

## **SEPARATION AND DEPLOYMENT**

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## Deployment Emergency Contact Sheet

	Name	Phone/cell phone	Address	Email
<b>Your Marine/rank</b>		Unit:	Unit: Unit/Deployed:	
<b>Family Readiness Officer</b>				
<b>Other Family Members</b> (contact in case of emergency)				
<b>Police</b>				
<b>Fire/Rescue</b>				
<b>Hospital</b>				
<b>Nearest Military Installation</b>				
<b>Navy Marine Corps Relief Society</b>				
<b>American Red Cross</b>				
<b>Chaplain</b>				
<b>Neighbor</b> (contact in case of emergency)				
<b>Friend</b> (contact in case of emergency)				

## Deployment Checklist

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- Record of Emergency Data (RED) is current in Military Member Service Record Book (SRB).
- You and your children are registered in DEERS.
- Dependent's ID cards are current and will not expire while your Marine is away.
- If a child will turn 10 while Military Member is gone, make sure all paperwork for ID is ready.
- Wills are current and safeguarded.
- Family Care Plan is current and safeguarded; ensure location of document is known.
- In loco parentis* document is current and copies provided to designated caregivers. General or special Power of Attorney is initiated if necessary.
- Parents & in-laws are aware of both your and the Military Member's address.
- Instructions are clear on pending family business. Potential problems are identified and potential solutions agreed upon.
- Checking/savings accounts are in order.
- Comprehensive budget is prepared and you have agreed on how much money each will spend.
- Plans are made for filing federal, state and local taxes.
- Auto inspections are up to date or instructions are left for updating them.
- Base vehicle decal is up to date.
- Insurance policies are up to date and safeguarded.
- If military member has a separate vehicle, keep insurance, but look into lowering premiums while they are gone (one driver less for 6+ months).
- Discuss the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society **pre-authorization** form. This form establishes the maximum authorized amount of emergency financial assistance that may be made available to you per NMCRS policy. Should you have a financial emergency, contact NMCRS for an appointment.
- Extra car and house keys are made and in a safe, accessible place.
- You know where fuse box/circuit breakers are and how to change or restart.
- You attend a Pre-Deployment Brief!!!**

# Normal Cycle of Emotions

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The way in which you and your spouse deal with emotions will vary from time to time and deployment to deployment. Since there is never a "textbook" deployment, there can never be one right way to cope. It is not uncommon for spouses to argue or stop talking, burst into tears unexpectedly, or experience difficulties with intimacy in the last weeks or days before a deployment. These types of feelings and behavior are absolutely normal and they should not be labeled good or bad. They are simply a part of the emotional cycle of deployments. Other people preparing for or returning from a deployment are experiencing the same emotions and situations. Below is a generalized listing of the flow of emotions you may experience – it is all normal so don't worry!

## **1. Anticipation of Loss**

- Ignore or deny that the deployment will actually happen
- Fantasize that the ship will sink before your Marine can get on it, or that something will happen so your Marine does not have to leave
- Difficulty accepting the reality of leaving
- Crying at unexpected things
- Increased tensions that could cause arguments
- Need to get all the 'projects' done
- Difficulty with intimacy
- Feelings of anger, frustration, and emotional distance between couples

## **2. Detachment and Withdrawal**

- Sense of despair
- Feeling that the marriage is out of control
- Making decisions is difficult
- Withdraw into yourself by not sharing emotions

## **3. Emotional Disorganization**

- Relief that the 'goodbye' part is over, but feeling guilty for the relief
- New routines develop, but overwhelmed by all the new responsibilities
- Sleeping is difficult due to loss of security and the spouse
- Anger towards your Marine for not staying and mad at the Marine Corps for making him/her go

## **4. Recovery and Stabilization**

- Comfortable and capable of all your new roles
- Able to reach out for support
- Feeling of self confidence and independence
- Going through the 'my' syndrome

## **5. Anticipation of Homecoming**

- Compile a list of things to do before your Marine comes home
- Excitement and anticipation of the return
- Questions of “Does he/she still love me?”
- Changing the house to reflect an ‘our’ house feeling
- Start changing patterns back to the way they were before your Marine left

## **6. Renegotiation of the Marriage Contract**

- May feel a loss of independence
- Start being a ‘married’ spouse again
- Share roles, responsibilities, and decisions
- A feeling of too much togetherness
- Hesitation towards intimate relations
- Falling in love again!

Each person is unique and may deal with these emotions in different ways. It is important to understand that all of these are **NORMAL** emotions. Separation causes us to grow as individuals and it can strengthen the bonds that you share with your Marine.

## **Enhancing Personal Security**

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There is no absolute protection from assault, sexual or otherwise, but taking precautions can lessen the likelihood of being attacked. Increasing one's awareness of crime prevention tactics can decrease the possibility of being a victim.

### **Awareness of Situations**

- Accept the fact that you are a potential victim.
- Learn about crime prevention tactics. If you are safe from other crimes, you will be safe from sexual assault.
- Be aware of locations and situations where sexual assault is more likely to occur.
- Understand that sexual assault is motivated by anger, hostility, frustration, and a need to control.
- Know that there are agencies on base and in the civilian community, which specialize in counseling and care for all types of assault victims.

### **Security in the Car**

- Always lock the doors when entering and leaving.
- Have your keys in hand so you don't delay before entering the car.
- Prior to entering the vehicle, look inside to see if anyone is hiding there, even if the door is locked.
- Always use well-lighted routes when traveling alone at night; avoid dangerous and unfamiliar areas.
- If you have car trouble, raise the hood, tie a white cloth around the door handle, lock yourself in and wait for the police. If people stop and offer help, do not get out of the car; ask them to call the police for you.
- Keep your car in good running order with at least ¼ tank of gas at all times.
- If being followed, do not go home. Go to a well-lighted public place where you can get help.
- Never pick up hitchhikers!

### **Security on the Street**

- Stay alert to where you are and who is around.
- Whenever possible, take someone with you.
- Dress safely; wearing shoes you can run in and clothes that do not restrict your movements.
- Keep your purse close to your body and one arm free for emergencies.
- Be aware that potential attackers may ask questions or strike up conversations.
- If followed by a car, turn and walk in the opposite direction.
- If you are being followed, go to a lighted residence or business.
- Do not go to your car if you see people standing near it.

### **Security at Home**

- Lock your doors at all times – whenever you are at home or away.
- Do not leave a spare key hidden near the door.
- If going away, arrange for a close and trusted friend to pick up your mail and newspapers and to keep a watchful eye on your home. Buy a timer to turn lights on and off at night to create the illusion that someone is home.
- Report to the police any evidence that your doors or windows have been tampered with and any reports from your neighbors of prowlers.

## Operational Security (OPSEC)

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- OPSEC involves keeping potential adversaries from discovering our critical information. It protects our operations – planned, in progress, and those completed.
- Critical information deals with the specific facts about military intentions, capabilities, operations, or activities.
- Examples of critical information include, but are not limited to, flight schedules, troop/ship movements, temporary duty locations, and installation activities.

### **Four Primary Things to Remember about OPSEC:**

- Where and how you discuss this information is just as important as with whom you discuss it. Places like internet blogs and chat rooms are not the place to reveal any unit separation/deployment information; you can never be certain who is on the other end receiving this information.
- Determined individuals can easily collect data from cordless and cellular phones and even baby monitors using readily available and inexpensive receivers.
- Personal conversations conducted in public may be easily overheard.
- If anyone, especially a foreign national, persistently seeks information, notify your spouse or FRO. They will contact the Security Manager of the unit.

*Note: It is extremely important to practice good OPSEC at ALL times. Sensitive and critical information is handled throughout a Marine's career, not just during a deployment.*

## Care Packages

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A Care Package is a little bit of home that says, ***“I Love You ... I’m Thinking About You”***. With just a little planning, they can be a great link over the distance. Care packages are also morale builders during the deployment. Speculation and excitement run throughout an entire shop when just one package arrives. Below are some helpful hints to ensure your care package arrives in good condition.

### How to Send Care Packages:

Keep the packages small (no larger than a shoe box). Larger packages take longer to be delivered and are more cumbersome for your Marine to haul around. Smaller, more frequent packages are likely your better option. The U.S. Postal Service offers FREE boxes for Priority Mail. You can also order free boxes from the USPS online store (for use with Priority Mail shipping ONLY). The Recommended size is the #4 or #7 box.

### Packaging Tips:

Use plastic bags with zip-style closures for everything. They keep out sand and rain. Resourceful Marines are re-using them for all sorts of things. The quart size is great to keep their wallets and personal photos with them, in one of their many pockets, and they stay dry. If you're shipping a liquid (shampoo, eye drops), or items that are likely to melt or drip (Chapstick, deodorants, chocolate) be sure to pop it into a tightly sealed plastic bag first. That will help keep the rest of the items from getting gooey or ruined, just in case.

**The following is a list of highly desirable items for deployed Marines.** It is recommend that you keep the boxes small, about the size of shoe box or a Postal Service Express mailing box for easy transportation. **Suggested items:**

Books	Moist Wipes	Sheets of stationery
Cameras (disposable)	Music CDs	Snacks (cookies, granola bars)
Camper style foods	Nerf toys (small footballs, etc.)	Tea bags
Candy	Odor Eaters (for boots)	Toiletries (travel sizes)
Cards	Pencils	Toothbrushes
Chapstick	Pens	Toothpaste
Dental floss	Personal message	Travel games
Facial tissues	Phone cards	Travel mugs
Fast food Hot Sauce packets	Playing cards	Tuna snack kits
Flashlights	Postage	Valentines or other cards to celebrate your special occasion
Girl Scout cookies	Powdered drink mix	
Gum	Razors	
Magazines	Sardines	

**The following items are prohibited:** Illegal substances, Alcoholic beverages, Explosives - including fireworks. Offensive or obscene materials, including photos, drawings or any other material which may have the potential to offend members of the opposite sex, members of another race, background, etc.

## MotoMail

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MotoMail is an additional way of sending mail and corresponding with deployed Marines. This FREE system augments USPS letter mail by providing a discreet and secure way of sending a letter via the internet. This letter is then hand delivered to the Marine, usually within 24 hours.



### **How to use MotoMail:**

1. Sender logs onto [www.motomail.us](http://www.motomail.us) and creates a letter. Senders who do not have computer access, or have letters from children, can take their handwritten letters to a scanning location.

*Note: Scanning locations for handwritten letters include: Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center 29 Palms, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, and Marine Corps Base Quantico.*

2. The letter is sent to the MotoMail server.
3. The USMC Post Office serving the recipient's location downloads the letter to a special machine, which prints, folds, and seals it.
4. The letter is delivered through the unit mail call.
5. The Marine reads, and then may re-read the letter.

MotoMail is now offering two-way service communication. Marine's can now send letters home by MotoMail as well. Also, senders may also attach photos with their letters.

## **Thriving and Surviving - Hints on getting through it all!**

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- Start writing letters before they leave! It's always uplifting to have mail waiting when they arrive.
- Number your letters to be sure each is read and understood in order. Have your spouse do the same.
- Keep your letters as upbeat as possible.
- Plan activities that you can all look forward to such as a movie, trip to the base pool or cookout. Ask another family to join you.
- Wear your spouse's clothes, t-shirt, sweats, or robe around the house.
- Spray his cologne in your bedroom.
- Rent comedy tapes when you feel lonely.
- Look into a reliable, inexpensive long distance service here in the states. Have your spouse do the same where they are.
- Be careful on the phone. International calls can add up fast and before you know it you could have the burden of a huge phone bill.
- If you have a second car, keep it "healthy." Start it a couple times a week. Drive it periodically to keep the tires in good repair.
- Get together with friends! Have everyone bring a favorite dish to share.
- Ask your friends and relatives to send your spouse emails. Keep in mind that their receiving computer may be in an open area and easily read by "all present."
- Send email/letters via MotoMail.
- Make a videotape of your day—ALWAYS REMEMBER—do not put anything on a video that you couldn't show to any Marine who may be in the viewing area!!!
- Do not tell strangers your Marine is away. If someone calls, simply explain that your spouse cannot come to the phone, "May I take a message?"
- Remember, reliable communication is the key! Contact your Family Readiness Officer (FRO) for current, updated information. Their information comes from the Command and is updated as circumstances allow.
- Above all, when it comes to rumors, trust your Marine or Sailor. Do not create problems that do not exist. Don't believe everything you hear and only half of what you see.
- Limit the amount of news programs you view. It is too easy to become overwhelmed with all the information. Get your news from newspapers to avoid the visual overload of TV.
- Exercise!! Join or start a walking group, go bowling, do aerobics, ride a bike, go to the gym. There are several gyms available on the base with personal trainers to design a workout just for you.

## Romance

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- Make “deployment stationery.” Photocopy a few of your favorite photos on plain white paper and use the paper for your stationery. Perhaps a picture on your first date together or a candid wedding shot.
- Buy two copies of a book that you both would enjoy reading. Send one to your Marine or Sailor and you can both read the same book at the same time.
- Tape their favorite TV show and send it.
- Tape their favorite radio station and send it.
- Send “goodie” packages with some of their favorite snack food.
- Write a poem and send it with a small box of chocolates.
- Send a disposable camera and have your Marine or Sailor take pictures of their everyday life. Include a return mailer so they can return the used camera and you can develop the photos.
- “Movie Night”. Purchase a video that you have watched and enjoyed. Send it along with microwave popcorn and a letter telling what you liked about the movie.
- Send a ladies’ handkerchief scented with the perfume he loves you to wear.
- Host a “Bridal Shower”. On the invitations ask your guests to bring their wedding photos or their favorite photo from within their first year of marriage.

## Activities for Children

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- Have your child trace their hand or foot on colorful paper. They can use the paper to write a letter on. Send extra colored paper with the letter and ask for a return hand tracing.
- Have your child make a cassette tape, perhaps reading a favorite book.
- Draw pictures to send. Ask for “artwork” in return.
- Make bookmarks and place in their favorite children’s book at their favorite pages. Send a book with a cassette tape and ask for those pages to be read on the tape for return.
- Write a story and send.
- Decorate a t-shirt to send.
- Write a note on the back of a photo. Make a puzzle from the photo to send.

### **Additional Activities:**

1. Take a photo of each child with the parent who is deploying. Scrapbooks of photos, letters, and mementoes can be fun for children to make during this separation.
2. Send letters, photos, drawings, and taped cassette messages from the children about family events, outings, ball games, class plays, etc. Ask deployed parent to respond to children also.
3. Participate in command video tape recordings. These will be sent to the command for the holidays. It is a sure way of bringing joy and happiness to your deployed spouse.
4. Buy or plan presents for birthdays or holidays in advance. Attach special messages. Kids especially love to get gifts through the mail (T-shirts from various ports or items to share at school).
5. Keep a map showing the ports to be visited. Use map pins to mark each port. This lets the children see where their parent has been and know that each pin means homecoming day is closer.
6. Make a blanket or pillow out of deployed parent’s clothes. Pictures can be made into pillows as well.
7. Notify your child’s teacher and school since they often have special programs for children with deployed parents. Occasionally surprise the parent by sending some of the child’s schoolwork.
8. Make a calendar with your kids while your Marine or Sailor is gone. Write down special things they have done.
9. Have the deployed parent take a letter of the alphabet each day and use that letter to describe/identify what they are seeing or doing that day. (Example – Today I saw an Alligator, ate an Apple, and flew in an Airplane.)
10. Make a deployment countdown chain before the parent leaves. Remove one link for each day until reunion day. (In the event of a lengthened deployment, you may have to add a couple of extra links.)

## **How to Create a Shared Sense of Purpose After Deployment**

By: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

Coming together as a couple after any deployment isn't always easy or something that happens naturally. It requires effort, and an understanding that each person has grown and changed during the separation. A positive way to think about this is that both of you, service person and spouse, have developed your own sense of purpose coping with new experiences while apart. What's important now is to come together and create a "shared sense of purpose", that is essential for your well being as a couple, that of your children and your life in the community. This won't happen overnight; it will take time, mutual compassion and a desire to do so. Here are four steps to help you create a shared sense of purpose".

### **STEP #1: Understand Each Other's Sense of Purpose During Separation**

The returning service member's sense of purpose has been shaped by:

- Traumatic events that can be difficult to process and talk about.
- Identification and closeness with their military unit and comrades who have shared similar experiences.
- Regimentation in the form of highly structured and efficient routines.
- Heightened sensory experiences including sights, sounds and smells.
- Expanded self-importance and identity shaped by war.

The spouse's sense of purpose has been shaped by:

- *New roles and responsibilities.* Many spouses have assumed new or more taxing employment, oversight of finances and child rearing.
- *Community support trade-offs.* Some spouses and children left the military base to stay with parents and in-laws for various reasons, but will have experienced loss of connection with their military community, its familiarity and support.
- *Emotional changes.* Some spouses may have experienced growing independence and thrived on it; others may have found this a difficult time, leading to depression, anxiety, increased alcohol or substance use and abuse, and other symptoms of stress.

### **STEP #2: Recognize that the following concerns upon return are common, often shared or felt indirectly, and will require mutual adjustments and time:**

- *Home.* Life at home does not have the edge and adrenaline associated with wartime duty, which often leads to let down, disappointment and difficulty shifting gears.
- *Children.* Reconnecting with one's children is an anticipated event by service member and spouse. Children react differently depending upon their age, and can be shy, angry, or jealous as new bonds are reestablished. Discipline will now be shared, often resulting in conflicting opinions and styles.
- *Relationship.* Concern about having grown apart, growing close again without giving up individual growth and viewpoints, issues of fidelity, and being able to discuss these issues without raising more anxiety or anger challenge many couples.
- *Public.* While there has been widespread support of the service member, the public has mixed views of the war. Protracted deployment and an upcoming election may polarize the public, promoting media coverage that can undermine the pride and purpose military families feel about their involvement.

**STEP #3: Relationship Breakers: Most couples argue about three things: sex, money and children.**

Understanding the potential of these issues to divide rather than unite is key to reestablishing a shared sense of purpose. These issues involve:

- *Intimacy.* Intimacy is a combination of emotional *and* physical togetherness. It is not easily reestablished after stressful separations creating an emotional disconnect. Partners may also experience high or low sexual interest causing disappointment, friction or a sense of rejection. In due time, this may pass, but present concerns may include hoping one is still loved, dealing with rumors or concern about faithfulness, concern about medications that can affect desire and performance, and expected fatigue and alterations in sleep cycles.
- *Finances.* During the deployment, most service members and families received additional income from tax breaks and combat duty pay. Some families may have been able to set aside appreciable savings; other families may have spent some or all of the money on justifiable expenses and adjusted family budgets. This may create disagreement that can hamper the important work of building *shared trust* and financial planning as a couple essential to moving forward.
- *Children.* Children have grown and changed during deployment. Some returning Marines will see children for the first time. It is important to build upon the positive changes in your children, and work as a couple to address issues of concern that need improvement or attention. Discipline of children will now be shared and should be viewed as something that can be built together rather than criticized or ignored.

**STEP #4: Relationship Makers. Here are some thoughts and tips for building a shared sense of purpose and stronger family.**

- *Expectations.* Remember that fatigue, confusion and worry, common during this transition, often lead to short tempers. In that frame of mind, it is easy to revert to the relationship breaker issues listed above. If this happens, suggest taking time out and return to discussions when both parties feel more relaxed.
- *Enjoy life.* Find and do activities that are pleasurable such as a movie, a family picnic, bowling or shopping. Create time in your weekly schedule to do something as a couple, as a family, and one-on-one activity that is shared between returning servicemember and his/her child or children.
- *Give thanks.* Together, thank those people, family, friends, co-workers and new servicemember buddies, who have helped you and your family during this deployment. Showing appreciation through writing notes together, calling people or visiting them will bring a sense of fulfillment that reunites each other's experiences.
- *Communicate.* Talking together builds a shared sense of purpose. Desire to communicate is more important than details. Servicemembers often prefer to discuss war stories with military buddies to protect their spouse and family from traumatic memories. Spouses should not be offended. Other ways to communicate involve physical activity. Take walks, work out together or engage in a sport. Healthy communication involves processing feelings, new information and relieving stress. Read, draw, paint, dance, sing, play an instrument, or volunteer at church or in the community to keep a sense of perspective and individuality as you grow together as a couple.
- *Let time be your friend.* Time may not mend everything, but it is often one of the most important factors in healing and solving problems.

*L.I.N.K.S. for Spouses*

- *Be positive.* A positive attitude is one of the most important gifts you can bring to each other and your family during this time. Appreciating what one has gives strength and energy to a family and a couple. Special circumstances such as physical injury and psychological problems are not addressed in this fact sheet, and require additional support, information and resources.

*Know when to seek help.* Both service member and spouse have endured a level of stress, uncertainty, worry, and lonesomeness that can affect one's physical and mental health. If either spouse or service member suspects they may be suffering from a physical or mental health problem, it is essential to seek help. Many service members do not want to seek help for mental health problems from the military for fear of damaging their career. However, the consequences of letting a problem linger untreated can be much more damaging. There are excellent treatments, including medications, which can help people reclaim their lives and enjoy their families, as they should. You owe it to yourself and your family to be in good health.



## Notes for home....

