



CIVILIAN BENEFITS

Civilian Personnel Office

T-112

DSN: 535-5137

COMM (011-351) 295-57-5137

The Lajes Field CPO provides assistance for current and prospective civilian employees in a wide variety of areas. Services include, but are not limited to: Staffing, Classification, Employee Management Relations, Overseas Allowances and Training.

ADVANCE IN PAY

Employees on PCS to or within a foreign area can request an advance of up to three months net base pay. This advance may be made three weeks prior to the estimated departure date and up to two months after arrival, through the losing or gaining Civilian Personnel Office. Employees must agree to repay the advance by payroll deductions over a maximum of 26 pay periods beginning the first pay period after receipt of the advance. Partial or lump-sum repayments in addition to payroll deductions are acceptable.

HOME LEAVE

Home leave is leave accrued during service abroad. You are eligible to receive home leave if you are entitled to earn 45 days of maximum annual leave. Your maximum annual leave accumulation determination was made at the time of your appointment. If you have this entitlement, you are eligible for home leave.

Eligibility

- Accrual begins on the date of your arrival at your post of duty outside of the United States.
- It is accrued at a rate of 5 days per year. You must complete 24 months of continuous service in the overseas area before becoming eligible to use your accumulated home leave. This is a onetime requirement. Once you complete that service, you are eligible to use home leave

immediately upon reporting for any subsequent overseas tours. This does not apply to “banked” home leave as outlined below.

- Home leave is for use in the United States, The commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States.
- The minimum charge for home leave is one day.
- You must return to service after the period of home leave, or you will be indebted for the home leave used.

Previously accrued (Banked) Home Leave

- If you serve on a subsequent overseas tour and did not use all of your accrued home leave from a previous tour, you will have accrued “banked” home leave available.
- This “banked” home leave may be granted only when you have completed a further substantial service abroad may not be less than the tour of the duty prescribed for your post of assignment

ANNUAL LEAVE ACCUMLATION

Employees recruited in the U.S. for overseas employment may accumulate a maximum of 45 days annual leave.

UNACCOMPANIED

Unaccompanied employees usually will not be offered on base housing. A good selection of off base housing is available. See HOUSING on the home page.

FAMILY QUARTERS

Accompanied employees are eligible for on-base government family quarters, when available. Advance application for family quarters is made by submitting DD Form 1746 to 65 CES/CEAO, Unit 7790, APO AE 09720, with a copy of your PCS orders, through your Base Family Housing Office. The waiting period for on-base family quarters is 3-6 months for GS-12 and above and 1-3 months for GS-9-11.

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TEMPORARY QUARTERS SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE (TQSA)

TQSA reimburses the employee for the reasonable cost of lodging, meals, laundry expenses, and items bought at the Commissary, which are considered at home meals. The amount of TQSA is based on the local per diem rate according to the following formulas:

<u>1ST 30 DAYS</u>	<u>2ND 30 DAYS</u>	<u>3RD 30 DAYS</u>
Initial occupant (75% of the Per Diem Rate)	Initial occupant (65% of the Per Diem Rate)	Initial occupant (55% of the Per Diem Rate)
Each other occupant age 12 or older (50% of the Per Diem Rate)	Each other occupant age 12 or older (45% of the Per Diem Rate)	Each other occupant age 12 or older (40% of the Per Diem Rate)
Occupant under 12 yrs (40% of the Per Diem Rate)	Occupant under 12 yrs. (35% of the Per Diem Rate)	Occupant under 12 yrs (30% of the Per Diem Rate)

All receipts must be provided for payment of expenses. Employees will keep all receipts to include meals, groceries, lodging, etc. and present them to the Civilian Personnel Office for reimbursement. The minimum time for reimbursement is 30 days and the maximum time is when employee leaves Temporary Quarters. TQSA is only FICA taxed.

LIVING QUARTERS ALLOWANCE (LQA)

Employees receive LQA when government-owned or leased quarters are not provided without charge or employee chooses to live on the economy. LQA is to cover the average cost of rent, heat, electricity, and water. It will cover most of your expenses but not necessarily all. The State Department establishes the LQA rates for foreign posts by employee's grade level and family size. LQA is effective the date employee moves into his/her off base quarters. The following are maximum LQA rates for Lajes Field.

GROUP 3: GS 10-13
WG 14-15
WL 12-15

WS 11-19

GROUP 4: GS 01-09
WG 01-13
WL 01-11

UNACCOMPANIED EMPLOYEES (Rates effective 18 Jul 2010)

GROUP 3 - \$23,400.00 PA
GROUP 4 - \$20,700.00 PA

EMPLOYEES WITH FAMILY (1)

GROUP 3 - \$24,600.00 PA
GROUP 4 - \$23,400.00 PA

EMPLOYEES WITH DEPENDENTS

2/3	4/5	6/OVER
GROUP 3 -\$27,060.00 PA	\$29,520.00 PA	\$31,980.00 PA
GROUP 4 -\$25,740.00 PA	\$28,080.00 PA	\$30,420.00 PA

LQA rates are subject to change at any time. LQA terminates the day the employee accepts government owned or leased housing or when the employee departs the post. Receipts must be kept for reconciliation at the end of the year. LQA is only FICA taxed.



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FOREIGN TRANSFER ALLOWANCE (FTA)

If you are required to occupy temporary quarters prior to your departure from your old duty station in the U.S., you may be eligible for the subsistence expense portion of the FTA. These expenses include lodging, meals, laundry and dry cleaning costs incurred while in temporary quarters. This allowance is for a period of up to 10 days prior to your departure from the U.S. You will have to complete a "Claim for Foreign Transfer Allowance," provide all lodging and laundry/dry cleaning receipts, and submit them with your travel voucher. You may contact the local Accounting and Finance Office or us to obtain this claim form. FTA is only FICA taxed.

SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (SMA)

For Special Needs or Hardship of the Employee an agency may authorize voluntary SMA when an employee requests SMA for special needs or hardship prior to or after arrival at post for reasons including but not limited to career, health, educational or family considerations for spouse, children or other family member. Children, including sisters and brothers, unless attending secondary school, must be under age 18 or incapable of self-support.

At the time of assignment an employee must elect (1) to have an eligible family member included on the employee's travel orders or (2) not placed on the travel orders and instead be placed on SMA (voluntary). After this initial election, the employee may request that SMA (voluntary) either commence/terminate, depending on the initial election, only once for each member of family during a tour. However, this change cannot occur during the employee's first or last 90 days at post.

The Civilian Personnel Officer has the authority to approve or disapprove SMA based on the justification. Please contact the Allowances technician if you require further information prior to making any decision on SMA.

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ANNUAL LEAVE ACCUMULATION

Employees recruited in the U.S. for overseas employment may accumulate a maximum of 45 days annual leave.

UNACCOMPANIED OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Unaccompanied employees will draw a living quarters allowance to live in off-base quarters.

FAMILY QUARTERS

Accompanied employees are eligible for on-base government family quarters, when available. Advance application for family quarters is made by submitting DD Form 1746 to 65 CES/CEH, Unit 7790, APO AE 09720, with a copy of your PCS orders, through your Base Family Housing Office. The waiting period for on-base family quarters ranges from 3-6 months.

POST ALLOWANCE

Employees assigned to a foreign area where the cost of living is substantially higher than Washington DC, are paid a post allowance. The amount is a flat rate based on salary and size of family in the overseas area. The State Department administers this allowance. **It is subject to change without prior notice.** Post allowance is not subject to **Federal income tax.**



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IN-PROCESSING

Report to the Civilian Personnel Office, 65 FSS/FSMC, DSN: 314-535-4208 or 314-535-5137, Bldg T-112, Lajes Field Air Base, Azores, Portugal for in-processing. Office hours are 0900 to 1600, Monday thru Friday. If you arrive after duty hours or on the weekend, you should report on the next duty day.

PASSPORTS

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their passport and those of their dependents are current and valid. An individual with an expired passport will not be allowed entrance into Portugal. Once you have arrived at Lajes Field, Azores you must have a permanent visa stamped on your passport and your dependents passports. You have 90 days to obtain a visa. Once you arrive we will inform you of where to go to obtain a visa.

TRAVEL VOUCHER

Submit your travel voucher (DD Form 1351-2) to the local Accounting and Finance Office within five (5) working days of your travel.

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

Employees with college-age students may send their children on government-paid travel to the U.S. for college education. College education is full-time attendance at the undergraduate level at a university or college located in the U.S.

The authority is for one round trip between the overseas post and the school in the U.S. within a 12 month period. The 12 month baseline begins from the first annual trip to the U.S. from the overseas post. Subsequent annual trips will not be authorized until 12 months have elapsed. Any portion of the round trip not taken in the 12 month period does not accrue to a subsequent period.

Children traveling to an overseas post must remain in the overseas area a minimum of 14 calendar days before starting educational travel again.

Educational travel may be authorized until age 22 (before 23rd birthday) or until graduation, whichever occurs earlier. Upon graduation, the student may travel back to the overseas area on educational travel; however, no educational travel will be authorized for the return trip to the U.S.

EMERGENCY TRAVEL

Eligible civilian employees and their spouses may be granted space available travel to the U.S. if the presence of the employee or his/her spouse is required due to an emergency that has occurred in either the employee's or the spouse's immediate family. Travel is to the first port of entry in the U.S. Cost of travel within the U.S. is solely the expense of the traveler. The regulation also permits civilian employees and/or their spouses to elect space required travel at their own expense, and at the U.S. Government rate tariff. Absences are chargeable to annual leave, leave without pay, or home leave (if eligible). Emergency leave travel is authorized only after the emergency has been verified through American Red Cross channels. Civilian employees and their spouses are encouraged to advise families in the U.S. to contact the nearest American Red Cross Chapter in the event of an emergency.

ENVIROMENTAL AND MORALE LEAVE (EML)

Employees recruited from the U.S. are eligible for four EML trips during their 24 month tour-- two trip to designated overseas locations and two to U.S ports of entry. Travel is on a space-available basis on military aircraft. Upon arrival at the overseas post, check with your organization for specific details. The Civilian Personnel Office administers this program. Please contact the Civilian Personnel Office for more information and specific requirements regarding EML.

RENEWAL AGREEMENT TRAVEL (RAT)

Normally, employees may be eligible for renewal agreement travel after completing the initial 24 months tour of duty. Employees may travel to and from their home of record (place of actual residence at time of hire) or to an alternate destination within the United States or their territories

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as long as the distance/cost does not exceed that to their original home of record. Employee must have an approved extension request from Headquarters Azores Air Zone (HAAZ) for an additional 12 months before RAT travel can be performed. You will need to check with our office for specific conditions governing RAT travel.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS (HHG)/WEIGHT

The restricted weight allowance for all Air Force civilian employees and military members assigned to/from Lajes Field Azores has been rescinded. All **accompanied** Air Force members' and employees' HHG shipments to or from Lajes Field, Azores picked up on or after 15 May 10 are authorized full JFT/JTR weight entitlement. There is no grandfather clause for this increase in HHG weight allowance.

This does not mean you should ship your full weight allowance. Housing in the Azores is smaller than homes in CONUS and commercial storage in the Azores is not available. Be aware that Housing will not fund items to be sent back to CONUS for storage, so be very careful what you select to bring. Review what items will be provided to you below, and the size of the available houses. This will help you decide what items to place in non-temporary storage for the duration of your tour in the Azores.

You may elect to ship personal items using the Postal Service to Lajes. For reimbursement TMO will need a copy of all receipts and weights for postal shipments. TMO does not reimburse for insurance. NOTE: Reimbursement is only authorized as long as weight entitlement has not been exceeded.

Consistent with Air Force policy, all unaccompanied AF members are authorized either an unaccompanied baggage shipment or elect 10% of full JFTR weight allowance via surface. However, AFSUP/JFTR, table a2.2 rule 2/4 and the overseas furnishings and housing availability report may authorize additional weight contingent upon the members/employees rank/grade and unaccompanied housing availability. All additional authorized weight must be identified on members/employees PCS orders. Phone Off Base (011)351 295573566; On Base 535-3566

NON-TEMPORARY STORAGE OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS

If you made arrangements to place your household goods in non-temporary storage at government expense in the U.S., please provide CPO with the name and address of the military Transportation Office (TMO) that arranged for the storage. We require this information to renew your storage contract each fiscal year.

SHIPMENT OF PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE (POV)

Civilians serving a two year tour agreement and all military personnel are authorized to ship a privately owned vehicle to Lajes Field, Azores provided they have at least 12 months on their tour when the vehicle arrives. Permission from the area commander is not required. Consult your transportation office for details regarding requests for shipment.

All POVs are shipped to the Azores via Portsmouth, Virginia. Dedicated shipping service to the Azores is approximately every 25 days. To inquire about your POV, you can contact the vehicle processing center, Monday through Friday between the hours of 0800, and 1630 hours (local) daily at DSN 535-6175 or 535-4153.

POV SHIPMENT: Shipment of a small or medium, well maintained rust free car is recommended, but not required. Roads are extremely narrow and very difficult to negotiate in a large vehicle. Repairs can be made locally, but parts are often difficult to locate and may have to be ordered from the states. All vehicles will be subject to a stringent vehicle inspection by Portuguese inspection officials. This inspection is comparable to vehicle inspections conducted in the states. Ensure your brakes are in good shape. These inspections started 1 January 1997 and thus far bad brakes are causing the most failures. Portuguese law requires that all POVs shipped to the Azores must be equipped with rear mud flaps, front and rear license plate holders, and emergency road kits. All trucks and non passenger vehicles are required to have side view mirrors on both the driver and passenger sides, and a reflective strip mounted the entire length of the rear bumper.



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POV PICK UP: To pick up your POV from the vehicle processing center at Lajes Field, Azores, you must bring the following items:

1. Military ID Card.
2. Azores Drivers License.
3. Proof of valid Insurance for the Azores.
4. Your copy of DD Form 788 (shipping document).
5. Power of Attorney for picking up a POV for a spouse or another service member.

PET MOVEMENT

[See PETS](#)

REAL ESTATE

Real estate expenses are not authorized upon transfer from the U.S. to a foreign area.

MEDICAL FACILITIES/CARE

Medical care at Lajes Field, Azores is very limited, it is important that you and your dependents are in good medical condition. Lajes has a medical clinic on base that provides basic medical care and is available to civilian employees for a fee. There is a Portuguese hospital on the island that will accept American patients. If you or your dependents have medical conditions we advise you to carefully research the availability of specific medical care with our 65th Medical Group at Lajes Field, Azores. The 65th Medical Group **Pharmacy** has limited medication in stock to provide to our patient population at Lajes Field. We strongly advise and encourage you to contact the 65th Medical Group's pharmacy, at DSN: 314-535-3635 or commercial 011-351-295-573635 to be sure that your required medication is available here at Lajes Field, Azores. In addition to contacting our Pharmacy we also recommend you bring at least 90 days of medication in case our Pharmacy does not have the medication in stock.

For more information on medical please [click here](#).

OTHER POINTS OF CONTACT

While the Civilian Personnel Office helps answer many general questions you may have about your move, you will find several other offices have responsibility for advising on specifics of certain areas.

- Points of contact at the Civilian Personnel Office, Lajes Field, Azores are: Mr. Isidro Nunes, Human Resources Specialist, DSN: 314-535-6329 or Ms. Nora Smits, Chief, Staffing and Classification, DSN: 314-535-5152.
- The Transportation Management Office (TMO) will provide advice and information on the movement of your household goods. This includes scheduling pick-up and/or delivery of those goods.
- The Legal Office will advise on how to file claims for household goods damaged during the move.
- The Accounting and Finance Office will provide advice on how and where to file claims for any of the reimbursements/expenses authorized in conjunction with your move.
- The Airman and Family Readiness Center can provide information on all DoD installations (and their surrounding areas) through Standard Information Transfer Exchange System (SITES). You can also check their information by going to [A&FRC link](#).

[Download request for separate maintenance allowance](#)