



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

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MARINE CORPS BULLETIN 1754

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM RESPITE CARE CHANGES

Ref: (a) MCO 1754.4B

Encl: (1) Respite Reimbursement Calculation Chart

1. Purpose. Headquarters Marine Corps, Marine and Family Programs Division, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is initiating policy change to the Respite Care reimbursement program outlined in MCO 1754.4B. This bulletin outlines new policy regarding EFMP enrolled Marine's eligibility to utilize respite care, establishes new reimbursement formulas and clarifies authorized use of respite care. Draft MCO 1754.4C is being prepared for independent review. The bulletin is utilized to ensure sufficient time to notify EFMP enrolled Marines and their family members about the respite care changes.

2. Cancellation. MARADMIN 308/10

3. Background. EFMP initiated respite in 2008 to support the impact of a high operational tempo and the particular impact to families who support a family member with exceptional needs. The respite care program is intended to reduce stress on sponsor families by providing temporary rest periods for family members who care for those who have special needs. With the drawdown of forces in theater, EFMP will implement changes in the respite care program. The intent of these changes is to ensure that funding for respite care is safeguarded and maintained for highly impacted exceptional family members (EFMs). Respite care is not required by all EFMP enrolled families.

a. Respite Care Use. Respite care is a non-entitlement benefit intended to provide brief rest periods for the primary caregiver(s) and may not be used to fund the following activities:

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

- (1) Pre-school programs.
- (2) Day care or babysitting to allow sponsor or spouse to work or attend school.
- (3) Therapy sessions or therapeutic recreation for the EFM.

b. Level of Need (LoN) Determination. LoN is determined during EFMP enrollment eligibility screening. EFM situations may change and can require a change in identified level. DC, M&RA, (MFY-1) will consider LoN changes when requested by the installation EFMP staff, using an evidence-based determination process. An enrollment update, or additional information, may be required to approve a change in LoN. LoN does not necessarily align with enrollment categories. EFMP uses enrollment categories for administrative purposes only.

c. Implementation of Respite Care Changes. Effective 1 October 2013, the following changes to respite care will occur.

- (1) EFMP respite care will be available to EFMs identified as LoN 3, or 4.
- (2) Family members identified as LoN 1 and 2 will no longer be eligible for respite care.
- (3) Age typical sibling reimbursement will no longer be provided.
- (4) Adult EFMs will no longer be eligible for age typical reimbursement for their children.
- (5) The maximum number of respite hours per month, per family, to be reimbursed at authorized rates is 20 hours.

d. Reimbursement Rate of Care. The following reimbursement rates are effective 1 October 2013. Reimbursement rates are based on EFM LoN as described below.

(1) Level three. Includes EFMP families with children 18 years old or younger, with severe special needs that require trained support from qualified providers to maintain their health and safety. Calculations for hourly reimbursement are addressed in Appendix A.

(2) Level four. Includes EFMP family members of all ages, with profound special needs who require skilled care

services as documented by qualified providers, to maintain their health and safety. Calculations for hourly reimbursement are addressed in Appendix A.

e. Implementation of the Respite Care Reimbursement Program. Installations establish program procedures for reimbursement to sponsors for qualifying care. Payment amounts are determined locally and do not exceed the rates based on the hourly reimbursement formulae, contained in Appendix A. Installations maintain records and provide required reports to DC, M&RA, (MFY-1) on a quarterly basis.

(1) Records maintained at the installation will include:

(a) Monthly respite care reimbursement vouchers.

(b) Certification of provider qualifications for LoN 3 and 4.

(c) Power of Attorney, if applicable, when Marine is deployed, TAD, attending an official school, serving an unaccompanied overseas tour where HQMC EFMP, or the overseas screening process, determines services are not available, or when the Marine has been approved by HQMC EFMP for a Continuation on Location.

(d) Letter notifying EFMP enrolled family of eligibility for respite care and reimbursement rate, effective 1 October 2013.

(e) Upon publication of MCO 1754.4C, installations will utilize standardized respite care forms developed by HQMC EFMP and included as Appendices.

f. Appropriated funds are authorized for the installation respite care reimbursement program. Respite care uses the Uniform Funding and Management (UFM) practice in the execution of appropriated funds.

g. EFMP enrolled families select a provider for local respite.

(1) Families must include provider documentation of qualifications for level 3 and 4 reimbursement. Installation EFMP Managers will review documentation provided to determine that providers meet requirements for the appropriate level of reimbursement. Provider skill will correspond to the documented

need of the EFM. LoN 3 and 4 providers must be over 18 years of age.

(2) Family members are eligible to serve as providers.

(3) Respite is typically provided in the family member's home or the provider's home and not in a public location.

(4) Respite providers shall not transport the EFM to activities or provide household chores other than providing meals or snacks as per parental direction.

(5) Respite care is not intended to provide medical or custodial care for adults or long-term care. Long-term care is defined as service for more than 6 hours consecutively.

h. In order to participate in the EFMP respite care program, the following is required:

(1) EFMP enrollment and/or update must be current and the EFM must legally reside full-time with the sponsor. If the EFM's update is overdue, costs are not reimbursed. To reinstate respite care eligibility, an update must be completed. Any costs incurred by the family during the time of ineligibility will not be reimbursed. Sponsors with a HQMC EFMP approved Continuation on Location decision or who are deployed, TAD, attending official schools, or serving unaccompanied overseas tours where HQMC EFMP or the overseas screening process determines services are not available, remain eligible for the respite care reimbursement program.

(2) Families who use providers who do not present adequate documentation of skill requirements are reimbursed at the appropriate lower level for one reporting period (30 days) and are not eligible to participate in the program after written notification by the installation EFMP Manager. Respite care reimbursement shall be reinstated upon submission of adequate provider documentation.

(a) A request to use a provider who does not have the required qualifications will be facilitated through an exception to policy request utilizing the Administrative Action (AA) form.

(b) The provider must provide proof of experience and skill to care for the EFM. This must be documented in the AA form and will be considered in lieu of certification or licensure. Installation EFMP Managers will determine the

appropriate rate of reimbursement and are not required to reimburse at the skilled LoN 3 or LoN 4 rate.

(c) Exceptions to policy are initiated by the Marine and routed through the Marine's chain of command for the appropriate command endorsements. Commands will forward to DC, M&RA, (MFY-1) for review and decision.

(3) Families who use respite for any purpose other than those established will not be reimbursed.

(4) Respite reimbursement is submitted monthly to ensure prompt reimbursement. Families who elect to delay reimbursement submissions for more than 60 days forfeit reimbursement. It is the sponsor's responsibility to ensure the installation has received reimbursement submissions.

(5) Respite reimbursement requests must comply with administrative control procedures identified by the installation.

(6) Installations shall determine and publish required submission dates for respite reimbursement forms in accordance with their installation's control procedures to facilitate timely reimbursement to families.

(7) The system used to account for the cost of support will be no different than the current system used by management officials for normal administration and control of resources.

(8) Respite reimbursement does not impact Leave and Earnings Statement or BAH and is not considered taxable income.

(9) Personal travel, transportation, per diem and other personal expenses, transportation of supplies, consumable materials and equipment are not a component of EFMP respite and are not authorized for reimbursement.

(10) The installation reimbursement request form will include detailed dates/hours when service was provided, who the service was provided to, sponsor's signature, provider's signature and contact information, the location(s) of the service, hours used, and a statement noting that the installation EFMP retains the right to verify the provision of EFMP respite care. Also clearly noted on the reimbursement form is language, approved by local MCCS counsel, which outlines legal recourse for fraudulent reporting.

(11) The installation EFMP Manager reports concerns regarding the provision of respite care and/or the veracity of reimbursement requests to local installation Provost Marshal Office, Criminal Investigations Division, or other appropriate authority, for investigation. Results of the investigation are to be provided to DC, M&RA, (MFY-1).

(12) Any substantiated fraudulent activity will result in ineligibility to utilize EFMP respite care at the current and future duty locations.

(a) Upon notification of substantiated respite fraud, DC, M&RA (MFY-1) will notify Sponsor, in writing, of current and future ineligibility for respite care.

(b) DC, M&RA (MFY-1) will note the ineligibility in the Case Management System.

(13) While respite reimbursement is not considered taxable income, sponsors who participate in the respite care reimbursement program may incur tax liability as a household employer. Installations will direct families who use respite to IRS Publication 926, Household Employer's Tax Guide for Wages Paid and/or recommend they consult a tax professional or their local legal assistance office. Sponsors can access this publication at <http://www.irs.gov/publications/index.html>.

(14) EFMP staff will not provide any additional advice or guidance regarding potential tax liability beyond directing families to the publication and/or a tax professional or legal assistance office.

i. It is critical that respite care reimbursement program resources be safeguarded and access to respite care is managed carefully. Participation in the respite care reimbursement program should not be withheld from an eligible enrolled family without cause. Local installations must coordinate such action with DC, M&RA, (MFY-1) and show justification for any structure or decision that would terminate respite service.

j. Marines may request an exception to policy due to hardship via the Administrative Action (AA) form. Exceptions to policy are initiated by the Marine and routed through the Marine's chain of command for the appropriate endorsements. A minimum of two endorsement letters are required. The command will forward exception to policy packages to DC, M&RA (MFY-1) for review and final determination.

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4. Action. Installation EFMP Managers will ensure that all EFMP enrolled Marines are notified of respite care changes through the use of the Sponsor's official government email account. When the Sponsor does not have an official government email, the notification will be sent to the home address listed in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS).

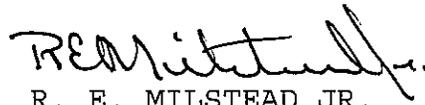
a. Installation EFMP Manager will send notification to EFMP enrolled Marines regarding the publication of Marine Corps Bulletin 1754 via the official letter provided by HQMC EFMP.

b. Installation EFMP Manager will ensure their website includes information about the respite care changes and has a link to Marine Corps Bulletin 1754.

c. Installation EFMP Manager will notify EFMP enrolled Marines, who have signed up for respite care, of their eligibility status for respite care and their reimbursement rate through use of the standardized letter template, provided by HQMC EFMP.

5. Reserve Applicability. Reserve Marines on activated status are eligible to use the respite care reimbursement program in accordance with current policy.

6. Cancellation Contingency. This bulletin is cancelled upon publication of MCO 1754.4C.



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Respite Reimbursement Calculation Chart
Effective 1 October 2013

| | 1 EFM | 2 OR MORE EFM |
|-------------|---|---|
| LEVEL 3 EFM | NOT TO EXCEED HOURLY BASE CDC RATE X 3 | NOT TO EXCEED BASE CDC RATE X 5 |
| LEVEL 4 EFM | UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CARE EXCEED \$45 PER HOUR | UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CARE EXCEED \$60 PER HOUR |

A. Calculations for hourly reimbursement for Level 3 EFM.

(1) When respite is provided for one Level 3 EFM, the rate will not exceed the hourly base CDC rate X 3.

(2) When respite is provided for two or more Level 3 EFMs, the rate will not exceed the base CDC rate X 5.

B. Calculations for hourly reimbursement for Level 4 EFM.

(1) When respite is provided for one Level 4 EFM, the rate will not exceed \$45 per hour.

(2) When respite is provided for two or more Level 4 EFMs, the rate will not exceed \$60 per hour.

C. Families are eligible for up to 20 hours of respite care, per month, per family.