

Welcome to Okinawa

CTF 76 FAMILY READINESS GROUP

Congratulations on your upcoming tour in Okinawa. Here is some information we wish we would have had and we hope it will help during your transition. If you have any questions you don't find answered here, please feel free to ask! Welcome!

CTF 76 is located on White Beach on the east side of the island about 20 minutes from Camp Courtney and 50 minutes from Kadena Air Base. White Beach is a small facility with bachelor housing, but no family housing. There are a few restaurants, a mini-mart, and a pool that is open Memorial Day to Labor Day. The beach is nice with campsites, trailers, and cabins for rent.

We got our orders, now what do we do?

1. **Overseas screening:** Do your overseas screening for the service member and all accompanying family members. It is usually due within 30 days of receiving your orders.
2. **Dependent Entry Approval:** Once your overseas screening is approved, your command must send a request for area clearance/dependent entry approval. They know how to do this. PSD Okinawa, Japan will respond with your dependent entry approval message. You will need this message prior to shipping your household goods and while you are traveling. Keep multiple copies with you . . . and multiple copies of your orders too! Information on how to obtain DEA and points of contact are available at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/distribution/Pages/DependentEntry.aspx>
3. **Passports:** Get government passports **AND** tourist passports for all family members (regardless of what anyone tells you, see below section from the Foreign Clearance Guide). The government passports are free and indicate that you are traveling under official orders of the US government. They get you priority if there is an evacuation and allow you to return when the evacuation is lifted. *Note: On the service member's no-fee passport application form DD 1056, Block 17 should read: "Unit travel requirements to India, Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam, Australia, Philippines."* The tourist passports will allow you to travel to all the cool countries you will visit while you are here. You cannot use your government passport for leisure travel. Apply for the government passports through your command and the tourist passports at the post office. They can take 6-8 weeks to get. You can find the tourist passport information and application here: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/> For any further questions, contact the CTF 76 Admin Office at M-OK-CTF76Admin@fe.navy.mil
4. Foreign Clearance Guide (<https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>):
 - JAPAN
 - A. IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIALS FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL
 3. Eligible family members.
No-fee passport required. (1) In an emergency (no-fee passport has not arrived, medical emergency, etc.), eligible

family members may travel on a tourist passport pending arrival of their no-fee passport. Japanese immigration will place the SOFA stamp in either passport.

Visa not required for: (1) Eligible family members of US military personnel or DoD civilians covered by the SOFA, regardless of nationality or accompanied or unaccompanied status. However, such eligible family members must have ID cards and must be listed on the travel orders of the military member or DoD civilian or, for US Navy families, on the eligible family member entry approval message. (For information on who is covered by the SOFA, see I.A.9, below.) (a) SOFA stamp is placed in member's passport by Japanese Immigration upon arrival in Japan. (2) Other US citizen travelers not covered by the SOFA, including personnel transiting through Japan as tourists who have proof of onward or return transportation and remain in country less than 90 days. (a) A visa is required for stays of 90 days or more.

5. **Housing and HHG:** Apply for housing and plan your shipments for household goods (HHG), unaccompanied baggage (UB, ie. your express shipment) and storage, if necessary. See below for detailed information. If you feel you need a waiver, please contact the CTF 76 Admin Office for more information -

M-OK-CTF76Admin@fe.navy.mil

6. **Kids:** For school aged children, please review the website for DODEA Schools. If you put your children in school while you are in TLF, they will go to the school that the TLF is zoned for and they may have to change schools once you find housing. For preschool children, there are many off base options. The Okinawa Hai website has write ups about many of them.

www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu

<http://okinawahai.com> - click on "School Index" on the top right

www.kadenafss.com - "Youth, Teen and Family" or www.mccsokinawa.com - "Marine and Family" have information on CDCs, school age programs, family child care, and youth and teen centers

7. **Pets:** If you have a furry friend you intend to bring, there is a lengthy process to make sure they are prepared. It can take up to seven months or more to prepare your pet and it can also be expensive. The cost of preparation (rabies shots and blood test) and the transportation costs are not reimbursable. The paperwork process is smoother if you can use a military vet. If your pet needs to be in quarantine when you arrive, that can be reimbursed. If you get base housing, your pet, under certain conditions, can do their quarantine at home. This is not possible if you live off base. Also, not all base housing units accept pets and bringing a pet does not guarantee you will get a pet-friendly unit. Non-availability of a pet-friendly unit is not justification to turn down an offer for base housing. If you turn down base housing to live out in town, you will not receive OHA to pay your rent and utilities. Certain dog breeds and exotic animals are prohibited in base housing. See the following websites:

www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard click on "Housing and Pets" then "Pet information"

<http://www.kadenafss.com/pets>

<http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/index.html>

<http://okinawahai.com/2008/09/101-questions-y.html>

8. **Drivers License:** If you get an international drivers license from AAA, you don't have to take the drivers test to get your license. Licenses for Navy personnel are only done on Thursdays at the building across from the CFAO headquarters on Kadena. Marines can take their test at the end of the Orientation at the Foster Community Center. To study for your exam, please see the Marine website: www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard and click on "Driving and Transportation". This is really good information even if you don't take the test. Driving here is scary at first but really not too bad. The max speed limit is 60 - that's kilometers per hour - which is really like 40mph. Drivers are really good about letting others in. Two things to remember - people generally don't honk, as it is considered rude, and there is no left turn on red except on Kadena. It will make sense when you get here.
9. **Temporary Lodging:** Your sponsor should make a reservation for you at the Shogun Inn (Kadena) or Westpac Lodge (Foster). Make your reservation for 3-4 weeks if possible. Unless base housing is available right away, two weeks might not be enough time.
10. **Welcome Aboard:** The Welcome Aboard is required for all SOFA status personnel age 10 and up. It is on Wednesdays at the community center on Foster next to the Ocean Breeze. Childcare for children under 10 is encouraged and available for free through the CDC on Foster. Your sponsor should make a reservation for you for the Welcome Aboard and for childcare if you need it. See www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard and click on "Newcomers Orientation".

There are a lot of great websites out there so start clicking!!

Navy - www.cnic.navy.mil/Okinawa/index.htm?ssSourceSiteId=Japan;

www.ctf76.navy.mil/index.htm Honestly, this one is not that helpful because the Navy footprint on the island is so small. The Navy uses the Marine and Air Forces resources.

Marines - www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard The "Must Know Information" is very helpful. A link from the Marines with many other helpful links - <http://community.marines.mil/unit/mcbbutler/Pages/FamilyReadiness/Links.aspx>

Air Force - www.kadenafss.com and www.kadenafss.com/newcomers The newcomers page has checklists, phone numbers and other information.

Tons of great info - www.okinawahai.com has articles about almost anything Okinawa, click on "Island Newbies" on the top right for an article with lots of great information; www.okinawayardsales.com is like Craig's list for Okinawa

Maps - See below for a map to help you get your bearings. Also see here:

www.okinawahia.com, click "I'm the map" on the top right. Having an iPhone or other smart phone with a map app is extremely helpful. As of 2012, Garmin did not have maps for Japan. The problem is Japan doesn't have street names, just intersection names and route numbers and none of the streets are straight. It is a little confusing but after while, you'll figure it out. If you are looking for off base housing, you can search by the neighborhood name on google maps to see where it is.

Weather - <http://weather.kadenaforcesupport.com>, click on the 5 day forecast on the lower left or the "Typhoon Timeline" on the right for typhoon information. Kadena gets

their typhoon info from the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Hawaii - <http://www.usno.navy.mil/JTWC/> note: the JTWC graphic times are in Zulu (Zulu+9=Okinawa time) while the Kadena graphic looks the same, but the times are in local time. <http://www.wunderground.com/weather-forecast/JP/Okinawa.html>, another helpful site, this one has satellite images. It is hard to get used to the fact that while in the states we get minute by minute coverage of a storm, here the updates only come every six hours.

Facebook pages to check out:

CTF 76 FRG
CTF 76 Ombudsman
Okinawa Hai (Facebook) Society
Commander Fleet Activities, Okinawa
Navy MWR, Okinawa
MCCS Okinawa
Kadena Force Support Squadron
AFN Okinawa
Kadena Air Base

Useful phone numbers:

When calling from a base phone or DSN, dial the 7-digit number listed below. When calling from a cell phone or off base phone, dial the 10-digit number. From the States, dial 011-81-98- and then the last 7-digits of the phone number for calls from an off base phone. The DSN area code for Okinawa is 315.

Emergency Services: on base - 911;
Off base/cell phone Kadena - 098-934-5911
Off base/cell phone Foster - 098-911-1911

Battle Watch Captain (BWC), the CTF 76 24-hour watch: 622-1633; 098-945-1633
This is a good number to call if you need to reach your sponsor at work in case of emergency. They should also be called any time a CTF 76 service member or family member is involved in a car accident or any incident involving Japanese or military police.

Kadena Air Base Base Operator: 630-1110; 098-938-1111 (press 0 when you hear the dial tone to speak to the operator)
USMC Base Operator: 622-5555; 098-954-5555
Naval Hospital: 098-911-5111, then dial the 7-digit number for the clinic you need or 643-7555 for the information desk; www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhoki/Pages/default.aspx

Shogun Inn (TLF on Kadena Air Base): 632-1010 or -1050; 098-962-1010 or -1050;
www.kadenafss.com - click "Kadena Life", click "Lodging" - pet friendly units available; free shuttle from Kadena AMC Terminal available
WestPac Lodge (TLF on Camp Foster): 645-2455; 098-970-2455;
www.mccsokinawa.com - click "Recreation and Leisure", click "Lodging", click "Westpac Lodge" - no pets

Karing Kennels: 959-4062; 098-959-4062; www.kadenafss.com/life-career/karing-kennels; there is a boarding request form on their website

My Exchange Food: order online and have it delivered on base; www.imenu360.com/clients/aafes/

On/Off Base Taxis: Panda Cab - 098-937-8989; Meiho Taxi - 098-939-1660; Okito - 098-959-5900

On base car rental: 959-0007 or 098-959-0007; email reservation - mrv@rentacar.co.jp; expensive, but a great help those first couple of days

Housing on Okinawa:

1. All inbound accompanied military personnel are required to reside on base unless your housing category is full. You will initially email the housing office on Kadena, but they will forward your application to Camp Courtney. There is base housing on Courtney and a small base that only has housing and an elementary school called Camp McTureous (Mc-Tee, for short). If these are full for your housing category, you may be able to see about living on Kadena (50-60 min to White Beach), or Foster (75 min to White Beach) or look into off base housing. Not all housing units accept pets and bringing a pet does not guarantee you will get a pet-friendly unit. Non-availability of a pet-friendly unit is not justification to turn down an offer for base housing. Certain dog breeds and exotic animals are prohibited in base housing. For further information, please visit www.housing.af.mil/okinawa/index.asp. There is a lot of information here. Don't be overwhelmed. The most important thing is to fill out the housing application Form DD1746 (see link below) and email it along with a copy of your orders to the housing office: Kadenahousing.customerservice@kadena.af.mil
Kadena Housing Office: 634-0582; 098-961-0582; 011-81-98-961-0582 (international). Application process for housing: www.okinawamfh.com/application_process.htm Housing application form: www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd1746.pdf
2. If base housing is not available, the housing office will give you a list of off base rentals and housing companies. You will call the different companies and set up times for them to show you what is available. They all speak English and most can come on base to pick you up. Regardless of the house you choose, your rent will be whatever your OHA is. They will ask your pay grade and they know what your OHA is and that is what you will pay. You may be able to negotiate some of the utilities into the rent as long as it is an authorized expense. There are Japanese style houses with small Japanese appliances and American style houses with regular appliances. Most houses are multiple stories, while apartments are generally one story, but you may have stairs to the apartment.
3. Location is very important when looking for a place to live. White Beach is pretty out of the way and not many Americans live in that area. Many people live off Rt 330/75 between Kadena Air Base and Camp Courtney. That would generally be about a 20-30 minute commute to White Beach and 15-20 minutes to Kadena. There is a lot to do in that area (restaurants, shopping, parks, preschools) and you are close to Kadena which has the most services (largest BX/Commissary, schools, youth and teen centers). The Sunabe Seawall and American Village areas are also very nice

with lots to do, but they are on the opposite side of Kadena from White Beach and at least an hour or more drive. If you have school age children, see this website for the school zones and busing: <http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu/transportation.html> and <http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu/documents/trans/Zones.pdf> - scroll to the bottom for a map.

Government Furniture:

If you are on a restricted JTFR (ie. limited to 25% of your HHG weight allowance), you are authorized government loaner furniture for the duration of your tour. It's not pretty or stylish, but it is functional and most everyone has it. Please see the link below for further information as to what is available. Please note, major appliances are available for on base and off base housing. Privately owned appliances are not authorized to be shipped to Okinawa. See paragraph 6 on the following link.

www.okinawamfh.com/government_furniture_support.htm

If you feel you need a waiver, please contact the CTF 76 Admin Office for more information - M-OK-CTF76Admin@fe.navy.mil

Stuff to bring or not to bring:

1. On base housing and much of the off base housing is wired with 110V so you will probably not need an adaptor for your electronics. Sometimes the outlets may not have the third grounding plug and you may need the adaptor for that, which can probably be found at the BX.
2. The TLF facilities (the Shogun Inn and Westpac Lodge) only have wireless internet in the common areas, not in the rooms. The rooms have wired internet. So, if you want to use your wireless devices, you might want to pack a wireless router. Or you can just plug your computer in old school style.
3. A power strip will be helpful for charging electronics at the airports.

Before the flight:

1. Confirm your reservations for your flight, hotel, newcomers brief, childcare if needed, housing office appointment, etc. Your sponsor should help you with all this.
2. This may seem obvious, but make sure that your sponsor knows which airport to pick you up at. Most families fly into Kadena but a few fly into Naha (the commercial airport) and without a phone to call them it can be tricky. Exchange pictures by email so you will recognize each other. Also, if you are friends on Facebook you could at least message your sponsor if you have wifi.

The big flight:

1. If you are taking the Patriot Express from the AMC terminal in Seattle, people start lining up around 12 or 1am. The line is loooooong, but there is a separate line for families. Each passenger is authorized two pieces of baggage not to exceed 70 pounds each. Excess baggage can cost up to \$112 per piece. You cannot claim this fee on your travel claim. However, if you did not exceed 1000 pounds for your express shipment, you can mail some of your excess stuff to your sponsor and claim the postage up to a total of 1000 pounds (express plus whatever you mail). Please see the Patriot Express brochure for more information. www.amc.af.mil/shared/

[media/document/AFD-110602-029.pdf](#) and [www.62aw.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-111103-015.pdf](#)

2. After getting through security, they have all the basic fare and a play area for the kiddos. That first flight is a doozy . . . but just when you are ready to pull your hair out, it will be over. The stop in Yokota is a couple of hours. They get you off the plane and into a small glass room that is just barely big enough to fit all the passengers from the plane. The only food is vending machines. There is a mini-cafe outside the holding area, but it is not guaranteed that they will let you out. Grab an outlet quick, get your power strip out and start charging! If you have little kids and checked a stroller, you will not need it here. It will be ok to check it all the way through from Seattle to Kadena. The second stop is Iwakuni and they may or may not have you get off the plane there. If you do get off the plane, there may be a food truck available. I'm sorry if this sounds vague, but people have had different experiences . . . this is the military after all. If you have a pet, you will be allowed to walk it and care for it at both stops. If you are traveling in the winter, Yokota and Iwakuni will probably be pretty cold.
3. If you are traveling commercial, lucky you!!! Just kidding. When you arrive at your point of entry (ie. Narita), you will have to get your bags at baggage claim and go through customs. After you clear customs, you will recheck your bags. This is a relatively smooth process and should be straight forward since everyone else is doing it too. After you get to your second gate, enjoy your walk around the airport and laugh at everyone stuck in a glass box in Yokota. Ha ha ha!! If you can get yen, you can probably get a big mac. If you can't get yen, maybe you'll wish you were in the glass box eating from a vending machine . . . nah! (The restaurants do take credit cards and you can easily exchange dollars for yen.)
4. When you go through customs and immigration, be sure to show your no fee passport. It will have a sentence printed on one of the last pages that says you are traveling on government orders.
5. If you stay in a hotel, have to take a cab or ship any boxes, be sure to keep your receipts for you travel claim. If you did not max out your weight allowance for your express shipment, any boxes you ship can count towards that and be reimbursed.
6. Melatonin, Ambien, Benedryl, oh my! One of these will be a life saver in helping kick the jet lag. By the time you are settled in TLF, it will be bed time and a little help with a good night's sleep will make a world of difference. Even half a dose of melatonin for the kids works wonders. You'll thank me later.

When you arrive:

1. Your sponsor should be meeting you at the airport. If not, there is a free shuttle from the Kadena AMC Terminal to the Shogun Inn. If you arrive at Naha International Airport, there is a free military phone available behind the information desk on the first floor. You can use it to call your sponsor, if needed. If you need to take a cab, you can pay by credit card and claim it on your travel claim. But really, your sponsor should pick you up.
2. Once you make it to your hotel, take your sleep aid and get a good night's sleep!

First things first:

Here's your check-list for your first week. Your sponsor should help you get to all these places. If you need help, feel free to ask on the CTF 76 FRG page. We've all been there and we can help.

1. Service member must check into the command and have his/her orders stamped.
2. Meet with the housing office (634-0582) and PSD (634-6309 or 634-9334). Family members need not be present for these appointments. The appointments should be made in advance by the sponsor. See this website for a list of documents to bring to PSD. www.cnic.navy.mil/Okinawa/InstallationGuide/PersonnelSupportDetachment/Check-InProcessing/index.htm
3. If you have arranged childcare for the Welcome Aboard brief, you may need to fill out paperwork ahead of time. The phone number for this is 645-4117.
4. Wednesday - Welcome Aboard brief at the Foster Community Center. Continental breakfast served. For lunch you can walk to the Ocean Breeze or the Spot (Subway and Pizza Hut). www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard click on "Newcomers Orientation"
5. Thursday - Get your drivers license at the building across from the CFAO building on Kadena. Bring your AAA International Driver's License, if you have it, and you won't have to take the test. Here's the website to study for the test: http://www.mccsokinawa.com/mccs%20wireframes/mccs_subx2-0img.aspx?pageid=2147488346

Ok, now we are going to need some wheels:

A couple things to know about cars:

1. There are two types of insurance - regular liability insurance and JCI. You will need to buy liability insurance when you buy the car.
2. JCI (Japanese Compulsory Insurance) is due every two years. A car with longer left on the JCI will be more expensive. When the JCI is due, the car must be inspected and any deficiencies repaired before the car passes.
3. Road tax is due in April each year.
4. There are several different types of cars. Cars with a yellow license plate have very small engines and pay cheaper road tax and insurance. Cars with white license plates have either a 300 series number or a 500 series number at the top of the plate. A car with plate number 300 at the top has a larger engine and is more expensive to insure than a car with a plate number 500. Also, road tax for a 300 plate car is more expensive than a 500 plate car, 19,000 yen (\$185) vs. 7,500 yen (\$70) in 2012.
5. You can find cars at the Kadena Auto Resale Lot, Marine Auto Resale lot on Foster, on www.okinawayardsales.com, or at the used car lots off base. Just make sure you get one with a good air conditioner -- the summers are brutal!!! Oh, and gas off base is about 4 times as much as on base, but they will pump it for you.
6. A few helpful websites:
www.kadena.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=7275
www.kadenafss.com/newcomers - click on "After Arriving" on the right side of the page, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on page 3 for the "Unofficial Car Buying Checklist".
www.mccsokinawa.com/welcomeaboard/ - scroll down and click on "Driving and Transportation".

Next steps:

1. Keep several copies of your orders and area clearance with you for the first few weeks because everyone needs a copy. Even the post office when you sign up for a mailbox. A Power of Attorney can be helpful too, so the spouse can handle some of the checking in stuff if need be.
2. Also don't forget to switch over your medical records at the doctor and dentist. You will be able to sign up for TRICARE at the Welcome Aboard or you can turn the paperwork in at the hospital later. You will need to go to the clinic on Courtney to sign up for dental. It is a good idea to check with the records department to make sure your medical records arrived. Be sure to take copies of your orders with you just in case.

Phones:

1. There are two phone companies that most people use - AU and Softbank. Both offer a variety of phones, including the latest iPhone. A smart phone is very useful here since regular GPS devices don't work. The map and GPS feature of a smart phone are so helpful when you are learning your way around. Word on the street is that AU gets better reception. Both have kiosks in the Kadena BX and will probably have tables at the Welcome Aboard. When calling a base number from your cell phone, the number needs to be converted from the DSN number to the appropriate number to call from an off base phone. See here for more details: <http://kadenafss.com/important-phone-numbers>
2. The BX sells calling cards for calling back to the States. You can also use Skype, Magic Jack or Vonnage. There are also many free/cheap apps for calling and texting.

Leisure Travel out of Japan:

1. Yes, you just got here, but when you decide to leave Japan for leisure travel, you will need a SOFA Entry/Re-entry Stamp on your passport before you leave. The stamp can be obtained from the PMO office on Foster (bring your orders, ID card and tourist passport) or the AMC terminal on Kadena (bring your orders, ID card, tourist passport and travel itinerary). You will need to have all family members listed on the leave papers and take a copy of your Dependent Entry Approval with you. Contact the admin department if you have any other questions.

A few words in Japanese:

Please - Kudasai

Thank you - Arigatou

Excuse me - Sumimasen

I don't understand - Wakarimasen

I'm sorry - Gomenasai

and if you are really confident

Do you speak English? - Eiago wa hanshimas ka?

We hope you find this information useful. If you need more help or have a specific question, feel free to post it on the FRG Facebook page. We have all been through it. If you learn anything new that should be added to this document, please let us know. We want to help make your transition as smooth and painless as we can. Please let us know how we can help. (See below for a map.)

Map:

White Beach is at the tip of the eastern peninsula on the eastern side of the island. Kadena is the big blue base on the west side. It has the biggest commissary and BX and the most schools and youth programs. Camps Courtney and McTureous (“McTee”) are our designated housing bases.

