



BEYOND BAHRAIN *Family FAQ*

Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51 / 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade • May 2026

Distribution: DoW Community OnlyQuestions? Contact your Unit Readiness Coordinator (URC) Maj Lorna Lynott at 559-392-2934 or GySgt Robert Foreman at 910-467-4457

I. SAFE HAVEN & LOCATION-SPECIFIC LOGISTICS

Q Are the dependents in Germany going to be extended for an additional 90 days?

Action Required — Please read carefully and act before the stated deadline.

Updated per USW Memo, 7 May 2026: The Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) **will no longer be an approved alternate Safe Haven location effective 30 June 2026**. Families currently residing in KMC must begin planning now to select and travel to an authorized Safe Haven no later than that date.

Families on 90-day tourist visas are **encouraged to immediately file petitions** with local German authorities to extend their status, so that students with DODEA enrollment may complete the remainder of the school year in KMC. The Joint Staff and U.S. European Command will issue specific guidance to assist families in filing petitions efficiently. For DoD Service Member dependents, **the 180-day Safe Haven allowance clock will reset on the day you arrive at your new Safe Haven.**

Q Are we going to be able to go back to Bahrain even if our sponsor is still TDY?

While the Ordered Departure (OD) remains in effect, dependents are restricted from returning to Bahrain with U.S. government support. The authority to lift the OD rests with the Department of State and the Office of the Secretary of War.

If the OD is lifted, families will have the option to return to Bahrain even if their Service Member is operating TDY from another location. If you choose to travel to Bahrain **while the OD remains in effect**, you do so entirely at your own risk and expense — flights are non-reimbursable, U.S. government evacuation support cannot be guaranteed, and Safe Haven allowances will be forfeited.

Q If we are not extended in Germany, how much advance notice will we receive to plan our next Safe Haven location?

Action Required — Please read carefully and act before the stated deadline.

Do not wait for additional notice — begin planning now. Per the USW memo, the deadline is **30 June 2026**. Early action significantly reduces administrative delays. Contact the TF 51/5 G-1 (manpower) team for assistance identifying authorized alternate locations and coordinating your move.

Q We are in Florida and school starts in early August. We need to make major decisions soon — rent a house (furnished or unfurnished?), buy a car, etc.

If you designate Florida as your alternate Safe Haven/designated place, your entitlements will reflect that location accordingly. If in a PCS window, HHG shipment is authorized; however, due to ongoing Strait of Hormuz (SOH) transit disruptions, shipment timelines are significantly extended. **Finding a furnished household is strongly advised** to bridge the gap until your goods arrive. Contact the TF 51/5 G-1 team regarding the specific authorization documents needed to initiate your HHG shipment. For others, once/if the OD is lifted, you will be able to return to Bahrain if desired. If not desired, an Early Return of Dependents (ERD) request is justified.



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Q Will tickets be issued for families switching their Safe Haven location to Tampa, or should we submit a reimbursement claim?

Coordinate with the TF 51/5 team to have tickets issued directly — do not self-procure without prior authorization. If you do self-procure, reimbursement is capped at what the government would have paid. **Obtain an amendment to your Safe Haven location before moving** to ensure full reimbursement eligibility. The TF 51/5 G-1 (manpower) office can assist with travel coordination once your Safe Haven change request is approved.

II. RETURN TO BAHRAIN & HOUSING (OHA / TMO)

Q Can spouses or sponsors return to Bahrain to TMO HHGs before reporting in, so OHA continues covering rent without out-of-pocket cost? (FY26 PCS season)

Guidance Pending — Official determination has not been finalized. The information below reflects current best understanding; we will update families as soon as confirmed guidance is issued.

At a minimum, Service Members will be given the opportunity to return to Bahrain to conduct pack-out, and DMO is fully operational to facilitate HHG requests. Lifting of OD will inform family movements for PCS.

Guidance is pending on the precise timing of OHA termination relative to PCS execution. Current information indicates OHA continues as long as a valid lease is held, HHG remain in the residence, and you have not yet checked into your new duty station; however, this is being confirmed through official channels. **Until clarified, we recommend coordinating pack-out before executing PCS orders** to avoid any gap in coverage. We will update families as soon as official guidance is confirmed.

Q Structural engineers will need to inspect base buildings before certifying them as habitable. Given typical contract timelines, how would this affect families' ability to return to Bahrain?

Guidance Pending — Official determination has not been finalized. The information below reflects current best understanding; we will update families as soon as confirmed guidance is issued.

A preliminary condition assessment of NSA Bahrain has been completed, and **initial results are reported to be favorable**. Official findings have not yet been formally released. If any structures are ultimately deemed uninhabitable, the timeline for a family return would be extended until alternate accommodations are procured or repairs are complete.

Guidance on return timelines remains pending final official release of assessment results. We will communicate that information to families as soon as it is available.



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Q What happens with pets still in Bahrain once the heat embargo makes commercial transport impossible?

This is an ongoing and actively worked concern. **Operation EPIC FURRY** (yes, like a furry pet) is the primary legal mechanism for pet retrieval and is currently pending flight booking and contracting. Commercial airline live-animal transport is restricted once temperatures exceed 100°F, which creates a narrow transport window.

The JTR was updated on 1 April 2026 to clarify pet evacuation reimbursements, but the physical transport remains the bottleneck. If a charter flight cannot be contracted before the heat embargo, **Marines and Sailors returning to Bahrain for pack-out will have the ability to retrieve pets at that time.** We are advocating urgently for a resolution and will update families immediately when one is reached.

Q Can someone speak to the timing process for notifying landlords and OHA implications as we learn of return-to-Bahrain or PCS timelines?

Guidance Pending — Official determination has not been finalized. The information below reflects current best understanding; we will update families as soon as confirmed guidance is issued.

OHA continues as long as a valid lease is held, HHGs remain in the residence, and a Service Member has not yet executed PCS orders. At a minimum, Service Members will be given the opportunity to return for pack-out, and DMO is fully operational.

Guidance on the precise OHA termination timeline relative to landlord notice and pack-out scheduling is pending confirmation. We strongly recommend **contacting your housing office before providing landlord notice**, as OHA termination is directly tied to lease and pack-out status. Updated guidance will be communicated as soon as it is confirmed.

III. DOWEA SCHOOLS

Q If the Bahrain school does not open for the 2026–2027 school year, how will this affect the return of families? What are the alternatives?

The most important baseline: **the Ordered Departure must be officially lifted before families can return to Bahrain with U.S. government support.** The OD is driven by the overall security environment — not solely by the school's operational status.

If the school does not reopen, alternative education options include homeschool, private school, or international schools (virtual or in-person). **There is currently no education cost reimbursement authorized for Bahrain alternatives.** Families who choose to return to Bahrain and enroll children in non-DOWEA schools could be subject to the cost of tuition.

Q If the DOWEA school does not reopen, will the Service Member be required to return unaccompanied?

The DOWEA school decision will help to inform the families decision to return, seek alternate school options within Bahrain, or submit an Early Return of Dependents (ERD) request.



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Q Has there been any update on whether the Bahrain school will open for the next school year?

DOWEA is expected to announce its decision for the 2026–2027 school year by the end of May. We will communicate that decision to all families immediately upon receipt.

IV. ORDERS & DUTY STATIONS

Q Where will TF 51/5 call home, and will accompanied orders still be honored or rewritten as unaccompanied?

TF 51/5 is currently exploring alternate locations at the direction of higher headquarters. Once a future location is approved, some billets will be accompanied. If the mission requires presence in a location deemed unsafe or unsupported for families, orders could change to dependent-restricted.

HQMC will not change orders from accompanied to unaccompanied without direct coordination with the individual Marine. No blanket changes will occur. Bahrain will remain the current PDS for FY 27/28 personnel.

Q If unaccompanied orders are issued, what will the tour length be?

HQMC will work individually with each Marine to determine tour length. **The minimum tour length is 12 months.**

Q If our Service Member is not going back to work in Bahrain, can our family still choose to live in Bahrain?

If and when the Ordered Departure is lifted and the country is deemed safe, families may choose to return to Bahrain. **This is a family decision, not a command directive.** Command-sponsored families will be entitled to a government-funded return flight to Bahrain if the OD is lifted. We anticipate most Service Members will be operating from locations outside Bahrain — any decision to move back should account for that operational reality.

Q Will families be informed of their next duty station decisions and when they can be with their families again?

Yes. As soon as decisions are made, your Service Member will receive that information and will be able to share it with you. The command is committed to communicating as quickly as possible.

Q Is there a timeline for when families will know if their Service Member will be unaccompanied, and what that means for HHG and entitlements?

Each Service Member should know where their billet is aligned — whether Tampa, another Marine Corps installation, or in theater. **The Service Member's assigned location will determine entitlements and if/when HHG movement is initiated.** As soon as final decisions are made, your Service Member will be able to communicate the specifics.



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Q Can families choose not to return to Bahrain?

Yes. You may request an **Early Return of Dependents (ERD)**, which allows you to move to a Designated Place in CONUS. NOTE: once an ERD is executed, Safe Haven per diem entitlements terminate, followed by a transition to BAH at your new CONUS location.

Q My children do not want to return to Bahrain and want to go to our home of record (different from our current Safe Haven). What happens to the Service Member's orders?

You may request an **Early Return of Dependents (ERD)** to move to your home of record or another Designated Place in CONUS. Once executed, Safe Haven entitlements stop and you transition to BAH at the new location.

The impact on your Service Member's orders — including whether they shift to unaccompanied status and what that means for tour length — depends on their specific billet assignment and will be coordinated individually with HQMC. **Your Service Member should contact their monitor directly** to understand the specific order implications for your situation.

V. POST-EVACUATION PROCESS

Q Is there an after-action report (AAR) for problems that occurred during the evacuation? Would spouse testimonies be helpful?

Yes — an AAR process is underway. **Spouse and family testimonies are a valuable and actively requested part of this process.** They identify communication gaps and administrative failures that may not be visible from the Service Member's perspective. Your experience throughout the Safe Haven transition is exactly what the command needs to hear.

To contribute: communicate your feedback through your Unit Readiness Coordinator (URC) or your Service Member so it can be formally incorporated into the AAR.

VI. ENTITLEMENTS & FINANCE

Q Will the per diem rate for families in Germany increase to the local German locality rate, or remain at the standard CONUS rate?

Per current USW guidance, the approved per diem rate is the **standard CONUS rate**. Should a different determination be made, families will be informed immediately.



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Q What happens on Day 181 if Safe Haven status ends — and what are the entitlement and PCS implications?

First, only the Under Secretary of War can announce the termination of the Ordered Departure and subsequent ending of Safe Haven status.

Per the JTR, Day 181 is the point at which Safe Haven entitlements would stop and families would transition to BAH at their Designated Location. The 180-day transition does not affect the Service Member's existing orders; follow-on orders are coordinated individually with each Marine's monitor.

However, the Under Secretary of War (USW) has previously issued exceptions and adjustments to standard JTR timelines throughout this process. For instance, the JTR also states that per diem Safe Haven entitlements reduce from 100% to 60% after the first 30 days unless an exception is authorized. The USW granted the exception to remain at 100%. Further USW guidance on entitlements at the 180-day threshold is anticipated. The command will communicate any updates immediately as they are received.