

## Things Everyone Needs to Know About Transferring to Guam

- 1) Guam is an amazing and beautiful place!
- 2) There are unique challenges associated with this move.
- 3) Pets can be very difficult to get to Guam and can be very expensive, especially if they are larger pets. Each member/family must determine the best way to ship their pets. Please see the Sector Guam internet page for more information and links on pets. Every member transferring to Guam who is looking to bring a pet faces the challenge of shipping a pet. These limitations are based on airline restrictions and not military policies. There are ways to receive reimbursement through travel claim for quarantine fees. Additionally, there are organizations who attempt to help through grants and other aid.
- 4) HHG's should be shipped very early. (60 plus days prior to arriving if possible). Make sure that your transportation providers pack Household Goods (HHG's) correctly! Lightweight straps for motorcycles, not packing dishes adequately, placing picture frames facing each other without packing material in between, and placing proper padding/materials around furniture are a few examples. Companies should crate your HHG's in front of you at your house. If this is impossible, they must allow you to see it go into the crate. They should seal the crates in front of you with seals that you sign. The same seal should be present when you receive your shipment.
- 5) POV's should ship as early as possible. (60 plus days prior to arriving if feasible). Keep in mind members **DO RECEIVE TRAVEL ENTITLEMENTS** to the nearest Vehicle Processing Center. (VPC). This is an entitlement. This includes the VPC location becoming an authorized departure point for your PCS move. For example: If a member in Central Florida is heading to Guam, their nearest VPC is Atlanta, GA. The member should receive orders to Atlanta and back to their duty station for mileage/per diem. OR The member can drive their POV to Atlanta, GA and then fly from Atlanta to Guam. Joint Travel Regulations allows members to depart from the nearest airport or location of their duty station to the new duty station, or from the VPC location to the new duty station.
- 6) Contact the VPC prior to arrival to see if they will provide you the required forms and paperwork when your car arrives. This will save you a trip to the VPC just to pick up paperwork. The process they will provide has many steps prior to being able to receive your vehicle. The steps are to go to the VPC to pick up forms, then to the Customs office at the port, then to the DMV for temporary permission, then back to Customs for approval, then to the VPC for pick-up. It makes it easier if the VPC will e-mail you the forms to fill out. This requires you to start with Customs saving one stop in the process. It sounds really rough, but the Customs office is sort of on the way to the DMV and on the way back. It can all be done in approximately two hours.
- 7) Most Coast Guard members are not used to overseas moves which includes understanding entitlements such as travel entitlements, HHG's shipment, etc. It is

recommended that you go through your sponsor to ask questions. Once receiving orders, it is highly recommended to talk with your sponsor every couple of weeks to ensure questions are answered. Your sponsor should ask either the local Admin/SPO any questions not provided to them in their sponsor training. The sponsor training power point is on the Sector Guam internet page.

- 8) Families should book their Temporary Lodging as early as possible and for at least 30 days, if not 45 or 60 just to be safe. (6 months in advance if possible) (See information regarding booking with the NGIS)
- 9) Members should book their TLA through the Navy Gateway Inn and Suites. If the NGIS is fully booked and has no availability, the member can book their TLA through the NGIS who will find them alternate lodging, or the member can ask for a statement of non-availability and make their own reservations as long as the hotel utilized is a TLA authorized hotel. The PDTATAC website has more information. The ADMIN/SPO in Guam can also help answer these questions. Please go through your sponsor. The NGIS utilizes hotels that provide funding to MWR programs for members TLA as it provides additional funding and support for Naval Base Guam MWR programs. Coast Guard members only need to ensure they have a "Statement of Non-availability" from the NGIS in order to find an authorized TLA hotel on their own as long as it is on the list. Members going directly into the barracks are not likely to receive TLA as long as their room is ready upon their arrival.
- 10) Single members E-4 and below should contact the ADMIN/SPO in Guam through their sponsor to determine their situation accurately. Typically, E-4 and below are assigned to barracks but due to limited space in the barracks, some E-4's may go on the economy.
- 11) Single members or unaccompanied members E-5 and above **will live on the economy** unless there is a Resident Advisor position available (There is only one position). The cost to move into a place is substantial. It can easily cost well over \$4000 to be able to move into a new place for any members going on the economy. OHA is not the same as BAH and is paid after the fact. This means members will not receive their first OHA payment until having lived in the place for a period unless advance OHA is paid. (Learn about OHA)
- 12) The NGIS has fully furnished two-bedroom homes available as TLA assigned hotels in order to accommodate families to include families with pets. It is recommended to book 30-60 days immediately upon determination of your actual arrival date to Guam.
- 13) Most people **ARE NOT** fully aware of the transfer requirements, allowances, and entitlements associated with Guam. Therefore, you must talk frequently and often with your sponsor, and the ADMIN/SPO in GUAM to ensure you have correct information.
- 14) Housing for members is mandatory! Accompanied Members and E-4 and below. Please see Items #7 and #8. Unless answered in a previous item, members and families that arrive on Guam are **REQUIRED** to go into base housing. There are very

few exceptions, such as purchasing a home. Additionally, if a member wishes to request living on the economy for an authorized reason from the CG Housing Manual, they should do so 45 days prior to arrival to allow the Command in Guam the time to review, forward to the District Housing Office for a recommendation, and gain final approval prior to arriving.

- 15) Naval Base Guam provides our housing. The policies associated with Coast Guard members and their families with regards to mandatory housing is slightly different than our Navy brothers and sisters. This means at times, the Naval Base Guam housing office provides information to Coast Guard members that is consistent with Navy policy or local base instructions and not Coast Guard policy. For example: at times members are told that they can deny houses and utilize a month to month lease or rental while awaiting a preferred housing area. This is authorized for Navy members as they do not have the same "Mandatory Housing" policy as the Coast Guard. As the Coast Guard Housing Manual and our Inter-Service Agreement with the Navy to provide our housing in Guam requires Coast Guard members to live in base housing unless specifically authorized. Information from Navy Housing regarding this manner may be relayed incorrectly by the contract or civilian employee due to their policies for the majority of personnel they assist falling under Navy policies. (Coast Guard Commands are working diligently to ensure proper usage of policies at the Housing Office).
- 16) Housing is a Naval Base Guam service that is done through an office with civilian employees then through a contract company. It is NAVY owned housing. Wait times for housing is dependent upon availability and can range from one week to 60 days. The average in 2018 for a three-bedroom house for CG members was between 10-30 days. Four-bedroom houses were longer. There has been very little wait for two-bedroom homes. This varies depending upon the time of year and volume of transfers.
- 17) Complete the HEAT applications and paperwork for housing. This does not help you with your housing priority or place on the list. Housing is prioritized by either being a command member (CO, XO, CMC) receiving priority 1, and the rest of the wait list being completely based on departure date from your last unit. For members who go TDY or take substantial leave prior to arriving, they may move ahead of someone else who has been on the list for a longer period. Completing the HEAT paperwork through housing means they have all your paperwork ready when you arrive, and you can begin your process immediately upon arrival. Dates for when you arrive, and your priority do not change.
- 18) Coast Guard members who are single or unaccompanied will only receive 65% of their TLA and 65% of their meals and incidental funding. The lodging rate in Guam is \$159 per day and the food rate is \$87 per day. 65% of the total of \$246 equals \$159.90. This means if the NGIS does not have availability and the member is required to find a hotel out in town that is a TLA authorized hotel, the hotel may charge \$159 per night plus tax. The tax is covered and claimed on a travel claim but if the total lodging is

\$159 per night charged by the hotel, the member essentially has \$0.90 left for food. Shoreside members would be receiving their SEPRATS or food allowance while shipboard members would not. Please review the formula for TLA to understand. Additionally, if staying in lodging with kitchen/appliances the amount changes.

- 19) TLA cannot begin until you check-in with the unit. If you decide to arrive on Guam and take leave in a Hotel prior to reporting, the cost of the hotel is the responsibility of the member. The best recommendation if desiring leave upon arrival is to work this out with your supervisor and understand whether you will receive TLA. Members **MUST** check-in and report prior to receiving TLA as well as going to the housing office in order to go on the list for housing. Additionally, your first night on Guam is on your regular PCS travel day and therefore is part of your travel claim and not TLA. TLA starts after your travel day.
- 20) Members do not receive reimbursement for rental cars or transportation costs associated with the PCS move unless their POV does not arrive by the promised date listed on the shipment. This is very rare for the POV to arrive much later than the promised date. If it does, the member can receive up to 7 days, at \$35 per day for a rental car. This is the only time this is authorized. Sector Guam has been working diligently with the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance regarding a grant to help with offsetting this cost but there is currently no reimbursement available. Members renting a car do so **out of pocket**. This is a major reason shipping a car early, prior to arrival is very important if feasible.
- 21) Decent "BOONIE CARS" can be found at a reasonable price. \$3500 gets a pretty nice vehicle. (AIRCON is a must). Members have found many cars under this amount as well. Many do not recommend bringing a nice new vehicle to Guam due to the salt air. This is completely the member's choice as there are many new car dealerships in Guam. Additionally, there are many for sale type pages on social media, and an MWR lot for cars being sold by military members.
- 22) Most members fly through Honolulu and after 20 or more hours of flying and a 15-18 hour time difference, they are extremely exhausted upon arrival. It will take days or even a week or more to adjust to the time difference.
- 23) Your sponsor **SHALL** work with you to provide you information early and often. They should talk with you simply to check-in and answer any questions you might have approximately every two weeks. Please ask questions!!!!
- 24) **YOU WILL BE MET AT THE AIRPORT BY AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE!** First, your sponsor will make all arrangements to be there when you arrive, as well as provide transportation to your lodging. Please make sure your sponsor is fully aware of your flight arrival time to Guam, your total family size whether single or with family, how many suitcases and/or luggage you are bringing, if you happen to rent a car from the airport upon arrival, and any special needs such as car seats, etc. The second person meeting you at the airport will be a member of the Chief's Mess regardless of rank. The Chief will provide you with a "Welcome Aboard" bag that is donated and provided by the

Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer's Association, Marianas Guam Chapter, and the Coast Guard Spouses Club, Guam Chapter. TEAM GUAM members will be there for you as long as your sponsor is aware of your arrival time and date! Often, during the busy transfer season, we will have anywhere from one to five new members flying in on the same flight as there are few flights per day that come to Guam. This often means that the members sponsor, a Chief, members from the spouses' club, and one of our TEAM GUAM Ombudsmen are all at the airport to meet and greet you when you arrive. It may be overwhelming after the long flight and exhausting day but having people there to help you and take care of you is paramount in the experience upon arrival. The welcome team will greet you even if you are from Guam and returning home. Provide your sponsor with arrival information to include number in your family/travel party, number of bags, whether you have scheduled a rental car (not reimbursable), number of car seats, or any other information that might help us get you where you need to be.

- 25) Cellular telephones from United States based companies **WILL NOT WORK OR WILL BE INTERNATIONAL CALLING UPON ARRIVAL. THERE IS NO U.S. COMPANY ON GUAM FOR CELLULAR SERVICE.** It is highly recommended that you ensure you have an **"UNLOCKED"** phone when arriving. Do this in the States prior to arriving on Guam which will allow you to put a temporary SIM card in your phone allowing you to call home to say you arrived, as well as take care of business for about a week. The Chief Petty Officer's Association, Marianas Guam Chapter has partnered with local cellular companies and a cell phone program to provide arriving members with a cell phone and service for approximately 7 days. If the member has an unlocked phone, the CPOA may only provide a SIM card for you to have and place in your phone saving the limited phones for others who do not have them. Please advise your sponsor whether you have an unlocked phone with you or not in order to ensure the CPOA is able to provide you with the correct option upon your arrival.
- 26) Naval Base Guam has a full Navy Exchange and Uniform Shop however it is limited on Coast Guard Uniform items. It is recommended that you ensure you have your full **"Sea Bag"** issuance when arriving.
- 27) Mail takes much longer than you are likely used to! Overnight mail takes closer to seven days. Normal mail can take anywhere from two weeks, to a month- Sometimes more.
- 28) Coast Guard members are not required Official Passports to come to Guam. However, **dependents are authorized no-fee passports. It is recommended that all dependents obtain no-fee passports prior to transferring to Guam.** This is especially important if medical issues arise requiring evacuation of a dependent to another location such as Japan, etc. The Coast Guard Passport officials in Guam are barely staffed to keep up with the volume of those needing official passports for official travel and not the family members. There is a Navy Passport office on-base, that can assist but the time frames can range up to six or more weeks. Tourists Passports for the entire family are

very highly recommended. Any travel from Guam will almost assuredly required a passport.

- 29) Spouse and family employment can be difficult. Being able to find a job on Guam for family members is very challenging as most jobs are government and many others are often family based.
- 30) Members should make **every attempt to not change their dependency status enroute**. This creates further requirements and may add substantial costs to the member if not done properly. This typically applies to getting married while enroute.
- 31) Living Off-Base is expensive. To live off base a waiver must be granted as it is mandatory housing. There are specific reasons where living on the economy is authorized. Single and unaccompanied members predominately live on the economy unless stated in a previous point such as E-4 and below in barracks. **Electricity costs can be extremely high! There have been bills reaching \$900 a month.**
- 32) For those who have not lived on or utilized a military installation previously- You will need your **military ID ALL THE TIME!** From getting on base and to your house, to using the Commissary (grocery store) and Exchange. Children over 10 should have an ID as well. Colors is performed at 08:00 every morning and at sunset every evening throughout the base to include all housing divisions. When driving on base, you are supposed to pull to the side and put on your hazards until carry-on is played. If not in a car and outdoors, you should stand, face the flag or the music, place your hand over your heart just like during the National Anthem. Military members follow their service protocol. In uniform, Coasties salute, in civilian attire Coasties stand at the position of attention. When approaching the gate to come on base or any installation: There are stops signs where you should stop until the sentry waives for you to proceed. Additionally, it is proper to dim your lights and ensure your windshield wipers are off.
- 33) The Department of Defense schools on Guam are very well liked. There is a re-zoning effort to gain more kids at Andersen Elementary which will affect many military kids who have already been attending at other schools. Please review the DODEA Guam sites online and through social media to follow closely. This may affect where you decide to live if you are living on the economy through a waiver.
- 34) Having a Generator is very **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**. You can find a generator at the exchange and/or Home Depot, but they can become very limited. Guam's AOR had more than 20 storms go through the region with two of them directly affecting Guam and three directly affecting Saipan. Guam saw a Category 1 Typhoon make a direct hit with power losses. Saipan and Tinian, 140 miles to the north received a direct hit from the second strongest storm to ever hit U. S. Soil! (2018) There is a high likelihood that you will go without power during a tour on Guam. The time frames can range from a few hours at a time, to months. Please think about items you can bring such as generators, gas cans, water jugs, etc. that will not have you attempting to purchase these things when you arrive. You can find these things on island, but if you arrive at specific times, they may be in very short supply.

- 35) Patio furniture is seasonal with the exchange. Even though we are summer year-round, the exchange falls under Virginia's headquarters office on the seasons for supplies. If arriving later in the year, this is good to keep in mind as the things people use year-round here may not be on the shelf. This includes but is not limited to: Patio Furniture, paddle boards, kayaks, beach equipment/chairs, grills, etc.
- 36) Guam Law does state that dependents are required to get a Guam Drivers license within 30 days. It is recommended that you pay close attention to the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act with regards to taxes and maintaining domicile.
- 37) There is a zero-tolerance policy for drinking and driving on base! This means if you receive a random breathalyzer, which you cannot refuse, you cannot have a BAC higher than 0.0! This is correct! If you are breathalyzed and have a BAC of 0.01, you WILL RECEIVE A DUI from base security. This also constitutes a violation of a lawful order for military members and for dependents, could result in the loss of on-base driving privileges.
- 38) There are many social media sites to follow. It is recommended that you find the Coast Guard centric pages instead of all military type pages as the Coast Guard policies can be different. (This is not to say the all military pages are not beneficial).
- 39) When storms hit- The base will set Typhoon Condition of Readiness 1 (TCCOR 1) in which they shut down the gate to get on or off base. This usually only occurs during the toughest part of the storm but can affect movement. This is also a reason why living on-base can help alleviate some issues.
- 40) Overseas screening can take some time. Complete this as rapidly as possible and if you do not hear back from Base Honolulu, reach out to your sponsor for assistance. Guam is Base Honolulu's largest Overseas Screening Customer as Oahu, HI no longer requires overseas screening.
- 41) If there are issues that are truly difficult, it is requested that the **MEMBER** reach out to the command to allow them a chance to help. All commands on Guam are dedicated to ensuring that every member and every family member is well taken care of to the best of their ability. If something isn't correct, they WILL attempt to find a better way. Please keep in mind that overseas/OCONUS transfers are often unique to Coast Guard families and not to DOD families. Our entitlements are equivalent to the other services as travel and transportation is regulated by the Joint Travel Regulations. Please seek guidance if you have questions!
- 42) There is an amazing team of Coast Guard Ombudsmen for all units in Guam. Each Ombudsman is highly motivated to assist the member and/or their families with the transition. Additionally, there is a chartered Coast Guard Spouses Club on Guam who can provide assistance as well. The most visited social media site for Coast Guard members, single, unaccompanied, or families is the Facebook page titled "COAST GUARD TEAM GUAM (UNOFFICIAL)". This page is frequented by the majority of the Coast Guard members on Guam and is one of the sites that members, spouses, and

**Ombudsmen monitor and disseminate information. It is not an official page! The Sector Guam Portal, and Sector Guam Internet page is.**

**43) Please take the time to review the website for the Sector Guam Reporting Aboard even if you are not heading to a Sector Guam unit! This information is the transition and relocation information for everyone stationed in Guam.**

**<https://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/our-organization/District-14/D14-Units/Sector-Guam/>**

**This Information is provided solely to assist members and families in making their decisions when coming to Guam. This is not intended to be an “Official Document” providing policy, regulations, or requirements. It is intended to help members transferring to Guam with regards to their transition and relocation. This document intends to help members and family members understand that THEY must research, ask questions, and review policies and regulations to ensure that they understand their entitlements, and challenges they may have to overcome. If you have suggestions, please provide them to the SECTOR Guam Command Master Chief, or any Chief assigned in Guam.**