

# MSD Saipan Welcome Aboard!



Hafa-Adai! MSD SAIPAN would like to welcome you and your family to Saipan, one of the Northern Marianas Islands, nestled in the Pacific Ocean and the Philippine Sea. Saipan offers everything you would expect on a tropical island: lush green hills, warm aquamarine waters, beautiful beaches, fabulous weather, great dining, duty free shopping and tons of water and land activities. This is probably a very exciting time for you and your family as you prepare to move to Saipan. It is our hope that this information will help ease your mind and help answer some basic questions that you may have.

We will cover the following topics:

1. Office
2. Housing
3. Medical
4. Education
5. Shopping
6. Other Information



1. **Office:** MSD Saipan is a small 3 person office with a LT, CWO, and a MST1. The co-located civilian GS-12 works for Sector Planning.

The roles and responsibilities are as follows:

**LT** – Supervisor. Conducts investigations, inspects deep draft US/foreign flag vessels, T-Boats and serves as the primary Coast Guard representative on Saipan.

**CWO** – Conducts T-Boat exams, inspects deep draft US/foreign flag vessels and serves as the secondary Coast Guard representative on Saipan.

**MST1** – Conducts Facility Exams, Container Inspections, Responds to Pollution incidents and assists with inspections of T-Boats and deep draft US/foreign flag vessels. Collateral duties include Mail custodian and GV rep.

Last update: July 2020

MSD Saipan typically has 06-08 MSC vessels anchored a few miles off shore that require annual inspections. In addition, MSD staff conduct 10-15 PSC exams a year on freight vessels, tank/chem vessels and cruise ships. The T-boat fleet consists of 32 vessels and we have tugs and barges.

- Housing:** One of the most challenging tasks upon arriving on island will be finding a place to live. All housing here is on the economy and you may find it useful to check out the website <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/ohaCalc.cfm> to look up your housing allowance by location, using Northern Marianas Island, Saipan. You will also receive an allowance for utilities, as they tend to be a bit high on the island. If married, presently your OHA is 1667 and you get 923 for utilities for all ranks. If single, presently your OHA is 1500 and utilities 692 for all ranks. **It is important to remember that with OHA, unlike BAH, you do not keep the difference between your actual expenses and your allowance.** When searching for housing, please keep in mind that many of the places are rented furnished, so that might determine how much of your personal belongings you may wish to bring with you. However, unfurnished housing can be found from time to time. Take your time, search the internet, and tour the island so that you can get a better feel for the island and the different areas. Bringing pets to Saipan takes considerable time and money, so do in depth research through the links below:

<https://www.pettravel.com/immigration/Saipan.cfm> and  
<https://www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/travel/animals.html>

Members have had good luck finding housing from these contacts, however these contacts are not USCG affiliated or endorsed:

Del Benson – 670-285-4335

Saipan real estate - 670-287-4766

Bridge Capital - 670-322-2222

Take a look as well on Facebook Saipan House/Apartment for Rent, and last but not least, talk to the departing members as their homes should be available!

- Medical:** Medical is handled by TRICARE International SOS. Contact 1-877-451-8659 for all your healthcare needs, such as medical advice and information, scheduling appointments, and locating network primary and specialty care providers. A helpful website for the TRICARE Overseas Program is [www.Tricare-Overseas.com](http://www.Tricare-Overseas.com)

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (Hospital) is available on island, offering a full array of primary, medical and specialty healthcare services. The website for the hospital is <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/>

**Dental:** Members use the Seventh Day Adventist Clinic and contact United Concordia to get a ACN. Give that number to dentist to be reimbursed by United Concordia. Contact United Concordia at 1-866-984-2337 for assistance.  
<https://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental/ADDental/ADDP/RemoteCare>

- Education:** There are several options for education depending on where you live, for both public and private schools.

Here is the Public school website: <https://www.cnmipss.org/>  
In addition, there is a Northern Marianas College: <https://www.marianas.edu/>



- 5. Shopping:** There are several different options for groceries. For example, there are stores that cater to an Asian diet such as XO market, 99 cents, and Twins, and there are stores that cater to an American diet such as the popular Joetens, which looks just like a Sams/Costco. You may have to shop at 2-3 places in order to complete your shopping and get what you need. **The tap water is safe to drink, but most people have water delivered to your home in 5 gallon water containers or refill it yourself at the markets due to the high sodium content.**

There is a small exchange/troop store on the Army Reserve Base that has a decent amount of cleaning items, frozen quick meals, household appliances, and liquid refreshments. The exchange offers decent prices; unfortunately, they are much smaller than typical military exchanges.

Other shopping options include a KMART type store, Ace Hardware, McDonalds, KFC, & Subway.

## 6. Other Information:

### Hotel

Upon arrival on island, you will most likely be staying at a hotel while searching for a place to live. Popular hotels include:

Hyatt Saipan, Fiesta, Kensington, and several other hotels. The Hyatt is generally the most popular choice.

**\*\*\*HOTELS BOOK QUICKLY HERE DO NOT WAIT\*\*\* ALSO BOOK FOR AT LEAST A MONTH JUST IN CASE YOU CAN'T FIND HOUSING.**

These hotels are located in downtown Garapan (except Kensington) and are convenient to shops and restaurants. Be sure to ask for the military/local rates when booking your hotel room. If you are bringing pets, see housing section for rules, and check to see if the hotel is pet friendly.



#### Cellular Phone Information/Internet/Cable

**\*\*\*YOUR PHONE PROVIDER WILL NOT WORK HERE SO MAKE SURE YOU CAN CHANGE SIM CARDS (UNLOCK YOUR PHONE)\*\*\***

There are two local companies that provide cell phones, cable and internet service. IT&E and Docomo.

Most people use WHATSAPP to communicate on island because phones do not send pictures here on text messages. You friends and family can get WHATSAPP and communicate easily with you and it's FREE.

#### Vehicle Shipment

If you plan to ship your vehicle to Saipan, it is best to ship it early. The shipping company has between 30 and 40 days to deliver your vehicle to the island, but it may take longer. The military will pay to ship one vehicle; if you plan to ship another vehicle you will have to pay out of pocket. If you plan to ship another vehicle, contact MATSON to find their rates and additional information. If you do not plan to ship a vehicle, there are always vehicles on island that can be purchased, typically at above market prices. Once your vehicle arrives on island, you will want to register it at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Information about the Bureau of Motor Vehicles can be found on their website <http://www.dps.gov.mp/#>

#### Driving

We drive on the right side of the road here on Saipan. The speed limit is 35mph on most of the island except for two areas. You must stop for all pedestrians when they are crossing the road, and there are lots of tourists from other countries who will stop and take pictures in the middle of the road. PAY ATTENTION and do not try to drive anywhere in a hurry.

Last update: July 2020

## Island Time

We are on Chamorro Standard Time and Saipan does not participate in Daylight Savings Time. This takes getting used to, for example: during summer if its Monday 1100 local time it would be 2100 Sunday night on the East coast. So East coast is 14 hours behind us. Therefore, Sunday Night football is on Monday morning and Monday Night Football is on Tuesday morning.



## Mail

The United States Postal Service does not deliver mail to most residences on the island. There are two options for mail delivery on island: 1. You can either rent a post office box at the post office nearest to your place of residence 2. You can use have the mail sent directly to the Coast Guard Office PO Box (which is what everyone typically does). The address for the Coast Guard PO box is: PO Box 5644, Saipan, MP 96950. **(Note: Do Not Change Your Address with USPS, only Change Address with individual companies because you CANNOT change your address from the USCG PO Box. If you do, then the entire box (meaning everyone's mail including CG mail) would then be forwarded!)**

When shipping items or having items shipped to you, it is easiest and most effective to use the United States Postal Service. The Flat Rate mailing envelopes and boxes are great for shipping items for one low rate anywhere in the United States. Fed-Ex, UPS, DHL, etc. are available on island, but do not deliver to all addresses and will sometimes require you to pick up the package from the carriers office. Saipan is considered International for these carriers, and rates can be quite expensive (but you may save money on taxes).

Amazon, Ebay, Vitacost, and other online retailers will ship to the island for lots of different items, however, they will often charge extra. Products with lithium batteries cannot be shipped to Saipan at all. Some people have had luck calling and informing the retailer that there are no extra costs associated with shipping to Saipan and the USPS may ship some items.



### Vehicle Insurance

**\*\*\*\*USAA AND OTHER INSURANCE COMPANIES WILL NOT INSURE YOU ON ISLAND FOR VEHICLES\*\*\*\***

There are two local companies: Century and Moylans that charge about \$400 a year.

### Recreational

There are numerous beaches in Saipan and plenty of snorkeling and diving opportunities. The beaches are not like stateside beaches, as most have coral of some sort and are over 80 degrees warm all year long. If you are going to go for a swim, recommend going during high tide and when the water quality of the local beach is in the green before going out. **Finally, do not leave valuables on the beach as theft occasionally occurs.**

BECQ Beach Advisories: <http://deq.gov.mp/sec.asp?secID=52>

Saipan's top attraction is MANAGAHA ISLAND, which is just off the coast of Saipan. There are many vessels that will take you out to the island to swim and snorkel. With the Mayor's Card, several vessels will take you there for \$20. They typically depart from the port at 0830 and return at 1300 and 1600 every day.

One of the most unique spots on island is called the Grotto, and it is very popular for tourists and locals to snorkel and dive.

There are three great golf courses: Lau Lau, Kingfisher, and Coral Ocean Point. CG members can join local golf leagues that play once a month on average.

There is a local ID from the Mayor's office that you can get for a onetime charge of \$25. This will get you discounts on island such as restaurants, golf courses, etc. For example, tourists pay around \$200 for a round of golf while the locals pay only \$35 for 18 holes.

Other recreational activities include: biking, running, Brazilian jiu jitsu, skydiving, spear fishing, yoga, as well as the local Gold's Gym.

### Travel

It is important to know that air travel to/from the states is very expensive. The average cost is over \$1500 per ticket and for some places, costs over \$2000 per ticket. In addition, there are limited number of flight per week so planning is crucial as most people try to combine C-schools with leave to alleviate some of the costs. Conversely, travel to Asian countries such as Korea, China, and Japan are more affordable at about \$300-400 for a round trip ticket, so take advantage of this opportunity to visit these countries on vacation.

Please feel free to contact one of the following crew to help answer questions, assist in house hunting, or offer advice on moving to the island.

Once again, welcome to Saipan! The Coast Guard members and dependents look forward to meeting you and your family very soon.

