

You've been evacuated.



Now what?

This document offers information, guidance, and resources on evacuations. It does not take precedence over the post-specific evacuation cable issued by the Department of State.



May 2019

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Message from the Family Liaison Office

Dear Evacuees,

It is likely that you have left post quickly and have not had a chance to plan or think things through to figure out what happens now. I want to assure you that the Department of State is concerned about your welfare and we in the Family Liaison Office (FLO) will do all we can to assist you as you cope with this sudden return.

This evacuation information was put together by FLO as a resource and guide to help you settle into life in your safehaven. FLO is here to help everyone regardless of agency or position – within the framework of regulations. We will be your point of contact for questions and assistance during this evacuation. Please get in touch with FLO, either by email to FLOAskEvacuations@state.gov or by phone at (202) 647-1076 to provide your contact information. Once we have it, FLO will send you periodic updates and may invite you to attend town hall meetings, either in person or virtually.

We understand that evacuations are always difficult and disruptive, and that many of you are now dealing with family separations. We want you to know that we are here for you throughout the evacuation and afterwards. Don't hesitate to reach out to FLO for any reason.

Sincerely,

Susan Frost,
Director

Evacuation Definitions

The primary purpose of the evacuation of a U.S. Mission is for the safety and security of Mission personnel and their families. The following definitions are in accordance with Department of State regulations. Please note that the military uses slightly different definitions for some of these terms.

Authorized Departure: This type of evacuation is voluntary for official family members and non-emergency direct-hire employees. It allows the Chief of Mission greater flexibility in determining which employees or groups of employees may depart. There is no difference in benefits between authorized and ordered departure. *Employees and family members who choose to depart post on authorized departure may not return until the Under Secretary for Management has lifted the evacuation.*

Ordered Departure: An Ordered Departure evacuation is not voluntary. Family members and non-emergency staff are ordered to depart post on evacuation status. It is not uncommon for the status of an evacuation to shift from authorized to ordered, depending upon the situation at post. In some evacuations, all staff must leave and operations are temporarily suspended at post.

Drawdown: The evacuation of family members and non-emergency staff; emergency personnel remain at post. One of the tasks of the Emergency Action Committee at post is to determine which staff positions would be necessary during a crisis. In an evacuation, the post would be **drawn down** to that number, unless the crisis required the temporary closure of the post.

Safehaven: In an evacuation situation, the Under Secretary for Management might designate the U.S. or a foreign location as the official safehaven. Depending on the situation, the official safehaven could change during an evacuation. It might start out as a foreign location and then at a later date change to include the U.S. as an option.

Members of Household: Members of Household (MOH) are entitled to evacuation assistance, but cannot be ordered to depart. However, it is important to note that if an MOH is occupying U.S. Government housing, and the Chief of Mission (COM) feels that the presence of MOHs in post housing could impact post security resources or otherwise affect post operations, then the COM can direct the employee to move MOHs out of USG housing. In addition, if the MOH remains at post, they would not have access to official post facilities and services while the employee remains on evacuation.

Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA): The allowance given to official evacuees, based on locality per diem.

Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE): Part of the Subsistence Expense Allowance, M&IE is a flat rate not requiring receipts (amount varies depending on locality).

Commercial lodging: Any temporary lodging, such as a hotel, for which one pays a rent and can produce a receipt.

Non-commercial lodging: A lodging for which one does not pay a receipted rent, such as one's own home or a relative's residence.

Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA): An allowance available to employees whose official family members have not chosen to accompany the employee for a tour of duty at a particular post. The employee may be eligible for **Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (ISMA)** when, after an evacuation, family members are not allowed to return to post but the employee does.

Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance (TSMA): Following the termination of an evacuation and the conversion of a post to an unaccompanied status, or for educational reasons following the termination of an evacuation and reversion of post to accompanied status, the employee may be eligible to receive TSMA. Consult the Department of State Standardized Regulations 262.3 for a complete explanation of the eligibility requirements of these benefits.

Choosing a Safehaven: Factors to Consider

In an evacuation situation, if the official safehaven is the U.S., family members may choose a safehaven at any point in the United States including Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. They do not necessarily have to choose their home leave address. When deciding on a safehaven location, family members may want to consider the following options, and the pros and cons of each.

Family members who wish to travel to a foreign location are required to request permission. If the official safehaven is a foreign location, family members are also required to request permission to return to the U.S. or to travel to another foreign location. In all situations, travel might be approved on a cost-construct basis.

The Metropolitan Washington, DC Area

If the employee is evacuated, she or he **must** report for duty at the agency headquarters, usually Washington, DC. In this case, family members may wish to choose Washington, DC as their safehaven point. Family members evacuated earlier to a U.S. or authorized foreign safehaven may be permitted to rejoin an employee subsequently evacuated and reporting to duty in Washington, DC.

Being in Washington, DC has certain advantages, including FLO or the evacuated post's Community Liaison Office Coordinator working out of FLO; taking courses at the Overseas Briefing Center; and having the resources of the Department of State nearby. If a group of evacuees is located in the Washington, DC area, they have the opportunity to enjoy mutual support and may feel a little more in touch with the situation at post.

Other Locations within the United States

Often the most important factor for evacuees in making the safehaven decision is where their network of support is located. If family and friends are located on the other side of the country from Washington, DC that may well be the best safehaven. If the employee did not return to the U.S. on evacuation status, it may be even more important to be near a source of family support, particularly if there are small children involved. Although FLO makes every effort to keep in contact with all evacuees wherever they are located by phone or email, those located farther from Washington, DC have less access to certain resources. However, this is often less important to evacuees than the support of their family and friends.

Alternate Foreign Safehaven

Some family members born outside of the U.S. may prefer to return to their home country for family support. Post may request a foreign safehaven for a family member from the Department of State. If the request is approved, the evacuee will receive a Subsistence Expense Allowance based on the lower of the following: the locality to which s/he is evacuated or the standard CONUS rate. If the request was not approved, the evacuee cannot officially travel to or receive evacuation benefits in a foreign location.

Changing Locations

Once the evacuee has arrived at the safehaven location, he or she will not be funded for travel to another location during the period of the evacuation. One exception: funding for travel is allowed if the travel is to relocate and rejoin an employee newly returned to the United States. Family members who move from one location to another during the evacuation may do so at personal expense. SEA payments will then be based on the new location.

Resilience Strategies for Evacuees

Evacuations elicit a variety of different feelings, but the universal response to an evacuation is a sense of not being in control of one's own life. The individual feels powerless, caught in a situation which affects every aspect of life. Since this feeling is common, the following tips are suggested as ways to gain a measure of control over the situation.

Make Contingency Plans

Decide ahead of time on a safehaven location, organize documents to take to post, make plans for children, MOHs, pets, and have powers of attorney (including one accepted by your bank or credit union) in order. Keep and use a copy of FLO's Personal Preparedness Plan. This document can be found online at www.state.gov/flo/crisis.

Plan for the Long Term

Evacuations last an average of 3-4 months. While the length of any evacuation is difficult to predict, those who plan for a longer period of time experience fewer frustrations.

Use Resources

While in the Washington, DC area, take courses at FSI's Transition Center including the many distance training courses available.

The [FLO Employment Team](#) facilitates employment orientation sessions at the [Foreign Service Institute \(FSI\)](#) and distributes *The Network*, an email subscription service for Foreign Service family members seeking employment in the Washington, DC area.

The licensed clinical social workers at the Department of State's Employee Consultation Service at (703) 812-2257 (or their equivalent in other agencies) may be helpful.

WorkLife4You (formerly known as Information Quest) is a resource and referral service contracted by the Department of State for employees and their family members. Email Specialist@LifeCare.com or call (866) 552-IQ4U (4748) or TTY/TDD (800) 873-1322. Information on the website includes:

- Childcare and Parenting
- Senior care
- Financial and Legal

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- Wellness
- Educations
- Special Needs
- And More

To access the resources, log on to www.worklife4you.com and look for the "Registered Users" box (do not click on the "New User" link). Simply enter Screen Name: **statedepartment** and Password: **infoquest** (codes are case-sensitive). For assistance logging on to the web site, contact the Help Desk at Help@LifeCare.com or by phone at (888) 604-9565.

Create a "Normal" Life

Develop as normal a routine as possible for yourself and your children. If an evacuation lasts more than a month, you may choose to put the children in school. Get them involved in activities, and get involved yourself. Pursue hobbies, do volunteer work, or take a part-time job.

Keep in Touch

Stay in touch with fellow evacuees, with FLO, your CLO, and/or your assigned point of contact (i.e. the family liaison specialist for your agency) throughout the evacuation. You will be up to date on the latest information from post, and enjoy mutual support with others in the same situation. FLO (or your agency's family liaison representative) will phone and/or send emails regularly, providing information on the status of the evacuation, and other important news. With permission, FLO will share with fellow evacuees your phone number and email address so that you may stay in contact with friends from post.

Evacuees sometimes do not return to post. They never get to say a proper good-bye. Many experience an emotional loss. Most people who experience an evacuation are able to put it into perspective and go on; yet Foreign Service life never seems the same again. The evacuation experience may make evacuees more wary, and influence them to take contingency planning more seriously in the future. Eventually, the memory of an evacuation becomes part of the rich tapestry of experiences, positive and negative, which make up the life of a Foreign Service family.

Pets in an Evacuation

The official policy of the Department of State is that it does not evacuate pets. It is recommended that, as a part of evacuation contingency planning, the employee make several optional plans for their pets so that they are ready for any situation that might arise in an evacuation. These options might include:

- Think about sending the pet out of country ahead of time, to a friend or family member, if there seems to be a likelihood of evacuation and if there is time.
- Identify someone in-country to leave the pet with if there is a crisis and he/she cannot travel. Make arrangements with this person now to be prepared in the event of an evacuation.
- Prepare to send the pet out of the country using a commercial carrier. Make sure shots are up to date and a pet carrier is ready. Be informed about pet travel regulations of host country and any country you must transit. Remember that you are responsible for the cost of the pet's evacuation.
- Put all options in place at once as you cannot predict what form an evacuation will take. Keeping shots up to date, your pet in good health, and an appropriate carrier ready will be important in all these scenarios. The [Overseas Briefing Center](#) (OBC) has country-specific information on quarantines and import requirements and lists of professional pet shippers.

Evacuation Benefits Overview and Allowances

Purpose

The purpose of evacuation benefits is to help offset added expenses incurred as a result of an evacuation/authorized departure. The employee continues to be personally responsible for normal family living expenses.

Civilian Employees of the U.S. Government, Marine Security Guards, Seabees Under Evacuation Orders

The Department of State Standardized Regulations 600 (DSSR) applies to all government civilians in foreign areas; however, each agency may have further implementing regulations. Employees should check with their agency's Human Resources office or other point of contact for further guidance before applying the DSSR (for foreign affairs agencies, consult the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)).

Department of Defense and Uniformed Military Personnel

Uniformed military personnel and their dependents are covered separately under the *Department of Defense Joint Federal Travel Regulations*. Assigned DOD civilians, military, and family members should contact their parent organizations. Those assigned to the Defense Attaché Office should contact DIA Headquarters; and those assigned under the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (Military Group, ODC, etc.) should contact their Combatant Command. If DOD personnel have questions, contact the Defense Attaché Service, Support Services Branch at (202) 231-7019/7465 /7464/7466 or email DASSupportServices@dodis.mil.

Members of Household

Members of Household (MOH) who have elected to leave post are not authorized evacuation benefits; however, the Family Liaison Office (FLO) encourages them to remain in contact with FLO, the Community Liaison Office (CLO) coordinator, and the community at post. MOHs can participate in informational sessions and stay informed through emails and other communications.

Safehaven

Employees will be notified of the officially designated safehaven location in any emergency requiring evacuation. If the official safehaven is the U.S., family members may choose any location in the U.S. They do not necessarily have to choose their home leave address. An alternate foreign safehaven location may be approved in individual cases by the Secretary of State (who delegates the authority to the Under Secretary for Management) when considered necessary and in the best interests of the government. Evacuees are not entitled to the

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usual diplomatic privileges, immunities or administrative services. No evacuation benefits are available for evacuees who proceed to an unauthorized point. If a request for an alternate foreign safehaven is not approved, evacuation benefits will not be authorized until the evacuee arrives at the official safehaven.

Travel Expenses

Employees are generally authorized travel only to the designated safehaven location.

EFMs may travel to the officially designated safehaven location at U.S. Government (USG) expense. If the U.S. is officially designated as the safehaven, travel will be paid to any point in the U.S. In the rare case an alternate safehaven is approved, travel will normally be reimbursed only on a cost-constructive basis calculated from the evacuated post to the nearest point of entry in the continental U.S. Any subsequent travel during the evacuation is at personal expense, except for authorized return travel to the evacuated post or if family members are authorized to reunite with the employee at his/her safehaven duty station.

Families evacuated earlier to the U.S. or to an authorized foreign safehaven at USG expense will be permitted to rejoin an employee subsequently evacuated to a duty station in the U.S. However, from an alternate foreign safehaven, travel expenses will be reimbursed only on a cost constructive basis calculated from the evacuated post to the U.S. duty station (S.R. 631a (1)).

Return to post travel expenses are authorized only after the USG officially permits employees and eligible family members to return. Evacuees should use the same Evacuation Travel Orders issued when they departed post to make the reservations to return to post. Family members not returning at this time may be placed on voluntary SMA (SR.264.2 (2) exception, 5-15-94).

When employees and/or eligible family members are away from a post on official travel (home leave and return orders, R&R, family visitation travel, emergency visitation travel, temporary duty) at the time an evacuation is ordered, travel expenses may be paid by USG to the safehaven location from the employee/family member's location once the purpose of the original travel orders is completed. In some cases, during an Authorized Departure, the Chief of Mission is granted the authority to permit employees/family members who have been caught out to return to post.

When employees and/or EFMs are away from a post on personal travel when an evacuation is ordered, travel to the safehaven will be on a cost-constructive basis, not to exceed cost of travel from the evacuated post to the safehaven location.

Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA)

SEA is payable the day following arrival at the authorized safehaven point for up to 180 days following the date of the evacuation order. Regardless of the timing of an evacuee's departure from post or the status of the evacuation order, SEA may not be paid beyond the 180th day after the order is issued. SEA payments and benefits are designed only to help offset the direct added expense incurred due to an evacuation. If family members are not allowed to return to post after the 180 day period, the employee may request Separate Maintenance Allowance (involuntary) on their behalf. In some cases the employee will be eligible to receive Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance (TSMA) on behalf of his/her family. In either case the allowance is not automatic. The employee must file an application with the regional bureau. (Please note that SEA and Medical Expense Allowance cannot be claimed at the same time. See Evacuee Medical Information in this document for additional information.)

Evacuees should wait until they are at their safehaven location to submit the Subsistence Expense Allowance forms. **NOTE:** Applications cannot be processed without airline tickets and lodging receipts. Forms may be emailed or faxed per the instructions on the application form. (Instructions for how to apply for SEA are addressed in the next section.)

When the U.S. is designated as the official safehaven, the SEA is based on safehaven location per diem. The first evacuee of a family unit is reimbursed for lodging expenses, based on either a commercial or non-commercial rate. Larger families (first evacuee plus 4 or more family members) may request a waiver asking that commercial lodging per diem be increased to 150%. Justification must be provided.

- **Commercial rate:** The first evacuee is reimbursed for 100% of lodging expenses for duration of the evacuation. Meals and incidental expenses are covered at 100% of the local rate for the first 30 days. The rate is reduced to 80% for days 31 through day 180. Commercial receipts for lodging (e.g., hotels, motels, commercially leased houses or apartments, or other transient-type commercial quarters) are required when claiming the commercial rate. (See chart under Calculating Subsistence Expense Allowance.)
- **Non-commercial rate:** For the first 30 days, the first evacuee is paid 10% of the lodging expenses and 100% of meals and incidental expenses. Non-commercial lodging expenses are not reimbursable for days 31-180. However, from days 31-180, 80% of meals and incidental expenses will be paid. No receipts or accounting is required. This rate applies in the absence of commercial receipts (e.g., lodging in government quarters or

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staying with friends or relatives). (See chart under Calculating Subsistence Expense Allowance.)

When a foreign area is designated as the official safehaven, the SEA is based on the applicable per diem rate of the officially designated safehaven under the same payment guidelines as for the United States.

When an alternate foreign safehaven is approved, SEA will not be authorized until the managing bureau in the Department of State receives the request. SEA is based on the lowest of the following:

- The standard CONUS rate;
- The per diem rate for the official safehaven (foreign or U.S.); or
- The per diem rate for the alternate approved safehaven.

SEA will continue to be paid during periods of annual and sick leave (except when in medical evacuation status) to employees and family members who are in evacuation status.

SEA will not be paid to employees and EFMs who are on home leave, TDY or R&R status, until such time as they are officially due to return to post. Family members who are employed at post should be placed in Leave Without Pay (LWOP) unless they are eligible to work from another location.

Unaccompanied Air Baggage (UAB)

Contact: TransportationQuery@state.gov

An air freight allowance will be authorized for both evacuation from and return to post in accordance with the current agency travel regulations--DOS Standardized Regulations (DSSR) 631 a (3).

- 250 pounds for the first evacuee
- 200 pounds for the second evacuee
- 150 pounds for the third evacuee
- 100 pounds each for the fourth or more family members

In lieu of airfreight, a replacement allowance is authorized if air freight is not shipped from post. Air freight is authorized upon return to post, even if no air freight was shipped from post.

- \$250 for the first evacuee without family
- \$450 for the first evacuee with one family member
- \$600 for the first evacuee with two or more family members

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Note: If UAB has already been shipped to post but the employee has not yet arrived, additional UAB will not be authorized.

Daily Transportation Allowance

A daily transportation allowance of \$25/day per family unit is authorized (receipts are not required).

Lease Coverage

Reimbursement for lease expenses not to exceed the daily SEA lodging rate may be authorized for up to 30 days from the effective date of the evacuation provided the following:

- SEA payment does not exceed 180 days.
- Evacuee is returning to post.
- The lease was signed prior to the date of termination of the evacuation.
- The evacuee provides documentation demonstrating an effort to break the lease.

Note: PCS (Permanent Change of Station) orders take precedence over evacuation orders. PCS Orders are enacted at the time the employee initiates travel and can affect evacuation allowances.

Advance Payments

In the evacuation cable, post is authorized to issue a one-time initial payment of \$1,000 per family and \$500 per single evacuee. The advance payment may be paid to the employee or a designated representative and will be deducted from the first SEA payment.

Household Effects (HHE)/Personally Owned Vehicle (POV)

Access to and delivery of stored household effects for evacuees is at personal expense, unless evacuees are not allowed to return to post after the 180 days and are placed on involuntary SMA. In the latter case, agency travel regulations governing SMA apply. Shipment of POV is not authorized at USG expense until the employee has a permanent change of station (PSC).

Education Allowance

Please see [FLO's](#) website for education information for parents of school-age children. In addition, visit the [Office of Allowances' Frequently Asked Questions](#) (questions #45-54), which address education and travel allowances during an evacuation.

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When the U.S. is the official safehaven, public schools are available to all residents and education allowances are normally not paid. Education allowances will also not be paid if an individual is at an alternate foreign safehaven (other than the designated foreign safehaven).

Away-From-Post and Special Needs Education Allowances

These allowances may continue, *within specific parameters*. Contact FLOAskEducation@state.gov for further guidance. **Education travel eligibility** rules continue to be applied, except that the official safehaven displaces the post as the travel destination from school. When the parent is utilizing either the away-from-post education allowance or educational travel, no SEA benefits are payable for children at their school locations. For more information and resources on returning to the Washington, DC area with children, please visit [FLO's Education and Youth webpages](#).

Tandem Couples

Tandem couples will each receive evacuation benefits not to exceed an employee's eligibility, but without duplication of benefits for eligible family members. Each employee is entitled to all other allowances, including transfer allowances and temporary lodging. If the couple shares lodging, 50 percent of the allowance is granted for each employee.

Length of the Evacuation

The initial cable ordering the evacuation declares the evacuation for a specified period of time (normally 30 days). At the end of that period, the Department of State in conjunction with post, reviews the evacuation status to determine whether it should be continued, whether employees should be reassigned, or whether to terminate the evacuation. If the evacuation is not terminated, status must be reviewed every 30 days up to 180 days. No evacuation will last beyond 180 days.

NOTE: The evacuation may be lifted at any time. If family members are not allowed to return to post and no reassignment decision has been reached, the post will change status to "unaccompanied." At such time, EFMs may apply for Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (ISMA) or Transitional Separate Maintenance (TSMA) depending on their situation. See [DSSR 260](#) for regulations governing all forms of Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA).

How to Apply for the Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA)

For Agencies Outside of the Department of State

Employees outside of the Department of State should check their agency's regulations before applying Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) (for foreign affairs agencies, consult the FAM). The DSSR applies to all government civilians in foreign areas, but each agency may have further implementing regulations and has its own forms and process.

Department of State SEA Payments

SEA payments will be made when the DS-4095 form is completed and all necessary documents are submitted and processed. **The DS-4095 should be submitted only once as the initial application.** Subsequently, only lodging receipts need to be submitted.

For processing: Forms may be faxed to (301) 985-8589 or emailed to GFSCSeaPackage@state.gov. **Make sure that all attachments are in PDF format.**

- **Necessary receipted documents:** Airline tickets, hotel receipt or signed lease agreement, taxi receipts, receipt for excess luggage fees, a copy of the travel advance, and travel orders.
- **Calculation of Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) in Transit to Safehaven:** If travel is more than 12 hours, but less than 24 hours on the first day of travel, employees will receive 3/4 of one day's allowance for the location they are traveling to. For travel exceeding 24 hours, lodging plus M&IE for stopover locations en route to safehaven apply.
- **Please Note:** SEA is normally paid in 30 day increments. If the employee has been paid the full 30 days and then the evacuation ends abruptly, **or** is issued PCS/TDY/MED/R&R/Home Leave orders, **or** lodging changes from commercial to non-commercial, **or** the employee or EFM's received SEA but were not eligible, the employee is responsible for repaying any or all SEA balance as soon as possible.

Calculating the Subsistence Expense Allowance

L = Lodging portion of per diem.

M&IE = Meals and Incidental Expense portion of per diem.

Table to Apply for Commercial Lodging		
	Days 1 – 30	Days 31 - 180
First Evacuee	100% L + 100% M&IE	100% L + 80% M&IE
Each additional person 18 & over	100% M&IE	80% M&IE
Each additional person under 18	50% M&IE	40% M&IE
Table to Apply for Non-Commercial Lodging		
First Evacuee	10% L + 100% M&IE	80% M&IE + no lodging per diem
Each additional person 18 & over	100% M&IE	80% M&IE
Each additional person under 18	50% M&IE	40% M&IE

Checklist for Evacuees Returning to Post

By law, Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA), including any extensions or grace period, may never exceed a total of 180 days. When an evacuation is lifted, evacuated employees are expected to return to post in an expeditious manner. Except for those individuals who are converted to PCS orders, there is a grace period of *up to* three days (beginning the date of the RETURN OF EVACUEES TO POST cable, including Saturday and Sunday) for the continuation of SEA to allow evacuees *to make transportation and travel arrangements for return to post.*

An additional seven days may be available for justifiable reasons and in certain circumstances (usually related to availability of flights and pack out of UAB). The total grace period cannot be extended past 10 days from the date of the RETURN OF EVACUEES TO POST cable nor exceed the 180th day of the evacuation. The additional seven days are NOT automatic; they must be justified and the justification must accompany the final travel voucher. Contact CFSC at (843)746-0722 or by email at GFSCSeaPackage@state.gov if you have questions or need assistance.

Checklist: Items to Complete Before Returning to Post

- **Department of State** employees and family members are required to use Carlson Wagonlit as follows:
 - Call Carlson Wagonlit at (866)654-5593 to make flight reservations. Be sure to ask the agent for the *Record Locator* number.
 - Before purchasing tickets, Carlson Wagonlit will require a scanned/emailed PDF of your approved/signed JF-144 travel orders to dosta@cwtsatotravel.com. Include the *Record Locator* number in the subject line and body of the email, along with the full names of the passenger(s).
 - To confirm your email was received call Carlson Wagonlit two hours after sending the JF-144.
- **USAID** employees and family members please contact your EXO (Executive Officer) at post to arrange return tickets.
- **DEA** families should make travel arrangements through Omega Travel by faxing them a request along with an approved DOJ-501 at (703) 359-3912.
- Arrange for pick-up and shipment of UAB (airfreight). Evacuation Travel Authorizations are used for return travel and shipments.

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- **DOS** families contact the DOS Transportation Office at (202) 647-4140 or toll-free (800) 424-2947.
- **USAID** families contact the USAID Transportation Office at (202) 712-4848.
- **DEA** families contact the DEA Family Liaison Specialists at (202) 307-8222 or (202) 307-4241.
- File change of address with local post office.
- **Department of State** employees complete check-out with the Employee Service Center, tel. (202) 647-3432, fax (202) 647-1429, email: EmployeeServicesCenter@state.gov.
- Inform bank, credit cards, etc. of change of address.
- Check validity of Diplomatic Passport and country (your post) visa.
- Employees, check the expiration date of the I.D. card and/or building pass for your agency and request renewal if necessary.
- **DEA** employees turn in headquarters building or parking passes to Security Programs.
- Notify post of arrival plans. Please contact the Post Management Officer (PMO) within the Regional Bureau at the Department of State. The PMO will cable post with the information. **USAID** families contact your Desk Officer.

Checklist: Items to Complete After Return to Post

- Upon return to post, the employee needs to file a travel voucher with post's Budget and Finance office (B&F) to be forwarded to the agency's budget office to reconcile the account.
- If SEA was filed using the DS-4095 form, employees should close out their account with Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS). The CGFS will need final paperwork to both close out the account and to take care of any Subsistence Expense Allowance benefits due. Send the original return airline tickets, final lodging receipts, and other applicable documents (e.g. the paperwork from DOS's Transportation Office showing when UAB shipment was collected to be sent back to post); include details and dates for everything (if they are not clear on the enclosed documents).

When Family Members Do Not Return to Post

When the status of the post is changed and some or all family members are not allowed to return to post, they are eligible to apply for Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (ISMA).

Family members who do not wish to return to post immediately may opt for Voluntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (VSMA). This use of SMA does not count as the one-time SMA option per tour. Families in commercial lodging who

You've been evacuated. Now what?

choose to remain behind to finish the current semester of the school year may apply for the Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance (see DSSR 264.3). Family members who anticipate that they may want or need SMA at the end of the evacuation need to apply for it before the evacuation is terminated and SEA payments stop. The bureau will hold the SMA applications that will be processed when the evacuation is lifted. Contact FLOAskEvacuations@state.gov for more information on SMA or assistance with the process. (See [DSSR 260](#) and [Allowances FAQs on SMA](#).)

Employee is Converted to PCS Orders

PCS orders take precedence over evacuation orders. Once travel on PCS orders begins, SEA will stop and the employee and EFMs will use the PCS orders at that point to determine allowances and benefits provided. If the employee and EFMs have not been able to return to post to pack out, the General Services Officer or another designated U.S. direct hire employee will oversee the pack out. Contact the GSO at post to coordinate.

Evacuation Contacts

All Agencies at Post

Family Liaison Office

Room 1239, HST (Main State)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. St., NW
Washington, DC 20520
Telephone (202) 647-1076 or toll-free (800) 440-0397
Fax (202) 647-1670
Email FLO@state.gov; Website www.state.gov/flo

Employee Consultation Services (ECS)

Columbia Plaza, SA-1, H-246.
Telephone (703) 812-2257
Fax (703) 875-4952
Email MEDECS@state.gov

U.S. Department of State

Subsistence Expense Allowance Payments

Charleston Financial Service Center (CFSC)
For claims and questions please email GFSCSEAPackage@state.gov

Employee Services Center

Room 1252, Main State
Telephone (202) 647-3432
Fax (202) 647-1429
Email EmployeeServicesCenter@state.gov

Housing (AAFSW)

Room 1252, Main State
Telephone (202) 647-3573
Website www.aafsw.org

Transportation

Room 5100, SA-3
Telephone (202) 663-0891/0892
Toll-free (800) 424-2947
Email TransportationQuery@state.gov

You've been evacuated. Now what?

Carlson Wagonlit Travel

Room 1243, Main State
Department of State reservations and help desk Mon-Fri: 7:30am and 5:30pm
Telephone (866) 654-5593 (also for After-hours and emergencies)
After-hours & emergencies
Room E-1113 at George P. Shultz NFATC (FSI)

DOS Regional Bureaus

AF/EX - African Affairs

Room 3519 Telephone (202) 736-4200

EAP/EX - East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Room 4313A Telephone (202) 647-9054

EUR/EX - European & Eurasian Affairs

Room 12A35 Telephone (202) 647-5979

NEA/SCA/EX - Near Eastern Affairs

Room 4245 Telephone (202) 647-3268/2785

WHA/EX - Western Hemisphere Affairs

Room 3262 Telephone (202) 647-4457

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Please Note: When filing for evacuation allowances, USAID Employees should first check with your bureau. Send completed forms to: USAID/M/FM/CMP, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20523-7700.

Counseling

USAID Staff Care Center (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year)

Free phone (877) 988-7243
Email support@usaidstaffcarecenter.net
Reverse Charge Calling +44-0-208-987-6200 (Call your international operator and request that the charges be reversed to the number listed above.)
SMS/Texting (314) 910-7728
TTY (866) 262-7848
Website www.staffcare.usaid.gov

Employee Consultation Services (ECS)

Columbia Plaza, SA-1, H-246.
Telephone (703) 812-2257
Fax (703) 875-4952
Email MEDECS@state.gov

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

**Foreign Personnel Support Unit/Office of Global Enforcement
Family Liaison Specialists:** Telephone (202) 307-8222/4241

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

International Operations Division (IOD): Telephone (202) 324-5904

Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS)

International Services Staff: Telephone (202) 720-2741

Foreign Commercial Service (FCS)

Human Resources: Telephone (202) 482-3397

Homeland Security

Immigration & Customs Enforcement

Telephone (202) 732-8152

Telephone (202) 732-0399

United States Secret Service

International Programs: Telephone (202) 406-5575

Personnel Division:

245 Murray Drive, Building 410

Washington, DC 20223

Telephone (202) 406-5800

General information: Telephone (202) 622-2000

Voice of America/ International Broadcasting Bureau (VOA/IBB)

Human Resources: Telephone (202) 619-311

General Resources

A Message from the Office of Medical Services

MEMORANDUM

United States Department of State
Bureau of Medical Services
Medical Director
2401 E. Street NW
Washington DC 20520

To: Foreign Service and Foreign Affairs Agencies personnel and family members on Ordered or Authorized Departure
From: Mark Cohen, M.D. Acting Medical Director

Welcome back to the United States. I am grateful for your extraordinary service to the Department of State. Your sudden return has probably been hectic, disruptive, and stressful. I want you to know that our staff is ready to assist you as you are resettling.

The Office of Medical Services' (MED) Travel and Immunization Clinic at Columbia Plaza (SA-1) is available for assessment of acute illnesses and referrals to local medical resources. Referrals can also be made to other MED offices as needed, for example, for a physical that may be needed to temporarily enroll your child in a local school or consultation with our tropical medicine specialist. The contact information for the clinic is:

Office of Medical Services, Columbia Plaza (SA-1)
2401 E. Street NW, Room L201, Washington, DC
Phone (202) 663-3974
Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 8:15-4:30

If you or your family member requires urgent medical assistance, please call the Emergency Room at a hospital near you for help.

Mental Health Services works with the Family Liaison Office to arrange briefings and community meetings, and to provide support through informal group discussions on the various individual and family problems associated with evacuations. You will be notified of these meetings.

The Employee Consultation Services (ECS) is a confidential service for Department of State employees and family members and offers consultations,

counseling and support groups. The clinical social workers at the ECS have extensive experience in family counseling. The office is located in SA-15 in Rosslyn, and the number is (703) 812-2257.

Evacuee Medical Information

All employees and family members on Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) who seek medical exams should schedule procedures as early as possible during the evacuation period. Once the evacuation order is lifted, it is expected that employees and family members will return to post expeditiously.

Payment for medical coverage provided to eligible U.S. citizen employees and their dependents overseas does not apply to employees and family members while they are in the U.S. on assignment, home leave, or other travel. The exception is an illness, injury, or medical condition connected with overseas service and the employee or family member is otherwise eligible for treatment. Such a situation is rare--an emergent medical condition for which medevac was approved at the time of ordered departure or a serious condition which occurred overseas necessitating the revocation of a medical clearance, disallowing an individual's return to post. The need to obtain medical care following the SEA period does not in itself warrant the issuance of medical per diem orders.

Employees and family members are encouraged to use the time in the U.S. to obtain medical and dental care. By choosing the preferred plan providers (PPOs) and medical facilities offered by your Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP), you reduce your out-of-pocket expenses. You also reduce up front charges and paperwork if your PPO provider files the insurance claim on your behalf.

Check with your insurance carrier to find out which local facilities and providers participate in their PPO program. You should also confirm that your medical or dental provider participates in your health plan when you make the appointment.

Many insurance programs also provide non-FEHBP benefits, for example, dental services, eyeglass examinations and supplies provided at pre-negotiated discounts. Check the brochure or call your carrier.

The FEHBP plans most commonly used by our FS population are listed below. Information is on the Office of Personnel Management's website at www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare.

Foreign Service Benefit Plan

Telephone (202) 833-4910

Fax (202) 833-4918

Website www.afspa.org/FSBP

Email health@AFSPA.org

BlueCross BlueShield

Telephone worldwide/collect (804) 673-1678

Toll-free in the U.S. (800) 848-9766

Website www.fepblue.org

Government Employees Hospital Association (GEHA)

Telephone Toll-free (800) 821-6136; (816) 257-5500

Fax (816) 257-3233

Website www.geha.com

Mail Handlers Benefit Plan

Telephone (800) 410-7778

Website www.firsthealth.com/smfh/login.do

Please note: *Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) and Medical Expense Allowance cannot be claimed at the same time and on the same set of orders. Each separate set of orders must detail an obligation and a set length of time. MED will not authorize medical travel for anyone who is in the United States on SEA. Employees and/or EFMs on medical expense orders during an evacuation from post in which the medical order ends prior to the termination of the post evacuation must submit a TA order for SEA entitlement. A copy of the medical order must be forwarded with the SEA application, TA order and any commercial lodging receipt (s) dating from the end date of the medevac. In the event that an SEA evacuee develops a serious medical condition that requires further medical evaluations or treatment, MED/Foreign Programs should be notified for medical clearance to return to post by emailing MEDForeignprograms@State.gov.*

Hotels and Lodging in the Washington, DC Area

When looking for lodging at your local per diem rate, an excellent source is the GSA website, www.gsa.gov. Click on the state where you plan to reside and select the city or county. Click on the property list to find a list of hotels that offer rates within government per diem.

The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) has a site for Extended-Stay Housing Providers at www.afsa.org/extended-stay-housing-guide.

Corporations that assist in finding lodging according to family specific needs and within per diem and at no extra cost to the evacuee.

BridgeStreet Corporate Housing Worldwide
Toll-free telephone (800) 278-7338
www.bridgestreet.com

Charles E. Smith
Toll-free telephone (877)902-0832
www.smithliving.com

Corporate Apartment Specialists, Inc.
Toll-free telephone (800) 914-2802
www.corporateapartments.com

Gilmore Group
Telephone (877) 844-6224
www.gilmoregroup.com

Oakwood Apartments
Telephone toll-free (888) 998-3265
oakwood.com

Hotel/Suite Chains in Greater Metro DC

A

AmeriSuites
(800) 833-1516
www.amerisuites.com

B

Best Western
(800) 780-7234
www.bestwestern.com

C

Candlewood Suites
(877) 266-3539
www.candlewoodsuites.com

Choice Hotels International¹
(877) 424-6423
www3.choicehotels.com

Country Inn and Suites
(888) 201-1746
www.countryinns.com

D

Days Inn
(800) 329-7466
www.daysinn.com

E

Extended Stay America
(800) 804-3724
www.extendedstay.com

H

Hilton¹
(800) 445-8667
www.hilton.com

Holiday Inn
(800) 465-4329
www.ichotelsgroup.com

¹ Doubletree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites and Homewood Suites

Hyatt²
(800) 233-1234
www.hyatt.com

M
Marriott³
(800) 932-2198
www.marriott.com

Microtel Inns and Suites
(800) 771-7171
www.microtelinn.com

My Suite Solutions
(888) 580-0505
www.mysuitesolutions.com

S
Sheraton
(888) 625-5144
www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/

SuiteAmerica
(800) 784-8431
www.suiteamerica.com

Summerfield Suites
(877) 999-3223
www.wyndham.com

W
Wingate Inn
(800) 228-1000
www.wingateinns.com

Hotels Frequently Used by Foreign Service Personnel

One Washington Circle Hotel
(800) 424-9671
www.thecirclehotel.com

² includes Hawthorne Suites

³ Springhill Suites, Renaissance Inn, Residence Inn, Towne Place Suites, Courtyard and Fairfield Inn

The River Inn
www.theriverinn.com
(888) 874-0100

State Plaza Hotel
www.stateplaza.com
(800) 424-2859

Car Rental Information

Alamo - www.alamo.com (800) 462-5266

Avis - www.avis.com (800) 230-4898

Budget - www.budget.com (800) 527-0700

Dollar - www.dollar.com 800-800-3665

Enterprise - www.enterprise.com (800) 736-8222

Hertz - www.hertz.com (800) 654-3131

National - www.nationalcar.com (800) 227-7368

Zipcar - www.zipcar.com (866) 494-7227

Maryland

Anne Arundel County

Information: www.aacps.org
Tel: (410) 222-5000
Special Schools: Tel: (410) 222-5410/5411
Gifted and Talented Tel: (410) 222-5430

Howard County

Public Information Office: www.howard.k12.md.us
Tel: (410) 313-6600
Email address for general
questions or comments: publicinfo@hcpss.org
Special Schools website
(special needs/magnet schools): www.howard.k12.md.us/

Montgomery County

Information: www.mcps.k12.md.us
Tel: (301) 279-3391
Special Education: Tel: (301) 279-3135
Gifted and Talented &
Magnet Programs: Tel: (301) 279-3163

Prince George's County

Communications: www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us
Tel: (301) 952-6001
Special Education: Tel: (301) 952-6336
Talented and Gifted: Tel: (301) 322-1729

Other School Resources on the Internet

[FLO's Education and Youth Resources](#)

Frequently Asked Questions on Evacuation

From the Department of State Office of Allowances

GENERAL

1. Q: What is the difference between an authorized departure and an ordered departure?

A: Authorized departure merely allows the Chief of Mission greater flexibility in determining which employees or groups of employees may depart, and avoids any negative connotation that might be attached to the use of the term "evacuation." Since the law uses the terms synonymously, there is no difference in benefits now in application of the regulations. Note: Once the Under Secretary of State for Management ("M") approves the evacuation status for post—either authorized or ordered—the 180-day clock "begins ticking" (by law, an evacuation cannot last longer than 180 days). Only one departure is permitted an evacuee during any one evacuation period, except for certain employees in unusual circumstances as determined by the Secretary of State.

2. Q: Do all US Government agencies subscribe, follow or adhere to the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas) (DSSR) on evacuations?

A: In accordance with DSSR 645 all civilian agencies have agreed to implement the regulations. In order to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all evacuees, any agency that proposes to deviate from DSSR Chapter 600 must seek Secretary of State approval.

Uniformed military personnel and their dependents are covered separately under the Department of Defense Joint Federal Travel Regulations.

3. Q: How are Members of Household (MOHs) of U.S. direct hire employees affected during an evacuation?

A: MOHs who are U.S. citizens are provided the same evacuation assistance as private American citizens. The "no double standard" policy requires private American citizens be given the same evacuation opportunities/assistance as official Americans. It is the Department of State policy to make available to private Americans any evacuation option planned for the official USG community, when appropriate and feasible. MOHs who are not U.S. citizens are also rendered evacuation assistance, either to the U.S. if documented for entry or otherwise eligible to enter as determined by the post, with assistance from Immigration and Customs Enforcement as necessary, or to a third country if documented or otherwise determined to be eligible for entry.

4. Q: Who is responsible for travel costs of Members of Household (MOHs)?

A: MOHs are personally responsible for their travel costs. As a general rule, the U.S. Government does not provide funds for evacuating persons other than U.S. Government employees and eligible family members.

5. Q: Where can I find more information on evacuation guidelines for U.S. citizens and other persons for whom the U.S. Government may have a responsibility?

A: The Overseas Citizens Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs provides assistance for U.S. citizens living abroad. You can contact them on the internet at www.travel.state.gov.

6. Q: Do Members of Household (MOHs) have to leave during an evacuation?

A: No. The Chief of Mission (COM) cannot order the departure of MOHs or other private U.S. citizens.

7. What happens if a Member of Household (MOH) is occupying USG housing - would s/he be required to vacate the house?

A: If the Chief of Mission (COM) feels that the presence of MOHs in post housing could impact post security resources or otherwise affect post operations, then the COM can direct the employee to move MOHs out of that housing.

8. Q: At what age do children become ineligible for evacuation-related payments under DSSR 600?

A: Allowances eligibility for children usually ends when they reach age 21 (unless incapable of self-support due to mental or physical impairment). Evacuation-related payments under DSSR 600 are no exception to this rule. The definition of "children" found at DSSR 040m under "Family" governs their eligibility for foreign allowances except when waived or modified in specific DSSR sections that follow 040. DSSR 600 contains no such waiver or modification.

SAFEHAVEN

9. Q: How does an eligible family member (EFM) select an official safehaven and what is the subsistence expense allowance (SEA) based on?

A: The Under Secretary for Management ("M") designates the United States (the 50 United States and the District of Columbia), a foreign location, or both when necessary as the official safehaven location(s). In most cases, eligible family member (EFM) evacuees are directed to travel to the U.S. safehaven. An EFM evacuee should select a U.S. safehaven, (any of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia) based on where he/she anticipates spending the longest time—such as where children may go to school or where family/friends reside. An evacuee is not required to remain at the U.S. safehaven. The regulations provide that SEA payments will be based on the per diem rate of the chosen U.S. safehaven location, however, DSSR 632.3 allows an agency to pay a lower rate if the authorizing officer determines that such lower rate would be more in keeping with necessary living expenses. For example, if an evacuee submits a lodging receipt at a location where the per diem rate is lower than their safehaven, reimbursement can be calculated not to exceed the per diem of the lodging location. A U.S. safehaven location for EFMs may be changed once during an evacuation and SEA payments will then be based on the new U.S. safehaven. However, any change in safehaven location is at the evacuee's personal expense, except when previously evacuated EFMs are allowed to rejoin their evacuated sponsor (the employee) in Washington, DC (or wherever his/her U.S. work assignment location is during evacuation). Be sure to notify the appropriate evacuee locator and accounting offices of any change in address. For assistance with figuring SEA, see DSSR Section 960 Evacuation Payments Worksheet.

10. Q: May an evacuated employee choose to accompany family members to their safehaven point prior to the employee reporting for work at the U.S. or foreign safehaven as determined by the employee's agency?

A: Either the post or appropriate bureau or agency head determines whether an employee must report directly to the U.S. or foreign safehaven and if any annual leave is authorized. However, the employee's travel at government expense will be cost constructive not to exceed the cost of travel from the post to the employee's U.S. or foreign location as instructed by the employee's agency. The employee is not eligible for the Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) until s/he arrives at the U.S. or foreign safehaven.

11. Q: If EFMs under an evacuation order are unable to travel alone due to special needs or minor age, who can be reimbursed to accompany them to a U.S. safehaven?

A: Only employees' and EFMs' evacuation travel can be funded by the Government. Therefore, either the employee parent designated nonessential could accompany, or another employee or EFM could serve as an escort, if willing and able to do so. If the EFM's U.S. safehaven is not the same as the

escort's duty station or safehaven, that escort's travel will be on a cost-constructive basis calculated from the evacuated post to the escort's U.S. duty station.

12. Q: What benefits are available for those going to an alternate safehaven?

A: Benefits are only available if the alternate safehaven is approved as in the best interest of the U.S. Government by the Under Secretary of State for Management ("M") following endorsement by the head of agency or designee on behalf of the agency employee's eligible family members (EFMs). The only benefits are cost constructive travel (not to exceed the cost of travel between the evacuated post and the U.S. or foreign location duty station) under DSSR 631a(1), and limited SEA, based on the lowest of three per diem rates: the official safehaven (whether U.S. or foreign), the alternate safehaven, or the standard CONUS, under DSSR 632.2b. If there is a first evacuee (employee or family member) at a U.S. or foreign safehaven, SEA calculations for family members at the alternate safehaven will be limited to the calculation for additional family members based on the M&IE of the applicable lowest per diem rate. No education allowance of any type can be authorized, nor are any diplomatic immunities, privileges, or services available at an alternate safehaven.

13. Q: May previously evacuated eligible family members (EFMs) join the employee at his or her official U.S. safehaven?

A: Yes, EFMs evacuated to a U.S. or foreign safehaven may be permitted to rejoin the employee subsequently evacuated to a U.S. duty station. Transportation costs would be at U.S. Government expense for the family members from their U.S. or foreign safehaven to the employee's U.S. duty station. EFM travel from an alternate safehaven to the employee's U.S. duty station will be on a cost constructive basis not to exceed the cost of travel from the evacuated post to the U.S. duty station (DSSR 631a(1)).

14. Q: May an employee and eligible family member (EFM) children take an authorized departure from post while the employee's spouse or domestic partner remains at post for professional reasons?

A: Yes, an employee and EFM children may be granted an authorized departure from post upon approval of the Chief of Mission, per DSSR 610j. If they were married couple employees or domestic partnership employees, the employee's spouse or domestic partner would not be required to evacuate. If the employee's spouse or domestic partner is a locally hired employee at the Mission or is otherwise employed outside the Mission the spouse or domestic partner would

not be required to evacuate, for example, if the employee's spouse or domestic partner was employed as a teacher in an international school.

15. Q: May an eligible family member (EFM) on educational travel or "away from post" education allowance, travel to the U.S. or foreign safehaven following evacuation of a post?

A: Yes. Either the U.S. or foreign safehaven location displaces the foreign post of assignment for travel purposes under education allowance and educational travel as provided in DSSR 633.2 and DSSR 633.4, respectively. Travel to an alternate safehaven is on a cost constructive basis not to exceed the cost of travel to either the U.S. or foreign safehaven. Note: Payment of subsistence expense allowance (SEA) is not allowed for children on "away from post" education allowance (DSSR 633.2) but is allowed between grant years. Payment of SEA is allowed for children under educational travel only when they are at the safehaven and only for children unmarried and under 21 (see definition of child in DSSR 040m(2)).

16. Q: Do newly assigned employees/eligible family members (EFMs) not yet arrived at the post qualify for evacuation benefits under DSSR Chapter 600?

A: No, not under Chapter 600. Under the evacuation benefits law, only employees and dependents who are temporarily away from their foreign post of assignment at the time of the evacuation order are eligible for evacuation benefits if prohibited from returning. However, under the transfer allowance authority, DSSR 245 does allow equivalent benefits to certain newly assigned personnel who are prohibited from proceeding to post. These equivalent benefits provide for Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) payments as well as justified grace periods needed to return to post at the end of an evacuation, and the lease penalty payment.

To qualify for these equivalent benefits the following three criteria must be met:

- (1) the employee's transfer orders have been issued;
- (2) on the date of the ordered/authorized departure order the employee must be within 60 days of scheduled departure to the new post; and
- (3) either (a) the employee's HHE have been packed out and the employee's residence has been vacated; or (b) the employee transferring from a post in the U.S. has an irrevocable contractual agreement for lease or sale of his or her residence; or (c) the employee has transferred from a foreign post with direct transfer orders (i.e. no home leave, or equivalent, prior to reporting to the new foreign post) and is required by post to vacate residence quarters.

If all three criteria are not met, EFMs are eligible for only Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance under DSSR 262.1 effective the date the employee begins official travel under assignment orders.

SUBSISTENCE EXPENSE ALLOWANCE (SEA) AND ADVANCE PAYMENTS

17. Q: When do Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) benefits commence for evacuees?

A: (1) U.S. or Foreign Safehaven: SEA benefits will commence from the day following arrival at the safehaven location, per DSSR 632. No SEA will be paid for travel enroute to the safehaven location.

(2) Alternate Safehaven: If an alternate safehaven is approved prior to the EFMs evacuation, SEA benefits will commence from the day following arrival at the alternate safehaven location. If an alternate safehaven is approved after evacuees have arrived at that location, SEA will commence no earlier than the date the Department approved the request for the alternate safehaven. If the request for an alternate safehaven is denied, no SEA is authorized until the evacuee arrives at the U.S. or foreign safehaven.

18. Q: What is the maximum time period an employee may receive SEA payments?

A: Evacuation status is authorized by the Under Secretary of State for Management in 30-day increments, up to a maximum of 180 days, per DSSR 623f.

19. Q: What happens to an employee's allowances, post hardship differential and danger pay during the period of SEA payments?

A: Post hardship differential, danger pay and post (cost of living) allowance terminate as of the close of business on the day an employee commences travel under orders for emergency evacuation, per DSSR 621.2(a) and (f). "School at post" education allowance terminates without financial penalty [see Exception at DSSR 621.1(d)(1) and DSSR 621.2(d)(1)]. "School away from post" education allowance may continue until the end of the school year, per DSSR 621.2(d)(2). Employees should check their earnings and leave statements for post hardship differential, danger pay and post (cost of living) allowance payments that should have been terminated. The employee is responsible for refunding any overpayments. (Refer to DSSR 532e. for termination of post hardship differential in those cases when the employee is away from post on detail or leave and his or her departure from post is ordered.)

20. Q: Do SEA payments stop while an evacuated employee is on temporary duty (TDY)? What happens to the employee's evacuated eligible family members (EFMs)?

A: To meet the needs of the service, employees in evacuation status may be assigned TDY to another location. However, during the TDY period, when the employee is receiving TDY per diem, the payment of SEA for the individual is suspended, per DSSR 635(a). SEA may be resumed when the TDY ends.

EFMs at same U.S. or Foreign Safehaven as employee: If there are EFMs of this employee in evacuation status, one family member receiving SEA becomes the first evacuee and thus receives lodging per diem. The family is not disadvantaged since the total SEA benefit package is reduced by only one MI&E allowance when the employee departs on TDY status.

EFMs at U.S. Safehaven and employee is at Foreign Safehaven: SEA benefits remain unchanged for EFMs – there is still one EFM designated as first evacuee at the U.S. Safehaven.

21. Q: When an employee is evacuated after eligible family members (EFMs) have been evacuated at an earlier date, is the employee entitled to SEA under DSSR 632.1, at the full amount for the first evacuee or at the amount for an additional family member?

A: When necessary and in the interest of the U.S. Government, there may be more than one official safehaven designated. This may include both a U.S. (50 United States and the District of Columbia) and Foreign Safehaven.

When the employee is evacuated later than EFMs to the same U.S. or Foreign Safehaven as the EFMs, the employee may be treated as the first evacuee or simply as an additional family member.

When the employee is evacuated to a Foreign Safehaven after EFMs have been evacuated to a U.S. Safehaven the employee will be designated as the First Evacuee at the Foreign Safehaven.

The DSSR allows for eligible family member(s) and the employee to be at different official safehaven locations. There can be one "first evacuee" under the formula (whether commercial or non-commercial) at a U.S. Safehaven and at a Foreign Safehaven. Example: When an employee (designated as first evacuee) is at the U.S. safehaven (and physically located in Washington, D.C.) and family members are at the U.S. safehaven (and physically located in Iowa), SEA payments for the employee and family members would be calculated based on the per diem rate for Washington, D.C. (location of the first evacuee).

Restriction: If there is a first evacuee at either a U.S. or foreign safehaven there cannot also be a first evacuee at the alternate safehaven. The SEA in this case would be based on the guidelines in DSSR 632.1 and calculated using the formula for "each additional evacuee" using the lowest of the per diem rates for the (1) U.S. or foreign safehaven; (2) the alternate safehaven; or (3) the Continental US (CONUS).

22. Q: May employees and EFMs on home leave or on R&R receive SEA payments?

A: Employees and EFMs cannot receive SEA while on home leave or in R&R status per DSSR 632.4(a). If away from post at the time of the evacuation order, the employee either must return to post or declare his/her intention to do so before any family member can qualify for evacuation benefits. Transportation may be authorized to the safehaven location. SEA may not commence for evacuees until each arrives at the authorized safehaven and providing the employee has commenced official travel to the duty station (either to safehaven or return to post). Determination of the exact date may also in some circumstances depend on the date the employee or EFMs members were officially due to return to post.

23. Q: If Permanent Change of Station (PCS) travel orders have been issued prior to an employee/EFM's evacuation orders, which orders take precedence?

A: PCS travel orders always take precedence over any other type of travel orders, including evacuation orders. An evacuee's travel should therefore be charged to his/her PCS orders. An evacuee may, however, be eligible to receive SEA benefits if the evacuation occurs prior to his/her originally scheduled PCS travel. When EFMs depart post under evacuation orders, and the employee subsequently departs post under PCS orders, all evacuation benefits will cease for EFMs when the employee's PCS travel begins.

24. Q: What if EFMs have been evacuated and the employee later joins the evacuated family on a different type of travel order such as R&R or home leave?

A: Employees cannot receive SEA. However, SEA continues for family members previously evacuated per DSSR 632.4.

25. Q: How is it determined whether the commercial or non-commercial rate for SEA applies, and can an employee draw SEA at the commercial rate and EFMs draw SEA at the non-commercial rate?

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A: When necessary and in the interest of the U.S. Government, there may be more than one official safehaven designated. This may include both a U.S. Safehaven (50 United States and the District of Columbia) and a Foreign Safehaven. For an example, the employee can draw the commercial rate at the Foreign Safehaven and the EFMs can draw the non-commercial rate at the U.S. Safehaven. Commercial or non-commercial applies to the type of lodging the "first evacuee" occupies. Per DSSR 632.1, "There can only be one 'first evacuee' per family at a U.S. Safehaven and one "first evacuee" at a Foreign Safehaven, except as per DSSR 632.4(b) ('Married Couple Employees or Domestic Partnership Employees)". Only the first evacuee (this may be the employee or eligible family member) is reimbursed for up to 100 percent (or up to 150 percent for special family compositions) of the lodging portion of the per diem rate for his/her U.S. or Foreign Safehaven location under the commercial rate. All other eligible family members get only a percentage of the meal and incidental expense portion of the per diem rate of the first evacuee's U.S. or Foreign Safehaven location. If the first evacuee submits a commercial lodging receipt, then the commercial rate formula applies. If a commercial lodging receipt is not submitted, then the non-commercial rate formula applies. Both formulas are shown in a separate document entitled, "Evacuation Payments Worksheet (EPW)", in DSSR 960. Note: If evacuees stay in commercial lodging that does not include furniture and/or cost of utilities, these additional costs may be reimbursed as part of lodging (receipts must be submitted with lodging receipts).

26. Q: If the family composition requires more than one hotel room or larger quarters is there flexibility to allow reimbursement above the commercial rate maximum of 100% of the lodging portion of the safehaven?

A: The first evacuee may be reimbursed up to 50% above the lodging maximum when using the commercial rate, per DSSR 632.1(b). Special consideration is given to the following family compositions: (1) First evacuee plus one (non-spouse or non-domestic-partner family member, age 18 and older); (2) First evacuee plus one (non-spouse or non-domestic-partner family member of opposite gender, age 12 and over); (3) First evacuee plus two (one non-spouse or non-domestic-partner family member, age 18 and older; or one non-spouse or non-domestic-partner family member, opposite gender, age 12 and older); (4) First evacuee plus three (one non-spouse or non-domestic-partner family member, age 12 and over); and (5) First evacuee plus four or more family members.

27. Q: What if I have a special family composition not included as one of the five listed in the previous question?

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A: Requests for other special family considerations should be submitted through your agency to the Director, Office of Allowances (A/OPR/ALS), U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20522-0103, per DSSR 632.1(b).

28. Q: Upon termination of an evacuation order, is there a grace period for continuation of SEA until the day an evacuee returns to post? What if the employee is being transferred and not returning to post?

A: Upon termination of an evacuation order, an employee or EFM will continue to receive SEA for an automatic grace period of three (3) days except when the full 180 days has expired, per DSSR 635. For the employee not returning to post, only the three (3) days are allowed as long as he/she has not commenced travel under an assignment order to another duty location. For employees/family members returning to the evacuated post, an additional seven (7) days may be authorized due to transportation delays. Evacuees must provide a statement on their travel voucher justifying the additional seven (7) days required to arrange for return travel to post, such as airline reservations and air freight pick up. Other reasons of a personal nature do not qualify the evacuee for SEA for the additional days. Under no circumstance can SEA payments be made to exceed the 180-day "clock".

29. Q: Is my nanny or caregiver eligible for SEA?

A: Unless the nanny or caregiver is an eligible family member (EFM), the answer is "no." However, he/she may be the designated representative (DSSR 610f) who is named by an employee for the purpose of caring for, escorting, or receiving monetary payments on behalf of an EFM.

30. Q: Is there any other provision under the evacuation payments if I need further help with unexpected expenses related to evacuation?

A: Yes. Per DSSR 615, an employee may be paid in advance of the normal payday when, in the judgment of the authorizing officer, payment is required to help defray the immediate expenses incident to an evacuation. The advance payment shall be for a maximum of 30 days based on the rate of compensation including any allowances or post differential the employee was entitled to immediately prior to the evacuation order. The advance payment may be made at any time after the date the evacuation has been ordered but no later than 30 days after this date.

31. Q: What work assignments may an employee expect while on evacuation?

A: Evacuated employees may be assigned to perform any work considered necessary or required to be performed during the evacuation period, per DSSR 625.1. Failure or refusal to perform assigned work may be a basis for terminating further evacuation payments and taking disciplinary action, per DSSR 625.2.

32. Q: An evacuated employee was assigned TDY to another post directly from the evacuated post. When are post differentials terminated and initiated in this situation provided the losing and the gaining posts grant them?

A: Per DSSR 532a(3), the Post Differential terminates for the employee's permanent post the day he/she departs on emergency evacuation orders. The employee will receive the post differential until evacuated from his/her permanent post. The employee will receive the post differential for the TDY post commencing with the 43rd day at post. The employee will not receive SEA payments because the employee is on TDY receiving per diem and has not been evacuated to a safehaven site.

33. Q: An evacuated employee was assigned to the Department of State in Washington, D.C. and was receiving SEA payments. Subsequently the employee was assigned TDY to a foreign post that has a post hardship differential. When will the employee's SEA be terminated and the post hardship differential payments be initiated?

A: The employee's SEA payments are terminated at the time of departure from Washington, D.C. to the TDY post. The employee will receive the TDY post's hardship differential commencing FROM the 43rd day at this post unless the employee is at a DSSR 920 footnote "N" post for the first 42 consecutive (NOT cumulative) days of detail. If that pertains, then once the 42 days consecutive are obtained, a look back to day one is allowed and the employee is paid the applicable post hardship differential percentage applied to basic compensation paid during the 42 day period.

34. Q: When are SEA payments terminated?

A: Entitlement to SEA payments ends on the earliest of the following dates, per DSSR 635:

the date the employee commences travel under an assignment order to another duty station outside the evacuation area;

- the effective date of transfer when the employee is already at the post to which transferred;
- the date of separation;

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- the date specified by the head of agency;
- 180 days after the evacuation order is issued; or
- the date the evacuee commences return travel to post.

When a departure (evacuation) order is terminated and evacuees are allowed to return to post, entitlement to SEA payments ends on the day that return to post is authorized. Normally a grace period of three, not to exceed ten days, is granted during which SEA may continue to be paid while an evacuee is making arrangements to return to post. The grace period taken must be justified on the employee's travel voucher (i.e. that the extra days were necessary to arrange return to post). SEA payments are limited to 180 days, the grace period included.

35. Q: What happens after an evacuation has terminated and the post becomes unaccompanied, meaning family members can no longer go to post?

A: Employees whose EFMs are in temporary commercial lodging should apply for Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance. Employees whose EFMs have been in non-commercial lodging should apply for Involuntary SMA. In lieu of Involuntary SMA for children in grades K-12, employees may consider the "away from post" education allowance option (see DSSR 276.23 for details). Since SMA payments cannot be made retroactively, the employee should submit Standard Form (SF-1190) to his/her regional bureau Executive director (or agency appropriate authorizing official) requesting SMA before the evacuation ends in order to take advantage of these benefits.

TRAVEL ALLOWANCES

36. Q: Are evacuated employees and/or EFMs granted unaccompanied air baggage (UAB) for their departure from post?

A: Yes, Department of State employees/EFMs are allowed UAB, per 14 FAM 613.3-1, as follows: First person traveling to an authorized safehaven, 250 lbs.; second person traveling to an authorized safehaven, 200 lbs.; third person traveling to an authorized safehaven, 150 lbs.; fourth or more persons traveling to an authorized safehaven, 100 lbs. Employees of other agencies should consult their applicable travel regulations for agency-specific weight allowances.

37. Q: What if this authorized UAB shipment cannot be arranged at the time of the employee's and EFMs' evacuation departure?

A: For Department of State employees: in lieu of an airfreight allowance from post, an airfreight replacement allowance may be granted to help defray costs of

You've been evacuated. Now what?

items normally part of the authorized airfreight shipment that must be purchased at the safehaven location.

The flat rates are *per authorized safehaven*:

- first evacuee without family: \$250;
- first evacuee with one family member: \$450;
- first evacuee with two or more family members: \$600.

Examples:

1. Employee is at the foreign safehaven and three family members are at the U.S. safehaven. The allowable amount would be \$250 for the employee at the foreign safehaven and \$600 for the three family members at the U.S. safehaven.

2. Employee is at the U.S. safehaven and three family members are at an alternate safehaven. The allowable amount would be \$250 for the employee at the U.S. safehaven and \$600 for the three family members at the alternate safehaven.

3. Employee is at the U.S. safehaven (and physically located in Washington, D.C.) and three family members are at the U.S. safehaven (and physically located in Iowa). The allowable amount would be \$600 because the employee and family members are all at the U.S. safehaven even though they are in separate U.S. locations.

Receipts are not required for this allowance, per DSSR 631a.(3). Note that the maximum airfreight replacement allowance per authorized safehaven is \$600, while the maximum UAB allowance could exceed 600 lbs., depending on family size. Employees of other agencies should consult their applicable travel regulations for airfreight allowances in this situation.

38. Q: If an employee receives the above allowance, is the employee entitled to ship UAB back to post upon the termination of evacuation?

A: Yes, the standard UAB shipment weights cited above apply, per DSSR 631a.(3). Employees of other agencies should consult their applicable travel regulations for airfreight allowances in this situation.

39. Q: If an employee ships UAB for an EFM to the U.S. safehaven, may UAB be shipped from the U.S. safehaven to the employee's next duty station where the EFM rejoins the employee?

A: Yes. However, the UAB is shipped using the employee's PCS orders, not the evacuation orders. Total weight of UAB shipped from the safehaven to the next post and from the employee's current duty station to the next post may not exceed the UAB weight authorized on the PCS orders. Employees of other agencies should consult their applicable travel regulations for airfreight allowances in this situation.

40. Q: A spouse or domestic partner of an employee is considered as emergency personnel and works in an EFM position at an Embassy that is on ordered departure. When the evacuation terminates and the post becomes unaccompanied, the EFM position is to be abolished and the spouse or domestic partner must then leave post for safehaven in the U.S. Under what kind of orders may the spouse or domestic partner travel, and what allowances may be granted?

A: The spouse or domestic partner travels under evacuation orders to the involuntary SMA location, per DSSR 264.1. The employee may receive involuntary SMA commencing the day after the spouse or domestic partner arrives in the U.S. The spouse or domestic partner is not entitled to transitional separate maintenance allowance (TSMA) because the spouse or domestic partner did not leave post during the evacuation and did not receive SEA payments.

41. Q: After an evacuation terminates and the post becomes unaccompanied, what benefits are available to EFMs? For example, an employee's EFMs want to move from their safehaven in Washington, DC to an alternate involuntary SMA location in the U.S. What allowances may be granted the employee for the family members?

A: For the Department of State, Human Resources (HR) will fund the EFMs' travel from the safehaven (in this case Washington, DC) to the involuntary SMA location and will issue SMA orders that designate Washington, D.C. as the alternate point of origin to the SMA location, per DSSR 264.1. The EFMs may ship their evacuation UAB to this location and may access their HHE at government expense. Employees of other agencies should check with appropriate officials within your agency for guidance.

42. Q: After a period of time, if an unaccompanied post is declared accompanied and the employee's EFMs want to return to post, what allowances may be granted the employee?

A: For the Department of State, Human Resources (HR) will fund the EFMs' travel back to post, provided the return to post is prior to the employee's final 90

days before PCS, per DSSR 264.2(2). Employees of other agencies should check with appropriate officials within your agency for guidance.

43. Q: After an evacuation terminates and EFMs may return to post, an employee requests that EFMs remain at the safehaven site for two months before returning to post. What allowances may be granted an employee whose EFMs remain at the safehaven on voluntary SMA under the exception at DSSR 264.2(b)?

A: Following termination of an authorized/ordered departure an employee may elect voluntary SMA at the official safehaven for eligible family members previously eligible for SEA payments under DSSR Chapter 600 and for whom round-trip travel expenses have already been authorized. The employee may be permitted to then terminate this voluntary SMA and these eligible family members may be permitted to return to post provided return travel to post does not occur during the employee's last 90 days at a post of assignment. No additional expenses for travel, access to goods in storage, shipment of household effects or other such SMA-related expenditures may be incurred on their behalf. Note this election of voluntary SMA does not count as the "one change of election during a tour of duty" as normal voluntary SMA would (see Exception under DSSR 264.2b).

44a. Q: An employee is evacuated from post leaving a pet behind to be cared for by friends. While at safehaven in Washington, DC and assigned to the Department the employee's tour was curtailed. The employee went on home leave and then proceeded to a newly assigned overseas post on PCS. The employee wants to send the pet to the new post. May this shipment be done at government expense?

A: Shipping a pet is the employee' responsibility, so this expense is not covered by transfer orders. However, the cost of shipping a pet may be claimed under the miscellaneous expense portion of the Foreign Transfer Allowance. The maximum amount of reimbursement for all allowable expenses without receipts is \$650 for an employee without family and \$1,300 for an employee with family. Greater amounts, up to one or two weeks of the employee's salary at the time of entrance on duty at the new post, may be granted with receipts or other acceptable evidence justifying the amount claimed for expenses. The current maximum is one or two weeks of the employee's salary or that of a GS-13, step 10, whichever is less. Costs in excess of these maximums are considered personal expenses that may be claimed, in some cases, as moving expenses for income tax purposes. See DSSR 242.1b and check agency guidance for limitations.

44b. Q: Per a change in the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH) on 11-1-2012 I understand my pet can be evacuated. Can you give me some details?

A: Transportation of pets during an evacuation is a non-reimbursable personal expense. The chartered transportation carriers must be able and willing to transport the pets and the onward destination must be able and willing to receive the pets. A traveler's baggage authorization is reduced by one checked bag for every pet carried in the cargo hold and/or by one carry-on bag for every pet carried under the seat in the passenger compartment. Note: Working animals, such as guide dogs, are not considered pets and will be accommodated if possible.

EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

45. Q: Are any other special education benefits available to evacuees and their families?

A: Usually education allowances are not granted for children evacuated from post to a safehaven in the U.S. if accompanied by a parent. Exception 1: If prior to evacuation, a child was attending school in the U.S. and was receiving the "away from post" education allowance, the rate authorized for the evacuated post may continue for the remainder of the school year, per DSSR 633.2. There is no entitlement for SEA payments for children on "away from post" education allowance. Exception 2: If prior to evacuation, a child of an employee assigned to a border post (Canada or Mexico) was attending school in the U.S. and was receiving the "at post" education allowance, the rate authorized for the evacuated post may continue for the remainder of the school year, per DSSR 621.1(d)(1) and DSSR 621.2(d)(1). Children under an "at post" education allowance are entitled to subsistence expense allowance if the "Exception" at DSSR 621.1(d)(1) and 621.2(d)(1) applies.

46. Q: Does the "away from post" education allowance continue during the evacuation period?

A: The education allowance continues until the end of the current school year and the safehaven location replaces the foreign post of assignment as the destination for travel within the education allowance. No payment of SEA is authorized for any period of time covered by the "away from post" education allowance (DSSR 633.2).

47. Q: May an EFM on educational travel or "away from post education allowance, travel to the safehaven following evacuation of a post?

A: Yes. The safehaven location replaces the foreign post of assignment for travel purposes under education allowance and educational travel as established in DSSR 633.2 and DSSR 633.4. Note: Payment of SEA is not allowed for

children on "away from post" education allowance (DSSR 633.2). Subsistence expense is payable for such students only during the school break between grant years. Payment of SEA is allowed for children under educational travel only when they are at the safehaven and only for children unmarried and less than 21 years old. ("Child" is defined in DSSR 271g for education allowance and DSSR 281d for educational travel.)

48. Q: May an EFM student travel at government expense from the student's safehaven site (the student's school is located in the U.S.) to the home leave address of the employee to join the family on home leave?

A: Yes, this travel is authorized, per DSSR 284. The EFM student would have been on the home leave orders of the employee had the student been able to return to post, a return that was precluded owing to the evacuation.

49. Q: During an evacuation, EFM students at "away from post" schools (boarding schools) continue to receive the "away from post" education allowance until the end of the school year, but do not receive SEA during the spring school break. When the school term ends, what options are available for students?

A: After the school year ends, the students may travel to a safehaven location using the remaining travel monies from the "away from post" education allowance. They may then begin receiving evacuation payments (SEA). The reason is that if the evacuation continues into the succeeding school year, students would not be eligible for an education allowance when the new school year begins. However, the employee may pay any required deposit or tuition payment for the first semester of this school year from personal funds with the understanding the employee risks not receiving reimbursement for this expenditure.

Should the evacuation terminate during the school year and EFMs are permitted to return to post, the Office of Allowances within the U.S. Department of State will update the "at post" and "away from post" education allowances which could subsequently be used to fund educational expenses for that school year (assuming the EFMs met the requirements of DSSR 270). Posts may not pay a deposit or down payment for tuition payment for the succeeding school year while the post is in authorized or ordered departure status.

If after termination of the evacuation, the post is declared "unaccompanied", and there is no natural or adoptive parent residing in the United States, then the student is permitted to use the "away from post" education allowance to attend boarding school in the U.S., per DSSR 276.23 and DSSR 276.3. See DSSR 276.3 for exceptions and restrictions. Note: The employee may choose the

"away from post" education allowance for a child to attend boarding school outside the U.S. without the restriction of the parent residing in the same country.

50. Q: What options are available to boarding school students on "away from post" education allowance who would normally be permitted to travel back to post during an evacuation? May they travel to the safehaven at government expense? What are their options should the evacuation terminate and they wish to return to post for the summer break?

A: If there is no parent already evacuated to the U.S., the employee may designate a relative's or other adult's residence, or the city in which the boarding school is located, as the safehaven. The employee has the option of paying for travel from the boarding school to the safehaven location from personal funds and thereby "save" the remaining travel monies of the "away from post" education allowance for later use in the event the evacuation terminates and EFM's are permitted to return to post. Please refer to the question/answer 49 above regarding the options available should the evacuation continue into the succeeding school year.

51. Q: What options are available to college students who would normally be eligible for educational travel during an evacuation? The safehaven normally replaces the post for computing educational travel, but is it permissible to delay using educational travel to post in anticipation of the imminent termination of evacuation and thus retain the option of the EFM student returning to post during the summer break?

A: If there is no parent evacuated to the U.S., the employee may designate a relative's or other adult's address or the city in which the college or university is located as the U.S. safehaven, per DSSR 610 I. The student, if under the age of 21, may begin receiving SEA payments after the student arrives at the safehaven. Parents have the option of paying for travel from the educational institution to the safehaven location themselves, thereby retaining the educational travel trip for later in the summer in the event the evacuation terminates and the post becomes accompanied again. If a student is already living in an off-campus apartment or similar housing at the end of the school year, then this accommodation will not be considered commercial lodging for purposes of SEA payments.

52. Q: An employee is assigned to an unaccompanied post. The employee's EFM student, age 18, is enrolled in college but cannot visit the employee using educational travel. In these circumstances, may the employee receive involuntary SMA for the EFM student?

A: Yes, the employee may receive involuntary SMA in lieu of educational travel in this instance, until the EFM student becomes 21 years of age.

53. Q: Some families have EFM students in boarding school and/or college in different locations that in addition terminate the school term on different dates. Must all family members proceed to the same safehaven site or may EFMs of the same family declare different and separate safehaven sites? If they are permitted to travel to different safehaven sites, what is the basis for the M&IE payments?

A: The safehavens are: Official U.S. (anywhere in the 50 United States or District of Columbia); Official Foreign; or Approved Alternate (foreign or non-foreign). EFMs are not required to travel to the same safehaven site. They may travel to another location in the U.S. or to an approved alternate safehaven. However, there can be only one first evacuee for SEA calculations (DSSR 632) per official (U.S. or foreign) safehaven and a first evacuee at an approved alternate safehaven ONLY if there is not already a first evacuee at an official safehaven.

There can be a first evacuee at an official U.S. safehaven and there can be a first evacuee at a foreign safehaven at the same time. When an employee or family member is at an official (U.S. or foreign) safehaven s/he is considered the first evacuee for SEA calculations even if other family members are at an alternate safehaven. SEA calculations for the first evacuee for both the lodging and M&IE are based on the per diem of the first evacuee's location; SEA payments for family members at an alternate safehaven are calculated on only the applicable M&IE portion for the lowest of the (1) official safehaven; (2) approved alternate safehaven; or (3) Continental US (CONUS). If, however, there is not an employee or family member at an official U.S. or official foreign safehaven, one family member at an alternate safehaven may be considered the first evacuee and SEA calculated using both the lodging and M&IE for the lowest of the (1) official safehaven; (2) approved alternate safehaven; or (3) Continental US (CONUS).

Travel of all other EFMs to safehaven sites different from the first evacuee is calculated on a cost-construct basis using the evacuated post to the safehaven of the first evacuee as the basis for this cost calculation.

54. Q: At the termination of an evacuation and a declaration that EFMs may return to post, an employee's EFMs nonetheless wish to remain in the U.S. so that the EFM students may complete the final term of the current school year. What allowances may be granted the employee?

A: If the EFMs are residing in commercial quarters, the employee may receive a maximum of 90 calendar days of Transitional SMA (TSMA) to allow the EFM students to complete the current term of the school year, per DSSR 262.3b. If the EFMs are residing in non-commercial quarters, the employee may be granted Voluntary SMA (VSMA). However, EFMs may not return to post if, at the end of the school year, the employee is within 90 days of Permanent Change of Station (PCS) (DSSR 264.2b).

TRANSITIONAL SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES (TSMA)

55. Q: An employee returns to the safehaven on evacuation orders to join his previously evacuated family two weeks before the end of the 180-day evacuation period. At the end of the 180-day evacuation period, the employee's post is declared "unaccompanied." At this time the employee takes two weeks of annual leave and then returns to post. May the employee receive TSMA on behalf of this family for the two weeks following the termination of the evacuation, even though the family was not separated?

A: Yes, TSMA may be granted for this period because the employee was maintaining quarters at the post during this temporary absence from post, per DSSR 265.3. TSMA in this case would be for the purpose of "transitioning" the family from commercial quarters occupied during the evacuation to permanent quarters because the post has been declared "unaccompanied", per DSSR 262.3a. This TSMA may be granted for up to 60 calendar days with an additional 30 calendar days granted on a case by case basis for extreme or unusual circumstances.

56. Q: An employee's EFMs were evacuated six months ago and have been living in a furnished apartment. The evacuation has been terminated and the post is declared as "unaccompanied". The EFMs would like to move to a less expensive rental house. Is this move permissible while still retaining TSMA eligibility?

A: Yes, this move is permissible provided that the less expensive commercially leased rental house is a "transition" residence prior to occupying permanent quarters (DSSR 262.3a). However, if this less expensive rental house is intended to be a permanent residence then the employee may not receive TSMA, but may receive involuntary SMA, per DSSR 262.1.

57. Q: After an employee's EFMs move into a permanent residence are they still eligible to receive TSMA until they receive their full HHE shipment?

A: TSMA payments terminate the earliest of the dates that are set forth in DSSR 266.4, i.e. (a) the date the employee commences travel under transfer orders from the evacuated post or the date of transfer if no travel is to occur under the transfer orders; (b) the final day of the authorized period of the TSMA; (c) the date the complete HHE shipment is received by the employee's EFMs; (d) the date the EFMs occupy non-commercial quarters; or (e) the date EFMs occupy permanent quarters.

If the employee's EFMs move into a permanent residence before they receive their full HHE shipment then their TSMA will terminate before they receive that shipment (on the day they occupy permanent quarters). Alternately, if they receive their full HHE shipment before occupying permanent quarters TSMA will terminate on the date they receive that shipment.

58. Q: An employee ships some HHE from post to EFMs on TSMA in the U.S. If the HHE does not arrive within 60 days may TSMA be extended beyond this period?

A: Usually TSMA under DSSR 262.3a may be paid for a maximum of 60 days, but an additional 30 days may be allowed, with agency approval based on extreme or unusual circumstances. The employee at post should submit an SF-1190 (Rev. 07/2009) to the appropriate agency official before the end of the 60-day period to request an extension of TSMA payments for the additional 30 days. An example of "extreme or unusual circumstances" would be a situation in which the employee made reasonable efforts to ship the HHE to his EFMs in the U.S. but the shipment did not arrive in this time period.

59. Q: What are the TSMA rates?

A: Per DSSR 267.1b(2), TSMA rates are based on percentage of the Standard CONUS per diem rate and are per family, not per person: for days 1–30 100% Standard CONUS/day for 1-2 family members and 100% (Standard CONUS +\$20) /day for 3 or more family members; for days 31-60 75% Standard CONUS/day for 1-2 family members and 75% (Standard CONUS +\$20)/day for 3 or more family members; for days 61-90 50% Standard CONUS/day for 1- 2 family members and 50% (Standard CONUS+\$20)/day for 3 or more family members.

60. Q: Is TSMA taxable?

A: No, TSMA is not subject to federal or state income taxes, per DSSR 054.1.

61. Q: How are TSMA payments initiated, received, and then terminated?

A: An employee submits a Standard Form (SF) -1190 (Rev. 07/2009) that is processed and approved, per DSSR 264.3. Payments are made to the employee by payroll and continue until the employee submits an SF-1190 requesting termination of the allowance. The employee should submit this termination notice upon the initial occurrence of any of the following events, per DSSR 266.4: (a) the date the employee commences travel under transfer orders from the evacuated post or the date of transfer if no travel is to occur under the transfer orders; (b) the final day of the authorized period of the TSMA; (c) the date the complete HHE shipment is received by the employee's family members; (d) the date the family members occupy non-commercial quarters; or (e) the date the family members occupy permanent quarters.

62. Q: Once TSMA is terminated what options remain for the employee?

A: The employee may submit an SF-1190 to the appropriate agency requesting involuntary SMA for each family member and specifying in box #18 of the SF-1190 the reason for the request; namely, that the post is unaccompanied and travel to post has been denied to the employee's family members, per DSSR 264.1. An employee's minor family members are covered by involuntary SMA until the age of 21 (age 18 for voluntary SMA with the exception of those over 18 who are in secondary school). Involuntary SMA is paid according to the following rates (as of 2/13/2013): \$6,800 for one child; \$11,300 for 2 or more children; \$12,900 for one adult; \$17,400 for one adult and one additional family member; \$19,700 for one adult and two or three family members; and \$23,000 for one adult and four or more additional family members, per DSSR 267.1a.

63. Q: What other allowances are available once TSMA terminates and the post is declared unaccompanied?

A: If the employee has EFM students in grades K through 12 then the employee may request either involuntary SMA or the applicable "away from post" education allowance. The applicable "away from post" education allowance is that specified for the employee's post of assignment, per DSSR 276.23. The "away from post" education allowance option may be chosen unless the child is going to school in the U.S. and the parent (natural, adoptive, or step) resides in the U.S. also (rare exceptions noted at DSSR 276.3). If this is the case, the employee is not eligible for the "away from post" education allowance. The logic is that the child could live with the parent and attend public school free of charge. This same prohibition does not apply if the child is going to school in a foreign country and the parent resides in the same foreign country because school wouldn't be free in the foreign country as in the U.S. The only restriction on the "away from post" education allowance when a child is going to school in a foreign country is at DSSR 277.2. Room and board could not be paid to the parent if the child lived with that parent outside the U.S. (rare exceptions noted at DSSR 277.2b).

64. Q: May an employee receive TSMA for EFMs who have been evacuated to an alternate approved foreign safehaven?

A: EFMs are eligible to receive TSMA, per DSSR 264.3, if they are occupying temporary commercial quarters. They are not eligible for TSMA if they are residing in non-commercial quarters. If they are not eligible for TSMA they may be eligible for either involuntary SMA or "away from post" education allowance (see the previous Q&A's on this topic).

Note: EFMs are officially considered to be residing in the U.S. on involuntary SMA. However, the employee may request that the alternate foreign safehaven of the EFMs be designated as the official involuntary SMA site. If this request is approved by the appropriate agency official an "at post" education allowance may be paid for eligible EFM students unless they have traveled to a secondary school (grades 9-12) under the educational travel authority within the previous 12 months (DSSR 262.5). (Department of State employees should make this request to the Executive Director of the appropriate regional bureau.)

65. Q: What constitutes "non-commercial" quarters?

A: "Non-commercial" quarters are those that are not commercially leased or rented. Employees and EFMs living with family, friends, etc. would be considered living in "non-commercial" quarters, per DSSR 632.1.

66. Q: An employee is to be reassigned within a month after the termination of evacuation orders. May his EFMs living in the U.S. receive TSMA for this period?

A: The employee's EFMs are eligible for TSMA while they reside in temporary commercial quarters. However, if the employee is expecting to be transferred to the U.S. within a month the subsistence expense portion of the Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) may provide a better benefit for the employee than the TSMA. If TSMA is approved, EFMs will not be eligible for the HSTA unless official transportation was authorized permitting those family members to join the employee at the new post of assignment in the U.S., per DSSR 252.8.

SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES (SMA)

67. Q: At what age must voluntary SMA terminate for a dependent child?

A: Voluntary SMA must be terminated on a child's 18th birthday, unless the child is attending secondary school or is determined to be incapable of self-support (due to physical or mental impairment), per DSSR 262.2 and DSSR 264.2a(4).

68. Q: If an employee's spouse or domestic partner is in Washington, D.C. on voluntary SMA and the employee is evacuated from post to the safehaven site of Washington, D.C., is SMA terminated?

A: The SMA is not terminated. When the employee is evacuated, it is considered a temporary absence from post. Per DSSR 265.3 the grant shall continue during the absence of the employee from the post provided the employee maintains quarters at the post, unless terminated under the provisions of DSSR 266.2 or 266.3 (Transfer or Separation).

69. Q: At what age must involuntary SMA terminate for a dependent child?

A: Involuntary SMA must be terminated on a child's 21st birthday, unless the child is determined to be incapable of self-support (due to physical or mental impairment), per DSSR 262.1. A child who is in post-secondary school/college and not currently working is not considered to be incapable of self-support.

70. Q: If an eligible family member on SMA travels to the post at personal expense will the Department assume any responsibility in the case of an emergency involving the EFM?

A: When an EFM travels to the employee's post at personal expense, the family member is considered a private citizen visiting the country. As such, that family member is not eligible for any allowances or benefits paid on behalf of family members of USG civilian employees, including any medical emergency evacuation travel, per DSSR 261.2. However, if the employee has not previously used the one change of option per tour (applies to voluntary SMA and not involuntary SMA) to terminate SMA, the employee might be permitted to do so once an emergency arises while the EFM is at the employee's post.

71. Q: When an employee receiving SMA is transferred to another post does the SMA automatically continue?

A: When an employee is transferred, SMA must be terminated, per DSSR 266.2. The employee must then elect to apply for SMA at the new post or have family members included on the travel orders (if an accompanied post).

72. Q: Following the termination of evacuation, may an employee's EFMs remain at their safehaven on voluntary SMA and then return to post later?

A: Following termination of an authorized or ordered departure an employee may elect voluntary SMA at the official safehaven for the EFMs previously eligible for SEA payments and for whom round-trip travel expenses have already been authorized, per DSSR 264.2b Exception. However, an EFM who has been

living in an official overseas safehaven and wishes to remain there must reaffirm that this location meets Department of State security standards. The employee may be permitted to terminate this voluntary SMA and EFMs may be permitted to return to post provided return travel to post does not occur during the employee's final 90 days at post. This SMA is not to be considered the "one change of option" during a tour of duty.

73. Q: Who may officially authorize approval or disapproval of an employee's SMA request?

A: Employees must check with their agencies for officials who are authorized to approve/disapprove SMA. Within the foreign affairs agencies, the following officials are authorized to approve SMA requests for their respective agencies (see 3 FAM 3232 and 3FAH-1 H3232.2 for additional instructions):

State Department--Executive Director of the appropriate bureau
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) --See ADS 477
USDA--FAS -- Director, International Services Division, OFSO
Department of Commerce--Director, Office of Foreign Service Human Capital

Only the following officials can disapprove SMA applications for their respective foreign affairs agencies:

State Department--Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources
USAID--See ADS 477
USDA--FAS -- Deputy Administrator, Office of Foreign Service Operations
Department of Commerce--the Director General or Appropriate Secretarial Officer.

74. Q: What procedure must an employee follow in submitting an SMA request?

A: The employee must complete and sign the SF-1190 (Rev. 07/2009) that contains a statement certifying the veracity of the request. Employees from agencies other than State should contact their respective headquarters for guidance. If an employee is requesting SMA on behalf of a spouse or domestic partner, the spouse or domestic partner must also sign the SF-1190 so that the spouse or domestic partner is aware of the request for SMA on his/her behalf.

75. Q: Is an employee's EFM student eligible to receive educational travel while on SMA?

A: No. When EFM students are on voluntary SMA they are not eligible for other allowances, including educational travel.

76. Q: Is an employee's EFM student eligible to receive an education allowance while on involuntary SMA?

A: If a foreign area is designated as the official SMA (involuntary) location, an EFM student may be eligible for an education allowance, per DSSR 262.5. Unless specifically designated otherwise by the head of agency, EFMs on SMA (voluntary) are considered to be officially residing in the U.S. and can attend U.S. public schools free of charge. However, if SMA is granted for the convenience of the government (involuntary) and a foreign area is designated as the official SMA location, the EFM student authorized to reside at that location may be authorized an education allowance within the applicable "school at post" education allowance rate for the officially authorized foreign Involuntary SMA location unless the child has traveled under the Educational Travel authority within the previous 12 months.

77. Q: The spouse or domestic partner of an employee at a foreign post is residing in the U.S. on SMA. When the employee leaves (transfers from) post the SMA will be terminated. How much Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) is the employee eligible to receive? Further, should the subsistence portion of this allowance include the spouse or domestic partner as well?

A: Family members for whom a SMA was authorized while the employee was posted in a foreign area are not considered members of the family for computing the HSTA unless official transportation was authorized permitting those family members to join the employee at the new post of assignment in the U.S., per DSSR 252.8. If transportation was not authorized for family members to join the employee at the new U.S. post, the employee is granted the HSTA as a single employee, not as one with EFMs.

SINGLE PARENTS / MARRIED COUPLE EMPLOYEES/DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP EMPLOYEES

78. Q: If a single parent employee is assigned to a position designated by the post as an "emergency" position will the employee's children be evacuated when ordered departure for EFMs is declared? If so, what allowances will the EFM children receive?

A: Yes, the EFM children will be evacuated. They will be eligible for the customary evacuation benefits, per DSSR 630. If there is a single child, this child would be considered as the "first" evacuee of the family unit and would receive SEA based on the safehaven per diem rate (if at the Official U.S. or foreign safehaven), including the actual lodging charge up to the lodging limit. If there are other children evacuated they would receive a percentage of the U.S. or

foreign safehaven locality M&IE rate according to the formulas set forth in DSSR 632.1. If, however, the children go to an approved alternate safehaven SEA is calculated using the lodging and M&IE for the lowest of the (1) official safehaven; (2) approved alternate safehaven; or (3) Continental US (CONUS) [DSSR 632.2(b)].

79. Q: When married couple employees or domestic partnership employees depart post on evacuation orders, how are their SEA payments determined?

A: Employees will each receive evacuation benefits not to exceed an employee's eligibility, but without duplication of benefits for family members on their orders. Both employees are considered to be the first evacuee, per DSSR 632.1. (This is based on married couple employees' or domestic partnership employees' eligibility for all other allowances, including transfer allowances and temporary lodging, on a per person employee basis. However, only 50% of the lodging allowance is granted for each employee if the employees are sharing lodging.)

80. Q: In the case of married couple employees or domestic partnership employees with EFM children and only one parent/employee being evacuated, on whose orders should the evacuated children be placed?

A: EFM children should be evacuated under the name of the employee who lists them for allowances and benefits at post.

81. Q: How do married couple employees or domestic partnership employees evacuated to the same official safehaven submit their receipts under the commercial rate formula for lodging?

A: Provided the evacuated employees are residing in the same commercial quarters, they should submit their vouchers together. Reimbursement would be granted as "first evacuee" to each for lodging (one-half of the commercial lodging charge for each if sharing quarters) as well as M&IE, per DSSR 632.1(b).

SHIPMENTS AND PROPERTY CLAIMS

82. Q: May POVs be shipped from the post to the safehaven point at government expense?

A: No, POV shipments are not authorized, per 631b. However, a safehaven transportation allowance of \$25 per day is authorized. The transportation allowance may not exceed \$25 per day per family and may be paid at only one

safehaven even if evacuees from the same family are at two different safhavens. No receipts are required.

83. Q: May an employee have access to HHE while on evacuation status?

A: Access to, delivery and return to storage of household effects for evacuees is at personal expense, not Government expense, per DSSR 631b.

84. Q: If an employee does not ship UAB from post during an evacuation and subsequently receives the airfreight replacement allowance, may the employee ship UAB back to post after the evacuation?

A: Yes. The airfreight replacement allowance is only in place of the UAB from post, per DSSR 631a (3).

85. Q: What if an employee is assigned to a new post, but all personal effects remain at the evacuated post?

A: If the household effects (HHE), unaccompanied air baggage (UAB), or privately owned vehicle (POV) are packed out, they will be shipped as soon as it is possible to do so. If the employee is not present at post, the post's Management section will be responsible for packing and shipping the employee's effects.

86. Q: What should an employee do if personal property has been lost or damaged at post?

A: The employee may file a claim with the Department for loss or damage of personal property, but not until such time that the post verifies the loss. Employees must provide travel orders and complete forms DS-1620, DS-1620C and form DS-1620A – Claims Investigating Officer's Report (CIO) must be completed by an executive, administrative, or general services officer at post. Employees should contact the Claims Assistance Officer at post to assist them in filing their claim.

87. Q: What is the maximum amount that may be claimed for lost and damaged personal property?

A: The maximum amount payable for any loss or damage arising from a single incident is limited by law to \$40,000, unless the claim arises from an emergency evacuation or from extraordinary circumstances, in which case the maximum amount is \$100,000. Employees are strongly encouraged to carry private insurance against damage to or loss of their personal property. The Department settles payable property claims based on the depreciated replacement cost of an

item and not the cost you may actually have to pay to replace or repair that item. For this reason the Department strongly recommends the purchase of private insurance. Employees should purchase coverage for both loss and damage of household goods and privately owned vehicles shipped and/or stored.

88. Q: Who should the employee contact to begin this claims procedure?

A: Department of State employees should contact the Transportation and Travel Management Division Claims Section at claimsquery@state.gov.

TERMINATION OF EVACUATION

89. Q: What is the period of validity for evacuation travel orders?

A: Under normal circumstances, evacuation travel orders are valid for up to nine months from the original date of approval of an evacuation order. However, if an employee still at post is reassigned to another post, evacuated family members are not allowed return travel within 30 days of reassignment.

90. Q: How are SEA payments and travel vouchers administered at the termination of an evacuation period?

A: For SEA payments: For Department of State employees, within 10 days of returning back to the evacuated post the final request must be sent to the Comptroller Global Financial Services (CGFS), CGFS/F/AOD/AA/CAA, PO Box 150008 Charleston, SC 29415-5008. The evacuee is responsible for sending the appropriate documentation including justification for any time between the termination of the evacuation and initiation of return travel to post. Justification includes making necessary travel arrangements. The final audit of SEA payments cannot be completed without appropriate supporting documentation.

- SEA payments terminate on the earliest of the following dates, per DSSR 635:
 - the date the employee commences travel under an assignment order to another duty station outside the evacuation area;
 - the effective date of transfer when the employee is already at the post to which transferred;
 - the date of separation;
 - the date specified by the head of agency;
 - 180 days after the evacuation order is issued; or
 - the date the evacuee commences return travel to post.

When an evacuation order is terminated and evacuees are allowed to return to post, eligibility for SEA payments ends on the day return to post is authorized. Normally a grace period of three, not to exceed ten days, is granted during which SEA may continue while an evacuee is making arrangements to return to post. The grace period must be justified on the employee's travel voucher (i.e. that the extra days were necessary to arrange return to post). SEA payments are limited to 180 days, including the grace period for travel.

91. Q: What happens if an evacuation ends and an employee is liable for paying a lease penalty?

A: If an employee or designee signs a lease at the safehaven and is subsequently ordered to return to post, or if an evacuation terminates and the post subsequently becomes unaccompanied, then the employee's agency may waive the refund due the Government on an advance or reimbursement of lodging expenses incurred not to exceed 30 days. This lease coverage may not extend beyond the 180-day evacuation payment limit. See DSSR 632.4c.

INVOLUNTARY SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (ISMA)

92. Q: If families are separated for the convenience of the government, why are all of our housing expenses not covered like they would be at post?

A: The purpose of both Voluntary and Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowances is to help defray the additional expenses associated with maintaining family members elsewhere than at post. The allowances are not meant to fully cover a family's expenses. The rates for Involuntary SMA are based on data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the average cost of maintaining a household in the continental United States (CONUS). The costs include average rent, utilities, miscellaneous furnishings and supplies. Because individual circumstances vary and most people do not live in the "average" area in CONUS, the rates may not fully cover each family's costs.

93. Q: If the post allows only spouses or domestic partners (or spouses or domestic partners and children under 5), but a spouse or domestic partner cannot go because there are children (or older children), is the employee then eligible for ISMA?

A: In addition to fully unaccompanied status, the Department of State has added the category of "partially unaccompanied" posts, i.e., only adult EFMs, or adult EFMs and small children, are permitted. If minor children (under the age of 18 years) may not proceed to post and are therefore eligible for ISMA, a parent or step-parent may remain at the separate household to care for them and would

also be eligible for ISMA. Questions on unusual circumstances should be sent to the Director of the Office of Allowances at AllowancesO@estate.gov.

94. Q: What happens if the family has been on ISMA and the post status changes back to accompanied, but because we are in the middle of the school year it is not advisable for the family to move? Can the employee continue to receive ISMA, or does it shift back to voluntary? If it shifts to voluntary, do I need to fill in another SF-1190?

A: When an unaccompanied post becomes safe enough for EFM's to return and the status changes to at least partially accompanied, the higher ISMA rates will continue for 90 days. Before the 90-day period ends, the employee will need to submit a new SF-1190 (Rev. 07/2009) to continue either ISMA (if partially unaccompanied and the employee's EFM's may not return) or VSMA (if the employee's EFM's could return but choose not to).

95. Q: If a family member fails to get a medical clearance, is the employee eligible for involuntary SMA? Is there a reporting requirement with regard to the medical condition? Do you have to continue to demonstrate the medical need for ISMA? If there is no longer justification for a medical ISMA, would the EFM still be eligible for voluntary SMA?

A: An employee may receive Involuntary SMA for a family member if that family member is prevented from proceeding to post due to a medical condition. The Office of Medical Services or other competent medical authority must certify in writing that the family member's medical condition prevents the family member from going to post. That certification could be a memo, cable or email that is attached to the SF-1190, Foreign Allowances Application, Grant and Report. If the family member's medical condition changes and the family member may proceed to post, but chooses not to, the employee is eligible for Voluntary SMA. The employee must immediately submit the new SF-1190 documenting that the EFM's status has changed. Please note that an employee may only elect VSMA for family members once during a tour of duty and the employee and family member must be separated for at least 90 days. The change of election may not take place during the employee's first or last 90 days during the tour of duty. (DSSR 264.2b).

96. Q: I am assigned to an accompanied post and my family members are with me. Unfortunately, one of my EFM's has developed a medical condition and the Regional Medical Officer (RMO) has stated that he cannot remain at post with me. He will return to the United States to get medical treatment for the remainder of my tour. May I put him on SMA? What type of SMA would he receive - voluntary or involuntary?

You've been evacuated. Now what?

A: You should submit an SF-1190 to your post management officer to apply for SMA on behalf of your EFM. Please note on the SF-1190 that you are applying for involuntary SMA because the Office of Medical Services has limited your EFM's medical clearance in such a way that he is not permitted to reside with you at post. Please attach documentation from the RMO or Office of Medical Services indicating that needed medical facilities are not available at post and therefore the EFM's medical clearance is being limited. You would then be eligible for ISMA on behalf of your EFM.

97. Q: What support is available to families on involuntary separation?

A: The Family Liaison Office (FLO) within the Department of State takes the lead on providing support to families on separate maintenance, both voluntary and involuntary, as well as those in evacuation status. FLO is setting up a network of support for families on involuntary separate maintenance and wants you to contact FLO with your email address and telephone number. FLO has developed a resource book and a website for unaccompanied tours on the internet website <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14521.htm>.

98. Q: How does ISMA relate to travel of separated families?

A: Travel for children of separated families described in 3FAM 3753 does apply to children on involuntary separate maintenance allowance (but not if on *voluntary* SMA). Since children are not allowed to visit an unaccompanied post, travel would have to be to an alternate location.

T SMA & EVACUATION

99. Q: My family and I were evacuated six months ago and I have been leasing a furnished apartment in a high rise building. Now that the evacuation has ended and the post is unaccompanied, I'd like to move my family to a rental house that is less expensive. Can I do this and still receive Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance (TSMA) for them?

A: Yes, your family can move to a less expensive commercially-leased rental house as long as it is a "transition" residence prior to occupying their permanent residence. If this move to the less expensive rental house is intended to be their permanent residence, then you will not be eligible for TSMA but only eligible for the "regular" Involuntary SMA rates in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) section 267.1.

100. Q: Even after my family moves, they will have a lot of extraordinary expenses (like furniture rental) until they receive the full Household Effects (HHE) shipment. When will my TSMA payments stop?

You've been evacuated. Now what?

A: As stated above, if this residence is considered temporary ("transitional") and commercially-leased, then TSMA payments may be paid for up to 60 calendar days awaiting your full HHE shipment. TSMA is intended to help defray the extraordinary expenses your family will experience during this transition period between the end of evacuation and the beginning of Involuntary SMA. The daily TSMA rates are based on percentage of the Standard CONUS per diem rate: for days 1–30 100% Standard CONUS/day for 1-2 family members and 100% (Standard CONUS +\$20) /day for 3 or more family members; for days 31-60 75% Standard CONUS/day for 1-2 family members and 75% (Standard CONUS +\$20)/day for 3 or more family members; for days 61-90 50% Standard CONUS/day for 1- 2 family members and 50% (Standard CONUS+\$20)/day for 3 or more family members. These are not per person rates but per family rates.

101. Q: Even if my spouse or domestic partner, who is still at post, ships some of our HHE right away, it will still probably take more than 60 days to get here. How do I extend the TSMA to 90 days?

A: TSMA may be paid for a maximum of 60 days with an additional 30 days allowed following agency approval based on extreme or unusual circumstances. The employee at post should submit an SF-1190 to the appropriate agency official ahead of the end of the initial 60 day period to request an extension of TSMA payments for the additional 30 days. One example of extreme or unusual circumstances is that the employee has made every effort to get the full HHE shipment to the family but the full shipment has not been delivered due to restrictions or difficulties beyond the employee's control.

102. Q: Are the TSMA amounts different for days 61 through 90?

A: Yes, the TSMA rates for days 61 through 90 are 50% Standard CONUS/day for 1- 2 family members and 50% (Standard CONUS+\$20)/day for 3 or more family members. These are not per person rates but per family rates.

103. Q: Is TSMA taxable?

A: No. TSMA is a type of SMA, which is not subject to federal or state income taxes.

104. Q: What if I get some of our furniture from storage and also have some of our HHE shipped. Would I still be eligible for TSMA after I get the items from storage, but until the HHE arrives?

A: If you are still in temporary commercial lodging, you are eligible for TSMA for up to 60 days or until your "full" HHE is delivered. However, the maximum days in TSMA cannot exceed 90 days.

105. Q: How do you know when my "complete" HHE has arrived?

A: The employee should submit an SF-1190 to the appropriate agency official to inform them of the date the family received the "complete" or "full" HHE. TSMA must terminate on the date the full HHE is delivered to the family. Please note that the USG is not responsible to move an HHE shipment from a temporary residence to the subsequent (permanent) residence, therefore, it would be good to coordinate delivery of HHE to a permanent residence. Please note that TSMA terminates when the earliest of several possible events occurs (see DSSR 266.4) and therefore could stop even before the "complete" HHE is delivered if one of those other conditions applies.

106. Q: Is TSMA paid automatically once it commences?

A: Yes. Once an employee has submitted an SF-1190 and it has been processed, payments commenced via the payroll process continue automatically until the employee submits an SF-1190 to the appropriate agency official to terminate the allowance. The employee should submit the form as soon as any of the following occur: date the employee commences travel under transfer orders from the evacuated post or date of transfer when no travel by the employee under the transfer order is involved; date the authorized period for Transitional SMA ends; date the complete Household Effects (HHE) shipment is delivered to family; date the family members occupy non-commercial quarters; or date the family members occupy permanent quarters.

107. Q: Once TSMA is terminated, what are my options?

A: You will submit the SF-1190 to the appropriate agency official requesting Involuntary SMA for each family member and cite in box 18 of the SF-1190 the reason for the request [that the post is unaccompanied and transportation to post has been withheld for family members]. Remember, involuntary SMA extends to children until they reach age 21 (age 18 is the limit for voluntary SMA unless the child is in secondary school). Although amounts may change in the future, the current annual amounts for Involuntary SMA as of 2/13/2013 are \$6,800 for one child; \$11,300 for 2 or more children; \$12,900 for one adult; \$17,400 for one adult and one additional family member; \$19,700 for one adult and two or three family members; and \$23,000 for one adult and four or more additional family members, per DSSR 267.1a.

108. Q: Is there anything else available following termination of TSMA?

A: For your school age children (grades K through 12), according to DSSR 276.23, the employee may request the applicable "away from post" education allowance [for the employee's post of assignment] for his/her child in lieu of

involuntary SMA. The restrictions are that (1) a parent (natural, adoptive, step) cannot reside in the United States if the child will attend school in the United States (this restriction does not apply if the child and parent live in the same foreign country); and (2) the child cannot have traveled under the educational travel authority within the previous 12 months.

109. Q: What if my family is at an alternate approved foreign safehaven at the end of the evacuation. Can I get TSMA for my family members in the foreign area?

A: If your family members are occupying temporary commercial quarters then they are eligible to receive TSMA. However, if they are in non-commercial quarters they are not eligible for TSMA. If they are not eligible for TSMA, they are eligible for either involuntary SMA or away from post education allowance. Note: Although family members are officially considered to reside in the U.S. on Involuntary SMA, if an employee has extenuating family circumstances, s/he may ask the appropriate agency official to "officially" designate a foreign area for Involuntary SMA. If a foreign area is "officially" designated for Involuntary (as opposed to voluntary) SMA, an education allowance (based on the DSSR 920 at post rate for the designated SMA location) may be paid for a child on Involuntary SMA at that location. (For State Department, the agency official would be the Executive Director of the appropriate bureau).

110. Q: Can you give me examples of non-commercial quarters?

Non-commercial quarters are considered private residences such as living with family, friends or others in a location which is not commercially leased or rented.

111. Q: I understand you're not supposed to receive regular SMA unless you will be in that status for at least 90 days. I expect my spouse or domestic partner to be reassigned in a month or so. Am I still eligible for TSMA?

A: Your family is eligible for TSMA as long as they are in temporary commercial lodging. However, if the employee is going to be transferred shortly to the U.S., you may wish to weigh the immediate benefit of TSMA versus the subsistence expense portion of the Home Service Transfer Allowance for family and employee once the employee gets back to the U.S. If TSMA is used, the family will not be eligible for HSTA "unless official transportation was authorized permitting those family members to join the employee at the new post of assignment in the U.S." (DSSR 252.8).