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How to Control Your Budget When Your Spouse Is Deployed

Your spouse's deployment doesn't need to throw your finances off track.

Understand what you're working with first. Go to [MyPay](#) to check your spouse's leave and earnings statement to help you create a budget and stick to it.

Deployment entitlements may include:

- Family Separation Allowance
- Combat Zone Tax Exclusion
- Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pays
- Hardship Duty Location Pay

Consider saving those extra funds instead of spending them. The [Savings Deposit Program](#) is available during combat deployments to help you stay in control of your finances.

How to stay in control of your finances during deployment

Here are some great ways to keep your bills in check:

- **Discuss the bills before your spouse leaves.** Make a list of all your combined bills and when they're due.
- **Don't overspend before the deployment.** Make a budget for deployment spending. Don't go overboard with electronics and equipment that you don't need.
- **Always keep some extra money in savings.** Make sure you keep some extra savings for emergencies, even if it's just a few dollars from each paycheck. Through [Military Saves](#), you can find out how to set savings goals, put them in writing and stick to them.
- **Live off your predeployment income.** Sometimes extra pay can tempt you to spend more. Instead, try to live off your usual predeployment income and use any extra income to pay down debt or put more into savings
- **Take advantage of extra savings during deployment.** Extra deployment pay is a great way to build your savings or invest in your future. Take advantage of these unique savings plans during deployment:
- **Thrift Savings Plan.** If you don't already invest regularly in the [Thrift Savings Plan](#), start during deployment. You're not likely to miss the money coming out every month and you'll enjoy the benefits later on

- **Roth TSP investments.** You can invest your after-tax dollars into your Thrift Savings Plan account too. With Roth contributions, you have already paid taxes on the money, so you can withdraw it tax-free, along with any earnings it has accrued, as long as you meet certain requirements. Check out our article on [Roth TSP investments](#) for more information.
- **Savings Deposit Program.** At the very high rate of 10 percent interest, the [Savings Deposit Program](#) is an excellent way to grow your savings. The program is only available during deployment.
- **Military Star Card.** Your Military Star Card offers special lower interest rates during deployment. If you have other credit cards with a very high interest rate, look at the [Servicemembers Civil Relief Act](#) to get them reduced. Contact the [legal assistance office](#) on your installation for more information.

Homecoming and overspending

It's the moment you've been waiting for, so it can be tempting to overspend when you celebrate. Here are some ways to keep your homecoming debt free:

- During the deployment, set some of your savings aside for a special occasion. Even \$50 a month adds up.
- Visit installation travel office for special postdeployment deals. If you're going to a family resort, be sure to ask whether special rates are available for service members returning from deployment and their families.
- Shop at your installation exchange and commissary for postdeployment celebrations. The tax break and special sales can save you a bundle. Sticking to a spending plan and saving even small amounts can make a huge difference.

To learn more, contact [free financial counseling](#) through Military OneSource. OCONUS/International? [Click here for calling options.](#)

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