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EARLY RETURN OF DEPENDANTS (ERD)

Sometimes the best interest of the Soldier, dependents, or the Government may require a dependent’s early return travel to CONUS. There are several ways a command sponsored dependent may return to CONUS on an Early Return of Dependents (ERD).

Early Return of Military Dependents for Personal Situations
Most commonly because of financial or marital difficulties. Other reasons include circumstances where essential medical treatment is not available in the overseas command or because of the death or illness of a dependent caring for minor dependents.

Early Return of Civilian Employee Dependents for Personal Situations
May be authorized when the employee is eligible for return transportation after satisfactorily completing the minimum service period (usually 36 months) or when the OCONUS command determines that is in the best interests to return dependents for compelling reasons of a humanitarian or compassionate nature. The civilian employee submits a request for travel orders to initiate the process.

Q: What is an ERD? A. An ERD is the early travel return of a Command Sponsored dependent, before the sponsor’s ETS or PCS move date, from an OCONUS Location. Travel through an ERD is paid for by the Army. If an ERD is granted the dependent will be returned to the United States; foreign-born dependants may travel to their native country. An ERD is the last resort after all other options have been exhausted.

Q. I am a dependent of a soldier and want to return home before my sponsor’s tour is over, what are the circumstances warranting an ERD? A. Circumstances warranting ERD can be found where:

a) Essential medical treatment is not available at current installation
b) Death or illness of a dependent caring for minor dependents
c) Education or housing for dependents is inadequate
d) International situation concerning safety of dependents
e) Compelling personal reasons such as financial or marital difficulties adversely affect the member’s performance of duties (a separation agreement IS NOT required for an ERD to be approved)
f) Dependent gets orders from Selective Service Board
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g) Lack of employment for dependents 18 years or older

h) Situations involving member court-martial, discharge, and/or prison term

i) The dependent is embarrassing to the U.S.; or is prejudicial to the command’s order, morale, and discipline

j) Divorce or annulment

A commander must first determine that the family’s problems cannot be resolved in the overseas command. Available resources must be exhausted before an ERD request can be granted. ERD should be used only as a last resort.

Q: Who approves an ERD? A. The Garrison Commander will approve or deny an ERD after carefully evaluating each request and determining if the ERD is in the best interest of the Government, the Soldier, and the family.

Q: Who can initiate an ERD? A. The Soldier, the dependent (if the sponsor is not available or declines to initiate the request), or the Command.

Q: What is the procedure for getting an ERD? A. The process is initiated by completing a DA Form 4187. Soldiers and dependents can get assistance through the Soldier’s personnel office, S-1. The personnel office will provide a checklist of additional requirements, which may include the following:

a. Completing AE Form 55-46A (Commander’s Soldier and Family Assistance checklist), which requires the individual initiating the ERD to meet with all agencies/programs listed on the form. Each agency will sign off and provide supporting documentation, if appropriate.

b. Updating DD-93 (Record of Emergency Data).

c. Completing a Statement of Understanding, acknowledging that once family members have returned to CONUS on an ERD, the Government will not provide travel and transportation if the family members decide to return to OCONUS.

d. Providing a copy of the sponsor’s orders and proof of Command Sponsorship.

Q. I have been approved for an ERD what am I entitled too? A.

a. An ERD entitles dependents to travel to CONUS at government expense. Foreign-born dependents may also travel to their native country. The dependent will receive individual orders.

b. Household goods shipment, POV shipment, and mobile home transport may be included.

c. While dependents returned prior to issuance of ERD orders are not reimbursed, an after-the-fact request may be made and considered by the approval authority.
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d. After an ERD has been executed, Soldiers must request command sponsorship to bring their dependents back overseas. Approval authority will consider the request but if the request is approved, the Soldier must serve 24 months thereafter; this requirement will not be waived.

e. Soldier may move dependents and household goods from the location in the U.S. where the family resides to the next duty station when the soldier PCSs from OCONUS.

Q. If I have other questions, what should I do? A. See a legal assistance attorney as soon as possible. Your lawyer can answer many questions and help you make a fair and informed decision about your options and alternatives. Our Legal Assistance Office stands ready, willing, and able to help you.

The USARAF/SETAF Legal Assistance Office number is DSN: 634-7041, Com: 0444-71-7041. If you need more information, please call for an appointment with one of our attorneys.

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