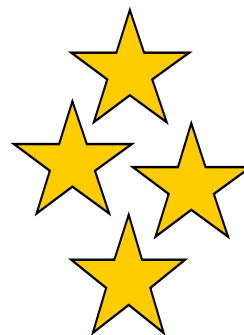




# Youth and Deployment

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## A Guide for Survival



National Guard Bureau-Family Program Office

## A Note to Parents

As parents, we are role models. Our children imitate our actions, beliefs and thoughts. When we look back on happy times with our families or recreate an experience we shared with our parents, it teaches them to appreciate life's simple times and look for those special moments in their own lives. Mothers and fathers often have different approaches to parenting. But these varied viewpoints can actually complement one another and benefit your children. Parents, just like members of a sports team, need to work together to make things run smoothly.

The staff of the National Guard Bureau-Family Program is committed to helping families of Guard members not only cope, but also flourish and grow as a result of their affiliation with the National Guard. For this reason we are pleased to offer the Youth and Deployment – A Guide for Survival as a resource for parents to use in preparing their children for family separations due to deployment. We have provided age appropriate information and activities that you can do with your child before and during deployment related separations. We have also included activities and information designed to maximize the reunion experience.

We are pleased to be able to offer you additional information and activities that will help you teach your child more about themselves and develop strong emotional skills. These skills can be developed and improved at any age.

We hope you use and enjoy this booklet.

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# What is Deployment?

## The Definition:

- de-ploy (v):**
1.
    - a. To position troops in readiness for combat, as along a front or line.
    - b. To bring forces or materials into action.
    - c. To base (a weapons system) in the field.
  2. To distribute (persons or forces) systematically or strategically.

**de-ploy-ment (n):** The distribution of forces in preparation for battle or work.

**What is it?** The purpose of a deployment or separation is to keep the military forces at the highest state of readiness and to meet global military commitments. Deployment occurs in four phases:

1. Pre-Deployment: usually begins six to eight weeks prior to the actual deployment date. During this phase, planning and family readiness preparation occurs.
2. Mobilization: occurs one or two days before the deployment and the Guard member is evaluated for physical fitness, receives vaccinations, prepares wills and power of attorney, receives special deployment training, etc.
3. Deployment: the Guard member or guard member actually departs for the mission.
4. Post-Deployment: could be referred to as reunion. This is the phase when the Guard member returns home.

**How long will it last?** A deployment may be for as short as an overnight alert or as long as an unaccompanied overseas tour. It can be for unspecified periods of time with field training exercises in between that can last for weeks.

**Why deploy?** Because the military is faced with the challenge of updating and modifying existing weaponry and tactics to meet the changing nature of combat, the National Guard requires Guard members to take part in deployments and training throughout the year.

**When is it?** The number of times an individual Guard member is deployed varies with the nature of his or her unit. Certain types of support units may deploy 20 to 30 times within a year, while other units may take part in as few as two major deployments and a few additional training deployments during the same period. Deployments are often unannounced, so Guard members may not know that they will be going on deployments months in advance. The possibility for unannounced deployment does exist.

# Planning Ahead

*“Your best defense in planning for what’s to come.”*

The following is a list of activities to do prior to your parent(s) deployment:

***Attend a Pre-Deployment Briefing:*** These meetings give important information that will help give you and your family access to valuable services. It will address the changes a family goes through during a temporary deployment, deployment, or remote deployment. Family Readiness programs will be outlined and any particular concerns the family has will be addressed.

- The Commander and key staff members will be introduced.
- The most up-to-date information about what’s going on in the unit will be given to you. You may be given information on the mission itself, the location, the length, and the extent of the danger that may be involved.
- Security concerns will be addressed.
- You will find out how Guard members can be contacted.
- Resource information to assist in resolving problems will be provided.
- Guidance will be given to facilitate uninterrupted household functions.
- The family will be provided a calendar and deployment guideline.
- Family concerns will be answered.

## ***Talk About Deployment:***

**Getting the facts:** The first thing you’ll want to do is to learn “What is this separation all about?” Sometimes parents on military duty can’t tell you much about where they are going or why. If they can’t answer or don’t know all the answers to these questions, be understanding. You’ll still feel a lot better knowing as much as you can. Ask a lot of “W” questions:

- Why are you being deployed?
- Where are you going?
- What is it like there?
- What will you do there?
- Will you be safe?
- When are you leaving?
- How long will you be gone?
- Who else will be going?

**How will the separation affect me?:** Many families find it helpful to have family meetings. These are times to talk as a family about your life together, your problems, gripes, and plans. At family meetings, you can also discuss and re-negotiate family responsibilities and rules. This separation might be a good time to start family meetings. It may not be easy to talk to your parents but it usually pays off. Here are some things you may want to discuss with your parents before separations:

- Will we have enough money?
- What will we do if you get hurt?
- What will be my responsibilities?
- Will family rules change?

- What is expected from me during this separation?
- Who will take care of me if Mom/Dad has to go away, too?

**Discuss your feelings:** Recognize your feelings and talk about them with your parents. Sometimes you will find they share some of your feelings. Here are some emotions you might experience.

- Fear
- Anger
- Worry
- Upset
- Scared
- Sad
- Anxious
- Concern

***Identify Support Systems:*** Reach out to others and make sure you have a good social support. Knowing there are others with the same feelings and experiences may make you feel less alone.

**Family:** Family members can be a great support. They may share some of the same problems and feelings you are having. If they have previously gone through a separation, they can be very understanding and helpful.

- Parent
- Siblings
- Grandparents
- Aunts/Uncles
- Cousins

**Friends:** Friends can understand how you feel and can say things to help. You may have a friendship where you can share your secrets and trust them to tell you the truth.

- School friends
- Neighbors
- Family friends

**Places of Worship:** Staff from various Houses of Worship can either provide counseling or can point you to other sources of help.

- Clergy
- Sunday School Teachers
- Youth Group Director

**School Counselors:** School counselors are good listeners and can also direct you to other sources of help.

**The National Guard Unit Contact:** This contact person can assist in directing you to a variety of services that can access information and resources to help you solve problems, provide answers to questions, and give emotional assistance.

***Establish a Communication Plan:*** Discuss with your parents how you plan to keep in contact during the deployment.

**Letter writing:** Writing is an easy and affordable way to stay in communication.

- Ensure you have a correct mailing address before your parent is deployed.
- You may want to pre-address envelopes.
- Consider purchasing stamps ahead of time.

**Telephone calls:** Phone calls are a quick way to communicate but remember long distance and overseas calls can be very expensive.

- It is a good idea to do advance planning for the length and frequency of phone calls.
- Establish a few ground rules to help keep phone bills under control, like having a list of items to discuss.
- Establish a list of information you need in order to complete the connection.
- You may want to purchase prepaid phone cards.
- You find out the time difference.

**Packages:** Develop, with your deploying parent, a list of suggestions you can include in a “care package.”

**Other:** If letter writing is difficult for you, discuss alternate ways to communicate, such as E-mail, audio or videotapes.

**Parent’s address:**

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**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Complete the Family Readiness Checklist:***

# Family Readiness Checklist

*Separation can be a time of high anxiety for families. This checklist can serve as a guide for families as they gather information and resources in order to be more prepared for separations due to deployments.*

*Be sure to share this checklist with your parents prior to deployment. These are just suggestions and all items on the checklist may not apply to everyone as each situation and family responsibilities differ.*

## PERSONAL MATTERS AND DOCUMENTS

\_\_\_\_ Identification Card

\_\_\_\_ Is it Up-to-date and Valid Until Deployed Parent's Return

\_\_\_\_ Where and How to Obtain a New Identification Card

\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Insurance Card

\_\_\_\_ Current Addresses and Telephone Numbers of All Immediate Family

(Includes Father, Mother, Sisters, Brothers)

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\_\_\_\_ Other Important Telephone Numbers You May Need In Case Of Emergency  
(See Emergency Contact List)

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\_\_\_\_ Phone Card

\_\_\_\_ Phone Number and Address of Credit Cards, if any

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\_\_\_\_ Family Program Contact Name and Phone Number (Have Ready: Parent's Full Name, Rank, Social Security Number, and Branch of Service)

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\_\_\_\_ Unit Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Unit Contact Name and Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



# Family Readiness Checklist

\_\_\_\_ Deployed Parent's Complete Deployed Address

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\_\_\_\_ Have you been included in discussions on where deployed parent(s) is going, when he/she will be coming home, and why he/she is leaving?

\_\_\_\_ Have you discussed your feelings on deployment and your parent's return?

\_\_\_\_ Up-to-Date Picture with Your Deployed Parent

## MEDICAL

\_\_\_\_ Physician Names/Addresses/Phone Numbers

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\_\_\_\_ Health Insurance Card/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Hospital Card

\_\_\_\_ How to Get Medical/Dental/Optical Assistance if needed

\_\_\_\_ Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Location of Immunization Records: Date/Type

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Date of Last Tetanus Vaccination: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Prescription Information

\_\_\_\_ Eyeglasses/contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Medications (List: Name, Dosage, Condition or Illness Being Treated)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

(A 90-day supply is suggested)

\_\_\_\_ Refill Procedures: \_\_\_\_\_

# Family Readiness Checklist

\_\_\_ Next Medical Appointments

Dr: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Veterinary Clinic and Doctor:

Dr: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## FINANCIAL

\_\_\_ Aware of Routine Monthly Bills and Budget

\_\_\_ Rent/Mortgage

\_\_\_ Insurance (Life, Property, Renters, Automobile, etc.)

\_\_\_ Telephone

\_\_\_ Utilities (Water, Gas, Electricity, Sewage)

\_\_\_ Sanitation (Trash)

\_\_\_ Gasoline

\_\_\_ Taxes

\_\_\_ Cable/Newspaper/Magazine

\_\_\_ Grocery

\_\_\_ Credit Cards

\_\_\_ Car Loans

\_\_\_ Other Loans

\_\_\_ How to Balance a Checkbook

\_\_\_ Who to Contact for: (Company Name and Phone Number)

\_\_\_ Car Insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Car Loans: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ School Loans: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTOMOBILE

\_\_\_ Vehicle Registration

\_\_\_ Renewal Date for License Plate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ When and How to Renew Inspection Sticker: \_\_\_\_\_

# Family Readiness Checklist

\_\_\_ Insurance Contact:  
Agent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Finance Company:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Location of Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Is the vehicle in good operating condition?

\_\_\_ Knowledge of Maintenance  
\_\_\_ Air Pressure in Tires (Including Spare)  
\_\_\_ Window Washer Fluid  
\_\_\_ Oil – How to Check  
\_\_\_ What Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ When It Should be Changed?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ What Type of Gasoline to Use  
\_\_\_ How to Change Bulbs and Fuses

\_\_\_ Repair Number:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Knowledge on How to Perform Emergency Repairs (Such as Overheating, Flat Tire, Dead Battery)

\_\_\_ Towing Service Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Who to Call for Emergency Transportation:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ What Arrangements Have Been Made for Non-Driving Family Members?

\_\_\_ Location of Duplicate Set of Keys: \_\_\_\_\_


# Family Readiness Checklist


## LEGAL

- \_\_\_ Location of Important Document Files
  - It Should Include:
    - \_\_\_ Adoption Papers, if applicable
    - \_\_\_ Birth Certificate
    - \_\_\_ Citizen/Naturalization Papers, if applicable
    - \_\_\_ Passports/Visas, if any
    - \_\_\_ Safety Deposit Box Information and Key, if any
    - \_\_\_ Vaccination Records
    - \_\_\_ Health Insurance Enrollment Information
    - \_\_\_ Wills
    - \_\_\_ Power of Attorney, if any
    - \_\_\_ Your Tax Record (Federal and State)
    - \_\_\_ Insurance Policies (Life, Car)
    - \_\_\_ Vehicle Titles
    - \_\_\_ List of all Credit Cards and Account Numbers
    - \_\_\_ Deeds
    - \_\_\_ Bank Books (Checking and Savings)

## HOUSEHOLD

- \_\_\_ Location and Use of Fuse/Breaker Box
- \_\_\_ List of Repairmen and Phone Numbers (Plumber, Electrician, Heating/Cooling, Structural, and Appliances)
  - Plumber: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Electrician: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Heating/Cooling: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Structural: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Appliances: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Location Of Water Valves, Water Main Valves, and Gas Shut-off
- \_\_\_ Power Outage Supplies (Flashlights, Radio, Batteries and Candles)
- \_\_\_ Gas Control Valve for Emergency
- \_\_\_ Key to Post Office Box, if any
- \_\_\_ How to Test Fire Detector and Smoke Alarm
- \_\_\_ Emergency Numbers Posted for Quick Reference
  - \_\_\_ Electric Company: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ Police: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ Fire Department: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ Rescue Squad/Ambulance: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Combination or Location of Keys to Outside Buildings or Padlocks
- \_\_\_ How to Change Furnace/Air Conditioner Filters
- \_\_\_ Landlord's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

 <h1>Emergency Contact List</h1>	
<b>Emergency</b>	
Fire Station: _____	
Police: _____	
Hospital (Closest location): _____	
Poison Control Center: _____	
Emergency Contact Person: (family member, neighbor): Number: _____ (w) _____ (h)	
<b>Personal</b>	
Parents Number: _____ (w) _____ (m)	
Emergency Contact (relative, family friend, neighbor): Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ (h) _____ (w)	
Deployed Parent: Full Name: _____ Grade/Rank: _____ SSN: _____ Complete Duty Address: _____ _____ _____ _____	
Unit Point of Contact: _____ Phone: _____ Family Support Coordinator: _____ Phone: _____	
key:      h-home      w-work      m-mobile	

 <h1>Emergency Contact List</h1>			
<b>Schools:</b>			
Name	Location	Telephone Number	Guidance Counselor
<b>Medical:</b>			
Doctors (name, location, telephone number): _____ _____			
Dentist (name, location, telephone number): _____ _____			
Veterinarian: _____			
<b>Household Emergency Phone Numbers:</b>			
Electric Company: _____			
Gas Company: _____			
Water Company: _____			
Plumber: _____			
Electrician: _____			
Heating/AC: _____			
Mechanic: _____			
<b>Other Important Numbers:</b>			
American Red Cross: 1-877-272-7337			
Clergy: _____ Phone: _____ _____ _____ _____			

# Deployment and Me

## **How could this be positive?**

Deployment positive – yeah right! Just as there are negative aspects to deployment there are positive ones, too.

- There is an opportunity for personal growth
- You can learn to deal with stressful situations
- Communication with your parents can be improved
- Separation is a learning experience
- You can become more confident, independent and assertive
- You can have input in decision making
- You can become more resourceful
- You can develop self-confidence
- You can increase your self-reliance
- You have an opportunity to do things for others

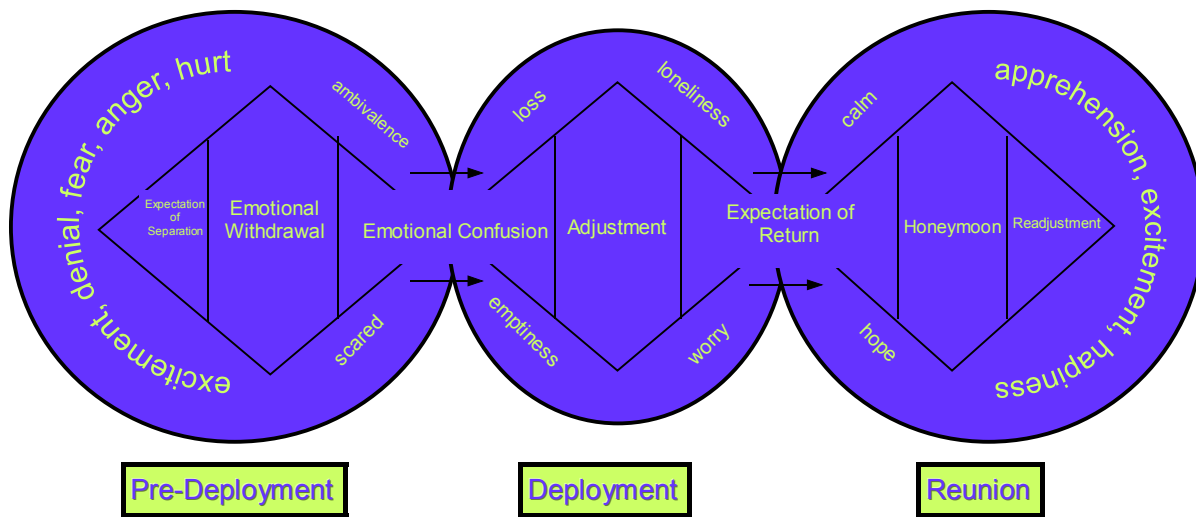
Remember, like change, deployment can be an opportunity to grow. It can be a time to take on new challenges, to learn more about yourself and your family, to build new skills, and to become a more capable person.

## **Emotional Cycles of Deployment**

You are going to react in many ways to your parent's departure. The emotional cycles of deployment gives you an idea of how people react in general, but every individual goes through it on their own terms in their own way. Remember, no two people react the same way, depending on a variety of factors such as age, maturity, gender, relationship with each parent, and how the remaining parent copes with the military separation.

The following graph shows the emotional cycles that people may go through because of a military separation.

## Emotional Awareness during the Phases of Deployment



Source: Behavioral Health Strategies, LLC, November, 2002

During the entire deployment process, individuals experience numerous emotions.

*Expectation for Separation:* Usually occurs 6 to 8 weeks prior to deployment. Feelings during this phase of deployment can be characterized by excitement, denial, fear, or anger.

*Emotional Withdrawal:* Usually occurs 1 week prior to deployment. Feelings you may be experiencing could be ambivalence, fear, or anger.

*Emotional Confusion:* Occurs 1 to 6 weeks after departure. Usual feelings during this time are loss, emptiness, and abandonment.

*Adjustment:* Occurs during most of deployment. Some feelings you may have could range from hope, to worry, to calm, to loneliness.

*Expectation for Reunion:* Usually occurs between 6 and 8 weeks prior to homecoming. Usual feelings during this phase include apprehension, excitement, and worry.

*Honeymoon:* Occurs 1 day or until first argument. You may experience feelings of euphoria, excitement, and confusion.

*Readjustment:* Usually takes 1 to 6 weeks following the return. You may feel happy, excited, and satisfied.

## What do I do when I feel . . .

### *Stressed*

Stress is a natural reaction to any change in your life. Stress is a continuous part of living, it can come from both positive and negative factors in your life. Individuals experience stress differently and their reactions to that stress may vary. Stress factors can compound one another and pile up. The good news is that it can be managed.

The first step in managing stress is to recognize the cause of it. Both positive and negative stress factors can come from three main areas:

- Environmental (weather, overcrowding, noise and social factors such as friends, school)
- Physical (illness, injury, handicaps)
- Psychological (interpreting events, dwelling, personalization, control)

Sometimes we don't realize that we are stressed. There are three groups of stress symptoms:

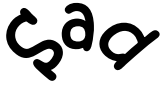
- Physical Symptoms (increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, increased respiration, muscle tension, cold hands and feet, tight throat and dilated pupils)
- Stress-Related Illnesses (heart disease, high blood pressure, skin conditions, headache, allergic reactions)
- Psychological Symptoms (attention and concentration problems, excessive fatigue, anger and irritability, anxiety and worry, increased alcohol and drug use)

### *Strategies for Stress Management:*

There are a number of strategies for handling stress, and some are more appropriate than others for specific situations. Keep in mind that you may need to use several different strategies or a combination of them before finding the right solution. Stress management strategies include:

- Learn to control anger in your life.
- Learn to relax, take slow, deep breaths.
- Manage your time more efficiently.
- Go outside and get a breath of fresh air.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat regular healthy meals.
- Plan something rewarding for you.
- Write - Get a journal and begin documenting your feelings.
- Hang out with your friends; create your own support group.
- Avoid the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
- Avoid negative self-talk. Challenge any negative thoughts you might have.
- Listen to music.
- Draw.
- Spend time with a pet.





In the normal cycle of life, everyone has times when they feel somewhat less than happy and optimistic. Admit it, your parent(s) are leaving or have left on a deployment and you are feeling sad. That is a normal reaction to what is going on in your life. The key to success in dealing with sadness is to recognize why you are sad and to do things that bring happiness to your life or keep you active before your sadness turns into a much more serious problem like depression. The following are some tips to help you deal with sadness:

- Try to make new friends. Healthy relationships with peers help with self-regard and provide you with an important social outlet.
- Participate in sports.
- Get an after-school, part-time job.
- Get involved in extra-curricular activities at school.
- Get a hobby.
- Join community organization for teens.
- Ask for help.
- Talk to an adult you trust about your feelings.
- Eat right and exercise.

## ***Anxious***

There are plenty of things to be anxious about these days, most of which we can't change. Being anxious is a normal reaction to those things, it can help motivate us, prepare us for what we have to face and sometimes give us the energy to take action when we need to. When feeling anxious, you might have trouble sleeping, eating and concentrating. You might get headaches or an upset stomach. If your anxiousness becomes so overwhelming that it interferes with your daily routine, you need to seek help. The following is a list of suggestions to help you deal with your anxiousness. If these do not help you, please seek professional assistance before your anxiousness turns into a much more serious condition.

- Practice taking time out to gather your thoughts and relax.
- Get help in solving your problems from someone you respect.
- Take action – make a decision and act on it. This frequently reduces anxiety and frees up energy for other things.
- Realize some anxiety in your life is normal.
- Control your worry; spend designated time during your day concentrating on identifying and controlling worrisome thoughts.
- Confront what makes you anxious.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to your doctor.
- Find a support group.
- Talk to your school counselor.

# ANGRY

Anger is a natural emotion that usually stems from some type of conflict in our daily lives. You may feel anger with yourself for not completing an assignment on time or feel anger toward another individual or object as a result of an unsuccessful interaction. It is perfectly okay to feel angry about your parent(s) deployment. The key is not to lose control and take your anger out in a destructive way. The following suggestions might help you in dealing with your anger.

- Figure out why you are angry.
- Is it something you have control over? If so, ask yourself what you could have done differently that would have resulted in a positive response, not an angry response. If you can't control the situation, accept that it is your choice to get angry over what you can't control. Try to find ways to understand why you are angry and ways to avoid getting angry again.
- Is what you are angry about really worth wasting your energy on? Will it change the outcome?
- Write down why you are angry; try to come up with alternative solutions to your anger.
- Talk to the person who made you angry about why you are angry.
- Learn to manage your anger; count to ten, walk away, take a deep breath.
- Look for triggers that make you angry and then make the choice not to be angry.

# Scared

We all experience fears at some point during our lives. Your heart beats faster, you breathe more quickly. Your reaction to fear is called "fight or flight." This means that when faced with a scary situation, your reaction will either be stay and fight or run away. During your parent's deployment, you are going to hear and see things on TV that may scare you. Learning to deal positively with those things will help you overcome your fears. The following is a list of suggestions to help you deal with your fears:

- Acknowledge that you are scared.
- Share your feelings with others.
- Spend time with others.
- Share responsibilities for tasks that are difficult for you to do.
- Look for ways to be involved.
- Create a safe environment.
- Get correct information.
- Remember that you can't control everything.
- Give yourself time.

These suggestions are just that, suggestions to help you. If you are having trouble dealing with certain issues or coping with your problems, please talk to your parents, a school counselor, a friend, a doctor, the State Family Program Coordinator or Wing Family Program Coordinator, a member of the Clergy or someone else you trust.

## **What if I have to move?**

*Your parent or both parents have been deployed, you have to go live with another relative in another town or even state – what are you going to do?*

*One of your parents has been deployed, your family can't stay where they currently live because they can't afford it, you're going to have to move – what are you going to do?*

*You have younger siblings and your remaining parent can't take care of them by themselves, you have no family that lives nearby, you have to move to another town or state – what are you going to do?*

All of these are real life examples of what can happen as a result of a military deployment. Your life can be turned upside down within a matter of weeks. Not only do you have to deal with one of your parents leaving, but you also have to deal with a major life event like changing schools, changing neighborhoods, leaving your friends behind. How are you going to deal with all of these things? The following is a guide to assist you and your family in dealing with moving.

### ***Let's talk about moving ...***

Moving can be a very stressful time for you and your family. You are thinking of a million and one reasons why not to move. Life might seem like it is over, but it is definitely not. While you are packing up your belongings, don't think you can just pack up your feelings too. Moving is a pretty emotional time for everyone in your family and everyone will react differently to the move. You are probably excited about moving to a new place, but you may also be sad about leaving your old friends, going to a new school and even angry about being forced to move.

Talk to your parents about moving, tell them your concerns, and ask questions about the move. Remember they may also be having some of the same feelings you are about moving. Your parents are also worrying about having to make new friends, getting a new job, finding a place to live and dealing with many other details of the move. If you talk to your parents about your feelings and identify the same concerns about the move that they have, you can work through these difficulties together and offer each other suggestions on how to deal with this change.

### **Packing 101**

Dealing with all your stuff can be one of the most frustrating parts of moving. What am I going to take with me? What can I throw away? Here are some helpful tips:

1. If you don't need something, pitch it. If it is something you simply cannot live without, keep it. Many people find themselves spending too much time packing things that they will never use or think about when they arrive at their new home.
2. Make money on the move. Have a yard or garage sale to get rid of unwanted items. You can also consider a consignment or thrift shop.
3. Donate your unwanted items to charity.

4. Organize your stuff before packing it. Throwing it all in a box will make it more difficult to find stuff once you've moved.
5. Label each box according to where it goes. This will help you find what you need more easily.

### **Tips for changing schools**

- Arrange for official copies of your school records to be sent to your new school.
- Get an unofficial copy of your transcript and check out your grades.
- Contact the guidance counselor at your new school.
- Find out all you can about the courses you are going to sign up for.
- Try to find people who share your common interests at the new school.
- Join something. The band, the chorus, and the computer club are great activities and help you make new friends.

### **Keeping in touch with old friends**

- E-mail is a great way to keep in touch with your friends. It's cheaper than phone calls and quicker than letters and e-mail allows you to send and receive messages as often as you want.
- Chat rooms allow you to communicate directly with as many friends as you would like in "real time."
- Bulletin boards allow you to post messages onto a public web page. Usually people post questions that they need answered or information that they want to share.
- School home pages provide lots of information that can keep you up-to-date on what's happening at your old school.
- Check out the National Guard Youth website at [www.guardfamilyyouth.org](http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org).

# COMMUNICATION TIPS

The greatest morale builder during a deployment is communication from home. Send letters and cassette tapes, make cards, send “care” packages, and send e-mail messages.

As you communicate keep in mind operational security. Operational security means making sure that sensitive information is protected. The security of the Guard and Guard families depends on many factors such as deployment areas and times. Location of spouses and families during the deployment, any special deployment training and the planned return date are sensitive items. Avoid discussing operational information in public places, over the telephone or with members of the media.

## **A. LETTERS**

1. A great method of communication during deployment is letters. Long distance telephone calls can get very expensive very quickly, and letters can be re-read during lonely moments or times when phone and e-mail are not available. Remember that as much as three weeks can pass between the time you mail your letters and the time they receive it. If you have been receiving mail regularly and the mail suddenly stops for a week or longer, there is usually no cause for alarm. The delay is probably due to some circumstance such as extended operations or bad weather.

## **A GUIDE FOR LETTER WRITERS**

1. Be informative and cheerful.
2. Use sarcasm and humor with great care. Remember that in writing, no one can hear the tone of your voice or see the expression on your face.
3. Answer all questions. Write with your parent's letter and picture in front of you, as though talking directly to them.
4. Ask advice when needed.
5. Write as often as possible about everything, even the weather. Sometimes the best letters are simply about the events in your day.
6. Tell of daily activities in amusing and interesting ways.
7. Keep your parent informed of events such as ball game schedules and class plays.
8. Remember to be very clear. An earlier letter explaining details may not have been received.
9. Number your letters on the envelope and the first page so that if more than one letter is received, your parent will know which one was written first.
10. Situations often change before a letter is received. It is strongly suggested you should not make a major decision or argue by mail.
11. Avoid troubling your parent with problems he/she cannot solve.
12. If you are angry with your parent or things are going all wrong, try recording everything you are feeling on paper or in a journal. Sometimes after you have vented the frustration, you will feel better and can better handle the situation. **Do not send these to your parent.** Remember there is no making-up when they are away and written words are far more permanent than spoken ones. Sometimes it helps just to talk to a friend or a trusted adult.
13. Express appreciation for letters or tapes you have received. Be sure to mention one or two points of special interest.
14. It is important to frequently tell your parent you love them.
15. Relay news of the neighborhood, friends, and relatives. Clip out newspaper articles that might be of interest to your parent.

16. Avoid GOSSIP about anyone else. It can cause unnecessary trouble and may not be true.
17. Rumors should be avoided, especially if they deal with classified subjects such as deployments. Remember the importance of operational security.
18. Do not brag about the number of letters you write or receive. Score keeping usually results in hurt feelings.
19. Cards can help to express your thoughts and feelings, often in a unique or humorous way.
20. Send cards early so that they are there on time for special days.
21. If your letters are not addressed correctly, they will probably be delayed in reaching your parent, if they arrive at all. Your parent's unit Rear Detachment or Family Readiness Coordinator can provide the proper address to use for this deployment.  
NOTE: Adding additional address information can also cause delay.
22. An airmail letter can take up to 10 days to reach its destination.

## **B. PACKAGES**

A "care package" is a little bit of home that says, "I love you; I miss you; I'm thinking about you." They can be a great link over the distances. Care packages are also a morale builder during remote deployment.

Remember what you send will undoubtedly be seen by a number of people. Packages going overseas are subject to Customs inspections.

## **A GUIDE FOR PACKAGES**

1. If the correct mailing address is not used, your package will be delayed and may not arrive at all.
2. Put an extra address card **INSIDE** before you seal the package. If the package is damaged or the address on the outside cannot be read, it will be opened by the Post Office. If they do not find where it should go from the contents, the whole package goes to the dead-letter bin.
3. Packages can be sent via airmail (Priority) or parcel post. Airmail is generally more expensive than parcel post. To be shipped through the Postal Service, the parcel must not weigh more than 70 pounds and not be greater than 108 inches. Be sure to check with your local Post Office or Postal Service website for current information at <http://www.usps.com>.
4. Usually for overseas shipment, including APO addresses, a Customs form must be completed and attached to the package. Packages mailed to an Army Post Office (APO) will not have to pay Customs tariffs.
5. Be aware of any trademark violation, as Customs officials will confiscate counterfeit name brand items and illegally copied software, music and video. You can find the U.S. Customs website at <http://www.customs.gov>.
6. Use a brown packing box with reinforced nylon strapping tape to send packages overseas.
7. Mark any package that contains a recorded message, music or VCR tape with the words, "MAGNETIC RECORDING ENCLOSED" or "MAGNETIC RECORDED TAPES INSIDE-DO NOT X-RAY."
8. Be sure that if you are sending a package for a special occasion to mail it so it has plenty of time to arrive. Arriving early is better than late.
9. Some suggested things to include in your care package are cookies, cereal, magazines and books, audio and videotapes, candy bars, stamps, hometown newspapers,

puzzles, playing cards and grooming items. Make sure not to send any items that are not allowed. The unit coordinator will have a list of items that cannot be mailed.

10. Wrap food securely so it will be edible on arrival. Chocolate may melt so protect other items in the box if you choose to include it and realize it probably will not arrive in its original form.
11. Storage spaces are limited so try to keep items small.

### **C. E-Mail**

Using e-mail can be an efficient way to communicate with your deployed parent.

1. Number the e-mail because of time differences and how frequently your parent is able to check his/her e-mail.
2. If you don't have a computer with Internet or e-mail at home, you can access one at the Family Support Center or community library, school, cyber cafes, and shopping malls. If you have a USO (United Services Organization) close to where you live, they normally provide free Internet services to military families in addition to many other activities. Free e-mail accounts are readily available to users via certain websites such as Hotmail, Yahoo, and Netscape.
3. Remember operational security and never discuss deployment details such as unit locations, dates or missions.
4. Read the contents before you send it. As you read ask yourself some questions:
  - a. Is this negative or depressing?
  - b. Does it contain certain personal matters that should not be read by others?
  - c. Will my parent be embarrassed if others read this?

If your answers are "yes" you may want to reconsider sending it. Rarely will your parent have an exclusive computer terminal for personal use.

5. It is best to send small, mostly text e-mail messages. Messages with a lot of graphics or attachments may be undeliverable because of download times and military network restrictions. The e-mail networks in remote areas are not always operational so have patience when waiting for a reply.

### **D. Calling Cards**

1. A variety of telephone cards are available through many different sources. Most phone companies issue cards and bill for charges monthly. Be sure to research hours, rates, and service charges that will add up when this card is used. Also, check the calling area covered by the rates. The rates quoted may not apply from areas other than your home phone or local calling area.
2. Prepaid phone cards are based on the number of minutes. It is good to research the rules of the card before purchasing. There are many different brands and the expense may vary greatly. Be sure to find out the rules of phone cards purchased at retail outlets before you buy.
3. Check out this link to see if your family qualifies for this free phone card:  
<http://www.vfwkc.org/marketing/PhoneCard.asp>.

### **E. Long Distance Rates**

Long distance calls overseas can be very expensive. When you use the phone, use it cautiously and budget for the charges in advance.

# Deployment and My Family

Deployment brings many challenges to families. One of the most difficult demands is separation due to the military assignments. Most military personnel will perform some type of temporary duty requiring separation from their family. The most difficult aspect for families is helping one another survive the period of separation.

A military separation is difficult to get through for anyone, and families know how tough things can be for children when Mom or Dad isn't available. This information is offered so that it may provide you with some ways to make things easier during deployment.

## Impact of Separation

- **Emotion and Behavior** - There will be emotional and behavioral stages of separation, such as denial, anger, bargaining, and depression. These are difficult to accept and to go through, but in order to bring about successful adjustment and emotional and spiritual health, we must deal with them.
- **Reaction to Change** - There will be unexpected - both negative and positive - information flow that, in turn, will cause family members/Guard members to react in various ways. Be ready to listen and answer all questions.
- **Roles and Responsibilities** - There will be changes in roles of individuals, as well as their responsibilities. Family members will have to pick up the responsibility for the role that the Guard member filled. Don't expect them to fill the role the same way! They aren't the same people.
- **Economics** - There may be an economic change because one family member is now out of the home.
- **Communication** - Mission, resources, time, and distance all affect when and how often family members communicate.

## Talk About It

Parents need to focus on how to make the separation less traumatic for the children. Most children are very distressed and anxious upon hearing the news of the separation. The deployed parent's continued involvement with the children is most important.

**Begin** - Telling your children about the deployment early provides them with the unique and very helpful opportunity to become involved in preparing for the separation. They will have many questions, which is positive—it means they're trying to make sense of what's happening and gain control over their environment. It allows them to begin expressing themselves, their worries, concerns, confusion, frustration, and so on. Withholding the information denies them this opportunity and can make the adjustment much more difficult.

**Who** - Both parents, if possible, together should tell the children. This begins the reinforcement of the family unity despite separation, that mom or dad will be back, and that it's not the child's fault. This also reinforces the parents' availability for questions and comfort. You, too, now have an opportunity to express how you feel about the separation. Telling your children how you feel (within limits of common sense) can help them understand and verbalize their own reactions.



**What** - Keep the discussion honest, straightforward, and factual. Discuss the reasons for the assignment and keep it in terms everyone understands. Once the separation is initiated, the children's adjustment is influenced positively if both parents are confident in their capacity to manage, if they are available to the children, and if the situation is as conflict free as possible.

### **Feelings You May Experience**

Children may react in many ways to a parent's departure. The Emotional Cycle of Deployment gives you an idea of how people react in general, but every individual goes through it in their own way. No two people will react in the same way, depending on a variety of factors such as age, maturity, gender, your relationship with each parent, and how the remaining parent copes with the military separation.

**The following is a list of common reactions family members experience:**

#### **Parents**

- Helplessness – feeling as if they have no control over the situation
- Stress due to the increase in responsibilities that were once shared by their spouse
- Frustration because of the unknown
- Anger toward the National Guard for taking their spouse away from their family
- Depression – they may withdraw from friends, family members and neighbors
- Overwhelmed as they face total responsibility for family affairs

#### **Children**

- Concern about whether they are still loved and protected
- Concern about where they will live
- Anger at parents
- Aggression in play, behavior, or communication
- Being negative, disobedient, talking back, or disrespectful
- Refusing to have contact with the absent parent
- Wish for revenge for the insecurity and embarrassment the parent caused
- Crying is a normal way of releasing pain, anxiety, anger, and guilt
- Physical symptoms such as loss of appetite, stomachaches, trouble sleeping, headaches, nightmares, restlessness, nausea
- Regression—going back to earlier developmental behaviors, such as bedwetting, thumb-sucking, baby talk, clinging to mom or dad, whining, or tantrums
- Attempts to be helpless and to be taken care of
- Over-activity
- Denial of the parent deploying, lying to others about it

Children, especially young children, use the above behaviors and reactions to protect themselves from pain, to gain reassurance that they are still loved, and to ensure themselves that the remaining parent won't "abandon" them.

## **How Can I Help?**

The following actions help reduce the complexities caused by deployment:

- Communicate. Get your parent to talk about what is going on and listen to what they are saying. Sometimes just talking about a problem makes things better.
- Develop individual and family goals. Use them to develop/maintain family routines.
- Accept the lack of control over deployment events.
- Encourage all family members to share their feelings.
- Reassure your parent of your love and support.
- Concentrate on what you can control: yourself and your behavior.
- Become or remain active: get a job, volunteer, or take up a hobby.
- Seek relevant information about the deployment.
- Try to see the deployment as a challenging opportunity for growth.
- Seek social support from friends, relatives, Family Readiness Centers (FRC), and the families of others who have been deployed.
- Communicate with others and open channels of communication within your own family.
- Check out rumors, and don't believe everything you hear.
- Assist with the daily tasks such as laundry, cleaning, taking care of younger siblings and cooking.
- Spend some time together as a family: go to a museum, to a movie, on a picnic, take a hike, attend a sporting event, go skating or go bowling.
- Encourage your parents to get help. Remind them of the services available through the National Guard Family Assistance Center or the American Red Cross.
- Remember that deployment is not forever.

## **Positive Aspects of Deployment**

Though you may not agree or believe that anything good could come from a separation, looking for the positives can help you cope. Some examples of the positives are:

- An opportunity for personal growth
- A transitional stage and a learning opportunity
- Making decisions
- Appreciate the simpler things in life
- Enjoy time with other family members
- Following through on decisions
- Taking an objective look at myself
- Evaluating myself more often
- Patting myself on the back
- Becoming more resourceful
- Being more myself
- Being self-sufficient
- Developing self-confidence
- Developing relationships with others going through a military separation
- Finding role models in my extended family
- Becoming a stronger person
- Developing self-reliance

## *Family Adjustment*

<i>Feelings and Behaviors that Affect the Family's Adjustment to Parent Absence: PRE-DEPLOYMENT</i>	
Any combination of these <b>FEELINGS</b>	Could lead to any of these <b>BEHAVIORS</b>
<b>PARENTS:</b>	
Resentment Anger Guilt Frustration Anxiousness Sadness	Arguing to establish distance/to express anger Guard member withholds notice to deploy until last minute Lack of adequate preparation due to denial Emotional and physical withdrawal
<b>PRESCHOOL CHILDREN:</b>	
Confusion Surprise Guilt during magical thinking period	Clinging Irritability Sadness Increase of attention-seeking behavior (positive and negative)
<b>ELEMENTARY CHILDREN:</b>	
Sadness Anger Separation anxiety Guilt May believe they caused parent's departure (even if discussed) Feels lonely before Guard member leaves	Behavior problems Regressive behaviors Angry outbursts mixed with clinging
<b>ADOLESCENT CHILDREN:</b>	
Sadness Fear of parent's rejection Denial of feelings Anger	Aloofness, don't-care attitude (arguing as defense against closeness or expression of anger) Friends take on increased value

Source: Hooah 4 Health, Deployment Guide

## **Single Parent**

One of the most challenging parts of a military separation is enduring the demands placed on a single parent. It's true that most parents affected by a deployment aren't truly single parents, but the challenges, difficulties, and dilemmas you'll face are much the same as those faced by single parents.

## **Common Objectives**

According to Drs. Barnes and Coplon, authors of *The Single-Parent Experience*, the following list is a sample of objectives commonly cited by single parents:

- Share experiences with others in the same circumstances
- Cope with the stresses of parenting alone
- Learn to adjust to being a single parent and to deal with the reactions
- Improve communication with the children
- Become a more understanding parent
- Learn how to talk to teenagers
- Provide male/female (opposite sex adult) models for my children
- Consider personal needs
- Learn how to effectively deal with outside influences (parents, neighbors, etc.)
- Learn to better handle "male-oriented" or "female-orientated" tasks
- Become more independent, confident, and assertive
- Determine how much personal information to share with my children
- Learn to see my child as a person, not an extension of me
- Watching what I like on TV

## **Negative Aspects of Separation**

Drs. Barnes and Coplon offer the following list of negatives that result from a military separation:

- Never having enough time for myself or my children
- Financial problems
- Enduring others' judgments, misunderstandings, and intrusiveness
- Feeling resentful for having my children, jealous of other couples, and angry at people who don't understand what I'm going through
- Feeling loneliness and boredom
- Not wanting to go out and meet others
- Feeling guilt for having all these negative feelings
- Discovering that single parents are often treated with arrogance, scorn, and stereotypes
- Losing intimacy
- Problems of consistency when it comes to child-rearing
- Disliking having to make all the decisions
- Finding it harder to discover myself and my role as a single parent and as an individual
- Feeling guilt, anger, and loneliness because my partner is not here

# Help From the National Guard

## **Family Assistance Centers**

Family Assistance Centers (FAC) provide a variety of support to families during mobilizations. FACs are usually located in an armory or reserve center and provide a variety of support to families from discussion groups, to food pantries, to video teleconferencing. The FAC serves as the point of contact for help with any type of problems individuals or families may have. Trained staff are available to either help solve problems or provide direction to the appropriate program or agency.

The FAC may provide information on and referral to essential services, including:

- Financial management assistance
- Information, referral and follow-up
- Identification cards and DEERS enrollment
- Medical care
- Legal assistance
- Social services

The FAC is the focal point to coordinate available resources such as Chaplain services, Red Cross, Veterans Administration and a host of other agencies with direct and indirect interests in assisting and supporting military families.

- The FAC operates under coordination between the recruiting and retention managers and the State Family Program Coordinators and Wing Family Program Coordinators.
- In addition to military support staff, family member volunteers and military retirees may volunteer to support the FAC operation during mobilization.
- FAC and Army Community Service Centers are located on most active military installations.
- National Guard members and their families are eligible for many services throughout the year.
- During periods of extended active duty, deployment and mobilization, members and their families are eligible to use the full range of services.
- Check with your State Family Program Coordinator, Wing Family Program Coordinator or Army Community Service Center for a full list of programs and services for which you may be eligible.

## **National Guard Family Readiness Coordinators**

The National Guard Family Readiness Program in each state was developed to ensure that family program elements and support services are provided to the families of National Guard members. Each state has identified State Family Program Coordinators and Wing Family Program Coordinators who provide information and referral services to all reserve component families. Their duties include:

- Coordinate and facilitate communication between family members and the Guard;
- Prepare and send out information concerning benefits, entitlement, schedules of events, missions, roles and functions of the National Guard;

- Conduct seminars, conferences and orientation workshops as appropriate for family members;
- Assist units in developing and maintaining local information, referral, and follow-up programs;
- Provide technical assistance for publicizing family program and quality of life issues;
- Conduct briefings and training for staff and units to produce necessary information and to stimulate interest and support;
- Conduct programs targeted at specific problem areas such as economic, educational, health related, employment issues or others.

In addition, State Coordinators provide input into the mobilization planning process to accommodate family needs at mobilization and to alleviate concerns of National Guard members about family welfare in the event of mobilization.

The State Family Program Coordinators and Wing Family Program Coordinators are there to provide help when you need it. Please check with the local National Guard unit to find out who your coordinator is and how they can help you.

### **Family Readiness Groups**

The National Guard recognizes that helping families is its moral obligation and in its best interest. Families are viewed as an integral part to the success of the National Guards' men and women. To support these families, the National Guard has established Family Readiness Groups. These groups are designed so that Guard members and their families can benefit from helping one another cope with the difficulty of Army and Air National Guard life, especially during times of deployment. The Guard feels families that can cope with, and in many instances actually enjoy Guard life, are more likely to contribute to the community, allow their Guard members to do their jobs well, and encourage their guard members to remain in the Guard.

A Family Readiness Group consists of officers, enlisted personnel, civilians, and family member volunteers. These groups provide:

- Social and emotional support;
- Outreach services; and
- Information.

These groups are designed to assist fellow Guardsmen and women and their family members. Group membership does not stop with just the children and spouses of Guard members, but it also welcomes employers, retirees, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, brothers, sisters, cousins and significant others. Good information and friends who provide each other with needed emotional support and shared labor to meet daily tasks are the very thing Guard families need to cope successfully with all phases of Guard life.

Family Readiness Groups are part of a larger Guard effort to help families adapt to the challenges they face everyday.

This resource is just one of many tools that is being provided to assist Guard families prepare for and thrive during deployments.

# Resources

Important Links:

[www.guardfamilyyouth.org](http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org)

Cultural Information:

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

[www.peacecorps.gov/countries/](http://www.peacecorps.gov/countries/)

[www.kulturekids.org](http://www.kulturekids.org)

[www.nationalgraphic.com](http://www.nationalgraphic.com)

Weather Information:

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)

[www.usatoday.com/weather/](http://www.usatoday.com/weather/)

[www.cnn.com/weather/](http://www.cnn.com/weather/)

Language Information:

[www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)

[www.language-museum.com](http://www.language-museum.com)

[www.ilovelanguages.com](http://www.ilovelanguages.com)

Time Zone Chart

KOREA	JAPAN	HAWA	PST	MST	CST	EST	CMT	GRMNY	IRAQ	AFGN	PKSTN	THAIL	VIET
100	100	600	800	900	1000	1100	1600	1700	1900	2030	2100	2300	2400
200	200	700	900	1000	1100	1200	1700	1800	2000	2130	2200	2400	100
300	300	800	1000	1100	1200	1300	1800	1900	2100	2230	2300	100	200
400	400	900	1100	1200	1300	1400	1900	2000	2200	2330	2400	200	300
500	500	1000	1200	1300	1400	1500	2000	2100	2300	2430	100	300	400
600	600	1100	1300	1400	1500	1600	2100	2200	2400	130	200	400	500
700	700	1200	1400	1500	1600	1700	2200	2300	100	230	300	500	600
800	800	1300	1500	1600	1700	1800	2300	2400	200	330	400	600	700
900	900	1400	1600	1700	1800	1900	2400	100	300	430	500	700	800
1000	1000	1500	1700	1800	1900	2000	100	200	400	530	600	800	900
1100	1100	1600	1800	1900	2000	2100	200	300	500	630	700	900	1000
1200	1200	1700	1900	2000	2100	2200	300	400	600	730	800	1000	1100
1300	1300	1800	2000	2100	2200	2300	400	500	700	830	900	1100	1200
1400	1400	1900	2100	2200	2300	2400	500	600	800	930	1000	1200	1300
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2100	2100	200	400	500	600	700	1200	1300	1500	1630	1700	1900	2000
2200	2200	300	500	600	700	800	1300	1400	1600	1730	1800	2000	2100
2300	2300	400	600	700	800	900	1400	1500	1700	1830	1900	2100	2200
2400	2400	500	700	800	900	1000	1500	1600	1800	1930	2000	2200	2300