



Pre-Deployment CFS Reference Manual



**GUARD
YOUR
FINANCIAL
FUTURE**

PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

Preparing for deployment can be a stressful time for Service members and their families. Deployment can also provide an excellent opportunity to improve their financial situation, if they are prepared. After completing this chapter, you will have the information to help Service members and their families prepare their finances for deployment.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Terminal Learning Objectives (TLOs) and Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs)

- 1. TLO:** Identify warning signs of Service members at risk for financial problems.
ELOs: Recognize indicators of Service members who are financially at risk. Know how to approach at-risk members with concerns. Understand duty to warn and confidentiality concerns. Know resources for at-risk members.
- 2. TLO:** Understand the fundamentals of creating and managing a spending plan, and the importance of updating a spending plan.
ELOs: Be able to estimate the potential savings and expenses associated with deployment (storage, suspended utilities, etc.). Know ways to maximize savings and minimize spending while deployed. Be able to develop a budget for deployment.
- 3. TLO:** Understand the fundamentals and management of debt and credit.
ELO: Understand how to access and use individual financial protection measures such as Active Duty alerts and security freezes with credit reporting agencies.
- 4. TLO:** Understand fundamentals of income tax and common tax benefits, and potential changes to tax situation.
ELOs: Understand what taxes need to be considered when deployed. Understand residency and tax implications while deployed. Understand the importance of providing tax documentation to beneficiaries to handle during deployment. Update contact information pre- and post-deployment. Establish and prepare a point of contact with tax documentation and information during deployment. Understand how to work with an accountant for tax filing in absentia. Review tax implications of deployment pay.
- 5. TLO:** Know military consumer protection law fundamentals, including the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and Military Lending Act (MLA).
ELO: Understand how the basic protections afforded under the SCRA can protect finances.
- 6. TLO:** Recognize and understand how to protect yourself from misleading consumer practices and report complaints.
ELO: Recognize scams that target deployed Service members.
- 7. TLO:** Recognize and identify steps to resolve identity theft.
ELOs: Know how to secure personal information for deployment. Know how to check and track personal information while deployed.

- 8.** **TLO:** Discuss the reasons, needs, types and options for purchasing insurance.
ELOs: Know what types of additional life insurance are available. Understand how to evaluate estate to know if additional life insurance is necessary. Understand and be able to update insurance policies with additional points of contact for deployment. Understand the need to provide and make insurance documentation readily available to contacts and beneficiaries. Know how to review insurance information and policies and update post-deployment.
- 9.** **TLO:** Understand the purpose and implications of estate planning (beneficiaries, wills, trusts, powers of attorney, etc.).
ELOs: Check and track information while deployed. Reevaluate and update survivor benefit elections. Ensure estate planning documents are up to date.
- 10.** **TLO:** Examine the impact of special pay and entitlements.
ELO: Understand special pay for pre- and post-deployment such as combat pay, family separation, etc.
- 11.** **TLO:** Discuss TRICARE options and costs.
ELO: Know how to update coverage under TRICARE. (Reserve members are eligible for TRICARE Prime when activated for 30 days or more.)
- 12.** **TLO:** Discuss survivor and dependent benefits.
- 13.** **TLO:** Recognize the importance of and be able to develop savings and an emergency fund.
ELOs: Understand the purpose and basic components of the Savings Deposit Program. Be able to calculate return of investment under the Savings Deposit Program. Understand withdrawal considerations.
- 14.** **TLO:** Understand and be able to manage a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account.
ELOs: Understand Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE) eligibility and TSP implications.

III. REFERENCES

- CG FINRED — <https://finred.usalearning.gov/CoastGuardResource>
- CG milSuite — <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/uscg-cfs-resources>
- Direct Access — <https://hcm.direct-access.uscg.mil>
- CG BRS — <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/brs>
- CG Pay Rates and Benefits — <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/ppc/mas/rates>
- Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED) — <https://finred.usalearning.gov>
- Military Compensation Policy — <https://militarypay.defense.gov>
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay>
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Benefits.aspx>
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Benefits/Thrift-Savings-Plan>
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay/Tax-Information/CZTE>
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Benefits/Savings-Deposit-Program>
- milConnect — <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>
- myPay — <https://mypay.dfas.mil/#>
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) — <https://www.tsp.gov>
<https://www.tsp.gov/tsp-basics/designating-beneficiaries>
<https://www.tsp.gov/planning-for-life-events>
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) — <https://www.consumerfinance.gov>
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/military-financial-lifecycle>
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) — <https://www.irs.gov>
<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/combat-zones>
<https://www.irs.gov/filing/individuals/update-my-information>
- Free Annual Credit Report — <https://www.annualcreditreport.com>
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) — <https://www.ftc.gov>
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Consumer Information — <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov>
<https://www.IdentityTheft.gov>
- FTC Complaint Assist — <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#>
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) — <https://www.fdic.gov>
- National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) — <https://www.ncua.gov>
- Treasury Direct — <https://www.savingsbonds.gov>
- USA.gov — <https://www.investor.gov/additional-resources/general-resources/publications-research/publications/saving-investing-roadmap>
- U.S. Armed Forces Legal Assistance — <https://legalassistance.law.af.mil>
- Department of Justice —
<https://www.justice.gov/servicemembers/servicemembers-civil-relief-act-scra>
- Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) —
<https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/sgli>
- Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) — <https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/vgli>
- Medicaid — <https://www.medicaid.gov>
- Medicare — <https://www.medicare.gov>
- Healthcare.gov — <https://www.healthcare.gov/have-job-based-coverage/flexible-spending-accounts>
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) — <https://www.va.gov>
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) — <https://www.dfas.mil>
<https://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/sdp>
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)/Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) —
<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp>
- TRICARE — <https://www.tricare.mil>

- Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) — <https://www.tricare.mil/deers>
- Military Health System — <https://health.mil>
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)/Travel Per Diem rates — <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) — <https://www.investor.gov>
- Compound Interest Calculator — <https://www.investor.gov/financial-tools-calculators/calculators/compound-interest-calculator>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) — <https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance>
- MilSpouse Money Mission — <https://www.milspousemoneymission.org>

IV. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/Abbreviation	Full Name	Definition
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System	Registration in this database is required for TRICARE eligibility and enrollment.
CONUS	Continental United States	This refers to locations within the continental United States.
OCONUS	Outside Continental United States	This refers to locations outside the continental United States.
PAYSLIP	Payslip	The payslip is a summary of earnings, deductions, and leave for the pay period. Each month has two pay periods: a mid-month pay period from the 1st through the 15th of the month and an end-month pay period from the 16th through the last day of the month.
FICO	Fair Isaac Corporation	This type of credit score makes up a substantial portion of the credit criteria report lenders use to assess an applicant's credit risk.
SCRA	Servicemembers Civil Relief Act	The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act eases the financial burden when Service members are called to Active Duty by postponing, suspending or lessening certain debt obligations and actions.
MLA	Military Lending Act	The Military Lending Act protects Service members and their families by limiting the cost of credit offered to 36% annual percentage rate.
SGLI	Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance	Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance offers low-cost term coverage to eligible Service members.

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Acronym/Abbreviation	Full Name	Definition
SBP	Survivor Benefit Plan	The Survivor Benefit Plan is a Department of Defense sponsored and subsidized program that provides up to 55% of a Service member's retired pay to an eligible beneficiary upon the death of the member. The program provides no-cost automatic coverage to members serving on Active Duty, and reserve component members who die of a service connected cause while performing Inactive Duty training. In addition, Active Duty members can purchase coverage upon retirement and reserve component members can elect coverage when they have 20 years of qualifying service for reserve retired pay.
VGLI	Veterans' Group Life Insurance	Service members who are eligible for Veterans' Group Life Insurance may be able to keep their life insurance coverage after they leave the military for as long as they continue to pay the premiums.
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan	The Thrift Savings Plan is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees and members of the Uniformed Services, including the Ready Reserve.
CZTE	Combat Zone Tax Exclusion	Earnings received while in the combat zone are excluded from taxable income.
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	This federal agency provides health and other benefits to eligible veterans and their families.

V. TOUCHPOINT TOOLBOX: MATERIALS AND RESOURCES TO TEACH TOPIC

All materials are available on CFS milSuite, FINRED websites (listed above), and DVD. Links to curriculum may change or vary locally.

Delivering the right financial training at the right time helps ensure that Service members understand the financial implications, considerations, and decisions that need to be made at each Touchpoint. The tools listed below teach the same story but let you, the Command Financial Specialist, tell it different ways, depending on your audience, your time allotted, or your particular teaching style. They can be mixed and matched to provide the best learning experience.

REMEMBER: Every Member should receive a signed, dated copy of the Member Checklist to verify training completion and, most importantly, to ensure they have a reference to help them navigate the financial decisions required at each Touchpoint.

1. One-on-One Counseling Checklists and Handouts (Service Specific)

- *Pre-Deployment Counselor Checklist*
- *Pre-Deployment Member Checklist*

Handouts:

- *Spending Plan Worksheet Handout*
- *Combat Zone Tax Exclusion Handout*
- *Estate Planning Handout*
- *TRICARE Overview Handout*
- *Survivor Benefits Overview Handout*
- *Thrift Savings Plan Handout*
- *Financial Warning Signs Handout*
- *Military Consumer Protection Handout*
- *Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Handout*
- *Paying off Student Loans Handout*
- *Sources of Help for Military Consumers Handout*
- *Understanding Credit Handout*

2. Classroom Training Materials (Service Specific)

- *Pre-Deployment Touchpoint Checklists and Handouts*
- *Pre-Deployment PowerPoint (PPT) Training slides and Instructor Guide (IG)*
- *Pre-Deployment Videos and Video Discussion Guides (VDG)*

3. Online Training

- *Pre-Deployment Course – (Coast Guard e-Learning site)*

VI. ADDITIONAL LEARNING AND ACTIVITIES

Preparing for deployment can be a stressful time for Service members and their families. Deployment can also provide an excellent opportunity to improve their financial situation. As a Command Financial Specialist (CFS), you can assist members with establishing financial goals. You can also help them understand the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) as they may naturally confuse SBP with Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI). The training materials, checklists, and handouts are all about getting their finances ready before deployment, so they can use the resources available to them and take advantage of opportunities to alleviate stress. The Personal Financial Manager at your local Health, Safety and Work-Life (HSWL) Regional Practice, along with the training material contained in this CFS Reference Manual, can help with specific situations before deployment.

Here are some additional ideas for conversations and activities to have with your audience:

- Complete the *Spending Plan Worksheet* Handout; account for changes in income, expenses, and include saving goals.
- Demonstrate the life insurance needs calculator.
- Review TSP contribution and fund allocations.
- Review the *Combat Zone Tax Exclusion* Handout, explain common tax benefits and special IRS rules that may apply to their deployment.
- Review eligibility requirements for participation in the Savings Deposit Plan (SDP) – considering length and location of deployment.

Encourage Service members to attend PFM Standard Curriculum courses at the local HSWL Regional Practice to learn more about financial considerations for this Touchpoint.

- Developing Your Spending Plan
- Financial Planning for Deployment
- The Thrift Savings Plan
- Your Insurance Needs