A Guide to the Mobility and Hardship Scheme and Related Arrangements

June 2016
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NOTE FROM THE ICSC CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to introduce the present Booklet prepared by the secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). It contains updated information on the mobility and hardship scheme and related arrangements, including the most recent changes introduced as a result of the comprehensive review of the entire compensation package for professional and higher category of staff. It reflects the situation effective 1 July 2016, unless otherwise indicated, replacing the earlier Guide to Arrangements for Mobility and Hardship published in 2013.

The aim of the mobility and hardship arrangements is to offer a comprehensive approach to compensation for service in the field and provide incentives for staff to accept assignments to the difficult and sometimes dangerous locations where staffing and effective programme delivery is often the most challenging.

As with the earlier edition, this Booklet is intended as a general information tool and does not supersede the organizations’ staff rules/regulations or administrative issuances. Like all other components of the remuneration system, the allowances and benefits described here are subject to periodic review.

Kingston P. Rhodes
Chairman
International Civil Service Commission

(i)
# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Administrative place of assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHA</td>
<td>Additional Hardship Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSA</td>
<td>Daily subsistence allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN DSS</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Safety and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMSEA</td>
<td>Extended monthly security evacuation allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSC</td>
<td>International Civil Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFSA</td>
<td>Non-Family Service Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POD</td>
<td>Place of duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;R</td>
<td>Rest and recuperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOA</td>
<td>Special operations approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Special service agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNV</td>
<td>United Nations Volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii)
Synopsis of most recent changes

As a result of the ICSC Comprehensive Review for Professional and above categories, the following changes are in effect:

- Hardship allowance amounts changed effective 1 July 2016 (see p.4)
- Non-family Service Allowance (NFSA) replaces Additional Hardship Allowance (AHA) effective 1 July 2016 (see p.5)
- Mobility allowance has been replaced by mobility incentive effective 1 July 2016 (see p.6)
- Changes in relocation related elements effective 1 July 2016 (see p.7)
- Non-Removal allowance discontinued effective 1 July 2016 (see p.7)
- Eligibility for Accelerated Home Leave has been adjusted effective 1 July 2016 (see p.9)
- Discontinuation date for additional education grant travel (see p. 9)
- Eligibility for additional reimbursement of boarding costs adjusted (see p.9)
- Discontinuation of additional freight entitlement (see p.9)

Other:

- The measures for phasing out Special Operations Approach (SOA) and Extended monthly security evacuation allowance (EMSEA) discontinued effective 30 June 2016 (see p.13)
Overview of the arrangement for the hardship and mobility scheme

Purpose of the arrangements

The mobility, hardship and related arrangements are intended to encourage geographic mobility and to compensate for hardship incurred in difficult duty stations.

Main components

The hardship and mobility arrangements may include one or more of the following allowances:

- Hardship allowance
- Non-family Service Allowance for service at non-family duty stations
- Accelerated home leave
- Relocation related elements
- Mobility incentive

The following allowances may also apply depending on the duty station:

- additional education grant travel
- additional reimbursement of school boarding costs
- additional freight shipment

Duty station categorization

All duty stations are categorized into one of six categories, H and A to E.

- H locations are either at headquarters and other similarly designated locations where the United Nations has no development/humanitarian assistance programmes, or in member countries of the European Union. The hardship allowance does not apply at H duty stations.

- A to E duty stations are rated on a scale that assesses the difficulty of working and living conditions from A to E, with A being the least and E, the most difficult. Categories are arrived at through an assessment of the overall quality of life. In determining the degree of hardship, consideration is given to local conditions of safety and security, health care, housing, climate, isolation and level of amenities/conveniences of life. The hardship allowance is paid for assignments at B, C, D and E duty stations; there is no hardship allowance at A duty stations.

Process for reviewing and designating hardship duty stations

Duty stations are reviewed once every three years in accordance with a cycle based on geographical region. In this way, countries in all regions of the world, i.e., in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Middle East know in advance the year of their review. If a duty station experiences a difficult or volatile security situation or another kind of precipitating event, it may be reviewed more frequently.
The annual review is managed by the ICSC secretariat and carried out by the ICSC Working Group for the Review of Conditions of Life and Work in Field Duty Stations. The Working Group is composed of representatives of the secretariat of the ICSC and representatives both of the organizations and the recognized staff federations. It normally meets in New York in November. A mid-year review also takes place, usually in June, to review new duty stations which may have been established following the annual review, or those requiring attention outside the regular cycle.

The ICSC secretariat initiates the process by requesting completion of a comprehensive questionnaire through the applicable lead agency at the duty station. The lead agency is responsible for coordinating and ensuring the timely submission of questionnaires for all duty stations in the country or region and for ensuring the participation of UN organizations maintaining an official presence at the location. The review determines how conditions of life and work are experienced by expatriate UN system staff, hence it is their views that are critical. Because national staff may experience local conditions differently, international staff are encouraged to participate actively in the review process.

Upon receipt of the questionnaires, the ICSC secretariat reviews, scores and assigns them a rating based on the criteria established by the Commission. These include the ratings for the medical and security factors provided by the United Nations Medical Service and Department of Safety and Security which are then integrated into the overall rating. The Working Group reviews and discusses the ratings and makes its recommendations to the Chair of the ICSC who has the delegated authority to take final decisions on hardship classification matters. The resulting hardship categories are published annually, on 1 January and 1 July, unless otherwise announced. For the latest list, visit the ICSC website at http://icsc.un.org.

Since the questionnaire forms the principal basis for determining the hardship level of a duty station, it is essential that duty stations comply with the mandatory hardship review by submitting questionnaires. If a duty station fails to submit a questionnaire, in accordance with the 2011 decision of the Commission, it will nonetheless be assigned a hardship rating based on other available information.

**Temporary Classification**

Any organization planning to assign international staff for a period of one year or longer to an un-classified duty station should request a temporary classification for that location. Temporary classifications are granted by the ICSC secretariat, and are valid for one year. Once the staff are assigned, a questionnaire must be submitted for formal review by the Working Group and decision by the Chairman of the Commission.

**Transitional classification**

A transitional classification indicates that a duty station is being carefully monitored by the Working Group for potential reclassification and is required to submit a questionnaire the following year. At the time of the annual promulgation of hardship entitlements, those duty stations which have been assigned transitional classifications are informed of that status. More information on the classification process is provided at:

Hardship Allowance

Purpose of the allowance

The hardship allowance is designated to compensate for the degree of hardship experienced by staff in hardship duty stations.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment for one year or more to a B, C D or E category duty station as from their first assignment.

The hardship allowance is not payable to:

- International staff serving in H and A duty stations
- International Staff on short-term assignment
- International staff in receipt of a daily subsistence allowance (DSA),
- United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), consultants, contractors under Special Service Agreements (SSAs) and locally recruited staff.

Amounts of the hardship allowance

New hardship amounts were established effective 1 July 2016. The amounts vary according to grade level as set out below.

Table 1: Annual Hardship Allowance, effective 1 July 2016 (U.S. dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardship category of duty station</th>
<th>Group 1 (P-1 to P-3)</th>
<th>Group 2 (P-4 and P-5)</th>
<th>Group 3 (D-1 and above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5,810</td>
<td>6,970</td>
<td>8,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10,470</td>
<td>12,780</td>
<td>15,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>13,950</td>
<td>16,280</td>
<td>18,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>17,440</td>
<td>20,920</td>
<td>23,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Family Service Allowance for Service in Non-Family Duty Station

Purpose

Non-family Service Allowance (NFSA) is an incentive for staff to undertake assignments at non-family locations and recognises the increased level of financial and psychological hardship incurred by involuntary separation from their families, including additional service-related costs. The allowance was previously known as Additional Hardship Allowance (AHA). NFSA is paid in addition to the normal hardship allowance.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff members on assignment for one year or longer at a field duty station designated by ICSC as non-family are eligible for Non-family Service Allowance.

The Non-family Service Allowance is not payable to:

- Staff serving in duty stations not designated as non-family by ICSC
- Staff on short-term assignment
- Staff in receipt of a daily subsistence allowance (DSA);
- Locally-recruited staff, United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), consultants, contractors under Special Service Agreements (SSAs) and locally recruited staff.

Non-family Service Allowance amounts

The amount of NFSA varies according to family status and is set as follows effective 1 July 2016:

- Staff with eligible dependents: $19,800/year ($1,650/month)
- Staff with no dependents: $7,500/year ($625/month)

Process for the designation of non-family duty stations

The Chairman of the ICSC has the delegated authority, in consultation with the ICSC Working Group for the Review of Conditions of Life and Work in Field Duty Stations, to designate a duty station as non-family, a key condition for granting Non-family Service Allowance. Staff at duty stations at which eligible dependants are restricted by the UN Department of Safety and Security for a period of six months or longer may benefit from the Non-family Service Allowance.
Mobility Incentive

Purpose

The purpose of the mobility incentive is to encourage movement of internationally recruited staff from one duty station to another in accordance with organizational needs.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment to a duty station of one year or longer who have had five consecutive years of service in the United Nations system and from their second assignment (that is, the first geographical move) may qualify for a mobility incentive.

The mobility incentive is not payable to:

- Staff at H duty stations
- Staff on short-term assignment
- Staff in receipt of a daily subsistence allowance (DSA)
- United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), consultants, contractors under Special Service Agreements (SSAs) and locally recruited staff.

Payment of the mobility incentive

The amount of mobility incentive varies across grades and the number of assignments. The amount of the mobility incentive increases by 25 per cent upon the 4th assignment of staff member and by 50 per cent upon the 7th assignment. The new incentive is effective on 1 July 2016.

Table 2: Annual Mobility Incentive, effective 1 July 2016 (U.S. dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Number</th>
<th>Additional amounts</th>
<th>Group 1 (P-1 to P-3)</th>
<th>Group 2 (P-4 to P-5)</th>
<th>Group 3 (D-1 and above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>8,125</td>
<td>9,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>25 per cent</td>
<td>8,125</td>
<td>10,156</td>
<td>12,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>50 per cent</td>
<td>9,750</td>
<td>12,188</td>
<td>14,625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relocation Related Elements

The adjusted relocation related elements consist of settling-in grant, relocation shipment and relocation travel.

Eligibility

Internationally recruited staff on an assignment to a duty station for one year or longer may qualify for relocation related elements. The relocation related elements is not payable to:

- Staff on short-term assignment
- Staff in receipt of a daily subsistence allowance (DSA)
- United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), consultants, contractors under Special Service Agreements (SSAs) and locally recruited staff (or those under similar contractual arrangements)

Settling-in grant

The adjusted settling-in grant includes a DSA element and a lump sum element regardless of type of duty station (i.e. field or HQ)

1. DSA element: equivalent to 30 days local daily subsistence allowance for staff, plus 15 days of local subsistence allowance for each accompanying family member, and
2. Lump-sum amount: equivalent to one month of net base pay plus applicable post adjustment

Non-removal Allowance

The non-removal allowance is discontinued effective 1 July 2016. As a transitional measure the non-removal allowance for up to five years will be paid for staff who moved before the implementation date of the new relocation package until he/she moves to another duty station.

Relocation Shipment

The adjusted relocation shipment options consist of the following:

1. Full removal by the organization if that option is available; otherwise, provide an option to handle full removal by the staff member up to the established weight/volume which would be reimbursed by the organization upon presentation of an invoice;

(ii) Lump-sum option established at 70 per cent of the actual cost of relocation shipments;

(iii) Lump-sum set by organizations based on 70 per cent of costs of past shipments, not exceeding $18,000.
2. To provide an approach similar to that in subparagraph (1) above for partial removal of household goods within an appropriate entitlement according to circumstances, including for appointments of less than two years, reassignments within the same country, mission area or area of operations and moves between non-family duty stations; and

3. Entitlement for relocation shipment of household goods for staff with assignments of two years or more up to a standard 20-foot container for single staff and a 40-foot container for staff with eligible family members, regardless of the weight of household goods, via the most cost-effective route and mode of transportation.
Other Field Allowances and Benefits

The following allowances and benefits may also be applicable at certain duty stations for internationally recruited staff.

Accelerated home leave travel

At H, A, B, and C duty stations a 24-month home leave cycle applies. At D and E duty stations that do not fall under rest and recuperation framework (R&R) a 12-month home leave cycle applies.

Additional education grant travel

One round trip for each scholastic year for children in receipt of assistance with boarding expenses is paid. Additional Education Grant Travel will be discontinued once the revised education grant scheme is introduced as of the school year in progress on 1 January 2018.

Boarding assistance

Boarding expenses are reimbursed only for staff in the field, based on a flat amount of $5,000 if the child is (a) in primary or secondary level education; (b) boarding at a school outside the staff member’s duty station. Boarding assistance may be granted exceptionally by Executive Heads to staff serving at head-quarters duty stations.

Family visit travel

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

Additional freight entitlement

An extra freight shipment of 50 kg per year for each staff member and each eligible accompanying family member may be payable at certain difficult duty stations where the supply of essential goods and services is poor. These criteria are assessed through the hardship review. Additional freight entitlement discontinues in the revised compensation package effective 1 July 2016.
Danger Pay

Purpose

Danger Pay is a special allowance established for internationally and locally recruited staff who are required to work in locations where very dangerous conditions prevail. The allowance may be paid under the following conditions:

(a) At duty stations where United Nations staff, by virtue of their association with or employment by an organization of the United Nations common system are clearly, persistently and directly targeted, or where United Nations premises are clearly, persistently and directly targeted, thus presenting an imminent and constant threat to staff and activities;

(b) At duty stations where United Nations staff or premises are at high risk of becoming collateral damage in a war or active armed conflict;

(c) In non-protected environments where medical staff are specifically at risk to their lives when deployed to deal with public health emergencies as declared by the World Health Organization.

Roles and responsibilities

The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security makes recommendations on Danger Pay according to the criteria set out in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above to the Chair of the Commission who, under delegated authority from the Commission, takes the final decision.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization makes recommendations on Danger Pay according to the criterion in sub-paragraph (c) above to the Chair of the Commission who, under delegated authority from the Commission, takes the final decision.

The Chair of the Commission promulgates Danger Pay upon receipt and review of the above-cited recommendations.

Duration

Danger Pay is normally granted for periods of up to three consecutive months at a time. It is lifted when dangerous conditions are deemed to have abated.

Amount

The amount of Danger Pay for internationally recruited staff is $1,600 per month (US dollars).

The monthly amount of Danger Pay for locally recruited staff (General Service and National Professional Officer Categories) is 30 per cent of the net mid-point of the applicable General Service local salary scale, divided by 12.
Payment modalities

For both internationally and locally recruited staff, Danger Pay is paid monthly. For periods of less than one month, the amount of Danger Pay is prorated on the basis of 365 days: the daily rate is calculated by dividing the annual amount by 365 days and multiplying the daily amount by the number of days actually spent at the duty station.

(a) Danger Pay remains payable for time away from the duty station on R&R travel (i.e. for five consecutive calendar days of authorized leave and travel time). Danger Pay also remains payable for official duty travel up to a maximum of seven consecutive calendar days. It is not payable if more than 7 calendar days are spent away from the duty station in conjunction with annual leave or any type of special leave or official travel, including weekends and holidays falling during that period. For staff members who spend one complete month in the area where the allowance is applicable, the monthly sum is paid irrespective of the number of days in the month.

(b) For locally-recruited staff, Danger Pay is payable irrespective of whether the staff concerned are required to report to duty. No deduction is made for temporary absences from the duty station if the staff member remains in a location which qualifies for Danger Pay. Staff members on maternity, paternity, annual or sick leave continue to be eligible for Danger Pay if the location where they serve qualifies for Danger Pay. Danger Pay is paid for absences from a location which qualifies for Danger Pay for up to a maximum of seven consecutive calendar days. It is not payable for absences of more than seven consecutive calendar days from a location which qualifies for Danger Pay.

Adjustments

The level of Danger Pay is reviewed periodically.
Rest and Recuperation

Purpose

The purpose of rest and recuperation (R&R) travel is to allow eligible staff members periodic leave from the often difficult or dangerous environment in which they serve. It enables staff to alleviate stress and regain perspective so that they may return to their place of duty (POD) and continue to perform effectively.

Elements of the framework

The R&R framework consists of the following elements:

(a) Paid travel by the organization from POD to a designated rest and recuperation location by the least costly and most direct route. If United Nations transportation is provided free of charge, there is no payment for travel costs;

(b) Five consecutive calendar days not charged to annual leave;

(c) Travel time to and from POD officially recognised as necessary, not charged to annual leave.

Table 3: Criteria for Rest and Recuperation Travel Frequency, effective 1 July 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>6 weeks a</th>
<th>Extreme situations as follows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very dangerous locations where staff are directly targeted as a result of their association with the United Nations or where premises are targeted, causing imminent threat to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Locations where there is war or active armed conflict and where staff are at high risk of becoming collateral damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>All non-family/restricted duty stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All duty stations declared by the UN Department of Safety and Security as restricted for all eligible dependants for security reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All duty stations designated as non-family by the Chair of ICSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Duty stations with a high level of hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-capital duty stations with a hardship classification of D or E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exceptional cases of category E capital cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a For very exceptional cases, a four-week rest and recuperation cycle can be approved by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, under the delegated authority from the Commission, upon the recommendation of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.
END NOTE

The measures for phasing out Special Operations Approach (SOA) and Extended monthly security evacuation allowance (EMSEA) discontinued effective 30 June 2016. For more information about the phasing out process please refer to A/66/30.

ICSC developed a microsite to reflect compensation changes as a result of the 2016 comprehensive review of professional staff and above. Staff are welcomed to consult the following link for additional information: http://commonsystem.org/cr/