Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual - Chapter 7: Continuation of Service published](#)
- [Cadet Initial Clothing Allowance \(ICA\) Academy Cadet SPO user guide added.](#)
- [Dependent Information SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [View Member Drills Self Service for Command user guide updated.](#)
- [Researching Basics for Pay and Pay Corrections SPO user guide added.](#) This guide provides pay technicians and auditors a starting point for researching all pay cases. This includes how and where to research, determining the correct rate of pay, using the Knowledge Base and Direct Access (DA) user guides, and entering pay corrections into DA.
- [Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Drills \(Command\) user guide updated.](#)
- [Approving or Denying IDT Drills SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [Recruit Accession \(from CGRC\) Cape May SPO user guide updated.](#)
- [Payroll Tax Deferral information guide updated.](#) The 2020 deferred Social Security taxes will be collected in 24 installments, from your mid-month and end-of-month pay between January 15 and December 30, 2021. Per Chapter 11 of the CG Pay Manual, any portion of a debt (including this payroll tax deferral) remaining uncollected at the time of the member's separation must be collected from the member's final pay and allowances. This includes Discharges, Retirements and RELADs, including Reserve members on Active Duty Orders that require a RELAD.