OPERATION EPIC FURY EVACUATION NAVY CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – 28 MAY 2026

1. KAISERSLAUTERN MILITARY COMMUNITY (KMC) SAFE HAVEN CHANGES

Q1: Why are evacuees located at the alternate foreign safe haven of Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) required to change safe haven locations?

A: In accordance with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness memorandum, "Safe Haven Guidance for Department of Defense Personnel and Dependents in the Kaiserslautern Military Community" (dated May 7, 2026), KMC will no longer be an approved alternate safe haven for Department of War civilian employees or dependents.

Q2: When must evacuees leave KMC?

A: This change is effective **June 30, 2026**. Personnel currently evacuated to Germany must travel to their designated safe haven in the United States by that date.

Q3: Does the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness memorandum, "Safe Haven Guidance for Department of Defense Personnel and Dependents in the Kaiserslautern Military Community" (dated May 7, 2026), apply to civilian employees on TDY orders?

A: No. Civilian employees on TDY orders are not evacuated and are not considered evacuees. Civilian employees on TDY orders to KMC should consult with their chain of command for further guidance.

Q4: Does the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness memorandum, "Safe Haven Guidance for Department of Defense Personnel and Dependents in the Kaiserslautern Military Community" (dated May 7, 2026), apply to evacuees who have an approved alternate foreign safe haven location other than KMC?

A: No. The memo only applies to evacuees in KMC.

Q5: Where may evacuees travel if they are directed to leave KMC?

A: To receive travel and safe haven allowances, evacuees must travel to the designated safe haven or a new approved alternate safe haven location. Evacuees who travel to any other location will not be eligible for transportation to that location nor safe haven allowances once they arrive.

Q6: What are the designated safe haven locations?

A: The official designated safe haven locations are:

I. For civilian employees under an authorized or ordered departure, the designated safe haven is Arlington, Virginia.

II. For eligible family members under an authorized or ordered departure, the designated safe haven is anywhere in the 50 United States, District of Columbia, or non-foreign areas (or U.S. territories, U.S. possessions, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico).

Q7: What are the approved alternate safe haven locations?

A: The approved alternate safe haven for DoW civilian employees is anywhere in the 50 United States, District of Columbia, or non-foreign areas (or U.S. territories, U.S. possessions, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico).

KMC was the only categorical alternate foreign safe haven location authorized for civilian employees and their eligible family members. After June 30, 2026, KMC will no longer be an approved alternate foreign safe haven.

Q8: Can evacuees travel to an alternate foreign safe haven instead of returning to the United States from KMC?

A: To receive travel and safe haven allowances for an alternate foreign safe haven location, evacuees must have approval from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

Q9: How does an evacuee request approval to travel to an alternate foreign safe haven location?

A: Evacuees seeking approval for an alternate safe haven within the foreign area must submit a formal written request to their chain of command. The chain of command must endorse the evacuee's request and forward that request to U.S. Navy Central Command (NAVCENT) N1. NAVCENT must endorse the request and forward the endorsed request to CENTCOM for review and final approval.

NOTE: Evacuee requests must include a significant, compelling justification explaining why evacuees are compelled to travel to a foreign location and not to the U.S.

Q10: What happens if an evacuee's request for an alternate foreign safe haven is disapproved?

A: If the evacuee's request is disapproved, the government will not fund any transportation expenses to and from the unauthorized foreign location for evacuees or their pets. Additionally, evacuees traveling to the unauthorized foreign location will be ineligible to receive safe haven allowances to include SEA and the daily transportation allowance while residing at the unauthorized location.

NOTE: Evacuees with disapproved alternate safe haven requests may still travel to the designated safe haven at government expense and receive transportation and safe haven allowances.

Q11: Will the Navy pay the travel expenses for evacuees required to leave KMC?

A: Yes, provided they receive the proper authorization or approval from the Secretary concerned. Per JTR Section 060103 (Paragraph C and Table 6-7), evacuees must have approval from the Secretary concerned to be eligible for travel and transportation expenses to a new safe haven location and to receive safe haven allowances at the new location.

To streamline this process, OCHR is currently coordinating with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to secure a blanket approval for all evacuees who must relocate from KMC to the United States. This will automatically cover all evacuees relocating to the designated safe haven locations specified in the departure memorandums.

Evacuees seeking to travel from KMC to an alternate foreign safe haven location must seek authorization or approval from CENTCOM. See FAQ #9.

Q12: If an evacuee is required to leave an alternate foreign safe haven (like KMC) and relocate to a new safe haven, what allowances will they be provided?

A: Allowances are governed by Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) Chapter 600 and JTR Chapters 2 and 6. The allowances authorized for evacuees moving from KMC to a designated or approved alternate safe haven include:

I. **Travel Expense Allowances (KMC to New Safe Haven)**

- **En Route Transportation Costs (DSSR 631 and JTR Chapter 2):** Flight arrangements or Mileage Allowance In Lieu of Transportation (MALT) if driving a POV to the final U.S. safe haven point. Authorizing Officials (AOs) determine the most appropriate method of transportation in accordance with JTR Chapter 2.

- **En Route Per Diem (DSSR 631 and JTR Chapter 2):** On evacuee's actual travel days (the day they depart KMC through the end of the day they arrive at the new safe haven location), enroute M&IE is calculated at 75% of the destination's M&IE rate, which is standard JTR policy. Evacuees do not receive the full 100% M&IE on travel days.

- **Pet Transportation and Quarantine (DSSR 631 and JTR 060407):** Evacuees are authorized reimbursement for transportation and quarantine fees for up to two household pets (defined strictly as a cat or dog) to or from a safe haven, provided they owned them at the foreign PDS in Bahrain.
    - If pets were obtained while in KMC or another temporary safe haven location, pet transportation and quarantine expenses are **not** authorized.
    - Allowable expenses may be reimbursed up to a total of **$4,000 roundtrip** and may include: pet transport costs, shipper fees, ground transport to/from airports, hotel pet fees, quarantine fees, boarding/kenneling, required immunizations, blood tests, and health certifications.

NOTE: Pet transportation is not authorized for civilian employees on TDY travel.

- **Air Freight Allowance / Unaccompanied Baggage (UAB) (DSSR 631.a(3) and JTR 060403.C.):** Evacuees on evacuation orders (DD Form 1610) are authorized an air freight allowance for UAB shipments from KMC to their new safe haven.

Note: Air Freight Allowance is not authorized for civilian employees on TDY orders.

- **Excess Accompanied Baggage (Checked Baggage) (JTR 020207.C.3):** The activity's AO has the discretion to authorize or approve excess checked baggage for evacuees on evacuation orders.

- **Baggage Allowances for Civilian Employees on TDY Orders (JTR 020207.C):** AOs may authorize excess accompanied baggage or a UAB shipment for civilian employees on TDY orders (DTS). Civilian employees on TDY orders may only receive a UAB shipment up to 350 pounds OR excess accompanied baggage, not both.

II. Evacuee Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) (DSSR 632 and JTR 060402)

- Evacuees moving from KMC to the designated safe haven (SEE FAQ #6) are authorized SEA payments calculated using the per diem rates for the designated safe haven location.

- Evacuees moving from KMC to an approved alternate safe haven (SEE FAQ #7) will have SEA payments calculated using the lowest of:
    - The locality to which evacuated,
    - The rate applicable to the official safe haven (U.S. or foreign), or
    - The standard CONUS rate.

- Civilian employees on TDY orders receive standard per diem based upon the TDY location, or Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) if specifically authorized.

- Because this is a change in safe haven and a continuation of the same departure order, **there is no reset on the 180-day limitation**. Time spent in KMC counts toward this limit. (e.g., if you were on evacuation orders at KMC for 40 days, M&IE and lodging rates will be based upon days 31–180 tiering, and you will have 140 days of SEA payments remaining).

Accommodation Type & Timeframe	**First Evacuee Rate**	**Dependents (Ages 18+)**	**Dependents (Ages <18)**
Commercial: Days 1–30	100% Locality Lodging + 100% M&IE	100% M&IE	50% M&IE
Commercial: Days 31–180	100% Locality Lodging + 80% M&IE	80% M&IE	40% M&IE
Non-Commercial: Days 1–30	10% Locality Lodging + 100% M&IE	100% M&IE	50% M&IE
Non-Commercial: Days 31–180	0% Locality Lodging + 80% M&IE	80% M&IE	40% M&IE

NOTE: For large family compositions, the maximum commercial lodging rate can sometimes be expanded up to 150% of the locality rate by the AO.

III. Local Transportation Allowance

- Evacuees at a designated or approved alternate safe haven are authorized a flat **$25 per day, per family** local transportation allowance to offset the cost of rental cars, taxis, or public transit. No receipts are required for this flat rate.

IV. Lease Coverage / Financial Protection

- If evacuees must abruptly break a commercial lease at their previous alternate safe haven (Germany) to comply with the June 30th relocation order, they may be authorized up to 30 days of lease coverage (not to exceed the daily SEA lodging rate), provided they have a documented good-faith effort to break the lease.

NOTE: Evacuees must maintain all commercial lodging receipts and flight itineraries. Safe haven allowances are paid in arrears; evacuees will submit travel vouchers and SEA application forms once established at their new safe haven.

Q13: If evacuees were authorized air freight replacement allowance when evacuating to KMC, are they authorized a second air freight allowance to the designated or approved alternate safe haven location?

A: No. However, they are authorized air freight allowance shipments and may be authorized or approved for excess checked baggage. (SEE FAQ #12). Evacuees wishing to ship UAB using their air freight allowance must contact the local personal property office in KMC with their amended DD Form 1610 to arrange the UAB shipment using the air freight allowance authorized in DSSR 600. The mailing of personal items is not reimbursable.

Q14: What happens to the Household Goods (HHG) and Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) left in Bahrain?

A: During an authorized/ordered departure status, HHGs and POVs typically remain at the PDS in Bahrain. The government does not ship HHG or POVs for a temporary safe haven relocation. Allowances for shipping HHG or POVs are only triggered if the evacuee’s evacuation orders are officially converted to a Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

Q15: Can a POV be authorized for travel from the arrival airport in the United States to the final approved safe haven location?

A: Yes, if authorized by the AO, evacuees may be reimbursed for mileage (MALT) and tolls for the distance between the airport and the safe haven. However, the government will not pay to ship a POV from Bahrain to a safe haven location under TDY or evacuation orders. If evacuees choose to drive a POV they already have parked/stored at the safe haven, that mileage reimbursement must be explicitly authorized on the DD Form 1610 and the evacuee would not be authorized daily transportation expenses.

Q16: Will the government pay for a rental car for evacuees at the safe haven location?

A: No. Evacuees on evacuation orders (DD form 1610) are authorized for a flat $25 per day, per family local transportation allowance to offset local travel costs (taxis, public transit, rideshares, or out-of-pocket rental cars). The government will not directly reimburse the full cost of a commercial rental car.

NOTE: Employees on TDY (DTS) orders may be authorized for rental cars IAW JTR chapter 2.

Q17: Must the $25/day Local Transportation Allowance be used for a rental car or POV?

A: No. The $25/day flat rate is a subsistence allowance, not a receipt-based reimbursement. However, evacuees with access to a POV may not be authorized the daily transportation allowance.

Q18: Should evacuees use the $25/day Local Transportation Allowance to pay for parking at a hotel or other commercial lodging option?

A: No, evacuees are not required to use the daily transportation allowance to pay for mandatory parking expenses. For evacuees, mandatory hotel parking fees may be claimed as part of the lodging expenses. However, the parking fee combined with the daily room rate cannot exceed the maximum daily lodging rate for the applicable locality. Taxes are separately reimbursable for locations within the United States or non-foreign area only.

Example: If the hotel charges $150/night and $30 for parking, the total lodging cost claimed is $180. If the locality max is $175, evacuees will be personally responsible for the remaining $5 difference.

Q19: Are daily hotel pet fees covered under the Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA)?

A: Pet fees are not reimbursed as a separate line item. However, these fees can be claimed as part of the daily lodging cost, provided the total cost of the room plus the pet fee does not exceed the maximum daily SEA lodging rate authorized.

NOTE: This is separate from the $4,000 pet transportation allowance, which covers the actual flights and quarantine fees to get the pet to the safe haven.

Q20: Are evacuees required to stay on a military installation (e.g., Navy Lodge or NGIS) when they arrive at their CONUS safe haven?

A: No. Unlike standard TDY, evacuees are not required to use government quarters, and evacuees do not need a Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA) to stay in a commercial hotel out in town. Evacuees may choose to stay in a Navy Lodge if space is available, but it is not a requirement for an authorized departure safe haven.

NOTE: Employees on TDY orders are still subject to the requirements of the Integrated Lodging Program.

Q21: What happens if evacuees find a long-term rental (like an Airbnb or apartment) in CONUS instead of a hotel?

A: Evacuees are authorized to use non-traditional commercial lodging (Airbnb, VRBOs, etc.), but must provide a valid, itemized receipt that breaks down the daily or monthly rate.

NOTE: Most platform "service fees" or "cleaning fees" must be prorated into the daily lodging rate calculation. If the total daily cost (Rent + Fees) exceeds the applicable locality lodging max, the evacuee will be responsible for the difference.

Q22: If an evacuee is currently in a commercial hotel but moves into a house they own, can they still claim the lodging portion of SEA?

A: In this scenario, evacuees would be authorized only the Non-Commercial SEA lodging rate (which provides 0% lodging for days 31–180). However, evacuees would still receive the applicable M&IE for each evacuee.

Q23: Are the travel and Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) payments considered taxable income?

A: Generally, travel and subsistence allowances paid under evacuation orders to offset temporary living expenses are not treated as taxable income. However, individual tax situations can vary. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional or legal assistance office regarding specific tax implications.

Q24: When do the SEA and transportation allowances terminate?

A: Entitlement to special allowance payments during an evacuation shall cease as of the earliest of the following dates (an appropriate grace period necessary to arrange return to post may be authorized, normally not to exceed ten days, provided it is justified on the employee's travel voucher and provided the 180-day limit is not exceeded):

- the date the evacuee commences travel under an assignment order to another duty station outside the evacuation area;
- the effective date of transfer when the employee is already at the post to which transferred;
- the date of separation;
- the date specified by the head of agency;
- the date specified by the Secretary of State;
- 180 days after the evacuation order is issued; or
- the date the evacuee commences final return travel to post.

Q25: What happens if evacuees are unable to return to Bahrain within 180 days after the evacuation order was issued?

A: If determined by the Secretary of State, a subsequent order issued after the 180th day will constitute a separate order, will start a separate 180-day period, and will apply only to evacuees under that order. If no subsequent order is issued by the Secretary of State, SEA and daily transportation allowances will terminate IAW DSSR 632.

Q26: If evacuees use the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) for commercial lodging in the United States, will they be reimbursed for the taxes?

A: For evacuees in the United States or non-foreign area, lodging taxes are a fully reimbursable expense and are paid in addition to the maximum daily SEA lodging rate. Ensure hotel receipts clearly itemize the room rate and the taxes separately.

Q27: Can evacuees use the GTCC for meals and groceries while at the safe haven?

A: Yes. While on official evacuation orders, evacuees may use their GTCC for official travel expenses, which include meals and groceries that fall under the M&IE allowance. However, evacuees are personally responsible for paying the GTCC bill in full each month, even if their SEA travel voucher from DFAS is delayed.

Q28: Can evacuees receive a travel advance to cover the costs of relocating from KMC to the CONUS safe haven?

A: Yes. Evacuees who require financial assistance to cover flights, transportation, or initial lodging costs to relocate from KMC to their new safe haven may request a travel advance. Advances are processed via **DFAS Form 9213**.

The DFAS Form 9213 must be submitted as a complete package to **Travel Voucher Direct Evacuations** via the DFAS Travel Voucher Direct Portal with the following supporting documents:

- **Amendment to DD Form 1610:** Must show the updated itinerary (Bahrain to KMC to

CONUS Safe Haven to Bahrain) and the new approved safe haven.
- **Ordered Departure Memo / Safe Haven Guidance KMC Memo:** A copy of both the Ordered Departure Bahrain memo and the Safe Haven Guidance to Depart KMC memo.
- **Evacuation Information Verification Sheet (EIVS):** This is a critical requirement as it provides the exact breakdown of family members and contains the bank account routing information where the payment will be deposited.
- **Estimates:** DFAS will calculate the advance based on the standard en route per diem rates for the distance between the origin (KMC) and the destination (CONUS Safe Haven).
- **The 30-Day Limit:** Evacuees can claim up to 30 days of estimated Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) and 100% of the en route travel expenses based on the estimates in the orders.

2. PREPARATION OF DD FORM 1610 FOR TRAVEL FROM KMC TO A NEW SAFE HAVEN

Q29: Will evacuees need a new or amended DD Form 1610 when moving from KMC to the new approved safe haven location?

A: Employees will need an amendment to their existing DD Form 1610 to cover the travel and allowances from the date of their departure from KMC. The amended authorization must contain the following specific details:

- **Block 2 (Name):** This block must contain the name of the primary evacuee. If the employee is traveling, the employee is listed here. If family members are traveling without the employee, the spouse or oldest dependent is typically designated as the primary evacuee.
- **Block 11 (Itinerary):** This block must reflect the new approved safe haven and full travel sequence (e.g., Bahrain to KMC to CONUS Safe Haven to Bahrain).
- **Block 16 (Remarks):** This block must include specific cross-referencing and funding instructions required for claims processing and ticketing:
  - Sponsor Identification: If a dependent is designated as the primary evacuee in Block 2, the remarks must state: Sponsor: [Name and Social Security Number or DODID number]. This ensures the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) can link the dependent's claim to the employee's record.
  - Airfare Payment Authorization (IBA vs. CBA): The remarks must explicitly state the payment method so that the Travel Management Company (SATO/CTO) can issue the tickets:
    - **Individually Billed Account (IBA) Authorized:** Authorized if the employee is using their Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) to pay for their own flight. The employee pays the GTCC statement and claims reimbursement on their travel voucher.
    - **Centrally Billed Account (CBA) Authorized:** Authorized if the traveler is a dependent (as dependents are not issued a GTCC) or an employee who

does not possess an active GTCC. This allows the travel office to bill the government directly for the airfare.

Q30: Should DD Form 1610 Remarks (Block 16) state "CBA Authorized" or "IBA Authorized" for booking flights?

A: It depends on who is traveling and how the commercial airfare is being paid for upfront. Evacuees must ensure the correct statement is in Block 16, or the travel office (SATO/CTO) may not be able to ticket their flight.

- **IBA (Individually Billed Account):** Commercial airfare will be charged to the employees GTCC. The employee pays the bill and claims reimbursement on their travel voucher.
    - When to use: Evacuee is an employee and uses their active GTCC to purchase their own flight. (Note: GTCC is for employee use only and cannot be used to purchase dependent tickets).
    - Block 16 Text: "IBA Authorized"

- **CBA (Centrally Billed Account):** The government pays the travel management company (e.g., SATO) directly for the flights. No upfront cost comes out of the traveler's pocket or GTCC.
    - When to use: The traveler is a dependent, OR when an employee does not have an active GTCC.
    - Block 16 Text: "CBA Authorized"

Mixed Travel: If an employee with a GTCC is traveling together with their dependents, the employee's ticket should be charged to their GTCC (IBA), and the dependents' tickets should be billed directly to the government (CBA). In this case, Block 16 must include both statements: "IBA Authorized for employees; CBA Authorized for dependents."

Q31: How should evacuees arrange for transportation to the new safe haven location?

A: Evacuees should contact their chains of command and arrange for transportation using the closest available passenger transportation office.

NOTE: Evacuees who self-procure their own travel risk not being reimbursed or not being reimbursed for the full amount of airfare.

Q32: What if evacuees do not have a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) to purchase flights?

A: If evacuees do not have a GTCC, their flights from KMC to the new approved safe haven location must be booked using a Centrally Billed Account (CBA). In this case, the amended DD

Form 1610, Block 16 (Remarks) must state: "CBA Authorized." This allows the Commercial Travel Office (CTO/SATO) to charge the government directly for the airfare.

Q33: Can the "First Evacuee" be changed when moving from KMC to the new approved safe haven?

A: Generally, no. The "First Evacuee" is the person used to establish the base for the Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) calculation. To maintain a clear audit trail with DFAS for the full 180-day period, the individual designated as the First Evacuee in KMC should remain the First Evacuee on the amended DD Form 1610 and the DD Form 2461 for the CONUS location

3. TRAVEL CLAIMS & FINANCIAL PROCESSING

Q34: How should the Travel Voucher/Claim (DD Form 1351-2) be completed based on whether the sponsor or a dependent is the primary evacuee?

A: The way to fill out the DD Form 1351-2 is completely dependent on who was designated as the "First Evacuee" on the DD Form 1610 orders:

- **If the Sponsor (Employee) is the Primary/First Evacuee:**
    - **Block 1 (Name):** Enter the Sponsor's full name.
    - **Block 2 (SSN):** Enter the Sponsor's Social Security Number.
    - **Block 20a (Signature):** The Sponsor must sign the voucher.
- **If a Dependent is the Primary/First Evacuee (e.g., traveling while the sponsor remains in Bahrain):**
    - **Block 1 (Name):** Enter the full name of the First Evacuee (e.g., the spouse or oldest dependent) exactly as it appears on the DD Form 1610.
    - **Block 2 (SSN):** Enter the SSN or TIN of the dependent listed in Block 1.
    - **Block 20a (Signature):** The First Evacuee (the dependent listed in Block 1) signs the voucher.

Q35: How frequently should evacuees submit travel vouchers/claims for SEA payments once established at the new approved safe haven location?

A: Because SEA is paid in arrears (after expenses are incurred), evacuees should submit an interim travel voucher **every 30 days**. This ensures a steady reimbursement flow to cover continuous lodging and M&IE outlays. Ensure all itemized lodging receipts are attached to each 30-day voucher submission.

Q36: What if an evacuee is unable to provide a receipt for lodging or an individual expense in excess of $75?

A: The JTR requires itemized receipts for all lodging and any individual expense over $75. If evacuees lose a receipt, they must first attempt to get a duplicate from the vendor. If a duplicate is impossible to obtain, they must submit a **"Lost Receipt Statement"** (a signed memorandum) detailing the exact costs, dates, and why the receipt is missing. The Authorizing Official (AO) must approve this statement before DFAS can process the payment.

4. SAFE HAVEN CHANGES OTHER THAN KMC

Q37: How does an evacuee not in KMC request a change of safe haven location?

A: Individual requests to change an established safe haven must be authorized or approved by the Secretary concerned. For the Department of the Navy, the Secretary concerned is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Military Manpower and Personnel (DASN (MM&P)).

Evacuees must submit requests via their chain of command with sufficient justification compelling the move. The employee's command will route the request to their Echelon 2 command via the Enterprise Track Management System (ETMS). Echelon 2 commands must then endorse and route the ETMS package via the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) to the DASN (MM&P).

Q38: Do evacuees need approval to move from a non-commercial residence to a commercial hotel within the same geographic area?

A: Yes. According to Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) Table 6-7, changes in a safe haven location within the same geographic area or city still require approval through the Secretarial Process. For civilian employees and their EFMs, OCHR serves as the approval authority. These requests may be submitted via the evacuee's chains of command directly to the OCHR's Overseas Allowances Program Manager.

Q39: Do evacuees have to stay at the exact same safe haven location?

A: No, however, if evacuees choose to reside at separate safe haven locations, the lodging portion of SEA will only be paid for one location and calculated based upon the first evacuee listed on the DD Form 1610. Lodging may not be claimed for more than one location and that is the location of the first evacuee. Evacuees at separate safe haven locations do not receive their own set of evacuation orders.
NOTE: Employees may be TDY at one location while their EFMs are evacuated to a different location. In this situation, the employee receives per diem for their TDY location while the EFMs receive SEA for the evacuation location.

Q40: Can evacuees change their safe haven location more than once?

A: Evacuees seeking a subsequent change in safe haven must submit requests via their chains of command with sufficient justification compelling the move. The employee's command will route the request to their Echelon 2 command via the Enterprise Track Management System (ETMS). Echelon 2 commands must then endorse and route the ETMS package via the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) to the DASN (MM&P).

Q41: Does residing in the United States for evacuation or TDY change state Tax withholding?

A: Generally, no. A temporary evacuation to a safe haven does not automatically change an employee's official "State of Legal Residence" (domicile) for tax purposes. Employees remain a resident of their established home state. However, if the evacuation extends for a long period, employees should consult a tax professional to ensure they do not inadvertently trigger physical residency tax requirements for the state where the safe haven is located.

5. LEAVE AND FAMILY

Q42: What happens to an evacuee's allowance if they travel outside of their safe haven location or go on leave?

A: In accordance with DSSR 632.4, SEA shall continue for eligible evacuees while an employee in ordered/authorized departure status takes annual, sick, or parental leave. Employees on leave outside of the official or approved alternate safe haven (domestic or foreign) will be paid the lowest of:

- The locality to which evacuated,
- The rate applicable to the official safe haven (whether U.S. or foreign), or
- The standard CONUS rate.

SEA is suspended for any evacuees traveling outside the country of their approved safe haven location. SEA payment may commence upon their return to the country of their approved safe haven location.

An employee in Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status on a workday for one-half day or less remains eligible for SEA for that day. An employee in LWOP status may receive SEA if they are evacuated primarily as a dependent.

Q43: Can employees on TDY orders receive per diem if they take leave?

A: Generally, no. Federal civilian employees on TDY orders do not receive per diem, neither Lodging nor M&IE, for days spent in personal leave status. A civilian employee is not in a travel status while on an excused absence or administrative leave (DoDI 1400.25, Volume 600).

However, how leave affects the days surrounding it depends on a few specific rules outlined in Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) 033301 paragraph C.2.

- The "Half-Day" Rule:
    - If an employee takes annual leave for more than half of their prescribed daily working hours (e.g., more than 4 hours of a standard 8-hour workday), per diem is not authorized for that entire day. If the leave taken is 4 hours or less, they can still receive per diem for the day, assuming they incur expenses.

- The Weekend and Holiday "Sandwich" Rule:
    - Normally, an employee receives full per diem for weekends and holidays that fall in the middle of a continuous TDY period. However, a specific restriction applies if leave is combined with a weekend:
    - The Rule: If an employee takes leave on the workday immediately before AND the workday immediately after a weekend or holiday (for example, taking annual leave on both Friday and Monday), per diem is withheld for the entire weekend or holiday period. If they only take leave on Friday but return to a regular work status on Monday, per diem for Saturday and Sunday remains intact.

- The Sick Leave Exception:
    - Per diem is authorized for a civilian employee who discontinues the TDY assignment and takes any type of leave due to an incapacitating illness or injury. However, it:
        - Must not exceed the per diem rate for the TDY location at which the interruption occurs.
        - May be continued at the location where the injury or illness occurred, or is being treated, for 14 or fewer days unless authorized through the Secretarial Process.
        - Per diem is not authorized in the following circumstances while a civilian employee is confined to a hospital or medical facility:
            - In the vicinity of the PDS.
            - That is the same hospital or medical facility the civilian employee would have been admitted to had the injury or illness occurred at the PDS.
            - If the civilian employee is paid or reimbursed for hospital expenses

under any Federal statute, including for hospitalization in a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center or military hospital. However, the civilian employee receives per diem if medical expenses are paid under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program while in a travel status (5 U.S.C. §§8901-8913).

Leave effect on long term lodging (JTR 033302):

- The JTR authorize the pro-rating the fixed lodging costs. When a traveler rents or leases lodging on a weekly, monthly, or long-term basis, the daily TDY lodging cost is computed by dividing the total periodic lodging cost by the number of days the traveler is authorized the lodging portion of the locality per diem rate. This computation presumes that the traveler acts prudently in renting by the week or month, and that the Government does not exceed the cost of renting conventional lodging at a daily rate.
    - Scenario: A traveler is on a TDY at a location in the CONUS at which the per diem rate is $150 ($91/$59). Lodging— apartment and utilities—is obtained on a long-term basis for $900 a month. The traveler is reimbursed up to the lodging portion of per diem. The traveler takes leave for 10 days and is authorized per diem for only 20 days. Per diem is not allowed when the traveler is in a leave status. The total allowable lodging cost is divided by the number of days the traveler is authorized the lodging portion of per diem. The daily lodging cost during September is computed at $45 a day ($900/20 days). Since $45 a day does not exceed the daily lodging per diem rate of $91, reimbursement is for $45 a day.

Q44: If evacuees take leave outside of the safe haven location, do they have to report the location change to anyone?

A: Yes. SEA payments may be adjusted if the leave location is outside of the approved safe haven locality. Additionally, evacuees should keep their command and HRO informed of their location for accountability and safety purposes (Mustering).

Q45: Do employees need to update health insurance when returning to the United States?

A: It is highly recommended that employees contact their Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) provider. Many overseas FEHB plans (or overseas provider networks) process claims differently than standard CONUS networks. Notifying the provider of the temporary relocation to a U.S. safe haven will ensure access to in-network care without billing friction while evacuated.

Q46: What happens if a dependent child turns 18 while we they are evacuated?

A: Under the DSSR, Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) M&IE rates are tied directly to the age of the dependent. Dependents under age 18 receive a lower M&IE percentage than those 18 and older. If a child reaches one of these milestone birthdays while evacuated, their authorized allowance rate will increase with an effective date of their birthday. Evacuees must note this age change on the subsequent 30-day voucher to ensure DFAS adjusts the payment correctly.

Q47: What if an evacuee has a baby while at the safe haven?

A: If an evacuee has a child while evacuated, the newborn is automatically considered an authorized dependent for safe haven allowances. Evacuees must immediately submit an updated **Evacuation Information Verification Sheet (EIVS)** to add the newborn to the safe haven SEA claim.

6. EVACUATION TERMINATION

Q48: What are the three critical dates evacuees need to know when an evacuation terminates?

A: The three dates are: (1) Date of Termination, (2) Grace Period end date, and (3) "MUST FLY BY" date. The Termination Date and number of grace period days are specified in the Return of Evacuees order and determine the SEA eligibility and travel deadlines.

Q49: What is the Date of Termination?

A: This is the official date the evacuation ends, as stated in the Return of Evacuees memo. It serves as Day 1 when counting calendar days for the "MUST FLY BY" date, and it may be the last date evacuees receive SEA if they don't travel within the grace period.

Q50: How does the grace period work?

A: The grace period is a specified number of calendar days (stated in the Return of Evacuees Cable) during which evacuees can continue receiving SEA while arranging return travel, UAB pack out, and departure. Evacuees start counting Day 1 the day AFTER the Date of Termination and must begin travel back to post within this grace period.

Q51: What happens if evacuees don't travel within the grace period?

A: Evacuees who do not begin travel back to post within the stated grace period days shall have SEA terminated as of the Date of Termination. There are no exceptions or extensions.

Q52: How many grace period days will evacuees receive?

A: The number of grace period days varies and is specified in the Return of Evacuees cable issued by DoS. The average number of days is 5, and the maximum number of days that can be authorized, per the DSSR, is 10 days.

Q53: Are grace period days business days or calendar days?

A: Grace period days are calendar days, not business days.

Q54: Can evacuees get additional grace period days due to UAB pack out schedules?

A: No. There are no additional grace period days due to UAB pack-out schedules.

Q55: What does "MUST FLY BY" mean?

A: This is the final date by which evacuees must be on a plane returning to post, if evacuees want their travel funded by the U.S. Government. It is calculated by counting 30 calendar days from the Date of Termination. Evacuees must be on the plane by day 30.

Q56: Example of how to calculate the "MUST FLY BY" date?

A: If the Date of Termination is January 12 and you're authorized up to 10 grace period days, you must be on a plane no later than (NLT) January 22, the 10th day. The grace days run from January 13-21, so you must fly NLT January 22.

Q57: When does SEA end?

A: If evacuees are not traveling to post within the grace period days, the last day evacuees can receive SEA is the Date of Termination. If evacuees are traveling back to post within the grace period days, the last day to receive SEA will be the day prior to beginning travel back to post.

Q58: Can evacuees continue receiving SEA after the grace period ends?

A: No. If evacuees do not begin travel back to post within the grace period, SEA ends on the Date of Termination.

Q59: Can evacuees be reimbursed if they must break a lease to return to the foreign post?

A: Reimbursement for lease expenses may be authorized for up to 30 days from the day prior to the effective date, not to exceed the daily SEA lodging rate, provided evacuees meet all eligibility requirements.

Q60: What are the eligibility requirements for lease payoff reimbursement?

A: Evacuees must meet the following conditions:

- Total SEA payment does not exceed 180 days
- Evacuees are returning immediately to post within the grace period
- The lease/extension was signed prior to the termination date in the cable
- Evacuees provide documentation showing they attempted to break the lease and a statement from the lessor certifying that all tenants vacated the lodging

Q61: What documentation must evacuees provide when requesting lease payoff?

A: Evacuees must provide documentation demonstrating an effort to break the lease and a statement by the lessor certifying that the lodging was vacated by all tenants.

Q62: Does the lease need to have been signed before a certain date to qualify for reimbursement?

A: Yes. The lease or lease extension must have been signed prior to the departure termination date.

Q63: Can evacuees receive lease payoff if they are not returning to post?

A: No. Evacuees must be returning immediately to post within the grace period to be eligible for lease payoff reimbursement.

Q64: What if an EFM does not wish to return to post after the evacuation terminates?

A: EFMs who do not wish to return to post may request Separate Maintenance Allowance in accordance with Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) chapter 260. Voluntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (VSMA) may be a temporary option without using the one-change rule, per DSSR 264.2

However, this exception does not apply during the first or last 90 days of the employee's assignment at post.

Q65: What is the "one-change rule" and how does it apply to this situation?

A: The one-change rule typically limits changes to SMA status. However, under DSSR 264.2 exception, EFMs who choose not to return during the grace period may access VSMA as a temporary option without using their one-change rule.

Q66: Can employees be authorized VSMA during the first or last 90 days of assignment at the foreign post?

A: No. VSMA is not authorized during the first or last 90 days of the employee's assignment at post.

Q67: Where can employees find VSMA rates?

A: Rates for VSMA can be found in DSSR 267.

Q68: Where can employees find more information about SMA eligibility and requirements?

A: Employees should contact their servicing human resources office (HRO) for information on SMA and the process to request SMA. Frequently Asked Questions and the DSSR are available at https://allowances.state.gov/

Q69: How do Department of Navy Employees request SMA?

A: Department of Navy employees must submit requests via their chains of command to their servicing HRO. The HRO will verify eligibility and ensure the package is complete and will submit the request to OCHR for agency level approval.

Q70: Is SMA retroactive?

A: No. SMA is not retroactive; employees should submit SMA requests as early as possible.

Q71: How do evacuees arrange to travel back to post?

A: Evacuees should contact their chain of command for guidance on return transportation arrangements. Evacuees should not self-procure transportation without specific authorization from the Authorizing Official. Evacuees who self-procure transportation risk not being reimbursed or having limited reimbursement.

Q72: What travel authorization do evacuees need for returning to the foreign post?

A: The original or amended DD Form 1610 evacuation order is used as authorization to fund return travel and transportation to the foreign post. Evacuees will not be issued a new DD Form 1610 for return travel.

Q73: Can evacuees return to the foreign post before the termination date?

A: No. Travel back to post may not commence prior to the termination date stated in the termination cable or as directed by DoW.

Q74: May an evacuee cost construct return travel to post and stop in a location of their choice on the way?

A: Return travel to post should be in the most expeditious and direct manner possible. Cost-construct travel, outside of travel from an approved alternate domestic/foreign safe haven location, is not authorized.

Q75: Can evacuees ship unaccompanied air baggage (UAB) using freight allowance back to post?

A: Yes. Evacuees are authorized the freight allowance in DSSR 600 for the shipment of unaccompanied air baggage (UAB) back to post regardless of whether UAB was shipped from post and regardless of whether an airfreight replacement allowance was granted.

Q76: How do evacuees request a UAB shipment back to post?

A: Evacuees must provide their DD Form 1610 to the personal property office to arrange for the shipment of the UAB using their freight allowance under DSSR 600. Mailed UAB will not be reimbursed.