



AREA II CPAC

“Servicing the Best Employees in Korea”



Far East Region Area II CPAC New Hire's Handbook

Area II Civilian Personnel Advisory Service
USAG Yongsan
Seoul, Korea

August 2015



As the Director of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, I would like to welcome you to Korea and Area II. You are coming to USAG Yongsan at an important time when huge changes are taking place to our manpower, infrastructure, and operational capacities. I hope that your overseas tour here will help to broaden your knowledge and provide you with some unique experiences to further your federal career. Korea is a great place to live, work, and get one-of-a-kind travel opportunities.

**Michael Prock
Director, Area II CPAC**

Summary. This guide is designed to be a quick reference for the new civilian employees in Area II. It provides a variety of information pertinent to activities and functions of the area, services available to civilian employees, and unique overseas benefits available.

Applicability. This guide applies to all civilian employees in Appropriated positions assigned to organizations serviced by the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center – Area II (CPAC).

Suggested Improvements. The proponent of this guide is the Area II CPAC. Users are invited to send comments and suggestions to the Area II Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, Bldg. 4314, ATTN: PECH-FEA-D, PSC 303 Box 9, APO AP, 96205



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 1
Information on Area II..... 1
 1-1. Purpose 1
 1-2. Area II..... 1
 1-3. Civilian Identification Cards 2
 1-4. Ration Control 2
 1-5. Temporary Lodging 3
 1-6. Off-Post Housing 3
 1-7. Special Needs for Family Members..... 3
 1-8. Medical Care 3
 1-9. Seoul American School 4
 1-10. Child, Youth and School Service Programs(CYSS) 5
 1-11. Mass Transportation in Korea 5
 1-12. Driving in Korea 5
Chapter 2 6
Personnel Procedures..... 6
 2-1. Your Tentative Job Offer 6
 2-2. Employee or Family Members Requiring Special Needs 6
 2-3. Required Documents..... 6
 2-4. In-Processing 7
 2-5. Long Term Storage 7
 2-6. Health Benefits (Overseas) 7
 2-7. Overseas Tours..... 8
 2-8. Priority Placement Program(PPP) 9
 2-9. Return Rights to CONUS..... 10
Chapter 3 10
Pay Related Issues 10
 3-1. Overseas Pay Scales 10
 3-2. State Taxes 10
 3-3. Allotments / TSP Loans..... 10
Chapter 4 11
PCS Facilitation..... 11
 4-1. Planning your Move to Korea 11
 4-2. The Importance of your PCS Transportation Briefing..... 11
 4-3. Authorizing Dependents 12
 4-4. Shipping Pets 12
 4-5. Passports 13



- 4-6. Transportation Options Once You Hit the Ground in Korea 13
- Chapter 5 15
- Overseas Benefits and Allowances..... 15
 - 5-1. Allowances 15
 - 5-2. Post Differential (If Applicable) 16
 - 5-3. Transportation Agreement (If Applicable)..... 17
 - 5-4. 45 Day Accrual (If Applicable) 17
 - 5-5. Advanced Pay 17
 - 5-6. Educational Travel (If Applicable)..... 18
 - 5-7. Home Leave (If Applicable) 18
 - 5-8. Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) (If Applicable)..... 18
- Chapter 6 20
- Overseas Specific Questions and Answers 20
 - 6-1. PCS Questions 20
 - 6-2. Allowances 21
 - 6-3. Pay 21
 - 6-4. Priority Placement Program (PPP) / Return Rights 22

Chapter 1

Information on Area II

1-1. Purpose

This pamphlet provides new overseas civilian employees information specifically relating to Area II and the unique overseas benefits available. In addition, we hope it will answer many of your commonly asked questions.

1-2. Area II

Area II consists of Yongsan Garrison, EDFE Compound, Camp Coiner, and K-16 Airfield. There are about 22,000 Soldiers, Department of the Army Civilian employees, contractors, Korean national employees, Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army, or KATUSA Soldiers, and Family Members who live and work within Area II.

The Yongsan Garrison consists of two main areas, Main Post and South Post, which are physically divided by a four-lane boulevard that links two Seoul neighborhoods. The garrison comprises just over 630 acres located within the Yongsan District of Seoul, Korea's capital. Garrison facilities include multiple family housing areas, a large commissary and post exchange, numerous Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities, restaurants, indoor and outdoor sports complexes, a library, a bowling alley, a skateboard park, a miniature golf complex, a hospital, three dental clinics, three Department of Defense Dependent Schools, a United Service Organization (USO), a child development center, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and a self-service gas station.

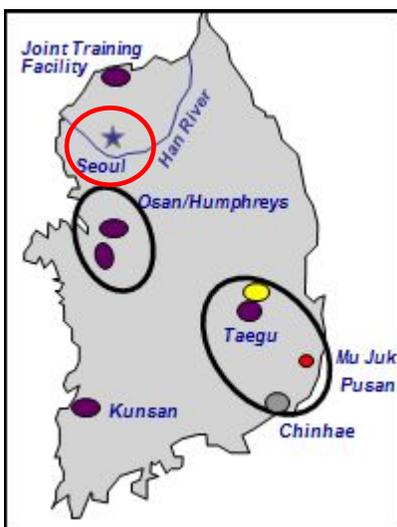
Area II is located in Seoul, South Korea. Seoul is the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea, forming the heart of the Seoul Capital Area, which includes the surrounding Incheon metropolis and Gyeonggi province, the world's second largest metropolitan area with over 25.6 million people.

Seoul has all four clearly distinguished seasons. Spring begins around early March; cherry blossom and flower festivals around the entire country signal the official coming of spring. The summer months can get quite hot and humid, but be ready for random spurts of coldness when stepping into a subway car, bus, or any other air-conditioned facilities in Seoul. For about a month starting from mid-July is the rainy season. Autumn start around September and boasts beautiful scenery as leaves begin to turn into fall colors. The winters in Seoul can get quite harsh. The temperature can drop as low as 15 degrees below zero (Celsius) during the coldest days.

More information on Korea and Area II can be found on Morning Clam Welcome to Korea '15 at the following link.

<http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/401695.pdf>

Area II
USAG - Yongsan



1-3. Civilian Identification Cards

A civilian or military ID card is required to enter any installation or facility located in Area II. Ration Control Cards are also required for dependents to enter any Commissary, PX, or facility that sells controlled items. These are provided upon arrival.

1-4. Ration Control

Your ration card is just as important as your identification card. In short, it is required by duty free on-post businesses. The Army and Air Force Exchange, commissary and other stores usually require seeing your card before you can enter and/or make purchases.

Following are some important points about this important card:

- You will need a ration card for each authorized Family Member (children 10 and up).
- During their first two weeks in Korea, Civilian Employees and Family Members can shop in the commissary and exchange with a military identification card and a copy of their PCS orders stamped by the ration control office. This is only necessary if the Ration Control office is unable to provide the Ration Control Cards immediately.
- Every purchase in the Commissary and PX is recorded in a real-time system based on a shopper's identification number. The system sends information to a database which automatically generates a violation notice if you exceed your purchase limit. Violations are sent to your chain of command. Violations of ration control can lead to suspension of

rations or adverse actions against the employee.

- At the PX, ration limits restrict purchasing a maximum of three of the same high-value item. Cosmetics, select health and beauty aids, and alcoholic beverages are some of the high-value, high-demand items.

Once you have your ration card, you can check your purchases and remaining ration limits online through the personnel information management system (PIMS) at <https://pimsk.korea.army.mil>. You can either log in with your CAC card or with your ration control card number. It is your responsibility to monitor your purchases and not to exceed your limits.

More information on ration control and ration limitations can be found at: <http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/hot-topic.usfk.ration.control.program.664>

1-5. Temporary Lodging

Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) is normally approved for employees on PCS orders transitioning in and out of Area II. Temporary quarters are normally facilitated through the local on-post lodge Dragon Hill Lodge. <http://www.dragonhilllodge.com/WP/>

1-6. Off-Post Housing

Most civilian personnel reside off post while on their overseas tours. The housing office has references for local realtors who can help locate long term housing off-post. Housing around USAG Yongsan is readily available and ranges in size from 1 bedroom apartments to condos over 2,000 square feet in size.

1-7. Special Needs for Family Members

Most normal services are available on or around post. However, employees should consider any special needs for themselves and of their family members accompanying them to Area II. These needs include medical, mental health, childcare, and schooling needs. While USAG Yongsan offers several services to support families, it is not an all-inclusive infrastructure. Such special needs as allergies, mental health, specialized day care, special schooling programs, and some specialty physicians may not be available at all on post or may be provided by off post providers. Employees should carefully consider this when making a decision to accept a tour in Korea or bring family members over to Korea.

1-8. Medical Care

Military Medical facilities at USAG Yongsan are limited in nature and scope compared to military installations in CONUS. Civilian employees and their families can only seek medical care on post in space available situations. The local Health clinic can also refer patients to approved outside sources for treatment. The closest military hospital is in Yongsan, Seoul and there are 22 MEDCOM approved host nation hospitals with agreements with USFK. They are located approximately 20 to 50 minutes from post.
<http://www.korea.amedd.army.mil/medical/index.html>

Special attention should be directed towards any prescribed medication that you or your family may require while stationed in Korea. It is recommended that you check to ensure that any medication is available to be prescribed in Korea or can be shipped by mail from the United States.

Special attention should be directed towards any specialize medical treatment or services that you or your family may require while stationed in Korea. You will be asked to fill out an exceptional family member form to identify any potential medical or educational needs to ensure that these needs can be met during your tour in Korea.

Off Post Medical Centers with USFK Agreements:
<http://www.korea.amedd.army.mil/Medical/PCMH/default.html>
Scroll over "TRICARE" – Click "Host Nation Provider Directory"

Brian Allgood Army Community Hospital
<http://www.korea.amedd.army.mil/Medical/PCMH/default.html>

1-9. Seoul American School

Civilian command-sponsored dependents are eligible for enrollment in the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) Elementary School, Middle School, and High School. More information can be obtained through the following websites on the schools, curriculum, and programs offered.

<http://www.dodea.edu/Pacific/Korea/index.cfm>

<https://www.facebook.com/samsbulldogs>

<https://www.facebook.com/SeoulAmericanElementarySchool>

Make sure you bring the following with you on person when you PCS to Korea.

- Immunization Records
 - Passport or birth certificate for Kindergarten and first grade students
- Child Social Security No.
Copy/official transcript or latest report card from previous school.

- Copy of IEP if applicable
- Copy of information for any special program: IE, ESL, Gifted Ed, Speech, LI
Copy of withdrawal grade with grading system from previous school
Copy of standardized test score if applicable

You may also preregister at the DoDEA preregistration website:
<https://registration.dodea.edu/>

1-10. Child, Youth and School Service Programs(CYSS)

Child, Youth and School Services of USAG Yongsan provide a variety of developmental programs for your child or youth. We strive to present engaging appropriate activities and experiences for children and youth 4 weeks to 18 years old. They provide programming and special events in the following areas. <http://www.mwrkorea.com/chilyouth/cyss.php>

- Full-day, Part-day, and Hourly Child Care
- Before-School and After-School Care Programs
- Middle School and Teen Programs
- Family Child Care
- Youth Sports Programs
- Parent and Outreach Programs
- School Support Services
- SKIIES Instructional Classes

1-11. Mass Transportation in Korea

Because of the congestion, close proximity of populations, and the expense of owning automobiles, mass transit or public transportation is readily available and inexpensive in Korea. Civilian buses, trains, subways, and taxis are available throughout Korea. In addition to this, the military has shuttle buses that go between the military installations throughout Korea. Additionally, AAFES taxi service can be called on and off post.

1-12. Driving in Korea

Most families are approved for shipping one (1) POV overseas and a civilian POV license must be obtained before use. Exception to policy of a 2nd POV on post may be requested but will not be approved solely for the convenience of the individual's family.

Driving in Korea is truly a challenge. Driving can be separated into two different areas, on post and off post. Drivers are expected to know regulatory requirements from the Korean Road Traffic Law and DOD and USFK directives. Road conditions, inclement weather, narrow or uneven roads and unmarked intersections are just a few of the additional factors that make driving in Korea a challenge.

U.S. Forces personnel in Korea who wish to drive POVs must have a USFK driver's license. Civilian employees and family members age 18 or older are required to take a written test to receive a USFK driver's license which is issued for a five year period.

Chapter 2

Personnel Procedures

2-1. Your Tentative Job Offer

Tentative job offers are meant to secure the positions and help facilitate the placement of personnel in positions. You should not make any life changing elections until you receive a firm job offer. Not all benefits, allowances, and quality of life subjects are addressed in this document. Full details will be given when you in-process.

2-2. Employee or Family Members Requiring Special Needs

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the CPAC during their job offer of any special needs that they or their family members may require while in Korea. These needs include medical, mental, childcare, and schooling needs. These needs should be identified and annotated on A5863 (Exceptional Family Member Form) or on SF-256 for the employee in the initial hiring packet. These needs should be disclosed and known before the employee and family PCS to ensure that services are available. Additional considerations should be taken with any long term medications, such as certain pain killers, as some medications are not available in Korea.

2-3. Required Documents

Because of some of the unique allowances overseas, employees will be asked to produce documents to validate the hiring process and determine eligibilities for certain allowances. Some of these documents may include birth certificates, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, passports. Please do not forget and accidentally pack these in your House Hold Goods baggage.

2-4. In-Processing

During in-processing, employees are encouraged to ask questions and make sure that they fully understand what is being briefed. You will be receiving a lot of information during these first days in country so it is advisable to read this document first in order to have a better understanding of life in Korea and formulate any additional questions to ask during your in-processing. Additionally, once you arrive, the Army Community Service (ACS) has additional information and resources to help in familiarizing yourself with Area II.

2-5. Long Term Storage

Employees who currently have long term storage or employees who have long term storage contracts with the government are responsible for providing the Area II CPAC with these documents. These contracts must be re-funded every year and failure to provide this information may result in possible loss of items in storage.

2-6. Health Benefits (Overseas)

It is important for current federal employees registered with a federal health plan to consider if their current plan will provide coverage in Korea. It is recommended that this be researched before the employee leaves for OCONUS. Currently, there are several benefits plans that are in effect in Korea. Through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM):http://www.opm.gov/insure/new_employ/index.asp or Army Benefits website (ABC website) <https://www.abc.army.mil/> you can find further details on what plans and coverages can be obtained.

Important Facts about Overseas Coverage:

- You should not be enrolled in an HMO if you are living overseas, except when the overseas geographic location is part of an HMO's service area (such as Guam).
- Most overseas providers require payment "up front".
- Some plans pay overseas providers at the Preferred Providers benefit level, but you will probably have to pay the difference between the plan payment and the actual charge. Check to see whether you must provide an English translation of the bill (claim) and currency conversion information.
- Some plans provide assistance in locating medical providers overseas or have participating hospitals and other providers.
- Your plan may have an overseas second opinion arrangement where an on-line opinion can be obtained from U.S. medical providers for certain medical conditions/treatments.

- Most plans do not require precertification for inpatient hospitalization and other procedures outside of the U.S. and Puerto Rico
- Some services that are "accepted practice" overseas are considered experimental or investigational by FEHB plans and are not covered.
- Some plans provide benefits for professional medical evacuation to the nearest hospital suited to provide treatment and the patient's condition requires immediate evacuation (air or sea evacuation may be covered if emergency ground transportation is not available).
- Prescription drugs may be available through a plan's Mail Order Pharmacy benefit (sometimes you need to have an address with a Zip Code, such as an APO and FPO address or in U.S. territories). You may be able to file a claim for prescription drugs you purchase overseas.

2-7. Overseas Tours

a. Tours of Service:

Civilian Employees accept tours of duty in overseas locations in much the same way as our military counterparts. Area II is considered an accompanied tour area. The norm is for employees to bring their dependents overseas with them. Employees choosing not to bring their dependents will receive no special treatment or considerations for requesting an unaccompanied tour. Upon arriving in Korea, all employees should be aware of their DEROS date which marks the end of their tour. The norm is to return to CONUS upon successful completion of a tour. This system allows U.S. employees the opportunity to enjoy serving overseas, gain some unique experience, then move on to other challenges back in CONUS.

b. Tour Lengths:

All **accompanied** tours will be for 36 months and all **unaccompanied** tours will be for 36 months. Exceptions to policy for a two year will be considered on a case by case basis.

c. Tour Extensions:

Tour extensions allow for the continuous assessment of civilian workforce requirements and promote the efficiency of worldwide operations. It is important for civilian employees to understand that extending a tour is neither automatic nor a right of the employee. Any manager or supervisor in the chain of command may disapprove an extension.

d. Five Year Rule:

For civilian employees in Korea, a five-year maximum service overseas is the rule and anything longer is the exception. Tour extensions beyond the five-year limit are designed to provide management flexibility to meet defined mission requirements

that cannot otherwise be met. Tours beyond five years require additional approval authority.

e. Completion of Tour:

Employees with return rights will exercise them upon completion of their tour of duty. Employees who do not have return rights will be entered into the Priority Placement Program (PPP) for re-assignment back to CONUS. If an employee has return right to a lower graded position, they may register in PPP but must exercise their return rights if they do not have a PPP match within 30 days of their DEROS ending.

f. Tour Curtailments:

Management reserves the right to curtail tours for failure to adapt to a foreign environment or other reasons that are detrimental to the operations of that directorate. An employee can request a voluntary tour curtailment for applicable reasons but the request must be approved by the appropriate authority.

2-8. Priority Placement Program(PPP)

The Priority Placement Program (PPP), under the Department of Defense Rotation Policy, is a program for returning Non-Displaced employees to the United States at the end of their overseas tours. A Non-Displaced employee is one who is employed in their own right, and not as a family member, in the overseas area. Non-Displaced employees must have successfully completed an overseas tour or a renewal tour. Non-Displaced employees must be serving on a Career or Career Conditional Appointment, or an appointment which leads to a status appointment, such as VRA. Employees serving on certain Excepted Service appointments and who have successfully completed an equivalent of an overseas tour may be eligible for PPP registration as a Non-Displaced employee. Employees serving under temporary or non-status appointments are not eligible to register. Individuals who have return rights to a lower grade are also eligible for PPP registration but must exercise their return rights if no valid match is found within 30 days of their DEROS.

2-9. Return Rights to CONUS

Employees with re-employment rights to a position in the U.S. will exercise those rights upon completion of or release from their overseas tour. Employees must exercise return rights to the organizations to which they have return rights and the organizations will place them in a position of the same grade level and type if available. Return rights are only authorized for a period of five (5) years unless administratively extended by the original organization.

Chapter 3

Pay Related Issues

3-1. Overseas Pay Scales

General Scale (GS) Federal employees overseas are paid in accordance with the base scale for the current grade and step. Locality pay is not included. Current federal employees transferring overseas will have their pay converted from their locality pay scale to the base pay scale.

3-2. State Taxes

While assigned overseas employees may be liable for state and local taxes. Some states have no income tax while other states don't tax income earned overseas. Many states, however, do expect employees to continue to pay state income tax while assigned overseas. It is the employee's responsibility to determine tax liabilities and initiate withholding to meet their obligation. Failure to do so does not reduce or eliminate liability. State and local taxes will be deducted from an employee's pay if this request is submitted.

Individuals can review general information about State and Local Taxes at <http://www.sisterstates.com/>. For more specific information, you will need to visit the official state website.

3-3. Allotments / TSP Loans

As a reminder, all allotments that current employees have in the states may be stopped upon PCS'ing to Korea. You must re-input for these allotments using My Pay. Please notify the CPAC staff if you currently have allotments and would like to continue them once arriving in Korea. The same applies for TSP loans that employees are currently paying back. You must re-initiate these requests.

Chapter 4

PCS Facilitation

Your travel date starts on the date annotated on your PCS orders, block 9. This is not the date to arrive at post. Travel before this time is not authorized and will be the employee's responsibility if you choose to arrive at the overseas area before the official travel date.

4-1. Planning your Move to Korea

Advance planning for your move to Korea will save stress and better prepare you for a great tour of duty in Korea. For Civilian Employees coming on board, if a sponsor has not contacted you yet, contact your gaining organization to ask for a sponsor. Sponsors can ease the transition by providing vital information for your move.

If you have access to Army Community Service, Air Force Family Service or Navy and Marine Family Service at your current location, check for relocation information specific to Korea and USAG Yongsan. Make sure you attend an overseas orientation class before you leave if available. Also, be sure to look in your local bookstore or library and on the Internet for assistance.

Visit these sites online to learn more about relocation and life in Korea:

[U.S. Army Garrison-Yongsan](http://www.army.mil/yongsan): This Web site is the official site for USAG-Yongsan. It contains a wealth of current community news and information, along with a telephone directory and important links to local agencies. <http://www.army.mil/yongsan>

[U.S. Forces Korea](http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/) - This site is the official Internet presence for U.S. Forces Korea and provides current information on USFK policies. <http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/>

[Military Homefront](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/) - This site provides relocation information for not just USAG-Yongsan, but also all DOD military installations. Click on installation locator, then input USAG Yongsan. It also features a customizable calendar, to-do lists and overseas information. <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

[8th U.S. Army](http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/) - This site contains an electronic Welcome Guide and the ROK Steady magazine. <http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/>

[Moral Welfare and Recreation](http://www.mwrkorea.com/index.htm)- Contains information about MWR services per installation. <http://www.mwrkorea.com/index.htm>

4-2. The Importance of your PCS Transportation Briefing

The CPAC and your Command cannot stress enough how important your PCS transportation briefing is and how critical it is to your successfully relocating overseas. In general, you are authorized three types of transportation shipments to facilitate your PCS move: House Hold Goods Shipment (HHG), Long Term Storage, and Unaccompanied Baggage Shipment. After the PCS transportation briefing, you should fully understand these options and how to use them.

- Ask questions at this briefing!
- Know your authorized weight limit!
- Schedule your shipment as early as possible! – Summer time is especially busy for PCS moves and you normally have only 45 days to move.
- Utilize Unaccompanied Baggage Shipments for critical items that you will need for living until your HHG arrives. – It may be over 60 days before your HHG arrives. It is your responsibility to plan and ship essential items using this method.

Newly appointed employees should contact their closest military base and set up an appointment with the transportation office to attend one of these classes and to step up their PCS moves.

4-3. Authorizing Dependents

In order for dependents to be authorized to accompany the employee overseas, a dependency determination must be approved. You will be required to provide documentation that the person is your dependent.

Things to keep in mind:

- If you have joint parental custody of a minor, the other parent has to consent to the minor residing overseas.
- If you have joint parental custody based on a court order that the court must change any parameters of residing outside of the US, visitation rights, claiming as a dependent on taxes, etc.
- Power of attorneys and affidavits do not necessarily establish custody. Custody must be awarded according to applicable state laws.

4-4. Shipping Pets

The following information applies to all personnel covered under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the United States and Republic of Korea (ROK).

Cats and dogs may be shipped and maybe subject to Korean customs and quarantine requirements. Pets other than cats and dogs must have a permit for importation issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry prior to movement to Korea. Pets must be microchipped, have a valid health certificate within 10 days of flight and current rabies vaccination (at least 30 days old and less than 12 months old for 1 year duration rabies

vaccines or less than 36 months old for 3 year duration rabies vaccines). Pets less than 3 months of age are not required a rabies vaccination. Pets with an invalid rabies certificate or rabies vaccination will be placed in quarantine for up to 30 days. Reimbursement for actual mandatory pet quarantine fees is not authorized for civilians and included in the Miscellaneous Expense Allowance.

To obtain more information, please visit

<http://www.korea.amedd.army.mil/veterinary/index.html> and click on PCS'ing with pets.

Additionally, you may contact your nearest United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Service Inspection Office (APHIS)

(http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/) for additional information and assistance as soon as you know you will be leaving to ensure all the necessary paperwork, shots and physicals are completed on schedule. You will also find helpful information at the following USDA APHIS website:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/animal_faq.shtml

Below are privately owned websites not affiliated with the Government which have additional pet travel information:

<http://www.dogfriendly.com/server/travel/airtravel/airpettravel.shtml>

http://www.pettravel.com/airline_rules.cfm

<http://www.petflight.com>

4-5. Passports

Passports are required for all employees and family members. You do not need an official passport to enter the country. You may enter with a tourist passport and no visa. Once you have arrived in Korea, you have 30 days to get your A3-visa and SOFA stamp. Except for Korean Nationals who have no need of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), all employees and family members are required to get a SOFA stamp.

More information can be found at the following website.

<http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/sja/clientlegalsvc/>

4-6. Transportation Options Once You Hit the Ground in Korea

At Incheon International Airport, you will go through the entire customs and immigration and baggage claim process. There is no military line in Immigration. Once in customs, you can either go through the normal customs lines or you can go through the Military lane. Normal lines will only require your passport while you must show your orders and passport to go through the military lane. Make sure your passport is stamped. If you need additional directions at the airport or get lost, just go to Gate 1 and the USO Kiosk. When you exit out of the baggage claim, turn left and proceed to exit 1 from the airport. You have a few options for getting to Seoul.

1. You can coordinate with your sponsor to pick you up at the airport.

2. You can pay to get a domestic Taxi and be reimbursed on your travel voucher. This will cost at least \$100. Keep in mind that a domestic taxi will not be able to enter post and may not know the exact location of the post gates.

3. You can go to the USO Kiosk and ask them to call an AAFES taxi. This is US government contracted taxi that is authorized to go on post and can take you directly to the lodging on post. They are also based on post and know the layout of post.

4. You can take the USO bus to post. It leaves every few hours and goes directly to the DHL lodging on post. Be advised that you will need a DOD CAC Card, passport, and Orders to enter post. If you do not have a DOD CAC Card than will be required to leave the bus, go register at the visitor center, and then call a cab to take you to the lodging. This method is not recommended if you do not have a DOD CAC card or if you are traveling with a large family. If the USO desk is open, they can tell you when the bus to Yongsan is departing. Since you will be in permanent change of station status, you and your family members will have priority above anyone else wishing to ride the bus, aside from any others in PCS status. The current bus schedule can be located at the following address:

Chapter 5

Overseas Benefits and Allowances

5-1. Allowances

Before allowances are discussed it is important to understand the following fact.

Per DoDI 1400 25-M,

SC1250.4.1. Overseas allowances and differentials (except the post allowance) are not automatic salary supplements; nor are they entitlements.

The following regulations govern overseas allowances and benefits:

Department of State Standardized Regulation (DSSR)

Department of Defense Regulation 1400.25-M, Subchapter 1250

Army in Korea 690-10

a. Post Allowance:

Post Allowance is paid to compensate in part for the higher price of many goods and services in overseas areas. It is based on the employee's salary, work schedule, number of dependents, and the employee's duty station location. Changes in exchange rates also raise or lower the post allowance since exchange rates affect the cost of goods and services bought on the economy. Post allowance is not taxable.

b. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA): (If Applicable)

Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance, referred to as TQSA is an allowance granted to an employee for the reasonable cost of temporary quarters, meals and laundry expenses incurred by the employee and/or family members at the new post in a foreign area. TQSA is normally granted for 30 to 90 days depending on the command. Employees must show compelling reasons beyond their control to justify the approval beyond 60 days. Prior to the departure from the foreign area, employee may be granted TQSA not to exceed 30 days once residence quarters are vacated. Expense of transportation and other expenses not directly related to lodging, meals and laundry/dry cleaning of clothes are not reimbursable under this allowance. Additional information is available in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR). At the State Department website, click on "Standardized Regulations DSSR", then click on Chapter 100. Scroll down to Section 120, TQSA.

Employees may request advanced TQSA for a projected period of 30 days to mitigate undue hardships and expenses.

c. Living Quarters Allowance (LQA): (If Applicable)

LQA is a quarters allowance granted to an eligible employee for the annual cost of suitable, adequate, living quarters for the employee and his/her family. The LQA rates are designed to cover substantially all of the average employee's costs for rent, heat, light, fuel, gas, electricity, water, taxes levied by the local government and required by law or custom paid by the lessee, insurance required by local law to be paid by the lessee, and agent's fee required by law or customarily paid by lessee. An advance of LQA can be authorized for up to one year. For further information see Department of State Standard Regulation (https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=78).

Personally Owned Quarters (POQ): when the employee, or the spouse, or both own the residence that they are residing in, the employee's POQ will be computed based on the original purchase price of the residence. The original purchase price is converted to dollars based on the conversion rate on the date of purchase. The employee will receive up to 10 percent of the original purchase price not to exceed his/her maximum rate for up to 10 years. Only the expenses for heat, light, fuel, (including gas and electricity), water, garbage, and in rare cases land rent, may be included in the LQA utility costs. At the end of the 10-year period, the employee will only be entitled to the utility expenses above.

d. Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA):

Foreign Transfer Allowance, referred to as FTA, is a reimbursement of expenses for lodging, meals, laundry, cleaning and pressing expenses in temporary quarters for the employee and each member of the family for up to 10 days before final departure from the United States to a foreign post. FTA cannot start earlier than 30 days after the employee vacates residence quarters at the permanent duty station. The 10 days may be extended if it has been determined by the component headquarters that the employee was unable to depart due to unusual circumstances beyond their control. Any extension request must be approved in advance on the 10 days expiring or the employee risks not being authorized the additional days. The CPAC should be immediately notified if an employee needs more than 10 days. Additional information is available in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), at the State Department website. Click on "Standardized Regulations DSSR", then click on Chapter 200, scroll down to Section 240, FTA.

5-2. Post Differential (If Applicable)

Post Differential (PD) is designed to provide additional compensation to employees for service at places in foreign areas where conditions of environment differ substantially from conditions in the continental United States. PD is used to warrant additional compensation as a recruitment and retention incentive. It is established for any place where the place involves extraordinarily difficult living conditions, excessive physical hardship, or notably unhealthy conditions affecting the majority of employees stationed or detailed in the foreign area. Living costs are not considered in differential determination. State Department determines the amount in increments of 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 percent for the additional compensation. The current PD for Korea is 15 %. Continuation is subject to Department of State approval. There is no PD for Area II.

5-3. Transportation Agreement (If Applicable)

A transportation agreement is a written understanding between a DoD component and an employee wherein the employee agrees to complete a prescribed tour of duty at the OCONUS PDS as consideration for return travel and transportation allowances. The completion of the period of service specified in the agreement establishes eligibility for travel and transportation allowances and does not, in itself, terminate the employee's employment. An agreement may be an initial agreement or a renewal agreement. An initial agreement establishes eligibility for an employee's travel and transportation allowances, the employee's dependents, and HHG.

5-4. 45 Day Accrual (If Applicable)

45-Day Annual Leave Accumulation allows certain overseas employees (usually those hired from the CONUS) to carry leave over from one year to the next for up to 45 days (360 hours) before it must be used or lost as opposed to the standard 30 days (240 hours) in the CONUS. Upon return to CONUS, the 360 hours may be kept as long as they are not used. Should the amount of leave drop below 360 hours, the maximum amount of allowable leave becomes either the new amount held or the standard 240, whichever is higher.

5-5. Advanced Pay

The law provides that up to three months basic pay may be paid in advance to an employee upon the assignment of the employee to a post in a foreign area. The employee can receive the advance payment prior to proceeding to or arriving at a post of assignment. Advance pay is reimbursed back to the Government through payroll deductions. There is no interest collected on advance pay.

5-6. Educational Travel (If Applicable)

Payment of travel expenses for a child is permitted from the employee's post to school and back (secondary, undergraduate college, post secondary vocational or technical education).

- Educational travel can originate from the overseas area or the school.
- The anniversary date is established the first time educational travel is used. It cannot be change at a later date.
- Dependents may use education travel up to the age of 21 and be further extended until 23 if the dependent was a full time student during this time.

5-7. Home Leave (If Applicable)

Home leave is special leave earned in one-day increments (rather than hours like annual or sick leave). In Korea, a majority of eligible employees earn home leave at the rate of 5 days per year.

An employee must have served continuously at least one 24-month period at an overseas post before home leave can be used. Home leave must be taken in the U.S. or its territories or possessions. Home leave may only be used if the employee will return to duty at an overseas area. In other words, home leave cannot be taken in conjunction with a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) back to the U.S., unless the employee is under a mobility agreement. Home leave can be taken in conjunction with a PCS from one overseas area to another overseas area, if other service requirements are met.

The home leave balance shows on the employee's Leave and Earnings Statement. This statement also shows when the employee will be eligible to take home leave.

5-8. Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) (If Applicable)

Renewal Agreement Travel, or RAT, is a Government-paid trip back to CONUS when an employee is recruited from CONUS, completes an overseas tour, and is extended for another tour. The employee signs a renewal agreement to stay on for another two year tour—hence the name. You must complete a full tour, 36 months initial and 24 months of extensions in order to qualify for RAT.

When taking RAT, the travel time to and from the employee's home of record or other single authorized point is not chargeable to leave. This entitlement is limited to one leave period for each overseas tour.

RAT covers the transportation expenses of the employee and the employee's dependents to the place of actual residence prior to the assignment overseas. Transportation to an alternate destination in CONUS is possible; however, the employee may be liable for any

excess transportation costs when they are compared to those of going back to the place of actual residence.

RAT can only be taken during a specific timeframe, known as the RAT Window. In most circumstances, RAT is taken around the end of the current tour and the beginning of the renewal tour. However, the window extends from two months before the end of the current tour to a point where the employee must have at least 12 months remaining on the renewal tour after return from RAT. If RAT is not taken during this window, then eligibility for it is forfeited. Entitlement to RAT is not stored up for use outside its window period.

Since RAT is a form of Government-sponsored travel, two things must occur before RAT can occur. First, an extension for a renewal tour must be approved by management and accepted by the employee by signing a renewal agreement. Second, official travel orders must be prepared for the RAT. If these two events don't occur before the travel, the expense of the travel is at the employee's personal expense. After-the-fact approvals of RAT are not authorized. As with other Government-sponsored travel, use of the official contract ticket office (CTO) is required when arranging travel.

RAT covers only the transportation costs of the trip back to CONUS. The employee's absence from work must be accounted for by some type of leave: home leave, annual leave, or leave without pay.

- a. Things to do:
Be aware of the ending date of the overseas tour. Respond to any management decisions regarding a tour extension.
- b. Sign a renewal agreement.
- c. Work with the supervisor to arrange the dates of your RAT so that they fall within the RAT window.
- d. Work with the supervisor and the CPAC to obtain RAT travel orders.
- e. Arrange for RAT transportation through the CTO.

Chapter 6

Overseas Specific Questions and Answers

6-1. PCS Questions

Is Area II an Accompanied tour Area?

As of November 5, 2009, Area II is an accompanied tour area and accompanied tours will be the normally offered tour. If an employee decides to leave his family CONUS, Separate Maintenance Allowance will not be authorized.

Can I store my vehicle at government expense CONUS when I PCS to Korea?

No, the storage of civilian POVs at government expense is not authorized.

Can I get reimbursed for shipping extra baggage / flying with extra bags to Korea?

Shipping extra baggage / flying with extra bags expenses are not reimbursable unless approved in advance and stated on PCS orders. If you have items which you can't live without until your HHG gets to Korea, you should ship them using the unaccompanied baggage shipment, not extra carry-on bags.

Keep in mind with all PCS expenses that you are authorized a \$650 unaccompanied and \$1300 accompanied miscellaneous expense with your PCS. This should cover any unexpected costs to your PCS move.

Can I get reimbursed for professional items being shipped?

Shipping professional items are not reimbursable unless approved by your command in advance. If approved, the CPAC will need a memorandum stating that the items to be shipped are a necessity for you to perform your job.

Keep in mind that your professional items do not count in your total authorized weight limit for HHG shipment.

Keep in mind with all PCS expenses that you are authorized a \$650 unaccompanied and \$1300 accompanied miscellaneous expense with your PCS. This should cover any unexpected costs to your PCS move.

6-2. Allowances

Are the allowances taxable income?

Post Allowance, POQ for Personally Owned Quarters, and TQSA are not taxable. Post Differential is taxable.

What affects my allowance determinations?

There are several factors that affect how much your allowances will be. These include: pay grade, location of duty station, number of dependants currently residing with you. If a family member leaves the country for more than 30 days, you must report this to the CPAC to adjust your allowances.

Does my Post Allowance stop if I leave the country TDY?

Yes, if the employee leaves the country, their PA should stop until they return. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the CPAC when this happens.

Am I responsible for notifying the CPAC of life changing events? (Births/ deaths of dependants, marriage/divorce, change in number of dependants living with employee overseas)

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the CPAC when any of these events happen.

6-3. Pay

Is there a locality pay in Korea?

No, there is currently no locality pay in Korea. Your grade for GS employees will be the base scale instead of the specific CONUS locality scale.

Are there bonuses available for employees accepting overseas tours?

Bonuses are the prerogative of the hiring official to justify and authorize. They are not an entitlement of the employee who serves overseas. The vacancy announcement must state that a bonus may be approved.

6-4. Priority Placement Program (PPP) / Return Rights

Do I have to register in PPP?

Yes, employees who are ending their tours and do not have return rights must register in PPP. If the employee does not exercise their return rights then they will be separated from service unless you apply a job on your own and are subsequently selected before your DEROS.

Can I register for any geographic area of my choosing?

No. Your zone will depend on where you were initially hired for your OCONUS assignment.

Do I have to accept a job match through PPP?

Yes. Declination of a valid job offer will result in removal from PPP and you may be separated from federal employment.

Do I have to Exercise my Return Rights?

Yes, in most cases, the employee has to exercise their return rights back CONUS.