

Taking Charge

From DoD and Staff Reports

The new Defense Personal Property System allows PCSers to manage their moves and claims online.

Moving and submitting claims is getting a little easier in the military.

U.S. Transportation Command and the Army's Military Surface Distribution and Deployment Command recently implemented a new personal property moving system designed to streamline the entire process while giving service members more control over their moves.

The Defense Personal Property System, or DPS, automates much of the process of pre-move counseling, scheduling, tracking, invoicing and claims filing for household goods shipments, officials said. DPS initially began operating at 18 transportation offices in Fall 2008, but is now available to transportation offices worldwide. The new system implements elements of TransCom's "Families First" initiative, and will replace TOPS, the Transportation Operational Personal Property Standard System.

DPS was developed to ease the stress of permanently changing stations by providing 24-hour online access to personal property shipment information and allowing customers to communicate directly with transportation service providers regarding shipment status, weight costs and delivery options. Customers can also use DPS to file and settle loss and damage claims directly with a transportation service provider (TSP).

"DPS benefits the customer by giving them more control over the move," said Russell DePietro, JPPSO deputy director for the Northeast Region. "It allows the customer to enter and change their contact information and set pick-up and delivery dates directly with the moving company, rather than negotiate with them through JPPSO. Doing so puts the customer in

a position to be more involved in their overall move process."

When DPS is fully implemented, customers will be able to complete an online move counseling, rather than making an appointment with the office on base, Mr. DePietro said.

"Customers can complete the counseling at their convenience," he said. "They can do it at home or work, or they can still come into the office for an appointment."

An additional DPS benefit involves the Customer Satisfaction Survey, which JPPSO customers receive upon the completion of their move, Mr. DePietro said. Carrier selection is now being based upon a Best Value Score, which is determined largely by customer feedback generated by the CSS, rather than by the lowest cost, as it has previously been determined.

"By completing the survey, customers can have a heavy impact on carrier selection, which will impact their future moves and the moves of other members," Mr. DePietro said.

Only a few shipment types, including personally procured moves and joint moves, have proven problematic in the new system, but those bugs are being fixed. The Services, USTRANSCOM, and SDDC have agreed to keep TOPS fully functional until Sept. 30, 2009 for use in shipments DPS cannot yet handle, and to provide a safety net for unforeseen problems with DPS.

Submitting a Claim

DPS provides an automated means for DoD Customers to file personal property claims online, and allows TSPs and service members to con-

duct claims negotiations online. Personal Property Shipping Offices will use DPS to conduct inspections resulting from certain claims. Military Claims Offices (MCO) will also have access to the DPS Claims module to handle claims resolution for the cases in which service members cannot successfully settle directly with the TSP.

Upon delivery, the service member and the TSP identify items that are damaged or missing. At this time, they complete and sign the Notification of Loss and/or Damage AT Delivery Form, which lists these items. The service member or the TSP can enter information from the Loss/Damage Report directly into DPS. If the customer intends to file a claim after the 75th day for any of the items, the information must be entered into DPS.

After delivery, the service member may identify other items that are missing or damaged. The Notification of Loss and/or Damage AFTER Delivery Form is designed so the service member can list these items, but there is no need to fill out this paper form if the service member would rather enter items directly into DPS. The service member must enter any items for which they will file a claim into the Loss/Damage Report form in DPS prior to filing the claim.

When service members file a claim in DPS, all loss and damage information is automatically pulled over from the Loss/Damage Report into the DPS Claims form. The service member can review this information in DPS before submitting the claim. After claims submission, the service member and the TSP can negotiate a settlement in DPS for the lost or damaged items.

The TSP has the following options when making an offer:

- Provide payment covering repair and/or replacement of one or more claimed items
- Replace one or more of the claimed items
- Repair one or more of the claimed items
- Deny the claim on one or more of the claimed items.

During the negotiation process, the service member can counter any TSP offer. DPS permits an indefinite number of rounds of claims and offers. If the service member determines they will not be able to reach a full claim settlement directly with the TSP, they can transfer either the entire claim, or any specific line item(s), to the MCO for their branch of service. It is important to note that upon transfer to the MCO, the government becomes responsible for reimbursing the customer. The MCO then negotiates with the TSP outside of DPS to reach a settlement with the TSP.

If the MCO is involved in settling a claim, they will make the necessary updates in DPS to record the amount paid to the customer as well as the amount recovered from the TSP.

The TSP's maximum liability on a shipment is \$5,000 or \$4 per pound times the weight of the shipment, whichever is greater, but not more than \$50,000. If the amount of your loss exceeds the TSP's maximum liability, you may file a claim with a military claims office for any loss in excess of the carrier's payment. However, the military claims office can only pay the depreciated replacement value or repair cost, whichever is less, for those items for which the carrier did not pay.

Full Replacement Value Eligibility

In order to be eligible for Full

Replacement Value (FRV), service members must file claims via DPS within 9 months from the date of delivery. If a claim is filed more than 9 months from the delivery date the service member will only be eligible for depreciated value up to two years from delivery. Exceptions to the filing timelines will be granted on a case-by-case basis. All claims must be settled or a final offer made within 60

days; however, service members may transfer claims for any reason to the appropriate MCO 30 days after filing. DPS tracks the status of claims throughout the entire claims process—from the first identification of lost and/or damaged items through the final claim settlement. For more information, including forms and helpful moving tips, visit the DPS website at www.move.mil ●

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