

POINT OF
CONTACT

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Coordinator

MARFORSOUTH

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Welcome Aboard Guide

JANUARY 2019

Welcome to

MARFORSOUTH

This guide was compiled by the MARFORSOUTH spouses and staff. Our goal, to provide you and your family with as much information about Marine Forces, South and the Miami Area prior to your change of station.

This guide contains many of the lessons learned by service members (single and married) and their families, we hope it will be a helpful tool during your upcoming transition.

Information about housing, child care, travel, shopping, medical, possible budget adjustment, sponsor and Family Readiness Officer assistance and sightseeing tips are contained within.

The South Florida/Miami-Dade area is a very unique and diverse place to live and work. The area

is much more different than you may expect. Many quality of life comforts available near military installations are not available here.

With that said, the information presented here is formed by our own views and personal experiences. Should you come across any new information during your transition or while stationed here, please feel free to share that information with the Marine Forces South Deployment Readiness Coordinator or your sponsor.

Welcome to the command, travel safely and we look forward to meeting you!



Headed to Miami...Now What?

Beautiful beaches, great shopping, and tropical weather... why wouldn't you want to live in Miami? This vibrant and energetic place is a melting pot of cultures and languages from the Caribbean, Central and South America. Prior to departing your current duty station, have you properly prepared for your

transition to South Florida (Miami)?

Every PCS move is filled with stressors and obstacles around every corner. Moving to this area has its own unique and separate challenges. In the pages that follow are tips, hints, contact information and numerous

resources that are helpful and available to all service members and their families. I encourage you to take time to review this guide, ask your sponsor questions, and contact the Deployment Readiness Coordinator

Housing

The MARFORSOUTH and SOUTHCOM area does not offer “traditional” military housing.

You will need to find a place to live . With that in mind, here are a few things to consider:

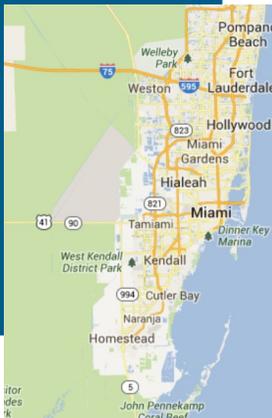
- **Deposits.** Home owners will charge first and last months rent in addition to a security deposit. There have been personnel who were able to only pay first months rent and a security deposit because they are military. Ultimately, it is at the discretion of the landlord. Please contact USAG Housing office at 305-437-2664/2636.
- **Home Owners Association (HOA).** Many of the gated communities require Homeowner’s Association approval. Note: 83.683 FS mandates complete processing of approval on 7 business days after submission.
- It is highly recommended that you utilize the U.S. Army Garrison housing office to review your housing contract before you sign. It was not uncommon during the height of the recession for owners to “bail” leaving tenants stranded in foreclosed homes. The state of Florida helps protect tenants from home force-outs, **ensure your Realtor or the housing office checks ownership status on a home you may rent.**
- **Realtor.** It does not cost you a dime to have a Realtor help you in your search. Many will preview homes and send you additional pictures that are not posted. Lastly, check with the housing office to ensure that there have been no complaints against any Realtors in the past and they can provide referrals on local Realtor’s.
- **Renters Insurance.** Get it! It’s the right thing to do and from June - November it’s hurricane season in South Florida and the weather can change very quickly. Additionally, USAA will pay \$500.00 if you loose electricity during a severe storm for perishable items in your fridge and if you go out of the area due to a hurricane you can receive per diem for each family member. Talk to USAA prior to departing the area in order to receive all the benefits.
- If you decide to purchase a home there may be some **insurance requirements** you may not have thought of; wind, flood, hazard, sink hole, etc. Do the research and protect your home.
- When looking for a place, you may want to take into consideration any **hurricane evacuation routes** and how easily accessible they may be. **Shutters on the windows** (especially for two story homes). If your home does not come with accordion shutters, ensure your lease identifies that the homeowner is responsible for coordinating the installation prior to severe weather.
- Sign up and use AHRN.com - it’s a great web site to find military friendly rentals with reduced deposits.
- If you plan on leasing from an Apartment Complex - ask the Housing Office for the list of properties offering Military discounts.



Location Location Location

When looking for a place you may want to keep the following in mind:

- If you have children, check out the schools. (school page has additional information)
- While a place may look close to MARFORSOUTH, the commute times can be very deceiving due to traffic. (ask your sponsor and check the Sun Pass website)
- Check the toll routes around MARFORSOUTH as this is an additional expense. (who likes to pay to go to work?)
- Make contact with your military sponsor to see if there are areas that may be more populated with military personnel - example: Pembroke Pines area of Broward.



Schools



- There are several quality magnet school options for older (HS) kids. Contact the SOUTHCOM School Liaison Officer for the list of schools that have “military child” preference for admission.
- Parents and guardians who are Active-Duty military may submit a 2018/19 School Choice application for a school with space available. What this means is that you can enroll your child into a school that is outside of the assigned school for the address that you are going to live at. For more information go to the links provided below for Broward or Dade County and search “school choice”
- SOUTHCOM’s School Liaison Officer can be reached at (305) 437-0148

- Links for great information on schools are:
www.greatschools.org
www.dodea.edu/Partnership/
<http://usmc-mccs.org/>
www.militaryone_source.mil
www.militarychild.org
miami.armymwr.com

Child(ren) school registration

- Ensure you receive a copy of your child’s transcripts prior to departing your current duty station.
 - Go to your local school district for (whole file) child; same w/ immunization (critical to registration)
 - Proof of age: Birth Certificate, passport
 - Medical exam within the last 12 months.
 - Copy of IEP (if applicable)
 - Copy of 504 from school (if applicable) - (i.e. allergies, broken arm, ad/HD...)
 - You will have 30 days from the date of registration to provide a home utility bill/lease to prove that your child is in the requisite district.
- **Immunizations must be listed on a Florida State-Specific form. You may take your current shot record to the Clinic at SOUTHCOM and they WILL transcribe the record for you. DO NOT TAKE “we don’t do that” for an answer!! Per the Colonel in charge of Medical, the Clinic WILL provide this service for dependents free of charge. **



DadeSchools.net
Giving our students the world

Dade County Schools

Immunization requirements:

http://comprehensivehealthservices.dadeschools.net/immune_require.asp

Registration Info:

http://attendanceservices.dadeschools.net/reg_require.asp



BrowardSchools.com

Broward County Schools

Registration and Immunization requirements:

<http://www.browardschools.com>

Childcare

- CDC will provide referrals for home care centers and can provide a list of emergency child care providers
- Check out www.sittercity.com and www.care.com for Nanny’s and night nurses.
- CDC provides baby-sitting training/certification and referrals as well as resources for single parents.

Florida Laws

Babysitters must be a minimum of 16 years old. 16-18 year old babysitters may not watch more than 3 children or for longer than 24 hours. Babysitters should have gone through a certification course.

Florida does not have an age set for leaving children home alone, although welfare and maturity of child “should be considered”.

State of Florida Immunization Guide:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/children-and-adolescents/school-immunization-requirements/>

Transportation and Driving (Miami)



Unless you are PCSing from a large city, expect your auto insurance premium to increase. South Florida auto insurance rates tend to be higher than other large cities. In some cases it may double!

Prior to PCSing, contact your auto insurance company and find out what you may be expected to pay and if you can keep your current plates once you arrive. Your insurance will likely double but, increase dramatically at a minimum.

Drive Times and Toll Roads

Approximate Drive Times and Sun Pass Rates in RUSH HOUR Traffic			
Area	Distance	Traffic Time	Toll Cost Per Day*
Doral	0-5 miles	20	\$0.00
Coral Gables	5-10 miles	20-30	\$0.00
Miramar	15-20 miles	30-40	Plate: \$2.64 Sun Pass: \$2.06
Pembroke Pines	15-20 miles	35-45	Plate: \$2.64 Sun Pass: \$2.06
Kendall	Over 20 miles	25-35	Plate: \$4.22 Sun Pass: \$3.18
Weston	Over 25 miles	30-45	Plate: \$2.64 Sun Pass: \$2.06
Homestead	Over 30 miles	45-60	Plate: \$6.86 Sun Pass: \$5.30
Ft Lauderdale/Hollywood	Over 30 miles	45-50	Plate: \$5.28 Sun Pass: \$4.25



Travel in and around south Florida often includes toll roads....which **DO NOT ACCEPT CASH!!** You will be billed via your license plate registered address if you do not have a SunPass mounted on your vehicle. If your car is registered out of state, the bill will go there and can cause fines/tickets if not paid on time. You can purchase a sticker or a transponder at many local pharmacy and grocery store chains (Publix Grocery Store).

Manage your account online at :

<https://www.sunpass.com/index>

Am I required to obtain a Florida Driver License when I move to the state?

Military service members and their families who live and drive in Florida, may do so with a valid out-of-state driver license. There is no requirement to obtain a Florida driver license when military and their family members move to Florida, take a job, or enroll their children in public schools.

<http://www.flhsmv.gov/military/>

Be Aware!

Currently there are no "Hands Free" laws in the state of Florida, so expect drivers to be on the phone, texting, or both!

Drivers in Florida drive fast and are very aggressive! While horns are often used, turn signals are not.

Also, check your concealed weapons license if you plan on having one in your vehicle.

Gas

The average cost per gallon for regular unleaded is:
\$2.63 (09/03/2018)

Parking

Many neighborhoods do not have adequate parking due to shortened driveways. Be aware that you may have to park on the side of the street. Check to make sure that you are following any parking "neighborhood guidelines" as contracted tow trucks like to prowl those specific neighborhoods

Maintenance

Make sure the place you take your vehicle is licensed properly!! Do not fall for the scam of someone telling you they can fix a dent right where your vehicle is/at your house...they only take cash, give fake phone numbers, work later into the evening so that quality of work is less noticeable and do awful work!

Healthcare

Depending on personnel strength, the U.S. Army SOUTHCOM clinic will provide support to all Military spouses and select Retirees for routine primary care. When you arrive the U.S. Army clinic personnel will inform you with an update on availability or if you prefer, you may contact the clinic prior to your arrival.

Additional services the clinic provides are listed below:

- Take care of your primary care manager (PCM) needs.
 - Manage your specialty referrals.
- *Pediatric patients cannot be seen. Selected retirees are those that work aboard the SOUTHCOM Campus.
- All requests will be filled on a first come-first served basis.
- If services are not available and you have not changed your coverage to the TriCare East Region, clinic personnel will provide assistance during the check in process.

- Take care of all your routine and acute care.

To make the switch

1. Call Humana-Military at 1-800-444-5445
2. Select option 1 followed by option 5 (Change PCM)
3. Inform Rep that you would like to change your PCM to the SOUTHCOM Military Treatment Facility (MTF)
4. New provider will be assigned to you.

SOUTHCOM (MTF)
Contact Information



U.S. ARMY SOUTHCOM
CLINIC
9301 NW 33RD ST
DORAL, FL 33172
305-437-1148

TRICARE Info

Transfer your TRICARE coverage to TRICARE South Region, the easiest way is to call and let your current region know you are transferring.

The U.S. Army Clinic does not have a TRICARE Representative on its staff. Although as mentioned above, clinic personnel will provide the following assistance when you arrive:

- Primary Care Manager (PCM) selection for your family.
- Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) information.
- Dental related questions.
- Reminder: As of 1 Dec 2016 the Tri-Care Pharmacy network has changed. Walgreens has been added and CVS and CVS pharmacies in Target stores have been removed.

- Regional change



TRICARE Stateside Regional Contract Information

South Region 1-800-444-5445
North Region 1-877-874-2273 (TRICARE)
West Region 1-877-988-9378 (WEST)

Other Important Contact

TRICARE For Life 1-866-773-0404
TRICARE Pharmacy 1-877-363-1303
TRICARE Dental 1-855-638-8371 (CONUS)
1-855-638-8372 (OCONUS)

Web Site: <http://www.tricare.mil/>

Humana Info



Once you have received the necessary paper work to see an off-post provider, visit the www.humana-military.com for additional information.

- After obtaining a referral from your primary care provider, this site provides the actual authorization that will permit you to get care at an outside facility.
- It has options for Family Members and Retirees (change PCMs, verify eligibility, make payments, etc)
- Register online. (requires a Premium DS Login [available through the site's login page])
- Active Duty service members must log in as "Beneficiaries"

Shopping



Dolphin Mall



Aventura Mall

This is no commissary in the area. Many of the large grocery stores have “discount cards”. It is highly recommended that you take advantage of their programs that can save you money when checking out and at the pump.



Also, there is no Exchange/PX. Aboard the SOUTHCOM compound and aboard Homestead AFB there are 7 Day Stores with limited selections. It is recommended that you purchase all your required uniform items at your current duty station prior to you move.



There are several malls and outlets in the Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

- Miami International
- Dolphin Mall (Outlet)
- Dadeland Mall
- Pembroke Lakes Mall
- Aventura Mall
- Sawgrass Mills (Outlet)
- Mall of the Americas
- The Shops at Mary Brickell Village
- The Shoppes at Pembroke Pines

Leisure Travel Services/Passport/ID & DEERS

Located on the 1st floor of the U.S. Army Garrison bldg. is the Leisure Travel Service office.

The office has a wide variety of discounted tickets to fill your entertainment, sports, and outdoor activity needs.

Their hours of operation are:

Mon-Fri 0830 - 1600
305-437-1595

Listed below are some of the discounted tickets available.

- Disney
- Universal
- Legoland
- Zoo Miami
- Local Theaters
- Miami Heat/Dolphins/Marlins
- Swamp Trips
- Local Museums

Passport and ID/DEERS services

Located in the same area are the offices for passport and ID/DEERS.

Your passport and Identification card requirements can be handled by USAG personnel. Both offices are first come first served basis and their hours of operation are listed below:

Passport Office

Mon-Fri 0800-1000/1430-1600
305-437-2751

ID/DEERS Office

Mon-Thurs (Fri) 0730-1530 (1200)
305-437-2718 (Appt only)

Traditional vs Non-Traditional Installation

SOUTHCOM is a non-traditional installation. Listed below are some items that you will NOT find available on the compound or local areas:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Commissary | Community Centers | Chapel |
| Department of Defense Schools | Pools | Base Theater |
| Base Housing | Library | |
| MCX/Uniform Store | Gas Station (Homestead AFB only) | |

** Note: The YMCA provides military personnel and their families free membership. Contact the MFS SJA for more information.

Unit Contact Information



U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South

9301 NW 33rd St.

Doral, Florida 33172

Deployment Readiness Coordinator (MSgt Emmons, Nathen M)

Phone: 305-437-2616

DSN: 567-2616

Fax: 305-437-2610

e-mail: usmc.miami.marforsouth-cg.mbx.cg-fro@mail.mil

Command Duty Officer

Phone: 305-437-0518/3411

e-mail: usmc.miami.marforsouth-cg.mbx.watch-officers@mail.mil

If the Active Duty Marine/Sailor has yet to hear from the assigned sponsor you can call the MARFORSOUTH GI at (305) 437-2600/2601 or DSN: 567-2600/2601.

Helpful Links:

<http://www.southcom.mil/> (US SOUTHCOM Homepage)

https://issuu.com/usag-miami-fmwr/docs/marapr_ff84c05c37c1b (Monthly Bugle Boy Newsletter)

Additional Tips

Listed in this area are additional tips that may assist prior to your arrival and once you arrive:

- If possible conduct your house hunting prior to your arrival. It may save you time. The market is extremely fast here and you will not be able to get into a house outside of 60 days. Check online at: www.militarybyowner.com
- Remain in contact with your sponsor.
- Monthly Newcomer Orientation brief
- Miami Tour. (Free!)
- Contact the Family Readiness Officer.
- Submit for an official passport if you don't currently have one.
- Visit the links provided at the end of this guide for additional information and resources that may save you money and time.

