



Current Support Capabilities for Command Sponsored Accompanied Tours at Al Udeid AB, Qatar

(Current as of April 2014)

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in serving an accompanied tour in Qatar! This fact sheet addresses the immigration and residency requirements, as well as other unique aspects of transitioning to and living in Qatar. Please read the following information before you decide to apply for an accompanied tour.

Pre-Departure Requirements

Sponsors and their family members are required to obtain an official (maroon) or no-fee (blue) passport and multi-entry/exit visa (valid for 3 months or more) to immigrate into Qatar. While you may enter with just orders and a CAC ID or Dependent ID card, a visa will be required for residency once you arrive. Your current installation passport office will process the passport and visa applications for you and your family members. The entire process can take anywhere from 60 to 90 days and must be initiated at the earliest opportunity. Tourist visas and passports will not be accepted and will cause significant issues, delays, non-reimbursable costs, or fines.

Qatar Residency

The host nation requires that you and your family obtain a Qatar residency permit for the duration of your tour. Furthermore, you cannot procure a Qatar Drivers' License, cable television, internet, or telephone services without a residency permit. Be advised that the process of obtaining a Qatar residency permit cannot begin until you physically arrive in Qatar, and may take up to 30 days dependent on Qatar General Headquarters processing timelines. The local celebration of Ramadan, which lasts roughly 30 days, will add additional delays to all residency permit applications processed during this time. When your tour is completed, you must cancel your residency permit and the residency permit for all family members. Failure to do this could cause problems or fines upon your departure.

Family Housing

Command sponsored families live off-base in Western-style houses and apartments leased by the Air Force and located within gated communities in the capital city of Doha. All houses and apartments are fully furnished, to include washer and dryer, microwave, tables, chairs, couches and beds. The cost of electricity and water is paid by the military so you will not receive a bill for those utilities. Housing compounds typically offer such common-use amenities as clubhouses, outdoor pools, playgrounds, a sauna and steam room, gyms with exercise equipment, basketball and tennis courts, but actual amenities will vary based on the compound.

Because the Air Force is paying the lease, you will not receive an Overseas Housing Allowance. As soon as you accept responsibility for your new residence, you will lose your current housing allowance.

Concurrent Travel of Dependents

Concurrent travel of dependents with the military member is not automatic and depends primarily on the approval of housing at the time of your report date. If concurrent travel is not authorized and you arrive ahead of your family, you will stay in on-base quarters until you are issued keys to your off-base residence and your dependents arrive. If approval of housing has occurred, but the house is not ready yet, you may elect to bring your family with you and can stay off base utilizing Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA). You must stay in a pre-approved hotel, and a list can be provided.

Shipment of Household Goods

Accompanied personnel shipping household goods (HHG) to Qatar are limited to 25% of the full Joint Federal Travel Regulation weight allowance or 2,500 pounds, whichever is greater. Because your leased house or apartment is fully furnished, you should only need to ship kitchenware, bathroom items, clothing, and personal items that will help you decorate your home to match your style (e.g. artwork, paintings, and mementos). HHG shipments are accomplished via the One Time Only process and your servicing Traffic Management Office must solicit vendor bids. This will not hinder the movement of a member's personal property, but may create a slight delay in shipment.

Qatari Customs Officials strictly enforce the prohibition of certain items and you can expect them to open your HHGs for inspection. To avoid customs delays and/or prevent confiscation of personal items, military members and their dependents should read the Personal Property Consignment Instruction Guide for Qatar before shipping any HHGs, which is located at the following link: <https://tops.ppcigweb.sddc.army.mil/ppcig/menu/query/international.do>

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Pornographic or sexual items of any type and in any format
- Bulk religious items contrary to the Islamic faith (*a single Bible, crucifix or other religious item intended for personal use, not for proselytizing, can be mailed*)
- Pork or pork products
- Alcoholic beverages or any consumable item containing alcohol including distillation and brewing supplies
- Firearms of any type, including air and toy guns
- Fireworks
- U.S.-issued military equipment (uniforms/associated boots/hats excluded)
- Controlled substances and drug paraphernalia
- Chemicals, including alcohol (medicinal or industrial)
- Cuban cigars
- Sand, soil, rocks
- Handcuffs

- Weapons accessories, parts or periodicals
- Ordinary items containing coins; banknotes; currency notes or any security payable to the bearer; traveler's checks; platinum, silver, precious stones, jewels, or any precious articles
- Laser pointers of any kind
- Butterfly knives, automatic/switch blades no matter the size
- Batteries inside of electronics
- Lighters or torch/new or used

NOTE: Knives must be sheathed or completely covered with cardboard or other adequate material (inside plaque not covered or sheathed is not adequate)

Vehicles

There are several options for personal transportation after you arrive in Qatar:

1. Take a cab or pay for a local driving service.
2. Lease a vehicle from a local company, the cost of which ranges from \$600 to \$1,600 U.S. dollars per month, depending on the type of vehicle you choose.
3. Purchase a new car after you arrive and obtain residency. Some U.S. banks will not provide auto loans for vehicles purchased in Qatar yet you may be able to secure a personal loan. Local banks currently lend only 80 percent of the car's value and may require you to establish a checking or savings account before approval.
4. Purchase a used car. The quality of used cars varies and may require assistance from a local Arabic-speaking citizen.
5. Use a POV that you shipped.

You should note that Qatar does not allow the import of right-handed vehicles or vehicles with dark tinted glass, nor does it allow the import of any POVs that were manufactured more than five (5) years from its arrival in Qatar. If you ship your vehicle, keep in mind that it can take up to 90 days to arrive. It will take additional time for your vehicle to clear Customs so that you can receive and register it, and you may experience more delays if your vehicle arrives immediately before or during Ramadan due to limited local government work hours. For this reason, it is recommended that you ship your vehicle at least 90 days prior to your report date. It is also recommended that you obtain an International Driver's License before you depart your current duty station to bridge the gap between when you arrive and when you get your Qatar Driver's License (QDL), the latter of which is required if you wish to drive off-base after you obtain a Qatar residency permit.

Dependent Education

There are no Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) in Qatar, and there is no guaranteed admission of military dependents in any school. However, there are over 100 different private schools in Doha, many of which provide a quality of education that is on par with or exceeds many U.S. schools. Many of these private schools have lengthy waiting lists and one of the biggest challenges parents face is securing admission to their school of choice. Each school is unique with specific registration and administrative processes that must be completed prior to attendance. Schools in Qatar are not traditionally equipped to deal with any type of learning disabilities. Home schooling is also an option.

Regardless of whether you choose private schooling or home schooling, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), through the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP), provides funding and support. However, you **MUST** enroll in NDSP prior to registering your child for any school option. Upon receipt of approval from NDSP, you may proceed with completing the application for the pertinent school. Full program information is found at the following website: <http://www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/index.cfm>.

Child Care and Domestic Services

There are currently no military childcare facilities at Al Udeid AB. However, there are many mother and baby groups in Doha, and the website www.dohamums.com is a good resource for local nursery and childcare options. In addition, the cost of labor is inexpensive in Doha and domestic help is available. A housekeeper's salary ranges between \$400 and \$500 U.S. dollars per month, based on nationality. Most housing villas also have a "maid's room" you can set up if you choose to hire live-in domestic help.

Pets

Family housing residents may keep domestic pets such as dogs, cats, birds, and fish. However, bringing pets into Qatar can be complex matter. To import your pet you will need a permit from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture. This requires you to present a veterinary certificate of good health and rabies vaccination, which must be issued no less than 30 days prior to date of entry. Additionally, the following breeds of dogs will NOT be granted entry to Qatar: Japanese Akita, Shar Pei, Great Dane, Doberman, Boxer, Bulldog, Bull Mastiff, Rottweiler, Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Afghan, and Pug. Using a pet importing service is recommended in order to more easily navigate the rules associated with pet importation. The following links provide access to such services, however, these links are not intended to imply endorsement of their services: www.qatarpetrelocators.com and www.qatarpettravel.com. You should also check with the airlines for the latest policy.

Financial Management

In addition to basic pay, permanent party personnel who are accompanied by dependents while assigned to Al Udeid AB receive the following monthly pay entitlements:

- Basic Allowance for Subsistence, which varies between officers and enlisted personnel
- Hardship Duty Pay (\$50)
- Cost of Living Allowance, which varies based on pay grade, years of service, and number of dependents

It should also be noted that enlisted personnel are exempt from all Federal and State Income Tax Withholding while assigned to Al Udeid AB. Currently, the total tax exclusion for officers is limited to \$7,963.80. Anything above this amount is taxable. However, tax-free allowances, such as BAS and COLA do not factor into the officer pay cap exclusion.

Pre-Departure Training

In accordance with United States Central Command Operations Order 05-02, dated 16 June 2008, all DoD dependent family members, age 14 years and older, traveling to the USCENTCOM AOR for accompanied PCS moves must receive the following training prior to departure from home station:

- Level I Anti-Terrorism Awareness
- Cultural aspects of host country
- Medical threat and appropriate force health protection countermeasures
- Self-Aid and Buddy care training
- Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, and Nuclear personal protective measures and defense survival skills

Dependents age 13 and under may receive the above training at the sponsor's discretion.

Religious Support

Islam is the official state religion of Qatar. However, Qatar is generally tolerant of other religions and practitioners can worship in areas specifically designated by the state. Many command sponsored families choose to use the chapel services at Al Udeid AB, or at the neighboring Army post, Camp As Sayliyah.

The 379th Air Expeditionary Wing's Chaplaincy provides spiritual care to all Airmen and their families, and will accommodate accompanied families' religious support needs to the maximum extent possible. This includes advising personnel associating with local religious communities off the installation, engaging the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Force Protection Office to assess relevant concerns, liaising with local clergy (consistent with host nation customs), and appropriately identifying and publicizing off-base worship opportunities.

Legal Matters

You and your dependents are guests of the host nation and are subject to their laws and regulations. While criminal jurisdiction may be ceded to the U.S. for certain offenses, this is never guaranteed and service members and dependents should be mindful to understand and obey all local laws and regulations. There is currently no Status of Forces Agreement with Qatar.

The 379th Air Expeditionary Wing's Legal Office provides legal assistance such as wills, powers of attorney, and notaries, subject to availability. AF legal assistance attorneys are not authorized to represent service members and dependents in off-base disputes, and individuals with off-base disputes should retain the services of a host nation attorney. The Legal Office does not have a host nation attorney on staff, so any questions about local law need to be addressed with a Qatari attorney at the member's expense.

AFCENT GO-1B Waiver Provisions

A partial waiver of AFCENT GO-1B is applicable for permanent party members residing off-base. AFCENT GO-1B is partially waived with regards to alcohol, pets and quarters visitations. You should become familiar with the provisions of the waiver and its applicability for your particular circumstances.

Medical Care

Dependents receive medical care through a network of civilian providers in Doha managed by TRICARE Overseas Prime Remote. We encourage you to check out the program's provisions at their website: www.tricare-overseas.com/TPR.htm. A high western-standard of medical care exists in Doha; however, the community's ability to support special needs is extremely limited. Prior to acceptance in the command sponsorship program, you and your dependents are required to pass a medical screening process. Those enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) may not be allowed for assignment to this location.

Dental Care

Dental Care for dependents can be acquired through the Qatari Dental System via the TRICARE Dental Program just like the CONUS. Emergency dental may be available at the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group on a Space Available basis. Dental providers downtown can care for all adult and pediatric dental concerns.

On Base Medical Resources

The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group (EMDG) located on Al Udeid AB is an expeditionary hospital designed to care for primarily deployed military members. It is not staffed or equipped to care for children or chronic conditions. There are no pediatric formulations of medications or immunizations available. Such care is readily available through TRICARE Overseas Prime Remote. Medical care may be provided to family members on a Space Available walk-in basis for acute and primary care issues. Prescription pharmaceuticals not available through the Qatari medical system or the 379 EMDG can be ordered through the TRICARE mail order (Express Script) system.

Mail

Al Udeid AB has a postal service center at which you can request a PSC box, or you can use the sponsor's unit address. Packages generally arrive in 7-10 work days; priority packages arrive in roughly 2 weeks. Please note that you cannot send or receive alcohol, pork products, fireworks, or pornographic material within the USCENCOM Area of Responsibility. Doing so violates USCENCOM and U.S. Postal Service policies.