



FAMILIES AT AUAB FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



If I am accepted for a command sponsored tour, can I change my mind later?

The ability to change your tour election from accompanied to unaccompanied depends on a variety of factors, to include whether or not you have already departed your losing base, and whether or not you have relocated dependents or household goods at government expense. For more information, contact your servicing Military Personnel Section.

Can I withdraw my volunteer status for Al Udeid AB if I apply for and do not receive command sponsorship?

Airmen who volunteer and subsequently are selected for a tour at Al Udeid AB are not authorized to withdraw their volunteer status because command sponsorship was not available.

What if my family gets to Doha and doesn't like it. Can they come back early?

We ask that all families be patient and take the time to adjust to their new surroundings. A family's difficulty adjusting is not necessarily grounds for Early Return of Dependents (ERD). However, in accordance Airmen may apply for ERD under certain circumstances as listed in Joint Travel Regulation. It should be noted that dependent travel and transportation allowances may be provided only when:

- There is a valid need for the dependent to move, and
- It is determined that the problem or situation occurred after arrival at the OCONUS permanent duty station and local resources cannot resolve the problem.

In all cases, ERD must be shown to be in the government's best interest. Furthermore, ERD is not authorized if the military member already has his or her next assignment on file.

If my dependents return early, can I change my tour from accompanied to unaccompanied?

Early return of an Airman's dependent(s) does not have change the requirement that the Airman complete the prescribed accompanied tour length.

If I complete a 24-month accompanied tour at Al Udeid AB, will I still receive short tour credit?

All Airmen receive short tour credit upon completion of their assignment at Al Udeid AB. For Airmen curtailed prior to completing the entire tour, short tour credit is determined and awarded according to the rules reflected in AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*, Table 3.3.

How long can I expect to wait before I receive an answer on my Families at AUAB application?

The 379th Expeditionary Force Support Squadron (EFSS) will process your command sponsorship application to the approval authority in your gaining organization within 72 hours of receipt. As soon as a decision is rendered, 379 EFSS will notify you. The timeline for this decision can vary, but you can expect a decision no more than 30 days from the day you submitted the application.

I have been told that my dependents must be cleared through the OCONUS Family Member Relocation Clearance process, and I also require an AF Form 1466. Does this involve coordination with my local medical clinic or the Al Udeid medical clinic?

Your current military treatment facility will process your AF Form 1466. For overseas clearances you should have a face-to-face appointment with the medical clearance office to determine if there are any medical, educational or other Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) issues that need to be addressed. If your local military treatment facility finds no medical, educational or EFMP conditions for your dependents, then it coordinate with your servicing Military Personnel Section to complete the approval process. On the other hand, if there are medical, educational or EFMP concerns, your military

treatment facility must coordinate with the MTF at Shaw AFB and the AFCENT/SG office at Shaw AFB to determine if the identified needs can be supported in Qatar. (NOTE: there are a few command sponsorship positions at Al Udeid with CENTCOM PASCODEs, for whom MacDill AFB is the serving MTF). Please contact your local MTF and/or EFMP Office for further information and assistance.

What TRICARE program is used in Doha?

Dependents receive medical care through a network of civilian providers in Doha managed by International SOS as part of the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) remote. We encourage you to check out the program's provisions at their website: www.tricare-overseas.com/TPR.htm. Also, the TOP Regional Call Center is available 24/7 at toll free: 1-877-678-1207 or commercial: 44-20-8762-8384.

If we fall under TRICARE, who is my Primary Care Physician (PCP)?

The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group serves as PCP for all military members assigned to Al Udeid AB. For dependents, the International SOS/TRICARE staff in the Eurasia-Africa office will coordinate care with downtown network providers.

Can my dependents be treated by the Medical Clinic on base?

The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group (EMDG) located on Al Udeid AB is an expeditionary hospital designed primarily to care for deployed military members in an acute care setting, and is not staffed or equipped to provide routine or continuity of care for children or chronic conditions. Therefore, when considering an assignment to Al Udeid, it is important to understand the majority of care for dependents, especially children 12 and under will be provided by an off-base provider utilizing the TRICARE overseas program administered by International SOS. Medical care can be provided to family members 13 years and older on a space available basis. Prescription pharmaceuticals not available through the Qatari medical system or the 379 EMDG can be ordered through the TRICARE mail order (Express Script) system.

Is the Health Care System in Doha comparable to the U.S. Standards?

A high western-standard of medical care exists in Doha and English is spoken widely in the medical community. There are some cultural differences you may experience when accessing healthcare in Doha such as separate waiting rooms for men and women; however, overall the experience is similar to what you would experience in the United States. In addition, many medical facilities in Doha are accredited by international healthcare accrediting agencies such as Joint Commission International and the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards International.

If my family member needs to see a dentist, what options are available for dental care?

Family members are eligible for Dental coverage via the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). This is a Department of Defense program administered by United Concordia. Enrollment is voluntary and monthly premiums are required. You do not have to change your dental plan when you move as your TDP coverage is worldwide. So if you are already enrolled in the TDP you will be able to use this insurance in Doha. Monthly premiums are \$11.10 per month for one individual and \$28.87 per month for families. There are several dental practices in Doha that offer a wide-range of dental services and accept the TRICARE Dental Program. Please call toll free 1-844-653-4060 for any questions.

I just received notification of an assignment to Al Udeid AB, what is my first step in the Medical Clearance process?

Immediately contact your local Military Treatment Facility to complete the Air Force Form 1466 "Request for Family Member's Medical and Education Clearance for Travel" form if you are interested in and applying for command sponsorship. Since the Al Udeid AB hospital is staffed based on contingency requirements, there are limited healthcare capabilities. As such, family members who accompany their spouses to Al Udeid should anticipate receiving the majority of their healthcare in the local Doha medical

network. If you have specific questions, please call the TRICARE Overseas Program Regional Call Center at 1-877-678-1207 (or commercial 44-20-8762-8284) concerning the availability of network specialists in the region. You can also contact the Al Udeid Hospital Patient Administration Flight Commander at DSN 318-455-5332 with additional questions.

Can I live off-base and move my family to Qatar at my own expense without them being command sponsored?

Currently, only permanent party Air Force members with command sponsored dependents living in Qatar are permitted to reside off base. Additionally, non-command sponsored dependents are:

- Not authorized access to Al Udeid AB
- Not eligible for TRICARE Overseas Prime Remote
- Not eligible for local school tuition support from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

Furthermore, non-command sponsored dependents may not meet host nation immigration and residency requirements. For these reasons, you are advised against bringing your dependents to Qatar unless they are command sponsored.

Can my dependents travel with me when I PCS? If not, how long of a delay can I expect before my dependents can travel to join me?

It is highly recommended for service members to travel first (non-concurrently), due to the number of administrative items and integration with local processes and host country, and to have their dependents follow at a later time. This will help ease the transition and lower the amount of stress on the entire family. In addition, due availability of housing, concurrent travel of dependents is not automatic. Authorization for concurrent travel depends primarily on the housing availability as of your report date.

Can my dependents stay in a hotel while awaiting housing and draw Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA)?

There are no Temporary Lodging Facilities (TLFs) on Al Udeid AB and TLA is typically not authorized due to the high cost of hotels in Doha. 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 concurrent travel is authorized, and your family housing unit is not available, the Finance office will help you determine your TLA rate and the Housing office will assist with the paperwork.

Are there any limits to importing privately owned vehicles (POVs) into Qatar?

Right-handed vehicles or vehicles with dark tinted glass cannot be imported. Also, Qatar does not allow the import of any POV that was manufactured more than five (5) years before its arrival in Qatar.

How long does it take for a POV to arrive in country?

The average time to receive your vehicle from the time you ship it is 120 days. It will take additional time for your POV to clear Customs so that you can receive and register it, and you may experience delays if your vehicle arrives immediately before or during national holidays due to limited local government work hours.

Why do I need to be a resident of Qatar if I am command sponsored?

“Residency” is not the same as “citizenship.” The issuance of a residency permit is required by the host nation in order to reside in Qatar beyond the period of a visa. Residency also allows you to procure telephone, internet and cable TV service for your off-base government-procured housing.

Can I drive using my stateside driver's license or will I need a Qatar Driver's license?

The host nation requires a Qatar Driver's License for off-base driving after you have received your residency permit. Before you receive your residency permit, military members may drive with their stateside license, but will need an international driver's license in order to lease a car. Several companies offer international driver's licenses and it is recommended that you and your dependents obtain one prior to arrival in Qatar.

What financial entitlements will I receive in Doha?

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

- Basic Allowance for Subsistence
- Hardship Duty Pay
- Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), which varies based on pay grade, years of service, and number of dependents

Personnel assigned to Al Udeid are currently authorized Combat Zone Tax Exclusion.

What is Combat Zone Tax Exclusion and how does it apply in Doha? Is different between officers and enlisted?

Combat Zone Tax Exclusion means that enlisted personnel are exempt from all Federal and State Income Tax Withholding while assigned to Al Udeid AB. However, tax-free allowances, such as BAS and COLA do not factor into the officer pay cap exclusion. There is a cap for officers, and it changes annually (Please contact your finance office for more details).

If I bring my family, can I ship all of my household goods?

Accompanied tour personnel are limited to 25% of the Household Goods weight allowance or 2,500 lbs., whichever is greater unless specified on the travel order. The houses available to command sponsored families are fully furnished, to include a washer and dryer, microwave, tables, chairs, couches and beds. You should only need to ship your kitchenware, bathroom items, clothing, and personal items that will help you decorate your home to match your style, such as artwork, paintings, and mementos.

How long does it take for household goods to arrive in country?

Household goods usually arrive within 60 days; however, national holidays in which the host nation government operating hours are reduced, may result in additional delays.

How close are the houses to shopping and entertainment?

Shopping and entertainment venues can be found throughout the city, usually within 15 minutes of housing compounds.

Will I be authorized an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and/or Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)?

OHA is not authorized since housing units are leased for you by the Air Force. However, you will receive a COLA based on pay grade, years of service, and number of dependents. For more information on COLA, please visit the following website: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm>

What are the houses like in Doha?

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. Because they are leased for you, you will not receive an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA). 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.

Can I pick my own place to live in Doha or will it be assigned to me?

Your housing unit will be assigned IAW applicable Air Force guidance and information included on your Housing Application, DD Form 1746, *Application for Assignment to Housing*.

Can I come out for Permissive House Hunting to pick a place in advance?

Permissive House Hunting is not authorized at this location because you will be assigned a house or apartment based on your grade and number of dependents.

Are there any DoD Dependent Schools (DoDDS) in Doha?

There are no DoDD Schools in Doha; however, the Non-DoD School Program (NDSP) provides financial support to defray the educational costs to authorized dependents of eligible DoD sponsors assigned to foreign locations outside the commuting area of a DoD school.

Are my dependents eligible for the Non-DoD School Program (NDSP)?

Command sponsored dependents of permanent personnel assigned to Al Udeid AB, living in Doha, are eligible for NDSP.

How many schools are there in Doha and are they tough to get into?

There are over 100 private schools in Doha, many of which provide a quality of education that is on par with or exceeds many U.S. schools. Select private schools may have waiting lists and one of the biggest challenges parents may face is securing admission to their school of choice due to availability and the child's academic placement. Each school is unique with specific registration and administrative processes that must be completed prior to attendance. For more information on schools in the local area, please feel free to contact the Al Udeid Air Base School Liaison Officer by emailing: 379efss.arc@auab.afcent.af.mil.

How much do the private schools cost in Doha?

Private schools in Doha can be quite expensive with prices ranging from \$2,500 to \$18,000 per semester; however, the DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) provides financial support through the Non-DoD School Program (NDSP) to defray the educational costs to authorized dependents of eligible DoD sponsors assigned to foreign locations outside the commuting area of a DoD school. In most cases, NDSP support covers nearly all educational costs within the guidelines of the program.

How do I enroll in NDSP?

Go to the following website to enroll electronically:
<http://www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/procedures/index.cfm>

Can the AF guarantee my dependents' admission to a school in Doha?

The Air Force cannot guarantee your dependent's admission to any school in Doha.

Are there opportunities for me to practice religion in Qatar?

Practitioners of all religions can worship in Doha in areas specifically designated by the state. Specifically, the "Church City" communities of faith are large, vibrant, and ethnically diverse. The Catholic Church, for example, has dozens of worship services weekly in several different languages. The Anglican Center houses over 50 different Protestant worshipping communities. Many command sponsored families choose to use the chapel services at Al Udeid AB, or at the neighboring Army post, Camp As Sayliyah. Questions regarding religious support for Families at AUAB can be directed to: 379aewhc@auab.afcent.af.mil.

Is there a CDC on base? What childcare options do you have in Doha?

There is no Child Development Center, Child and Youth programs, or other on-base options for childcare like you may find at other overseas bases. However, there are off-base day care centers and mother and baby groups in Doha who are a good resource for childcare.

What impact does Ramadan have on American families in Doha?

During Ramadan, Muslims fast from sun up to sun down. As guests in the host country, you will be expected to refrain from eating or drinking in public during day light hours. You will also find that during Ramadan most local establishments and restaurants will not be open until after sunset.

Can I receive AFN channels in my house?

AFN Decoders are available for purchase through AAFES on base. Once you have purchased your decoder, you will need to purchase a satellite dish from a local company, as well as have them install it. Further information regarding installation of the satellite dish, as well as what direction it needs to be pointed, can be found through AAFES online or over the phone when registering your decoder.

I still have more questions. Who can I contact for more information?

Please contact the Command Sponsorship Program Manager at DSN 318-437-7682 or via e-mail at 379EFSS.FSM@auab.afcent.af.mil.