



TEMPORARY CHANGE OF STATION (TCS) LODGING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 4-2-09

lodgingsuccess

Official Travelers' First Choice

Question: What do I do to obtain lodging when I receive my TCS orders?

Answer: If you are going to be assigned to an installation, contact the installation housing office to determine the availability of Army lodging. If lodging is not available or you are not assigned to an installation, call Lodging Success at 1-866-363-5771 within 48 hours of receipt of your orders to obtain lodging. Lodging Success will issue a Statement of Non-availability if on-post lodging is not available, and will assist you in obtaining off-post contract lodging.

Question: How long is the period on the Statement of Non-Availability (SNA)?

Answer: Under normal circumstances, SNA are issued for a period of 8 days. Once a contractor is notified of a requirement, it takes eight days on average to prepare an apartment for issue. However, in circumstances where it takes longer than 8 days, Lodging Success has the authority to issue SNA for full per diem in 30 day increments to a maximum of 90 total days. However, full per diem applies only to Soldiers newly arriving to the duty location and not Soldiers transitioning from existing leases they've previously entered into on their own.

Question: How will I be notified when quarters are available?

Answer: You will be notified by a Lodging Success reservationist by telephone and/or email and also by the apartment contractor.

Question: What if housing is not available in 8 days?

Answer: Contact Lodging Success at 1-866-DoD-LSP1 and request an extension. If you do not obtain an approved extension, you may assume full liability for all lodging expenses. In circumstances where it takes longer than 8 days, Lodging Success has the authority to issue a SNA for full per diem in 30 day increments to a maximum of 90 total days. However, full per diem applies only to Soldiers newly arriving to the duty location and not Soldiers transitioning from existing leases they've previously entered into on their own.

Question: What if my initial order is for 6 months or less? Do I still have to move into contract lodging?

Answer: No. Since your order is for 6 months or less, you do not fall under the provisions of the reduced per diem policy and can by-pass using contract lodging. However, if your TCS orders are extended beyond 6 months at the same duty location you are expected to immediately transition into contract lodging. Another option is to extend in a PCS status which affords you the opportunity to reside wherever you want. However, you must still contact Lodging Success at 1-866-363-5711 if on-post lodging is not available.

Question: Must a Soldier transition into government contracted lodging if he/she is living on the economy in an existing lease agreement and has a current SNA?

Answer: Yes, you must transition into government contract lodging unless you were issued an SNA that covers the period through the end of your existing orders. SNA issued throughout the length of a Soldiers orders will be issued only as a last resort and will likely not be issued because Army policy is to maximize use of Government contract lodging. A Soldier who wants to reside on the economy in a private residence (lease or mortgage) has the option of requesting a permanent change of station (PCS) assignment.

Question: Must a Soldier transition into government contracted lodging if he/she receives a new set of orders or has changes to his/her existing orders?

Answer: Yes, you must transition into government contract lodging if the cumulative period on active duty is greater than 180 days on a new set of orders, an extension to orders, or an amendment that extends the period of active duty service.

Question: What happens if a Soldier is transitioning into government contracted lodging and is currently in an existing lease that includes early termination fees?

Answer: Contact the LSP and notify them that you will be subject to lease termination fees. The reservation agent will direct your call to a representative in Army Lodging (AL) who may be able to assist you. In many cases, AL can explain the Army's requirements to your landlord and obtain relief from any fees. If not, they will work determine if the fees are reasonable. If so, you may claim the fees in your Defense Travel System per diem claim as an expense. If they are deemed excessive, AL will advise you to contact the Chief, Compensation and Entitlements Division, Deputy Chief of Staff G-1 on how to proceed.

Question: What happens if a Soldier is transitioning into government contracted lodging and must move out of current accommodations into temporary lodging until long-term government contracted lodging is obtained.

Answer: The LSP will provide you with a temporary SNA authorizing you with per diem reimbursement up to the maximum per diem rate for lodging, and reimbursement at the 100% rate for meals and incidentals. This entitlement allows you to locate temporary short-term lodging on the economy until long-term government contracted lodging is obtained. The SNA will cover the period between the end of your existing lease and the anticipated date you will obtain government contracted lodging, or 30-days, whichever is shorter. Lodging Success has authority to issue SNA in 30-day increments out to a max of 90 days.

Question: Does a Soldier have the option of staying in other accommodations at his/her own expense?

Answer: No. To bypass Government contract lodging, the Soldier must obtain approval from the first O6/civilian equivalent in his/her chain of command. This O6/civilian equivalent will document in memorandum for record why his/her Soldier is unable to comply with the policy. The Soldier will file this memorandum with his/her monthly claims. If a Soldier obtains approval from his/her chain of command to bypass contract lodging, he or she assumes full responsibility for all lodging expenses. He or she will receive no lodging per diem reimbursement, and is entitled to full meals and incidental per diem only. Soldiers who prefer to reside on the economy at a location of their choosing should request a PCS assignment.

Question: How does a Soldier obtain a waiver? What is the process?

Answer: You must have the first O6/GS-15 in your supervisory chain of command prepare and send a memorandum to the Chief, Compensation and Entitlements Division, Deputy Chief of Staff G-1 stating the reasons why you are requesting a waiver. In addition, you must include all original orders, extensions and/or amendments, and a copy of your lease agreement with the waiver request. The Chief, Compensation and Entitlements Division will adjudicate your waiver request.

Question: Can a Soldier obtain an extension to his/her existing SNA to remain in lodging on the economy?

Answers: No, if government contracted lodging is available.

Yes, if government contracted lodging is not available

Yes, if you have a unique circumstance and receive an approved waiver from the Chief, Compensation and Entitlements Division, Deputy Chief of Staff G-1 (see waiver process above) to reside on the economy.

Question: Is the waiver for lodging and/or M&IE? If so, what is the percentage?

Answer: The waiver granted to a Soldier to reside on the economy will cover lodging, meals, and incidentals and will be a flat 55% of the applicable per diem rate unless the waiver states otherwise.

Question: What about Soldiers who purchase a residence? Is there a waiver process that allows them to stay in the house until the end of their current orders if their orders exceed 180 days?

Answer: While the Joint Federal Travel Regulation (JFTR) allows for the purchase of a home and the reimbursement of certain expenses, current Army policy requires Soldiers on active duty in a Temporary Change of Station (TCS) status to use government contracted lodging. Soldiers who already own a home, may request a temporary waiver from the Chief, Compensation and Entitlements Division, Deputy Chief of Staff G-1 using the waiver process outlined above. The Army's expectation is that the Soldier transition to Government contract lodging. The Compensation Chief will likely disapprove TCS waivers because the Soldier has the option to request a PCS assignment. A PCS assignment affords the Soldier the opportunity to reside where they wish.

Question: Can a Soldier live in his/her home if it is located in the place entered active duty (stated in your orders) and receive per diem reimbursement?

Answer: No. You are not entitled to per diem reimbursement if you commute from your home to your place of duty no matter where your home is located.

Question: Will my commander have any input on the selection/acceptance of the properties?

Answer: The commander may provide input to the LSP program on localities identified by the command as adequate or inadequate to meet certain mission, safety, and security requirements.

Question: Am I authorized to bring my family or pet(s)?

Answer: No, unlike PCS orders, entitlements for TCS Soldiers only pertain to the Soldier. TCS tours are unaccompanied. However, under PCS stateside orders, you are authorized to bring your family and/or pets. In order to bring family members or pets, you must get your orders amended to PCS orders.