

VOLUME 7A, CHAPTER 67: “COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE (COLA) IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES (CONUS)”

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 [January 2021](#) is archived.

PARAGRAPH	EXPLANATION OF CHANGE/REVISION	PURPOSE
All	Updated the hyperlinks and formatting to comply with current administrative instructions.	Revision
References	Verified supporting statutes and references in “References” section.	Current

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CHAPTER 67

**COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE (COLA) IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES
(CONUS)**

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Purpose

This chapter identifies the eligibility requirements for a Service member to receive COLA for an assignment in CONUS. This chapter specifies the rates payable and the effect that a dependent has upon those rates.

1.2 Authoritative Guidance

The pay policies and requirements established by DoD in this chapter are derived primarily from, and prepared in accordance with Title 37, United States Code (U.S.C.). 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 DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC TO CONUS COLA

2.1 Base Period

The 1-year period beginning July 1 and ending the following June 30, during which time data is gathered to provide the basis for designating a location a high-cost area.

2.2 Threshold Percentage

The threshold percentage is the limit for determining whether a location is a high-cost area. The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the other Administering Secretaries, establishes the amount, which by law may not be less than 8%. It must be adjusted when necessary to ensure the total amount of **CONUS COLA** payments does not exceed the amount available to the DoD for paying CONUS COLA that fiscal year.

2.3 High-Cost Area

A high-cost area is a location where a Service member's cost of living is at least 8% higher than the average cost of living in the CONUS. The data gathered during the base period is used to determine the cost of living at that location for the following fiscal year. When a location exceeds the threshold percentage, the CONUS COLA for that area begins on the first day of the new calendar year immediately following the base period.

2.4 Service Member With a Dependent

A Service member is with a dependent if he or she is authorized the basic allowance for housing (BAH) or would be authorized BAH at the with-dependent rate if Government quarters were not occupied. This does not include a Service member authorized BAH at the with-dependent rate solely based on paying child support. A spouse who is also a Service member on active duty may not be a dependent for CONUS COLA purposes. See Chapter 26 for BAH.

2.5 Service Member Without a Dependent

A Service member is considered without a dependent if any of the following conditions are met:

2.5.1. The Service member is authorized BAH at the without dependent rate;

2.5.2. The Service member would be authorized the without dependent BAH rate if Government quarters were not occupied; or

2.5.3. The Service member is authorized the with-dependent BAH rate solely based on paying child support.

2.6 Primary Dependent

A primary dependent is either the Service member's spouse or, for an unmarried Service member, a dependent as defined in Volume 7A, "Definitions," excluding the following:

2.6.1. A dependent transported outside the CONUS (OCONUS) at Government expense who then returns at Government expense after he or she no longer qualifies as a dependent;

2.6.2. A Service member's or spouse's parent, stepparent, parent by adoption, or any other person (including a former stepparent) authorized as a dependent; or

2.6.3. A Service member's former spouse, former dependents, or former dependent children authorized return transportation to the CONUS.

2.7 Unaccompanied Status

A Service member is considered to be in an unaccompanied status during any portion of an assignment to a permanent duty station (PDS) OCONUS while a dependent resides in, or returns to, a location in the CONUS to establish a permanent residence.

2.8 PDS for Service Member Assigned to Ship or Afloat Staff

The home port of the ship or afloat staff to which a Service member is assigned is his or her PDS for CONUS COLA purposes.

3.0 CONUS COLA ELIGIBILITY

3.1 CONUS COLA Rates Payable

3.1.1. Rates Based Upon Location. CONUS COLA rates are based on the Service member's PDS, his or her home port, a designated place, or the primary dependent's location when authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process or authorized in this chapter. The CONUS COLA rate paid to the Service member does not change when the Service member is on leave.

3.1.1.1. CONUS COLA based on the PDS begins on the day the Service member reports to the new PDS and ends the day before reporting to the next PDS. The CONUS COLA rate applicable to the primary dependent's permanent residence starts on either the date the primary dependent arrives at the new residence or the date the Service member reports to the new PDS in connection with the transfer, whichever is later. When a Service member is departing from a PDS OCONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS, then the Service member is authorized CONUS COLA for the new PDS starting on his or her reporting date at the new PDS.

3.1.1.1.1. The CONUS COLA rate payable based on the primary dependent's old permanent residence or the Service member's old PDS continues through the day before the Service member reports to the new PDS or the rate for the new permanent residence begins. CONUS COLA at the old rate ends the day before the rate based on the new permanent residence begins.

3.1.1.1.2. When a Service member is stationed OCONUS, but the primary dependent is in the CONUS, see paragraph 4.7 for exceptions.

3.1.1.2. The Service member may be authorized through the Secretarial Process, CONUS COLA at the rate for the dependent's location instead of the rate for the new PDS when it is necessary for the Service member and dependent to maintain separate residences.

3.1.1.2.1. If the primary dependent does not relocate, CONUS COLA would continue to be based on the rate payable for the primary dependent's permanent residence or the Service member's old PDS.

3.1.1.2.2. When the primary dependent's permanent residence is at a location different than the old PDS, and the Service member was paid based on the rate for the old PDS, the rate payable for the primary dependent's residence begins on the service member's reporting day to the new PDS.

3.1.1.3. If two married Service members maintain a joint residence with a dependent, CONUS COLA is paid to one spouse at the with-dependent rate and to the other spouse at the without dependent rate.

3.1.1.4. When a Service member is on a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to a new PDS in the CONUS and has a Temporary Duty (TDY) in route, CONUS COLA at the new PDS rate begins the day after per diem stops provided both of the following occur:

3.1.1.4.1. The TDY is near but not at the PDS; and

3.1.1.4.2. The Service member commutes to the TDY location from what will become the permanent quarters after reporting to the new PDS.

3.1.2. Service Member Assigned to a Ship or Afloat Staff Home Port. Regardless of BAH eligibility, a Service member assigned to a ship or afloat staff is eligible for CONUS COLA unless the Service member is already drawing CONUS COLA for a dependent at another location.

3.1.2.1. The CONUS COLA rate is based on the home port of the Service member's assigned ship or afloat staff.

3.1.2.2. For CONUS COLA related to a home port change:

3.1.2.2.1. The CONUS COLA rate for the old home port stops on the day before the effective date of the home port change, and the rate for the new home port begins on the effective date of the home port change; and

3.1.2.2.2. A Service member without a dependent who ordinarily resides onboard the ship is authorized the CONUS COLA rate for the old home port until the day he or she moves back aboard the ship, under all of the following conditions:

3.1.2.2.2.1. Quarters on board the ship are not available, such as when a ship is in dry-dock; and

3.1.2.2.2.2. The ship or afloat staff is delayed at the old home port after the effective date of the home port change.

3.1.3. Accessions. A new Service member is authorized CONUS COLA at the rate based upon whether he or she has a dependent.

3.1.3.1. The without dependent rate is based on the duty location. The rate changes on the Service member's arrival day at each duty location until the Service member arrives at the first PDS.

3.1.3.2. A Service member may elect the with-dependent rate for either the duty location or the primary dependent's location. If the Service member selects the primary dependent's location, the rate is based on the primary dependent's location until the day before the Service member's arrival day at the first PDS.

3.1.4. Service Member Processing for Separation or Retirement. CONUS COLA is paid during separation or retirement processing based on one of the following:

3.1.4.1. The last PDS rate;

3.1.4.2. The primary dependent's location immediately before separation processing, if previously authorized that rate instead of the PDS rate; or

3.1.4.3. The separation or retirement processing station in the CONUS for a Service member who separates in the CONUS from a PDS OCONUS.

3.2 Secretarial Waiver [When the Primary Dependent Does not Reside at the PDS in the CONUS](#)

Ordinarily, CONUS COLA is paid based on the Service member's PDS, or a ship, or afloat unit's home port. However, the Service may determine through the Secretarial Process that a Service member's assignment to a PDS or the circumstances of that assignment requires the dependent to reside separately and authorize or approve CONUS COLA payment based on the dependent's location. If the Secretarial Process determines that it is necessary for the primary dependent to maintain a permanent residence in the CONUS at a location other than the Service member's PDS, the Service member may be authorized CONUS COLA at the rate for the primary dependent's permanent residence instead of for the Service member's PDS.

3.3 Concurrent Payment of OCONUS COLA and CONUS COLA

A Service member assigned to a PDS OCONUS may be paid OCONUS COLA at the without dependent rate and a CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate applicable for the high-cost area in the CONUS where the primary dependent resides only if no command-sponsored dependent is residing OCONUS with the Service member.

3.3.1. [Service Member Departs](#). If, after a Service member departs, the Service member is authorized an extension of OCONUS COLA for a dependent residing OCONUS through the Secretarial Process, the Service member may be paid OCONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate, and CONUS COLA at the without dependent rate based on the new PDS. The specified COLA continues through the date the OCONUS COLA extension ends.

3.3.2. [Dependent Leaves OCONUS Residence](#). Beginning the day the dependent permanently leaves the [OCONUS residence](#), the Service member may be paid CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate for the PDS in the CONUS.

4.0 CONUS COLA AND DEPENDENT CIRCUMSTANCES

4.1 Service Member Paying Child Support

A Service member is authorized CONUS COLA at the without dependent rate when he or she is authorized BAH at the with-dependent rate or BAH Differential (see Chapter 26) based solely on child-support payment.

4.2 Effect of Physical Custody of a Child on CONUS COLA

Ordinarily, a divorced or legally separated Service member who is not identified as the primary custodial parent of a child in the divorce decree or legal separation agreement, is not authorized CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate.

4.2.1. Service Member Has Physical Custody but Not Court Ordered/Agreed to in Legal Separation. A Service member parent who has physical custody, but not legal custody, although not court-ordered in the divorce decree or in a legal separation agreement, of at least one child (proof of custody required) is authorized CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate if both of the following conditions are met:

4.2.1.1. The Service member is authorized BAH; and

4.2.1.2. Physical custody is for a minimum of 90 consecutive days. A break of 5 or fewer days is not considered an interruption of the 90-day period, even if there are multiple breaks of 5 or fewer days.

4.2.2. Two Service Members Divorce or Separate. When the divorce or separation is between two Service members, it is possible for both Service members to be authorized CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate if each Service member has physical custody of one or more children at the same time.

4.2.3. Service Member Paying Child Support has Physical Custody. If a Service member paying child support has physical custody of a child for 91 or more consecutive days, excluding any breaks for 5 or fewer days, the Service member does not receive BAH at the with dependent rate solely because of child support payments.

4.3 Service Member Acquires a Dependent

4.3.1. General Rules. When a Service member acquires a primary dependent, CONUS COLA is paid based on the PDS, if the Service member is assigned to a PDS in the CONUS and when he or she meets the conditions in Table 67-2.

4.3.2. Dependent Visits or Moves to the PDS. A dependent may visit the Service member for 90 or fewer days at the PDS without changes to the CONUS COLA. When the visit exceeds 90 days, the CONUS COLA rate changes to the rate for the Service member's PDS location on the 91st day. If the dependent leaves the PDS area after the CONUS COLA changes, the CONUS COLA previously authorized for the dependent's location is reinstated as of the departure date.

4.4 Advance and Delayed Dependent Travel to a PDS OCONUS

When a PCS order is issued, the Service member's family may perform PCS travel at a different time than the Service member. See paragraph 3.2 when a dependent is required to reside away from the Service member's PDS.

4.4.1. CONUS COLA Based on a Dependent's Location or Old PDS

4.4.1.1. Unless otherwise authorized or approved, a Service member's CONUS COLA is based on the PDS.

4.4.1.2. If authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process, a Service member may be authorized CONUS COLA based on the dependent's permanent residence or the old PDS.

4.4.2. Applicable Rates. If a dependent relocates, the rate for the dependent's location starts on the date the primary dependent arrives at the new residence. If the dependent does not relocate, CONUS COLA is based on the primary dependent's location and continues until the primary dependent departs the authorized or approved location.

4.5 Government Defers Dependent Travel

4.5.1. Government Defers Dependent Travel to a PDS OCONUS. Table 67-5 specifies the decision process for CONUS COLA when the Government defers a dependent's travel to a PDS OCONUS.

4.5.2. Government Defers Dependent Travel to a PDS in the CONUS. CONUS COLA payment based on the primary dependent's location or old PDS continues for up to 60 days after dependent travel is authorized. If the dependent has not arrived at the Service member's PDS by the end of 60 days, and an extension to, or a waiver of, the 60-day limit has not been granted through the Secretarial Process, CONUS COLA based on the dependent's location changes to CONUS COLA based on the PDS location.

4.5.2.1. If a dependent is not relocated at Government expense, then Table 67-6 specifies the decision process for CONUS COLA when the Government delays the dependent's travel to a PDS in the CONUS and the expected travel delay is 139 or fewer days (20 weeks).

4.5.2.2. Table 67-7 specifies the decision process for CONUS COLA when the Government delays a dependent's travel to a PDS in the CONUS and the expected travel delay is 140 or more days (20 weeks).

4.6 Early Return of Dependents (ERD)

4.6.1. Early Return at Government Expense. When all of a Service member's dependents are returned, from a PDS OCONUS at Government expense for circumstances other than for a PCS (regardless of the reason for the return) the Service member is authorized CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's permanent residence, starting on the arrival day at that location or the date the ERD order was issued, whichever is later.

4.6.2. Early Return at Personal Expense. When all of a Service member's dependents are returned early from a PDS OCONUS at personal expense, the Service member is not authorized CONUS COLA.

4.7 Service Member Serving in an Unaccompanied Status OCONUS

If a Service member serving in an unaccompanied status OCONUS has dependents in multiple locations, CONUS COLA authority is based on the primary dependent's residence.

4.7.1. Eligibility. When the primary dependent establishes a residence or resides in the CONUS due to a Service member's transfer to, or while assigned at, an unaccompanied PDS OCONUS, CONUS COLA is authorized in any of the following situations:

4.7.1.1. The primary dependent relocates in the CONUS from a PDS in the CONUS;

4.7.1.2. The primary dependent resides in the CONUS and the Service member is required to perform TDY incident to a transfer to an unaccompanied PDS in the CONUS; or

4.7.1.3. The primary dependent establishes a residence in the CONUS due to the Service member's transfer from an accompanied status at a PDS OCONUS to an unaccompanied status.

4.7.2. Allowances. Table 67-8 specifies CONUS COLA for a Service member with a dependent assigned to an unaccompanied tour at a PDS OCONUS.

5.0 CONUS COLA AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

5.1 Service Member in a Missing Status

5.1.1. Service Member Without a Dependent. A Service member without a dependent who's PDS is in the CONUS and is in a missing status receives CONUS COLA based on the PDS location.

5.1.2. Service Member With a Dependent. A Service member with a dependent continues to receive CONUS COLA at the rate paid when they were placed in a missing status. Pay CONUS COLA based on the dependent's location when a dependent relocates.

5.2 Service Member in Confinement

If a Service member in confinement is authorized allowances, he or she receives the same CONUS COLA rate paid immediately before confinement. If a Service member with a dependent is transferred to a confinement facility, then the CONUS COLA is based on the dependent's location.

5.3 Service Member Requires Prolonged Hospitalization

The hospital where a Service member is transferred becomes his or her PDS for CONUS COLA purposes when he or she requires prolonged hospitalization and is issued an appropriate

order. This applies when a Service member is transferred from any PDS to a hospital in the CONUS for observation and treatment.

5.4 Service Member Whose PDS is Evacuated

5.4.1. Service Member With a Dependent

5.4.1.1. CONUS COLA Continuation at the Service Member's PDS

5.4.1.1.1. A Service member who is authorized CONUS COLA at the with-dependent rate based on his or her PDS, and whose dependent is evacuated, continues to receive CONUS COLA on the effective date of the evacuation unless the Service member's PDS changes.

5.4.1.1.2. When a determination is made through the Secretarial Process that it is necessary for a dependent to maintain a permanent residence in an area other than where the PDS is located, CONUS COLA at the with dependent rate is based on the designated place for the primary dependent. The CONUS COLA starts the day after per diem at the designated place ends.

5.4.1.2. CONUS COLA at a Designated Place. When a Service member's command-sponsored dependent resides at a designated place in the CONUS due to an evacuation from a location OCONUS, the Service member is authorized CONUS COLA at the with dependent rate starting the day after per diem at the designated place ends. The rate is based on the designated place for the primary dependent.

5.4.2. Service Member Without a Dependent. A Service member without a dependent who was authorized CONUS COLA at the PDS on the date an evacuation is ordered is authorized CONUS COLA through the day before the Service member reports at the new PDS.

6.0 RESERVE COMPONENT (RC) MEMBER

6.1 Called or Ordered to Active Duty

Table 67-9 specifies CONUS COLA for an RC member called or ordered to active duty for a period of 140 or more days or in support of a contingency operation. A DoD or U.S. Coast Guard retired Service member called or ordered to active duty is authorized the same CONUS COLA as an RC member.

6.2 Modified or Amended Order

If an RC member receives an order modification or amendment that extends the original assignment, the modification or amendment determines the CONUS COLA.

Table 67-1. CONUS COLA Eligibility

R U L E	CONUS COLA Eligibility	Circumstances
1	CONUS COLA Eligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Service member is assigned to a high-cost area in the CONUS. b. A Service member is in an unaccompanied status OCONUS, if the Service member's primary dependent resides in a high-cost area in the CONUS. c. A new Service member is ordered to active duty to a high-cost area through accession. d. A Service member is married to another Service member. Each is authorized CONUS COLA. This authority exists whether the married Service members maintain a joint residence or separate residences. e. A Service member is assigned to duty in the CONUS and the primary dependent does not reside at the PDS in the CONUS and it is determined through the Secretarial Process that both of the following conditions apply: f. The Service member's primary dependent resides in a high-cost area in the CONUS because of the Service member's PDS or other circumstances. g. It would be inequitable for the allowance to be determined on the basis of the Service member's PDS. h. A RC member is authorized CONUS COLA only when the call to active duty is for a period of 140 or more days or is in support of a contingency operation.
2	CONUS COLA Ineligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. During the travel days a Service member is authorized for a permanent change of station (PCS) between the old PDS and new PDS. If the Service member is receiving CONUS COLA before the PCS, then the CONUS COLA payments stop on the first travel day. b. During the travel days a Service member (including an RC member) is authorized for a PCS (see Joint Travel Regulations, Chapter 5, Para. 051201) from the place last entered (or called to) active duty (PLEAD) to the first PDS. If the Service member is receiving CONUS COLA before the PCS, then the CONUS COLA payments stop on the day before the first travel day. c. For an RC member on active duty under an order for 139 or fewer days, unless the duty is in support of a contingency operation (see section 6.0). d. For more than one location at a time.

Table 67-2. Service Member Acquires a Dependent who is in the CONUS

R U L E	Location of Service Member's PDS	Basis for CONUS COLA
1	In the CONUS	<p>a. If the dependent is located at or near the PDS, change CONUS COLA to the with-dependent rate based on the PDS as of the date the Service member gained the dependent.</p> <p>b. If the dependent is not located at or near the PDS, change CONUS COLA to the with dependent rate based on the Service member's PDS as of the date the Service member gained the dependent or, if the Service member requested and received a Secretarial waiver, based on the dependent's location as of that date (see par. 3.2).</p>
2	OCONUS	<p>a. The dependent's location if the dependent does not reside at or near the PDS OCONUS.</p> <p>b. Start CONUS COLA at the with dependent rate based on the dependent's location as of the date he or she became a dependent.</p>

Table 67-3. Dependent Performs PCS Travel Before the Service Member

R U L E	If...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location...	then...
1	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<p>(1) stop CONUS COLA based on the old PDS the day before the primary dependent arrives.</p> <p>(2) start CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's location on the arrival date or the date specified by the authorizing or approving document, whichever is later.</p>
2	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS,	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<p>(1) continue CONUS COLA based on the current PDS until the Service member arrives at the new PDS.*</p> <p>(2) start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS the day the Service member arrives at the new PDS.</p>
3	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is OCONUS	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<p>(1) continue CONUS COLA based on the current PDS until the Service member arrives at new PDS.*</p> <p>(2) start OCONUS COLA based on the dependent's location on the arrival date, or the date specified by the authorizing or approving document, whichever is later.</p>
4	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is OCONUS	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	continue CONUS COLA based on the current PDS until the Service member arrives at new PDS.*

Table 67-3. Dependent Performs PCS Travel Before the Service Member (Continued)

R U L E	If...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location...	then...
5	the old PDS was OCONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	start CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's location on the arrival date, or the date specified by the authorizing or approving document, whichever is later.
6	the old PDS was OCONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS the day the Service member arrives at the new PDS.*
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-4. Dependent Travel After a Service Member

R U L E	If...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location...	then...
1	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	(1) continue the CONUS COLA based on the old PDS or the primary dependent's location, whichever has a higher rate.* (2) start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS as of the date the primary dependent departs provided the Service member has arrived at the new PDS.
2	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is in the CONUS	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	(1) continue CONUS COLA based on the current PDS until the Service member arrives at the new PDS.* (2) start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS the day the Service member arrives at the new PDS.
3	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is OCONUS	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	(1) continue the CONUS COLA based on the old PDS or the primary dependent's location, whichever has a higher rate.* (2) stop CONUS COLA on the day before the primary dependent departs.
4	the old PDS was in the CONUS and the new PDS is OCONUS	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	continue the CONUS COLA based on the current PDS until the Service member arrives at the new PDS.*
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-5. Government Defers Dependent's Authorized Travel to a PDS OCONUS

R U L E	If the expected travel delay is...	and...	then...
1	at least 61 days but less than 20 weeks and the dependent did not relocate at Government expense,	the dependent arrives within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS upon the Service member's departure.* (2) start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location upon the Service member's arrival date. (3) stop CONUS COLA on the day before the primary dependent arrives at the new PDS.
2	at least 61 days but less than 20 weeks and the dependent did not relocate at Government expense,	the dependent does not arrive within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS upon the Service member's departure.* (2) start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location upon the Service member's arrival date. (3) stop CONUS COLA on the 60th day.
3	20 or more weeks and the dependent did not relocate at Government expense,	the dependent arrives within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS upon the Service member's departure.* (2) start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location upon the Service member's arrival date. (3) stop CONUS COLA on the day before the primary dependent arrives at the new PDS.
4	20 or more weeks and the dependent did not relocate at Government expense,	the dependent does not arrive within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS upon the Service member's departure.* (2) start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location upon the Service member's arrival date. (3) stop CONUS COLA on the 60th day.

Table 67-5. Government Defers Dependent's Authorized Travel to a PDS OCONUS (Continued)

R U L E	If the expected travel delay is...	and...	then...
5	20 or more weeks and the dependent relocates at Government expense,	the dependent arrives within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	(1) change the CONUS COLA rate on the date the primary dependent arrives at the designated location from the rate based on the old PDS to the rate based on the designated location.* (2) stop CONUS COLA on the day before the primary dependent arrives at the new PDS.
6	20 or more weeks and the dependent relocates at Government expense,	the dependent does not arrive within 60 days of being given permission to travel to the PDS OCONUS,	(1) change the CONUS COLA rate on the date the primary dependent arrives at the designated location from the rate based on the old PDS to the rate based on the designated location.* (2) stop CONUS COLA on the 60th day.
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-6. Government Defers Dependent's Travel to a PDS in the CONUS When the Old PDS is in the U.S. and the Expected Travel Delay is 139 or Fewer Days (20 Weeks)

R U L E	If the dependent...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location ...	then upon the Service member's departure, continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS*
1	arrives within 60 days of travel authority,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	(1) upon the Service member's arrival date, start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location through the day before the primary dependent arrives at the new PDS. (2) beginning on the primary dependent's arrival date at the PDS, start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS.
2	does not arrive within 60 days of travel authority,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	(1) upon the Service member's arrival date, start CONUS COLA for the authorized dependent's location for up to 60 days. (2) beginning on the 61st day, base CONUS COLA on the new PDS.
3	does not travel	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	and beginning on the arrival date, start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS.*
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-7. Government Defers Dependent's Travel to a PDS in the CONUS When the Old PDS is Outside the U.S. or the Old PDS is in the U.S. and the Expected Travel Delay is 140 or More Days (20 Weeks)

R U L E	If the dependent...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location ...	then...
1	arrives within 60 days of travel authority and he or she is relocated at Government expense,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) change the CONUS COLA basis on the date the primary dependent arrives at the designated location and continue it through the day before the primary dependent arrives at the PDS.* (2) beginning on the primary dependent's arrival date at the PDS, change the basis for CONUS COLA to the PDS.
2	arrives within 60 days of travel authority and he or she is not relocated at Government expense,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA through the day before the primary dependent arrives at the new PDS and base it on the old PDS as of the Service member's departure.* (2) beginning on the primary dependent's arrival date at the PDS, change the basis for CONUS COLA to the new PDS.
3	does not arrive within 60 days of travel authority and he or she is relocated at Government expense,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) change the CONUS COLA basis on the date the primary dependent arrives at the designated location from the old PDS to the designated location through the 60th day after travel is authorized to begin.* (2) beginning on the 61st day after travel is authorized to begin, change the basis for CONUS COLA from the dependent's location to the new PDS.
4	does not arrive within 60 days of travel authority and he or she is not relocated at Government expense,	was authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) continue CONUS COLA through the 60th day after travel is authorized to begin based on the old PDS. (2) beginning on the 61st day after travel is authorized to begin, change the basis for CONUS COLA from the old PDS to the new PDS.

Table 67-7. Government Defers Dependent's Travel to a PDS in the CONUS When the Old PDS is Outside the U.S. or the Old PDS is in the U.S. and the Expected Travel Delay is 140 or More Days (20 Weeks) (Continued)

R U L E	If the dependent...	and the CONUS COLA for the dependent's location ...	then...
5	does not travel	was not authorized or approved through the Secretarial Process,	start CONUS COLA based on the new PDS as of the Service member's arrival date.
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-8. Service Member (With a Dependent) Assigned to an Unaccompanied Tour at a PDS OCONUS

See CONUS COLA			
RULE	If the Service member's dependent...	and...	then...
1	retains a permanent residence in the CONUS	the primary dependent remains at the old PDS,	continue to pay CONUS COLA, based on the old PDS.
2	retains a permanent residence in the CONUS	the primary dependent is at a location in the CONUS other than the old PDS and the Service member is receiving CONUS COLA based on a Secretarial waiver,	continue the CONUS COLA previously paid.
3	retains a permanent residence in the CONUS	the primary dependent is at a location in the CONUS other than either the old PDS or location for which the Service member had a Secretarial waiver,	continue to pay CONUS COLA, based on the old PDS and start CONUS COLA the day the Service member arrives at the new PDS based on the primary dependent's location.
4	relocates the permanent residence from the CONUS to another location in the CONUS at Government expense	a. the primary dependent either travels with or in advance of the Service member,	(1) stop the old CONUS COLA rate the day before the dependent's arrival day. (2) start CONUS COLA the day the primary dependent arrives at the new residence location based on the dependent's location.*
		b. a dependent travels after the Service member,	(1) continue CONUS COLA based on the Service member's old PDS through the day before the primary dependent's arrival at the new residence location. (2) start CONUS COLA on the arrival day based on the dependent's location.*
5	relocates the permanent residence from OCONUS to the CONUS at Government expense	a dependent travels in advance of, with, or after the Service member,	start CONUS COLA based on the dependent's location the day the primary dependent arrives at the new residence.*
6	relocates permanent residence from the CONUS to a location OCONUS at Government expense	a. a dependent travels in advance of the Service member or with the Service member,	continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS through the day before the Service member's arrival at the new PDS.
		b. a dependent travels after the Service member,	continue CONUS COLA based on the old PDS through the day before the primary dependent's arrival.*

Table 67-8. Service Member (With a Dependent) Assigned to an Unaccompanied Tour at a PDS OCONUS (Continued)

See CONUS COLA			
R U L E	If the Service member's dependent...	and...	then...
7	relocates the residence at personal expense	a. CONUS COLA is authorized through the Secretarial Process,	continue CONUS COLA based on the rules in this table.*
	relocates the residence at personal expense	b. CONUS COLA based on the new location is not authorized through the Secretarial Process,	continue CONUS COLA based on the rules in this table through the day before the primary dependent's arrival.*
8	is not OCONUS	the Service member is assigned to an unaccompanied assignment OCONUS or unusually arduous sea duty,	(1) pay CONUS COLA based on the old PDS rate if the dependent does not relocate. (2) pay CONUS COLA based on the dependent's location if the dependent does relocate.
9	continues to reside at same location	the Service member is required to perform a TDY, inside or outside the CONUS, due to a transfer to another unaccompanied tour,	continue CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's permanent residence.
10	continues to reside at same location	the Service member is required to perform a TDY due to a transfer in the U.S.,	(1) continue CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's permanent residence through the day before the day the Service member reports to the new PDS. (2) start CONUS COLA at the rate for the new PDS on the day the Service member reports at that PDS.
*COLA is not payable on authorized days of travel.			

Table 67-9. RC Member CONUS COLA Determination

R U L E	If an RC member is called or ordered to active duty ...	and PCS HHG transportation ...	then...
1	for 140 or more days	a. is authorized,	(1) start CONUS COLA on the first active-duty day based on the primary residence at the time called or ordered to active duty through the day before arrival at the PDS. (2) starting the day the Service member reports to the PDS, change the basis for CONUS COLA to the PDS location.
	for 140 or more days	b. is not authorized,	start CONUS COLA on the first active-duty day based on the primary residence at the time called or ordered to active duty.
2	for 139 or fewer days for a contingency operation	is not authorized,	(1) start CONUS COLA on the first active-duty day of an assignment that supports a contingency operation and base it on the primary residence at the time called or ordered to active duty. (2) there is no authority to pay CONUS COLA when the assignment is not in support of a contingency operation.

Table 67-10. RC Member's Order is Modified or Amended

See CONUS COLA			
R U L E	If an RC member's order is modified or amended...	and PCS HHG transportation ...	then...
1	and the days remaining on the existing order plus the number of days added by the extension total 140 or more days	is not authorized,	CONUS COLA based on the primary residence continues or would start on the modification or amendment date.
2	and the days remaining on the existing order plus the number of days added by the extension total 140 or more days	is authorized,	CONUS COLA based on the primary residence, if currently authorized, would stop the day before the modification or amendment in CONUS COLA based on the PDS rate would begin on the modification or amendment date or CONUS COLA based on the PDS would continue.

REFERENCES

1.0 – GENERAL

37 U.S.C. § 403b

4.0 – CONUS COLA AND DEPENDENT CIRCUMSTANCES

- 4.5.1. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (OASD)
Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) Memo,
August 12, 2020
- 4.6 OASD (M&RA) Memo, May 5, 2020