

SUBJ: DACOWITS RFI 14 – September 2022 QBM

FROM: Officer Personnel Management (PSC-OPM) and Enlisted Personnel Management (PSC-EPM)

TO: DACOWITS Committee

THRU: Office of Diversity & Inclusion (CG-127)

PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Well-Being and Treatment (WB&T) Subcommittee will determine if there are gaps in institutional policies and procedures that obstruct pregnant servicewomen from progressing in their military career and recommend policy changes.

DACOWITS: The Committee understands that there may be valid health or other reasons why servicewomen may be unable to continue work in their primary career field both during and after pregnancy. However, the Committee is concerned about the manner in which such work reassignments are determined and implemented, particularly when specialty-wide occupational reassignments are mandated. The Committee is also interested in the current policies outlining the physical fitness testing requirements applicable to pregnant or postpartum servicewomen.

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard** addressing the following:

- a. **How does your Service make reassignment determinations when servicewomen must be temporarily reassigned to other duties due to pregnancy, regardless of whether for individual or occupational-wide profile reasons? Are meaningful assignments developed to ensure best utilization of servicewomen's skills? Do servicewomen have the opportunity to provide input on such reassignments? May servicewomen request waivers or the opportunity to continue working in their in their primary career specialty? Who within the command has decision authority for such reassignments?**
- b. **What is your Service's pregnancy and postpartum physical fitness testing requirements?**
- c. **What is your Service's postpartum operational deferment period?**
- d. **How does your Service document the above actions? Are safeguards put in place to prevent adverse career impacts to servicewomen?**

CG Response:

- a. How does your Service make reassignment determinations when servicewomen must be temporarily reassigned to other duties due to pregnancy, regardless of whether for individual or occupational-wide profile reasons? Are meaningful assignments developed to ensure best utilization of servicewomen's skills? Do servicewoman have the opportunity to provide input on such reassignments? May servicewomen request waivers or the opportunity to continue working in their in their primary career specialty? Who within the command has decision authority for such reassignments?**

A: The service expects a pregnant member to retain a high degree of commitment to fulfilling full professional responsibilities. To afford the member who gives birth to a child the opportunity to make suitable childcare arrangements, while continuing to fulfill professional responsibilities, these assignment policies apply.

(1) During pregnancy and for twelve months after childbirth, the service defers assigning otherwise, eligible pregnant women on CONUS shore duty to shipboard or OCONUS assignments, unless they volunteer for earlier rotation to a shipboard or OCONUS Tour. Members who volunteer for such assignments where subsequent deployment is likely must waive in writing the prohibition on deployment.

(2) The service transfers pregnant women assigned to OCONUS locations with inadequate housing and medical facilities to an alternate location where these facilities exist to complete their tour. The pregnant member's commanding officer determines when to transfer her and so recommends to the Commander (CG PSC) based on the attending medical officer's advice.

(3) Pregnant women assigned to OCONUS locations where adequate housing and medical facilities are available remain there until they complete their OCONUS tour.

(4) The service does not require or permit pregnant women to perform physical duties that could threaten the pregnancy or assign them beyond the availability of medical attention, for example, to aircraft and boat crews or vessel inspection teams.

(5) The service ultimately reassigns women who become pregnant while assigned to shipboard duty to duty ashore. Upon confirmation of pregnancy, the commanding officer of an afloat unit coordinates with the attending physician to determine when to reassign the pregnant member ashore, at the latest by the 20th week of pregnancy. The member's and potential child's safety are paramount. Commanding officers must consider any possible effect of a cutter's operational schedule on these safety concerns. Commander (CG PSC) transfers the member to a unit ashore where adequate housing and medical facilities are available.

(6) Commander (CG PSC) reassigns women assigned to shipboard duty whose pregnancy terminates before childbirth when fit for full duty, as berthing becomes

available, generally six months after the date the child would have been born, unless the member volunteers to return earlier.

(7) The service credits women reassigned to shipboard duty with the time served aboard before transfer due to pregnancy and consequently reassigns them afloat only to complete the balance of their prescribed sea tour.

(8) Pregnant members who have orders to any school should not fulfill them unless they can complete training before the third trimester. If the training cannot be completed before the third trimester, FORCECOM holds the orders in abeyance and reissues them for the first available class 12 months after birth event, unless the member requests a class sooner and is medically cleared.

(9) Before a pregnant member undertakes any government travel, she should obtain written authorization from the attending physician stating that the pregnancy has been uneventful, that no excessive absences are anticipated, and that the travel will not harm the member or child.

(10) Post-partum member may elect TDY or voluntary mobilization orders within the 12 months following a birth event only if cleared by a Coast Guard medical officer and with approval from the first O-6/GS-15 in the chain of command.

(11) Post-partum Reserve members will not be involuntarily mobilized for up to 12 months from the date of a birth event. A post-partum Reserve member may elect voluntary mobilization orders if cleared by a Coast guard medical officer and with approval from the first O6/GS15 in the chain of command.

Service Actions:

All members that are pregnant or desire to become pregnant that are up for orders have the ability to communicate this to their assignment officer via their e-resume member comments. For an officer that is O4 and below, the slate team will internally discuss each member and come up with a recommendation of assignment for every member. The assignment officer will gain concurrence from the program, unit, and member as well as brief the Chief of OPM-2 before a member receives their orders. An O5 goes through the same process of assignment, however, also has the additional scrutiny of a Commander assignment panel. The assignment officers take every assignment preference from the member in consideration and will strive to always meet service, unit, and member needs.

b. What is your Service's pregnancy and postpartum physical fitness testing requirements?

A: The USCG does not have a Service wide physical fitness testing requirement. For billets and collateral duties that have a physical fitness requirement, members are not required to complete physical fitness testing until after the deferment period of 12 months or earlier if requested by the member and cleared by a Coast Guard Medical officer and with approval from the first O-6/GS-15 in the chain of command.

c. What is your Service's postpartum operational deferment period?

A: The Coast Guard's postpartum operational deferment period is 12 months.

d. How does your Service document the above actions? Are safeguards put in place to prevent adverse career impacts to servicewomen?

A: The Coast Guard documents the reassignment of members through the ADASSIGN process. Once a member is reassigned in the system, the assignment is coded the same no matter what the reason (pregnancy, broken leg, etc.). The generic coding ensures that the service member is not penalized for the reassignment on boards and panels.

For operational deferment, the Assignment Officers are each annotating and tracking the 12-month period for their respective members. These notes are not listed in a member's permanent record and will not be viewed by a board or panel. Once a member is ADASSIGN'd then their previous position may be filled. Upon completion of the deferment period, members may be able to resume their original assignment on a case by case basis based on availability.