

EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS PACKAGE (ERD)

1. **PURPOSE:** This guide provides detailed information about the eligibility and entitlements for dependents who are early returned from an overseas duty station. REF: DOD Directive 1315.7; JFTR, Vol I, Paragraph U5240 and AFR 75-8, Vol II.

2. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS:

a. Service members stationed outside the CONUS may request (sample, Atch 1.1) their command sponsored dependents, including foreign-born spouses, be transported at government expense to a designated place within the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a territory or possession of the United States, or the foreign-born spouse's native country, for personal reasons.

b. Members who have been officially notified of selection for PCS from the overseas area, have an approved retirement, or have an approved separation **are not** eligible to apply for early return of dependents. (Receipt of PCS orders is not required.)

c. Under certain circumstances, foreign-born spouses located in their native country on an approved designated location move may be early returned (i.e., under the provisions of JFTR, Vol I, paragraph U5240-B) to locations indicated in paragraph 2a above.

d. Individually sponsored and/or acquired non-command-sponsored dependents are ineligible to be early returned.

3. **APPROVAL AUTHORITY:** The installation commander, provided the commander is in the grade of colonel (O-6 or above).

a. The approving official may only authorize the early return of eligible dependents when the member has clearly shown:

1. The existence of a valid need to return dependents early.
2. The problem or situation occurred **after** arrival at the overseas duty station.
3. Local resources (on- and off-base) cannot resolve the problem.

b. The approving official must apply the provisions of the Early Return Program judiciously and understand this program may only be used as a last resort.

4. ENTITLEMENTS/AUTHORIZATIONS (IF APPROVED):

a. Dependent Travel: government funded travel is authorized.

b. Household Goods:

1. Dependents: Orders authorized the transportation of dependents from outside CONUS as provided in JFTR, Vol 1, paragraphs U5144 through U5154, may also authorize (if approved by

approval authority) the transportation of household goods within the member's authorized weight allowance or the administrative weight limitation established by the Air Force.

2. Members:

a. When the member and spouse who was early returned are not divorced or they are divorced and member does not remarry, the member will be entitled to the authorized weight if the outside CONUS shipment not to exceed the maximum weight allowance or the administrative weight limitation established by the Air Force, less the weight of the household goods shipped by dependents.

b. When the member and the spouse who was early returned are divorced (or spouse is deceased) and a new command-sponsored spouse is residing with the member on the effective date of the next PCS order, the member will be authorized shipment of the weight he/she was originally authorized in the overseas area. (Authorized weight will not be reduced by the amount previously authorized when the former dependent was early returned.)

c. Unaccompanied Baggage: Shipment of 350 pounds for dependents 12 years of age or older and 175 pounds for dependents under age 12 is authorized.

d. Privately Owned Vehicle (POV): Shipment of POV is authorized (if approved by approval authority) but exhausts the member's entitlement to ship POV on his/her next PCS move.

e. Subsequent Travel/HHGs Entitlements for Dependents: When the member receives PCS orders directing reassignment from the overseas duty station (includes in-place COTs) his/her dependents are authorized travel and allowances and shipment of HHGs and POV from the early return location to the member's new duty station.

5. **TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS:** Dependents must commence early return travel prior to the member being officially notified that he/she is being reassigned from the overseas duty station. Unexecuted early return orders become void upon notification of reassignment. (Receipt of PCS orders is not required; see paragraph 2b above.)

6. **RETURN OF DEPENDENTS TO THE OVERSEAS AREA:**

a. Government Expense: Except when dependents are relocated from the overseas area at the direction of the Secretary of the Air Force or higher level authority because their safety can no longer be ensured due to adverse public feelings in the area, dependents early returned at government expense may not be subsequently transported at government expense until such time as the member is reassigned from the overseas duty station or receives an in-place COT.

b. Personal Expense: If dependents are subsequently returned to the overseas duty station at the members expense, they may be once again command sponsored, for the purpose of "with dependent" station allowances and government funded travel when the member is reassigned, providing the following conditions are met:

1. The member has not been notified that he/she is being reassigned from the overseas duty station.

2. The member has at least 24 months remaining on his/her overseas tour after approval of command sponsorship.

7. **MEMBER'S TOUR STATUS:** The fact that the member's dependents have been relocated will have no bearing on the requirement that the member completes the prescribed accompanied-by-dependents tour.

8. **REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF DEPENDENT TRAVEL ORDERS:**

Except for travel under the provisions of paragraphs 10b and 10e below, when dependents have performed travel without orders to an appropriate destination under circumstances which would have permitted their travel to have been authorized, no reimbursement for such travel is authorized even though orders are subsequently issued under the provisions of JFTR, Vol I, paragraph U5240-D1.

9. **DOCUMENTATION:** The application must provide documentation to substantiate the existence of a situation which requires his/her dependents to be early returned. The applicant should obtain recommendations from religious, mental health, financial management, family counseling or legal agencies, etc., as appropriate. The list below corresponds to the provisions of JFTR, Vol I, paragraph U5900-D2, items a-h and indicates the minimum documentation required to adequately substantiate an early return case.

10. **REASON FOR EARLY RETURN:** Types of cases under the JFTR, Para U5144-U5154:

a. For medical treatment, if such treatment is not available at member's present duty station (PDS) nor readily available in the theater. The member's request must be supported by medical documentation, including a statement by the attending physician, indicating that the treatment is essential to the well-being of the dependent patient.

b. When death, serious illness, or incapacitation of the dependent (such as spouse) who normally takes care of other dependents (such as children) makes it necessary in the opinion of the approving authority that such other dependents be transported to an appropriate place in order to receive proper and adequate care. The request must be supported by statement by competent medical authority.

c. Lack of adequate *educational facilities or housing for dependents when supported by a statement by the authorizing official that the inadequacy of such educational facilities or housing was caused by conditions beyond the member's control and knowledge of these conditions arose after the dependents began to travel to the member's overseas PDS. * NOTE: lack of a desired degree program is not considered "lack of adequate educational facilities".

d. When conditions in an overseas theater are such that, although the evacuation of all dependents is neither warranted nor desired, the international situation is such that the member justifiably is concerned for the safety and well-being of his or her dependents. Such determinations must be made by the Unified Commander and on the recommendation of the major commander of the Service concerned. Approval authority may be delegated no lower than general officer rank in the headquarters of the respective Unified Command.

e. When determined that the best interests of the member, dependents and the government will be served by the transportation of one or more dependents for compelling personal reasons, such as financial difficulties, marital difficulties, unforeseen family problems, death or serious illness of close relatives, or for reasons of a humanitarian or compassionate nature, and in other situations which have an adverse effect on the member's performance of duty. Such determination will be in the form of a statement of the approving official. This item may not be used for transportation of student dependents to CONUS for the purpose of attending school.

f. Item does not apply to members stationed in Alaska.

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h. When a member is:

1. Discharged outside the United States under than honorable conditions.

2. Returned to the United States for discharge under than honorable conditions.

3. Sentenced to confinement civil or military confinement facilities overseas.

4. Returned to the United States to serve a sentence of confinement in civil or military confinement facilities.

5. Sentence to confinement in foreign civil confinement facilities.

6. Dropped, dismissed, sent to prison under sentence, or transferred as a prisoner to a place of detention.

7. Transferred to a different ship or station to await trial by courts-martial or a deserter or straggler.

8. Awaiting review of a sentence to a punitive discharge and is placed on mandatory appellate leave.

11. Request must have a statement by the approving authority that the best interests of the government and the dependents will be served by the return of the dependents and, provided that the transportation is so authorized, is not for distance greater than that from the member's last or former duty station overseas to his/her home of record or place on entry on active duty.

12. **STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**: Service members (whether initiating the ERD request or it is initiated by a dependent) must be counseled and asked to sign a statement of understanding (Atch 1.2). The statement must be completed/signed before sending the case file to the approving authority for decision and then be retained with the record copy of the case file.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING ATCH 1.2

I, _____, understand that once my dependent(s) depart the overseas area, on an approved early return of dependents move, the following will apply:

- a. I am not entitled to dependent rate Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) or Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) effective the date my dependent(s) depart JBER, AK.
- b. Payment of with-dependent Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) will be determined by the Accounting and Finance Office and is based on my current marital status, divorced or separation agreement (oral or written), and dependent support requirements.
- c. If being paid Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) and in grade E-5 or below, I will be issued a meal card. I may request permission to ration separately based on my duty hours or shift as determined by the unit commander.
- d. If residing off-base and in grade on E-6 or below, I will be assigned single-type quarters on base. I may request permission to reside off-base due to the non-availability of government quarters or other extenuating circumstances as determined by the Housing Office. I may also request permission to reside off-base at personal expense as determined by the unit commander.
- e. I will not be authorized Family Separation Allowance (FSA) if my dependents depart the country due to martial discord, misconduct, or personal reasons.
- f. If assigned family-type government quarters and all of my dependents depart the overseas area, I must notify the Housing Office and terminate quarters.
- g. I understand that it is my responsibility to immediately notify the Accounting and Finance Office of any change of status that would affect my pay and allowances. This includes, but is not limited to (1) divorce or separation agreements, (2) date dependents depart the overseas area, (3) date assigned single-type government quarters, and (4) date issued a meal card. Failure to do so may cause an overpayment for which I would be liable to repay all monies to the United States Government.
- h. I have not applied for nor received an Early Return of Dependents approval during this tour.
- i. I understand that shipment of Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) with my dependent(s) exhausts my entitlement to ship a POV upon departure from this station.

(PAYROLL SIGNATURE)

(DATE)

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 37 U.S.C. Chapter 7, Section 401, and E.O. 9397, 22 Nov 73 **PURPOSE:** To determine travel entitlements of your dependents to a designated location during the interim period until further transportation at government expense is authorized. **ROUTINE USES:** Used to request advance return of dependents to a designated location in the CONUS, to the port of debarkation, Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States. **DISCLOSURE IS VOLUNTARY:** Failure to do so could result in the loss of travel entitlements or failure to receive reimbursement for dependent travel. **PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT:** Sample letter requesting Advance Return of Dependents (AFR 75-8, Vol II, and JFTR, Vol I, Para 5240.)