

Permanent Change of Station (PCS)/ Temporary Duty (TDY) Handbook

USS SOMERSET (LPD 25)

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1. Introduction

Pre-Commissioning (PRECOM) training pipeline is long and will take many of us to various training commands and locations. As a result, PRECOM Sailors will have an extensive travel claim to file as they report to the ship. This booklet explains the basics of travel and entitlements and your responsibilities when traveling on official orders. Your understanding of this process will speed the liquidation of your travel claim by helping you avoid many of the most common travel pitfalls. This booklet will cover the travel topics listed in the table of contents. For each topic, minimum guidelines are addressed. It is unlikely that any two travel claims will be alike. If you have any questions contact the Ship's Office immediately. A few minutes spent now in understanding travel entitlements can save you time, and possibly money, later.

2. Orders

A word about your original orders - **PROTECT THEM!** They are the only readily available records of endorsements and advances made to you. If they are lost, the office settling your claim will have to contact all the disbursing offices and commands you may have been serviced by in order to verify endorsements and advances. This is a time-consuming task and will cause major delays in processing and paying your claim.

Personnel assigned to the PCU will receive a new set of PCS orders 4 to 6 months prior to Ship Custody Transfer (SCT) transferring them from the PCU to USS SOMERSET, Homeport (when assigned), ACC 100 (For Duty) effective on the date of SCT. These orders are the member's authorization to move dependents and household goods to the ship's homeport as promulgated by the official homeport message from CNO. In the case of single members and GOB's who have a vehicle at the PCU, they are entitled to drive their POV to the new homeport and are also entitled to a return airline ticket back to the PCU.

Personnel assigned to the PCD will receive a new set of PCS orders 6 to 8 months prior to SCT transferring them from the PCD to the PCU in ACC 352 (Temporary Duty In Connection With Conversion and Fitting Out) for less than 180 days and ultimately to PCU SOMERSET, Homeport: (when assigned), ACC 100 (For Duty) effective on the date of SCT.

3. Accounting Classification Codes

For accounting purposes, every personnel assignment is given an Accounting Classification Code (ACC). On your orders, you will notice this field for the detaching command, the ultimate command, and each intermediate. Personnel assigned to New Construction duty are normally assigned under either Accounting Classification Codes (ACC) 106 or 352. The ACC that is written in your orders assigning you to a Pre-Commissioning Unit/Detachment will determine entitlements for pay, travel, per diem, shipment of household goods and family housing assignment policy. Listed below, you will see the various regulations and entitlements determined by the ACC written in your PCS orders.

ACC 100 - For Duty (FORDU):

Use when ship delivers, all personnel will be assigned ACC 100 the day the crew moves aboard (Ship's Custody Transfer). This ACC also provides for shipment of household goods and movement of dependents to the homeport for those who were in ACC 106 at the building site.

ACC: 106 - For Duty In Connection With Conversion and Fitting Out (FORDUCFO):

- Will be assigned to either the construction site, commonly referred to as the Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) or to Pre-Commissioning Training Pacific or Atlantic located at Naval Station San Diego, CA or Training Support Center (TSC) Norfolk, VA. These sites are commonly referred to as the Pre-Commissioning Detachments (PCD's).
- Entitled to move dependents and shipment of household goods at government expense to the PCU or PCD location. ACC 106's are also

eligible to get on the Family Housing List for the military base in the vicinity of this location.

- Should married crewmembers elect not to move their families to the construction site (Avondale, LA), government quarters will be provided at no charge to the member on a space available basis.
- Personnel assigned to ACC 106 **are not eligible for per diem** at the PCU or PCD.
- Family Separation Allowance (FSA) - No entitlement to FSA because your dependents were entitled to be moved at government expense.
- Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) - BAH entitlement is based on the zip code of your permanent duty station.

Personnel assigned 106 to the Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) **ONLY**. Sea Duty Commencement Date (SDCD) is for rotational purposes only, and will start on the date of reporting to the PCU.

ACC 352 - Temporary Duty In Connection With Conversion and Fitting Out (TEMUCFO):

New construction training under six months. Personnel assigned ACC 352 to the PCU/PCD are generally assigned for less than 6 months prior to Ship Custody Transfer (SCT) and may be eligible for per diem. Advance per diem is normally paid in no more than 30 day increments. You will be paid 100% of your estimated lodging cost plus 80% of the Meal & Incidental Expense (M&IE) rate for that time period. The amount payable for per diem is determined by the availability of Government Quarters/Messing. Per Diem is not payable when you are on leave, TAD or underway. Entitlement to per diem stops on SCT.

- Effective 17 September 2002, the Compensation and Policy Coordination Branch at Naval Personnel Command (N130), has approved payment of per diem to Direct Accession Personnel (DAC's) assigned ACC 352 at the construction site, Avondale, LA ONLY!!.
- Direct Accession Personnel (DAC's) assigned to ACC 352 at the PCD's **are not** eligible for per diem. DAC's are personnel who have not had an initial permanent duty station and are still proceeding through the training pipeline, i.e. Recruit Training Command to 'A' School to Pre-commissioning Detachment to Pre-commissioning Unit Avondale, LA and finally to their Ultimate Duty Station being USS ANCHORAGE Homeport: (when assigned), ACC 100 (For Duty). Reviewing the PCS Accounting Data on individual's orders can easily identify DAC's. When you review the accounting data on the individual's orders and see the following **17_1453.2250**, they are DAC's. (2250 in the accounting data identifies DAC's as well.)
- ACC 352 personnel **are not** authorized to move dependents to the construction site (the PCU) and **are not** eligible to be placed on the Family Housing List at the military base in the vicinity of the construction site. ACC 352's are authorized to move dependents/household goods to the designated homeport of the vessel **after** it has been commissioned as promulgated by the official homeport message from the CNO.

- Geographic Bachelor Travel (GOB): Personnel assigned in a 352 status **are not** authorized Geographic Bachelor Travel (GOB) **until** 31 days after Ship Custody Transfer (SCT) and then every 60 days thereafter. This entitlement ends on the date the ship departs the construction site. (Sail away)
- Privately Owned Vehicle (POV): If either of the following two scenarios fits your situation, then we recommend that you DO NOT drive your POV to the PCU:
 - Your Last Permanent Duty Station (LPDS) is in the same geographical area as the Official Homeport of the Ship as announced by CNO **OR,**
 - You have been TDY in the same geographical area as the Official Homeport of the Ship as announced by CNO.

If you fall into either of these situations **you have NO ENTITLEMENT** to get your POV back to the homeport of the ship i.e. travel pay, travel time or a one-way return plane ticket back to the PCU. You will bear the expense of getting your vehicle back to the ship's homeport entirely out of pocket including the use of leave to get your POV back to the ship's homeport - if approved by the chain of command.

- Family Separation Allowance (FSA) - ACC 352 married members may be authorized FSA.
- Basic Allowance for Housing With Dependents (BAH-D) - BAH entitlement is based on the zip code of your last permanent duty station.
- Basic Allowance for Housing Without Dependents - BAH-S has always been a very contentious issue for sailors assigned to new construction. Rules/regulations concerning a sailor's entitlement to BAH-S during the pre-commissioning process are explained on the next several pages.

4. Endorsements

One of the biggest problem areas when processing travel claims is the endorsement. An endorsement can be either a stamp or a sticker on your orders, a written memo or a letter. Endorsements typically include:

- Reporting Date and Time
- Detaching Date and Time
- Advances/Partial Settlements
- Availability/Non-Availability of Government Quarters and Messes

Less common, but still required if applicable, is a local mileage authorization letter or orders endorsement for personnel who must commute if quarters are not available, or must use their personal vehicle on official business. **This endorsement is not available in the immediate Norfolk area.**

The importance of obtaining endorsements cannot be overstated. For example, failure to have a non-availability of quarters' endorsement for staying in a hotel will result in the member being paid only as if they stayed in government quarters. As is the case with lost original orders, most of these endorsements can be obtained through messages, phone calls, and faxes, but again, this is time consuming and will delay processing and payment of your claim.

5. Lodging and Reservations

When on Temporary Duty en route (TDY) or Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) many members will be traveling by privately owned vehicles (POV). Personnel reporting in a TDY status will not normally be able to make lodging reservations in advance. Most major training sites have rooms set aside in the BEQ/BOQ for personnel reporting in a TDY status.

Personnel reporting TAD and traveling by POV will need to make all lodging reservations for the TAD site through SATO at 1-800-576-9327. Otherwise, when traveling commercially, the PSD/SATO Travel Office that provides your tickets should make your reservations for you. If government quarters are available, a reservation will be booked as appropriate and a confirmation number provided. If adequate government quarters are not available then a certificate of non-availability (CNA) number will be recorded on the itinerary, and the SATO will arrange for commercial lodging.

NOTE: All reservations for all official travel must be made through the Commercial Travel Office (CTO), i.e. SATO, per the JFTR.

6. Receipts

Receipts also frequently cause confusion among travelers. The receipt requirements for travel claims are:

- ALL lodging and lodging related receipts (Ensure you have receipts covering your entire period day by day).
- ALL transportation receipts for long distance travel only; i.e. airline, bus, and rail tickets.
- ALL receipts for miscellaneous expenses of \$75 or more (cabs, local bus, traveler's checks, baggage handling, bridge tolls, etc.). If in doubt about whether or not you need a receipt, get one! Keep in mind that ORIGINAL receipts are required. "Stationary store" receipts, copies, and credit card charge receipts are not acceptable.

In the event you lose your receipts, you should first make an attempt to get another copy of the lost receipt (faxed copies are acceptable). If this is impossible, a lost receipt statement must be completed. The statement requires your full name, address, and phone number, as well as dates and rates of the service provided. Remember, lost receipt statements will not be accepted if it is possible for you to still obtain a receipt. As with lost original orders and endorsements, obtaining this information and verifying it takes time. This time is money, your money; so don't lose your original receipts.

7. Per Diem Basics

The purpose of per diem is to offset the cost of lodging, meals, and incidental expenses incurred while performing travel duty or temporary duty away from the permanent duty station. Per Diem is NOT payable in the following instances:

- While TAD in the area of the permanent duty station;
- While on TAD performed at a location to which the member commutes from permanent quarters;
- While on a period of leave or proceed time authorized on orders;
- While on "NO-COST" TAD orders;
- While TAD aboard a ship when both quarters and mess are available, and;
- While on a ship during acceptance trials when both quarters and mess are available.

Per Diem rates vary by locality and by the availability of Government quarters and mess. Proper endorsements are CRITICAL in order to be properly paid. Failure to obtain endorsements will cause problems in obtaining advances and can result in large over/under payments.

Per Diem rates consist of two portions: lodging, and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). As stated previously, lodging rates vary widely by locality. However, M&IE rates are always between \$39.00 and \$64.00 per day, depending on location. If government quarters/mess is available, your M&IE rate will drop to \$11.50 per day. Only the host activity can approve locality per diem or proportional meal rate (PMR).

Note that the lodging rates are the maximum allowed. If your cost is less, you are entitled to your cost only, as supported by original receipts. The M&IE rates are paid as stated, regardless of your actual costs. Receipts are NOT required for meals. Several reminders regarding lodging:

- Lodging costs are not reimbursable when staying with friends or relatives, whether or not any payment is made;
- If sharing a room with another service member or Government employee, you will be reimbursed one half the double occupancy rate. If the person sharing the room is not a service member or Government employee, you will be reimbursed at the single room rate. You are required to provide the single room rate as a receipt or statement from the lodging facility;
- Members on TDY or TAD who rent a furnished or unfurnished apartment, house, mobile home, travel trailer, etc., are authorized the following items when computing lodging costs:
 - Rent of apartment, house, mobile home, travel trailer, etc.;
 - Rental charge for parking space for a mobile home, travel vehicle or camping vehicle;
 - Charges for rent of appropriate and necessary furniture, such as stoves, refrigerators, chairs, tables, beds, sofas, televisions, and vacuum cleaners;
 - Cost of connection, use, and disconnection of utilities including electricity, natural gas, water, fuel oil, and sewer charges;
 - Dumping fees;
 - Shower fees;
 - Cost of maid fees and cleaning charges;

- Monthly telephone use fees (not including installation and long distance charges), and;
- If ordinarily included in the price of a hotel or motel room in the area concerned, the costs of special user fees such as cable TV charges.

NOTE: THE ABOVE ITEMS WILL BE PRORATED TO A DAILY RATE. THIS TOTAL DAILY RATE IS LIMITED TO THE MAXIMUM LODGING RATE FOR THE LOCALITY.

Detailed Per Diem information can be found at <https://www.secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/>

8. Mileage Allowances and Flat Rate Per Diem

a. Mileage Allowance in Lieu of Transportation (MALT) Plus Flat Rate Per Diem is authorized for PCS travel between permanent duty stations via temporary duty stations by POV. This is not to be confused with local area travel, nor with regular per diem, as previously discussed.

b. Members are granted MALT at \$0.15 per mile for the entire authorized travel distance. Mileage between duty stations can be found in the Defense Table of Official Distance (DTOD).

c. Flat rate per diem is \$117 per day and is payable for each day of authorized travel time. POV travel time is computed by dividing the mileage between the two duty stations by 350, and rounding up any remainder of 51 miles or more. For example, the official distance from Norfolk, VA to San Diego, CA is 3150 miles. The MALT Plus computation is:

Travel time:	3150/350 =	9 days	
Flat Per Diem:	9 days @ \$99 =		\$891.00
MALT:	3150 x \$0.24 =		<u>\$756.00</u>
TOTAL DUE:			\$1647.00

Travel by commercial means (air, bus, rail) is reimbursed at a rate not to exceed the government's scheduled ticket cost, plus the M&IE (discussed earlier) portion of per diem prorated on a 75% daily basis.

Only one day of travel time is allowed for travel by commercial air in the continental U.S. (CONUS). Travel by a combination of modes is known as "mixed modes" and in an entirely different computation. Due to its complexity it won't be discussed here. PSD will assist you if you must file this type of travel claim.

9. Family Member Travel

Generally, family members are authorized reimbursement for travel from your last permanent duty station directly to your next permanent duty station. Travel to intermediate duty stations is not funded for your family members. Remember, all family member travel entitlements are based on current Page 2 entries in your service record, so be certain it is updated. Reimbursement is as follows:

1. By POV:

a. When traveling with family members: Each family member in the vehicle is authorized an additional \$0.02 per mile, not to exceed a total of \$0.05 per mile for the official distance. Flat rate per diem is authorized for each day of travel time, at a rate of \$74.25 per day for each family member age 12 and over, and at \$49.50 per day for each family member under age 12. If traveling in two vehicles, the driver of the second vehicle is entitled to \$0.15 per mile and \$0.02 per mile for each additional family member, not to exceed a total of \$0.20 per mile for the vehicle. Flat Rate per diem entitlements remains the same. Entitlement for any additional vehicles over two are under special circumstance only. Check with the personnel office if you have any questions about more than two vehicles.

b. When NOT traveling with the service member: If, for acceptable reasons, the family members must travel to the new duty station in advance of the member, after the member, or to another authorized location, they have a slightly different set of entitlements. Acceptable reasons include (but are not limited to): completion of school terms, sale of property, settlement of personal affairs, or shipment of household goods. Rates payable are identical to those in the previous paragraph, with the exception of the driver. The driver will receive the full Flat Rate per diem of \$99 per day and \$0.15 per mile.

2. By commercial transportation: Normally a CTO/NAVPTO/SATO ticket is provided; otherwise, reimbursement is authorized for the ticket not to exceed the Government's cost. Family members 12 years old and over are entitled to 75% of regular per diem and those under 12 to 50%. Travel time is computed in the same manner as the member's.

3. By mixed modes: Like the member's mixed mode travel, it is rather complex. If you have questions, ask your Personnel Office.

10. Dislocation Allowance (DLA)

The purpose of Dislocation Allowance (DLA) is to partially reimburse a member for the expenses incurred in relocating a household due to PCS orders. The amount payable can be found at <https://www.secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/> for the applicable pay grade. DLA is authorized for all married members. For single members, DLA is payable only if government quarters are not assigned at the new permanent duty station. Temporary assignment to government quarters for less than 60 days while searching for off-base quarters does not void the entitlement. This 60-day period can be extended by an additional 60 days by the Commanding Officer.

11. Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLE)

Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) is designed to help reimburse a member for temporary lodging obtained prior to detaching from the last permanent

duty station or reporting to new permanent duty station. TLE is based on the cost of lodging you procure, the local per diem rate, the number of family members staying in the room and the availability of cooking facilities. The entitlement will not exceed \$180.00 per day. A maximum of 10 days is authorized for transfers within CONUS. As with the case with all lodging, **ORIGINAL** receipts are required.

12. Advances and Settlements

An advance is an estimated payment of travel entitlements or per diem made before those entitlements are earned. The key word to remember is that it is an ESTIMATE of the amount the member will be entitled to. The amount actually earned could be more or less than the advance, so you must carefully track your advances. After arriving at the new permanent duty station, you must file a travel claim. This claim will cover all travel from the last permanent duty station to the new permanent duty station. Your actual entitlement will be computed based on your claim and supporting documents, and any advances paid will be deducted. Any remaining amount will be paid to you. Conversely, any negative amount is an overpayment and will be collected.

In effect, an advance is a "loan". This loan does not become a "grant" or entitlement until the travel is complete and the travel claim is filed. Failure to file a travel claim within 5 working days of reporting PCS can result in collection of advances paid.

As a rule, PCS allowances (MALT Plus, flat rate per diem, family member's travel, and DLA) are advanced 100%. Regular per diem, however, is typically advanced at 80% of the estimated entitlement, in a maximum of 30-day increments (for extended TDY).

Overpayments and shortages stem from many causes. Most frequent is failure to obtain necessary receipts, endorsements, or improper completion of the travel claim. Another significant but less common cause is drawing an advance for family member's travel and DLA, then not moving the family members.

Recently, and a little bit closer to home, several members of previous PRECOM units were substantially overpaid (\$100,000) due to being incorrectly advanced for TEMDU at Wallops Island. Please be aware that Wallops Island is a "mission-essential" messing activity and that COMRATS will stop and no per diem for meals will be paid. The only per diem payable is lodging costs and \$2.00 for incidental expenses. Also, any "No Cost" orders (usually house-hunting leave), underway time (on another ship), or leave periods reported on your travel claim will result in a loss of all per diem entitlements for those days.

On board PRECOM unit, the member will be interviewed in all cases of any potential overpayment to ensure all possible entitlements have been considered. All personnel found to be overpaid will be notified in writing by the Disbursing Officer. The letter will list options to resolve the overpayment, most likely a one-time pay checkage.

13. Geographic Bachelor (GOB) or Return to Homeport (RTH) Travel:

Personnel who elect not to move their dependents to the construction site - PCU only (ACC 100 or 106), will be eligible for Geographic Bachelor (GOB) or Return to Homeport (RTH) Travel beginning on the 31st day after reporting onboard the PCU with subsequent visits every 60 days thereafter. This entitlement is from the construction site - PCU to the address shown for the member's dependents on his/her Record of Emergency Data (Page 2). Either the member or the family may travel. The member can save accrued GOB entitlements so that 2 or more family members may travel together. (If 2 family members traveled together, the entitlement would occur on the 91st day after the member reports and every 120 days thereafter.) This entitlement is for round trip transportation only. Should the member elect to drive, reimbursement will be \$.485 per mile but will not exceed the cost of a government procured plane ticket. No per diem, lodging, tolls or miscellaneous expenses are authorized. In most circumstances leave or special liberty will be used in connection with GOB/RTH travel. Entitlement to GOB/RTH travel stops on the date the ship departs the construction site.

Personnel assigned ACC 106 are not eligible for per diem at the PCU or PCD.

14. Family Separation Housing (FSH)

Family Separation Housing (FSH) was formerly known as Family Separation Allowance (FSA). Members ordered TEMDU or PERMDU at a location to which family member travel is not authorized, maybe entitled to FSH. The separation must be over 30 days, and the current rate is \$250.00 per month.

15. Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)

The rules governing Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) are actually fairly straightforward for new construction units:

- a. **While TEMDU:** BAH is based on your last duty station, regardless of the location of the TEMDU station or length of TEMDU.
- b. **When PERMDU:** BAH is based on the new permanent duty station rate or the rate of your dependent's zip code.

Family Housing Assignment Policy at the Ultimate Homeport of the Ship:

a. **Personnel assigned to the PCU**

The control date will be the date the Housing Office receives your application, after the official naval message from the CNO is released designating the ships' homeport.

b. **Personnel assigned to the PCD**

The control date will be the date the Housing Office receives your application, or the date of the official naval message from the CNO is released designating the ships' homeport, whichever one is later.

16. Career Sea Pay

Your Sea Duty Service Counter and Career Sea Pay will commence at Ship Delivery (Ship Custody Transfer). Don't wait until the last minute to review your Leave and Earning Statement (LES) Sea Duty Service Counter for accuracy.

17. Disbursing at the PCD

At the detachment, PSD Naval Station San Diego will maintain your pay record (unless you are assigned to Pre-Commissioning Training at Training Support Center (TSC) Norfolk, VA in which case your pay issues will be addressed by PSD Naval Station Norfolk). They will hold your records in disbursing and will be your main point of contact for all disbursing issues while in San Diego. If you are in a per diem status while in San Diego, you will fill out a per diem request form on a monthly basis. You will also need to get a lodging intent form from your lodging location. This form states you intend to stay at the lodging location for the next month (or shorter period of time) and states the room rates for that time. Once you have your lodging intent and your per diem request you will turn them into the PRECOM admin office.

When you are preparing to check out of the detachment you must notify PSD approximately two weeks in advance so that you can request travel advances and so they can prepare your records for checkout. Upon final checkout ensure that you obtain a final receipt from your place of lodging, and that you have picked up your service record, original orders and pay record from PSD.

18. Disbursing at the PCU

Upon reporting to the PCU, your service record will be maintained by the Personnel Office. If you are assigned to the PCU as PERMDU, the Personnel Office will help you with the final liquidation of your travel claim. Personnel who are assigned to the PCU as TEMDU will have their per diem account maintained by the PRECOM UNIT's disbursing clerks and per diem will be paid on a 30-day basis.

19. Ship's Delivery and Travel Entitlements

Ship's Delivery is the cut-off date for all per diem entitlements. For TEMDU personnel assigned to the PCD or PCU, the TDY period ends upon delivery, and all travels are considered completed. At this point, the Personnel Office will begin the long process of liquidating all remaining travel claims. As delivery approaches we will be providing more information on how this will affect your pay. One point to remember is that TEMDU personnel are not entitled to travel from the construction site to the new homeport. This means that if you are TEMDU to the PCU you are not entitled to move your personal vehicle or baggage to homeport until delivery and you are reported onboard in ACC 100. Keep this in mind as delivery and Sail Away approach.

