

Updated Medical Standards For Deployments Outside U.S.

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The Department of Defense (DoD) recently signed a new Instruction (DoDI 6490.07) establishing minimum medical standards for any deployment lasting longer than 30 days outside the continental United States.

Who does this affect?

It affects all Service members, including Reservists, and DoD civilians. It does not apply to contractor personnel who deploy because they are governed by the terms of their contract and a separate DoD Instruction.

Why is the Instruction on deployment-limiting medical conditions important?

This instruction creates a minimum medical standard for all DoD personnel who deploy, whether military or civilian. It ensures the health and safety of all personnel abroad as well as the availability of sufficient medical assets to support the wartime mission, rather than providing care for pre-existing conditions in personnel who were not medically qualified to deploy.

When is this Instruction effective?

Immediately.

How does this impact my Service's medical standards?

This new instruction does not alter or replace any Service accession, retention, or fitness for duty requirements. It does not replace stricter readiness or deployment requirements of a Service or unified combatant command, such as USCENTCOM. This new standard applies only to deployment and only establishes a minimum or baseline requirement.

What are the new medical standards for deployment?

Generally, the policy behind the new deployment medical standards is that personnel with an existing medical condition should be able to deploy if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. Medical condition is stable and unlikely to get worse.
2. If the medical condition were to get worse in theater, it would not negatively impact the mission or have a serious medical outcome.
3. Any necessary continuing health care is available at deployment location.
4. Prescribed medication has no special handling or storage requirements and would be tolerant of within the particular environmental conditions.
5. In the case of military personnel, the medical condition will not require a duty limitation.

Civilian employees may receive reasonable accommodations in their job, but they must be able to perform the essential functions of the deployed position.

What are some general medical conditions that may limit deployment?

- Any condition that prevents personnel from wearing required protective gear.
- Any condition that prohibits required immunizations.
- Any condition that would require frequent clinical visits.
- Any condition requiring medical equipment or appliances not available in theater.
- Any condition that would impair performance.

What are some examples of specific medical conditions that might restrict deployment?

Examples include some heart diseases, psychotic and bipolar disorders, cancer, pregnancy, as well as conditions currently undergoing an extended course of treatment by specialists such as postoperative rehabilitation.

Can I receive a waiver for any of these deployment-limiting medical conditions?

Yes. There is a formal waiver process for both military and civilian personnel. The request for a waiver is submitted by the Service, although the Combatant Commander is the final approval authority for a waiver in the presence of a deployment-limiting medical condition.