

STATEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS JAPAN  
**Overseas Benefits & Entitlements Fact Sheet**  
Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler  
Okinawa, Japan

**WELCOME TO OKINAWA JAPAN!**

Welcome! Or as they say in Japan, “YOKOSO.” Soon you will be experiencing a wonderful opportunity to live and work in a foreign country. If this happens to be your first Navy tour or first overseas tour, rest assured that Okinawa, Japan is truly a delightful and exciting country in which to be stationed. In addition, Okinawa will provide many memorable pages even for the seasoned traveler’s scrapbook. The Japanese are kind, polite, and friendly. They are genuinely interested in learning about you and the American lifestyle. In return, they take great pride in acquainting you with their fascinating traditions and customs. See <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/location/regional/okinawa/index.html> for additional information from the Japanese National Tourist Organization.

Okinawa, the principal island of the Ryukyu Islands, is often referred to as the "Keystone of the Pacific" because of its strategic location relative to major Far East cities. Okinawa is located about 900 miles from Tokyo, Manila, Seoul and Hong Kong, and about 1,200 miles west of Guam. The island is 67 miles long and varies from 2-17 miles wide. Temperatures range from the high-40s on winter nights to the 90s through much of the year. Humidity is relatively high throughout the year. The climate compares to United States (U.S.) southeastern coastal areas, making it perfect for those who enjoy swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, golfing, boating and taking part in other outdoor recreational activities. With our normally warm, sunny climate, you will have an opportunity to trek the miles of sandy beaches, enjoy local attractions and visit neighboring islands. Since Okinawa is in "Typhoon Alley," high winds and rain periodically affect the island between July and November. In May, the island usually experiences its rainy season, which lasts about 30 days. Okinawa has a unique, rich culture and history of its own. For those interested and willing to take the time to learn, Okinawans are eager to share their culture. You will also have the opportunity to experience many local festivals and observances.

The following information is provided by the Marine Corps Installations Pacific (MCIPAC) Civilian Human Resources Office (CHRO) as you make your decision and prepare for your Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move to Okinawa, Japan. This information is important since many benefits and entitlements at an overseas location are different than duty locations in the U.S. In preparation for your PCS, your new organization will assign you a sponsor to assist with the transition to Okinawa. Another great source of information is the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Okinawa website at: <https://www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard/>. The site contains valuable information on topics such as the installation overview, must-know items, housing, commissary, exchange, transportation, education, employment, medical and dental, survival tips, local community, pets, youth, teens, and much more.

*This Statement of Living and Working Conditions is designed to provide general information for prospective appropriated fund civilian employees of U.S. Marine Corps installations in Okinawa, Japan. Many subjects covered in this Statement are subject to change at any time. Readers are therefore encouraged to visit the hyperlinks referenced throughout this Statement and to verify information of specific concern prior to accepting a position.*

### **IMPORTANT TAX CHANGE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2018**

Per Public Law 115-97 (The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017) – employee-paid PCS expenses are no longer tax-deductible and employer-paid or –reimbursed PCS expenses are no longer excluded from taxable income. This section will be updated as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides additional information regarding its interpretation of this legislation. Items following marked with an asterisk should be noted as currently taxable per this law. Other items not so marked *may* be deemed taxable upon instruction from the IRS. Check the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) website at <https://www.dfas.mil/> for the latest updates. The DFAS Civilian PCS page may also provide up-to-date information. See <https://www.dfas.mil/civilianemployees/civrelo.html>

### **PRE-TRANSIT INFORMATION**

Once you have accepted the position, the servicing Civilian Human Resources Office (CHRO) in Okinawa, Japan will advise you of the staff members that will do the processing for your tour in Okinawa. The processing staff will make the necessary arrangements for your PCS travel. You and your dependents will be furnished information and instructions regarding passports and visas, physical examinations, dependents' entry approval, issuance of travel orders, baggage allowance, shipment of household goods and automobile, and other pertinent details.

You will be required to travel by air from the port of embarkation, unless there are medically contra-indicated reasons why you should not do so. Dependents also usually travel by air.

You should ensure that your processing office keeps the CHRO in Okinawa informed of your flight schedule and itinerary, and you should also keep your sponsor informed.

Be sure to make plenty of copies of your orders prior to departure. You will need them when making arrangements for travel, shipment of your household goods, and again upon arrival in Okinawa for confirming lodging reservations, etc.

**Advance in Pay** – A federal employee being assigned to a post in a foreign area may request an advance of up to three months of net base pay. Salary advances may be made three weeks prior to arrival and up to 60 days after arrival at the new duty station. If an employee is new to Federal Government, the request maybe made at the time of appointment. Repayment is by payroll deductions over a maximum of 26 pay periods beginning with the first pay period after receipt. Since the first paycheck may be delayed on assignment overseas, we strongly recommend that employees request advance pay upon arrival. Additionally, employees securing housing off-base usually need to put down a large deposit in order to begin a lease. Those desiring advance pay should contact the CHRO Employee and Labor Relations Section at [mcipac\\_chro\\_usemplrel@usmc.mil](mailto:mcipac_chro_usemplrel@usmc.mil).

**Annual Leave Accumulation** – Employees recruited from the U.S. and under conditions that provide for their return transportation may carry over a maximum of 45 days annual leave (rather than the usual 30). Employees will still earn annual leave at the same rate they would in the U.S.

**Base Privileges** – Employees and their families are authorized the use of all essential base facilities including the base exchange (BX), commissary, DoD Dependent Schools, the education center, recreation, child care, medical, and club facilities.

**Clothing** – Be sure to bring enough clothing and shoes for the whole family to last until your unaccompanied baggage and/or household goods arrive. Also, be sure to allow for change of climate and include rainwear.

The BX carries an assortment of men's, women's and children's clothing and shoes. However, your size may not always be available in the styles or quality you prefer.

**Customs** – You and your dependents will be required to go through a customs inspection upon arrival in Japan. It is important to note that some medications that are commonly prescribed in the U.S. are currently prohibited in Japan. Please visit the website below for additional information regarding procedures and prohibited articles. <http://www.customs.go.jp/english/passenger/index.htm>

**Dependent Entry Approval** – One of the most important aspects of living in Japan is physical and emotional suitability. Individuals/large families requiring specialized services or consideration of any kind should carefully contemplate the decision to transfer to Japan, since American-style housing and services in an overseas environment may be unavailable or limited. Accordingly, if a family member has a chronic illness or serious emotional problems, it would be advisable that he/she does not accompany you to Japan, since English-speaking medical facilities are limited.

**Direct Deposit** – All pay is transmitted by direct deposit. Please have your bank account information (routing number and account number) ready when in-processing.

**Driving** – In Japan, people drive on the left side of the street and many roads are quite narrow by U.S. standards. While this can be challenging for some, with proper studying and guidance, the transition can be seamless. New employees and eligible family members are able to take the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Driver's License exam at the end of the required MCCS Newcomer's Orientation. A study guide for the SOFA Driver's License exam can be found at: <https://www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard/#tab3> by clicking on the link for Japanese Traffic Regulations for SOFA Licensed Drivers.

**Education** – Employees recruited from the U.S. may enroll their children in Department of Defense Dependent schools (DoDDS) on a space-required, tuition-free basis. These schools are run by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Selectees with school-age children with special needs who will start school during the sponsor's tour need to contact the Enrollment Coordinator, DoDEA-Pacific South District, at Commercial Phone Number: 011-81-6117-34-1204, or the Center for Instructional Leadership at 011-81-98-953-5882. Selectees must obtain required school documents prior to departure for the overseas location. The district website is available at: <http://www.dodea.edu/Pacific/south/index.cfm>

**Education Travel** – Educational travel is available to employees with transportation agreements. This permits payment of a child's travel expenses between school (secondary or post-secondary) and the sponsor's permanent duty station once each way annually up to the dependent's 23rd birthday. A dependent child must be a full-time student to be eligible for this benefit. See: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=179&menu\\_id=78](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=179&menu_id=78)

**Electrical Appliances** – Electrical service in the community is 100V, 50 cycle AC. Most U.S. electrical appliances will work, although at somewhat reduced efficiency, using local power. American clothes

dryers may work here, but the cost of installation is prohibitive (exceeding the cost of the dryer). Step-up transformers are available in the BX for those appliances that are particularly sensitive to voltage changes.

**Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT)** – If an employee with a transportation agreement experiences a medical or family emergency which meets the conditions outlined in the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), the employee may be eligible to take funded emergency travel (for one family member only) to the continental U.S. (CONUS), non-foreign CONUS, or other locations.

**Environmental Morale Leave Travel (EML)** – EML is travel granted to the employee with a transportation agreement as well as his/her dependents. Employees must be on annual leave or compensatory time off. An employee and his/her dependents may take two EML trips during a 12 month period. EML entitlements are not cumulative and if not used during the 12 month period, they are forfeited. Dependents unaccompanied by their sponsor must be at least 18 years old to travel alone. An employee is eligible to use EML six months from the beginning of their tour and six months prior to the end of tour. EML orders allow employees to use military aircrafts on a space available basis to travel to South Korea, mainland Japan, CONUS, Guam, or other locations on rare occasions. See the Kadena Air Base Passenger Terminal page for additional information:  
<http://www.kadena.af.mil/Home/AMC/>.

**Employment Opportunities for Dependents** – The number of civil service and non-appropriated fund positions are limited in an overseas area. A large percentage of these positions are of a clerical nature. Although dependents have preference over non-dependents, when filling GS-1 through GS-15 positions, highly qualified dependent spouses of active duty military members will receive preference over dependents of civilian employees.

Dependents who do not have other eligibility for Federal employment are given excepted appointments under the Department of Defense Dependent Hire Program with a time limit not exceeding the sponsor's tour by two months. These appointments do not necessarily confer competitive (career/career-conditional) status. However, by authority in Executive Order 12362 of 12 May 1982, as amended by Executive Order 12721, upon returning to the U.S., a dependent employed through this authority may be eligible for noncompetitive term, temporary, or career-conditional appointment if he/she:

- is a United States citizen;
- has accumulated twelve months of creditable overseas service in an appropriated fund position(s) under a local hire authority;
- has received a satisfactory or better performance rating for his/her overseas service; and,
- is currently a family member of a Federal civilian employee, non-appropriated fund employee or of a member of a uniformed service who was officially assigned to the overseas area and has been serving in this capacity while in the overseas area.

Civil Service opportunities for dependents can be found on USAJobs (<https://www.usajobs.gov/>). Non-appropriated fund employment opportunities may be found on MCCA Careers (<http://www.usmc-mccs.org/careers/>), and NAFJobs (<http://www.nafjobs.org/>).

**Firearms** – Members assigned to Naval and Marine Corps Installations in Japan are not allowed to import any type of handgun, rifle, shotgun, pellet/air/BB guns, spear guns, explosives, or prohibited knives as defined on page 16 of “Okinawa PCS Must Know Information” at:  
[https://www.mccsokinawa.com/uploadedFiles/MainSite/Content/Marine\\_and\\_Family/Marine\\_and\\_Family](https://www.mccsokinawa.com/uploadedFiles/MainSite/Content/Marine_and_Family/Marine_and_Family).

**Foreign Transfer Allowance (Subsistence Expense) (FTA)\*** - This allowance is authorized to defray the subsistence expenses of employees and their family members for up to ten days before final departure from the United States to Okinawa. **Employee must leave from their duty station in the U.S. in order to receive FTA.** It is normally used for the period between the time the household goods are packed and travel begins, however, occupancy of temporary quarters in the US must begin within 30 days after the employee’s residence has been vacated. Payment is based on actual lodging amount up to the lodging portion of the per diem and a flat amount equal to the meal and incidental expense (M&IE) portion of the per diem. Receipts are required for lodging expenses, meals (if you do not want to accept the flat rate per diem), and coin laundry. Travel voucher submission must include receipts and record of expenses.

**Funds** – You should plan to have between \$5,000 and \$8,000 with you, depending upon the size of your family, to cover living expenses pending receipt of your first paycheck and reimbursement for travel claim expenses.

**Household Goods (HHG) Shipment** – Okinawa is not a restricted location for civilians and civilians are authorized up to 18,000lbs to include Unaccompanied Baggage and Non-Temporary Storage (NTS). However, some houses and apartments are small by American standards and storage space is limited. The US Government has no permanent storage facilities on the island, so if you ship too much and find you have inadequate room, storage will be at your own expense on the local economy. We recommend you correspond with your sponsor and obtain all possible information needed to make a decision regarding shipment and/or storage of your household goods. **MCIPAC unaccompanied civilian personnel in Okinawa are not authorized to receive temporary loaner furniture so plan accordingly when shipping HHG. Additionally, MCIPAC unaccompanied civilians are not authorized loaner appliances.**

**Housing** – Due to a housing shortage primarily driven by ongoing military housing renovations, civilian employees not part of an active-duty household will live off-base. For unaccompanied personnel it is suggested that you consider bringing household appliances (i.e. washer/dryer) as a substantial (but decreasing) number of housing units on the market do not come equipped with certain major appliances. For more information please visit [http://www.kadena.af.mil/Kadena\\_Housing\\_Office/](http://www.kadena.af.mil/Kadena_Housing_Office/)

**Living Quarters Allowance (LQA)** – Employees recruited from the U.S. may be eligible for LQA when government-owned or leased quarters are not available. LQA reimburses the cost of housing, including rent and utilities, up to maximum limit for each locations established by the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR). It is intended to cover most housing expenses but not necessarily all expenses and should be sufficient if you factor in the estimated utility cost with the rent. The LQA rate is adjusted periodically to correspond with the yen/dollar exchange rate. LQA bi-weekly payments are factored by taking the monthly reimbursable expenses (estimated for first 12 months), multiplying by 12 (for 12 months in a year), then divided by 26 (pay periods in a year). So it should be noted that since LQA is paid bi-weekly, some covered expenses will still be paid out of pocket most months.

LQA may be authorized in accordance with the DSSR. Additional information on LQA can be found at [https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=241&menu\\_id=75](https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=241&menu_id=75).

**Locality Pay** – Employees working overseas are not eligible for locality pay. Please see Post Allowance

**MCCS Newcomer's Orientation** – Your command sponsor will register you and your family for MCCS Newcomer's Orientation, which is held every Wednesday. This is a required orientation where you will receive additional details from the different program managers. At the end of the day, employees will be able to take the SOFA Driver's License test.

**Medical and Dental Facilities** – As an overseas civilian employee in Okinawa, you are eligible for medical and dental care on a space-available basis. There are also off-base medical, dental, and vision facilities. More information about the Naval Hospital Okinawa is available at:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhoki/Pages/default.aspx>

**Medication** – Be aware that Japanese pharmacies and medical facilities will not fulfill U.S. prescriptions. Additionally, medications that are on the American market may not be available on the Japanese market. If you bring any medications, ensure they are kept within their original issuing container with the label intact so as to not have any problems when going through customs.

Please see <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html> for additional information.

**Miscellaneous Expense\*** - Miscellaneous expense is part of the Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA). It is an allowance to offset some of the costs involved in your PCS move. Unaccompanied civilians received a flat rate of \$650 and accompanied employees receive a flat rate of \$1300. No receipts are required for the flat rate reimbursement. A higher amount may be reimbursed with receipts. The higher amount based on itemized receipts maybe: up to one week of basic compensation for employee with no dependents or two weeks basic compensation for employees with dependents. Upon arrival at the overseas post of assignment, employees should claim this expense on their first travel voucher or SF-1190. For more information, please contact the MCIPAC CHRO, Employee and Labor Relations Section at [mcipac\\_chro\\_emplrel@usmc.mil](mailto:mcipac_chro_emplrel@usmc.mil).

**Non-Temporary Storage (NTS)** – NTS is the long-term storage of household goods (HHG) in lieu of transportation, usually booked with your Transportation Office along with your shipments. This is only available to employees with a transportation agreement located OCONUS. If you have HHG in NTS, please provide a completed DD1299 form to CHRO, Employee and Labor Relations Section. For more information, please contact [mcipac\\_chro\\_emplrel@usmc.mil](mailto:mcipac_chro_emplrel@usmc.mil).

**Passport** – It is imperative that you start applying for passports for yourself and authorized family members as soon as you accept the job offer so as not to delay your move to Japan. (Selectees are usually expected to report for duty within 45 days of acceptance of job offer.) Separate passports are required for each child, and keep in mind that you and your family members may obtain a no-fee passport. Family members who are not U.S. citizens may not be issued a no-fee official passport. They must possess a current passport from their country of origin and a copy of their sponsor's official orders. If you and/or your family members already possess tourist passports, you/they may use them for entry into Japan, but must have copies of orders and military/government identification in order to have those passports stamped into country under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Please link to [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1148.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1148.html) for information on the requirements for entry of personnel. Information on application for US passports is at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html). Please note you WILL NOT be reimbursed for the cost of obtaining a tourist passport.

**Pay** – Pay periods are biweekly with payday every other week. Wages and other income derived from U.S. Government employment are not subject to Japanese taxes. However, you are subject to payroll deduction for U.S. federal income tax and you are required to file a federal tax return. Quarters and post allowances are not considered part of the basic wages; consequently, federal tax is not imposed on these allowances. The filing and payment of state income taxes are the employee's responsibility. Check with your home state to determine what your responsibilities are with regard to state income tax. Direct Deposit to a financial institution is mandatory.

Locality pay is not authorized overseas. If you are currently receiving locality pay, this will be discontinued on the date you enter the rolls of the overseas activity. Locality pay will not be used in setting pay in an overseas area. Employees considering retirement upon completion of their overseas tour should carefully weigh the economic benefits of overseas employment versus the likely reduction in annuity compared to remaining in the United States.

**Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Orders** – The MCIPAC CHRO will provide you with travel orders. The PCS orders will contain a reporting date. Civilian employees must begin travel on their reporting date (entrance on duty date) in order for overseas benefits and pay to be correctly applied. If your entrance on duty date is a Sunday, you are not required to begin travel on the weekend. Please ensure both your CHRO HR Specialist and command-assigned sponsor receive a copy of your travel itinerary. If you are arriving on a commercial flight, tell your sponsor where the last leg of your trip is originating from as your sponsor will be coordinating your transportation from the airport to your temporary lodging. Also, it's a good idea to work out a back-up plan on what to do in case your sponsor does not meet you.

**PCS Travel and Transportation** – Employees transferring overseas are required to sign a transportation agreement (24 months for Okinawa). Once signed, PCS travel to the overseas area is at Government expense for both the employee and family members (unless family members are not eligible for inclusion on the PCS orders) and travel from the overseas area to the original duty station is authorized upon completion of the 24 month tour.

**Personal Property-Household Goods (HHG)** – Express shipment of unaccompanied baggage to Japan takes approximately thirty days from the West Coast and forty days from the East Coast. Major household good shipments have been averaging sixty days from the West Coast and eighty days from the East Coast.

When you arrive at your duty station, you can make arrangement for delivery through contacts noted in your move records in Move.mil. Your sponsor can help you contact the Personal Property Office if additional assistance is required. If you cannot accept your shipment because housing is not yet available, temporary storage can be arranged for a limited period of time. If your goods have not arrived, you will need to provide a telephone number or address in Move.mil where you can be reached when the shipment arrives.

When your goods are delivered, it is very important to check-off each carton and piece of furniture listed on the inventory. You should know in advance where you want the larger pieces of furniture placed since the mover is responsible for one-time placement only.

If any of your goods are lost or damaged, note it on the inventory form and notify the Personal Property Office immediately. A government inspector may either stop by during delivery or may be requested, and a written report will be prepared to verify the loss or damage.

You may submit a claim for all lost or damaged property. To do this, you must obtain a repair estimate for damaged items. The Personal Property Office will advise and assist you in preparing the required forms.

It should be noted that in order to collect for lost or damaged items, those items must appear on the carrier's inventory. Without this proof of shipment and original condition, no claim can be awarded.

**Pets** – A substantial number of changes have occurred recently (as of 1 June 2018) regarding the transportation of pets overseas by airlines providing GSA-contract flights. If you intend to bring pets with you to Okinawa, it is imperative that you review the policies of the airline that has the GSA contract to provide service between your current duty station (or home of record) and Okinawa, especially regarding certain breeds which cannot safely be transported during the summer. Costs for transporting pets may be reimbursable under Miscellaneous Expense, if itemized, up to limits described in that section above.

Also important to note is that the Japanese government has imposed restrictions for the importation of animals into Japan, including blood tests, pre-notification, and veterinarian screening and health certificates. If quarantine is required, the Kadena Air Base 18<sup>th</sup> Services Squadron operates a kennel, but during peak vacation and PCS periods, it may be booked. Please check view the following website for important information on importing animals to Japan and restricted dog breeds:

<https://www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeboard/>

<http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/animal/dog/index.html>

<http://www.housing.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120525-022.pdf>

**Post Allowance** – Post Allowance is paid to employees assigned to a foreign post where the cost of living is significantly higher than in Washington DC. It is a balancing factor designed to permit employees to spend the same portion of their basic compensation for current living expenses without incurring a reduction in their standard of living. It is a tax-free allowance paid at a flat rate based on base pay, size of family and post of assignment. It is subject to adjustment based on the dollar to yen exchange rate or as costs fluctuate relative to those in Washington DC. Post allowance is authorized when applicable and may be terminated at any time in accordance with DSSR. Additional information can be found <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als>.

**Post Office Box** – Once you have PCS orders, your sponsor will obtain a post office box for you prior to your reporting so you can arrange to have mail forwarded. The address you are given for your post office box will be a U.S. address, through the United States Postal Service (USPS).

**Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Shipment** – POV shipment is not authorized to Okinawa. Further, POV storage is not authorized for civilians assigned to Okinawa. However, there is a plethora of cars locally available for reasonable prices.

**Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT)** – An authorized employee (and his/her dependents) are granted RAT transportation to and from foreign duty location to the employee's actual residence at the time of assignment. This is available to employees who have been granted 24 months extension and have 12 months remaining on their extended tour. Extensions are management initiated with concurrence of the employee.

**Return Rights** – DoD civilian employees recruited from the U.S. in a DoD position are granted statutory return rights, up to 5 years, to the position held prior to going overseas. Return rights may not be exercised until the employee satisfactorily completes the overseas tour of duty. Eligible employees

without return rights, or those with return rights to a lower grade, are provided return placement assistance through the DoD Priority Placement Program.

**Rotation Agreement** – Assignments to a position in the overseas area is for a specific tour of duty unless the tour is extended, employee agrees to exercise return rights upon completion. Employees without return rights, or with rights to lower-graded positions who desire to attempt placement at current overseas grade, agree to register in the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) for return placement. Your HR Specialist can provide further information.

**SOFA, Legal Jurisdiction, and Prohibited Activities** – Under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the United States and Japan, U.S. Forces sponsored personnel, (including U.S. Civil Service employees and their dependents), are under the jurisdiction of the Japanese civil/criminal court system.

Article XVI of the SOFA provides that, “It is the duty of members of the United States Armed Forces, the civilian component, and their dependents, to respect the laws of Japan and to abstain from any activity inconsistent with the spirit of this agreement, and, in particular, from any political activity in Japan.”

It is the policy of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Japan that there be no participation by U.S. Naval Forces personnel or dependents, military or civilian, either individually or in groups, in any unauthorized demonstrations, including those involving civil rights.

Pertinent Japanese laws and ordinances do not generally require nondiscriminatory practices by Japanese businesses. Therefore, proprietors are free to choose their own clientele. Individuals who enter an establishment and refuse to leave upon request of the proprietor subject themselves to prosecution under the Japanese criminal statutes. Persons who have knowledge of discriminatory practices existing off-base should bring them to the attention of the Commanding Officer or sponsor’s Commanding Officer.

All persons should be aware that strict laws exist concerning the use, possession, and or sale of stimulants, depressants and other narcotics. Japanese authorities strenuously enforce such laws, and penalties can be very severe. A civilian employee of the Department of Navy can, at minimum, expect expulsion from the country and, at worst, fines and imprisonment in Japanese prison. Administrative discipline, to include separation from employment, could be pursued.

**Sponsor** – A sponsor is designated for each newly selected employee by your gaining organization. The sponsor provides you with current information on living and working conditions, answers questions, meets you upon arrival, and otherwise assists you in making the transition from your current location to your duty station overseas. If, after your selection and notification, you have not heard from your sponsor, you should inquire through your processing Human Resources Office or contact your sponsor directly. Your processing CHRO staff should have your sponsor’s name, email address, and telephone number.

**Temporary Accommodations after Arrival\*** - When you arrive at your duty station, you will either be billeted in the WestPac Lodge ([https://www.mccsokinawa.com/westpac\\_lodge/](https://www.mccsokinawa.com/westpac_lodge/)), other base lodging, or in a nearby commercial hotel. Your sponsor will assist you in making reservations for lodging and provide you with additional information upon request.

There are some quaint western-style hotels and Ryokan (traditional Japanese inns <http://www.ryokan.or.jp/english/index.html>) available which are approved for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) in addition to the WestPac Lodge and other approved government facilities. In most of the large, modern hotels, rooms may be either western- or Japanese-style. Some hotels allow shoes to be worn inside; however, many of the small hotels require that shoes be

removed and slippers used in the corridors (if this is the case, slippers will be provided, but usually not in larger sizes).

**Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA)\*** - Granted to employees for the **reasonable** cost of temporary lodging, meals, and laundry/dry cleaning expenses incurred after arrival in the overseas area. TQSA is intended to assist in covering the average cost of adequate, but not elaborate or unnecessarily expensive accommodations in a hotel or other transient quarters at the post of assignment, plus **reasonable** meal and laundry expenses. Employees are required to stay at on-base temporary lodging, unless a statement of non-availability is obtained.

**Tour of Duty** – The initial tour of duty in Okinawa Japan is 24 months. There may be a different tour of duty if you are moving from another overseas area.

Prior to completion of an initial tour of duty in Okinawa, the command **may** offer you an invitation to extend for up to two additional years, but usually not to exceed five years total. Any extension beyond the initial tour shall be at the invitation of management and requires management certification of satisfactory performance, currency of knowledge/skills, and successful adaptation to the overseas environment. An extension will not be affected without the employee's concurrence.

Employees who complete an initial tour of duty and who are invited to extend their tours may be eligible for renewal agreement travel (RAT) at government expense to their home of record in the U.S. and return. A renewal tour of duty normally begins upon return to Japan. Be sure to check with your servicing HR Specialist prior to making RAT arrangements.

**Working With Host Country Employees** – You will be working with host nation employees on a day-to-day basis. You may even supervise host nation employees, who comprise the bulk of our civilian workforce. They are employed in professional, technical, clerical and trade and crafts positions. Our host nation workforce has long enjoyed the well-deserved reputation of being competent, loyal, courteous, and totally dedicated to duty. Their work efforts over the many years have contributed significantly to the successful accomplishment of the Marine Corps' mission in the Pacific. On a personal level, they have strengthened the bonds of friendship between their country and ours by introducing us to their customs and culture and by allowing us to share a part of their lives. You will find the experience of working together rewarding and memorable.

## **FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)**

AAFES Base Exchanges (BX) that provide a variety of services, including auto service, retail sales, barber and beauty shops, laundry and dry cleaning service, photo processing, video rental, bookstore, gas stations and fast food outlets. The merchandise/furniture selection is adequate and meets the ordinary needs of most customers.

### **AAFES Express Stores**

Express Stores (aka Shopettes) carry a line of convenience foods, wine, and spirits to satisfy community needs from cocktails to cooking at very reasonable prices.

### **Armed Forces Network (AFN)**

The Armed Forces Network provides closed-circuit television programming for base-housing residents, and round-the-clock radio broadcasting services. A programming guide is available from links on AFN

Pacific's Okinawa page (<http://www.afnpacific.net/Local-Stations/Okinawa/>). Note: Excellent quality cable TV and broadband connection is available in Okinawa in most off-base residential areas at rates comparable to those in the U.S.; numerous English language broadcasts on channels such as History, Discovery, Animal Planet, Disney, BBC, CNBC, CNN and various movie/sports channels are available. Off-base, cable TV providers in Okinawa provide monthly schedules. Please check with your sponsor for TV service available in other areas.

### **Banking**

Community Bank (<http://www.dodcommunitybank.com>), Navy Federal Credit Union (<http://www.navyfederal.org/>), and Pentagon Federal Credit Union (<https://www.penfed.org/>), are three financial institutions available in the overseas area. However, Navy Federal Credit Union is not available at all locations and Pentagon Federal Credit Union only has a branch on Kadena Air Force Base on Okinawa. These financial institutions offer a range of services including check cashing, checking and savings accounts, automatic payroll deposits, loans, certificates of deposit, traveler's checks, money orders and foreign currency conversion. Please check with your sponsor to see if any other banking facilities are available in the area where you will be located.

### **Commissary**

The commissaries (on-base grocery stores) in Okinawa carry a good selection of food items at reasonable prices. Please check with your sponsor for information on commissaries on the various camps and bases. <http://www.commissaries.com/>

### **Legal Officer**

Each base has a permanently assigned Legal Officer. Complex legal and/or tax problems should be concluded before your departure from Japan. Some services may be available from the legal assistance office, on a space-available basis. Please contact your local legal office for current information.

### **Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Okinawa**

MCCS Okinawa (<https://www.mccsokinawa.com/>) offers information and referral services, adjustment programs, individual/family counseling, and a variety of workshops and classes for personal growth and development.

### **Medical and Dental**

The U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH), Okinawa, aboard Camp Foster serves military and Department of Defense civilian personnel. It is the central medical complex for Naval bases in Japan. Currently this is only provided on a space-available basis for non-emergency civilian care.

The USNH staff includes specialists representing many major divisions of medicine and surgery. However, because of the size of the hospital and its staff, some specialized non-elective treatment is beyond the services provided by the Naval Hospital, and patients must sometimes be returned to the United States via the Medical Air Evacuation (MEDEVAC) System for treatment.

The U.S. government is not obligated to pay for medical treatment, unless a job-related injury or illness, irrespective if received from DoD facilities in the area or from private sources. Medical insurance is available from Federal providers with the exception of HMOs (HMOs are not available overseas). This means that the cost of medical care beyond policy limits must be absorbed by the employee. When

provided by Japanese medical facilities, even if referred to by DoD facilities, costs for treatment can be significantly higher than rates for comparable services in the U.S. The method of payment (see below) may be much different from what occurs in the U.S. It is possible that your FEHB medical insurance will not be accepted at a Japanese medical facility or that your FEHB carrier will not accept the Japanese medical facility as an authorized provider; please be prepared financially for that contingency.

You and your dependents may obtain outpatient medical care at Naval medical facilities in the overseas area. The charge is now based on the type of care and treatment required. This will include all medical examinations, tests, diagnosis, treatment, prescriptions, evaluations, and consultations during that day. Care that must be carried over to a second day and certain types of follow-up visits may be served under the original charge. There is also an inpatient care rate per day.

For those civilian employees who are hospitalized in a local hospital, the hospital will expect full payment up-front on a monthly basis (upon receipt of a bill on or about the tenth of the following month). If hospitalized for less than a month, payment is expected at the time the patient is discharged from the hospital. The hospital also expects full payment up-front for examinations and/or medical treatments received on an outpatient basis.

Private hospitals may not be willing to wait for payment until the patient applies for and receives money from their FEHB carrier. It is up to the patient to reach agreement with the hospital as to how and when payment will be made. In some instances, signing of a written oath, with a cosigner, may be required for the patient to reach agreement with the hospital.

Dental Clinics are available at each of the bases/camps. There is a charge for dental treatment. Dental treatment and care is also available in the local community.

Your sponsor can provide you with the current chargeable rates. Coverage may be provided by your FEHB insurance plan or other health/dental insurance. Be sure to check with your plan information representative to determine whether the military medical/dental facilities and/or private treatment facilities are considered preferred providers while you are in an overseas area. This may vary not only among plans, but between the levels available within a carrier's plan. It should be noted that costs generally rise each fiscal year due to inflation. Optical care is available both at the Naval facilities and in the Japanese communities. Japanese lens grinding is considered to be excellent.

### **Morale, Welfare and Recreation Activities**

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department in Okinawa provides clubs and open-mess dining and excellent service at very reasonable cost. The clubs have facilities to cater private parties, hold formal and informal receptions, host stage shows, bingo, and other social events.

MWR activities on Okinawa include operation of a Tours Office (foreign and domestic travel). See <https://www.mccsokinawa.com/tours/> for additional details.

### **Okinawa Hai**

Okinawa Hai is a blog by many contributors who are currently living on Okinawa. Follow the embedded [link](#) to get a better insight on Okinawa living.

### **Post Office**

The US Military Post Office is available at all duty stations and provides services like those of the USPS. Operating hours vary, but the offices are generally open Monday through Friday, 1000 –

1700. Mail is delivered to the FPO in San Francisco and then entered into the USPS, and conversely, picked up at the FPO and delivered to the military post offices overseas. Postage rates are the same as those within the United States.

### **Religious Services**

Protestant and Catholic Chaplains are assigned to all the bases and military facilities. Sunday school, Catholic Christian education, Bible classes and preparation for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation are available. Religious services for other faith communities may be found on individual camps on both a regularly occurring basis or as arranged by request. Please check with your sponsor for religious services available in other areas.

### **Schools**

The Department of Defense Dependent Schools are run by the Department of Defense Education Authority (DoDEA) school system (<http://www.dodea.edu/>). Okinawa schools are administered by the DoDEA Pacific South District (<https://www.dodea.edu/Pacific/south/index.cfm>). The district provides schooling, books, and transportation at government expense with the exception of minimal fees for lockers, laboratory supplies, etc. for eligible dependents. All facilities are well equipped with audio-visual aides and libraries are fairly modern. Schools are located aboard various installations on Okinawa, with high schools located aboard Camp Foster and Kadena Air Force Base. School bus service is available. Nursery school facilities are provided on a fee basis and parents must provide transportation for preschool children. Parochial and other non-DoDEA schools are located on Okinawa. Parents must provide tuition fees and transportation to these schools. A wide range of educational programs for college degrees is also offered through the Educational Services Office on most bases.

DoDEA-operated schools in overseas will provide your children with an education equivalent to that offered in the schools in the United States. High schools are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Your children can make the change from the U.S. without undue interference with their studies or loss of credit. To register, students must have a copy of their sponsor's orders, a copy of the student's birth certificate or proof of age, report card/transcript from the school last attended, and updated immunization records.

If you have a dependent child with special educational needs, please check with the DoDEA Pacific Area Office to determine whether any necessary special education facilities you might require are available (<https://www.dodea.edu/Pacific/offices/Education/Curriculum/SpecialEducation/sped.cfm>).

### BASES AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Okinawa is home to many U.S military bases, and all are within driving distance. Map below give a clearer picture of U.S occupancy compared to the size of the island.

