



# **NSA Souda Bay, Crete, Greece Fire & Emergency Services**

*Welcome Aboard  
&  
Information for PCS*

**Dear New Member,**

**From all of us at the NSA Souda Bay Fire Department, let us welcome you to our fire family! This welcome packet will serve as your pre-arrival guide and help you become fully prepared for your journey to the beautiful island of Crete. If you have any unanswered questions please don't hesitate asking your sponsor. That is their job and one day it will be yours.**

**NSA Souda Bay is situated in the middle of the Akrotiri (peninsula) on the northwestern side of the island of Crete. The base itself encompasses 110 acres and shares the runway with the Chania International Airport. NSA Souda Bay supports United States Department of Defense activities within the Mediterranean theater and is continually a host to NATO forces as well. Our fire department consists of 22 civil service (GS-081/GS-318) and 40 Local National (LN) firefighters that staff (2) structural engines, (4) crash trucks, (1) BLS ambulance, and a technical rescue truck when needed. The US shift fire fighters work a 48-48 work schedule that includes 4 day and 8 day breaks.**

**We look forward to working with you and we are here to support you and your family in any way possible.**

**NSA SOUDA BAY FIRE DEPARTMENT FAMILY**

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**Mail Information**

*Once you check-in to this command you will be issued a Foreign Post Office Box with an Armed Forces in Europe address. This is the only way you be able to receive mail from the US. The post office on base is fully functional and you will be able to mail items back to the states if needed. \*There is a maximum weight limit on items shipped to all FPO addresses of 70lbs. All other items will have to be delivered via commercial carriers.*

**Your new mailing address will be:**

**YOUR NAME**

**PSC 814, Box (designated box number)**

**FPO, AE 09865-(designated last 4)**

**Sponsor POC Information**

**Your Sponsor Is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- 1. NOW THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR TENTATIVE JOB OFFER, THE CLOCK IS TICKING.**
- 2. GET ALL REQUESTED DOCUMENTATION, PAPERWORK, &/OR INFORMATION FORMS COMPLETED, AND RETURNED TO OUR HRO REPRESENTATIVE ASAP. THIS WILL MAKE THE PROCESS RUN A LOT SMOOTHER.**
- 3. PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR PRESENT SUPERVISOR TO HELP AVOID DELAYS IN YOUR OFFICIAL RELEASE/DEPARTURE DATE FROM YOUR PRESENT COMMAND.**
- 4. COORDINATE A REPORT DATE BETWEEN YOUR CURRENT COMMAND AND NSA SOUDA BAY ASAP.**
- 5. START PREPARING FOR YOUR MOVE NOW! THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW WILL HELP.**

**\*\*\*GETTING STARTED\*\*\***  
**(Once your orders have been issued)**

**TRAVEL OPTIONS (To be arranged/scheduled through your local TMO office):**

- You may fly commercial airlines all the way to Chania (pronounced: Hann-ya) International Airport, Greece. Airport code: **CHQ**
- You may fly commercial airlines to Norfolk VA area, and then a military contracted flight (CAT-B) to NSA Souda Bay. This is commonly referred to as “The Rotator”.
  - CAT-B flights depart Norfolk NAS bi-weekly on Tuesday evenings at approx. 9 pm EST, and arrives in NSA Souda Bay, around 10 pm local time (7 hours ahead of East coast time) on Wednesday evening.
  - **YOU MUST INQUIRE ABOUT CHECKED LUGGAGE ON ALL COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS. UNLIKE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY, CIVILIANS ON ORDERS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY ALL BAGGAGE FEES. SPEAK WITH YOUR TRAVEL OFFICE ONCE YOUR FLIGHT IS BOOKED.**
- Are you bringing dogs or cats? What will your options be?
  - You are responsible for pay for your pets to be shipped (approx. \$100.00 each on the CAT-B (more on commercial flights) and animals must be shipped in different cages if you have more than one). Crates must be to the required size for the animal’s size / weight.
  - Dogs must be processed through a veterinarian and chipped with an international chip. Then the pet can be processed through the appropriate office for final approval.
  - To be worked out through your local TMO office when making reservations.
  - **PLEASE LET YOUR SPONSOR KNOW IF YOU WILL BE TRAVELING WITH PETS. THE EASISEST THING TO DO IS TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE DIRECTLY THAT HAS GONE THROUGH THIS PROCESS.**

**NOTE: If traveling from the west coast area you are authorized only two (2) days for travel time. East coast travelers are authorized (1) travel day unless pre-approved and amended to your orders.**

**PASSPORTS:**

- Government (no fee) Passport - Get your paperwork filed ASAP through your local Personnel / Human Resources or Transportation Office.
  - You will need to submit a certified birth certificate or tourist passport (returned later) with your application.
  - Can take up to 8 weeks processing time.
  - **This is required for all family members including children. (All ages)**
- Tourist Passport – Not required, but good to have if you intend to travel throughout Europe
  - Please follow the directions on the link below
  - <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>

## VEHICLE SHIPMENT:

- Consider shipping your vehicle versus storing or selling it prior to PCS.
  - Smaller vehicles are preferable. Roads/streets are narrower in Greece and full size/larger vehicles can be difficult to maneuver at times.
- Should be shipped as far in advance as possible. 90 to 120 days is the normal shipping time frame, but could be longer.
  - **Special Notes:**
    - You **WILL NOT** be reimbursed for a rental vehicle while waiting for your POV to arrive.
    - If you don't own the title to your vehicle, you must obtain a letter of permission from the title holder prior to shipment.
    - Families are authorized to have a second vehicle, but if you want to ship it to Crete, you must pay the shipment fees yourself (\$2000 estimate).
- Your local Transportation Office should have a booklet that shows authorized drop-off locations & information and POC numbers for overseas vehicle shipment.
- Check with your present insurance company to see if they offer overseas or foreign insurance coverage.
  - GEICO & USAA do offer this coverage as well as Overseas Insurance policies. You can opt to buy local insurance once your vehicle arrives also. Purchasing local insurance is VERY difficult and you have a good chance of not obtaining local insurance.

## CHECKING OUT AND TEMPORARY LODGING:

- You are authorized 10 days of lodging and meals prior to departing your home station. Be sure to speak to your HRO should you have any questions.

## ADVANCED PAY:

- You can receive up to 3 months advanced pay (just like an interest free loan paid back over a one (1) year timeframe), 3 weeks prior to your report date or any time after that. They should start taking it out of your first check you receive after getting here, but the deductions have been known to start prior to your departure.

## START-UP FUNDS:

- For a family of 2-3 people should have **\$8,000 - \$12,000** on hand or available when you first get here. All food, transportation, and hotel fees will be reimbursed. **KEEP ALL YOUR RECEIPTS!!**
- Rental car - approximately \$900 - \$1,000 a month (not reimbursed).
- Hotel costs: approx \$4,500 a month, plus authorized *expenses (i.e. food, water, laundry, dry cleaning and takes about 2-3 weeks to get reimbursed after filing your paperwork)*. TQSA-(30 day cycle, 90 days max, but may be extended for extenuating circumstances). You are reimbursed 100% for the first month, 75% for the second month, and 50% for the final month.
- 1<sup>st</sup> and last (security deposit) month's rent on your house and a down payment on utilities (i.e. phone, cable, electric, water, etc.)

- Once you are in your house / apartment you will start to receive Living Quarters Allowance (LQA) to pay for the rent, electricity, heating oil, firewood and water. LQA is based on pay grade. Post Allowance (PA) is also authorized in this location as well.

### **LEASES, CONTRACTS, AND CREDIT CARDS (in the US):**

- Apartment/house rental/lease: Check with your landlord to see if there is a penalty for early termination. You may be exempt because you will be on “Official Government Orders”.
  - If not exempt, the government may pay this cost for you break your lease (orders amendment/modification).
- Vehicle lease: check with leaser to see if you can break your contract because you will be transferring overseas.
- Check with your cell phone carrier. Most will allow you to break your contract (with no penalty) because of overseas assignment.
- Notify credit card companies prior to PCS. Some companies will shut-off your credit card without prior notification of your intent to move.

### **EXPRESS SHIPMENT, HOUSEHOLD GOODS SHIPMENT AND NON-TEMPORARY STORAGE:**

- Scheduled through your local Transportation Management Office.
- 18,000 lbs maximum between the three (3).
  - **Express Shipment: (shipped via air): 350 lbs per person (1000 lbs max. for the whole family).**
    - What you might want to send in your express shipment (it should arrive approx. 30-45 days after you ship it).
      - Pots pans, dishes (what you need for cooking and eating)
      - Extra clothes.
      - Extra medications.
      - Toys for kids.
      - Sheets, blankets, pillows.
      - Small TV & DVD player, computer (dual voltage - 120/240 if possible).
      - Extra pet food/medications.
  - **Household Goods: (furniture, appliances, tools, bedroom suites, etc).**
    - **Consider carefully:** Greek houses/apartments are smaller than those in the US. Large US appliances, over stuffed furniture, bedroom suites, and bulky items are difficult to fit into the smaller spaces. The local housing office will provide large appliances (refrigerator, washer, dryer, freezer, etc.) at no cost for your entire stay in Greece.
    - Some homes have garages but extra storage space (i.e. closets) is limited and/or non-existent.
    - All of your electrical items (TVs, stereos, computers, hair dryers, curling irons, etc) should be dual voltage (120/240) if possible. Plug adapters are available and inexpensive. If not dual voltage, a power transformer will be required, and these are limited in availability and expensive to buy (housing will loan you up to four (4) transformers.
    - Small mower, weed eater and yard tools.



- Spare parts for your vehicle.
- US (110v) lamps will work with an adaptor, but you must use local light bulbs.
- **Non-temp storage: Items you should not ship overseas.**
  - Large bedroom suites (California Kings)
  - Washers/dryers
  - Range/oven
  - Large/bulky items
  - Riding mower.
- **SPECIAL NOTE: YOU MAY SHIP A MOTORCYCLE AS PART OF YOUR HOUSHLD GOOD (WITH YOUR FURNITURE SHIPPMENT). SEE YOUR LOCAL TMO OFFICE FOR INSTRUCTIONS.**

### WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING:

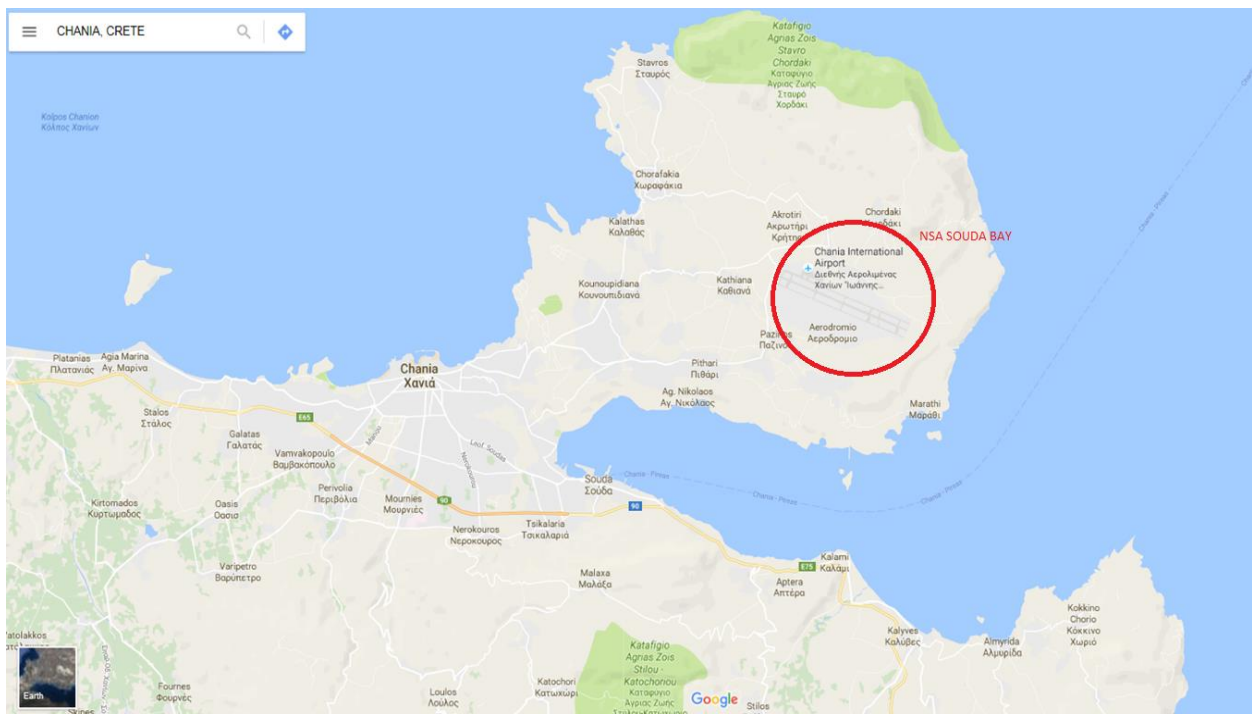
- Enough clothes for a few days (coin laundry mat is available on base)
- Snacks, you are fed on the “Cat B” flights but if you have any lay-over’s after leaving the states, food services are scarce in some air ports.
- Any medications with sufficient supply
- Cell phone must be Tri-Ban or Quad-Ban, unlocked or international, and use a SIM card. Call your carrier and have them unlock the phone before you depart from the US. Your sponsor will provide you with a temporary Greek phone once you arrive and will also take you to set up your *Vodafone* or *Cosmote* phone account within a few days.
- Tourist passports or at least have ordered.
- Medical records for you & family.
- Training records.
- Last LES – turn in to pay role as soon as you report.
- Security clearance documents.
- Hard copies of everything you sent to HRO (in-case any issues arise).
- Documents for your Spouse: Social Security card, Marriage Certificate.
- Documents for your Child: Birth certificate, Social Security card.

### EDUCATION & K-12 SCHOOLING:

- **NON DOD** School for children.
  - There is an American speaking school available for K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. This is a DOD certified school that uses the Calvert Home School program. Should you decide not to send your kid(s) to school, you have the option of home schooling as well. 7-12<sup>th</sup> must be home schooled or sent to boarding school.
  - Start researching on-line education or home schooling programs early.
  - Please contact the Student Liaison Office for this region to find out more details on your schooling options.
  - **Christopher McKibbin:** [christopher.mckibbin@eu.navy.mil](mailto:christopher.mckibbin@eu.navy.mil)
  - **From U.S.: 011-39-095-56-4018**
  - **Local: 0095-56-4018**
  - **DSN: (314) 624-4018**
  - **There is no childcare available on base.**

## HOUSING:

- Housing in this area is very competitive and is on a first come, first serve basis. Be prepared to be flexible and understand that Greek housing is nothing like US housing. Almost all of the houses are concrete construction and have separate AC and heating units in every room. The majority are heated with petroleum heaters or by fireplaces only. There are many modern houses available, but it may take some time to find the right one for your family.
- You will have the option of renting fully furnished houses/apartments.
- **Options for finding a house:**
  - The local housing office has an up-to-date list of approved and available houses. These options can be viewed on the *homes.mil* website.
  - You can contact a local real estate agent and have them find you a house as well. This option will require you to pay a realtor fee, usually one month's rent, and **the house and rental price has to be approved** through the local housing office.
- Try and find houses in the areas below. The local TMO office will only deliver your HHG within a specific radius from the naval base. It's about an hour drive to the naval base from the most distant villages on this map.
- Cable, internet, and home phone services are available throughout most of the local area. An AFN cable box will be provided once you move into your permanent house. This will allow you to watch American TV, but the programming is limited. (7-8 channels)
- It's advisable to purchase a G-Box or an Amazon Fire Stick before you depart the states so that you have other entertainment options. These devices use an app called Kodi and allow you to stream TV shows and movies via your DSL internet.
- Look into buying the MagicJack phone app or a paid Skype plan with a US phone number. This will allow you to call the US via the internet.



## FAQs

**What you might want to send via USPS prior to your arrival so that you have it when you get here?** (Takes 1-2 weeks for shipping)

- Extra medications, toys for kids, etc.

**What type of living quarters you will have for up-to 90 days from your arrival?**

- Hotel life- most have a small kitchenette (a lot of eating out), and up to 2 bedrooms.
- Short-term, fully furnished home rentals are available based on the time of year you arrive.

**Transportation to and from work until you vehicle arrives?**

- Rental car or car-pool

**Information about the Euro**

1 Euro = \$1.10 (July 2016)

**Navy Federal Credit Union**

- Navy Federal Credit Union on base.

**Health Insurance**

- Blue Cross Blue Shield is the preferred insurance. You pay up front and complete a reimbursement form.
- Need to notify them when you transfer overseas.

**Special Needs Family Members**

- Be sure to weigh the options if you have a family member with special needs. The local medical care is not comparable to the US standard and in some cases non-existent.
- You and your dependents will be able to utilize the clinic on base if appointments are available. You will have to pay for this service though.

**Gas Station usage on base**

- You can purchase gas from the NEX at a reduced rate vs. out in town.

**POV pick up (documents needed)**

\*Must be current originals\* (Document should not expire prior to vehicle arriving in Crete)

- Last vehicle registration
- Vehicle title
- Valid US drivers license
- Insurance, validated for driving in Greece
- USAFE Driver's License (issued here)

**Exchange and Commissary Information**

- Small combined store with basic food items and a small selection of house hold goods.
- Local Greek supermarkets are widely available and carry items similar to US stores.

**PLEASE ASK YOUR SPONSOR ANY AND ALL QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT LIVING AND WORKING HERE. THEY WILL BE YOUR BEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION.**