

10 Financial Tips to Do Before You Deploy



For military families, deployments are a way of life and it always pays to be ready. Preparation is the key to making sure everything is in order and taken care of while you are on deployment.

Have a designated financial caretaker in your absence – To help you manage your finances while deployed, choose a trusted person like your spouse, parent or other responsible friend whom you trust, to oversee your finances.

Communicate, communicate, communicate! – Communication with your spouse, partner or other person responsible for your financials while you're deployed is very important in staying on top of your financial situation. Establish a communication plan before you deploy so you can discuss how bill payments, major purchases and other financial decisions will be handled.

Establish a power of attorney and draft or update your will – While you're deployed, it may be necessary for someone to make decisions on your behalf. A power of attorney allows you to legally grant an individual to act on your behalf. You will want to draft or update your will to ensure your property is handled as you intend in case of your passing. For assistance preparing your power of attorney or will, contact the legal office on base or use the U.S. Armed Forces Legal Assistance locator to find legal help near you.

Update emergency information and life insurance – It's important to make arrangements for your property and benefits to be transferred in case of serious injury or death. Before you deploy, review your Record of Emergency Data* to make sure it's current. This is used to contact next-of-kin, designate a beneficiary to receive certain military benefits and to identify an individual to coordinate funeral arrangements. Also, update your Service Members Group Life Insurance form, which identifies the legal beneficiary for your payment in case of death.

Establish a budget and savings plan – You may have extra income during a deployment, but you and your family should live on your pre-deployment income by keeping a spending budget/plan. Deployments are an ideal time to start saving by getting into the habit of setting money aside to prepare for unexpected financial challenges. See if you're eligible to take advantage of savings programs like the Defense Department Savings Deposit Program and Thrift Savings Plan.

Make sure bills are paid on time – Even while deployed you're still accountable for financial obligations at home. Set up automatic bill payments prior to deployment to avoid late payments. Your bank, credit union or other financial institution can help you set those up.

You have rights, understand them* – The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act offers a wide variety of protection and financial relief for active-duty service members, including activated members of the National Guard and reserve, during deployment. Including a 6 percent cap on interest rates and many other protections. However, for many of the protections you are required to take action and request relief.

The best thing for you to do is contact your nearest Armed Forces Legal Assistance Program. Look for the Armed Forces Legal Services locator to find one near you.

Protect Your Property **

Homeowners: Update your homeowners insurance, and notify your insurance company if your home will be unoccupied. If you don't have a home security system, install one for added protection during your absence. Check that you have adequate coverage for your valuable personal property, and arrange to store it with a friend or relative, or in a storage facility.

Renters: If you plan to put your personal belongings into storage, help make sure they're protected with renters insurance.

Drivers: Check with your auto insurance carrier to see if storing your vehicle or removing yourself as an operator will lower your premium. If someone else will be driving your car while you're deployed, you may need to add that person to your policy.

*Information contributed from Real Warriors Campaign

**From USAA.com

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