



Deployment and time apart

Defence Community Organisation

Supporting Defence families during deployment and time apart

Defence Community Organisation provides a range of support services, practical assistance and products to support Defence families during times of deployment.

Time apart from families due to deployments, training or other Service requirements is an integral feature of Defence life.

We provide a range of services to help families prepare emotionally and practically for the ADF member's time away, and to support families in the member's absence, including special assistance for children.

To access any of these deployment support services or products, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Preparing for deployment

ADF members may be called upon at short notice to deploy anywhere in Australia or around the world, meaning they often have to spend time away from their families. This can be a challenge for families, but timely preparation can help to make the experience more manageable and positive for all concerned.

The DCO website at www.defence.gov.au/dco and the *Deployment Support Booklet* contain detailed information to familiarise you with what you might expect from each stage of deployment.

Experiencing a variety of strong emotions during this time is completely normal, and knowing what to expect can make the feelings much easier to manage.

Our resources will give you practical guidance for each stage, such as outlining

administration and planning you should carry out pre-deployment, different ways of communicating with the deployed family member, and hints and tips to readjust as a family when the member returns.

Contact from DCO personnel

If you would like to receive regular contact from us during your family member's deployment, register your details with the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

This contact allows you to ask any questions or express any concerns you may have, and allows us to inform you of local activities, groups and events and other support services or community resources you may need.

Professional support

If needed, we can supply short-term confidential casework and support from a social worker to help you through difficulties.

24/7 Helpline

You can contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** at any time, day or night, for assessment, advice or referrals. The Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists.

This service should not replace Triple-Zero for emergency situations.





Deployment and time apart

Defence Community Organisation

Emergency support

If an emergency or crisis occurs when your ADF member is away from home, you may access practical assistance. We also offer support if the member is injured or ill while on deployment. For more information refer to our emergency support handout.

Deployment Support Booklet

This booklet is a comprehensive resource, containing information about preparing for deployment, what to expect before, during and after a deployment, and how to access additional support if needed. It is available on the DCO website.

The SMART programs

DCO runs a suite of programs called FamilySMART, TeenSMART and KidSMART, which target challenging aspects of Defence life such as deployment.

The SMART sessions help Defence families build on their strengths, learn techniques to cope with stressful situations, and become more resilient, positive and self-reliant.

FamilySMART is designed for partners, TeenSMART for teenagers and KidSMART for primary school aged children.

To find out more about SMART programs in your area, call the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Connect with your community

Your community is a rich bank of support to draw on, with resources and structures in place which can help you through times of deployment. We keep a directory of local Defence- and community-run initiatives and we can help you to connect with the organisations, groups or events that best suit your needs.

DCO holds a variety of local events to support the families of deployed members, including farewell and welcome home events, workshops and family activities.

Community groups may run programs which build on your life skills, keep you active and engaged in the community, or help you network with other Defence families to share experiences and support each other.

Children and parental absence

We have DVDs and resources available for parents with tips and information about guiding very young children to teenagers through deployments.

We also produce a range of children's books which are designed to help children and teens understand more about the military lifestyle and develop coping strategies for parental absence.

In-school Aides and Mentors also provide on-the-ground support to Defence students during deployments.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

The Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

The best way to access these services is to call **1800 624 608**. The all-hours Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

