

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 1754.7A
30 JAN 1996

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1754.7A

Subj: COAST GUARD SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

- Ref:
- (a) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Public Law 93-112, 504, 87 star. 394, as codified at 29 U.S.C. 794.
 - (b) Memorandum of Understanding between DoD and DOT, signed 18 NOV 91, Coordination of Overseas Assignments of Coast Guard Service Members Who Have Children Who Require or Are Likely to Require Special Education
 - (c) Department of Defense Directive 1342.12, Education of Handicapped Children in DoD Dependent Schools
 - (d) Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336, 104 Star. 327, as codified at 42 U.S.C. 12101.
 - (e) Defense Dependents' Education Act of 1978, Public. Law 95-561, 92 Star. 2365, as codified at 20 U.S.C. 921.

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this instruction is to provide policy and guidance concerning the Coast Guard Special Needs Program.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders; commanders, maintenance and logistics commands; commanding officers of Headquarters units; Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy; unit commanding officers and officers in charge; Family Program Administrators (FPA's); Dependent Resource Coordinators (DRC's); and Work-Life Supervisors shall ensure compliance with the contents of this instruction and ensure widest dissemination.

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3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. COMDTINST 1754.7 is cancelled.
4. APPLICATION. This instruction applies to all Coast Guard personnel (active duty, civilian and retired) having family members with special needs. Enrollment in this program is required for all active duty members with family members with special needs.
5. DISCUSSION.
 - a. The Coast Guard Special Needs Program was developed and implemented in 1984 to assist Coast Guard families with special needs and to address the unique challenges and concerns which are above and beyond normal, military family life issues. The intent of this program is to identify and support the special needs of the family member while meeting the mission of the Coast Guard. Currently over 2000 Coast Guard families with special needs have been identified and enrolled in the program. These active duty members have successfully continued their careers, their family member's special needs have been addressed and the integrity of the Coast Guard family has been enhanced.
 - b. The Special Needs Program, in concert with other military and civilian agencies, provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to enhance adequate medical, educational, psychological and community support for family members with special needs. Services are provided through relevant Work-Life staffs before, during and after reassignment. Location and timing of an assignment involving members enrolled with special needs families are given careful consideration by detailers and Commandant (G-PWL-2) for availability of necessary resources and to permit the member to best continue a Coast Guard career while meeting the mission needs of the Coast Guard.
 - c. Enrollment in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program is required by active duty personnel as a condition of employment. This will help ensure early identification of families with special needs and maximize the provision of quality services to reduce family stress and undue hardship while minimizing costly and disruptive Humanitarian Assignment requests and early returns of dependents from outside of the continental United States.

- d. Coast Guard civilian personnel with family members with special needs are encouraged to enroll in the Special Needs Program to take advantage of assistance in the identification of necessary resources and support.
- e. Although there is no statutory requirement for such a program, the Coast Guard has determined as a matter of policy that a Special Needs Program is essential to the welfare of its military members, civilian employees and their family members.
- f. Commandant (G-PWL) is responsible for implementing this program through Coast Guard area and district commanders, maintenance and logistics commands (MLC's) and Work-Life Staffs.
- g. This program is comparable to the Department of Defense Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

6. POLICY AND SCOPE.

- a. Provide support and assistance to active duty, retired and civilian Coast Guard family members with diagnosed and professionally documented long-term medical, physical, psychological, mental or educational disabilities. (Included in this category are those family members who are chronically ill and/or orthopedically handicapped; hearing, vision and/or speech impaired, have chronic psychological problems and/or mental retardation; and/or are learning disabled, emotionally disturbed or multi-handicapped. Further definition is provided in enclosure (1));
- b. In order for special needs situations to be taken into consideration for assignments and other personnel decisions, all active duty members must enroll their family members with diagnosed special needs in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program;
- c. Active duty members shall not be adversely affected in their selection for promotion, schools or assignment due to their enrollment in this program;
- d. Information concerning enrollment or data used in this program shall not be made part of the service record of the member nor the official personnel file of the civilian employee. All information shall be kept strictly confidential in a locked file cabinet with access only by authorized personnel. Any case information maintained in a data base shall be physically and electronically secure; and
- e. Eligible active duty members who do not require or request assistance still must enroll in this program.

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7. PROCEDURES.

a. Commandant (G-PWL) shall:

- (1) Provide coordination of the Coast Guard Special Needs Program service-wide;
- (2) Initiate and develop policy, procedures, revisions and guidance concerning the Coast Guard Special Needs Program;
- (3) Review, assess and maintain documentation on all special needs cases provided by military or civilian agencies, Work-Life staffs, Family Advocacy Representatives (FAR's), units, assignment officers, medical staff, educational systems, districts and commands to ensure appropriate education, prevention and intervention and case decisions and Judgments have occurred; guidance and support have been provided; and case recommendations have been made whenever necessary;
- (4) Maintain the Central Registry for special needs cases Coast Guard-wide for review, coordination of transfers, tracking, and providing accurate monthly and annual statistical reports;
- (5) Provide direct technical guidance to Work-Life staffs on special needs cases or issues;
- (6) Exercise final review authority regarding special needs case decisions;
- (7) Track and implement trends in national, Federal and DoD special needs related programs;
- (8) Prepare reports and maintain statistics for the Special Needs Program service-wide;
- (9) Develop and establish training and written materials to provide education Coast Guard-wide on special needs issues for all relevant personnel (FPA's, FAR'e, DRC's, commands, medical staff, chaplains, assignment officers, etc.);
- (10) Represent Coast Guard interests in meetings and contacts with Department of Defense, national, Federal and state agencies and organizations;

- (11) Conduct regular Quality Assurance Visits of all special needs case files under the management/review of the FPA and provide a written report of findings to the District Commander or Commanding Officer responsible for the administrative evaluation and oversight of the duties and responsibilities of Work-Life staffs;
 - (12) Provide assistance and guidance to all Coast Guard personnel on special needs and related Humanitarian Assignment requests and overseas screening issues;
 - (13) Identify and assess national resources/services and programs, both civilian and military, to enhance the provision of quality and available services to family members with special needs service-wide; and
 - (14) Provide annual lists to FPA's and DRC's of all special needs cases within geographic areas of responsibility.
- b. District commanders and commanding officers with FPA's shall:
- (1) Implement policy and program objectives as described herein;
 - (2) Ensure special needs training is conducted, in accordance with training requirements as prescribed by Commandant (G-PWL), for all commands, FAR's, Work-Life Supervisors, FPA's and DRC's in their geographic areas of responsibility;
 - (3) Require identification and enrollment in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program for all members with special needs family members; and
 - (4) Identify and facilitate the prompt availability of adequate and appropriate medical, psychological and/or education services, through existing military or civilian medical and educational facilities, for all active duty family members with special needs being considered for assignment out of CONUS or isolated in CONUS assignments. This particularly pertains to families with special needs being considered for assignment overseas. Ensure copies of these evaluations are provided to Commandant (G-PWL-2), relevant FPA's and DRC's.

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c. Supervisors of FPA's shall:

- (1) Implement policy and program procedures as described herein;
- (2) Ensure special needs case files are secured; this shall include providing a private locked office and file cabinet for the physical security of files;
- (3) Ensure only personnel with a need to know are provided access to case information and files;
- (4) Supervise and provide administrative support to FPA's and DRC's; direct all technical and policy questions to Commandant (G-PWL-2);
- (5) Use applicable Quality Assurance Visit reports provided by Commandant (G-PWL) when rating the performance of the FPA and DRC;
- (6) Ensure members with special needs family members are identified and enrolled in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program; and
- (7) Ensure all special needs cases are managed in accordance with the criteria delineated in enclosure (2), Case Management/Review of Special Needs Cases.

d. FPA's shall:

- (1) Provide coordination and direct case management of all special needs cases within geographic areas of responsibility;
- (2) Obtain, review and analyze documentation on all special needs cases provided by Headquarters and other FPA's, DRC's, districts, MLC commands, units or FAR's to ensure appropriate services and support are being provided. Make case recommendations whenever necessary;
- (3) Review and co-sign all special needs cases at least annually in which DRC's are providing documentation unless the case is considered to be an "at risk" (of family violence) special needs case or already a family violence case. If so, these cases shall then be managed exclusively by the FPA. Sign off on all special needs cases to be transferred or closed;
- (4) Maintain a list of all active duty members with special needs family members updated quarterly, in conjunction with the DRC, within geographic areas of responsibility and provide a list annually to Commandant (G-PWL-2);

- (5) Identify and enroll active duty members with special needs family members;
- (6) Provide ongoing coordination and communication with Work-Life staff specialists, especially the DRC;
- (7) Notify members' commands whenever their family members are enrolled in the Special Needs Program;
- (8) Represent and advise district commanders, MLC commands and commanding officers, officers in charge and Work-Life Supervisors, in conjunction with the Work-Life DRC, in all areas pertaining to special needs;
- (9) Maintain special needs cases on children until they reach 21 years of age and/or are no longer a dependent; or the member is discharged from the service; or the special need of the family member has been resolved;
- (10) Send special needs cases of retired Coast Guard personnel to Commandant (G-PWL-2) to be kept in inactive status pending request for further services;
- (11) Manage special needs cases involving members who are Geographic bachelors but whose family members with special needs reside within their area of responsibility;
- (12) Not use E-mail to transfer case information or provide discussion of any special needs cases or situations;
- (13) Maintain all special needs case records in accordance with Privacy Act Systems Notice DOT/CG 641, the Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.2 (series), and the Paperwork Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series);
- (14) If disclosure of case particulars is made to an agency outside the Department of Transportation (DOT), the name and address of the person or the agency, the date, agency involved, and purpose for the disclosure must be made part of the special needs case record by the FPA or DRC; and

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(15) Disclose case information within the following guidelines:

- (a) Disclose to personnel of the Coast Guard who have a need to know the information within the record in the performance of their official duties;
- (b) Disclosure outside the Coast Guard within compliance with the routine uses of records published in the system of records notice. Specifically, this pertains to:
 - (1) Federal, state and local government or private agency for coordination of special needs programs, medical care, mental health treatment, and monitoring and tracking special needs families;
 - (2) Individuals or organizations providing family support program care under contract to the Federal government.
- (c) Individuals requesting access to special needs case records should write to: Commandant (G-TPS), USCG, 2100 Second St., S.W., Washington, DC 20593-0001. Only Commandant can disclose case information or provide copies of case files to private individuals.

e. DRC's shall:

- (1) Provide assistance to FPA's with special needs cases and case documentation;
- (2) Provide special needs contact and follow-up, by telephone and/or face to face contact, with each family enrolled in the Special Needs Program within areas of responsibility at a minimum of once a year;
- (3) Document in the special needs record each contact and any activity pertaining to those families ensuring each entry is signed and dated by the individual making the entry;
- (4) Provide information to all Coast Guard personnel, within geographic areas of responsibility, concerning relevant policy, procedures and required enrollment in the Special Needs Program;
- (5) Identify and enroll all Coast Guard active duty members with special needs family members within geographic areas of responsibility;

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- (6) Access and assess relevant resources (medical, educational and psychological services/programs), both civilian and military, in close collaboration with other Work-Life specialists, within geographic areas of responsibility. Create and maintain a resource file;
 - (7) Provide ongoing coordination and communication with FPA's and commands concerning all identified families with special needs;
 - (8) Provide all obtained special needs enrollment forms and supportive medical, educational and/or psychological documentation to relevant FPA's to enable them to provide appropriate case management/review;
 - (9) Ensure multi-disciplinary support, guidance, advocacy and follow-up to Coast Guard personnel with special need family members whenever necessary;
 - (10) Maintain and update a list of all active duty members with special needs family members within geographic areas of responsibility and provide a quarterly copy of that list to the FPA;
 - (11) Not use E-mail to transfer case information or provide discussion of any special needs cases or situations; and
 - (12) Report immediately all suspected or substantiated family violence incidents to relevant FPA's, commands and appropriate state agencies whenever any such information is provided or obtained.
- f. Unit commanding officers, officers in charge and their FAR's shall:
- (1) Ensure enrollment of active duty members with special needs family members at individual units providing members with the enrollment form with the Privacy Act Statement included;
 - (2) Keep no case files and/or supportive documentation (medical, educational or psychological) of the family member with special needs at the unit level. All such information shall be sent immediately, upon receipt, to FPA's or DRC's. Clinical records shall be kept in accordance with COMDTINST M6000.1, (series) Medical Manual, Chapter 4;
 - (3) Inform FPA's and DRC's of Coast Guard personnel who have family members with special needs; and

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- (4) Ensure information and enrollment forms are provided to all unit personnel concerning relevant policy and required enrollment in the Special Needs Program.
- g. Commanding Officers of units with clinics shall:
- (1) Ensure every effort is made to provide material assistance to families with special needs;
 - (2) Provide families with information regarding health benefit plan alternatives; and
 - (3) Comply with paragraph 7.f. (1), (3) and (4).
- h. Coast Guard active duty members with family members with special needs shall:
- (1) Complete the Coast Guard Special Needs Enrollment and Assessment Form (CG-5494) (enclosure (1)) for each identified family member;
 - (2) Obtain and provide copies of current medical, educational and/or psychological documentation/evaluations when submitting the Special Needs Enrollment and Assessment Form to relevant FPA's or DRC's;
 - (3) Provide an update of all information to FPA's or DRC's every two years or sooner if the situation warrants;
 - (4) Inform individual assignment officers, Commander (MPC-opm-2) or (MPC-epm-2) and FPA's or DRC's of any special needs family member(s); and
 - (5) Send the completed forms and documentation to relevant FPA's or DRC's. Place forms and supportive documentation in double envelopes and mark "FOUO" on the outside of the inner envelope.
- i. Directors of Coast Guard Child Development Centers shall:
- (1) Inform FPA's, DRC's or FAR's whenever a family with special needs is identified; and
 - (2) Encourage enrollment of families with special needs in the Special Needs Program.

- j. Ombudsmen shall:
 - (1) Inform unit FAR's, DRC's, FPA's and commands whenever a family with special needs is identified; and
 - (2) Encourage enrollment of families with special needs in the Special Needs Program.
- 8. FORMS. Coast Guard Special Needs Enrollment and Assessment Form. Security classification shall not be given to this form. This form may be reproduced locally.

WC DONNELL
Chief, Office of Personnel
and Training

- Encl: (1) Coast Guard Special Needs Enrollment and Assessment Form
(2) Criteria for Case Management/Review of Special Needs Cases

Enclosure (1) to COMDTINST 1754.7A

COAST GUARD SPECIAL NEEDS ENROLLMENT AND ASSESSMENT FORM
PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT:

Data required by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a)

AUTHORITY: 14 U.S.C. 632.

PRINCIPAL PURPOSES: To obtain family information needed to evaluate and document the needs of family members for special education and/or health related services. Information will be used by personnel, Commandant (G-PWL-2), to evaluate and document the health related needs of family members and to document the special education needs of school age family members. This information will enable assignment personnel to match needs of family members against the availability of special education and health related services by assignment location, service-wide.

ROUTINE USES: Provide information to Federal Government agencies for coordination of special needs programs, medical care, mental health treatment, and monitoring and tracking of special needs families. Provide information to individuals or organizations providing family support program care under contract to the Federal Government.

DISCLOSURE: The provision of requested information is mandatory from active duty military personnel. Failure to respond may preclude processing requests or consideration for out-of-CONUS assignments. Proper medical and educational evaluations of family members cannot be made without completion of this form.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, USCG, CG-5494 (6-88)

DATE: _____

SPONSOR'S NAME: _____ SSN#: _____

RATE: _____ DISTRICT: _____ UNIT: _____

WORK NUMBER: _____ HOME ADDRESS: _____
(INCLUDE ZIP CODE)

HOME NUMBER: _____

NAME OF CHILD/SPOUSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

DATE OF BIRTH OF CHILD/SPOUSE: _____

TYPE OF DIAGNOSED SPECIAL NEEDS CONDITION (Deaf, Vision or Speech Impaired; Cerebral Palsy; Mental Retardation; Attention Deficit Disorder; Down Syndrome; Spina Bifida; Seizure Disorder; Learning Disabilities; Developmental Delays; Emotionally Disturbed; Hydrocephalus; Chronic illnesses such as heart, kidney, cancer, asthma, blood disorders, tumors; Depression; Head or Spinal Cord Injuries; etc.):

CAUSE OF SPECIAL NEED (if known):

TYPES OF THERAPY/TREATMENT NEEDED OR CURRENTLY RECEIVING
(Speech; Physical Therapy; Occupational Therapy; Psychotherapy; Chemotherapy; Radiation; Specific Medications; Medical Specialists; etc.):

Enclosure (1) to COMDTINST 1754.7A

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND/OR PROGRAMS ATTENDED OR PRESENTLY ATTENDING
(Infant Stimulation; Center Base School; Home Resources; Residential Treatment Facility;
Learning Disabled Classes; Resource Room; Special Education Classes; Chemical Substance
Program; etc.):

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED (Wheelchair; neck, arm, leg and/or back braces; crutches;
apnea monitor; hearing aids; glasses; modified car or van; feeding devices; communication board
(Bliss); etc.):

SUPPORT GROUPS USED, IF ANY (Parents of Down Syndrome Children; Parent Groups Within
Schools; Parents of Learning Disabled Children; National Parent Network on Disabilities; Easter
Seals; National Cancer Society; Candlelighters; etc):

SPECIAL PROBLEMS AND/OR CONCERNS: (Availability of Special Schools and/or Programs;
Lack of Medical Specialists/Therapists, Medications and Equipment; Support Groups; etc.):

NAME OF FAMILY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR (FPA) AND TELEPHONE NUMBER:
NAME OF UNIT FAMILY ADVOCACY REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) AND....TELEPHONE
NUMBER:

HAS A COPY OF THIS ENROLLMENT FORM AND SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION
BEEN SENT TO YOUR FPA OR DRC?

YES _____ DATE _____ NO _____

HAS A COPY OF THIS ENROLLMENT FORM AND SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION
BEEN SENT TO HEADQUARTERS (G-PWL-2)?

YES _____ DATE _____ NO _____

ESTIMATED DATE/YEAR OF REASSIGNMENT: _____

Enclosure (2) to COMDTINST 1754.7A

CASE MANAGEMENT/REVIEW OF SPECIAL NEEDS CASES

Family Program Administrators (FPA's) shall case manage or review all special needs cases in accordance with risk factors and criteria listed below:

- LEVEL I:
- Family is knowledgeable
 - Services are available and appropriate
 - Services are utilized by family
 - Once a year (unless otherwise requested by DRC's or other W/L staff) FPA's shall staff and review case with DRC's and sign case notes indicating a review has occurred

- LEVEL II:
- Family is knowledgeable
 - Services are available and appropriate
 - Family beginning to utilize services
 - Twice a year FPA's shall staff and review cases with DRC's and sign case notes indicating a review has occurred

- LEVEL III:
- Family becoming knowledgeable and accepting special need
 - Assessment of needs completed
 - Available services are identified
 - FPA's shall manage the case until services are in place and utilized by the family

- LEVEL IV:
- Family cannot/will not accept special need
 - Services are not available or appropriate
 - Family refuses to utilize services
 - FPA's shall manage the case until positive or permanent change occurs

- LEVEL V:
- Family Violence and Special Needs case
 - FPA's shall always case manage