



Flight Plan to Financial Freedom



Air Force Financial Readiness: Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan Instructor Guide

May 2020

Guidance on financial readiness training requirements are outlined in AFI 36-3009 (10 May 2019), *Airman and Family Readiness Centers*.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Your *Post-Deployment Flight Plan* comprises four parts:

- › Introduction
- › Financial Planning Post-Deployment
- › Smooth Landing Checklist
- › Conclusion

COURSE MATERIALS

A list of required materials is included in the materials section. All learning aids are included with the course materials and instructors may print new blank forms as needed.




A bank of items for quizzing and review is included among the course materials, to be used at the instructor's discretion.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES

Sections labeled "Instructor Note" include additional information for instructor background, as well as activities that provide practical application of key learning points. Instructor notes contain an icon and appear in a shaded text box for easier recognition.

CONTENT ICONS

The following icons are used throughout the guide:

Instructor Note:	<i>Indicates additional information related to the content for the instructor</i>
	Handout (<i>indicates a handout is associated with the content</i>)
	Learning Activity (<i>indicates a learning activity</i>)
	Animated Slide (<i>indicates that a slide is animated</i>)

TRAINING EVALUATIONS

Upon completion of the *Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan* training, learners are encouraged to complete a training evaluation. Please check the Personal Financial Readiness (PFR) Operations Guide for the most current information on how to complete a course evaluation and encourage learners to complete the evaluation.

GUEST SPEAKERS

The use of guest speakers is to be determined by each Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) or command. Speakers may be invited to present information about a specific organization or as a subject matter expert. Use of guest speakers must comply with Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2925, *Personal Commercial Solicitation on Air Force Installations*, and use only Air Force-provided materials; that is, this training.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- I. Length of Training. *Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan* shall consist of approximately 30 minutes of live classroom training.
- II. Sections. *Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan* contains an introduction, two content sections, and a conclusion. (Please see the content outline for details.)
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Financial Planning Post-Deployment
 - C. Smooth Landing Checklist
 - D. Conclusion

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I. **Terminal Objective:** Upon completion of this course, learners should be able to articulate personal financial planning and management goals related to returning from deployment.
- II. **Enabling Objectives:** During this course, learning will:
 - A. Generate a list of anticipated post-deployment-related changes to his or her spending plan.
 - B. Personalize a financial “to do” list (*Smooth Landing Checklist*).

CONTENT OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (2 minutes)
 - A. Welcome
 - B. Facilitator Introduction
 - C. Course Purpose and Rationale
 - D. Agenda



II. Financial Planning Post-Deployment (10 minutes)

- A. Factor in Changes
- B. Reassess Financial Goals
- C. Plan Major Changes
- D. Make a Workable Plan to Achieve New or Revised Goals

III. Smooth Landing Checklist (15 minutes)

- A. Spending Plan
- B. Estate Plan
- C. Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)
- D. Savings Deposit Program (SDP)
- E. Student Loan Interest Relief
- F. Medical Coverage
- G. Life Insurance
- H. Auto and Property Insurance
- I. Taxes
- J. Active-Duty Alert
- K. Other Considerations

IV. Conclusion (3 minutes)

- A. Closing
- B. Evaluation
- C. Certificates

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Materials and equipment needed:

- › Projector/screen
- › *Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan* PowerPoint slides
- › Chart paper and easel or whiteboard and markers
- › Paper
- › Pens, pencils

Forms:

- › Course sign-in sheet (from the course materials)
- › *Financial Well-Being Assessment* handout
- › *Spending Plan Worksheet*
- › *Car Buying Sources of Help* handout
- › *Home Buying Sources of Help* handout



- › *Smooth Landing Checklist* handout
- › *Sources of Help for Military Consumers* handout
- › Course evaluation
- › Course certificate

COURSE PREPARATION

Instructor Note: Being prepared for training promotes organization, projects a positive image, and reduces stress. To ensure proper preparation for your training, do the following:

- › Create a roster of learners before the training begins.
- › Set up an attendee sign-in sheet on a sign-in table near the front of the classroom.
- › Place a sharpened pencil and blank paper for notes at each seat.



CONTENT



SLIDE 1

Introduction

Welcome

Welcome learners to *Your Post-Deployment Flight Plan*. Tell them that returning from a deployment is a time of change. Some changes are exciting—getting to see your friends and family, leave time, being home—but other changes may be overlooked. Such may be the case with their finances after deployment. This course will provide information to help learners adjust to the financial changes and challenges following a deployment. Explain that this 30-minute course can only provide a brief overview of post-deployment financial planning. For additional assistance, encourage learners to visit the Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) to speak with a personal financial counselor/educator (PFC/E).

Facilitator Introduction

Introduce yourself by providing:

- › Your name
- › Your position
- › Your experience as a facilitator and/or with personal financial management

Course Purpose and Rationale

Explain that the information provided over the next 30 minutes will help them review their finances following a deployment. Understanding pay changes and adjusting spending will help keep them financially sound.

Disclaimer: *Tell learners the information provided in this course does not constitute a formal endorsement of any company, its products, or services by the Air Force. Specifically, the appearance or use of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Air Force of the linked websites, or the information, products, or services contained therein. The Air Force does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. This information provides informational resource material to assist military personnel and their families, to assist in identifying or exploring resources and options.*



SLIDE 2

Agenda: What You Will Learn

Tell learners that there are several factors to consider when reviewing finances after a deployment. Explain that to help them make the necessary adjustments, you will be discussing: financial planning post-deployment and the *Smooth Landing Checklist*.





SLIDE 3



Financial Planning Post-Deployment

Explain that returning home after a deployment can be a busy time because there are typically many things to do. For most people, sorting out a post-deployment financial situation is not a top priority. Airmen have several months of lost time to make up for with friends and family, and it is important to settle back into one's life. But it is also important to assess post-deployment finances.

Instructor Note: Distribute the *Financial Well-Being Assessment* handout and the *Spending Plan Worksheet*. Instruct learners to take a moment to complete the assessment. Allow two to three minutes for learners to complete assessment.

Ask learners how they feel about their financial situation after their return from deployment. Remind them that this is a chance for them to make any changes necessary to ensure their financial well-being.



SLIDE 4



Factor in Changes

Instructor Note: Encourage learners to note on their spending plan any changes to their income or expenses that they identify now that they have returned from deployment.

Explain that the most obvious financial change following deployment is the loss of deployment pays and allowances and possibly tax-free benefits. Remind learners to check their leave and earning statement (LES) to track which pays and allowances will be changing (or have changed) and calculate how these changes affect their monthly income.

Note that they will also want to be sure that adjustments made for the duration of the deployment—such as allotments or extra Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions—be changed upon return from deployment.

Ask: How will your income change, up or down, now that you have returned from deployment? Guard and Reserve members may have to adjust to a significant difference between their civilian and military incomes.

Other answers may include the following:

- › Loss of Family Separation Allowance.
- › Loss of Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay.
- › Loss of Hazardous Duty Pay.
- › Loss of Combat Zone Tax Exclusions.



- › Increase in household expenses now that the Airman is home.
- › Other household changes: new dependents (children, spouses); fewer dependents (due to divorce); etc.

Remind learners to keep an eye on their pay following deployment to ensure their pay is adjusted appropriately and that they are no longer receiving deployment pays; if their pay has not been adjusted, they should check with their pay administrator to correct the error. Anyone who receives pay to which they are not entitled will have to pay this back when the error is noted. It is better to correct this now instead of having a large repayment later.



SLIDE 5



Reassess Financial Goals

Explain that it is normal for income to decrease following a deployment due to the loss of deployment pays and allowances. It is also normal to experience an increase in monthly expenses. Remind learners that the budget they created before deployment will no longer be accurate. It is important to reassess their financial situation and establish a new budget. For those who do not have a budget, now is a great time to create a budget or spending plan, which will help them stay on track financially. A well-thought-out, realistic spending plan can:

- › Help them learn to live within their means. If they are unsure of their income or expenses, they could be spending more than they make, which could result in a drain on their savings, increased debt, or overdrawn account(s).
- › Reduce financial stress and help prevent additional costs. A plan helps them to stay on track and may prevent overdrawn accounts, non-sufficient funds fees, late fees, and higher interest on credit due to late payments.
- › Allow them to plan for current and future expenses. This might include: covering monthly expenses, preparing for expenses that occur throughout year (i.e., insurance, holidays, taxes, etc.), and saving for a family vacation or retirement.
- › Help them achieve financial goals. Pay off a car, start a college fund, retire early, or at the very least maximize matching contributions available under the Blended Retirement System. A good spending plan can help them spend, save, and invest wisely so they can reach those goals.

Anyone who has never created a budget or spending plan should see an A&FRC personal financial counselor/educator for assistance in creating a plan and getting themselves on the road to financial fitness.





SLIDE 6

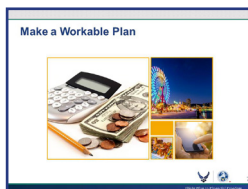


Plan Major Purchases

Ask: Is anyone planning to make a major purchase (i.e., house, car, or other expensive item) in the near future?

Instructor Note: Distribute the *Car Buying Sources of Help* and *Home Buying Sources of Help* handouts to learners who may be making a major purchase.

Explain that some Airmen may wish to buy a new car or a house when they return from deployment. Perhaps they saved enough for a down payment on a major purchase. Remind learners to factor in the changes to their income and TSP investment opportunities when they create a spending plan for these items. Encourage learners to consult with a PFC/E at the A&FRC to review their spending plan before taking on any new financial obligations. Suggest that learners resist the urge to make impulse purchases but instead implement a “cooling off” period during which they hold off on making any major purchases. Then, proceed if the purchase still feels like a good move after some time has passed.



SLIDE 7



Make a Workable Plan to Achieve New or Revised Goals

Ask: How have your financial goals changed since your return? Answers may include:

- › Getting married
- › Having children
- › Going to college
- › Saving for retirement

Explain that service members may find that their goals and plans have changed since they deployed. These changes may require an adjustment to their financial plans.

Smooth Landing Checklist



SLIDE 8



Tell learners there are some tasks they may need to complete in order to manage their finances after deployment. The *Smooth Landing Checklist* includes many of these tasks. Explain that they should make notes on any items they still need to complete.

Instructor Note: Distribute *Smooth Landing Checklist* handout. Encourage learners to note on the checklist the post-deployment tasks they need to complete.



SLIDE 9



Estate Planning Documents

Ask: Do you need to update your will, beneficiaries, or other estate planning documents?

Tell learners that many service members have a power of attorney drafted before deployment that authorizes a family member or friend to act on their behalf to carry out financial or legal matters. These legal documents remain in effect until they expire or are revoked. Remind learners that they can revoke the power of attorney if they no longer need a friend or family member to act on their behalf. Suggest that they contact their base legal office for assistance. The Armed Forces Legal Assistance Locator can help them find the nearest legal office: <https://legalassistance.law.af.mil>.



SLIDE 10

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)

Ask: Did you apply SCRA to debts or leases and, if so, who must be notified of your return?

While this question pertains primarily to members of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve who have been mobilized and are returning to inactive duty status, some active-duty Airmen may also have used SCRA protections upon entering the Air Force.

Remind Airmen in these categories that if they lowered interest rates to 6% on any indebtedness (student loans, car loans, credit cards, etc.) under the SCRA, they must immediately notify creditors of their release from active duty so that interest rates can reset to their contracted levels. Penalties may apply if they fail to do this in a timely fashion.

Judicial proceedings or foreclosures that were put on hold while on active duty will also have to be dealt with.



SLIDE 11



Savings Deposit Program (SDP)

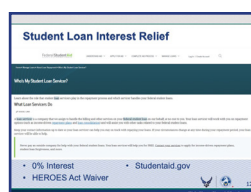
Ask: Did you take advantage of SDP? How will you use the proceeds (e.g., emergency fund, investing, major purchases)?

During deployment, Airmen may have participated in the DoD Savings Deposit Program (SDP). The SDP provides a great opportunity to increase savings by guaranteeing an annual return of 10 percent, compounded quarterly, of up to \$10,000 in savings. The money they invested in their SDP accounts continues to accrue interest until 90 days after they leave a combat zone. Airmen can make withdrawals from SDP after they leave a combat zone by sending a request to ccl-sdp@dfas.mil. They can find additional information at the DFAS website: www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/sdp.html.



Unless Airmen make other arrangements with DFAS, after 120 days, their SDP accounts will be closed and the money will be deposited into their direct-deposit accounts of record (that is, where their regular paychecks deposited.).

They can also use their SDP proceeds to fund an individual retirement account (IRA), which has a 2020 contribution limit of \$6,000 for those under 50.



SLIDE 12



Student Loan Interest Relief

Ask: Did you receive student loan interest relief and, if so, who must be notified of your return?

If learners had student loans set to 0% interest while they were deployed to a hostile fire zone, or if they are members of the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve and are demobilizing after a period of reduced interest under the SCRA, they must notify the loan servicer(s) of their return.



SLIDE 13



While deployed, they may also have been exempt from reporting family income to loan servicers under a HEROES Act waiver. Once they have returned from deployment, however, they must meet all reporting requirements for their loans. Remind learners to check the status of their student loans with loan servicers. If their loans are federally insured, they can find contact information on the Studentaid.gov website (<https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment/servicers#your-servicer>).

Medical Coverage

Ask: Do you need to update coverage under TRICARE or a civilian health insurance policy?

Guard/Reserve members are eligible for TRICARE Prime when activated for 30 days or more. Upon return from deployment, Guard/Reserve members and family members are covered by TRICARE for an additional 180 days under the Transitional Assistance Management Program—or TAMP. Eligibility for premium-free TRICARE under TAMP ends on day 181. Contact TRICARE with any questions (Source: <https://tricare.mil/Plans/SpecialPrograms/TAMP>).



SLIDE 14



Life Insurance

Ask: Do you need to update your life insurance policy or policies?

Ask learners if their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) or Family SGLI beneficiaries changed while they were deployed (by birth, divorce, adoption, etc.). If so, elections can be changed at <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>.



If learners are uncertain how much life insurance they should carry, ask them to consider:

- Their current indebtedness (including mortgage)
- Estimated funeral expenses
- Current household spending vs. income that would come in
- Estimated college expenses for all children
- Existing savings and investments that could be used to offset needs

The total of these items may exceed the maximum amount available under SGLI, in which case you may need to explore options about how to fill any coverage gaps.

Remind learners that their life insurance needs change as their families grow, so this is an area they should consider often, and not just when deploying or returning from deployment.



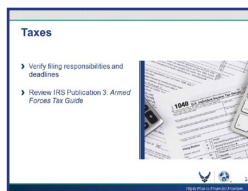
SLIDE 15

Auto and Property Insurance

Ask: Do you need to change your auto or property insurance?

Ask learners if they changed their car insurance before they deployed. Many Airmen tell their insurers that their cars are “off the road” during deployment. Remind learners to notify their insurance provider that they have returned, and that the car will be in use again. Explain that they should expect their insurance rates to increase and should budget accordingly.

Airmen should also update their property insurance (renters or homeowners) to include anything of value purchased during or after deployment. If their home address has changed, they should be sure to transfer property insurance to the new address.



SLIDE 16

Taxes

Ask: Do you need to file taxes?

Explain that for Airmen who were deployed out of the country, extensions of tax filing deadlines may apply. Some extensions are automatic, while some have to be requested of the IRS. The lengths of time involved vary.

To avoid penalties and interest, learners should clarify their tax status and prepare the documentation they owe to federal and state tax authorities. Tell learners that IRS Publication 3, the *Armed Forces' Tax Guide* (<https://www.irs.gov/publications/p3>), covers service members' benefits and responsibilities in detail.





SLIDE 17



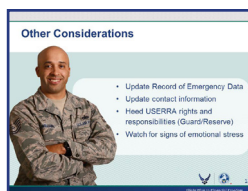
Active-Duty Alert

Ask: Did you set an active-duty alert with credit reporting agencies and, if so, what steps will you take to remove it?

Tell learners that when they deployed, they may have placed an active-duty fraud alert on their credit reporting accounts. Placing an active-duty fraud alert with one of the three major reporting companies (Equifax, Transunion, or Experian) obligates that company to pass the information to the other two. The alert is placed initially for 12 months and can be extended.

Unlike placing an active-duty alert, removing an active-duty fraud alert requires contacting *each* of the three reporting agencies to request that the alert be removed. It is not sufficient to remove the alert from one of their profiles. Equifax and Experian require a written notice from the account holder to remove the alert. Transunion permits an online request. Learners should call the telephone numbers on the slide or visit the websites of each reporting agency (<https://www.equifax.com>, <https://www.transunion.com>, and <https://www.experian.com>) for complete instructions.

Instructor Note: Emphasize that Airmen are eligible for free credit monitoring, depending on their duty status. Tell learners that credit monitoring means the reporting agency will alert the Airman about unusual account activity. Each of the credit-reporting agencies has its own application procedure. The important point, however, is that the Airman must request this service. Though free, the service is not automatic.



SLIDE 18



Other Considerations

Ask: Are there any other issues you need to consider now that you have returned from deployment? Answers may include:

- › Updating record of emergency data.
- › Providing bank or credit union with updated address and contact information.
- › Being aware of post-deployment spending or other financial behavior that reveals trouble with emotional adjustment to transition, and seek help as needed.

Remind demobilizing Guard/Reserve members of their rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), especially the requirement of returning to civilian employment within certain a certain period of time after release from active duty. Remind learners to note any additional items on their checklist.



SLIDE 19



Conclusion

Closing

Instructor Note: Distribute the *Sources of Help for Military Consumers* handout.

Summarize the training by reminding learners that there is a lot of to do and consider when they are preparing financially for the post-deployment period. Fortunately, there are many people and organizations that can provide information, guidance, and assistance. It is wise to become familiar with these sources.

Instructor Note: Remind learners that participant evaluations are an essential part of facilitation. Encourage learners to complete the training evaluation.

Explain that certificates are available, if needed, and can be collected before they leave the classroom.

Thank everyone for participating!

