

VOLUME 7A, CHAPTER 25: “SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES”**SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES**

Changes are identified in this table and also denoted by [blue font](#).

Substantive revisions are denoted by an asterisk (*) symbol preceding the section, paragraph, table, or figure that includes the revision.

Unless otherwise noted, chapters referenced are contained in this volume.

Hyperlinks are denoted by [bold, italic, blue, and underlined font](#).

The previous version dated [April 2018](#) is archived.

PARAGRAPH	EXPLANATION OF CHANGE/REVISION	PURPOSE
1.2 (250102)	Updated the “Authoritative Guidance” paragraph to comply with current administrative instructions.	Revision
2.2 (250202)	Updated to reflect the Basic Allowances for Subsistence effective January 1, 2020.	Revision
Table 25-1	Updated to reflect the meal collection rates effective January 1, 2020.	Revision
References	Renamed “Bibliography” to “References”, updated statutes, and supporting references.	Revision

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CHAPTER 25

SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

1.0 GENERAL (2501)

1.1 Purpose (250101)

Each member of a uniformed service entitled to basic pay is entitled to Subsistence Allowances subject to the conditions set forth in this chapter.

*1.2 Authoritative Guidance (250102)

The policies and requirements established by DoD for subsistence allowances in this chapter are derived primarily from and prepared in accordance with Title 37, United States Code, section 402 (37 U.S.C. § 402). Due to the subject matter in this chapter, the list of authoritative sources is extensive. The specific statutes, regulations, and other applicable guidance that govern each individual section are listed in a reference section at the end of the chapter.

2.0 BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR SUBSISTENCE (BAS) (2502)

2.1 Eligibility (250201)

Upon completion of initial basic military training, unless otherwise restricted as described in paragraph 2.3, a member becomes entitled to one of the following monthly BAS rates based upon their rank and circumstances.

2.1.1. Officer BAS. A single rate of BAS applies to all officers.

2.1.2. BAS for Enlisted Members. Enlisted members are entitled to one of the following BAS rates.

2.1.2.1. Enlisted BAS. Enlisted BAS is the monthly standard rate that is payable to enlisted members unless they qualify for, and proper authority approves, BAS II.

2.1.2.2. Enlisted BAS II. Enlisted BAS II is the monthly rate that may be payable to members on duty at a permanent station and assigned to single (unaccompanied) Government quarters, which do not have adequate food storage or preparation facilities, and where a Government mess is not available, and the Government cannot otherwise make meals available. The BAS II rate is twice the rate of standard enlisted BAS. BAS II may be paid to enlisted members of the Navy assigned to vessels in a pre-commissioning status or who otherwise meet criteria set forth in the Military Personnel Manual (MILSPERMAN) 7220-182. The Air Force has authorized payment of BAS II to members at specific locations.

2.1.3. Continuity of Enlisted BAS Entitlement

2.1.3.1. Enlisted members continue their existing BAS entitlement without interruption upon discharge or retirement, if reenlistment or recall to active duty is completed at the same station within 24 hours.

2.1.3.2. Enlisted members continue their existing BAS entitlement without interruption during weekends, holidays, administrative absence, pass, or liberty (not including leave).

*2.2 Payment (250202)

2.2.1. Effective **January 1, 2020**, the rates for BAS are as follows:

2.2.1.1. Officers. The monthly BAS rate for officers is **\$256.68**.

2.2.1.2. Enlisted. The monthly BAS rates for enlisted members are:

2.2.1.2.1. Enlisted BAS (standard) – **\$372.71**; and

2.2.1.2.2. BAS II – **\$745.42**.

2.2.2. Enlisted BAS in Specific Situations. The following policy will be used in determining whether BAS or BAS II applies in specific situations:

2.2.2.1. Enlisted BAS rates will be applied uniformly for all enlisted members under similar conditions permanently assigned to the same installation, station, base, or ship. The installation commander/commanding officer will ensure the uniform application of BAS rates for members under similar conditions, whether from a single Service or more than one Service. If there is conflict between Service directives that prevents uniform application of BAS, the commander/commanding officer will report the differences, through appropriate channels, to the Secretaries of the Military Departments concerned, who will confer to ensure uniform determinations on the authorized BAS rate.

2.2.2.2. Enlisted members on authorized leave (including proceed time, authorized delays enroute between duty stations chargeable as leave, and convalescent leave) are entitled to the standard enlisted BAS rate, regardless of the BAS rate authorized at their Permanent Duty Station (PDS).

2.2.2.3. Enlisted members performing Permanent Change of Station (PCS) travel (including Temporary Additional Duty or Temporary Duty (TAD/TDY)) enroute under orders away from their designated post of duty are entitled to the standard enlisted BAS rate, regardless of the BAS type authorized at their previous or subsequent PDS.

2.2.2.4. Enlisted members receiving BAS II at their PDS who are hospitalized or performing regular or permissive TAD/TDY (including field duty, sea duty, Essential Unit Messing (EUM), or members traveling together with limited or no per diem travel) under orders away from their PDS will revert to standard enlisted BAS for the period of hospitalization or absence from the PDS.

2.2.2.5. Enlisted members will be entitled to the standard enlisted BAS rate for any day they are under orders for leave or PCS travel. This includes the day of commencement and day of termination of the status under those orders.

2.2.2.6. Enlisted members who change BAS status at the direction or by permission of a commander, under blanket authority, or at the member's request will have the entitlement change take effect at the beginning of the day specified in writing by the commander.

2.2.3. Advance Payments. Specific circumstances for advance payment of BAS are contained in Chapter 32, paragraph 320205.

2.2.4. Effect on Overseas Station Allowances. BAS is paid in conjunction with the overseas Cost-Of-Living Allowances (COLA) authorized by the Joint Travel Regulations.

2.3 Restrictions (250203)

2.3.1. Military members are not entitled to BAS of any type under the following conditions:

2.3.1.1. When undergoing Basic Military Training, including initial officer training (Officer Candidate School, Officer Training School), except when the member has continuous prior enlisted service (active or reserve). Members will be subsisted-in-kind while attending initial basic military training;

2.3.1.2. When in an excess leave status;

2.3.1.3. When in an absent-without-leave status, in excess of 24 hours, unless the absence is excused as unavoidable;

2.3.1.4. When on an approved educational leave of absence not exceeding 2 years;

2.3.1.5. When a member with no dependents is training for, attending, or participating in Pan American games, Olympic games, or other specifically authorized international amateur sport competitions and the sponsoring agency subsists them during that period; or

2.3.1.6. When a court-martial sentence imposes forfeiture of pay and allowances.

2.3.2. Enlisted members are not authorized BAS II when a government mess is temporarily closed for less than 14 days

2.4 Government Provided Meals (250204)

2.4.1. A military member being paid BAS must pay for all meals or rations provided by or on behalf of the Government, except as provided in subparagraph 2.4.1. This is a personal obligation of the individual. Meals or rations may be paid with cash tendered to the Government mess by the member or, under certain circumstances, the amount owed may be collected/deducted from the member's travel per diem (a member under orders for EUM has no entitlement to subsistence travel per diem), or from the member's pay account. When payment is made from a pay account, the payment is not considered a deduction from or reduction of the entitled BAS; rather it is a collection for a debt owed to the Government (see Table 25-1).

2.4.2. A member is not required to pay for meals provided while the member undergoes medical recuperation or therapy, or is otherwise in the status of continuous care, including outpatient care, at a military treatment facility for an injury, illness or disease incurred while the member was on active duty:

2.4.2.1. In support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, [Operation Freedom's Sentinel](#); or

2.4.2.2. In any other operation designated by the Secretary of Defense as a combat operation or in an area designated by the Secretary as a combat zone.

2.4.3. Mandatory pay account collection may be imposed for enlisted members in certain situations. These are circumstances where it is not feasible to control dining access or collect cash due to operational constraints or where efficiency of operation requires collection for all meals. When a commander/commanding officer requires mandatory pay account collection, the collection will be made for all meals available, whether the meals are actually eaten or not. Mandatory collections are made day-for-actual-day, not on a 30-day month basis. Unless the member is receiving a per diem for subsistence, the collection will be at the discount meal rate.

2.4.3.1. Mandatory pay account collection may be required in the following situations:

2.4.3.1.1. Field duty;

2.4.3.1.2. Sea duty;

2.4.3.1.3. Members traveling together with limited or no per diem travel;

2.4.3.1.4. Accession Pipeline Military Training;

2.4.3.1.5. EUM; or

2.4.3.1.6. Essential Station Messing (ESM).

2.4.3.2. Mandatory pay account collection for meals does not apply to the following:

2.4.3.2.1. Members on official leave, in a PCS status (including travel time and proceed time), in a military treatment facility, or on TAD/TDY other than TAD/TDY to another situation requiring mandatory pay account collection for meals. In these instances, pay account collections will be suspended or adjusted with a credit and the Government mess will be responsible for collecting from the member for any meals served.

2.4.3.2.2. Members who have missed meals, as certified by the commanding officer/commander or their designee. Collections will be suspended or adjusted with a credit.

2.4.3.3. Pay account collections will be at 25-percent of the discount meal rate for the first and last day of assignment in situations requiring mandatory collection. A member transitioning directly between two mandatory meal collection situations will be treated as though the collection period were continuous and will not receive the 25-percent reduced charge for the transition. The 25-percent reduced meal charge does not apply for leave periods. Full collections will be made on the duty days before and after the leave period.

2.4.4. In circumstances other than those requiring mandatory pay account collection, members receiving BAS will pay for meals provided by or on behalf of the Government by using cash or by collection/reduction of subsistence per diem from their travel claims. Members on Joint Task Force operations under per diem travel orders usually will have the subsistence portion of their per diem withheld or deducted from their travel reimbursement as payment for meals provided in theater. Members deployed on regular TAD/TDY travel who receive deductible meals (meals at “no cost”) will have the subsistence portion of their per diem reduced as payment for meals provided by or on behalf of the Government.

2.4.5. The standard meal rate applies unless there is a specific exception allowing application of the discount meal rate. Members actually paid subsistence per diem for meals must pay the standard meal rate unless the per diem is withheld or disallowed as payment for the meals.

2.4.6. Members being subsisted by or on behalf of the Government, where no other collection means exists or where normal collections were not made, may have a collection for meals made through their pay account at the appropriate rate upon proper documentation for a debt owed to the Government.

2.4.7. Collections from individual pay accounts for meals and rations provided by the Government or on behalf of the Government will be credited to the appropriation specified by each Military Service.

2.5 Specialized Terms (250205)

2.5.1. ESM. Messing declared by the installation, base, or station commander responsible for single Government quarters that is essential to operate the Government mess efficiently and economically, or that is necessary for the health and safety of enlisted personnel permanently assigned to single quarters. Those categories of enlisted members included in ESM will be charged for all meals made available whether eaten or not, except for approved missed meals.

2.5.2. EUM. Group messing that is declared by an appropriate authority to be necessary for operational readiness, military operations, or effective training where members are required to eat Government–furnished meals. Members will be in a travel status and are entitled to travel reimbursement for incidental expenses, but not for subsistence. Designation for EUM will apply only to organizational units and to operational elements and detachments, not to individual Service members. All members on duty under circumstances where EUM has been declared will be charged for all meals made available whether eaten or not, except for approved missed meals.

2.5.3. Sea Duty. Service performed in a self-propelled vessel with berthing and messing facilities that is in an active status, in commission, or in service. This term applies to members who are either permanent party or aboard for TAD/TDY. All members on sea duty, not a member of an authorized private mess, will be charged for all meals made available whether eaten or not, subject to approved missed meals.

2.5.4. Subsisted on Behalf of the Government. A condition in which meals or rations are furnished without charge by a Government contractor or a foreign government, or through a fellowship, grant, or intern program while a member is receiving basic pay, either under the terms of a contract or agreement or on a complimentary basis. Unless a member is entitled to be subsisted-in-kind, subsistence provided on behalf of the Government must be charged to the member.

2.5.5. Subsisted-in-Kind. Meals or rations furnished at no charge to members not entitled to BAS from a Government Mess or who are subsisted at no charge on behalf of the Government.

3.0 FAMILY SUBSISTENCE SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE (FSSA) (2503)

3.1 General Provisions (250301)

The FSSA program was established to supplement a member's BAS to a level sufficient to remove the member's household from or eliminate the need for benefits under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program. FSSA is payable at a monthly rate as determined by the Military Service concerned under the guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense and may not exceed \$1,100 per month. FSSA is a nontaxable allowance payable in addition to, all other pays and allowances.

3.2 Eligibility (250302)

FSSA is payable to any officer or enlisted member of the Armed Forces who meets all of the following criteria:

3.2.1. Is serving on active duty and receiving BAS;

3.2.2. Has a household income, including military income of the member, and any other household income that would make the member eligible for assistance under the USDA SNAP program for the member's household size;

3.2.3. Has at least one person in the member's household who is a military dependent;

3.2.4. Has made an application for and been certified at a specific payment level by the appropriate office; and

3.2.5. After September 30, 2016, is serving outside the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Guam.

3.3 Entitlement (250303)

FSSA is a monthly entitlement payable in whole dollar amounts not to exceed \$1,100. It is not payable to any member, otherwise entitled, during periods in a non-pay status.

3.3.1. FSSA is payable in an amount that would bring the member's household income to 130 percent of the Federal poverty line as established by the USDA.

3.3.2. For periods of less than a full month of entitlement, the FSSA is payable at 1/30 of the monthly amount for each eligible day served.

3.3.3. If an eligible member is receiving SNAP benefits, the amount of the FSSA entitlement will be equal to the calculated FSSA or the SNAP allotment, whichever is higher, not to exceed \$1,100 per month.

3.4 Military Income (250304)

3.4.1. For the FSSA Program, the following sources of revenue will be counted as military income:

3.4.1.1. Basic Pay;

3.4.1.2. BAS;

3.4.1.3. Basic Allowance for Housing or cash equivalent for those who are living in Government-provided housing;

3.4.1.4. Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA). When a Service member lives in Government quarters while stationed overseas, the amount of the housing allowance to count as income for that member is the OHA ceiling for the local area;

3.4.1.5. All bonuses. The monthly amount of military income attributable to a bonus will be the amount of the bonus, prorated over the period of time to which bonus is applicable; and

3.4.1.6. All special and incentive pays except those excluded in subparagraph 3.4.2.

3.4.2. The following sources of revenue will not be counted as military income:

3.4.2.1. Hostile Fire Pay;

3.4.2.2. Imminent Danger Pay;

3.4.2.3. Continental United States COLA;

3.4.2.4. Overseas COLA;

3.4.2.5. Family Separation Allowance;

3.4.2.6. Clothing Allowances; and

3.4.2.7. All travel and transportation related allowances and entitlements.

3.5 Application and Certification (250305)

Members must apply for the FSSA Program with the appropriate organizational element as designated by their respective Service. The appropriate Service organization will make all decisions regarding eligibility and the amount of entitlement and will provide final certification for payment to include the entitlement start date.

3.6 Recertification and Termination (250306)

3.6.1. When any of the following events occurs, in order to avoid termination of FSSA, a member receiving FSSA must report the event to the Service certifying organization within 30 days for recertification of FSSA eligibility:

3.6.1.1. Member's monthly household income increases by \$100 or more;

3.6.1.2. Member's household size decreases;

3.6.1.3. Member is promoted. The certification ends the day prior to the effective date of promotion;

3.6.1.4. Member executes a PCS move. The certification ends the day prior to the date the member officially reports for duty at the new duty station; and

3.6.1.5. Members are required to re-certify annually effective February 1 of each year.

3.6.2. Recertification must be completed in 30 days or less, before or after one of the events listed in subparagraph 3.6.1, to maintain continuous qualification for the FSSA Program.

3.6.3. The effective date of recertification will be the day following the last day of the previous certification period.

3.6.4. If during recertification it is determined that the member's gross household income increased by an amount greater than \$100 more than 30 days prior to reapplication, the difference between the amount of the current entitlement and the amount being recertified (if less) will be recouped. The recoupment amount is calculated on a pro rata basis for each day, following the date the increased income exceeded \$100 through the effective date of the recertification.

3.6.5. When a member's eligibility is not timely recertified, eligibility for FSSA will be lost, and the date for termination of the entitlement will be the date of the event requiring recertification. An untimely recertification will be treated as an initial application.

*Table 25-1. Meal Collection Rates

Effective January 1, 2020 (Notes 1 & 2)

R U L E	When a member receiving BAS also receives subsistence (meals or rations) from a Government mess or provided on behalf of the Government at the	and the meal received is	then the collection rate is (note 2)
1	discount meal rate (note 3)	breakfast	\$2.60
*2	discount meal rate (note 3)	lunch	4.30
*3	discount meal rate (note 3)	dinner	3.70
*4	discount meal rate (note 3)	daily total	\$10.60
*5	standard meal rate (note 4)	breakfast	\$3.50
*6	standard meal rate (note 4)	lunch	5.65
*7	standard meal rate (note 4)	dinner	4.90
*8	standard meal rate (note 4)	daily total	\$14.05

NOTES:

1. Collections from an enlisted member's pay account will be made when the member has not otherwise paid for meals provided by or on behalf of the Government (i.e., by cash, a personal check or charge, or by deduction/reduction of per diem). Collections from pay will be deducted from the member's pay account and credited to the appropriation specified by the Military Service concerned.
2. For the prior year rates, see: Office of Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) website.
3. The discount meal rate applies to meals and rations provided by or on behalf of the U.S. Government to a member not paid per diem or other travel reimbursement for subsistence who is performing duty in a U.S. Government vessel, a U.S. Government aircraft, on maneuvers, war games, field exercises, or similar operations, or to members traveling together with limited or no per diem travel status under EUM or assigned ESM. The discount meal rate also applies to meals and rations provided to a member assigned to Joint Task Force operations (for other than training) at temporary U.S. installations, or through a temporary dining facility.
4. The standard meal rate applies to meals and rations provided to any member not authorized the discount meal rate. This includes any member being paid per diem for subsistence, except those on Joint Task Force operations as described in note 3. Generally, when the standard meal rate is applicable, it will be collected in cash from the member by the dining facility.

*REFERENCES

CHAPTER 25 – SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

2.0 – BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR SUBSISTENCE (BAS) (2502)

	37 U.S.C. § 402
2.1	DoD Directive (DoDD) 1418.05, October 6, 2003
2.1.2.1.	37 U.S.C. § 402(d)
2.1.2.2.	Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Financial Management Memo, June 8, 2010
2.2.1. & 2.2.2.	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Manpower and Reserve Affairs Memo, December 2, 2019
2.2.2.2.	DoDD 1418.05, October 6, 2003
2.3.1.5.	37 U.S.C. § 420(c)
2.3.1.6.6	10 U.S.C. §§ 857, 858b
2.3.3.	37 U.S.C. § 402(h)
2.4	10 U.S.C. § 2603
	37 U.S.C. § 1011
	DoDD 1418.05, October 6, 2003
2.4.2.1.	37 U.S.C. §402(h) Secretary of Defense Memo, July 21, 2010 Secretary of Defense Memo, October 16, 2015

3.0 – FAMILY SUBSISTENCE SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE (FSSA) (2503)

	37 U.S.C. § 402a
	DoD Instruction 1341.11, March 4, 2008
3.2.5.	37 U.S.C. § 402a(b)(4)
Table 25-1	Office of Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Memo, December 13, 2019