



**US Army Corps of Engineers  
BUILDING STRONG®**

# **Family Member Casualty Assistance Handbook**

**Taking Care of Our Own**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

This handbook is intended for U.S. Army Corps of Engineer (USACE\*) Family Members whose Soldier or Department of the Army (DA) Civilian loved one is at possible risk to become a casualty. It is not meant to be a complete resource, but rather a guide for Families to follow when navigating the complex system of assistance and care available to them. The handbook was written by the Headquarters, USACE Family Readiness staff with information from many individuals, agencies, and organizations who provide outstanding support and care to our Soldiers, DA Civilians, and their Families. It is also based upon USACE Casualty Management policy and procedures.

It is our hope that Families receive, review, and discuss this handbook before their loved one is deployed. Information is included that may not pertain to every Family's situation, since every case is unique. This handbook is for all USACE employees and Families whether DA Civilians or Soldiers.

Since regulations, policies, procedures, supporting agencies, and legislation regarding casualties often change, this handbook is updated as necessary to incorporate those changes. This handbook is organized into sections that reflect the logical progression of what you will need to know if your Soldier or DA Civilian loved one becomes a casualty. A casualty is defined as any person who is missing, ill, injured, or dead.

The subject of casualties is a difficult one to consider. Fortunately, USACE casualties have not been extensive, but they have occurred and will inevitably occur. It is vitally important that our employees and Families be prepared in case the

unthinkable happens. This handbook helps you in those preparations. The chapters include information on the casualty management process, what assistance Families can expect, what they need to do, where to get assistance, and helpful lists and recommendations in the appendices.

[\*Please note: For those Family members who are inexperienced in dealing with the military system, the use of abbreviations can be confusing. Throughout this handbook, we have attempted to avoid acronyms, but where they appear explanations will include the complete name and then the appropriate acronym in parenthesis.]

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

(To be filled out prior to deployment by employee and Family member)

Home Station Commander: (name)

Commercial Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email Address:

Home Station Supervisor: (name)

Commercial Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email Address:

Family Readiness Coordinator/Assistant: (name)

Commercial Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email Address:

Home Station Emergency Operations Center Phone:

Supporting Regional Family Readiness Coordinator: (name)  
(Located at USACE Divisions and Headquarters)

Commercial Phone:

## Red Cross Information

The first five lines of this Red Cross emergency information form should be filled out by the employee and/or Family member prior to deployment. The remainder of form will be filled out if an emergency occurs by the person notifying the Red Cross. To notify the **RED CROSS** for emergency reporting and verification services, such as in the case of a death or serious illness in the immediate family, contact Armed Forces Emergency Center, 1-877-272-7337, 24 hours a day, or the Red Cross emergency number: 1-888-737-4306 or your nearest Red Cross office. The home station commander will assist with notification of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross will ask for:

Employee's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Social security number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

Military Unit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Rank/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

The Red Cross will ask for the name of the person having the emergency. \_\_\_\_\_

The Red Cross will ask for the nature of the emergency.  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Red Cross may ask for the name and location of the hospital.  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Red Cross may ask for the name of the attending doctor.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **WHAT IS A CASUALTY?**

As mentioned above a casualty is defined as any person who is missing, ill, injured, or dead. As you can see, there are several categories of casualty and the Army treats them differently depending upon both the category and the severity of an injury or illness.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CASUALTY OCCURS?**

### **Assigned or Deployed Overseas or Temporary Duty Status**

Department of the Army (DA) casualty reporting, notification, and assistance requirements differ between Soldiers and DA Civilian employees. Military service members on active duty are entitled to DA notification and assistance to the next of kin no matter what their status or location. DA Civilians, on the other hand, are entitled to notification and assistance only while assigned, deployed, or on temporary duty outside the United States or on temporary duty within the United States. For example, a DA Civilian employee who is assigned to Korea, or is deployed to Afghanistan, or is on temporary duty to Germany would be entitled to DA casualty reporting, notification, and assistance for the next of kin. A DA Civilian employee on temporary duty in support of disaster response mission within the United States, such as Hurricane Katrina, would also be entitled. However, a DA Civilian at his or her normal work place within the United States such as Norfolk or Omaha Districts would not be entitled.

## **Deceased or Missing**

When a casualty occurs, the primary next of kin is promptly notified. In those cases in which the individual is declared deceased or missing, the U.S. Army Casualty Assistance Operations Center appoints both a casualty notification officer and a casualty assistance officer to advise and assist the primary next of kin. The primary next of kin is notified in person.

The primary next of kin is the person designated on the Department of Defense Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93). If the DD Form 93 is not available, the legal line of succession is followed for notification. The legal next of kin is the person of any age most closely related to the individual according to the line of succession. Seniority, as determined by age, will control when the persons are of equal relationship, for instance in the case where two children are next of kin. **It is important that the employee correctly completes the DD Form 93 at home station or deployment center prior to deployment.**

**Casualty notification officers** are trained individuals who make the initial notification to the primary next of kin. **Casualty assistance officers** are trained individuals who assist the primary next of kin immediately following a casualty to help with benefits, to keep the Family informed, and other matters as necessary. The scope of the casualty assistance officer's guidance and help includes such matters as pay, allowances and benefits, veteran benefits, social security benefits, funeral honors support, remains information, filing of interment claims, shipping status and delivery of the personal effects, and income tax refunds or exclusions, and other benefits for which the primary next of kin may be eligible.

In the case of deceased Soldiers and Civilian employees, the casualty assistance officer will keep the primary next of kin

informed of the status of any death investigations. Upon request, DA will provide a fully qualified representative to answer any questions from the primary next of kin about the investigation report(s). The primary next of kin has the right, if desired, to receive a copy of any completed investigative report and any other completed fatality reports that are available.

## **Illness or Injury**

The notification process is different from the other categories in the case of illness or injury of a Soldier or Civilian employee. Consistent with the expressed desires of the casualty, the primary next of kin will be notified as soon as possible, including information on the condition and location where the member is receiving treatment. Depending on the circumstances, notification of an injury or illness may come from the injured or ill person, a medical official, home station commander, or casualty notification officer. In the case of injury or illness, notification is by telephone.

The preferred method of notification is by the injured or ill individual; second by the home station commander. The intent is that Family members receive such news from someone with whom they have an established relationship or at least the employee has a relationship. The primary next of kin will be provided regular updates on the member's location and condition until considered no longer necessary.

Information on the status and conditions of casualties is protected and may be released only under conditions stated in Department of Defense directives.

## **At the Regular Job Within the United States**

If an employee becomes a casualty while at his or her home station within the United States, then the home station commander or designated representative makes the notification and provides assistance to the Family. The local command will coordinate assistance for the Family through the employee's supervisor, family readiness representative, volunteers, and community support organizations as necessary. The support will depend upon the situation and desires of the Family.

## **WHAT ASSISTANCE WILL YOU RECEIVE?**

The answer to this question depends on the circumstances and the Family's desires. However, there are a number of ways that the Army and USACE can and will assist Families if a loved one becomes a casualty. As described above, in certain circumstances the Army will provide a casualty assistance officer who will advise and assist with benefits, entitlements, and other help as needed. When a Civilian employee, not overseas or on temporary duty, becomes a casualty, assistance with benefits and entitlements is provided by a local command representative. The following is assistance that may be available for you if you desire.

### **From the USACE Command**

1. The USACE Chaplain to provide spiritual support and counsel
2. The Regional Family Readiness Coordinator (RFRC) in the nearest USACE Division and in the Headquarters for assistance. The RFRC can find resources that may be able to assist Family members depending on the circumstances of the death or serious injury/illness.
  - a. Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP provides free, confidential, short-term counseling (typically six office visits) to assist employees and their Families in short-term needs.
  - b. Survivor Outreach Services (SOS). SOS is the official Army program designed to provide long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers. Although SOS is designed for fallen Soldiers' Families and its first priority is to fallen Soldiers' Families, SOS personnel will assist DA Civilian employees' survivors, in particular in navigating the

paperwork and connecting them with other resources.  
([www.sos.army.mil](http://www.sos.army.mil))

- c. Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). TAPS is a non-profit organization that provides care and support to Families and friends grieving the loss of a member of the armed forces. TAPS resources, such as long-term, peer-based emotional support, crisis response and intervention, casualty casework assistance, and grief and trauma resources and information are available to the Families of deceased DA Civilians. ([www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org))
  
- d. Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA). FEEA is a non-profit organization devoted to assisting Civilian federal and postal employees. Their emergency assistance program provides emergency loans to help employees due to unforeseen emergencies such as a death or critical illness/injury in the Family or severe illness or injury to an employee. ([www.feea.org](http://www.feea.org))

## **When Travelling to the Bedside of an Injured or Ill Deployed Loved One**

1. Under certain circumstances, **Family members of military personnel** may be authorized government-funded travel to the bedside of seriously injured or ill Soldiers. The primary next of kin should contact the local commander to make arrangements to travel to the bedside of the Soldier. The rules that apply include the following.
  - a. The attending physician and the commander or head of the medical treatment facility must determine that the presence of the Family member(s) may contribute to the Soldier's health and welfare and must state so in writing.
  - b. The Casualty Management Assistance Operations Center is the final approval authority and will assist in arranging appropriate government-funded transportation and travel for up to three Family members.
  - c. More than three Family members may be requested and authorized, if extenuating circumstances warrant.
  - d. The transportation and travel order is valid until the time a Soldier is discharged, becomes an outpatient, transferred to a veteran's or specialty care medical center, or when the primary next of kin leaves the bedside of the Soldier.
  - e. Initial orders will not exceed 15 days.
  - f. Requests for extensions, in extenuating circumstances, must be made to the Casualty Management Assistance Operations Center.

2. In certain other cases, **Family members of Civilian personnel** may be reimbursed through the DoD Emergency and Extraordinary Expense (EEE) fund for per diem, travel, and transportation expenses incurred by traveling to the bedside of the loved one. The primary next of kin must work with the local commander to secure reimbursement. The following rules apply.
- a. A competent medical authority must request for Family members to travel to the bedside of a seriously injured or ill Civilian employee. As with Soldiers, the attending physician and the commander or head of the medical treatment facility must determine that the presence of the Family member(s) may contribute to the Civilian employee's health and welfare and must state so in writing.
  - b. The home station commander must initiate this request.
  - c. The request can be for up to three Family members. More than three may be requested, if extenuating circumstances justify more.
  - d. The normal duration is 30 days. An extension may be requested, if justified.
  - e. The following must be provided to the home station commander for reimbursement:
    - Copy of air, train, or bus travel tickets
    - Dates of travel of applicable Family members
    - Origin and destination of travel of applicable Family members
    - Copies of all routine travel receipts (taxis, parking, fuel, etc.)

## What Should I Do to Prepare?

While we may not like to think about it, Families must be prepared in case a deployed loved one becomes a casualty. Being prepared ahead of time will allow you to respond quickly and will lessen the stress you and your Family experience. Here are some key preparations you can make.

1. Talk with your deploying loved one to make sure you both understand the casualty management process; you have all the information you need to be prepared; you make a plan to respond if needed.
2. **It is very helpful for your deploying Civilian employee or Soldier to complete ENG Form 6037-E, USACE Family Readiness Information Form at home station or at the deployment center.** This form contains contact information and allows USACE family readiness representatives to contact you and provide information support and assistance.
3. Set aside an emergency fund. You may need to travel to the bedside of your injured or ill loved one. You may need to pay for the expenses initially even if you are eligible for reimbursement under the DoD Emergency and Extraordinary Expense fund.
4. Make sure you have the key documents in place that you may need and you know where they are. A current passport for each member of the Family is essential since you may have to travel to a medical facility overseas, such as Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. For a list of important documents, see Appendix 1.

5. Make plans that include estate planning, final preparations in case of death, and travel preparation such as child care, pet care, bill paying, taking care of your house and car, and so forth as required. See a list of things to be included in your planning in Appendix 2.

## Appendix 1: Important Documents and Information

The following is a list of important documents and information that you need to have on hand, as applicable to your situation. It is vitally important that the documents are correct, current, and you know the location and can readily retrieve them. You can use this list as a worksheet to keep a record of the location of each document or item.

	<u>Location</u>
Adoption Papers/Custody Documents	
Automobile Insurance Policy and Cards	
Bank/Checking and Savings Account(s)	
Birth Certificate(s)	
Citizenship/Immigration and Naturalization Papers	
Credit Card Number(s)/Cards	
Death Certificate(s)	
DEERS Enrollment (copy)	
Divorce Papers	
Family ID Cards	
Important Phone Numbers and Emails (Work, Doctor, School, Friends, etc)	
Insurance Policy(s) (Life, Medical, Disability, Home: note expiration date)	
Inventory of Household Property	
Living Will(s)	
List of Immediate and other Family Members (Addresses, Phone Numbers and Emails)	
Financial Records (Stocks, Bonds, Loans, Debts, etc.)	

	Location
Marriage License and Certificate	
Medical Power of Attorney	
Medical Directive(s)	
Medical Records	
Military Service Records	
Passports/Visas	
Power(s) of Attorney	
Proof of Service Documents (DD 214, Discharge Papers, etc.)	
Real Estate Papers (Deeds, Mortgages, Rental Agreements)	
Safety Deposit Box and Key	
Savings Bonds	
Social Security Number(s)/Cards	
Tax Records (at least 3 years)	
Title and Registration (Automobile, Boat, Trailer)	
Trust(s)	
Vaccination Records (including pets)	
Veterinarian Records	
Will(s)	

## **Appendix 2: Developing a Family Plan in Case Your Deployed Loved One Becomes a Casualty**

Prior to any deployment, employees and Family members are encouraged to discuss personal preparedness issues. These discussions are hard, but the consequences of failing to have the discussions and make plans are harder.

Three important planning considerations are estate planning, final preparations, and preparation for travel in case of a casualty:

1. Estate planning often includes the following (Do you have the necessary documents in place? Are these documents updated? Are insurance levels adequate?).

- \_\_\_ Preparation of wills and trusts
- \_\_\_ Life insurance
- \_\_\_ Long-term care insurance
- \_\_\_ Disability insurance
- \_\_\_ Living will or medical directives
- \_\_\_ Powers of attorney (medical, enduring)
- \_\_\_ Guardianship of children

2. Final preparations are difficult but very important for the Family. If a death occurs without prior planning of what should be done, the burden on the Family is increased at a time when stresses are already extreme for your loved ones. Here are some questions to help you in your planning.

- \_\_\_ What are your wishes for the funeral or memorial service?
- \_\_\_ Who do you want to preside at the funeral or memorial service?
- \_\_\_ Where do you want the funeral or memorial service conducted?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you want to be cremated?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Where do wish to be interred?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you selected a funeral home?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have funeral insurance or a pre-paid plan?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Who should be contacted and do you have contact information (Family members, friends, clergy, funeral director, colleagues, employer, school teacher)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What special instructions do you have (organ donor, other)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Who is the most important support person for your Family (another Family member, a close friend, clergy, counselor)?

3. Important household considerations when planning for travel for 30 days or longer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain valid passports that will not expire in the next six months for each member of the Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set aside an emergency fund or the necessary financial resources
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure credit card or debit card companies are notified of travel plans
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule bill payment (How will you pay them: electronically, pay in advance, a trusted Family member?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Establish a child care plan in case dependent children cannot accompany you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for pet care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform trusted friend or Family of travel plans and leave spare key to access and check on your house and car(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure car(s) is locked and windows rolled up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put a stop on your mail or arrange for someone to pick it up and hold or forward it to you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stop newspaper delivery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consider changing cell phone plan to include extra minutes or unlimited long distance

- \_\_\_\_\_ If you are taking children with you, call ahead to the medical treatment facility to check on child care availability and rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empty all trash cans and refrigerator of perishable foods
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set thermostat to cost saving level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange lawn care if necessary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate time off from work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform home station command of travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify others as needed (trusted neighbors and friends, Family members, landlord, school, etc.)

In addition, the employee should ensure the following are updated periodically and kept current:

- \_\_\_\_\_ DD Form 93, Emergency Data Form (correct information greatly speeds up the notification process)
- \_\_\_\_\_ SGLI forms (military only)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Power of attorney
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family care plan (military and designated Civilian Expeditionary Workforce only)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Survivor Benefit Plan (retired military only)
- \_\_\_\_\_ DEERS information (military only)

## **Appendix 3: Travel Preparation Considerations (Adapted from Information Provided by Walter Reed National Military Medical Center)**

### **DOCUMENTS TO BRING WITH YOU:**

- Copies of the invitational travel orders (ITOs) that the Army sends to you. (Keep one with you at all times) (If applicable)
- Military ID or government issued ID such as driver's license
- Power of attorney (If you have one)
- Living will or medical directive (If your loved one has one, many do not)
- Immunization records for children in need of daycare (This is a necessity.)
- Name and phone number of a point of contact for the Soldier's or DA Civilian's unit or home station
- Valid passport if overseas travel is involved
- Original prescription for any medications that you may need
- Health insurance information for traveling Family members\*
- This Handbook
- Travel Money:
  - Major credit and or debit card (maintain photocopy of front and back of card in case of loss)
  - Cash or traveler's checks (note that traveler's checks can be difficult to use overseas)
  - Checkbook and/or account number and bank routing number

\*For military Family members: If staying out of the TRICARE region for longer than 30 days, consider changing your TRICARE area.

## **HOUSEHOLD CONSIDERATIONS**

**Execute the plan you made in Appendix 2, paragraph 3.**

### **THINGS TO PACK FOR YOU**

- o Glasses/contacts/associated supplies
- o Prescription medication for up to 30 days plus refill information
- o Toiletries
- o Comfortable clothing/sleepwear/shoes/socks/belt
- o Light sweater or jacket for use in cooler parts of the hospital
- o Cell phone/charger
- o Seasonally appropriate outerwear/umbrella
- o Book(s)/journal
- o Phone numbers of key people (Family, friends, creditors, employer, school, etc.)
- o Comfort item (pillow, blanket, whatever provides you with special comfort)
- o Hand sanitizer/disinfecting wipes

### **FOR YOUR INJURED OR ILL SOLDIER OR DA CIVILIAN**

- o Bring clothes for patient from home if possible. It is a good idea to pack a pair of sweat pants and shirt (can be cut for casts or appliances, if needed), underwear, shoes/sneakers, and jacket/hat if weather is cold.
- o Soldiers are allowed a \$200 one-time Army Emergency Relief (AER) health and comfort payment while on inpatient status.

### **FOR YOUR CHILD**

- o Clothing/shoes/outerwear
- o Diapers/wipes/diaper ointment

- o Bottles/sippy cups/formula
- o Toys/activities
- o Comfort item (favorite stuffed animal or blanket)
- o Immunization records (military or civilian dependents intending to use child care)
- o Medications (prescriptions as well), thermometer
- o Toothbrush/paste/special bath items
- o Car seat/stroller

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN NOT TRAVELING WITH PARENT:**

- o Arrange transportation for children to/from school/activities
- o Give medical power of attorney to children's caregiver
- o Check with attorney to see if a guardianship document is required for caregiver
- o If moving child out of normal TRICARE region, call TRICARE to change region
- o Give TRICARE card or medical insurance information to caregiver with instructions on how to procure medical appointments for child
- o Inform school and other activities about who will be acting as caregiver
- o If living on post, procure gate pass for caregiver
- o Coordinate financial support for children's necessities
- o Make list of scheduled activities for caregiver
- o Make list of allergies, medications, likes and dislikes, bedtimes, routines etc. for caregiver
- o Leave caregiver with contact information for you and another support person in the area
- o Consider who needs to know about loved one's injury to better support your child during this stressful time (teacher, minister, scout leader, counselor, etc.)

## Appendix 4: Resources and Information

This appendix contains additional resources to assist you in finding the casualty support information that you may need. Each cited resource has a brief explanation of the information it provides. This list is not exhaustive. Many of the sites have additional references you may find helpful.

[www.usace.army.mil/familyreadiness](http://www.usace.army.mil/familyreadiness). This is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Family Readiness webpage that contains family readiness information and additional links.

[www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/CMAOC/SurvivorsGuide/intro.html](http://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/CMAOC/SurvivorsGuide/intro.html). Guide for Families of Fallen Soldiers. This guide provides an overview of the rights, benefits, privileges, and entitlements that may be available as well as the process involved in exercising them.

[www.myarmyonesource.com](http://www.myarmyonesource.com). This site is full of information for Soldiers and Families, including information regarding casualty and survivor support. While it is geared toward Soldiers and their Families, it has a lot of good information pertinent for DA Civilians and Families as well.

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil). Similar to the previous site only with a military-wide focus.

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). This site contains descriptions of all of the services offered by the Red Cross including emergency assistance and contact information for your local chapter.

[www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/CMAOC](http://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/CMAOC). This is the U.S. Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center web page. It contains information on the Army's casualty management process and support to Families.

[www.militaryfamily.org](http://www.militaryfamily.org). The National Military Family Association is a non-governmental organization with a number of helpful programs and good information for Families including medical and survivor benefits.

[www.CPOL.army.mil](http://www.CPOL.army.mil). This is the primary civilian personnel web site with extensive information for DA Civilian employees including benefits.

<http://wtc.army.mil/aw2/index.html>. This is the U.S. Army's web site for support to severely wounded Soldiers and their Families and contains extensive information on care and assistance available.

[www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil). Gives information about TRICARE benefits for Soldiers, Retirees, and their Families.

[www.tricare.mil/DEERS](http://www.tricare.mil/DEERS). This site provides information on the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) including information about change of status, updating DEERS, and much more.

[www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil). The Defense Finance and Accounting Service web site gives information on military, civilian, retiree, and travel pay and allowances.

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). The Department of Veterans Affairs web site has extensive information on services and benefits available to military veterans.

<http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>. This one-stop-shop for military has a wealth of information including casualty and survivor, medical, family benefits, and much more.

[www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org). Child Care Aware of America is an advocacy association that provides information, support for Families, and child care referral. The support they offer includes help when Families experience emergencies and trauma. Their services are for both military and civilian Families.

[www.dol.gov/owcp](http://www.dol.gov/owcp). The Department of Labor Office of Workers' Compensation Programs has extensive information on services and benefits including forms, laws, rules, and how to file and track claims.