

# LIFE transitions

Transitioning to Military Spouse Life

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## **Congratulations, You're a Military Spouse! Now What?**

There are basically two kinds of military spouses: those who grew up in the military (or were/are active duty) and those who didn't. No matter which type you are, you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed right now. After all, marriage is a significant life transition. Now, in addition to adjusting to being a wife or husband, you also have to learn a new "language," navigate a new healthcare system, determine what (if any) type of job/career you want, and typically you have to do it with little to no help from your spouse, who may be deployed or TDY most of the time. Never fear—Powerhouse is here! In the following pages you will find helpful resources, checklists, and information designed to help you make the most of your new life.



## Checklist for Transitioning to Military Spouse Life

- Enroll in DEERS (AD spouse must do this. Can typically be done at the same time you get your ID card).
- Obtain military ID card. You will need the following: marriage license, birth certificate, photo ID, DD-1172 (application form), your active duty spouse.
- If changing your name, fill out Social Security Card Name Change Application at [www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/).
- If changing your name, apply for driver's license reflecting name change. You will need the following: certified copy of marriage license, your old license, your new Social Security card, and possibly a piece of mail with your new name and address on it. Basically, if you think you may need it, bring it.
- If changing your name, update all accounts to reflect the change. You can do this separately, or there is an online resource that will help you for a fee: [www.hitchswitch.com](http://www.hitchswitch.com).
- Notify your doctor of your new status and update any medical prescriptions.
- Update all financial accounts with new status and/or name.
- Establish Power of Attorney (General and Specific, if you know what you will need).
- Update/write a will for both you and your spouse (this service is free at your military installation).
- Get listed as beneficiary on your spouse's Serviceman's Group Life Insurance (SGLI).
- Determine if you need to change state and/or federal income tax paperwork to reflect married status.
- Memorize your spouse's social security number. (No, we're not joking. This is now the most important number you will ever know.)
- Notify housing authority of change in marital status, as needed.



## Checklist for Transitioning to Military Spouse Life (con.)

- Attend a New Spouse Orientation Briefing at your military installation.
- Ask your spouse to get you the information for your unit's Key Spouse/Ombudsman and contact her/him.
- Get list of names and numbers you need to know (e.g., base commander or unit commander, etc.).
- Research and determine if you want to be TRICARE Prime or Standard (military health insurance).
- Meet other military spouses. Check with your military installation for upcoming events/functions. Ask your Key Spouse/Ombudsman about unit spouse meetings and playgroups (if you have small children); meet your neighbors (if living on base/post).
- Understand you will be overwhelmed. It's a massive transition. Find people you can talk to who will understand what you are going through and will listen to you when you need to vent.



## Resources for New Spouses

**Powerhouse Career Transitions Binder:** This resource will help you with your questions about career transitions as well as your resume needs.

**Powerhouse Moving Binder:** This resource provides a handy binder full of all you need to know to effect a smooth PCS (move).

**Military Spouse Advocacy Network (MSAN):** A network of military spouses helping military spouses. MSAN provides many services for spouses, particularly those new to the military.

**Key Spouses and Ombudsmen-**Unit level military spouses who volunteer to mentor and assist other spouses in their units: Highly effective personal resources who can provide support in a number of ways.

**www.hitchswitch.com:** An online resource to help you with all your name change needs, for a fee.

**www.military.com:** The website devoted to all things military. Find out practically anything you'd need to know about active duty military and Veteran's Affairs.

**Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC):** The Air Force department devoted to helping active duty military members and their families. Services range from new spouse orientation programs to support with job searches, resume writing, financial services, and beyond.

**Other military branches' equivalent of A&FRC:** See above.

**www.tricare.mil:** The website for TRICARE, the military healthcare system. You can schedule appointments, check on progress of referrals, order prescription medications, etc.

**www.militaryspouse.com:** Another website devoted to helping the military spouse. Locate information on finding and maintaining a career while married to an active duty member, surviving and thriving in the military life, enrolling in further education opportunities/school, etc. Plus, sometimes they have awesome giveaways!

**www.militaryoneclick.com:** A website dedicated to support services for military members and their families. Plenty of resources are available on a variety of topics.

**www.uscg.mil/sealegs/:** Download a copy of "Sea Legs" here—it includes all you need to know about becoming a new U.S. Coast Guard spouse.