



# DEPLOYMENT STRONG

## WHY IT MATTERS

Proactive actions and attitudes renew energy and reinforce a shared commitment in taking care of oneself and others.

*Develop the skills and strengths needed to keep you and your Family mission ready and deployment strong*

### The Five Dimensions of Soldier and Family Readiness



PHYSICAL

**Maintaining good physical health** promotes good mental health, greater self-esteem, and a better ability to do your job effectively.  
**Creating and maintaining an environment to support healthy choices** helps you sustain long-term physical and mental wellness.  
**Seeking medical care** for aches and pains helps address problems early and enhances your well-being.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

**Directly addressing and overcoming fears** removes sources of anxiety and stress, while improving life satisfaction and morale.  
**Maintaining realistic optimism** helps to counter negativity bias, create positive emotion, and combat life's stressors.  
**Practicing self-control** helps regulate impulsive behaviors and improves decision making, resulting in healthier outcomes.



SOCIAL

**Cultivating strong relationships with family and friends** can ease the demands of the military lifestyle and provide sources of support and encouragement that allow individuals to thrive.  
**Avoiding isolation** when faced with stressors helps you share your concerns, rather than bear them alone.  
**Engaging in help-seeking behavior** is the first step to self-care and long-term wellness.



SPIRITUAL

**Honoring the Army Values** in daily life builds strong character and guides you to do what's right.  
**Volunteering and helping others** can enhance self-esteem and one's sense of purpose and belonging.  
**Developing associations with others who share your world view, faith, or religion** provides a source from which to draw strength and offers a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded individuals.



FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

**Fostering a way for your family to be a part of the military community** can help them enhance their sense of belonging, develop friendships, share information and provide mutual support.  
**Communicating regularly and scheduling time to be together** can help build strong family ties.  
**Taking proactive action to meet financial challenges and obligations** can reduce stress and improve confidence in navigating other important decisions to reach future goals.

**Promoting the strengthening of these actions enhances resilience and sustains readiness.**

## Pre-Deployment - Tasks and Considerations

*(Text in red is linked to additional information and resources)*

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### □ Time Together

Step back from the checklists and spend quality time with your family and loved ones. Take photos, plan an outing, have a family dinner or think of other fun activities to do together before deployment.

### □ Unit To-Dos

Service members will receive a checklist of tasks from their unit, including a required pre-deployment health assessment. Complete the items applicable to you, and review this information with your family and loved ones.

### □ Voting

If you're deployed, you still have the right to vote in your home state — either electronically or with an absentee ballot. Learn more about your voting rights and options [here](#).

### □ Health Care

Make sure you and your family members are enrolled in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility System](#) and in [TRICARE](#). Family members must be enrolled in both to receive benefits during deployment. Review your health care coverage with your family and check that all information is updated.

### □ Family Care Plan

If you have children or dependents, set up a family care plan to ensure that they will be taken care of during deployment. Reference the Department of Defense [Instructions](#) for creating a family care plan.

## □ **Pets**

Be sure that someone is able to take care of any pets prior to deployment. Reach out to family and friends or look into resources like [Dogs on Deployment](#) for help. Make sure your pet's records are up-to-date and provide your pet's caretaker with veterinary contact information.

## □ **Home Preparation**

Prepare your home for any maintenance needed during deployment. Decide who will receive your mail, if they have the right to open it and then contact U.S. Postal Service with the updated information. See the Home Maintenance Guide for more suggestions.

Keep in mind that you're protected by the [Servicemembers Civil Relief Act](#) to terminate your house lease when you deploy. Also, if you're single, you may not have to pay for rent and utilities if you put possessions into storage. If you do utilize storage, make sure you buy rental insurance to protect your belongings.

### **Home Maintenance Checklist**

## □ **Vehicle Preparations**

Decide what to do with your vehicles during deployment. Consider options like storage facilities or friends and family. If anyone will be using your vehicle, talk to them about upcoming maintenance needs and fill out the Vehicle Maintenance Guide for them to reference during deployment.

Keep in mind that you're protected by the [Servicemembers Civil Relief Act](#) in case you need to end your car lease.

### **Vehicle Maintenance Guide**

## □ **Personal Security**

Read through the [Personal Security and Operations Security Guidelines](#) to understand what you can and can't say about your deployment. It's important that family members understand these rules and regulations as well so that everyone can stay safe.

### **OPSEC-PRESEC Guidelines**

<https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/>

## □ **Information and Records**

Review and update contact information and important documents. Store all documents in one location and keep several copies for you and your loved ones. If needed, you can get assistance at your installation to draft and update legal documents.

See the Must Have Documents Checklist for important documents to update and maintain.

### **Must Have Documents Checklist Account and Passwords Guide**

## □ **Wills**

Work with an attorney on your living will and your last will and testament. Then, review these documents with family and loved ones before deployment. Assistance is provided at your installation to help with drafting and updating legal documents, and may be free. Read more about [legal planning](#).

## □ **Power of Attorney**

Designate a power of attorney — a loved one (or a few) to act on your behalf in legal and financial matters during deployment. Power of attorney can be given to more than one person and can be limited to specific actions. Assistance is provided at your installation to help draft and update legal documents, and it may be free. Read more about [legal planning](#).

## □ **Emergency Planning**

Discuss how you and your loved ones will get in contact in case of an emergency. Make sure all important contact information is up-to-date and that family members are pre-authorized for emergency assistance. Read more about [preparing for deployment as a family](#).

### **Emergency Contact Information**

<https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/>

## □ **Military ID**

Make sure everyone has valid **military-issued identification cards** and that your family's information is current and accurate in the **Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System**, or DEERS.

Military ID cards allow family members to access important services and privileges, like **TRICARE** health insurance and the on-base commissary and exchange. If your ID card expires during deployment, make sure you have a plan to update it. Read more about ID cards and connecting with the military community [here](#).

## □ **Employment & Education**

If you're a National Guard or reserve service member, you're entitled to certain benefits and protections — like those under the **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act**. See the **National Guard and Reserve article** for more information on these protections.

## □ **Auto-Pay and Savings**

Set up auto-pay for any recurring bills and consider enrolling in the **Savings Deposit Program** or setting up a **Thrift Savings Plan**. Be sure you have copies of all your financial documents and understand how your finances may change, including special pay you may receive. Read through the **financial readiness article** for more tips on preparing financially.

### **Budgeting Worksheet**

## □ **Communication Plan**

Reach out to extended family and loved ones to let them know about your upcoming deployment. Although communication may not be guaranteed, make a plan for how you'll communicate with each other during deployment. If you're using an app or software for the first time, do a "dry run" to be sure everyone is comfortable. Read more about **preparing as a family** and **helping children prepare for deployment**.

<https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/>

## When a Son or Daughter Deploys

Parents can experience a wide range of emotions regarding their son or daughter's service in the National Guard, from pride in their accomplishments to fear for their safety. It's common to feel anxious, but supporting your son or daughter is the best way you can express your love and concern for their well-being. Below are some strategies to help you be the best parent you can be to your service member.

### 1. Be prepared

If your son or daughter is deploying, be sure to:

- Attend **Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Events** and learn about local support resources Get your son or daughter's mailing address (be sure you have their unit name as well)
- Know their Social Security number in case you need to find them in an emergency through the American Red Cross
- Find out if they'll have email access or phone access and whether you can expect to hear from them
- Find out from your son or daughter's base command what modes of communication the unit will maintain during the deployment (i.e., newsletters, support groups, phone trees, etc.)
- If possible, ask them to describe their assignment so you can feel secure in the knowledge of what your son or daughter is experiencing
- Get to know your state/territory Family Readiness Group

### 2. Stay in touch

Correspondence and other means of communication can help you as much as your son or daughter during their deployment.

- Send letters and care packages including: \* Photographs
- Mementos and/or crafts created by their children Toiletries, snacks or other comforting items from home

- Stories and anecdotes of special events and everyday activities Protective packing material for fragile items
- \*For information on restricted items, check the restrictions list at the [U.S. Postal Service](#).
- Number your letters, as your son or daughter may receive them out of order due to their unit's operational requirements
- Leave time for care packages to arrive
- Connect with your son or daughter through Facebook or Twitter
- Send emails and find out in advance when you can expect to receive replies

### 3. Find Support

Ways to find support include:

- Talking to your state/territory Director of Psychological Health Connecting with other Military families through your unit's phone tree
- Establishing a support group of your family members, and friends
- Exploring your community's National Guard support organizations
- [Join your service member's family readiness group](#) to stay connected to the unit and local resources.

### 4. Welcome your son or daughter home - gently

You're allowed to be excited when your service member returns from deployment, but it's important to give your son or daughter sufficient space to reintegrate into their civilian life. Welcome him or her home by:

- Collaborating with your son or daughter's spouse and children to prepare for their homecoming
- Allowing them to set their own schedule
- Being sensitive to their needs to talk or not talk about their deployment Noticing if there are signs of mental or emotional distress
- Being a good listener and responding to their need for support and encouragement

## Deployment Planning: Your Relationship Checklist

Have a deployment in your future? This is where you and your partner team up for relationship resilience. Plan, trust, communicate-and be confident you're ready to support your partner and keep your long-distance relationship strong.

### Make a family plan.

Separations mean preparation, and making a family plan is one of the most important ways to get ready. Talk about out how you'll handle life and situations that can come up when you're apart:

- Emergencies and parenting issues: How will you handle them? For example, who will be the back-up emergency contact person if the at-home parent can't be reached?
- Finances: Who will take the responsibility for household expenses and large expenditures?
- Communicating: How will you stay in touch during separations? What contact is possible? What's comfortable?
- Get your support in place: Identify your support network.
- Check '[Plan My Deployment](#),' an online resource for deployments from mobilization to reintegration.

### The operative word is trust.

Trust is always important in relationships, but it's crucial when you're apart-it's the best way to help your partner feel strong and able to focus on the job at hand. Try these tips for keeping both sides of the relationship secure as you head into separation.

- Don't take each other for granted. Reminders of love, of missing them, thanks for what they're managing-on both sides of the relationship-these things are always, always appreciated.
- Remember, you're both under stress. Respect each other and the jobs you have to do, and stay positive. Offer frequent praise, support, and encouragement.



- Share the little stuff. Sharing daily happenings keeps your partner connected and builds trust in your relationship. Just remember that a deployed spouse may not be able to 'share back' -and that's okay.

### **Keep the lines of communication open.**

Sometimes there's no telling when or how you'll hear from a deployed partner, but there are things you can do on the home front.

- Be patient. Trust that your partner will connect as soon as he or she can.
- Do your best to express yourself clearly, no matter how you're communicating. Keeping a lighthearted attitude can help make communications easier for both of you.
- Keep security in mind. Remember that your service member may not always be able to share certain information with you.
- Be creative. Hey, it's email! You can attach kids' artwork and photos, record video messages, scan articles from the local paper.
- Explore technologies and adapt. Chat and Skype are great, but your deployed partner could be severely limited in the ways he or she can communicate-or afford to. Look for alternative ways to stay in touch.
- Using the mail? There may be mail restrictions. Check out the U.S. Postal Service website for restrictions and regulations specific to the address or location, or visit the Military Postal Service Agency website.

**A solid plan. A healthy dose of trust. Open communication.** While deployment's never easy and everyone's different, these three things can take your relationship a long way.

P.S. Need extra support or help? Reach out. There's an entire military community here to help you power through the challenges. Remember, Military OneSource is here for you 24/7, with advice, resources and confidential support.

## Helping Children Prepare for Deployment

Getting ready for a deployment can be challenging — especially for children. It's important to maintain open channels of communication with children so that they can ask questions and express emotions. This begins with, but isn't limited to, pre-deployment preparation.

While it may be overwhelming and you might not know exactly where to start, there are a variety of ways to help children prepare for a loved one's deployment. It's important to help each child prepare individually, based on their age and unique personality.

### Ages 5 and Below

Very young children may not understand that their parent is leaving or why, but they still need support during this change. Here are some ways you can help younger children prepare for a deployment:

**Pre-record a bedtime story or favorite song.** When your child is missing mom or dad, you will be prepared with a recording of their voice.

**Find resources tailored to younger children.** [Sesame Street](#) is a great starting place for videos, print-outs and other resources for younger children during a deployment. Check out the [Military OneSource products page](#) for more resources to download or order for your children.

**Identify important milestones.** While younger children may not find meaning or comfort in a specific calendar date, letting them know that their deployed parent will be home by their birthday or other milestone can help them to mark the time.

### Ages 6–12

As children get older, conversations about deployment can become more complex. Some ways you can prepare children in this age range include:

**Help pack and prepare.** Letting children play a role in deployment preparations may help them to feel a part of the process and give them a sense of control.

**Assign responsibilities.** Taking on new responsibilities can help children feel included and cope with new changes. Explain that taking on new chores during a deployment is an important contribution and helps the family as a whole.

**Learn about where their parent is going.** Share as many positive elements as possible about where the deployed parent is going and what they'll be doing there. Help your child learn about the location by showing the location on a map and describing their work and why it's important.

## **Ages 12 and Up**

Older children are better able to understand and anticipate the realities of deployment and might need additional support. Consider options like:

**Make individual communication plans.** Have an individual discussion with each child about what communication will be and establish expectations.

**Provide resources directly.** Point your child towards resources— such as online, through your installation or through school — and allow them to decide what will be most helpful.

**Exchange important keepsakes.** Before deployment, give your child a meaningful item from their deploying parent — like a favorite T-shirt — and help your child pick something of theirs to give in return.

Regardless of your children's ages, it's a good idea to be sure that other important adults in their lives are aware of upcoming deployments so that they might also be able to help. This may include teachers, coaches or religious leaders.

Most importantly, don't forget to spend time together before deployment begins. Find fun things to do with each child in addition to preparing for deployment.

## You Can Do This: Your Checklist for Living Positive While Your Partner's Deployed

During deployment, your partner's not the only one who has to step up and serve. Your job is standing tall here at home. The power of being positive can go a long way to supporting your spouse. You'll find it can give you extra strength as well. Try these practical, positive tips.

- Believe in yourself. Write yourself a note: I can do this. Look at it every day. Lots of couples have been through deployment before and their relationships have become stronger over the years. Yours can too.
- Try something new, and stay healthy. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Maybe just a walk every day, or a new class. You'll feel stronger and better about yourself.
- Rally your friends. Connect with other military spouses. Having a network of support is really important now, and it's a good time to reconnect with friends and family you haven't seen in a while. Just make sure they empower you, rather than bring you down.
- Stick to a routine, but create new family rituals. Always had pancakes on the weekend? Try to keep it up, because kids appreciate the consistency. But maybe you can add new group activities to get everyone involved and jazzed.
- Don't give into retail therapy. Put aside some savings. It really feels good-honest! Remember, these extra deployment funds won't last forever.
- It's OK to treat yourself once in a while. Stick to the family finances, but know there's sometimes room to buy yourself an inexpensive little lift.
- Plan a post-deployment vacation, if you can afford it. This can be something to look forward to and talk about with your family.
- Check out '[These Boots: A spouse's guide to stepping up and standing tall during deployment](#)' by Jacey Eckhart. It's positive, real-life advice from someone who's been there (five deployments!).

# Stay Strong with these Resilience Tools

Take advantage of free mobile tools designed to help you optimize your well-being.

Military OneSource offers service members and their families access to evidence based and scientifically validated tools that improve well-being. These online tools are free and don't require any downloads – all you need is your Military OneSource login.

## **MoodHacker: Boost Your Mood**

Identify patterns and discover strategies for improving your mood.

- Rate your mood on a scale of 1-10
- Track patterns over time to learn how different factors affect you
- Get reminders and suggestions for mood-boosting activities based on your preferences

## **CoachHub: Reach Fitness and Nutrition Goals**

Set, track and achieve goals with one-on-one support from a professional online coach.

- Goals can relate to exercise, physical fitness, nutrition, weight loss or stress reduction

- Use text, email or secure online messaging to communicate with your coach
- Request appointments, ask questions, see daily tasks and more

## **Love Every Day: Strengthen Your Relationship**

Supercharge your bond with your partner by answering questions that rekindle romance.

- You and your partner both participate
- Answer prompts 21 days in a row and read your partner's responses
- Questions explore what you like about each other, how you work as a team and other topics to strengthen your connection

To access these tools, visit [MilitaryOneSource.mil/resilience-tools](https://MilitaryOneSource.mil/resilience-tools), or call 800-342-9647 for more resources and services that connect you to your best MilLife.



## Where to Turn When You Need Information or Assistance

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE or EMAIL
DEERS / ID Cards	<a href="tel:614-336-7087">614-336-7087</a>	<a href="http://www.dmdc.usd.mil/rs/">http://www.dmdc.usd.mil/rs/</a>
Education Office	<a href="tel:614-336-7023">614-336-7023</a>	<a href="https://ong.ohio.gov">https://ong.ohio.gov</a> (Members Section)
Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve	<a href="tel:614-336-7444">614-336-7444</a>	<a href="https://www.esgr.mil">https://www.esgr.mil</a> (State Pages)
Employment Assistance	<a href="tel:614-400-7888">614-400-7888</a>	<a href="https://ong.ohio.gov">https://ong.ohio.gov</a> (Members Section)
JAG Office – Legal	<a href="tel:614-336-7022">614-336-7022</a>	
Medical Records	<a href="tel:614-336-7457">614-336-7457</a>	
Military OneSource	<a href="tel:800-342-9647">800-342-9647</a>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/</a>
Military Pay	<a href="tel:614-336-7404">614-336-7404</a> (Traditional) <a href="tel:614-336-7478">614-336-7478</a> (AGR/Tech)	
Military Records		<a href="mailto:ng.oh.oharnng.cal.g1-personnel-branch@mail.mil">ng.oh.oharnng.cal.g1-personnel-branch@mail.mil</a>
OHIOCARES - Behavioral Health Coordinators	<a href="tel:800-761-0868">800-761-0868</a>	<a href="https://ohiocares.ohio.gov/">https://ohiocares.ohio.gov/</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – Cincinnati	<a href="tel:513-431-1300">513-431-1300</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC.CINCINNATI.USAR@zeiders.com">PFC.CINCINNATI.USAR@zeiders.com</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – Columbus	<a href="tel:614-600-8355">614-600-8355</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC.OH.NG@zeiders.com">PFC.OH.NG@zeiders.com</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – North Canton	<a href="tel:740-447-3727">740-447-3727</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC5.OH.NG@zeiders.com">PFC5.OH.NG@zeiders.com</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – Springfield	<a href="tel:937-917-6778">937-917-6778</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC2.OH.NG@zeiders.com">PFC2.OH.NG@zeiders.com</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – Toledo/BG	<a href="#">Open Position</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC6.OH.NG@zeiders.com">PFC6.OH.NG@zeiders.com</a>
Personal Financial Counselor – Mansfield	<a href="tel:330-620-2042">330-620-2042</a>	<a href="mailto:PFC3.OH.NG@zeiders.com">PFC3.OH.NG@zeiders.com</a>
Personnel	<a href="tel:614-336-7172">614-336-7172</a> NCO <a href="tel:614-336-7331">614-336-7331</a> Officer	
Retention Office	<a href="tel:877-687-7660">877-687-7660</a>	
Retirement Office	<a href="tel:614-336-7277">614-336-7277</a>	
State Chaplain	<a href="tel:614-336-7377">614-336-7377</a>	
Transition Assistance	<a href="tel:202-987-3919">202-987-3919</a> <a href="tel:614-336-4192">614-336-4192</a>	<a href="https://ong.ohio.gov">https://ong.ohio.gov</a> (Members Section)
TRICARE Benefits	<a href="tel:800-444-5445">800-444-5445</a>	<a href="https://tricare.mil/TRS">https://tricare.mil/TRS</a>
Soldier and Family Readiness Specialists: Your regional connection to programs, resources and services for service members and families.	<a href="tel:800-589-9914">800-589-9914</a>	<a href="https://ong.ohio.gov">https://ong.ohio.gov</a> (Members Section)
Youth and Family Activities	<a href="tel:614-336-7274">614-336-7274</a>	<a href="https://ong.ohio.gov">https://ong.ohio.gov</a> (Members Section)

**“Seeking assistance is a sign of personal strength, not weakness!”**

**Major General John C. Harris Jr.  
Adjutant General, Ohio National Guard**





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**ALWAYS READY   ALWAYS THERE**

## Mobile App Downloading instructions:

1. Open GooglePlay on your Android phone and search “Ohio National Guard” by Straxis Technology or ...
2. Open the AppStore on your iPhone and search "Ohio Army National Guard"
3. Install the OARNG Mobile App
4. Begin exploring the OARNG Mobile App’s many features