

1. What is the DoD Rotation Policy on Overseas Tours?

Since 1966 it has been Department of Defense (DoD) policy to limit the time appropriated fund civilian employees in the *competitive service* spend in foreign areas to 5 years. This typically equates to one foreign area tour (three years) and one renewal agreement tour of duty (24 months). The policy was established to provide management the necessary flexibility to regulate the ever-changing foreign area workforce requirements, provide a continuous flow of jobs for newly assigned personnel, and to provide career-enhancing opportunities for continental US (CONUS)-based employees.

- [\(DoD CPM 1400.25-M, 301.4-2a\)](#)
- [\(Five-Year Limitation on Foreign Employment, DoD Memo, 26 Mar 97\)](#)

2. What benefits/advantages are there to this rotation policy?

The 5-year rotation policy has been in effect since 1966. It was instituted by DoD in response to Commanders' concerns that the knowledge of civilians overseas was becoming dated; while civilians in CONUS who would benefit from overseas rotation were not getting the opportunity to serve overseas. The policy is predicated on the view that the overseas assignments are but one step in the career management process. The opportunity for careerists to serve overseas is important to the DoD overall career development strategy. Careerists working overseas gain greater in-depth knowledge of the DoD worldwide mission, bring that knowledge back to the United States and integrate it into CONUS operations thus completing that part of the developmental cycle. Originally, the policy only applied to GS-7 and above (the minimum level at which CONUS recruitment normally occurred). The policy was modified in 1988 to include lower grade levels as well. The modification was one of several initiatives taken by DoD in response to Commanders' calls for greater employment opportunities for military family members. The rotation of lower graded non-family member employees opened up more employment opportunities for family members. Adding the lower graded positions was part of a broader package that expanded family member employment opportunities and included congressional action mandating preference for military spouses.

3. Are employees on overseas limited (OSL) appointments covered by the DoD policy?

Yes. Although employees on an OSL are not required to sign a rotation agreement, they are subject to the provisions of the rotation policy. The typical appointment is not to exceed 5 years. Unless management grants an extension, the employee is terminated at the end of the 5-year period. (Employees in positions not subject to the 5-year limitation may be given overseas limited appointments of an indefinite nature. NOTE: OSL appointments are being phased out in USAREUR.) [\(DoD CPM 1400.25-M, 301.4-2d\)](#)

4. Are employees on temporary or term appointments covered by the DoD policy?

Yes. The rotation policy applies to all DoD positions in the competitive civil service in foreign areas. However, because most of these types of positions are normally made for less than five years, the employee's appointment should expire before reaching five years in the overseas area. [\(DoD CPM 1400.25-M, 301.4-2a\(1\) and 301.4-2d\)](#)

5. Are NAF employees included in the rotation policy?

No. The limitation on foreign service only applies to positions in the Appropriated Fund competitive civil service in all DoD components. It does not apply to non-appropriated fund positions.

6. Are civilian attorneys subject to the DoD rotation policy?

No. Attorneys are typically appointed using Schedule A, excepted service appointments under 5 C.F.R. Part 213. As such, attorneys are not subject to the DoD policy which specifically applies to competitive service positions. No other DOD or DA guidance subjects attorneys to the five-year limitation or rotation. In addition, no infrastructure currently exists to accommodate the rotation of civilian attorneys.

- a. Civilian attorneys are specifically identified as ineligible to register (for the attorney series) in the DOD priority placement program (PPP).
- b. Civilian attorneys do not receive statutory reemployment rights to their former stateside positions.
- c. Responsibility for attorney career programs rests with their Qualifying Authority. See JAG Pub 1-1, paragraph 13-4; AR 690-200, chapter 213, subchapter 4 and appendix C.

7. Can a previously exempt employee become subject to the rotation policy?

Yes. An exempt employee may become subject to the rotation policy. Typical examples are: a person hired as a GS-5 in 1987 is selected for a new position to the GS-7 level or a Non Appropriated Fund (NAF) employee accepts an appropriated fund position. On the date the action takes place, the employee signs a rotation agreement for a period of time equivalent to one renewal agreement tour of duty and is immediately subject to the provisions of the rotation policy. After the initial tour, all prior Appropriated Fund service, not interrupted by one year of CONUS residence, is then used in computing their 5-year period. ([DoD CPM 1400.25-M 301.4-2a\(2\)](#))

8. Are there any agencies in the European Theater to which the policy does not apply?

The limitation on foreign service normally applies to all competitive service positions in all DoD components in the overseas area. Professional educator positions in DoDDS for example are not in the competitive service and therefore excluded from the rotation policy. Because this is a DoD policy, it does not apply to any non-DoD agency.

9. Why isn't a rotation policy in effect for all Army employees worldwide to include CONUS to ensure equal opportunities for positions in other locations?

The rotation policy is not a stand-alone program. It is part of a system designed to support the concept of overseas recruitment and rotation. This includes many benefits not available to career employees in CONUS i.e., tax free living quarters allowance, guaranteed reemployment rights, travel and transportation entitlements for return travel to the home of record, student travel and paid renewal agreement travel. None of these entitlements exists in the United States where each assignment is "permanent" as opposed to a "rotational" assignment.

10. Will the 5-year rotation policy be strictly applied or is it up to the Commander's discretion?

The establishment of the DoD rotation policy was based on Commanders' concerns regarding the rotation of career employees through the overseas area. The intent of the policy is to ensure a continuous rotation of employees between CONUS and OCONUS. USAREUR also recognizes the uniqueness of the mission and the subsequent need for managers to have the flexibility to manage their workforce. Therefore, USAREUR established a policy that allows senior level commanders the authority to extend an employee beyond the five-year mark. 5-year limit. This gives the Commander the needed flexibility to perform mission essential functions.

11. Are there any exceptions to this policy?

The following categories of employees/positions are exempt:

- Employees in positions that require frequent contact with officials of the host nation and a detailed current knowledge of the culture, laws, customs, and/or government processes of the host nation. The employee's position description must clearly specify these duties are required of the position. A requirement to speak the host-country language is not sufficient reason to designate a position exempt from rotation.
- Employees who are family members and accompanied military or civilian DoD employees to the foreign area.
- Employees in the Senior Executive Service (SES).
- Employees who were employed in the foreign area on or before April 1, 1966.

- Educators in the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) Systems.
- Employees employed on or before Aug 1988 in GS-6 or below or in non-supervisory wage grade positions remain exempt as long as they remain continuously employed at those levels. ([DoD CPM 1400.25-M 301.4-2a](#) and [4-2e \(1\) and \(4\)](#))

12. DCIPS positions are not subject to the rotation policy because they are in the Excepted Service. I am a DCIPS employee and I was required to sign a rotation agreement. Why am I subject to tour rotation?

The DoD rotation policy applies to competitive service positions. However, in USAREUR a decision was made to apply the rotation provisions to DCIPS employees as well. By [memorandum](#) dated 6 August 1997, subject: Overseas Tour Policy for USAREUR Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System (CIPMS) Employees, all USAREUR DCIPS employees became subject to tour. Similarly, on 08 April 2004, the 5th Signal Commander [informed](#) its DCIPS employees that they too are subject to the DoD rotation policy. The purpose was to provide both management and employees a scheduled opportunity to systematically review and determine if it is in the best interest of the organization, mission and/or an individual's professional career to extend an employee's overseas tour.

13. My position requires frequent contact with Host Nation officials. What does my supervisor need to do to exempt my position from the rotation policy?

Only a General Officer or SES or equivalent, Commanders of USAREUR commands and staff principals or their equivalents may authorize a position to be exempt from rotation. When making a decision to designate a position exempt from rotation, DoD criteria must be met. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301, para 5-3b\(1\)](#)).

14. I am a family member on a career appointment hired locally and my sponsor has departed the command. Am I still exempt from the rotation policy?

Locally hired family members on career or career-conditional appointments who lose their family-member status must inform their servicing CPAC of the status change. These employees become subject to rotation and must sign AE Form 690-33.301 A-R (Rotation Agreement for Family Members with Career or Career Conditional Status Who Lose Family Member Status While Employed Overseas).

15. I am a career employee originally hired from the United States thus subject to a rotation agreement. Last week I married a member of the Uniformed Services and I am now a family member. Am I exempt from the rotation policy now?

Although you may be a family member for other purposes, you are bound by the provisions of your rotation agreement and thus not exempt. ([AR 690-300.301 para 5-2a and 5-2a \(1\)](#)).

16. What are the different types of extensions that may be granted and who has the authority to grant them?

Extension of initial tour: Employees completing an initial overseas tour may have their tour extended up to 24 months. Tour extensions may be approved by commanders of USAREUR commands, HQ USAREUR/7A staff principals and assistant staff principals. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301, para 5-3a\(1\)](#)).

Extensions beyond 5 years: Only general officers, senior executive service personnel, commanders of USAREUR major subordinate and specialized commands (AE Reg 10-5, app A), and HQ USAREUR/7A staff principals and their equivalents may approve extensions beyond 5 years. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-3b\(1\)\(a\)](#)).

Short Term Extensions: Employees who have not accepted an offer through PPP may be granted an extension, normally not more than 6 months, for compassionate or personal reasons on an individual

basis. Some examples of when a short term extension may be appropriate include allowing children to complete the school year, allowing the employee or an employee's family member to continue short-term medical treatment; or to coincide with the sponsor's tour expiration, etc. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301, Appendix G-3 e](#)).

17. Within USAREUR is management allowed to grant extensions to employees beyond 5 years?

Yes, General officers, senior executive service personnel, commanders of USAREUR major subordinate and specialized commands (AE Reg 10-5, app A), and HQ USAREUR/7A staff principals and their equivalents may approve extensions beyond 5 years. The extensions are granted based on mission requirements and organizational needs providing the employee meets the DoD criteria for extension. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301](#)).

Note - A supervisor/manager anywhere in the chain of command may determine the employee/position does not meet either the DoD or any locally developed criteria and disapprove the employee's request for an tour extension. In this instance, the request should not be forwarded to the individuals cited above

18. What is the DoD criteria for tour extensions beyond 5 years?

The employee must have an annual performance rating of fully successful or better, possess current knowledge skills and abilities required in their job and have successfully adapted to the overseas work and cultural environment. ([DoD CPM 1400.25-M, 301.4-2a\(4\)](#))

19. Do employees married to host country nationals receive any special consideration when they request an extension to their tour?

Neither the DoD nor the USAREUR policies make any distinction based upon the marital status of the employee. Tour extension decisions must be based on resource and mission requirements and be in the best interest of the command.

20. Are there any circumstances where the approving authority may grant an extension of less than 24 months?

If the position occupied by the employee is not expected to continue for at least 2 years, the approving authority may grant an extension of a lesser duration to meet operational requirements. If it is later determined that the position occupied by the employee will continue for at least 2 years, the original extension decision may be amended to allow for a full 24 month extension. Management also has the option to grant short-term extensions for compassionate or personal reasons on an individual basis. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 5-3a \(1\) \(b\)](#))

21. Are there any other situations in which an employee's tour may be extended?

Administrative tour extensions may be granted in the following situations:

Civilian employees whose overseas tour expires while they are deployed to support official missions will have their overseas tour administratively extended for up to 12 months from the date they return from deployment. This one-time adjustment is to allow for their registration in the DoD PPP and if applicable, have tour extension decisions made by their Commander.

Civilian employees who take military leave, annual leave (AL), or leave without pay (LWOP) from their civilian position to perform Active Duty military service may have their current tour/5-year overseas dates adjusted to equate to the same amount of time remaining towards their 5-year limit as they had before entering the Active Duty tour. The current guidance, USAREUR Supplement 1 to AR 690-300-301, paragraph 5-3.c.(2), dated 15 June 1999, is being revised to reflect this, however, until the new regulation is published, individuals should contact their servicing CPAC representative for information to request an exception to the existing policy, and for additional information.

[AE Form 690-300.301C-R \(Administrative Tour Extension\)](#) will be used to process administrative tour extensions. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-3 c](#))

22. What happens to employees when their request for extension is disapproved?

Employees on career or career-conditional appointments will either exercise their [reemployment rights](#) to CONUS or return through the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) ([DoD 1400.25-M, 301.4-2b](#)). Employees on an OSL appointment may be terminated. ([DoD CPM 1400.25-M, 301.4-2d](#)).

USAREUR recognizes the unique situation of our OSL employees. They are subject to the overseas tour limitation but are not eligible to register in PPP. USAREUR does not plan to take action that would result in the wholesale removal of overseas limited employees, and continues to pursue options to reduce impact on OSL employees.

23. What are the employment options for those who must return to the United States?

All career/career conditional employees who came overseas from another Army activity have statutory reemployment rights to their former position for five years. Career employees who come overseas from another DoD component may also have [reemployment rights](#). Those who do not have reemployment rights, or who choose not to exercise them because they are to a lower graded position than the one they currently hold, are required to register for placement through the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP).

24. How does the Priority Placement Program (PPP) work? How long may an employee remain registered in PPP?

The PPP is an automated, worldwide referral program used throughout DoD. It provides placement opportunities to eligible non-displaced overseas employees in vacant positions at DoD activities in the United States and provides placement opportunities for employees adversely affected by reduction-in-force worldwide. The PPP is a robust program that is currently placing approximately 750 employees per month. The selection of employees is based on their numeric priority (1 through 3). The basis of the numeric priority is the severity of the employee's proposed personnel action. Priority 1 registrants must be considered for placement before priority 2 and 3 registrants. The United States is divided into 4 zones for purposes of registration in the PPP. Employees should initially register for referral to the minimum number of activities likely to provide a job opportunity. They are registered within the zone from which they were recruited, the zone in which they last lived prior to moving overseas or a zone closer to the overseas area, but no further than the stateside location from which they were recruited. If after 90 days the employee does not receive an employment offer, the registration must expand to the closest adjacent zone and include up to two full zones. If after an additional 90 days there is no offer, the registration must include all of CONUS. Non-displaced employees subject to rotation, serving on permanent career or career-conditional appointments, remain in PPP until placed or decline a valid offer. Employees in receipt of a specific RIF notice of separation remain registered until they are placed, decline a valid offer, are scheduled to exercise [reemployment rights](#) within 30 days or until 12 months after the effective date of separation from the permanent position, whichever occurs first.

25. The dates on my rotation and transportation agreements are different. Aren't they supposed to match?

Normally, the dates on the rotation and transportation agreements are the same. Certain situations may occur where the dates may not match. For example, an employee is not extended and then accepts a position in another organization. The employee is PCS'd to a new overseas location signing a one-year transportation agreement. The dates of the rotation agreement and the transportation agreement no longer match. Management may however, extend the employee's tour under the rotation program as necessary to match the employee's eligibility for travel. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-1d](#)).

26. I have just accepted a Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA). Since it is not a competitive service appointment, am I exempt from the rotation policy?

VRA employees are subject to the 5-year limit. Upon completion of the two-year program in the Excepted Service, they are converted to a career or career conditional appointment in the Competitive Service. The exception would be employees who continue to occupy a GS-06 or lower graded position, or non-supervisory wage grade position and were initially appointed before 24 August 1988.

27. How long of a rotation agreement will I receive as a VRA?

If you have no DoD Appropriated Fund Service in the foreign area, you will receive a 36-month rotation agreement. If you have DoD Appropriated Fund Service in the foreign area, up to six months of service is counted against a 36-month rotation agreement. All rotation agreements will be for at least 30 months. The agreement will allow 24 months for your conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment, plus six months following conversion. For example: I previously worked 18 months in a DoD Appropriated Fund position before accepting my VRA. My rotation agreement would be for 30 months (36 months – 6 months = 30 months). If I had only worked 3 months, my rotation agreement would be for 33 months. (36 months – 3 months = 33 months). ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 5-5f](#))

The rotation agreement effective date is the date the VRA appointment begins. Periods of DoD Appropriated Fund overseas employment not interrupted by 1 year's residence in the United States will be used to compute the 5-year limit.

28. I am a family member and just accepted a position as a VRA. What is my status regarding the rotation policy?

Family members who accompanied their military or civilian sponsor to the overseas area and receive a VRA appointment are not subject to tour limits as long as they remain a family member. Family members are exempt from the DoD Policy and therefore do not sign a rotation agreement. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-5f\(4\)](#)).

29. I am a current NAF employee and have just accepted an Appropriated Fund position. What is the duration of my rotation agreement?

The rotation agreement for non-appropriated fund employees converted to Appropriated Fund employment is for 36 months. Once you have completed the initial 36-month tour, all previous DoD appropriated fund time, not interrupted by 1 year's residence in the United States, will count towards your 5-year limitation on overseas employment. None of the time spent working in a NAF position will be counted. ([DoD CPM 1400.25-M, CPM 301](#) and [USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-5 g\(2\)](#)).

30. I am currently serving on an OSL appointment. I have just been selected for a career conditional appointment through the Delegated Examining Unit. What type of rotation agreement am I required to sign?

Employees who receive a career or career-conditional appointment who have previous overseas DoD appropriated fund service will sign a rotation agreement for 24 months. The effective date of the rotation agreement is the date the appointment becomes effective. Once the initial tour (24 months) is complete, all periods of Appropriated Fund employment not interrupted by one year's residence in CONUS will be used to compute the 5-year limit. ([USAREUR Suppl 1 to AR 690-300.301 para 5-5 g\(4\)\(a\)](#)).

31. Six months ago I signed a rotation agreement for an additional 24 months. I have decided I would like to exercise my return rights and not complete the remaining 18 months of my tour. What do I need to do?

You must request approval to curtail your tour through command channels. The approving official for your curtailment will be the same person that approved your extension. If you have used any transportation

entitlements on your current tour, you must also request a release from your transportation agreement requirements.

32. I accepted a 36 months overseas assignment and am only part way through my tour. I have decided I do not wish to stay and complete my assignment. What do I need to do?

Your first step should be to set up a meeting with your supervisor and possibly your command staff to discuss the reason(s) you do not wish to complete your tour and to determine if there are any possible alternatives to returning to CONUS. If after this meeting, you wish to formalize your request, submit the request in writing through your command channels to the approving authority.

If you have been here less than 1 year, you should also request a release from transportation expenditures incurred by the government on your behalf for the move here.

Keep in mind that curtailment of an overseas assignment can be extremely costly to you. You could be liable for both the move to the overseas area as well as your return to CONUS (unless your request for tour curtailment and/or release from transportation agreement is approved, based on acceptable reasons to the command).

Specific information with regards to service agreement violations can be found in the Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2 Ch 5: Permanent Duty Travel, Part L: Service Agreements, Section 5: Agreement Violation, Part C5586 Agreement Violations for an OCONUS Employee.

33. Last year I was called to Active Duty for 14 months with a duty assignment in the United States. I am now back to work in my civilian position in Germany and want to know if this is considered a new overseas tour because I spent more than 12 months in the United States?

No, this is not considered a new overseas tour. Although you were on an Active Duty assignment in the United States, you were still on civil service rolls here in Germany in a Leave without Pay - US status.

34. Can management withdraw an approved tour extension after the employee was notified it was approved and has taken Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT)?

Yes. Commanders authorized to approve tour extensions may curtail tours and correct improperly extended tours. The employee must be provided a written explanation as to why the tour-expiration date is being changed. Further, the memo must indicate that the employee would need to exercise return rights, if entitled, or register in PPP within six months of the existing DEROS.

NOTE: In this case management would waive repayment of RAT as long as the employee was within the RAT window and traveled based upon the approved tour extension. Management will also pay any unexpired lease penalties incurred by the employee.

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