

The Deployment Support Booklet

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Introduction

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. Whether the time apart is due to deployment, training, exercise or posting, it can be a challenge for both the ADF member and the family at home. However, timely preparation can help to make the experience more manageable for all concerned.

Defence families do not have to make these preparations in the dark. Extensive information and resources are available in this booklet to familiarise you with what you might expect from each stage of deployment. You will also find practical guidance for each stage, such as outlining administration 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. The Member and Family Care Plan on **page 24** gives you a useful tool for your planning.

This booklet is only one part of the support services, practical assistance and products offered to Defence families by the Defence Community Organisation, or DCO. DCO's services not only seek to inform and prepare you for deployment and time apart, but also provide you with support to make these experiences manageable, positive and strengthening ones for your family.

Some of the support available to the family during the ADF member's absence includes regular deployment support calls, 24-hour advice and referrals, social work, and assistance with emergency and crisis, as well as special assistance for children dealing with parental absence. We also have interactive programs, information products and community connection services.

If you have any queries about deployment support, or wish to access any of these services or products, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline at DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au or on **1800 624 608**.

We also invite you to visit the DCO website at www.defence.gov.au/dco to find out more about Defence family support, and if you would like ongoing updates from DCO, 'like' our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DefenceCommunityOrganisation.

Preparing for deployment

Although deployment and time apart can be challenging for families, timely preparation can help to make the experience more manageable and positive for all concerned. In this section, you'll find important information, guidance and tips for making your preparations.

Be informed. Find out about the member's operation, and what effect the time apart may have on your family so you can prepare emotionally as well as practically.

Plan ahead. There are practical things you can do to make sure the family is well cared for and things run smoothly in the member's absence, including making a family support plan. The ADF member will also have to perform some vital administration before they go.

Involve the whole family. Getting the whole family involved in preparations, including children, will make sure everyone feels heard, informed and that they have an important part to play.

Prepare practically

ADF members, make sure your family is supported

For support to be delivered appropriately to your family during deployment and in times of emergency or bereavement, there are some essential things for you to do **before you go**.

» **Check your personal details in PMKeyS**

Make sure you have named your primary emergency contact person and next of kin in PMKeyS and that their details are accurate and up to date.

When you name a primary emergency contact you are telling Defence who you want to be contacted if you are injured, become sick, or die. Your next of kin is your closest living relative over the age of 18, usually a partner, child, parent or sibling. Your primary emergency contact and next of kin may be the same person.

» **Have your partner and dependants formally recognised**

If your partner and dependants are not formally recognised by Defence, they may not receive Defence entitlements and support, including housing, relocation, child care, education and employment assistance, or bereavement payments and compensation.

To have your partner formally recognised by Defence, complete form PE357 and provide it to your Commanding Officer. You can have your dependants recognised by completing form AD160.

Other Web Forms are available for changes to dependant or partner details, and other categories of recognition such as special needs and dependants (unaccompanied).

The forms are available from the Defence intranet (DEFWEB) or from the DCO website.

DEFWEB: <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/webforms>

DCO website: www.defence.gov.au/dco > Resources > Forms

» **Fill out form AC989**

Each time you are deployed, you will be asked to complete form number AC989 on Webforms and submit it to the National Welfare Coordination Centre. This enables the NWCC to access the details of your emergency contacts and to contact them in the case of emergencies during the deployment. The NWCC can be contacted on their website at www.defence.gov.au/nwcc or on **1800 801 026**.

» **Make a Will**

Defence strongly encourages you to have a current Will and power of attorney in place, and to send your Will to DCO for storage:

Wills Administrator
DCO Headquarters
PO BOX 7921
Canberra BC ACT 2610

If you don't make a Will, or update your existing Will, your estate may not be distributed according to your wishes. This means that should you die, your family may not be provided for appropriately.

Making a Will doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. You can seek free advice from a Defence Legal Officer, or pick up a Legal Will kit from a Post Office or newsagent. Get hold of a Defence Legal Officer by searching for 'defence legal' on the Defence intranet (DEFWEB).

» **Register your family for deployment support**

You can register your family for regular deployment support calls from DCO during your absence by calling the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

See the **Support for families during deployment** section on **page 15** for more information.

Plan ahead

Be informed

The member's unit will hold briefs for families before, during and often after a deployment. These will give you vital details about the

length and nature of the deployment, ways of communicating with the deployed member and important contacts within the unit.

Make sure you take careful note of all the contact details of the unit support staff and the phone number, postal address and email for the ADF member during the deployment.

You can also visit Defence's Global Operations website at www.defence.gov.au/op to find out more about the deployment, exercise or operation.

Make plans

It is very important to make plans for the care of your family during the member's absence, to ensure that family life runs smoothly and everyone has easy access to support and information when they need it.

Some questions to start you off in your planning:

- Are there changes you need to make to your current financial arrangements?
- Does your family know where all the important records and information are kept?
- Does everyone in your family know how to perform maintenance and repairs, or where to find the right assistance?
- Do you have a plan for emergencies?
- Does everyone know what their new daily responsibilities and duties will be in the ADF member's absence and how to perform them?

The Member and Family Care Plan

The Member and Family Care Plan is a useful tool to bring together vital information about personal arrangements, records and emergency details for your family in one easy reference.

The plan also guides you through important considerations including financial arrangements, home preparation and maintenance, legal considerations, medical needs, emergency plans and other practical matters. The questions help you assess your current level of family readiness and identify issues you haven't thought about yet.

The Member and Family Care Plan is entirely for your own use, but you may choose to leave a copy with another family member or trusted friend in case of an emergency.

You can find a hardcopy of the Member and Family Care Plan at the end of this booklet, or visit the DCO website to download a copy.

www.defence.gov.au/dco > Resources > Downloads

Other assistance to help you prepare

DCO produces videos which may assist families with children in their preparation. The videos are *Going Solo—Dealing with Absence in Defence Families* for families with younger children, and *Don't Forget it's Bin Night—Stepping up when Mum or Dad is away* for families with teenagers. Contact the Defence Family Helpline for copies.

The [ADF Financial Services Consumer Council](http://www.adfconsumer.gov.au) website, at www.adfconsumer.gov.au, has a budget calculator and a deployment checklist to help you with your financial planning.

Prepare emotionally

The emotional impact

Each stage of the deployment—pre-deployment, the time apart and the reunion—may be characterised by some very normal feelings and reactions. Experiencing a variety of strong emotions during this time is completely normal. Knowing what to expect can help you to manage these feelings more effectively, respond more positively and feel more in control.

In the lead up to deployment, you'll likely go through a rollercoaster of emotions. Excitement, worry and sadness are common feelings to experience. Family members might feel they just want the ADF member to 'go already' and get the goodbye over with. You may notice yourselves withdrawing a bit from the departing member to make the farewell easier.

Plan to look after yourself and your family

There are proactive things you can do to manage your feelings and reactions, and to support yourself and your family during the ADF member's absence.

You can plan to incorporate these things into your routine before the ADF member leaves. You might sign up for DCO's SMART programs to learn strategies to overcome negative emotions and make your responses more positive, set up a support network in your community or enrol in a yoga or relaxation class. See the **Time apart** section on **page 12** for more ideas about looking after yourself during deployment.

Know what support is available to you, and having all the contact information at hand makes it easier to access support when you need it. Reading our **Support for families during deployment** section on **page 15** will get you off to a good start.

Talk about it

Try to involve everyone close to the ADF member—partners, children, parents, relatives and close friends—in your preparations

for deployment. This will make sure everyone feels heard, informed and that they have an important part to play.

Be prepared for relationships to change and shift during the time apart, as the deployed member and the family at home have their own separate experiences, responsibilities and personal growth. Working together and communicating openly about your feelings and expectations at this early stage will help to keep your relationships strong and make it easier to adapt to changes.

During deployment, time apart and reunion

In this section, you will find information on what to expect from your time apart and reunion and how to look after yourself, find support and manage these deployment phases. You can also explore ways to stay informed about the operation or exercise, and communicate with the deployed member.

Defence provides a range of support to the families of deployed ADF members, including regular contact from our support staff and practical assistance during emergencies. Go to the **Support for families during deployment** section on **page 15** for more information.

Information about a deployed member's operation

The Global Operations website

Defence's Global Operations website at www.defence.gov.au/ops outlines the ADF's operations within Australia or overseas. There are factsheets, new stories and up-to-date information for each deployment currently in effect.

Unit briefs

The ADF member's unit will often hold briefs or events for families during the deployment which may give you updates as well as an opportunity to connect with other Defence families. Contact the unit directly for more information.

The National Welfare Coordination Centre

The National Welfare Coordination Centre provides a 24-7 information and referral service for families of deployed ADF members. The NWCC is staffed by Service personnel who can help with deployment queries such as mailing addresses and postal regulations, give you current information about operations, and pass urgent information to the deployed member. The NWCC website also has links to useful information for families of deployed members.

The National Welfare Coordination Centre

1800 801 026

nwcc.australia@defence.gov.au

www.defence.gov.au/nwcc

All deploying members are required to complete an Emergency Contact Notification Information form, which is lodged with NWCC to confirm the members' chosen emergency contact details. Be aware if you are listed as your ADF member's emergency contact,

you will need to let NWCC know if your contact details change or you go away on holiday.

Staying in touch with the deployed member

Communication between the deployed member and the family at home is essential to help you to:

- keep your relationship fresh and strong,
- share important moments and feelings,
- remain involved in each other's lives despite the physical distance between you,
- ease anxieties, loneliness and any sense of loss,
- reassure each other of your continuing love and support, and
- make reunion a much easier process.

With this in mind, try to make your communications frequent and positive. Discuss the communication options before the deployment and stick to your agreed plan wherever you can. Be clear, open and honest about your experiences and feelings. Try to limit negative emotions and responses as they can be difficult to resolve when you are not face-to-face.

Restrictions

Be aware that direct modes of communication such as telephone and Skype may not be available in particular locations or may only be sporadically available. Email and electronic communications may also be restricted.

The conditions of the deployment will stipulate what sort of communication you can use and when, and you should be able to find out these details from the unit or the National Welfare Coordination Centre on 1800 801 026.

Contact details

Make sure you have the member's PMKeyS number and their unit contact details noted correctly and in full. If you're unsure of the details, call the National Welfare Coordination Centre on 1800 801 026. The NWCC is also the place to call if you need to relay an urgent message to the deployed member.

Letters

ADF members often commend letters as the best form of communication from home, as they can be read and re-read any time and aren't dependent on online or telephone access.

You don't have to be restricted to standard letters—you can send cards, postcards, artwork, local news snippets or photos.

Write your letters as if talking directly to your loved one, but make sure to express yourself clearly so there's no room for misinterpretation or confusion. Express your appreciation for previous letters or other communications, mentioning one or two points of special interest and answering any questions that may have been raised.

It's a good idea to date or number each letter so that if more than one letter is received at once, the deployed member will know which one was written first.

For the ADF member sending letters to home, consider sending individual letters to each family member (especially if you have more than one child) and, without compromising operational security, include descriptions of your activities or photos of your living quarters to give your family an idea of your life away.

Care packages

Care packages can be like sending a little bit of home to the deployed member. Packages can contain gifts, non-perishable food items and toiletries. You might create special CDs or DVDs, but make sure that the member has access to the appropriate equipment to view them.

Before sending a care package to an ADF member, families should visit the Australia Post website at www.auspost.com.au to find out specific postage guidelines and security advice.

It is best to use a sturdy container and not to send perishable goods. Items like women's magazines and other types of publications can cause offence in some locations and, as with all mail, is subject to border security.

Keep in mind your package may be opened in front of others, so it is wise not to send private or embarrassing material.

Certain items should never be sent, including cigarettes, alcohol, perfumery products and pornography. For more details, visit the Australia Post website and read their International Post Guide.

Postal information

When sending anything by post, make sure the member's unit details and full address are clear and correct. Keep in mind there may be delays in delivery. Free postage applies for all mail up to two kilograms (cubed), with the exception of post to Malaysia.

To check addresses or any weight or content restrictions for the particular deployment, contact the member's unit or call the National Welfare Coordination Centre on 1800 801 026.

For more information about Defence mail service and postage costs, visit Australia Post's Defence mail website at auspost.com.au/personal/defence-mail.html or call 13 76 78.

Telephone calls

Telephone communication gives you direct contact with your loved one and is often available during deployment, though the length of calls may be limited and they can become expensive especially when made to mobile phones or to distant locations. You may find it useful to make a list of important things to tell each other before making the call.

Emails, video calls and social networking

Emails, internet video calls and social networking sites are another avenue for families to share experiences and connect with each other, but are entirely reliant on the member having access to the internet. Video calling options like Skype will also require a webcam.

If using social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, keep in mind not to share sensitive or indecent material as posted material becomes part of a public forum and leaves your control. **Do not post anything that could compromise operational security, and this includes the ADF member's geographical location.**

If the member is travelling overseas, it's a good idea to set up a Skype account while in Australia as the set-up can become more difficult overseas.

Check with the unit to see whether these communications are allowed for the operation, and to find out any special addresses you will need to know.

Time apart

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

During the time apart, you will usually go through a period of adjustment—your lifestyle and routine may be disrupted, and you may feel a sense of loss, loneliness or anxiety. As you begin to settle into your new routine, find new support and gain in independence and self-confidence, these feelings normally begin to subside.

Tips for the partners, parents or families at home

- Be aware of the support services that are available to you during deployment. See the **Support for families during deployment** section on **page 15** for more information.
- Establish a new routine as early as possible, as this can help you to handle your day-to-day commitments and gives you a sense of normality.

- Talk through your emotions or concerns with a close friend or family member who you trust to be supportive. It is important to be able to express what you're feeling and to realise you are not alone. We can help you to connect with your community to find other Defence families who can share their experiences, strategies and support with you. See the **Support for families during deployment** section on **page 15** for more information.
- Look after yourself. Make sure to exercise, eat well and get enough sleep, as being healthy helps you to feel good emotionally as well as physically. Avoid too many vices like alcohol, caffeine and nicotine as they may give you immediate comfort but take a long-term toll and do not actively improve your stress levels. Treat yourself now and again with a favourite activity or a 'night off'.
- Look after each other. All the ADF member's loved ones at home will be dealing with the member's absence, and you can support and help each other through the deployment, whether it's by spending time together doing activities you enjoy or talking through your feelings.
- Learn relaxation and stress management techniques to help you to unwind and respond more positively to life events and challenges. You might choose to do this through DCO's FamilySMART program (**see page 16**) or through a meditation or yoga course.
- Keep busy. Time passes more quickly when you are occupied. You might choose to learn something new, take a course, or volunteer or contribute to your community somehow. Think of the time apart as a chance to grow and to get involved in things that make you happy. DCO's lifestyle magazine, *defence family matters*, is a good place to find ideas, as it regularly profiles community activities of benefit to Defence families.
- Seek help if you are experiencing negative emotions—such as anger, abandonment or anxiety—for prolonged periods, or are facing other difficulties in the member's absence. You can call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** for support, advice or referral, night or day.

Reunion

In the lead-up to reunion you may experience excitement and anticipation as well as worries and doubts, as you wonder about your place with each other, changes that might have taken place and the other person's feelings toward you.

When you first reunite, it's common to feel a little awkwardness, especially after long absences, and it may take time to re-establish closeness and easy face-to-face communication.

Both the homecoming member and the family members at home may have changed and undergone personal growth. Be prepared for this, as the other person may not perfectly match your memory or expectation of them and there may be some realignment of your relationship.

You will likely have to make some changes to your routines and roles, as what worked before the time apart may not be the best fit for you any more.

Talk openly and honestly through any changes, and make sure to give each other the time and space to adjust to your new life together.

If you are having difficulties readjusting, the human services professionals at the Defence Family Helpline can direct you to resources or services that may help. You can contact the Defence Family Helpline day or night on **1800 624 608**.

In some cases, the ADF member may be dealing with some serious stress responses from their deployment. Support and guidance is available from the Defence Family Helpline or the ADF All-hours Support Line on **1800 628 036**.

Support for families during deployment

Defence provides a range of support to the families of deployed ADF members. We provide regular deployment support calls, 24-hour advice and referrals, social work, and assistance with emergency and crisis, as well as special assistance for children dealing with parental absence. The member's unit is also there to help and will run programs of support for you.

You can access any of these services by calling the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or visit the DCO website at www.defence.gov.au/dco for further details.

24-7 Helpline

Families can contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** at any time about deployment matters. The Helpline operates 24-7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists, who can provide you with assessment, advice or referrals.

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

Contact from DCO personnel

If you would like to receive regular contact from us during your family member's deployment, register 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 support services or community resources you may need.

Professional support

If needed, we can supply short-term confidential casework and counseling services from Defence Social Workers to help you through any difficulties. You can make an appointment with your local DCO social worker by calling the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Support for children

Resources are available for parents with information and tips for supporting children through deployments, from very young children to teenagers. See the **Supporting children through parental absence** section on **page 18** for more information.

Unit-delivered deployment support

The member's unit will often run events for Defence families, including information sessions, farewells, social get-togethers and welcome home events. Unit welfare officers and ADF chaplains are available to provide support and guidance to members and families at any stage of deployment. Talk to unit staff directly for more information.

Emergency support

If an emergency or crisis occurs when an ADF member is away from home, the family may access practical assistance. DCO also offers support in times of injury, illness or bereavement, including help with obtaining compassionate consideration for ADF members.

Families can call the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 anytime, and can visit www.defence.gov.au/dco for more information on available emergency assistance.

Community events and support

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 back 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.

To find out what's on offer in your local area, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or visit the Community connection section of the DCO website and click on your state or territory.

www.defence.gov.au/dco > Community Connection

Stress management and building resilience

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 identify and 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 aged children.

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

Support for children during parental absence

Children and deployment

Communicating truthfully and openly with children about deployments is important to help them understand and cope with a parent being away. If possible, prepare the child for what is going to happen in advance, explaining clearly where, why and for how long the parent is going away. This helps dispel uncertainties and fears, or any belief that the separation is their fault.

Encourage children to express their feelings, perhaps by sharing some of your own. It can help for each parent to spend time individually with each child prior to and after deployment to encourage communication and to let them know that they are loved. Special time together helps to cement bonds and provides positive memories.

Involve older children in the planning and preparation for deployment, especially in figuring out new roles and responsibilities in the member's absence. Keep the usual rules, expectations, and discipline in place in the parent's absence, and establish a new routine as early as possible.

Encourage children to keep a record of special events in their lives through art, photos, stories or scrapbooks, which they can send to their deployed parent or show them when they get home. Read the **Staying in touch with the deployed member** section on **page 10** for more tips for strong family communication during deployment.

Resources for parents and children

Resources are available for parents with information and advice about guiding children through deployments, from very young children to teenagers. You can order any of these free resources from the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Videos

There are two informative videos available about deployments, which we encourage you to watch with your children. The videos can be a useful tool for starting a discussion about what deployment will mean for you.

Going Solo—Dealing with Absence in Defence Families outlines strategies and ideas for helping younger children and families cope with a parent's absence during deployment. Built on experiences shared by other Defence families, the DVD provides useful tips to handle all stages of deployment, from preparing for the member's absence to reuniting as a family upon the member's return.

Don't Forget it's Bin Night—Stepping up when Mum or Dad is away examines the impact of deployment on families with teenagers, and presents mechanisms for older children to both cope with the parent's absence and see the possibilities for personal development it affords.

Toys

DCO produces teddy bears in the uniforms of the three Services. The bears are given to the young children of ADF members who have deployed. Bears can be ordered from the Defence Family Helpline, or are available in DCO Area Offices.

Books

We have a range of children's books, including the *Sapper Pat*, *Pepper Penguin* and *Tyler Turtle* series, which are designed to help young children understand more about the military lifestyle and develop coping strategies for parental absence.

Children can follow the adventures of teddy bear Sapper Pat in his overseas Army postings, and cuddly penguin Able Seaman Pepper Penguin as he travels the world on Navy ships. The books give young children an easy-to-understand picture of life in the military, and what their parent might be experiencing while they are away from the family on deployments or postings. Pat and Pepper also show children ways to stay in touch, and positive ways to manage time apart and reunions.

The Tyler Turtle picture book and workbooks are designed for younger children, and follow the colourful Tyler as he learns simple strategies to help him cope with his mother's absence and return.

Books can be ordered from the Defence Family Helpline, or are available in DCO Area Offices.

Support for children

24-hour support

Children are often unable to articulate their feelings and thoughts as adults do. If they are having trouble dealing with stress and changes during deployment, it will often present in their behaviour or in health complaints.

If you or your children are having difficulties, you can access help, advice or referral by calling the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Defence School Transition Aides and Mentors

Defence School Transition Aides and Mentors are placed in schools across Australia, and provide support to Defence students in times of parental absence. Visit the DCO website and click on

the **Aides and Mentors** tab for more information or to see which schools have Aides and Mentors in place.

www.defence.gov.au/dco > Children > Education support

KidSMART and TeenSMART

Children can use deployment as an opportunity to step up, assume new responsibilities, gain self confidence and grow as people. To help them do this, local DCO offices run fun and interactive resilience-building programs designed for Defence kids called KidSMART and TeenSMART. Children learn how to manage change and stresses in their lives, and gain practical tips for coping with parental absence.

KidSMART guides primary aged children through handling emotions with the help of mascots Tyler Turtle and Sam Super. Older children attend a one-day TeenSMART session, where they can meet like-minded Defence teens and share their stories about being part of a military family.

Contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** for more information or to sign up for a program.

Connecting with community

We also have community connection services to help identify local events and groups for Defence families. These can give Defence children the chance to meet kids in the same situation as themselves, have a lot of fun and feel part of and proud of the Defence community.

Contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** to access our community directory or to obtain personalised advice. You can also visit the Community connection section of the DCO website and click on your state or territory to find out what's on offer.

www.defence.gov.au/dco > Community connection

More information

For more information about supporting children through deployment, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

Useful contacts

Defence Community Organisation

The Defence Family Helpline

1800 624 608

DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au

The Defence Family Helpline is your first point of call for support, information and connection with your community, including your local DCO team. The Helpline is available 24-7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

Australian Defence families who are living overseas can contact the Helpline free of charge by calling their country-specific Freecall number from a landline.

United Kingdom—08000512187

North America/Hawaii/Canada—18558093999

Malaysia—1800816443

Papua New Guinea—000861004

The International Freecall service is offered initially as a six-month pilot program and may not be available after this time.

Website

www.defence.gov.au/dco

Defence-delivered support

The All Hours Support Line

A 24-hour confidential service for ADF members and their families to access mental health advice and referral.

1800 628 036

+61 2 9425 3878 outside Australia

Mental health factsheets: www.defence.gov.au/health > [Mental Self-Help tips](#)

Defence Families of Australia (DFA)

A Ministerially appointed advocacy group for Defence families.

1800 100 509

www.dfa.org.au

Global Operations

Outlines the current operations in action overseas or within Australia.

www.defence.gov.au/op

National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC)

A 24-7 information and referral service for the families of deployed ADF members.

1800 801 026

www.defence.gov.au/nwcc

Defence Housing Australia (DHA)

Comprehensive housing services for Defence families.

139 342

www.dha.gov.au

Community-delivered support

Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG)

A network of peer support for Defence families with special needs.

1800 037 674

www.dsnsq.org.au

beyondblue

A not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related disorders in Australia.

beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636

Kids Help Line

Free, confidential and anonymous 24-hour telephone and online counseling service for young people five to 25 years old.

1800 551 800

www.kidshelp.com.au

Lifeline

A national 24-hour support line providing crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health services.

131 114

www.lifeline.org.au

Mensline Australia

A national 24-hour service for men, providing support, information or referral by telephone or online.

1300 789 978

www.mensline.org.au

Australia Post

Information about postal costs and restrictions during deployments or exercise.

13 76 78

auspost.com.au/personal/defence-mail.html

Member and Family Care Plan

The deployment

Deployment/Exercise/Course: _____

Location: _____

Estimated date departure: _____

Estimated date return: _____

Are there any restrictions on communication with the member while they are away (e.g. weight limits on postal items, access to internet, etc.)?

_____ **Yes / No**

If yes, describe the restrictions

Unit contact details

Supervisor(s):

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Name: _____

Contact number _____

After hours / Duty Officer:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Unit Welfare Officer:

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Does the partner or dependants have ID to gain access to the military base (i.e. a National Family Access Card or a Dependant Base Card)?

_____ **Yes / No**

If no, contact the Unit Orderly room or Unit Welfare Officer to organise a pass.

Personal details

ADF Member

Name: _____

Rank: _____

PMKeyS number: _____

Date of birth: _____

Mobile number: _____

Email address: _____

Postal address while away: _____

Unit/Squadron/Ship: _____

Category/Mustering/Trade _____

Partner

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address during member's absence: _____

Telephone numbers – home/work/mobile _____

Dependants

Name	Relationship to member	Date of birth	Living with member?
			Yes / No
			Yes / No
			Yes / No
			Yes / No
			Yes / No

Schools

Have you informed you child’s teachers and carers of the member’s absence so that they can be supportive of your child’s needs?

_____ **Yes / No**

If relocating, have you advised the school of your next location and moving date?

_____ **Yes / No**

Have you informed any in-school Defence Aides or Mentors of the member’s deployment?

_____ **Yes / No**

Personal details administration

Have the partner and/or dependants been formally recognised by Defence?

_____ **Yes / No**

If no, the ADF member should complete Webform PE357 for a partner or AD160 for dependants, and submit the forms to their Commanding Officer.

Are all the member’s, partner’s and dependants’ details correct and up-to-date in PMKeyS? _____ **Yes / No**

Has the member named their Next of Kin and Primary Emergency Contact in PMKeyS? _____ **Yes / No**

Has the member lodged form AC989 with the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) to confirm emergency details? _____ **Yes / No**

Medical issues

Special needs

Does any member of the family have current special medical needs (including mental health issues or pregnancy) or recognised conditions?		Yes / No
Name	Need/condition	

Are these special needs formally recognised by Defence?

_____ **Yes / No**

If no, you can begin the recognition process by contacting the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

Allergies

Does any member of the family suffer from known allergies or adverse drug reactions?	Yes / No
Name	Allergy/adverse reaction

Medical details

Doctor

Doctor's name: _____

Phone number: _____

Practice: _____

By appointment? _____ **Yes / No**

Dentist

Dentist's name: _____

Phone number: _____

Practice: _____

Specialists

Type of specialist:	Name
	Phone number
Type of specialist:	Name
	Phone number
Type of specialist:	Name
	Phone number

Private health insurance

Does the family have private health cover?	Yes / No
Fund name	
Fund contact number	
Policy number	

Level of cover	
Includes hospital cover?	Yes / No
Includes ambulance cover?	Yes / No

Immunisation

Are children fully immunised relevant to their age?	Yes / No
Are adults up to date with immunisations (e.g. tetanus)?	Yes / No
Where are the immunisation records kept?	Yes / No

Other issues

Are there any religious, cultural or other considerations that would have a bearing on medical treatment administered to the family?	Yes / No
If yes, what?	
If yes, have you notified the family doctor and emergency contacts of these issues?	Yes / No

Insurance

Are all insurance policies up-to-date?	Yes / No
Home and contents	Yes / No
If yes, company and policy number:	
Vehicle(s)	Yes / No
If yes, company and policy number:	
Life insurance	Yes / No
If yes, company and policy number:	
Private health insurance	Yes / No
If yes, company and policy number:	

Other:	Yes / No
If yes, company and policy number:	

Finance

Is the partner or person in charge of finances fully familiar with the financial arrangements of the family? _____ **Yes / No**

Bank account and credit card details

Name of account: _____

Account number: _____

Where held: _____

Expiry date: _____

Can the partner access and utilise all accounts? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, what will the arrangements be? _____

Payments

Are there sufficient funds in place to cover all periodic payments (e.g. phone, power, water, insurance and rent or mortgage payments)? _____ **Yes / No**

Are the regular bills automatically paid from your pay or bank account?
 _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how are payments made? _____

Is the partner or person in charge of finances aware of the due dates and payment methods for all regular bills or expenses? _____ **Yes / No**

Budgeting / financial planning

Do you have a personal tax adviser or financial counsellor? _____ **Yes / No**

Name: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Do you have an up-to-date budget? _____ **Yes / No**

Is the family sufficiently funded to meet all bills and expenses incurred?
 _____ **Yes / No**

Do you have emergency funds available (or someone who would be able to provide you with emergency financial assistance) to deal with unforeseen expenses or an emergency? _____ **Yes / No**

If yes, provide details _____

Legal

Wills

ADF member

Does the member have a current Will? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, you can seek free advice from a Defence Legal Officer, or pick up a Legal Will kit from a Post Office or newsagent.

Is your Will lodged with Defence? _____ **Yes / No**

We strongly encourage you to forward your Will to DCO for storage.

If no, where is the Will located? _____

Partner

Does the partner have a current Will? _____ **Yes / No**

Where is the Will located? _____

Who is the Executor? _____

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Power of Attorney

Have you appointed a Power of Attorney? _____ **Yes / No**

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Where are the Power of Attorney documents kept? _____

Electoral voting

Have you registered for voting in your current electorate? _____ **Yes / No**

State Electorate: _____

Council Electorate: _____

Motor vehicle

This includes cars, boats and motorcycles.

Roadside service

Do you have membership with a Roadside Service Provider such as NRMA or RACQ for assistance in the event of a breakdown? _____ **Yes / No**

Company: _____

Membership number: _____

Phone number: _____

Registration

Vehicle 1: _____

Registration number: _____

Due date: _____

Will the registration remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Vehicle 2: _____

Registration number: _____

Due date: _____

Will the registration remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Vehicle 3: _____

Registration number: _____

Due date: _____

Will the registration remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Vehicle 4: _____

Registration number: _____

Due date: _____

Will the registration remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Insurance

Vehicle 1: _____

Insurance company: _____

Policy number: _____

Will the insurance remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Are all people who may drive the vehicle listed on the insurance? __ **Yes / No**

Vehicle 2: _____

Insurance company: _____

Policy number: _____

Will the insurance remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Are all people who may drive the vehicle listed on the insurance? __ **Yes / No**

Vehicle 3: _____

Insurance company: _____

Policy number: _____

Will the insurance remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Are all people who may drive the vehicle listed on the insurance? __ **Yes / No**

Vehicle 4: _____

Insurance company: _____

Policy number: _____

Will the insurance remain current for the period of absence? _____ **Yes / No**

If no, how will the renewal be paid? _____

Are all people who may drive the vehicle listed on the insurance? __ **Yes / No**

Licences

Member licence number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

State: _____

Other Licence (boat etc): _____

Expiry Date: _____

State: _____

Does the partner and/or dependants have a current driver's licence? **Yes / No**

Are all licences valid for the current state or territory where you live? **Yes / No**

Maintenance and service

Are family members fully aware of the general maintenance requirements of the vehicles and how to perform basic checks (e.g. checking oil, water, tyre pressures, or changing a tyre)? _____ **Yes / No**

Do all vehicles contain sufficient emergency equipment (e.g. spare tyres, jacks, tool kits, First Aid kits)? _____ **Yes / No**

Who provides maintenance and mechanical repairs to the vehicles? _____

Vehicle 1: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Is this vehicle due for a scheduled service during the member's absence? _____ **Yes / No**

Next service due (date or kilometres) _____

Vehicle 2: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Is this vehicle due for a scheduled service during the member's absence? _____ **Yes / No**

Next service due (date or kilometres) _____

Vehicle 3: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Is this vehicle due for a scheduled service during the member's absence? _____ **Yes / No**

Next service due (date or kilometres) _____

Vehicle 4: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Is this vehicle due for a scheduled service during the member's absence? _____

_____ **Yes / No**
Next service due (date or kilometres) _____

Home and security

Rental property real estate agent: _____

Agent name: _____

Contact number: _____

Arrangements for rent payment: _____

Where are lease documents kept? _____

Own home

Arrangements for mortgage payments: _____

Where are mortgage papers or house deeds kept? _____

Home and contents insurance

Do you have home and / or contents insurance? _____ **Yes / No**

Company: _____

Membership/policy number: _____

Due date: _____

Home arrangements

Are the fire detectors or smoke alarms installed and working? _____ **Yes / No**

Has any necessary mail redirection been organised? _____ **Yes / No**

Does everyone in the family know where the spare keys for the house and vehicles are kept? _____ **Yes / No**

Are all electrical systems and major appliances in good working order?
_____ **Yes / No**

Are fuses and circuit breakers labelled? Are family members aware of the location and function of these? _____ **Yes / No**

Security

Is there sufficient security for your home while absent? _____ **Yes / No**

Do you have adequate and functioning locks or bolts on all doors and windows? _____ **Yes / No**

Are there any additional security measures to add to the home (e.g. security doors or screens, front door peep hole, sensor lights, etc)? _____ **Yes / No**

Are all alarm systems and sensor lights in good working order? _____ **Yes / No**

Maintenance and repairs

Can your partner/dependant maintain the household in your absence?
 _____ **Yes / No**

Are all tools in good working order (e.g. lawn mower) and are family members familiar with the location and use of them? _____ **Yes / No**

Does the family know who to contact for home maintenance or repair issues (e.g. plumbers, electricians, tradespeople, and Defence Housing Australia)?
 _____ **Yes / No**

Type of service: _____

Name of company: _____

Phone number: _____

Type of service: _____

Name of company: _____

Phone number: _____

Type of service: _____

Name of company: _____

Phone number: _____

Does any maintenance need to be scheduled during the member's absence (e.g. lawn mowing services)? _____ **Yes / No**

Important documents

Are your important personal documents secure? _____ **Yes / No**

Do all family members know where the important documents are kept?
 _____ **Yes / No**

Document	Yes / No	Location
Birth Certificates		
Adoption papers		
Marriage Certificate		
Court Orders		
Passports		
Wills		
Power of Attorney		
School reports / records		

Immunisation records		
Medical records		
Dental records		
Investment documents		
Prescriptions		
House deeds		
Mortgage papers		
Vehicle registrations		
Insurance policies		
Tax returns		
Spare keys		
Citizenship papers		
Appliance warranties		

Emergencies

Emergency contacts

If there was a medical or other emergency with the partner, who should be called?

Name: _____

Phone numbers – home / work / mobile: _____

If there was a medical or other emergency with one of the children and the parent(s) were not contactable, who should be called?

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Phone numbers – home / work / mobile: _____

Secondary or other person to call in an emergency situation:

Name: _____

Phone numbers – home / work / mobile: _____

Emergency plans

Does your family have local support in the event of an emergency? **Yes / No**

Does your family have a prepared emergency kit (including a First Aid Kit, and severe weather provisions)? _____ **Yes / No**

Do all members of the family know where the emergency kit is located?
_____ **Yes / No**

Does your family have support to assist with the preparation of the home in the event of severe weather? _____ **Yes / No**

If a member of your immediate family became ill or incapacitated whilst the serving member is absent, what emergency plan do you have in place to ensure your family is cared for and has access to supports if required?

Outline your emergency plan: _____

Has this emergency plan been discussed and agreed with the person or people who are going to provide the support and care? _____ **Yes / No**

Emergency support

Are you aware of the emergency support that Defence Community Organisation can provide? _____ **Yes / No**

Have you registered your family for deployment support contact from DCO? _____ **Yes / No**