



A GUIDE TO MOBILITY AND HARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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FOREWORD

This booklet was prepared as a joint effort of the ICSC secretariat, the representatives of the organizations and staff bodies to provide information on mobility and hardship arrangements which came into effect on 1 January 2009 under the reform of the pay and benefits system.

The booklet is intended as a concise guide to explain:

- *details of the entitlements.*
- *the process by which hardship classifications are determined.*
- *the roles of the various parties in determining and administering the entitlements associated with the scheme.*

The booklet is to be used as a general information tool. It does not supersede the organizations' staff rules/regulations or administrative issuances.

It should be noted that like other components of the remuneration system, entitlements under the mobility and hardship scheme are subject to periodic review.



*Kingston Papie Rhodes
Chairman*

International Civil Service Commission

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Introduction

The United Nations common system has established arrangements for mobility and hardship which are intended to encourage mobility between duty stations when operationally necessary and to compensate staff for hardships they may incur when assigned by their organizations to difficult duty stations.

All duty stations are placed in one of six categories, H and A to E.

- H duty stations are headquarters and similarly designated locations where the United Nations has no development or humanitarian assistance programmes, or locations in countries which are members of the European Union;
- A to E duty stations are field duty stations.

These arrangements involve the provision of allowances for hardship, mobility and non-removal as well as an assignment grant. Further benefits may be available, depending on the particular circumstances of a duty station, including additional educational travel, additional reimbursement of school-boarding costs, reimbursement of basic medical expenses and extra freight shipment.

This is the second revision of these arrangements since the publication of guidelines in 1997 by the ICSC. The objective of this revision is to ensure a more cost-effective use of available resources, whilst recognising both the increasing hardship experienced by staff from conditions of life and work in the field, the increased number of assignments to difficult locations and the need to encourage a greater level of geographical mobility. In addition, the revision provides for a clear separation of the mobility, hardship and non-removal allowances to simplify and streamline the approach; giving greater transparency for staff to better understand the purpose of the various allowances and benefits available to them.

This booklet outlines details of the various allowances and additional benefits provided under these Arrangements for Mobility and Hardship.

Hardship Allowance

Purpose of hardship allowance

Most of the United Nations organizations' work is done in the field and often in duty stations where living and working conditions are difficult. The hardship allowance aims to compensate staff for difficult living conditions at these duty stations.

Hardship categories

Hardship categorization assesses the overall quality of life at a duty station. In determining the degree of hardship, consideration is given to local conditions of safety and security, health care, education, housing, climate, isolation and the availability of the basic amenities of life. Duty stations are categorized on a scale of difficulty from A to E with A being the least difficult.

Review process

The hardship category of each duty station is reviewed at least once every three years (each region - Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean- is reviewed in one year of the three-year review cycle). In practice, however, many duty stations are reviewed more frequently as under established procedures, those with a difficult or volatile security situation, for example, must be looked at every year (in exceptional cases, reviews are carried out more frequently).

The review is carried out annually by a Working Group consisting of representatives of the secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission, organizations and staff. Preliminary markings by the ICSC secretariat, based on a questionnaire submitted to the secretariat no later than 1 October by the organizations at the duty station through the "lead agency", are reviewed by the Group, and a recommendation is submitted to the ICSC Chairman. The factors covered in the questionnaire and the marking/scoring system are: health, security, climate, isolation, local conditions and housing. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations Medical Service participate actively in the process by providing up-to-date information in the areas of security and health, respectively. The Resident Coordinators or Resident Representatives have the responsibility to ensure that the questionnaires are completed when their duty stations come up for review and to submit them to the ICSC on time. Staff members are encouraged to actively participate in the completion of the review.

The Working Group's recommendations are submitted to the ICSC Chairman for decision. The decisions are published by the ICSC secretariat and made available on the ICSC website. The effective date of the classifications are 1 January of each year, however, exceptionally a different effective date may apply for new duty stations.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment of one year or more serving at duty stations in categories B to E will receive a hardship allowance.

The allowance is not payable to staff serving at H and A duty stations. These duty stations fall outside the hardship scheme.

The allowance is not payable to short-term staff, staff who either receive a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) or who are assigned to peace-keeping activities and are on mission subsistence allowance (MSA), United Nations Volunteers, consultants, holders of Special Service Agreements (SSAs) or those working under similar contractual arrangements.

Amounts of hardship allowance

The hardship allowance varies according to the staff member's grade and family status as shown in the table below:

HARDSHIP ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i>						
	Group 1 (P1 to P3)		Group 2 (P4 and P5)		Group 3 (D1 and above)	
Duty Station	Dependency status	Single status	Dependency status	Single status	Dependency Status	Single status
H	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	--	--	--	--	--	--
B	5 670	4 250	6 800	5 100	7 940	5 950
C	10 210	7 650	12 470	9 360	14 740	11 060
D	13 610	10 210	15 880	11 910	18 140	13 610
E	17 010	12 760	20 410	15 310	22 680	17 010

Adjustment

The amounts are reviewed every three years by reference to (a) the average movement of net base salary plus post adjustment in the eight headquarters of the United Nations system; (b) the movement of the out-of-area index for post adjustment based on inflation factors in 21 countries; (c) and the movement of the base/floor salary scale.

Mobility Allowance

Mobility in the United Nations common system

The concept of mobility in the United Nations common system includes movement within and across organizations in the United Nations common system, occupations and geographic locations. For the purposes of the mobility and hardship scheme, mobility is the geographic reassignment of a staff member for a period of one year or more from one duty station to another.

Purpose of mobility allowance

Internationally recruited staff will be paid an incentive in the form of flat amounts based on a cluster of moves ranging from one to seven to encourage movement from one duty station to another.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment of one year or more who have had five consecutive years of service in the United Nations system may qualify for the mobility allowance.

The allowance is not payable to short-term staff, staff who either receive a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) or who are assigned to peace-keeping activities and are on mission subsistence allowance (MSA), United Nations Volunteers, consultants, holders of Special Service Agreements (SSAs) or those working under similar contractual arrangements.

Payment of the mobility allowance

The mobility allowance is paid as of the second assignment at A to E duty stations and is increased for each move up to the seventh assignment after which it continues to be paid at the rate of the seventh assignment.

In order to qualify for payment at H locations, staff must have had at least two previous assignments at A to E locations. Furthermore, the mobility allowance will only be paid from the fourth assignment, and reaches a maximum on the seventh and subsequent assignments.

After five consecutive years at the same duty station, the mobility allowance is discontinued.

The amount of the mobility allowance varies according to the staff member's grade and family status as indicated in the tables below:

Amounts of mobility allowance

Table 1

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i> Group 1 (P-1 to P-3) Dependency Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	2 630	3 290
A	-	6 960	9 400	12 690
B	-	6 960	9 400	12 690
C	-	6 960	9 400	12 690
D	-	6 960	9 400	12 690
E	-	6 960	9 400	12 690

Table 2

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i> Group 1 (P-1 to P-3) Single Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	1 970	2 460
A	-	5 220	7 060	9 520
B	-	5 220	7 060	9 520
C	-	5 220	7 060	9 520
D	-	5 220	7 060	9 520
E	-	5 220	7 060	9 520

Table 3

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE (Annual amounts in United States dollars) Group 2 (P-4 and P-5) Dependency Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	2 990	3 740
A	-	8 000	10 800	14 580
B	-	8 000	10 800	14 580
C	-	8 000	10 800	14 580
D	-	8 000	10 800	14 580
E	-	8 000	10 800	14 580

Table 4

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE (Annual amounts in United States dollars) Group 2 (P-4 and P-5) Single Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	2 250	2 800
A	-	6 010	8 110	10 940
B	-	6 010	8 110	10 940
C	-	6 010	8 110	10 940
D	-	6 010	8 110	10 940
E	-	6 010	8 110	10 940

Table 5

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i> Group 3 (D-1 and above) Dependency Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	3 360	4 200
A	-	9 040	12 210	16 490
B	-	9 040	12 210	16 490
C	-	9 040	12 210	16 490
D	-	9 040	12 210	16 490
E	-	9 040	12 210	16 490

Table 6

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i> Group 3 (D-1 and above) Single Status				
Number of Assignments				
Duty station category	1	2-3	4-5-6	7+
H	-	-	2 520	3 150
A	-	6 780	9 160	12 360
B	-	6 780	9 160	12 360
C	-	6 780	9 160	12 360
D	-	6 780	9 160	12 360
E	-	6 780	9 160	12 360

Adjustment

The amounts are reviewed every three years by reference to (a) the average movement of net base salary plus post adjustment in the eight headquarters of the United Nations system; (b) the movement of the out-of-area index for post adjustment based on inflation factors in 21 countries; (c) and the movement of the base/floor salary scale.

NON-REMOVAL ALLOWANCE

Purpose of the non-removal allowance

The non-removal allowance is paid to staff who upon appointment or reassignment are granted shipment of personal effects only. The non-removal element aims to compensate for the non-payment of the removal of household goods.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment of one year or more who did not receive an entitlement to allow for full removal of their household goods.

Payments

The payment of the non-removal element will be made in a lump-sum at the beginning of the assignment, up to a maximum of five years. Entitlement and payment modalities depend on the length of the staff member's contract and assignment.

Amounts of non-removal allowance

The amount varies according to the staff member's grade and status:

NON REMOVAL ALLOWANCE <i>(Annual amounts in United States dollars)</i>						
	Group 1 (P1 to P3)		Group 2 (P4 and P5)		Group 3 (D1 and above)	
Duty Station	Dependency status	Single status	Dependency status	Single status	Dependency Status	Single status
H	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360
A	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360
B	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360
C	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360
D	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360
E	2 100	1 580	2 630	1 970	3 150	2 360

Adjustment

The amounts are reviewed every three years by reference to (a) the average movement of net base salary plus post adjustment in the eight headquarters of the United Nations system; (b) the movement of the out-of-area index for post adjustment based on inflation factors in 21 countries; (c) and the movement of the base/floor salary scale.

ASSIGNMENT GRANT

Purpose

The assignment grant is intended to provide staff with a reasonable cash amount at the beginning of the assignment for the costs incurred as a result of appointment or reassignment. Its purpose is to enable staff to meet removal/installation related costs (temporary housing; purchase/rental of household items; establishment of new household) and is based on the assumption that the main expenses of installation are incurred at the outset of an assignment.

Eligibility

Staff in the Professional and higher category, internationally recruited General Service staff and Field Service staff.

Structure of assignment grant

The assignment grant consists of two portions: the DSA and the lump sum portion (consisting of one or two months' net remuneration, i.e. salary plus post adjustment).

ASSIGNMENT GRANT		
	Field duty station (A to E)	Headquarters duty station (H)
For both removal and non-removal cases	30 days' DSA plus 30 days' DSA at half the DSA rate for each eligible family member for whom travel has been paid by the organization.	30 days' DSA plus 30 days' DSA at half the DSA rate for each eligible family member for whom travel has been paid by the organization.
PLUS		
LUMP-SUM PORTION		
For non-removal cases only	<p>For assignments of 1 year or more, but less than 3 years, 1 month's lump-sum.</p> <p>For assignments which are expected to be of a duration of 3 years or more, 2 months lump-sum.</p> <p>If an assignment of less than 3 years' duration is subsequently extended to 3 years or more, a second 1-month lump sum is payable at the beginning of the third year.</p>	1 month's lump-sum
OR		
For full removal cases only	1 month's lump-sum	No lump-sum payable

OTHER BENEFITS

The following entitlements may be payable at certain duty stations

Accelerated Home leave travel

While assignment to H, A and B duty stations carries a 24-month leave entitlement, at duty stations in categories C to E, home leave may be taken once a year (or every 12 months); in alternate years the entitlement may be used for travel to a country other than the home country (provided that the cost does not exceed that of travel to the place of home leave).

Additional education travel

In locations where educational facilities are not available or are deemed to be inadequate, (requiring staff to send their children outside the country of the duty station for schooling, travel of the child between the duty station and the place of schooling may be paid twice in a year, provided the parent does not travel on home leave in that year. Inadequate educational facilities are assessed through the hardship questionnaire and may result from a number of factors such as: absence of schooling in the language used by the majority of international staff at the duty station; and secondary schools lacking accreditation for admittance to universities abroad.

Additional reimbursement of boarding costs

For staff serving at duty stations where educational facilities are not available or are deemed inadequate, an annual amount is payable in respect of boarding costs for children at primary and secondary school levels, over and above the maximum payable under the regular education grant.

Family visit travel

Family visit travel to eligible family members living outside the duty station may be authorized for staff, provided a minimum prescribed period has elapsed since the last home leave.

Additional reimbursement of the cost of basic medical examinations

The costs of basic medical examinations may be reimbursed for accompanying eligible family members of staff assigned to countries where the majority of duty stations are classified as having adverse health conditions.

Additional freight entitlement

An extra freight shipment of 50 kilos per year for each staff member and each accompanying family member may be payable at certain difficult duty stations, which meet the inter-agency criteria.

EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES HAZARD PAY

Purpose

Hazard Pay is a special allowance established for staff who are required to work under hazardous conditions, which are defined as follows:

- Duty stations where very hazardous conditions such as war or active hostilities prevail and where the evacuation of families and non-essential staff has taken place;
- Duty stations where no evacuation has taken place, but in which staff are required to work in hazardous conditions such as war or where active hostilities prevail, including situations where staff are required to work on cross-border missions in hazardous areas;
- The performance of functional medical requirements that directly expose staff to life-threatening diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Ebola virus, in the course of the performance of their duties.

Duration

Hazard Pay is authorized for a limited period, normally up to three months at a time, subject to ongoing review, and is lifted when hazardous conditions are deemed to have abated.

Eligibility

Internationally-recruited and locally recruited staff. Locally recruited staff may receive hazard pay only if they are required to report to work and actually do so.

Amounts of hazard pay

For internationally-recruited staff members, the amount is currently set at US\$1,365 per month. For locally-recruited staff members serving in designated locations, the allowance is calculated locally at the rate of 25 per cent of the net midpoint of the applicable local General Service salary scale.