



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
5TH BATTALION, 5TH AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY REGIMENT
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FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503

AFVL-RJB-BC

17 June 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: Policy Letter 10: Pregnancy, Postpartum Family Wellness and Parental Leave

1. References:

- a. Army Directive 2022-06, Parenthood, Pregnancy, and Postpartum, 19 April 2022
- b. AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, 24 July 2020
- c. AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations, 28 June 2021
- d. AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges, 8 February 2020
- e. FM 7-22, Holistic Health and Fitness, 1 October 2020
- f. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), 23 March 2010
- g. USAFCOEFS CG Policy-Memorandum SC, Pregnancy/Postpartum Physical Training (P3T) Program, 13 October 2023
- h. Joint Travel Regulation (JTR), 1 June 2024
- i. ALARACT 007/2023, Expansion of the Military Parental Leave Program, 31 January 2023
- j. AR 600-8-10, Leaves and Passes, 03 June 2020

2. Lactation Accommodations

- a. All Soldiers and employees who want to breastfeed upon return to duty will notify their chain of command and/or supervisors as soon as possible. This notification allows commanders/supervisors to determine how to best support the Soldier and employees and to ensure a workplace with appropriate space and time for expressing milk.

b. Commanders/supervisors will designate a private space, other than a restroom, with locking capabilities for a Soldier and/or employees to breastfeed or express milk. This space must include a place to sit, a flat surface (other than the floor) to place the pump on, an electrical outlet, a refrigerator to store expressed milk, and access to a safe water source within reasonable distance from the lactation space. This space can be permanent or temporary. Soldiers/employees must supply the equipment needed to pump.

c. Commanders/supervisors will ensure that Soldiers and/or employees have adequate time to express milk but must be aware that each Soldier's or employee's situation is unique. The time required to express breast milk varies and depends on several factors, including the age of the infant, amount of milk produced, quality of the pump, and distance the pumping location is from the workplace, as well as how conveniently located the water source is from the pump location. Lactation breaks must be accommodated at least every 2-3 hours and for not less than 30 minutes each break. A child beginning to eat solid foods does not negate a Soldier's individual need for lactation breaks.

d. Soldiers who are breastfeeding or expressing milk can participate in field training and mobility exercises after completing their postpartum deployment deferment period. However, they will remain exempt from CTC rotations, deployments, or any training events where lactation accommodations cannot be provided for up to 730 days (24 months). Commanders may verify lactation through the Soldier's profiling provider. During field training and mobility exercises, commanders will provide private space for Soldiers to express milk. If the Soldier (or designated personnel) cannot transport expressed milk to garrison, the Soldier's commander will permit her the same time and space to express and discard her breast milk with the intent to maintain physiological capability for lactation. Commanders should work with the supporting medical officer to determine whether milk storage and/or transportation will be feasible during the exercise. Commanders will counsel Soldiers to discuss the potential risks of storing milk during field training and mobility exercises with their medical provider.

3. Transport or Shipment of Human Breast Milk for Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel

a. Expenses associated with the transport of human breast milk expressed by a Soldier or Civilian employee while on TDY travel may be authorized as travel accommodation for "special need".

b. Human breast milk shipment may only be authorized for TDY longer than three calendar days and up to 12 months from the date the Soldier or Civilian employee gave birth.

c. Authorized expenses may be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$1,000 per TDY trip when authorized in advance of travel and accompanied by all valid receipts (\$75.00 minimum not applicable).

d. Expenses may include the following: commercial shipping fees (packaging and packing material are not authorized), excess baggage fees, and dry ice or regular ice. Expenses for this purpose may not include the cost of a rental vehicle. Travelers are ultimately responsible for arranging the transport of their breast milk and for handling all related logistics.

4. Family Care Plans

a. The care of families and dependent children is a command emphasis item within this unit, and every effort will be made to assist Soldiers in providing for the care of their families. For those Soldiers who are single parents, married to another Service Member, or have sole responsibility for a family member with special needs, it is mandatory for them to complete a Family Care Plan.

b. Family Care Plans will be completed IAW the provisions of AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, and other applicable regulations and policies. Personnel who fail or refuse to complete Family Care Plans will be involuntarily separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations, or AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges. Commanders will initiate involuntary separation due to parenthood only when a Soldier has been adequately counseled concerning deficiencies in their FCP and afforded the opportunity to overcome them. Commanders should consider all available counseling and rehabilitative options, including intra-post transfers, before initiating separation.

c. Soldiers **will not be required** to utilize the long-term guardianship provisions of the FCP to meet short-term, unforeseen childcare requirements or for routine military duties occurring outside of normal duty hours, such as charge of quarters and staff duty. To ensure Soldiers have adequate time to arrange childcare, commanders **should** provide 3 weeks' notice for duty requirements outside of normal duty hours or for significant changes to a Soldier's normal duty hours. **Commanders will take no adverse action** against Soldiers who cannot arrange childcare for these duties without 3 weeks advance notification.

d. Pursuant to training management policies, commanders must provide at least 6 weeks notification, in writing, before requiring Soldiers to activate the long-term guardianship provisions of their FCP for routine TDY, school attendance, multi-day exercises, or similar duty that involves travel or extended periods of absence from the home outside of normal duty hours. The 6-week notification requirement does not apply to military operations or missions assigned because of a national emergency or activation of forces on prepare to deploy orders or similar orders. This includes Soldiers assigned to an immediate response force or crisis response force. Soldiers in rapid deploying units must always be prepared to utilize their FCPs for deployments, even on short notice.

e. Commanders are encouraged to give Soldiers **Maximum Flexibility** to personally attend to short-term, unforeseen parenting requirements, even when doing so would interfere with military duties. This includes, but is not limited to, unscheduled childcare responsibilities due to child development center/school closures or child illness. In cases where training and operational requirements allow a Soldier's absence, the Soldier will not be charged ordinary leave if remaining in the local area to care for their children.

5. Duty away from home

a. To ensure that at least one parent is home with their child, all birthparents (Soldiers who physically give birth) and Soldiers described in Army Directive 2022-06 paragraphs 4d(2)-(5) are deferred or excused for 365 days after the birth of their child from all continuous duty events that are more than 1 normal duty day/shift. These include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Deployment
- (2) Mobilization
- (3) Field training
- (4) Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations
- (5) Collective Training Events away from home station (unit of assignment)
- (6) Temporary Duty (TDY).

6. Convalescent leave

a. Commanders will grant non-chargeable absence or convalescent leave to the Soldier IAW Army Directive 2022-06. Soldiers and Soldiers with a spouse who is outlined in the following sub-paragraphs are also eligible:

- (1) Any birth or perinatal loss event during a primary military education course; or
- (2) Soldiers on a fertility profile and/or the Army Spouse of an individual undergoing fertility treatment; or
- (3) Following a birth event, miscarriage, or still birth in accordance with Army Directive 2022-06, Enclosure 3.

- (4) Convalescent leave and/or a physical profile may be applicable immediately following a pregnancy termination. There is no requirement to receive unit commander pre-approval. Following the procedure the Soldier will follow up with a Healthcare provider with privileges in the OB/GYN specialty and the Commanders will take into consideration the written medical recommendation when deciding if convalescent leave is appropriate.

e. Soldiers that are pregnant or less than 180 days postpartum will enroll in the installation P3T program, regardless of profile limitations or duty requirements.

7. Parental Leave

a. Military Parental Leave Program (MPLP) provides non-chargeable leave entitlements for covered Soldiers who are birth parents, adoptive parents, or have children placed with them for long-term foster care.

- (1) Birth Parents: After a period of convalescent leave following childbirth, birth parents are granted 12 weeks of parental leave to care for their child.
- (2) Non-Birth Parents: Non-birth parents (including same-sex couples) receive 12 weeks of leave following the birth of their child. If the child is born outside of marriage, the non-birth parent's parentage of the child must be established in accordance with AR 600-8-10, paragraph 5-5.d.(6).
- (3) Adoptive Parents and Foster Parents: They are also eligible for 12 weeks of parental leave.

b. Parental leave may be taken either in whole or taken in increments during the 1-year period beginning on the date of birth of the child. Additionally, these Soldiers should expect to deploy with their units. Unit commanders will consider the significance of the event and its impact on readiness (for example a critical deployment or critical training exercise) when considering a Soldier's request for parental leave.

c. Only the first general officer in a Soldier's chain of command may disapprove a request for parental leave.

8. Deferral of Parental Leave

a. Soldiers who participate in an operational deployment and/or military exercise, temporary duty, hospitalized and/or in an in-patient status for a consecutive period of 90 or more days can elect to defer parental leave and may be authorized an extension. If they would ordinarily lose unused parental leave at the end of the 1-year period.

- (1) For such qualifying circumstances, the 1-year period will be extended on a day-for-day basis based on the period of such circumstance.

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