

## GENERAL COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

Check with the command for information on the specific communication options available. Communication options may be disconnected without notice due to command mission and location. Before deploying, discuss which options will be best for you and your families and how you wish to use them.

### **Sailor Phones**

An immediate contact with family members using time-limited prepaid cards and phones onboard the ship. Sailors initiate the phone call. Limited privacy and time differences between Sailor and home.

### **E-Mail**

A time-delayed contact with family members. Sailors need access to computer to type message. Message is then processed by the command POC into the internet system. Both Sailor and family member may initiate contact. Limited privacy and command access to satellite.

### **Regular Mail**

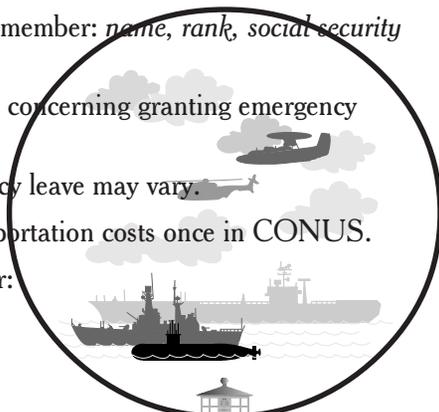
A time-delayed contact, but also the most personalized connection to loved ones. Very private. Sometimes unpredictable. It is common to receive nothing for a week or more and then a stack of letters in one day. Number your letters to avoid confusion.

## EMERGENCY MESSAGES

### **American Red Cross (Shore to Sea)**

The American Red Cross sends emergency messages to commands of deployed service members.

- Basic information needed about service member: *name, rank, social security number, command/division.*
- Commanding officers make the decision concerning granting emergency leave.
- Command criteria for granting emergency leave may vary.
- Service member is responsible for transportation costs once in CONUS.
- Emergency Notification Phone Number: 1-800-272-7337



Little Creek • 462-7563  
Newport News • 688-NAVY  
Norfolk • 444-2102

Northwest • 421-8770  
Oceana • 433-2912  
Yorktown • 887-4606  
[www.ffsconorva.navy.mil](http://www.ffsconorva.navy.mil)

**FLEET &  
FAMILY  
SUPPORT  
CENTERS**  
OF HAMPTON ROADS

CPD01070



Military members and families spend a lot of time apart. Whether it's a spouse, parent, or relative at sea, a family can still remain close. Discussing communication expectations — phone calls, e-mail, and letter writing — can make the difference in a deployment being difficult or manageable. Take a moment to review options for “Keeping in Touch!”

**FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS OF HAMPTON ROADS**  
WEBSITE: [www.ffsconorva.navy.mil](http://www.ffsconorva.navy.mil)

| DEPLOYER    |
|-------------|
| AS A COUPLE |
| SINGLES     |

# BEFORE

- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Recognize your feelings, needs, and expectations and talk to your partner about them.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Identify your support systems: Family Support Group, family, friends, place of worship.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Agree how often you will write, and what type of information will be shared.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Be romantic before the deployment. Create special moments to cherish!
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Discuss and plan how you will spend deployment day.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Plan ways to keep the connection with relatives. Decide who will write and/or send gifts to parents, etc.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Discuss other ways to communicate: video and cassette tapes, sailor phones, e-mail, or regular mail.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Start homecoming plans and communicate them throughout the deployment.
- ⚓ ⚓ Put your family on the mailing list for newsletters and official communications from your command.
- ⚓ ⚓ Indicate special events, birthdays, school, and community activities on a calendar and duplicate. These calendars can also be used for the homecoming countdown.
- ⚓ ⚓ For special occasions, flowers and gifts can be ordered in advance for family members at home.
- ⚓ ⚓ Buy cards for special occasions before the deployment.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Plan in advance for length and frequency of phone calls. Making a few ground rules for telephone calls will help keep phone bills under control.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Discuss how you want to share bad news. Try to write about solutions or plans, not problems.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Give your special someone a keepsake for the deployment. This is an emotional tie that can keep you connected when you feel lonely.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Have photos taken of you and your family together and of your spouse or loved one alone.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Discuss and develop a list of items for care packages the deployer wants and needs.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Give your family the ombudsman's number. If your family is out of the area, they can call 1-800-FSC-LINE to reach the careline.

| DEPLOYER    |
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# DURING

- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Number your letters to avoid confusion. Mail may accumulate before arriving onboard the ship.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Write often. Writing can be in letter or journal form. Letting your friends and family know how day-to-day life is, and how you are, is important for successful separations.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Write about homecoming plans.
- ⚓ Encourage each other to achieve goals. Give praise when goals are reached.
- ⚓ Write love letters.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Video and audio tapes enhance your communication.
- Care Packages:**
- ⚓ ⚓ Service members like to get goodies from home. Here are a few suggestions:

|            |               |                     |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Cookies    | Cereal        | Magazines           |
| Books      | Videos        | Audio tapes         |
| Candy bars | Stamps        | Hometown newspapers |
| Puzzles    | Playing cards | Grooming items      |
- ⚓ ⚓ Wrap food securely so it's edible upon arrival. It can take up to a month for packages to reach any given destination.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Keep a list of things you need to discuss by the phone. When you get a call, you will save frustration by talking about the "need to know" items first in case your call gets disconnected.
- ⚓ ⚓ ⚓ Use prepaid phone cards where available. Check for international availability.

# AFTER

Expect face-to-face communication with your spouse or loved ones to feel awkward at first. One thing you can count on is that things will not be the same as when you left. You will be different, as will the people you left behind.

Take the time to listen to each other. Acknowledge the great job you both have done communicating with each other during the deployment.

Review the deployment:

- How well were you prepared for the deployment?
- What will you do differently during the next deployment?
- Did the frequency of mail or care packages meet your expectations?
- Were your phone bills manageable?

Discussing the above statements and any other areas of concern may help build your relationship and coping skills for the next deployment.