

# 2022

## PCS Toolkit



Your Military Move Guide



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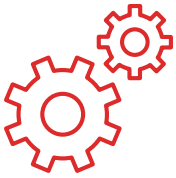
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# THE PCS PROCESS

Moving can be exciting and stressful, especially if it's your first time, and that can double for a permanent change of station. Typically occurring once every 2 - 4 years, a PCS can seem like an arduous process. But with this guide, our help, and some solid planning, you can keep it relatively low stress and make the transition to your next posting as easy as possible.

The basic steps that go into a PCS move are pretty much universal across all jobs, ranks, and branches of the armed forces:

## 1. Assignment Notification

The first heads-up about where you'll be PCS-ing to. It does not mean that you have official orders yet, though they should follow shortly after. Once you receive your assignment notification, start researching housing options at your next installation and begin organizing for the move.

## 2. Receive PCS Orders

Once you please receive your orders, review them carefully to ensure all details are accurate. Your name, social security number, duty station assignment, dependent information, reporting dates, etc. If you find any errors, contact the relevant admin office right away.

For CON US moves, you have the choice of a Household Goods (HHG) move completed by a Government contracted moving company or a Personally Procured Move (PPM, also called a Do-it-Yourself or DIY/DITY move).

For a PPM, the government will cover 95% of the estimated cost of hiring a moving company. You pocket the savings if you can move for less than that allowance. PPMs are an available option for all PCS moves within the continental United States (CONUS).

# THE PCS PROCESS

## 3. Scheduling Your Move

When using the Defense Personal Property System (DPS) to schedule your move, have the following information ready:

- Your contact information
- Estimated shipping weight
- Pick-up and delivery dates/locations
- A list of specialty items (boat, guns, RV, large electronics)
- Professional Books, Paper, and Equipment (PBP&E or Pro-Gear) list with the weight of items
- Your preferred transportation provider/moving company

To confirm your packing and moving dates, take the forms generated by DPS to your current base's Installation Transportation Office. The Transportation Office will assign an official moving company/transportation service provider or carrier.

## 4. Pre-Move HHG Inventory

Your assigned moving company will complete a pre-move survey of your home to include a weight estimate and review any of those particular items you listed in DPS. If you're within a week of moving day and a pre-move survey has not been completed on your home, contact the moving company and/or your local Personal Property Office (PPO).

## 5. Packing Day

On packing day, the moving company sends a team of packers to your home to box everything up. Your packing day and moving dates are usually not the same. The boxes may not be loaded onto the truck(s) until several days later.

## 6. Loading/Moving Day

On moving day, everything is correctly loaded onto the truck before departing. Ask the driver for their phone number so you can reach them if needed. The moving company should create an inventory of all your household items and put stickers on all the boxes and larger items.



# THE PCS PROCESS

## 7. Travel to Your New Location

Keep the lines of communication open with the moving truck driver during travel. Hang on to all receipts for expenses during your trip, such as hotels, gasoline, tolls, etc. You'll need them to file for reimbursement at the end of your move.

## 8. Household Goods Delivery

Once you receive your household goods at your new home, it's time to unpack. You have 75 days from the delivery date to notify the moving company in writing of any lost or damaged items you intend to file a claim for. So make sure everything is in good condition right away.



# TOP 15 BEST APPS FOR YOUR PCS MOVE

## APPS BEFORE YOU MOVE

### **Mint**

Moving expenses can add up quickly, so it's important to set a clear budget and stick to it. Mint allows you to set up budgets for different aspects of your move and track your spending as you go.

### **Wunderlist**

A tremendous organizational app to keep your move as efficient as possible. Wunderlist lets you create to-do lists and reminders to keep you on schedule.

### **Letgo | Thredup | Facebook Marketplace**

Got some odds and ends you no longer need clogging up your closets? Then maybe it's time to purge. Use any of these great apps to help you lighten your load and pick up a few bucks.

### **Sortly**

Use this app to create a visual inventory of your home and keep track of each item with tags and labels. You can even label each item's box location within your house.

## APPS FOR MOVING DAY

### **TaskRabbit**

Need a little extra assistance with a DITY move? This app has vetted taskers to help with all your moving needs, like packing up your belongings and loading your moving truck.

### **Thumbtack**

A directory of skilled local professionals for hire. Whether your home needs a deep clean or a new carpet installation before you move, Thumbtack has people to get it done.

# APPS AFTER YOU MOVE

## **MyBaseGuide**

The official app of the company that has provided bases to all US Military posts for over 50 years. Get check-in locations and procedures, building designations, and base phone numbers in the palm of your hand. Plus a wealth of information like base news, housing, employment, schools, health care, dental services, and community activities/recreation.

## **Facebook**

The #1 social media platform for the military community. Use it to join groups and events on Facebook associated with your new installation to make new friends, get involved, and expand your social circle faster and easier.

## **Certifikid**

If you have children, CertifiKid is a great app to find family-friendly deals and activities in your area. Moves are usually toughest on kids, so make their lives in a new home a little more accessible from the get-go.

## **Commissary Rewards**

You'll rarely find better savings on groceries and sundries than at your local Commissary. With this app, you can clip and share digital coupons, then automatically redeem them when you scan your Commissary Rewards Card at checkout.

## **ShopSavvy**

This is a great app for those who want to monitor and access great deals outside the Commissary but with the same level of ease. ShopSavvy offers great military coupons, deals, specials, and cashback programs.

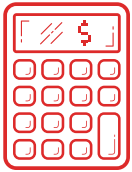
## **Rover**

We all love our pets. But military life is busy, and you may not always be able to give your pet the care they need. You can use this database of over 200,000 trusted pet sitters and dog walkers across the country to keep your fluffy family members cared for at all times.

## **Care.com**

With things as busy as they are, those with children will need to hire a babysitter from time to time. Find and select a sitter based on their experience level and availability and trust that they come highly recommended.





# PPM/DITY MOVE CALCULATOR

Planning on a PPM/DITY move for your PCS? Whether your next station is in CONUS or OCONUS (outside the continental United States), you can calculate your allowances and expenses with our PPM/DITY Move Calculator tool.

## 2020 Travel Reimbursement Changes

- Per Diem for Lodging increased from \$94 to \$96
- Per Diem for Meals and Incidentals remain at \$55
- Dislocation Allowance(DLA) increased by 3.1%
- PCS Mileage Rates remain the same amount as in 2018 at \$0.18 per mile

## DITY MOVE CALCULATOR

### What is a DITY move?

A DITY (Do IT Yourself) move, officially called a Personally Procured Move (PPM), is a type of move you organize and manage yourself, which the government partially reimburses. That means you directly pay for the moving costs, by hiring a company, renting a truck or van, or packing all your odds and ends in your own vehicle and hitting the road. The GCC will pay you approximately 95% of what your move would have cost the government to contract out, some of which you may be eligible to receive in advance. Speak with your travel office to determine the payout for your specific move.

### Will this calculator work for any PCS move?

No, it can only calculate the costs of DITY moves. It also does not apply to those traveling by commercial means (airlines, rail, etc.). But you can use it to calculate the Dislocation Allowance (DLA), and per diem, you would be entitled to for any military move.

### What allowances will I receive if I do a DITY move?

Most service members will receive MALT (Monetary Allowance instead of Transportation), per diem, and DLA. You'll also receive compensation for moving your own household goods, paid by the pound. Please see the "Allowances" section of the calculator for more information.

#### Additional Resources:

- The Defense Travel System's JTR (Joint Travel Regulation) PDF
- Defense Travel Site PCS FAQ





# BUDGET ESTIMATOR

(Some costs may not apply to your and your family)

	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
SELLING YOUR HOME		
Pre-listing maintenance and repairs	\$	\$
Advertising and staging	\$	\$
Agent costs + commission	\$	\$
Mortgage payments between move and final sale	\$	\$
MOVE OUT PREP		
Cleaning supplies or service	\$	\$
Move out repairs (paint, spackle, light bulbs, etc.)	\$	\$
Yard work: reseeding, fence repair, etc.	\$	\$
Meals (after the kitchen is cleaned and packed)	\$	\$
DRIVING TO YOUR NEXT HOME		
Pre-trip tune-up and oil change	\$	\$
Weatherizing (if moving to a different climate)	\$	\$
PETS		
Update Vaccinations	\$	\$
Health certification (if traveling across states)	\$	\$
Microchip	\$	\$



# BUDGET ESTIMATOR

(Some costs may not apply to you and your family)

ON THE MOVE		
Temporary lodging at your current duty station	\$	\$
Hotel/lodging during your trip	\$	\$
Temporary lodging at your next duty station	\$	\$
Food while in transit	\$	\$
Boarding pets	\$	\$
Gas	\$	\$
Trip activities and entertainment	\$	\$
AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL		
Restocking the kitchen	\$	\$
Toiletries	\$	\$
Other household items & supplies	\$	\$
SCHOOL PREP		
School Uniforms	\$	\$
Extracurricular club registration	\$	\$
Climate appropriate clothing	\$	\$
EXTRA EXPENSES		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$



## PCSing WITH PETS

PPCSing with pets requires a little extra planning, not to mention a few more pit stops during the actual move. They can also make finding a rental property a little more challenging. Get a jump on such potential difficulties by building a Pet Resume and following a few more easy steps:

### Before Your Move

When packing, don't forget to include an accessible bag of comfortable and convenient items for your pet. A leash, food and water dishes, bottled water, pet first aid kit, disposable litter box (for a cat), and some towels at the very least. Don't forget an up-to-date health certificate if you are crossing state lines. Be sure their identification tags and/or microchip are updated with your current contact info as well.

### Packing Day

Strangers in your home, belongings moving around, open doors, and general confusion can make packing day tough on pets. Before the packers or movers arrive, ensure your pets are secure and relaxed. You might want to board them for the day (or a couple of days) or crate them in a relatively secluded room.

### The Move

If you're driving to your next location, make sure your pets are secured and safe while moving. Loose pets in a car can distract you while driving and are extremely vulnerable in accidents. Cats should be in a carrier, which should be covered for the first few hours on the road to calm them if they're anxious.

Dogs should be in crates or restrained with a safety harness and must get out regularly to move and relieve themselves. Pit stops are the most likely points your pet may run off while disoriented. Temporary tags with your cell phone number should be added to their collar for extra protection.

### Alternate Transportation

If you have multiple pets, particularly large ones (a horse or a very big dog, day) or a TOY stop before moving on to your new station, you may want to employ a professional carrier for them. Transport companies will handle the entire process of getting your pet from one place to another, a convenience that may be worth paying for.

Particularly if you have young children to take care of or will be stuck in a hotel while awaiting your lease to start or household goods to arrive. If you are considering this option, start looking for and interviewing potential companies at least 30 days in advance to find the best fit for your pet needs.

# PCSing WITH PETS

## Overnight

If your move is likely to take multiple days, plan ahead by locating pet friendly hotels on the route. Be sure to call the specific locations and confirm their pet policy. Many hotels don't allow dogs over 30lbs, birds, exotic pets, and sometimes cats. Some also charge an additional fee per pet, so build that possibility into your budget. You can easily scout out pet-friendly hotels online with [PetsWelcome.com](http://PetsWelcome.com).

## Arrival

Help your pet settle in quickly by returning to a normal routine as soon as possible. Try to place their things in the same location they were in your previous home. For example, if the litter box was in the laundry room before, put it there again. Before you let them run loose in the new home, do a thorough walkthrough and pet-proofing.

If you haven't done it ahead of time, locate the necessary services, like a new veterinarian, a boarding facility or pet sitter, pet stores, and a great walking route for dogs right away. Before you know it, your pet will be as happy and healthy in your new home as they were in your last one.







## PCSing WITH FAMILY AND KIDS

As you and your family go through the laborious and stressful process of packing up your lives to start over somewhere new, remember it can be a real emotional roller coaster for your kids. A little extra care and attention can make your PCS a lot easier on your children.

### Ways To Prepare Kids:

- Tell them you're moving as soon as you know. Keep them up-to-date on details, like your new base and unit, as soon as possible. Let them know your feelings on the move and assure them they can talk to you about any and all concerns they have. Encourage your kids to ask questions and talk about their emotions.
- Make moving an adventure they're taking part in, not an event they're subjected to. Keep your kids involved and engaged with the moving process. Read books and articles about moving with them. Include them while you're searching for your next potential house and get them excited about whatever benefits they may have over your current home (like a bigger room(s) for them, for example). Encourage them to pack their own stuff.
- Visit your new home before you leave the old one. Take your kids on some "re con" to your new neighborhood and explore the area, its parks, restaurants, stores surrounding attractions, and their new school-to-be.
- Remember those sentimental must-haves. Help your kids organize those special items they can't live or travel without. Favorite blankets, stuffed animals, beloved toys, books, iPads (don't forget headphones) full of music, movies, etc. Having these items will keep them occupied while traveling and help them feel more comfortable in their new environment.
- It's never goodbye, it's see you later. Particularly in the military, where your next PCS could end up reuniting your kids with old friends all over again. Nevertheless, give your children a chance to say farewell to their friends, school teachers, and neighborhood. A farewell party for them to gather all their friends is a fun way to say 'see ya later.'
- Assure your kids that they'll meet new friends and be able to keep in touch with the old. Remind them that social media and apps like FaceTime and Skype make it easier than ever to do the latter. Is key. Plus, there are new and fun people to meet everywhere you go. Particularly in the great, big military family, you all belong to.



## PCSing WITH FAMILY AND KIDS

Obviously these steps, while helpful, won't ease all the pain of moving for your kids. After all, PCS orders aren't always issued on a family-friendly schedule. So if you need a few extra resources to support your kids during your change of station, here are some worth checking out:

- **Learning Care Group** is one of North America's largest child care providers and a leader in early education. They offer programs designed for children from 6 weeks to 12 years old across the country and worldwide. Plus, they honor the support Child Care Aware and GSA by offering a 10% discount to active military families.
- **Preparing Children For School - And The Future**







# MOVING CHECKLIST

It's easy to get overwhelmed during a move. Stay on top of it all with these convenient and printable to-do checklists.



# MOVING CHECKLIST: 3 MONTHS OUT

TO DO	NOTES	DONE
Set up transportation counseling with your current installation transportation office or do self-counseling on move.mil.		
Have a PCS-specific power of attorney or letter of authority drawn up if your spouse will be handling legal details without you present.		
Decide which type of move (HHG, DITY, partial DITY) is best for your family.		
Determine if you will need to ship a vehicle.		
Find out your new BAH and decide if you want to live on or off base/post.		
Estimate your move-related expenses and create a budget.		
Create a system to track moving-related expenses.		

## Tasks

- ☐ Notify your landlord that you will be moving and provide a general timeline that they know may change.
- ☐ Take care of needed medical/dental appointments.
- ☐ Start or update your personal property inventory.
- ☐ Organize all personal records.
- ☐ Notify your local clubs and volunteer organizations that you will be moving.
- ☐ Remove all stickers from previous moves left on furniture.
- ☐ Identify any necessary home repairs.
- ☐ Begin researching your new base and its surrounding area.



# MOVING CHECKLIST: 2 MONTHS OUT

TO DO	NOTES	DONE
If shipping a vehicle is authorized (for OCON US moves), have your local transportation office start the setup process. They will require your vehicle's estimated weight.		
Attend the pre-clearing brief to learn your installation's clearing process and timeline.		
Evaluate housing options on AHRN.com.		
Check expiration dates on any credit/debit cards you plan to use during your move. Order new ones if necessary.		
Begin sorting and disposing of (donating, selling, etc.) items you don't need.		
Start looking into options if you require child care at your next base.  If you have school-age children, check school schedules and enrollment requirements.		
If you have pets, take them to the vet for a full physical, including necessary vaccinations and immunization updates. Get a copy of their medical records.		

## Tasks

- ☐ Complete any needed auto maintenance.
- ☐ Post home for rent or sale on AHRN.com.

## MOVING CHECKLIST: 1 MONTH OUT

TO DO	NOTES	DONE
Attend a finance brief and request any necessary PCS advances.		
Confirm packing, pick-up, and delivery dates with movers/ transportation office.		
Begin out-processing.		
Submit your change of address to the US Postal Service.		
Fill out an IRS change of address form.		
Renew and pick up any necessary prescriptions. Obtain prescription slips in case you need refills on the road.		
Verify your move-in schedule with real estate agents and landlords.		
Arrange for temporary housing if needed.		

## Tasks

- ☐ Begin disposing of the contents of your freezer and pantry.
- ☐ Label items/boxes that you will need easy access to just before and after your move.
- ☐ Designate a folder for important documents.
- ☐ Evaluate whether you need storage options.
- ☐ Arrange for temporary lodging.
- ☐ Dispose of any leftover unwanted items or items that cannot be transported.
- ☐ Ensure that all insurance is up-to-date and your insurers have a forwarding address and transit contact information.
- ☐ Return any borrowed items (like library books).
- ☐ Record serial numbers of electronics and other valuables in personal property inventory. Notify utilities of your move-out date and make arrangements to close out accounts.

Electric | Waste Disposal | Water | Telephone | Internet/Cable | Lawncare

- ☐ Cancel any subscriptions and memberships (i.e. newspaper or gym).
- ☐ Settle all outstanding bills that can be paid in advance of your departure.

## Moving Checklist: Moving Day

TO DO	NOTES	DONE
Have coffee, cold drinks and snacks ready for yourself (and your packers).		
Make sure cash, jewelry, important documents, checkbook, and other valuable items are secure.		
Double-check closets, drawers, shelves, the attic, and the garage.		
If you are hand-carrying any boxes, clearly mark them with "DO NOT MOVE."		
Have such a box of basics you'll need on move-in day (tools, paper products, house cleaning supplies, first aid kit, etc.)		
Watch loading, unloading, and examine all items carefully before signing a receipt.		
If the military is taking care of your move, be sure to obtain a copy of the GBL, the 00-619 (if CO NUS), and the Household Goods Inventory from the packers before they leave. Ensure it's accurate and complete. Keep a copy with other important records you are hand-carrying.		
Leave all the old keys with your realtor or a neighbor.		

## Tasks

- ☐ Check that your new base's transportation office has your contact info and new address.
- ☐ Plan where you want each piece of furniture placed in your new residence.



## Moving Checklist: After the Move

TO DO	NOTES	DONE
Contact your new post's transportation office as soon as possible, and provide them with a phone number where you or your designated representative may be reached.		
If you are utilizing the base's Household Goods Office, contact them to arrange for delivery of personal property.		
Arrange for phone, gas, and electricity to be connected.		
Check the pilot lights on the stove, water heater, incinerator, and furnace.		
If you moved to a new state, register your car and get a new driver's license.		
Register your children in school.		
Connect with medical services in your new location (doctors, dentists, veterinarians).		
Clean the hard-to-reach places in your new residence before moving in household goods.		
When the movers arrive, check their inventory against the one you made prior to departure.		
Ensure the movers reassemble all items they disassembled, unpack all items, and remove packing materials (unless you specifically waive this service).		



## DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

If you hire a company to pack and move your household goods, you should have the following important documents among the stuff you keep with you during the process.

Additionally, we recommend you store digital copies on a device that you also keep with you.



## Family Member Documents

- ☐ Military IDs
- ☐ Drivers Licenses
- ☐ Social Security cards
- ☐ Passports
- ☐ Birth Certificates
- ☐ Marriage Certificates
- ☐ Naturalization Certificates
- ☐ Adoption paperwork
- ☐ Custody agreements
- ☐ Divorce decrees
- ☐ Household inventory (with supporting images and video on a digital device)
- ☐ Contact information for your moving company and new installation transportation office D Title/Lease
- ☐ Proof of vehicle inspection
- ☐ Vehicle registration
- ☐ Car Insurance

## FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Personal checks (digital copy not required)
- ☐ Bank statements
- ☐ Credit and debit cards
- ☐ Powers of Attorney
- ☐ Wills

## School/Employment

- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- ☐ Report cards
- ☐ Additional registration required documents
- ☐ Resume and letters of reference
- ☐ Contact list for future/former schools

## Medical Records

- ☐ A full copy of each family member's medical and dental records (including any needed x-rays)
- ☐ Vaccination records
- ☐ Any current prescriptions





# ARE YOU READY TO BUY A HOME?

Home ownership is a great opportunity to get grounded and start planting some roots, even for those still on active duty.

But buying a home requires careful financial and lifestyle planning. You can find more home buying resources and information in our Military Home Buying Guide.

## 6 Questions To Ask If You're Thinking About Becoming a Homeowner

### 1. Am I financially ready?

Financial readiness is one of the key factors in deciding whether it's time to buy instead of rent.

### 2. Do I know my credit score?

Before you start contacting lenders for rate quotes and qualification guidelines, know your credit score. Credit scores range from 100-850. But be aware: when someone checks your credit, it can reduce your score.

### 3. Do I know the market where I want to buy?

Military members often decide to rent or buy from a distance prior to moving into the area. In such cases, you need to do your best to learn about the area's financial and real estate conditions. Your best bet is to find a military-friendly realtor familiar with the local market.

### 4. What is my timeline?

Absolute certainty is a rare thing for military personnel and families. In most cases, though, you should have some idea of how long you'll live in the area. If you are PCSing for a shorter tour, then it might not be the right time or place for buying. On the other hand, if your assignment is expected to last two or more years, then it may be worth considering.

### 5. How much house can I buy?

As a general rule of thumb, you shouldn't spend more than 40% of your monthly income on housing, including mortgage, taxes, insurance, and maintenance. If these potential expenses are above 40%, then you may want to save up and work towards home ownership in the future. Consult with a mortgage lender before making a final decision. You can talk to one about your options without them pulling your credit or making any commitment, so there's no risk.



# ARE YOU READY TO BUY A HOME?

## 6. What are my financing options?

One of the best benefits of serving in the military is the VA Home Loan: a mortgage loan guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs but issued by qualified lenders, like banks or mortgage companies. For active duty or veterans that qualify, the VA loan makes it easier for you to purchase or refinance a home.

## Benefits To Know About VA Loans

VA home loans are great deals that offer advantages to military personnel and veterans who qualify for them. Some of the best benefits of purchasing a home on a VA loan:

- No minimum down payment
- Relaxed credit standards
- No Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI)
- Competitive interest rates
- No prepayment penalty