



TORII LEGAL ASSISTANCE

OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE



EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDENTS

Adapted from an article written by the Camp Zama Legal Assistance Office

Many families on Okinawa are happy living on the beautiful island of Okinawa. There are times when dependents can face certain situations where they need to move back to the United States or their home country while the Soldier remains on Okinawa. Some of these Family Members qualify for an Early Return of Dependent (ERD) move at government expense. Not every Family Member is eligible for an ERD and those who are eligible, are only approved under certain circumstances. The chain-of-command must approve the ERD and this does not always happen very quickly. Below is some information to help you better understand the ERD process.

Who is eligible for an ERD?

To be eligible for an ERD from Okinawa, the following criteria must exist:

- The Family Member must be Command Sponsored.
- The Soldier must be stationed in Japan.
- The Soldier must not already have an approved Permanent Change of Station, Separation, or Retirement.

Under what circumstances is a Family Member eligible for and ERD?

There are numerous reasons that a Family Member could qualify for and ERD. Complete details are available in the Joint Travel Regulation, but some common examples are:

- Medical reasons where a certain treatment may not be readily available on Okinawa.
- Divorce or separation.
- International situations concerning a Family Members safety.
- Lack of adequate housing or education.

How does a Soldier request an ERD?

A Soldier should contact his chain of command and the Soldier's personnel office to assist with the request. Sufficient evidence and justification must be included when requesting an ERD. The following documents should be provided when requesting and ERD of Family Members:

- DA Form 4187 Request for Personnel Action, which includes the reason for the request;
- Statement from the Soldier explaining in detail the full nature of the request;
- Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Orders;
- Family Member(s) statement regarding the request.
- A letter recommending ERD from a counselor (marriage counselor, chaplain, Army Community Service, finance (if applicable)
- Medical documentation and or letter from a physician (if applicable);
- Command Endorsements.

Note: After the U.S. Army pays for an ERD move, additional funds will not be provided for any return trips back to Okinawa.