Starting Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)

Introduction
This guide provides the procedures for a SPO to start Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) in Direct Access (DA).

Definition
OHA is a monthly allowance paid to service members assigned to an OCONUS PDS (with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii) and are authorized to live in private quarters.

OHA is a cost reimbursement based allowance. The member does not have an entitlement until they enter into a rental/lease/purchase agreement and provide proof of private sector housing expenses.

References
(a) Coast Guard Pay Manual, COMDTINST M7220.29
(b) Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Chapters 8-10
(c) Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) Briefing Sheet, PDTATAC
(d) CG Portal: Overseas Housing Allowance Knowledge Base

Important Information
If an OHA transaction is denied for any reason, it is IMPORTANT to remember that the most recent approved OHA transaction will continue to run, and therefore continue to pay/not pay the member. The only way to stop/start an OHA entitlement is to ensure a new row is approved. The new row may be an Active row updating the OHA entitlement or an Inactive row, stopping the OHA entitlement.

Reserves
If starting OHA for a Reserve member, ensure their BAH has been stopped (Inactive). Remember, BAH rows for Reservists remain Active even when the member is not on orders and will begin paying BAH when the member is on an Active Duty pay calendar (on orders).

Dependent Information
The member’s OHA eligible dependents’ addresses should be updated to reflect the OHA locality. Within DA, this is completed in the Dependent Information section of the HR Data Shortcuts pagelet. This is important for audit and verification of the OHA entitlement.

OHA Calculator
It is not recommended to use the OHA Calculator as the rate of exchange used by the calculator does not match the rate listed in the OHA tables in Appendix K of the JTR or the rate of exchange loaded into DA every 2 weeks.

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**OHA Tables**

The JTR’s [Appendix K OHA Tables](#) provide the rate of exchange and the maximum rental allowances, MIHA allowance, and utility/recurring maintenance allowances for each paygrade at the with dependent rate. The without dependent rate is 90% of the maximum with dependent rental allowance. These tables are updated bi-weekly. To access the tables, click the link above and then select Appendix _K_OHA_Tables > PDF. Locate and click on the country.

When verifying exchange rates, it is important to utilize the rate of exchange listed on the tables provided in Appendix K OHA tables. Here is the table for Columbia. Note the rate of exchange is $0.000307 – this is the same exchange rate used by DA (see Step 10). The Appendix K OHA tables display the most current rates (it is important to note that the Effective Date will reflect the last time the country’s rates were updated). It is important to understand that while rates are reviewed bi-weekly, if there are no changes to the rate of exchange, the effective date will not change until the rate of exchange changes.

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Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA)

If TLA is used, enter the inclusive dates in the Notepad. This ensures all periods of Active Duty are accounted for within the Housing Allowance component.

For example, the member’s PCS report date was 08/13/19 to an OHA eligible PDS. The member’s BAH entitlement ends on 08/13/19 but their OHA entitlement does not begin until 09/01/19. The notepad should provide a brief explanation as to why OHA did not begin immediately, if not assigned to Government Quarters. For instance, the notepad would read: “TLA was used for 08/13/19 through 08/31/19”.

Auditing Standards

Email ALSPO B/19 implemented a standard business process for submitting and validating pay transactions entered by Servicing Personnel Officers (SPOs). See the following user guides for navigating, identifying, and researching pay transactions:

- Pay Calculation Results
- One Time Positive Input (OTPI)
- Element Assignment by Payee (EABP)

Procedures

See below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Select <strong>Housing Allowance</strong> from the Active &amp; Reserve Pay Shortcuts pagelet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Starting Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), Continued

Procedures, continued

| Step 2 | Enter the member’s Empl ID and click Search. |

- **Empl ID**: 1234567

| Step 3 | The member’s BAH page will display (if any). Select the OHA tab. |

The member’s BAH page will display (if any). Select the OHA tab.
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Procedures, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The member’s current OHA information will display (if any). If the page is blank (as shown below), continue with Step 5. <strong>If</strong> the member has an existing OHA row, click the (+) button to add a new row.</td>
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Procedures, continued

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enter the <strong>Effective Date</strong> of the signed rental/lease/purchase agreement. Ensure the <strong>Status</strong> indicates Active (Inactive indicates the member is not currently receiving pay and allowances).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Image of a screen showing a form with fields for entering details about an Overseas Housing Allowance.*

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Procedures, continued

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Using the drop-down, select the appropriate <strong>OHA Type</strong>.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

![Image of Overseas Housing Allowance form]

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Procedures, continued

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Using the drop-down, select the appropriate OHA Reason.</td>
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</table>

![Image showing the drop-down for selecting OHA Reason.](image)

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Procedures, continued

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Using the lookup, select the appropriate <strong>Locality Code</strong>. Upon selection of the Locality Code, the <strong>OHA Rental Table Amount</strong> will auto-populate (this should match the amount shown in the Appendix K OHA Tables for the member’s rank/paygrade listed in Job Data).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

![Image](image_url)

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Procedures, continued

<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
| 9    | Enter the **Monthly Rental Amount** as it is identified on the rental/lease/purchase agreement (see NOTE below) and press the Tab key; this will auto-populate the **Shared Rental Amount**. If the amount provided in the rental/lease/purchase agreement is listed in foreign currency, do **NOT** convert to US dollars – leave as foreign currency.

**NOTE:** If the predominant form of currency is the local foreign currency but the rental agreement was negotiated in US dollars, the rental amount **must** be converted to foreign currency and entered into DA. The Fixed Exchange Rate must also be selected (see Step 10).

For example, a member stationed in Cartagena, Columbia agreed to pay his landlord $2075 US dollars each month. Because the predominant currency in Columbia is the Columbian Peso, the rental amount must be entered in DA in Columbian Pesos. To calculate the foreign currency, divide the rental amount by the rate of exchange (found on the OHA Tables in Appendix K): $2075 / 0.000307 = 6758957.654 = 6758958 is entered as the Monthly Rental Amount.
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If the member is the home owner, check the <strong>Home Owner Indicator</strong> box. The <strong>Fixed Exchange Rate</strong> box should only be checked if the rental/lease/purchase agreement is utilizing a fixed exchange rate. If a Fixed Exchange Rate box is checked but a fixed exchange rate is not being utilized, this could result in significant under/over payments to the member. For example, this member negotiated their lease in US dollars that was converted into the local foreign currency using the rate of exchange in place at the time of conversion. In this scenario, the Fixed Exchange Rate box should be checked to ensure the member receives the equivalent of the rent in US dollars vice the foreign currency that can fluctuate from pay period to pay period. <strong>Note:</strong> The Appendix K OHA tables display the most current rates of exchange. The Effective date will reflect the last time the country’s rates were updated. It is important to understand that while rates are reviewed bi-weekly, if there are no changes to the rate of exchange, the Effective date will not change until the rate of exchange changes. In this example, the member’s Effective Date of OHA is September 1st, but the OHA tables reflect an Effective date of August 1st. This is because Columbia’s rate of exchange has not changed since August 1st, 2019.</td>
</tr>
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Note: The Appendix K OHA tables display the most current rates of exchange. The Effective date will reflect the last time the country’s rates were updated. It is important to understand that while rates are reviewed bi-weekly, if there are no changes to the rate of exchange, the Effective date will not change until the rate of exchange changes. In this example, the member’s Effective Date of OHA is September 1st, but the OHA tables reflect an Effective date of August 1st. This is because Columbia’s rate of exchange has not changed since August 1st, 2019.
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<tr>
<td>10 cont.</td>
<td><img src="image_url" alt="Image" /></td>
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*COLOMBIA HOUSING ALLOWANCES EFFECTIVE 01 AUGUST 2019*

- **CLIMATE CODES:**
  1. FOR LOCALITY CODE 001 AND
  2. FOR LOCALITY CODES 003 AND 999.
- **UTILITY/RECURRING MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE:** 2050232
- **MOVE-IN HOUSING ALLOWANCE (MIHA)/MISCELLANEOUS:** 888205
- **RATE OF EXCHANGE:** $0.000307

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### Step 11

Using the drop-down, select the appropriate **Utilities Included in Rent** option as indicated in the rental/lease/purchase agreement.

**Note:** If the ‘Some’ option is selected, the **Utility Point Total** must be entered before continuing. This is based on the Climate Code and the total Climate Code Utility Points assigned (see 100503.B.2.b of reference b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Using the drop-down, select the appropriate <strong>Utilities Included in Rent</strong> option as indicated in the rental/lease/purchase agreement. <strong>Note:</strong> If the ‘Some’ option is selected, the <strong>Utility Point Total</strong> must be entered before continuing. This is based on the Climate Code and the total Climate Code Utility Points assigned (see 100503.B.2.b of reference b).</td>
</tr>
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**Procedures, continued**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Upon completion of Steps 9 – 10, the <strong>Constructive Rental Cap</strong>, <strong>Entitled OHA Amount</strong>, and <strong>Utility Recurring Maint Allow</strong> will auto-populate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>If the member is sharing the residence/rent/expenses with another person (that is not their dependent), enter the <strong>OHA Rental Sharers</strong> information as appropriate. Using the drop-down, select the appropriate Branch of Service or Not Applicable (see 100101.A of reference b for Rental Sharer criteria). If the OHA Rental Sharer is a Coast Guard member, enter their <strong>EmplID</strong>.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

If OHA Rental Sharer(s) are entered, the **Shared Rental Amount**, **Constructive Rental Cap**, **Entitled OHA Amount**, and **Utility Recurring Maint Allow** will reduce based on the number of OHA Rental Sharers entered.

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Procedures, continued

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</table>
| 14   | If the member has OHA eligible dependents: using the **OHA Dependents ID** lookup, select the Dependent to be added. To add additional OHA eligible dependents, click the (+) button.  

**Note:** Only BAH eligible dependents will be displayed in the Search Results. If the member has OHA authorized dependents that are not showing in the Search Results, review the member’s **Dependent Information** and update as necessary. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>Review the OHA row to ensure all information has been entered correctly. Click <strong>Save</strong>. The OHA request will be forwarded to the SPO tree for approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Effective Date:** | 09/01/2019 |
| **Status:** | Active |
| **OHA Type:** | OHA With Dependents |
| **OHA Reason:** | Govt Quarter Vacancy |
| **Locality Code:** | CO003 |
| **OHA Rental Table Amount:** | 6755250.00 |
| **Monthly Rental Amount:** | 6758958.00 |
| **Shared Rental Amount:** | 6758958.00 |
| **Constructive Rental Cap:** | 8805482.00 |
| **Entitled OHA Amount:** | 8805482.00 |
| **Fixed Exchange Rate:** | 0.900307 |

| **OHA Rental Sharers** |
| **Branch of Service:** | | **EmpID:** | | **Share Name:** |
| **ID:** | | **Name:** | | **Relation:** |
| **01:** | | **Brown, Sally:** | | **Spouse:** |

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**16** | Per **Email ALSPO B/19**, once the OHA request has been approved, it is important to review the member’s Pay Calculation Results ensure the pay transaction processed correctly. Please see the **Pay Calculation Results** user guide for more information on navigating, reviewing, and validating pay transactions.