

Soldier's Checklist

Automotive:

- _____ Proper periodic maintenance up-to-date (oil change, lubrication, tune-up, fluid levels)
- _____ Equipment in good condition (brakes, tires, battery, lights)
- _____ Insurance policy adequate (liability, medical, uninsured motorists, damage to automobile)
- _____ Road service policy (if desired; provides assistance with flats, lock-outs, and other emergencies)
- _____ Vehicle registration/license (on post and state) and renewal dates current/known
- _____ State annual safety inspection current and renewal date known
- _____ Driver's license for spouse current and renewal date known
- _____ Spouse has automotive papers (tire warranty, battery guarantee, insurance policy, road service card)
- _____ Spouse has automobile information: warranties/guarantees in effect and from whom; correct tire pressure and how to inflate and check tires; oil to use and how to fill and check dipstick; gasoline to use; where to go for maintenance and repair services; how to get emergency road service; where car keys and spares are located
- _____ Spouse familiar with bus routes and alternative transportation in case the family car is out of service

Family:

- _____ Unit has the complete current address and telephone number for your family, along with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of one or two relatives, neighbors, or friends who will know where your family is living (if you do not have a phone, list neighbors' numbers)

Make sure spouse has:

- _____ Name, address, and telephone number of your landlord or mortgage company
- _____ Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for your commander, Army Community Service Center, Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator, rear detachment commander, and Family Readiness Group representatives

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- _____ Current ID cards for each member of your family (check expiration dates)
- _____ Keys (house, car, garage, personal storage company, safety deposit box)
- _____ Marriage certificate
- _____ Birth certificates
- _____ Insurance policies (life, home, automobile)
- _____ Family social security numbers
- _____ Deeds and/or mortgage papers
- _____ School registration papers
- _____ Proof of service documents
- _____ Copies of orders and all endorsements
- _____ Shipping documents and/or household goods inventory
- _____ Court orders for support and custody of legal dependents
- _____ Unit mail card

And if appropriate:

- _____ Naturalization papers
- _____ Divorce decree and separation agreements
- _____ Adoption papers
- _____ Death certificate

Financial:

- _____ Class EE Savings Bond allotment applied for (if desired)
- _____ Bank or credit union accounts in both names with an “or” rather than an “and” between the names (checking, savings, and any other accounts)
- _____ Spouse has account number, bank books, checkbooks, ATM card
- _____ Spouse has credit cards, bills, information on amounts due, and when and how to report lost cards
- _____ Spouse knows amounts due on loans, monthly payment dates, addresses and phone numbers of loan companies
- _____ Spouse is aware of savings bonds and securities owned, where they are, and how to gain access to them if needed

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- _____ Spouse has a signed release from the soldier to pick up a copy of LES
- _____ Spouse is aware of all bills that need to be paid routinely, with address and telephone number for each (rent or mortgage, car payment, telephone, electricity, appliance/furniture payments, water, credit cards, garbage collection, all types of insurance, debt repayment, cable television, dues and subscriptions, and so on)
- _____ Spouse has access to copies of state and federal income tax returns for the last five years; the name, address, and telephone number of the person or company who helped you with your return last year, along with information, forms, and tax deductible receipts for the current year
- _____ Spouse knows where to go for financial assistance in times of crisis: Army Community Services, Army Emergency Relief, rear detachment commander, Family Assistance Center, Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator

Legal:

- _____ Spouse has the name, address, and telephone number of your private or military attorney or legal advisor
- _____ You and your spouse have current wills to specify how you want your property handled and distributed in the case of the death of either
- _____ If needed, spouse has Power of Attorney giving him or her the right to sign your name and do the things you could do if you were actually present; may be specific or general
- _____ Spouse has copies of all insurance policies, along with the name and telephone number of your insurance agents
- _____ Spouse has information on where to go for legal aid: Legal Assistance Office, rear detachment commander, Family Assistance Center, Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator

Medical:

- _____ Spouse has family medical cards/knows how to get medical records
- _____ Spouse has family immunization records; shots are up to date
- _____ Spouse knows medications/allergies of all family members
- _____ Prescriptions (medical and optical) are readily available
- _____ Rear Detachment Officer/ACS knows of family members with special needs, Exceptional Family Member Program, or chronic medical condition

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_____ Spouse has phone numbers for medical and dental services: emergency care, outpatient and inpatient medical care, pharmacy, routine or emergency dental care, and health benefits advisor for assistance with TRICARE

Security/Safety:

_____ Military or local police crime prevention survey for your quarters has been conducted

_____ Your home or apartment has at least a front door “peephole” and adequate locks on all doors and windows

_____ Your family's name is on the Military Police Quarters Checklist

_____ Your smoke detector is working and has a new battery

_____ Fire extinguishers are charged and are in good working condition; family members know where they are and how to use them

_____ Your family is familiar with alternate exits they can use to leave the home from each room in case of fire or other emergency

_____ Spouse knows how to reach police, MPs, fire department, ambulance, poison information center, chaplains, help line; locate numbers by the telephone

_____ Spouse and older children know how to turn off electricity, water, and gas in case of an emergency

To the Spouse

Once a unit has deployed, it is too late to realize you need your spouse's signature or don't know where things are or how important tasks are done. These problems can easily be avoided. The best solution is to be totally prepared.

True family readiness comes from a series of minor tasks accomplished well in advance rather than a sudden "crash" program begun after receiving an unexpected deployment notice. Last-minute rushing produces needless family worry and stress. It causes many parts of the family readiness plan to be left undone.

By looking ahead and anticipating the likelihood of a deployment, you and your loved ones can adequately plan for this separation. Remember, once your soldier has been deployed, the responsibility for your family transfers directly to you. Ultimately, you are responsible for knowing your rights and privileges and what resources are available to you as an Army spouse.

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- _____ Take AFTB classes
- _____ Get to know community resources, services, and locations

Automotive:

- _____ Get automobile key (and spares)
- _____ Get garage key (and spares), if applicable
- _____ Have oil changed, new oil and air filter installed, and car lubricated; know the mileage reading when the oil should be changed next
- _____ Make sure all fluid levels are up to normal (oil, transmission fluid, brake and steering fluid, water); know how to check and fill them yourself (if needed) and what gasoline to use
- _____ Make sure all vital equipment is in good condition and working order (including brakes, tires, battery, belts, hoses, headlights/high and low beams, tail lights, brake lights, turn signals)
- _____ Review your insurance policy to make sure it provides adequate coverage (liability, medical, uninsured motorist, damage to your car and others); know the renewal date, cost of renewal, who to contact to renew the policy (name, address, and telephone number)
- _____ Investigate a road service policy (if desired) to provide assistance with flat tires, towing, stalled engine, being locked out of your car, and other emergencies; know what your policy covers, when it expires and has to be renewed, cost of renewal, who to contact to renew (name, address, and telephone number); know what to do if you don't have this coverage and one of these events happens
- _____ Look into the renewal of state and on-post vehicle registration (year, cost, where to go, what to do)
- _____ Check your state driver's license expiration date, cost to renew, where to go, what to do
- _____ Check your annual state automotive safety check, if required (when it expires, cost to renew, where to go, and anything that may have to be repaired or replaced to pass this inspection)
- _____ Take possession of automotive papers (car registration, safety inspection, tire warranties, battery guarantee, insurance policy and certificate of insurance, road service card); know where they are, what they mean, how to use them
- _____ Learn where to go, who to see or call when you have problems with the automobile (routine maintenance, auto repair, tires, oil changes, and lubrication)

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_____ Learn what alternative transportation is available (on post, car pools, taxis, city buses, friends)

_____ Prepare a list of automotive “do’s and don’ts” and hints on car care

Family:

_____ Make sure your spouse’s unit has your name, address, and telephone number, along with the name, address, and telephone numbers of one or more people who will know where you are at all times (even if you travel or move)

_____ Get the name, address, and telephone number of your landlord, mortgage company, or government housing office

_____ Get the names and telephone numbers of key members of your Family Readiness Group, your unit’s rear detachment commander and chaplain, Family Assistance Center, Guard or Reserve Family Program Coordinator

_____ Make sure you have a military ID card for each member of your family

_____ Get the keys to your house, safety deposit box, personal storage company

_____ Know when ID cards expire, and have required forms signed by sponsor before departure

Make sure you have (if appropriate):

_____ Marriage certificate

_____ Birth certificates

_____ Insurance policies (life, home, auto)

_____ Family social security numbers (including your children’s)

_____ Rental or lease papers (if appropriate)

_____ Deeds and/or mortgage papers (if appropriate)

_____ School registration papers (if appropriate)

_____ Spouse’s proof of military service documents

_____ Copies of your spouse’s orders and all amendments

_____ Shipping documents and/or household goods inventory

_____ Court orders for support and custody of legal dependents

_____ Unit mail card

_____ Copy of your most recent allotment request (if appropriate)

_____ Naturalization papers (if appropriate)—know the expiration date and prepare paperwork in advance

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- _____ Divorce decree (if appropriate)
- _____ Adoption papers (if appropriate)
- _____ Death certificates (if appropriate)

Financial:

- _____ Take possession of appropriate bank books, ATM cards, checkbooks, credit union papers or books, credit cards
- _____ Know how to report lost credit cards and how to request replacements. If a credit card is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the issuing company AND the credit-reporting agencies listed in the front of the Resources section of this handbook.
- _____ Make sure you can make deposits and withdrawals with only your signature. If the account shows an “and” between your spouse’s name and yours, it requires both signatures; an “or” ensures you can make deposits and withdrawals in the absence of your spouse. This can be changed only while the soldier is here.
- _____ Keep a list of automatic deposits and withdrawals or payments made to financial accounts (paycheck, insurance, loan, or bill payments)
- _____ Have your spouse apply for a Class EE Savings Bond allotment (if desired and appropriate), and keep a copy of the signed application

Important documents you should have:

- _____ Get a Power of Attorney, unit mail card, and military ID card if you will have to pick up your spouse’s paycheck and/or mail from the unit
- _____ Prepare a list of outstanding payments, loans, and other obligations with due dates, amount owed, who to pay, contact person, address and telephone numbers
- _____ Prepare a list of investments such as securities or bonds with their value, contact person’s name, address and telephone number; know how to cash these in an emergency
- _____ Get copies of the past five years’ state and federal income tax returns and everything needed for the next filing, including due dates and who to contact for assistance in preparing the returns
- _____ Prepare a list of military and community organizations that offer financial advice, counseling, information, and assistance

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Legal:

- _____ Get the name, address, and telephone number of your military or private attorney or legal advisor
- _____ Get a Power of Attorney (general or limited) if you will need to sign documents or act on your spouse's behalf during the deployment
- _____ Make sure your will and your spouse's will are up to date and valid
- _____ Get copies of all insurance policies, and find out what is covered and to what extent; get contact person's name, address, and telephone number; ask whether you need a Power of Attorney to file a claim during your spouse's deployment
- _____ Secure a list of military and community organizations that offer legal advice, counseling, information, and assistance

Medical:

- _____ Make sure you have family medical cards for you and your children
- _____ Make sure you have family shot records for you and your children
- _____ Make sure current prescriptions for medicine and glasses or contact lenses are available
- _____ Get a list of military, community, state, and federal organizations that offer medical, mental or emotional, dental, and optical assistance

Security/Safety:

- _____ Request a military or local police crime prevention survey for your home
- _____ Add a "peephole" to at least your front door and adequate locks to all of your doors and windows
- _____ Place your family's name on the Military Police Quarters Checklist (or notify the local police if you live in a civilian community) if your family will be away from home for an extended period
- _____ Install a smoke detector (or check existing detectors) in key areas of your residence (kitchen, bedroom, living room, shop/garage)
- _____ Install a fire extinguisher (or inspect existing extinguisher) in key areas of your residence (also recommended for your automobile)
- _____ Discuss with your family alternate exits they can use to leave your home from each room in case of a fire or other emergency
- _____ Get a list of military and community organizations that offer security/safety advice, counseling, information, and assistance