

EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS (ERD) GUIDE

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, GERMANY



Current as of 07 December 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL PERSONNEL

FROM: 52 FSS/FSMPD

SUBJECT: Early Return of Dependents (ERD) Fact Sheet

1. The attached package reflects the intent of the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) and DoD Directive 1315.7. Processing procedures have been designed to provide you with as much professional help and guidance as possible.
2. Command Sponsored dependents in the overseas area may be returned, at government expense, from the overseas area in advance of the member. **Early Return of Dependents must be applied judiciously; it is a last resort.**
3. Squadron commanders should carefully evaluate ERD requests for the following criteria:
 - a. The request is in the best interest of the Air Force;
 - b. The member has shown the existence of a valid need for the dependent to move;
 - c. The member has provided evidence that the problem or situation occurred **after arrival** at Spangdahlem Air Base; and
 - d. The member has provided evidence that **local resources, including applicable helping agencies, cannot resolve the problem.**

See JTR Chapter 5, Paragraph 050804.

4. Normal processing time for final approval of an ERD package, including publishing of dependent travel orders, is 7 - 10 duty days from **initial receipt** of an error-free package by the MPF Career Development office. **All ERDs must be submitted to the Career Development Office in GEARS. Any packages sent via email will be returned. Failure to include required documentation, justification or failure to submit in GEARS could cause delays.** ERD requests based on barment requests, in most cases, will be walked through to allow for one to two day turn around. In all other cases, temporary arrangements should be made, if necessary, to defuse family situations.
5. For questions or concerns, please contact the MPF Career Development Section at 452-6817.

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LAUREN W. COOK, Capt, USAF
Military Personnel Flight Commander

7 Attachments:

1. Training Package
2. Sample ERD Letter
3. Statement of Understanding
4. Caring for Kids Through Divorce
5. Questionnaire for ERD Requests for Marital Difficulties
6. ERD PSD Guide, Section B
7. GEARS Submission

EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS TRAINING PACKAGE

1. PURPOSE: This guide provides detailed information on the eligibility and entitlements for dependents that are early returned from an overseas duty station. *See* DoD Directive 1315.7; JTR Chapter 5, 5B-6 Paragraph 050804 Early Return of Dependents (ERD); and Early Return of Dependents –PSD Guide Dated 28 September 2020 Version 1.

2. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS:

a. Service members stationed outside the CONUS may request (sample at Attachment 2) their command sponsored dependents, including foreign-born spouses, be transported at government expense to a designated place within the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a territory or possession of the United States, or the foreign-born spouse's native country, for personal reasons.

b. Members who have been officially notified of reassignment from the overseas area are not eligible to apply for early return of dependents, even if official PCS order, have not been received. However, a member may move dependents at the government's expense upon written notification of an upcoming assignment. Reimbursement in such a case is limited to government cost to the new permanent duty station.

c. Individually sponsored and/or acquired non-command-sponsored dependents are ineligible to be early returned.

3. APPROVAL AUTHORITY: The 52nd Fighter Wing Commander has delegated approval authority for ERD packages to the 52nd Mission Support Group Commander.

a. The approving official may only authorize the early return of eligible dependents when the member has clearly shown:

- (1) The request is in the best interest of the Air Force;
- (2) The existence of a valid need to return dependents early;
- (3) The problem or situation occurred **after** arrival in the overseas duty station; and
- (4) Local resources cannot resolve the problem. Documentation from base helping agencies is required.

b. The approving official must apply the provisions of the JTR judiciously and understand the ERD program may be used **only as a last resort**.

4. ENTITLEMENTS/AUTHORIZATIONS (IF APPROVED):

a. Dependent Travel: Government funded travel is authorized to a designated place.

b. Household Goods:

(1) Dependents: Orders authorizing the transportation of dependents from outside CONUS as provided in JTR, Chapter 5, 5B-6 Paragraph 050804. May also authorize (if approved by approval

authority) per paragraph 053301, the transportation of household goods within the member's authorized weight allowance or the administrative weight limitation established by the Air Force.

(2) Members:

(a) When the member and spouse who was early returned are not divorced, or they are divorced and the member does not remarry, the member will be entitled to the authorized weight of the outside CONUS shipment, not to exceed the maximum weight allowance of the administrative weight limitation established by the Air Force.

(b) When the member and spouse who was early returned are divorced, or if the spouse is deceased, and a new command-sponsored spouse is residing with the member on the effective date of the next PCS order, the member will be authorized shipment of the weight he/she was originally authorized into the overseas area.

c. Unaccompanied Baggage: Shipment of 350 pounds for dependents 12 years of age or older and 175 pounds for dependents under age 12 is authorized.

d. Privately Owned Vehicle (POV): Shipment of a POV is authorized (if approved by approval authority) but exhausts the member's entitlement to ship a POV on his/her next PCS move. *See* JTR par. 053301.

e. Subsequent Travel/HHGs Entitlements for Dependents: When the member receives PCS orders directing reassignment from the overseas duty station (includes in-place COTs) his/her dependents are authorized travel and transportation allowance and shipment of HHGs and POV from the early return location to the member's new duty station.

5. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS: Dependents must commence early return travel prior to the member being officially notified that he/she is being reassigned from the overseas duty station. Unexecuted early return orders become void upon notification of reassignment. Moreover, receipt of PCS orders is not required (see paragraph 2b above).

6. RETURN OF DEPENDENTS TO THE OVERSEAS AREA:

a. Government Expense: Except when dependents are relocated from the overseas area at the direction of the Secretary of the Air Force or higher level authority because their safety can no longer be ensured due to adverse public feelings in the area, dependents early returned at government expense may not be subsequently transported at government expense until such time as the member is reassigned from the overseas duty station or receives an in-place COT.

b. Personal Expense: If dependents are subsequently returned to the overseas duty station at the member's expense, they may be once again command sponsored, (provided eligibility requirements are met) for the purpose of "with dependent" station allowances and government funded travel when the member is reassigned.

7. MEMBER'S TOUR STATUS: The fact that the member's dependents have been relocated will have no bearing on the requirement that the member complete the prescribed accompanied-by-dependents tour.

8. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF DEPENDENT TRAVEL ORDERS: Except for travel under the provisions of paragraphs 11b and 11e below, when dependents have performed travel without orders to an appropriate destination under circumstances which would

have permitted their travel to have been authorized, no reimbursement for such travel is authorized even though orders are subsequently issued under the provisions of JTR Para 050804.

9. HHG TRANSPORTATION FROM A LOCATION OCONUS DUE TO A PERSONAL SITUATION: A dependent who traveled without an order to an appropriate destination due to a personal situation may be authorized HHG transportation if an order is later issued approving dependent transportation and confirming HHG transportation.

10. TRAVEL ORDERS: ERD orders will be published providing the 52 MSG Commander has approved the request.

11. DOCUMENTATION: The applicant must provide as much documentation as possible to substantiate the existence of a situation that requires his/her dependents to be early returned. The applicant must obtain recommendations from religious, mental health, financial management, family counseling and/or legal agencies, as appropriate. Notably, this includes ERD requests based on “compelling personal reasons,” including, but not limited to, marital difficulties. Items below indicate the minimum documentation required to adequately substantiate an early return case. Requests submitted without proper or adequate documentation will be returned to the member without action. The more documentation you have to demonstrate you have taken measures to locally resolve the situation, the easier it will be to obtain approval. Again, the early return of dependents is a last resort.

**Reasons for Early Return
&
Required Documents**

REASON	REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
For essential medical treatment, if such treatment is not available at your permanent duty station nor readily available in the overseas theater. <i>See</i> JTR para 050804 Table 5-22	A statement by the attending physician, indicating the treatment is essential to the wellbeing of the dependent patient.
When death, serious illness, or incapacitation of your dependent (such as spouse) who normally takes care of your other dependents (such as children) makes it necessary in the opinion of the approving authority that your other dependents be transported to an appropriate place in order to receive proper and adequate care. <i>See</i> JTR para 050804 Table 5-22	Statement by an appropriate medical authority.
Lack of adequate educational facilities or housing for dependents. <i>See</i> JTR para 050804 Table 5-22	Statement from the education or housing authority that the inadequacy of such educational facilities or housing was caused by conditions beyond the control of the member and that knowledge of these conditions arose after commencement of travel of the dependent(s) to your overseas location.
When conditions in the overseas command or in a nearby area are such that, although the evacuation of all dependents is neither warranted nor desired, you are justifiably concerned over the safety of your dependents. <i>See</i> JTR para 050804 Table 5-20.	Determination must be made by the unified commander and based upon the recommendation of the major commander of the service concerned. Approval authority may be delegated, but no lower than general/flag officer rank within the headquarters of the unified command concerned.

<p>When determined in the best interests of the dependents and yourself, and the government would be served by the transportation of one or more of your dependents for compelling personal reasons that cannot be resolved by you. <i>See JTR para 050804 Table 5-22</i></p>	<p>Statements from medical, legal, chaplain, family support center, social actions, as appropriate, must be obtained and verify that agencies were used in an attempt to resolve the problem..</p>
<p>Your dependent receives orders from a selective service board directing them to report to a place in the United States for induction into the armed forces. <i>See JTR para 050804 Table 5-22</i></p>	<p>Notice of induction.</p>
<p>Lack of acceptable employment opportunities for dependent children age 18 years or older. <i>See JTR para 050804 Table 5-22</i></p>	<p>Statement from your commander that (1) because of the lack of employment opportunities at the overseas location and the resulting idleness, your dependent children are likely to become involved in a situation creating embarrassment to the United States which place additional administrative burdens on the commander or have adverse effects on your duty performance and (2) such advance return is in the best interest of your dependents, yourself and the United States.</p>
<p>When you have been or are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discharged outside the United States under other than honorable conditions; ○ returned to the United States for discharge under other than honorable conditions; ○ sentenced to civilian or military confinement facilities overseas; ○ returned to the United States to serve a sentence in civil or military confinement facilities; ○ sentenced to confinement in foreign civil facilities; ○ dropped, dismissed, sent to prison under sentence, or transferred as a prisoner to a place of detention; ○ transferred to a different ship or station to await trial by courts martial, deserter, or straggler; <p>awaiting review of a sentence to a punitive discharge and are placed on mandatory appellate leave <i>See JTR para 050804 Table 5-22</i></p>	<p>Statement from the approving authority that the best interest of the government and your dependents will be served by the return of your dependents and provided that the transportation is authorized not for a distance greater than that from your last or former overseas duty station to your home of record or place of entry on active duty.</p>

12. STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING: Service members, whether initiating the ERD request themselves or when initiated by a dependent, must be counseled and asked to sign a statement of understanding. Members can obtain this memo from vMPF, an example of one is at Attachment 3. The statement must be completed/signed before sending the case file to the approving authority for decision, and it is retained with the record copy of the case file.

13. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ERD FOR MARITAL REASONS/CARING FOR KIDS THROUGH DIVORCE: Service members who are requesting ERD due to marital difficulties are required to complete the Questionnaire for ERDs for Marital Difficulties & Caring for Kids through Divorce statement (if applicable).

14. BASE HELPING AGENCIES: The ERD program is a last resort, and as such, the exhaustion of local resources must be documented in the ERD package. The base chaplains and Family Advocacy both can provide marital counseling, and provided appropriate documentation in deserving cases. In their counseling sessions, Chaplains are prohibited from including religious content, unless the counselee requests it. Military Family Life Counselors also provide services to members and their families experiencing marital difficulties; however, members should be aware that the counselors are prohibited from providing documentation of the visits. Counselors at Spangdahlem Department of Defense Dependent Schools are an available resource for assistance with student educational and learning issues.



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
52D FIGHTER WING (USAFE)**

MEMORANDUM FOR UNIT/CC (ex: 52 FSS/CC)
52 MSG/CC

FROM: (Rank, Last Name, First Name, SSAN, Organization/Off Sym, Duty Phone)
(If member is not stationed on Spangdahlem, the FROM element will contain the complete mailing address of the originator)

SUBJECT: Request for Early Return of Command Sponsored Dependents – Rank First MI Last

1. Under the provisions of the JTR, para 050804 (cite specific JTR subparagraph), my request for early return of dependent(s) is hereby submitted. The following supporting information is provided:

a. Justification: (Justification will be written “first person”. Explain circumstances IN DETAIL that prompted this request and the possible resolution this approval will have on the present situation. Elaborate on exactly what resources have been exhausted. Remember, this paragraph, in conjunction with the supporting documents, is the only evidence the approval authority will have to make an informed decision. Intimate details of the outcome of the resources used is unnecessary; however, providing a clear picture of the path that now necessitates an ERD will make it easier to approve the ERD package.)

b. Date of arrival of sponsor overseas: Initial date of entry into European theater.

c. Special order assigning sponsor and/or dependents to this station is/are attached. (Attach one copy of the special order, which authorized PCS movement of sponsor and dependent(s) to the overseas duty station. If dependents traveled to your station on a separate order, one copy of that order is also required. Also, if dependents were acquired after member’s arrival at current duty location, attach a copy of the approved command sponsorship application.)

d. Date of separation:

e. Current date eligible to return from overseas (DEROS):

f. Name, relationship, sex, date of birth (children only), and passport numbers of dependents:

g. Present address of dependents: (Physical address in the overseas area – include house number, street, city, and ZIP code, (**NOT PSC Address**))

h. Address where dependents will reside: (Physical address of dependents after completion of travel—include house number, street, city, state, and ZIP code.)

i. I do/do not desire a port call via military air for my dependents.

j. Month/year of desired travel.

k. I do/do not desire to ship household goods (and/or) unaccompanied baggage (NOTE 1).

2. I do/do not desire to ship POV. (NOTE: Shipment of POV on early return of dependent orders will exhaust the member's entitlement to shipment of POV upon his/her PCS.) (NOTE 1)
3. I understand that my dependent(s) being relocated will have no bearing on my requirement to complete the prescribed accompanied by dependents tour.
4. I certify that I have not been notified of reassignment from my current overseas duty station.
5. I have read and understand the provisions of the JTR, para 050804. I have read AFI 36-2906, *Personal Financial Responsibility* and AFI 36-2908, *Dependent Care Responsibilities*, and have made appropriate arrangements to comply with Air Force policy.

(Member's signature)
FIRST MI. LAST, Rank, USAF
Duty Title

Attachment(s):

1. Special order (PCS) and Dependent Travel Order (or approved command sponsorship application) (as appropriate)
2. Supporting Documentation (NOTE 2)
3. Other pertinent documents (Divorce decree, separation agreement, etc)
4. Statement of Understanding

1st Ind, Unit/CC

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR 52 MSG/CC

Endorsement must include comment to verify remarks made by the member in support of the ERD request. Commanders' endorsements which simply recommend approval with no other supporting remarks will be returned to be re-worked so the approval authority will have sufficient input to make an informed decision. Indorsement must say ERD is in the best interest of the Government.

(Commander's Signature)
FIRST MI. LAST, Rank, USAF
Commander, UNIT

2d Ind to Member's Unit/Office Symbol, Date Memo was signed by member, Subject as written in Subject

52 MSG/CC

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR 52 FSS/FSMPD

Request for early return of dependents is approved/disapproved. Request for shipment of HHG (if requested) is approved/disapproved. Request for shipment of POV (if requested) is approved/disapproved. **If Sq/CC is not an O-5 or above, 2d Indorsement must say ERD is in the best interest of the Government.**

(Commander's Signature)

D. BETSY J. ROSS, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 52d Mission Support Group

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 37 U.S.C. Chapter 7, Section 401, and E.O. 9397, 22 Nov 73

PURPOSE: To determine travel entitlements of your dependents to designated location during the interim period until further transportation at government expense is authorized.

ROUTINE USES: Used to request advance return of dependents to a designated location in the CONUS, to the port of debarkation, Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States.

DISCLOSURE IS VOLUNTARY: Failure to do so could result in the loss of travel entitlements or failure to receive reimbursement for dependent travel.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT: Sample letter requesting Advance Return of Dependents (AFI 36-3020, Table 1, and JTR, pars. 5096 to 5104.)

NOTE 1: Approval of early return of dependent(s) travel does not automatically authorize shipment of HHG/Unaccompanied baggage or POV. These are separate entitlements. Therefore, the approval authority must render a decision on dependent travel, the shipment of HHG and/or unaccompanied baggage, and POV (if appropriate).

NOTE 2: In all cases appropriate supporting documentation substantiating the request must be attached. In cases involving personal compelling reasons documentation from on/off base agencies certifying that local resources cannot resolve the problem, i.e., recommendations from chaplain, mental health, financial, family counseling or legal, must be included.

(Attachment 3)

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I, _____, understand that once my dependents depart the overseas area on an approved early return of dependents move, the following will apply:

1. I am not entitled to dependent rate Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) or Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) effective the date my dependents depart my duty station.
2. Payment of with dependent Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) will be determined by the Accounting and Finance Office and is based on my current marital status, divorce or separation agreement (oral or written), and dependent support requirements.
3. If being paid Basic Allowance of Subsistence (BAS) and in grade E-5 or below, I will be issued a meal card. I may request permission to ration separately based on my duty hours or shift as determined by the unit commander.
4. If residing off base and in grade E-6 or below, I will be assigned single-type quarters on base. I may request permission to reside off base due to the nonavailability of government quarters or other extenuating circumstances as determined by the billeting office and the base commander. I may also request permission to reside off base at personal expense as determined by the unit commander.
5. I will not be authorized Family Separation Allowance (FSA) if my dependents depart the country due to marital discord, misconduct, or personal reasons.
6. If assigned family-type government quarters and all my dependents depart the overseas area, I must immediately notify the Housing Office and terminate quarters.
7. I understand that it is my responsibility to immediately notify the Accounting and Finance Office of any change of status that would affect my pay and allowances. This includes, but is not limited to (1) divorce or separation agreements, (2) date dependents depart the overseas area, (3) date assigned single-type government quarters, and (4) date issued a meal card. Failure to do so may cause an overpayment for which I would be liable to repay all monies to the US Government.
8. I understand that shipment of a POV with my dependent(s) exhausts my entitlement to ship a POV upon departure from this station.

Payroll Signature: _____ Date: _____

CARING FOR KIDS THROUGH DIVORCE

Caring for Kids Through Divorce (CFK) is a unique program for military members and their spouses who are in the process of divorce and stationed overseas. This educational class is a total of four hours and geared to give parents guidelines to effectively deal with their children and each other as parents during and after the divorce. Cumulative evidence from research indicates that children’s adjustment seems less dependent on parental divorce itself and more dependent on five factors: inter-parental conflict, adjustment and parenting skills of custodial parents, involvement of non-custodial parent, economic hardship and stressful life changes. CFK touches on most of these issues, helping ensure a healthier post-divorce outcome for parents and children. The topics covered in the class are as follows: 1) Parental Relationship Roles - How They Change, 2) How to Tell Children About Your Decision to Divorce, 3) Mediators and Lawyers, 4) Effects of Divorce on Children, 5) Tasks Children Need to Accomplish, 6) How Children Get Drawn Into the Conflict, 7) Nurturing Relationships With Your Children, and 8) Taking Care of Yourself.

Forty-eight out of fifty states currently have counties that mandate this type of parent education program before a divorce is finalized. The choice for many becomes whether to take the class here or in the States. Classes in the states range in price from \$40-\$100 per parent. The Medical Group offers the class at no cost and provides a certificate of attendance and syllabus to be filed with the court. We cannot guarantee that each county will accept this program as meeting their requirements, but we can say to our knowledge, not one county has rejected the program.

Military members and parents can sign up for a class through the Wellness Center by calling 452-WELL. It is recommended that divorcing couples attend separate classes. Attendance is not mandatory but encouraged. Classes are taught by licensed counselors who deal with many of these issues day to day in their professions. CFK is focused on education - it is not therapy. If more individual attention is needed, it is recommended that an appointment with Mental Health or a Chaplain be made.

I understand my option to attend Caring For Kids Through Divorce.

Military Member

Date

Spouse

Date

(Attachment 5)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ERD REQUESTS FOR MARITAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Is this your first duty assignment? Yes/No
2. How long have you been at Spangdahlem? _____
3. How long has your spouse been at Spangdahlem? _____
4. Were you experiencing marital problems prior to this overseas tour? Yes/No
5. How long have you been married? _____
6. Does your job require you to go TDY? _____ If so, how often? _____
7. What do you think contributed to your marital problems?

TDYs
Living overseas
Financial problems
Communication problems
Work related stress
Lack of squadron support
Other: _____

8. Were you seen for marital counseling? Yes/No
If so, what agency did you utilize?

Mental Health
Chaplain
Family Advocacy
Other: _____

9. What is your AFSC? _____
10. What unit are you assigned to? _____

(Attachment 6)

From *Early Return of Dependents PSD Guide (Dated 28 September 2020)*

EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENT (ERD)

This section outlines the specific responsibilities for individuals or an agency when processing a program request.

AIRMEN

- Submits request to unit/CC to relocate dependents prior to DEROS
- Provides supporting documentation from base agencies, e.g., chaplain, family support, JAG

UNIT COMMANDER

- Reviews case file and provides recommendation

FSS/MPF

- Reviews request for content to ensure request meets intent of JTR and provides recommendation to approval authority
- Prepares dependent travel orders (AF Form 937) after approval (see attachment 1)

INSTALLATION COMMANDER (Can be delegated to MSG/CC)

- Approves/disapproves movement of dependents

AFPC/DP3AM

- Provides guidance to commander's and other agencies concerning this program

NOTE: Approval for an ERD under JTR 050804 Table 5-22: Official Situations, National Interest or Conditions in OCONUS Theater where the Airman is concerned for dependent's safety must be processed to the appropriate approval authority as referenced in Section B.

(Attachment 7)

The Electronic Staff Summary Sheet is no longer required as all ERD submissions must be uploaded into GEARS. All GEARS submissions will follow the formatting contained in the 52d Fighter Wing GEARS Guide. The Guide can be located on the 52d Mission Support Group SharePoint Page under “Admin Docs” (<https://portal.usafe.af.mil/sites/52MSG/Shared%20Documents/Forms/WebFldr.aspx>).

UNIT CCF

UNIT CC

52 FSS FSMPD Career Development

52 FW JA Admin

52 MSG CCE-CCS

52 MSG-CC

52 FSS FSMPD Career Development

DO NOT send ERD packages to an individual technician in GEARS. Use organization above.