

Top Errors on Military PCS Travel Vouchers

From the Defense Finance and Accounting Service

Submitting incomplete or inaccurate vouchers can delay or prevent payment. Avoid these common errors:

- Inaccurate/ incomplete administrative information on DD 1351-2 (Blocks 1-14).
- Missing orders (attachments, endorsements, amendments, etc.)
- Incomplete itinerary on DD 1351-2 (Block 15)
- Missing traveler's official signature & date (Block 20 a-b)
- Missing Reviewer/Approving official signature & dates (Block 20 c-d)

Note: If your PCS voucher was not fully paid due to an error or omission, you can submit a supplemental travel voucher.

For any travel after November 1, 2010, you may not be reimbursed for a hotel booked using an online booking agent (orbitz, travelocity, etc.) UNLESS an itemized receipt from the hotel is also provided. The receipt from your online reservations will no longer be considered a valid receipt. Additionally, you cannot submit a "lost receipt" statement as a replacement for the online booking receipt.

Additional Tips:

- Personal Vehicle Use: When using a personal vehicle, be sure to complete Box 16 of Form DD 1351-2
- Lodging Costs: Submit all receipt copies for lodging costs, regardless of amount.
- Expenses: Submit receipts for all expenses incurred for \$75.00 or more
- Accruals/Advances: Submit data related to all previous accruals/advances received from finance offices (non-submission of previous payment data will result in payment delay).
- Form DA 31 Leave Form: Complete this form (or leave must be annotated on the DD 1351-2).
- Statement of Non-Availability: Stayed in a commercial hotel due to unavailability of quarters on base? Include this statement to receive reimbursement for commercial lodging and meals.
- Authorized TDY: If you are authorized TDY en route, please ensure that your orders reflect accurate and complete TDY information.
- Separate Orders: Although your TDY en route information should be included on your PCS order, sometimes you may receive separate orders. Submit copies of any/all orders received.
- Direct Deposit Information: Submit SF 1199 ONLY IF your financial institution changed since your last TDY or PCS move.

Travel Pay Services is now sending a detailed travel voucher summary via email to all military PCS travelers who provide a valid and legible email address on their DD 1351-2. This feature allows travelers to see what has been paid on their travel voucher, as soon as their voucher has been processed. Be sure to provide a valid email address on your future DD 1351-2 submissions.

For more information on your PCS travel benefits, visit www.dfas.mil/dfas/pcstravel.html.

Homeowners Assistance Program

In today's struggling housing market, the recently expanded HAP helps service members recoup some of the costs of selling their homes. Here's what you need to know.

Congress created the Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) 45 years ago to financially compensate eligible military and civilian Federal employee homeowners when the real estate market was adversely affected directly related to the closure or reduction-in-scope of operations due to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Public Law 111-5, expanded this program to also provide assistance to:

- Deployed wounded, injured, or ill members of the Armed Forces (30 percent or greater disability) and forward deployed wounded, injured, or ill Department of Defense (DoD) and Coast Guard civilian homeowners (including employees of non-appropriated fund instrumentalities) reassigned in furtherance of medical treatment or rehabilitation or due to medical retirement in connection with their disability;
- Surviving spouses of the fallen
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 impacted homeowners relocating during the mortgage crisis; and
- Service member homeowners undergoing Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves during the mortgage crisis.

To qualify for HAP, a service member must have:

- owned home prior to July 1, 2006
- have PCS orders dated between February 1, 2006 and September 30, 2010. (This date may be extended to September 30, 2012, at the discretion of the DUSD(I&E) based on availability of funds)
- reassigned to a new duty station or home port outside a 50-mile radius of the member's former duty station or home port
- suffered a decline of at least a 10% in home value from the date of purchase to date of sale (market value of the home will be verified by the USACE).

Service members have had many questions about the program and its recent changes. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers straight from the DoD:

Q. Who is eligible for Conventional (original) HAP assistance?

A. Conventional HAP applies to certain:

- Active duty service members and federal civilian employees assigned at or near the affected installation.
- Owner-occupant and assigned at or near the installation on the announcement date – military personnel who normally rotate back to the installation are also eligible.

- A Non Appropriated Funds Instrumentalities (NAFI) employee at a facility operated in conjunction with the installation.
- A civilian or NAFI employee who a U.S. citizen is serving overseas at the time of the announcement, who is entitled to reemployment rights at the affected installation.

Q. How do I apply?

A. Visit the HAP web site: <http://hap.usace.army.mil/> and download the application package. Complete the application and mail to the Corps district responsible for the area in which your home is located.

Q. What is the basis for HAP benefits?

A. HAP benefits are based on the prior fair market value (PFMV) of the applicant's home

Q. How long before I will receive my benefits?

A. The normal processing time is between 60 and 90 days provided all required documents are submitted.

Q. Will the Government reimburse me for mortgage interest?

A. For BRAC, WII/SS the Government will reimburse you for mortgage interest (not principal payments), taxes, and hazard insurance premiums that have been paid from the date the Corps district office received your application, or the date of vacating of the premises, whichever is later.

Q. If I am foreclosed upon, what will the Government pay or not pay?

A. The Government will pay all legally enforceable liabilities; but will not make up past payments. If you deed the property back to the mortgage company in lieu of foreclosure, your application will be processed as a private sale. The Government will not pay outstanding judgment liens, encumbrances of a personal nature, or junior mortgages acquired after acquiring the property unless the junior mortgage was obtained at the same time as the original mortgage or used to improve the property.

Q. A real estate agent expects a commission. Will the Government pay commissions when the Government purchases an applicant's home?

A. No. Applicants should ensure that the listing agreement for their property contains the following statement: "In the event the herein listed property is sold to the United States of America, or an agency thereof, the listing broker will not be entitled to any commission or other consideration as a result of such sale." If the listing agreement does not contain the above statement and any

commission is due, it is the applicant's responsibility to pay the commission.

Q. If I rent my home before I sell it, will it impact HAP benefits?

A. No. Rental income is not deducted from benefit payments.

Q. Do I need any HAP related additions to a purchase contract from a buyer?

A. Yes, you need to add the verbiage "Contract is contingent upon seller's eligibility for the Homeowners Assistance Program."

Q. What are the specific eligibility requirements for Permanent Change of Station (PCS)?

A. PCS refers to the assignment or transfer of a member to a different permanent duty station (PDS), to include relocation to place of involuntary retirement, under a competent authorization/order that does not specify the duty as temporary, provide for further assignment to a new PDS, or direct the military service member return to the old PDS.

Q. Are individuals assigned to an installation after the announced BRAC 2005 action eligible for Expanded HAP benefits if they purchased their homes after the closure/realignment announcement?

A. Applicant must have been the owner/occupant at the time of the BRAC 2005 announcement date of May 13, 2005. Contact the Corps district responsible for the area in which your home is located for further information. <http://hap.usace.army.mil/Contact.html>

Q. If I have to sell my home at a loss, and I qualify for the Expanded HAP program, will I be able to recoup 100 percent of my loss?

A. No, but it can offset your losses. Each individual's situation is unique, so contact the Corps District responsible for the area in which your home is located for assistance. <http://hap.usace.army.mil/Contact.html>

Q. At what point should I market my home?

A. As soon as you know you will be relocating. Two eligibility requirements for the program are

- the applicant must have made a reasonable effort to sell the home, and
- relocated beyond a reasonable commuting distance.

However, in some instances, applicants may be eligible without relocating under BRAC 2005 provided they lost their jobs due to a base closure or realignment and demonstrate a financial hardship. Contact the Corps district where the home is located for more information.

Source: <http://hap.usace.army.mil>