LOCATION GUIDE

Hawaii

Pet quarantine, car shipping, housing, schools and base notes for Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Schofield, Kaneohe Bay and more.

BOARDING PASS

FROM	TO	START
Your current duty station	Oahu & Kauai	4–6 months out

BASES	ALLOWANCES
JBPHH · Schofield · MCBH + more	BAH + COLA

SERIES
OCONUS
PCS

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

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WELCOME

Hawaii at a glance

Almost every Hawaii assignment is on Oahu, where every service shares one small, busy island. Hawaii counts as an overseas (OCONUS) move, but you're still in the U.S.: BAH plus COLA, U.S. mail and no passport needed.

INSTALLATION	AREA	MAIN SERVICES	NOTES
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam	South shore, near the airport	Navy, Air Force	Largest; ships, subs, 15th Wing
Schofield Barracks / Wheeler AAF	Central Oahu (Wahiawa)	Army	25th Infantry Division
Marine Corps Base Hawaii	Kaneohe Bay, windward side	Marines, Navy	On a peninsula near Kailua
Fort Shafter / Tripler	Honolulu	Army	USARPAC HQ and the main hospital
Camp H.M. Smith	Halawa Heights	Joint, Marines	INDOPACOM HQ
PMRF Barking Sands	Kauai	Navy	Small missile range on a neighbor island

Five things that work differently here

1

Pet quarantine

Hawaii is rabies-free. Miss a step and your pet can be held for up to 120 days.

2

BAH + COLA

You get BAH like stateside, plus a cost-of-living allowance.

3

One car shipped

The government ships one vehicle; it needs a Hawaii safety check.

4

No DoDEA

Kids attend Hawaii public schools, even on base.

5

Island traffic

H-1, H-2 and H-3 bottleneck quickly — live near your work.

Start pet prep first

Pet rules set the pace of a Hawaii move — start the day you get orders.

COUNTDOWN

Before you go

Treat Hawaii like an overseas move. Many commands require family screening, and the pet process alone can take four to six months.

As soon as you have orders 4–6 MONTHS OUT

- [ ] Start pet microchip, vaccines and blood test
- [ ] Request a sponsor through your gaining unit
- [ ] Book a TB test for kids — most schools require it
- [ ] Ask your command about overseas or EFMP family screening
- [ ] Apply for military housing for your base
- [ ] Decide which car ships and what to sell or store

Book the move 60–90 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Split household goods: express, main and storage
- [ ] Book flights that land at Honolulu by midafternoon if a pet flies with you
- [ ] Plan temporary lodging — TLA briefs are required for Army
- [ ] Schedule your car drop-off at the vehicle processing center
- [ ] Gather school, medical and IEP/504 records

Final prep 30 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Mail original pet documents to Hawaii (at least 10 days before arrival)
- [ ] Carry orders, leave form and your car shipping form
- [ ] Pack an "island survival" bag: beach gear, fans, rain jacket
- [ ] Arrange a rental car or ride for the first two weeks

Army arrivals

Soldiers report first to the Army Replacement Company liaison desk near Baggage Claim 19 at Honolulu airport. Bring orders, a leave form, your car shipping form and an itinerary that lists every family member.

FOUR-LEGGED FAMILY

Bringing pets to Hawaii

Hawaii is the only rabies-free state, and its rules are strict. Pets that meet every requirement can be released at the Honolulu airport the same day — miss one and they go to the Animal Quarantine Station.

Four steps, in this order

1

Microchip

Implanted and readable before any vaccine or blood draw counts.

FIRST

2

Two rabies shots

At least 30 days apart; the latest more than 30 days before arrival.

4–6 MONTHS OUT

3

FAVN blood test

Result of 0.5 IU/ml or higher; 30-day wait after the lab receives it.

LAB TAKES WEEKS

4

Health certificate

Plus a vet-applied tick treatment within 14 days of arrival.

WITHIN 14 DAYS

Original documents must reach the Animal Quarantine office at least 10 days before arrival. Fees run about $185 for direct airport release or $244 for 5-day-or-less. Source: Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Military-specific notes

- DoD can reimburse OCONUS pet travel costs, up to $2,000 for an eligible pet
- Summer heat embargoes on airlines can block pets from flying cargo
- The Army runs a pet kennel in Halawa Valley; base vet clinics are on Oahu
- Base housing typically limits the number of pets and restricts some breeds
- Arriving on Kauai? You'll need a neighbor island permit and an approved vet to meet the flight
- Animal Quarantine Station: (808) 483-7151

The tick-treatment trap

The state only accepts certain tick products, applied by a vet and written on the health certificate. Some popular products don't qualify — confirm with the Department of Agriculture before your vet visit.

ON THE ROAD

Shipping and registering your car

The government ships one privately owned vehicle to Hawaii. It takes a few weeks, so plan for a rental or a ride when you land.

Three steps after your car arrives

1

Safety inspection

Take the car to a Hawaii inspection station. It will fail for registration only — that's expected.

2

Register

Bring the failed certificate, bill of lading and forms to a satellite city hall or the JBPHH office (appointment).

3

Pass inspection

Return within 30 days of the failed check to pass and get your safety emblem.

OPTION	WHAT YOU NEED
Keep out-of-state plates	Current registration, bill of lading, Form CS-L (MVR) 27, failed safety certificate
Get Hawaii plates	Same, plus Form CS-L (MVR) 50 (Non-Resident Certificate) and Form CS-L (MVR) 1
Weight tax	Nonresident active duty and their spouses are exempt with Form CS-L (MVR) 50 each year

Driving here

- Your valid home-state license works; you only need a Hawaii license if yours can't be renewed
- Rust is real near the ocean — wash the car often
- Gas costs about $1–1.50 more per gallon than the mainland
- Track your car shipment at pcsmypov.com
- TheBus covers much of Oahu, and many families manage with one car
- Drivers here are patient: let people merge and skip the horn

WHERE TO LIVE

Housing, BAH and COLA

Oahu bases use the Honolulu County BAH rate below, plus COLA.

GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT	GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT
E-1 to E-4	$3,333	$2,598	O-1	$3,702	$2,997
E-5	$3,663	$2,856	O-2	$3,909	$3,555
E-6	$3,912	$3,036	O-3	$4,428	$3,819
E-7	$4,098	$3,348	O-4	$4,737	$4,110
E-8	$4,302	$3,720	O-5	$4,959	$4,224
E-9	$4,518	$3,783	O-6	$5,001	$4,413

2026 Honolulu County BAH, monthly. Source: DoD rates via FedRateCalc

Double-check your rate before you budget — BAH changes every January: travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Basic-Allowance-for-Housing/BAH-Rate-Lookup/

Double-check COLA too: travel.dod.mil/allowances/overseas-cost-of-living-allowance/overseas-cola-rate-lookup/

Military housing BY SERVICE

PROVIDER	SERVES
Island Palm Communities	Army: Schofield, Fort Shafter, Aliamanu, Red Hill, Tripler area
Ohana Military Communities	Navy and Marine Corps, including Kaneohe Bay
Hickam Communities	Air Force at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam

Off base TYPICAL 3-BEDROOM RENT

AREA	GOOD FOR	RENT
Ewa Beach / Kapolei	JBPHH; newest homes	$3,000–$3,800
Salt Lake / Moanalua	JBPHH, Shafter, Tripler, Camp Smith	$2,800–$3,500
Mililani / Wahiawa	Schofield and Wheeler	$2,600–$3,200
Kailua / Kaneohe	Marine Corps Base Hawaii	$3,200–$4,200

KIDS

Schools and child care

There are no DoDEA schools in Hawaii. The Hawaii Department of Education is one statewide district, and many schools sit on or next to the bases.

WHAT TO KNOW	DETAIL
School assignment	By home address — temporary lodging can place kids in a different school at first
Oahu districts	Honolulu, Central, Leeward and Windward
On-base schools	Hawaii DOE runs elementary and middle schools on several installations
TB test	Most schools and child care centers require a negative TB test
Geographic exceptions	You can request a school outside your zone
Private schools	Many options; apply early, as waitlists are common

School Liaison Officers

Every service has one. Army CYS and school liaison: (808) 655-8326.

Military Interstate Compact

Hawaii is a member — it helps with placement and graduation rules.

Youth sponsors

Request one through School Support Services before you move.

Child care

- Request base Child Development Center care through MilitaryChildCare.com as soon as you have orders
- Youth centers and summer camps run on the larger bases
- Family Child Care homes on base can fill gaps
- Bring shot records and the TB test result to enroll

HEALTH CARE

Medical and dental

Hawaii is in the TRICARE West region. Tripler Army Medical Center is the main military hospital for all services on Oahu.

1

Tripler Army Medical Center

1 Jarrett White Road, Honolulu. 24/7 emergency room, labor and delivery, pediatrics and specialty care. (808) 433-6661.

2

Base clinics

Primary care at clinics on most bases, including the 15th Medical Group at JBPHH: (888) 683-2778.

Before you go

- Complete any overseas or EFMP screening your service requires
- Get copies of medical, dental and shot records
- Ask about specialty care for EFMP needs — some is only on Oahu
- Refill prescriptions for 90 days and hand-carry them
- Book kids' TB tests for school enrollment
- Neighbor island families may fly to Oahu for specialty care

Good to know

TOPIC	DETAIL
TRICARE West	(888) 874-9378
Nurse advice line	1-800-TRICARE, option 1
Dental	Active duty uses base dental clinics; families use the TRICARE Dental Program
Sun and ocean	Strong sun year-round; Hawaii law bans sunscreens with oxybenzone and octinoxate

ISLAND LIFE

Money, phones and daily life

Hawaii is in the U.S., so your bank, phone and mail mostly work as usual. The difference is cost — almost everything is shipped in.

Groceries

Often 60–80% above the mainland. The commissary and exchange save a lot.

Electricity

Among the highest rates in the U.S. — budget $200–$400 a month with window A/C.

Homes

Smaller than the mainland, and many have no central A/C.

Everyday details

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
Phones and internet	Major U.S. carriers work; mainland plans usually carry over
Mail and shipping	U.S. mail and Amazon work, but some sellers won't ship or charge more
Time zone	Hawaii Standard Time, no daylight saving: 5–6 hours behind the East Coast
Flights home	Long and pricey — space-available flights from Hickam are an option
General excise tax	About 4.7% on Oahu, added to most purchases and services
State income tax	Nonresident military pay isn't taxed by Hawaii; check spouse rules under MSRRA

Island fever is real

Being far from family and the mainland hits some newcomers hard. Plan a few inter-island trips, get involved early and use family readiness programs.

LIVING ALOHA

Culture, safety and the go-bag

Local customs

- Take shoes off before entering a home
- Mauka means toward the mountains, makai toward the ocean — you'll hear them in directions
- Respect sacred and cultural sites; stay on marked trails
- Don't touch sea turtles or monk seals — it's illegal
- Use reef-safe sunscreen and leave rocks, sand and coral where they are

Safety

- Hurricane season runs June through November
- Tsunami sirens are tested monthly; know your evacuation zone
- Ocean conditions change fast — swim at beaches with lifeguards
- Flash floods can hit hiking trails and streams after heavy rain
- Car break-ins at trailheads and beaches are common; leave nothing visible

Hurricane go-bag KEEP 14 DAYS READY

- [ ] Water: one gallon per person per day
- [ ] Medications and copies of prescriptions
- [ ] Copies of IDs, orders and insurance
- [ ] Cash — card readers fail when the power is out
- [ ] Non-perishable food and a manual can opener
- [ ] Flashlights, batteries and a radio
- [ ] Pet food, leash, carrier and records
- [ ] Charged power banks

Why 14 days?

Hawaii depends on shipping. After a major storm, store shelves can stay empty for days. State emergency officials recommend at least a 14-day supply.

BASE NOTES · OAHU

Pearl Harbor-Hickam and Schofield

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam NAVY · AIR FORCE

- Pacific Fleet ships and submarines plus the Air Force's 15th Wing, right next to Honolulu airport
- Big Navy Exchange and commissary; Navy Lodge Pearl Harbor
- Space-available flights leave from the Hickam terminal
- Housing: Ohana Military Communities (Navy) and Hickam Communities (Air Force)
- Ewa, Kapolei and Salt Lake are the most common off-base picks
- The vehicle registration office here works by appointment

HOUSING OFFICE	FFSC / A&FRC	LODGING	VET CLINIC

Schofield Barracks and Wheeler AAF ARMY · CENTRAL OAHU

- Home of the 25th Infantry Division, about 25 miles north of Honolulu
- Cooler and rainier than the south shore
- Mililani and Wahiawa are short commutes; Honolulu trips mean H-2 and H-1 traffic
- Housing: Island Palm Communities across Schofield, Wheeler and Helemano
- Hawaii DOE schools on and next to post
- North Shore beaches are about 20 minutes away

HOUSING OFFICE	ACS	LODGING	VET CLINIC

BASE NOTES · OAHU AND KAUAI

Kaneohe Bay, Honolulu and Kauai

Marine Corps Base Hawaii KANEOHE BAY · WINDWARD SIDE

- On the Mokapu Peninsula near Kailua, across the mountains from Honolulu
- Breezier and greener than the south shore, with fewer tourists
- Housing: Ohana Military Communities, with homes on base
- Commutes to Honolulu go over the Pali, Likelike or H-3

HOUSING OFFICE | MCFTB | LODGING | VET CLINIC

Fort Shafter, Tripler and Camp H.M. Smith HONOLULU

- Fort Shafter hosts U.S. Army Pacific headquarters
- Camp Smith in Halawa Heights hosts INDOPACOM and Marine Forces Pacific
- Tripler is the main hospital for all services
- Army housing at Aliamanu and Red Hill serves many joint staff families

HOUSING OFFICE | FAMILY CENTER | LODGING | CLINIC

PMRF Barking Sands KAUAI

- Navy missile range on Kauai's west side — a small, close-knit community
- Pets need a neighbor island permit and an approved vet at arrival
- Limited housing and services; some specialty care means flights to Oahu
- Coast Guard Base Honolulu families on Oahu use Army or Navy housing

HOUSING OFFICE | FFSC | LODGING | CLINIC

KEEP THIS HANDY

Contacts and links

Numbers change — call ahead to confirm hours. Fill in your own base contacts on the base notes pages.

OFFICE	PHONE
Animal Quarantine Station	(808) 483-7151
Tripler Army Medical Center	(808) 433-6661
15th Medical Group (JBPHH)	(888) 683-2778
TRICARE West	(888) 874-9378
Island Palm Communities	(888) 458-8933

OFFICE	PHONE
Joint Personal Property (HHG)	(808) 473-7760
Army CYS and School Liaison	(808) 655-8326
Army emergency chaplain	(808) 656-3272
Coast Guard Sand Island clinic	(808) 842-2930
Nurse advice line	1-800-874-2273

Links

Hawaii Animal Quarantine · Army Hawaii newcomers · Honolulu vehicle rules for military · PCSmyPOV · Overseas COLA Rate Lookup · Plan My Move

Sources: Hawaii Department of Agriculture 5-Day-or-Less FAQ; City and County of Honolulu info for military; U.S. Army Hawaii newcomers page; PCS Pay It Forward Hawaii guide; DoD 2026 BAH rates.

READY FOR THE FULL PLAYBOOK?

Go step by step with the kits.

Worksheets, trackers and a complete binder setup for every stage of your move.

pcslikeapro.org
hello@pcslikeapro.org

WORKSHEET

Pet tracker and budget

Pet quarantine tracker

STEP	DATE DONE	PET 1	PET 2
Microchip number			
Rabies vaccine #1			
Rabies vaccine #2			
FAVN blood draw			
Lab received date			
Documents mailed			
Tick treatment			
Health certificate			

Monthly budget

ITEM	AMOUNT
BAH + COLA	$
Rent	$
Electricity and water	$
Groceries	$
Left over	$