

Subject: CPC CyberFlash  
From: Director CPC <Director.CPC@noaa.gov>  
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### **From the Director's Desk**

The Commissioned Personnel Center is very near completion of the revisions to Chapters one and four of the NOAA Corps Regulations. However, you will notice the name has changed to the NOAA Corps Directives (NCD). Accompanying the first two revised chapters of the NCDs will be Chapters one and two of the Commissioned Personnel Center Instruction Manual. Chapter one describes the appointment process and all requisite correspondence required to effect the different appointment procedures for individuals seeking an appointment in the NOAA Corps. Chapter two describes the promotion process in a similar manner.

The Officer Personnel Board has made a recommendation to the Deputy Director, NOAA Corps, Rear Admiral Prah, to create a Directives Board that will be tasked with updating and providing recommendation for revision of the Directives Manual. Quarterly meetings will convene to make such recommendations.

The Officer Assignment Board met this week to make assignment recommendations to the Deputy Director, NOAA Corps, Rear Admiral Prah. The assignment process is defined in the NOAA Corps Regulations and the NOAA Corps Assignment Coordinator, Lieutenant Commander Raymond Slagle has provided some words of wisdom for this week's CyberFlash.

Commander Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA  
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

### **DISLOCATION ALLOWANCE (DLA):**

The purpose of DLA is to partially reimburse a member, with or without dependents, for the expenses incurred in relocating the member's household on a PCS, housing moves ordered for the Government's convenience, or incident to an evacuation.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

NOAA Corps Officers with dependents are authorized a DLA payment at the with dependent rate when dependents relocate in connection with a PCS. They are also authorized the DLA payment when the dependents move to a designated place incident to an evacuation (special rules apply). NOAA Corps Officers without dependents are authorized a DLA payment at the without dependent rate when they relocate in

connection with a PCS to a Primary Duty Station where Government quarters are not assigned.

### **SPECIAL CATEGORIES DLA AUTHORIZED:**

NOAA Corps Officers who have no dependents and are assigned permanent duty aboard a ship are authorized a DLA payment at the without dependent rate if they elect not to occupy assigned shipboard quarters and they occupy non-Government quarters ashore. The commanding officer of the ship will submit a memorandum to the Director, Commissioned Personnel Center certifying the officer has refused government quarters and is occupying non-Government quarters ashore. It is not physically possible to refuse quarters when you meet your ship at a location other than home port. You must be at home port to refuse quarters and provide an address to receive DLA. A hotel address or Post Office Box does not constitute occupation of non-Government quarters.

### **TRICARE:**

What is the Difference Between “Emergency” Care and “Urgent” Care?

Most people probably don't think too much about the difference between "emergency" medical care and "urgent" care. But, they aren't the same. And the differences could matter--for example, to a person who's enrolled in TRICARE Prime (the Defense Department's HMO-type health care option), and who happens to be traveling outside his or her TRICARE region when illness or injury strikes.

Here's how TRICARE defines the two types of care:

An EMERGENCY is a sudden and unexpected medical condition, or the worsening of a condition, which poses a threat to life, limb or sight, and requires immediate treatment; or, a sudden, extremely painful condition which requires immediate treatment to alleviate suffering. You usually get emergency care at a hospital emergency room. Conditions that require emergency care include loss of consciousness, shortness of breath, chest pain, uncontrolled bleeding, sudden or unexpected weakness or paralysis, poisoning, suicide attempts, drug overdose, acute psychosis, and major depression. Pregnancy-related medical emergencies involve a sudden and unexpected medical complication that puts the mother, the baby, or both, at risk. In the case of pregnancy, TRICARE does not consider a delivery after the 34th week an emergency. If you need emergency care: Go directly to the emergency room at the nearest hospital, or call 911 if available in your area. Otherwise, call your primary care manager (PCM)--if you're a TRICARE Prime enrollee-- or call the health care finder (HCF) toll-free; they'll help you get the closest and most appropriate care.

If you, as a TRICARE Prime enrollee, receive emergency medical care and are hospitalized as a result, without your PCM being involved, you or a family member must contact your PCM, or the HCF, within 24 hours of receiving care.

If you're not enrolled in TRICARE Prime, you don't need to make the above notification (since you don't have a PCM--only TRICARE Prime enrollees do). You should, however, make sure that a claim is filed promptly with your TRICARE contractor for the region in which you live, for cost-sharing of the episode of emergency care. If you live in a part of the country that doesn't yet have TRICARE in operation (basically, all states east of the Mississippi River and north of Tennessee and South Carolina), claims should go to the claims processing contractor for the state or region in which you received the care.

URGENT CARE is medically necessary treatment that's required for illness or injury that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately--but treatment shouldn't be put off. The illness or injury does require professional attention, and should be treated within 24 hours to avoid development of a situation in which further complications could result if treatment isn't received. Examples of conditions that should receive urgent treatment are: sprains, scrapes, earaches, sore throats, rising temperature--conditions that are serious, but aren't life-threatening. You can get urgent care at various locations (this includes your PCM's office, if you're enrolled in TRICARE Prime), and at urgent care centers. If you're a Prime enrollee, call your PCM, or call the TRICARE contractor's HCF toll-free, for advice and assistance. The HCF (who is usually a nurse) will assess your situation, given the symptoms presented, and will direct you to a specific provider for care, or will authorize you to seek the care and be reimbursed under TRICARE Prime.

If you aren't enrolled in TRICARE Prime, but use TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Standard instead, you can still ask for advice from your TRICARE service center or the HCF. If you have any questions about being hospitalized or about advance authorization of care (urgent or otherwise), check with the HCF. You can meet with the HCF on a walk-in basis during normal business hours at your local TRICARE service center (TSC). Or, you can call an HCF for advice and information 24 hours a day, every day, toll-free.

If you're enrolled in TRICARE Prime, and are away from your Prime service area, Prime will cover emergency care. Be sure to notify your PCM, or the HCF within 24 hours. They'll evaluate your situation and decide whether you should return to your Prime service area for hospitalization there.

If you have to pay up-front, out-of-pocket (other than a normal TRICARE Prime co-payment) for emergency or urgent medical care, your TRICARE contractor will reimburse you in accordance with the provisions of TRICARE Prime coverage. Check with your nearest TSC for details on how to get reimbursed.

You should contact your PCM for instructions in a non-emergency situation. If you see a physician without authorization for a non-emergency problem, you'll still be covered for medically necessary care for some of the costs, under the "point-of-service" option. That option pays 50 percent of the allowable charges for covered care after a separate, somewhat higher, deductible than that for TRICARE Standard is met (\$300 for an individual and \$600 for a family).

## **CPC RefTra:**

### **NOAA CORPS ASSIGNMENT PROCESS**

The Commissioned Personnel Center routinely receives inquiries from officers about the NOAA Corps assignment process and in particular, the criteria used by the Officer Assignment Board (OAB) to determine which billets are to be filled and by whom. Each officer is encouraged to review NOAA Corps Regulations, Chapter 5 - Assignments, for the most authoritative discussion on the assignment process. A thorough understanding of the assignment process and of the criteria used is essential for each officer.

The OAB considers the following criteria, in descending order of priority, when recommending billets to be filled and by whom:

1. needs of the NOAA programs;
2. information provided by the assignment coordinator and/or liaison officer(s);
3. individual officers' career development;
4. experience and training;
5. performance and promotion potential;
6. balance of sea, shore, flight, and mobile duty;
7. availability of qualified officers;
8. grade level of the billet and of the officer;
9. time in present geographical area and in present billet;
10. travel costs; and
11. personnel preferences and special problems or hardships.

“Needs of the NOAA programs” is at the top of the criteria list. It is the most important factor when recommending assignments. However, “needs of the NOAA programs” are tempered with personnel preferences and humanitarian considerations. Optimally, each officer is ordered to the billet where he/she best serves the parent organization consistent with the career development needs of the individual officer. When this is not possible, officers are reminded that while serving under a commission they are always “under orders”. Orders are not negotiable and compliance is not optional.

After deliberations and within 5 working days, the Chair of the Officer Assignment Board shall provide the Director, NOAA Corps with a list of recommended assignments. The Director’s approval of a recommended assignment will be in the form of a memorandum advising the officer of the forthcoming assignment. The Director, NOAA Corps is the only individual who has the authority to approve forthcoming assignments.

The Forthcoming Assignment Memorandum states that the Director, NOAA Corps has approved your assignment, the date you are to report and the date you may expect to complete the assignment if the needs of the service permit. The forthcoming memorandum no longer states “on or about” for a reporting date. This statement was

generally understood to mean two weeks either side of the reporting date. The date indicated in the memorandum now is the date the officer is expected to report. If the officer is not able to report to the new assignment as indicated, they need to notify the Director of Commissioned Personnel Center as soon as possible. The forthcoming memorandum also requests the officer to complete a travel questionnaire (NOAA Form 56-26) and forward it to CPC through the officer's supervisor. This form is available online through a link at the Commissioned Personnel Center website. An officer may also request a maximum of 30 days leave en route. The leave will be approved provided the officer's current duty station is not adversely affected.

Every time your orders are endorsed make two copies and mail a copy to CPC. This document is essential for several actions affecting your pay. Late submission of a copy of your partially endorsed orders may result in an overpayment that must be collected later. Sea Pay and Basic Allowance for Housing are examples of entitlements for which overpayment may occur requiring reimbursement to the government.

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