LOCATION GUIDE

Alaska

Driving the ALCAN, winter prep, housing, schools and base notes for JBER, Fort Wainwright, Eielson and Fort Greely.

BOARDING PASS

FROM	TO	START
Your current duty station	Anchorage & Fairbanks	4–6 months out

BASES	ALLOWANCES
JBER · Wainwright · Eielson + more	BAH + COLA

SERIES
OCONUS
PCS

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Installations at a glance
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WELCOME

Alaska at a glance

Alaska counts as an overseas (OCONUS) move, but it's still the U.S.: BAH plus COLA, U.S. mail and no visa. Most families land at JBER in Anchorage or at Fort Wainwright and Eielson near Fairbanks, 360 miles apart.

INSTALLATION	AREA	MAIN SERVICES	NOTES
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson	Anchorage	Air Force, Army	Largest; 11th Airborne Division HQ, 3rd Wing
Fort Wainwright	Fairbanks	Army	11th Airborne brigade and aviation; Bassett hospital
Eielson AFB	25 mi south of Fairbanks	Air Force	354th Fighter Wing
Fort Greely	Delta Junction	Army	Missile defense; small and remote
Clear Space Force Station	Interior	Space Force	Mostly unaccompanied
Coast Guard Base Kodiak	Kodiak Island	Coast Guard	Largest Coast Guard base

Five things that work differently here

1

Screening

Families need concurrent travel on orders and EFMP screening at most bases.

2

BAH + COLA

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

3

The drive

Driving up means crossing Canada — passports for everyone.

4

Real winter

Fairbanks can hit -40°F or colder; cars need cold-weather prep.

5

Daylight swings

Fairbanks gets under 4 hours of daylight in December and nearly 22 in June.

Start six months out

Passports, screening and the drive-or-ship decision set the pace.

COUNTDOWN

Before you go

Treat Alaska like an overseas move. Screening and passports take time, and the choice between driving the ALCAN and shipping your car shapes the whole timeline.

As soon as you have orders 4–6 MONTHS OUT

- [ ] Complete EFMP or family suitability screening
- [ ] Apply for no-fee passports if you'll drive through Canada
- [ ] Apply for military housing for your base
- [ ] Confirm concurrent travel is on your orders
- [ ] Request a sponsor from your gaining unit
- [ ] Decide: drive the ALCAN, ship the car or both

Book the move 60–90 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Split household goods: express, main and storage
- [ ] Plan Canada rules for firearms and pets
- [ ] Reserve lodging in Anchorage or Fairbanks
- [ ] Book the vehicle drop-off if shipping
- [ ] Gather school, medical and IEP/504 records

Final prep 30 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Winterize the car: antifreeze to -60°F, strong battery, block heater
- [ ] Carry orders, passports, vehicle and pet papers together
- [ ] Pack winter coats, boots and gloves in the car or suitcase
- [ ] Book an ID/DEERS appointment if needed

Winter arrivals

If you land between October and April, your first stop is a store for real winter gear. Mainland "winter" coats rarely cut it in Fairbanks.

ON THE ROAD

Getting there: drive, ship or fly

Most families choose one of three paths. Driving is an adventure, but it takes about a week and requires passports for Canada.

1

Drive the ALCAN

About 2,200+ miles through Canada from the northern U.S. border; plan 5–7 days. Summer is easiest.

2

Ship your car

The government ships one vehicle. It takes several weeks, so plan for a rental on arrival.

3

Ferry

The Alaska Marine Highway runs from Bellingham, WA. Stops in Canada still mean passports.

Crossing Canada

- Every family member needs a passport; no-fee passports can be issued for PCS travel
- Allowed long guns need a Non-Resident Firearm Declaration filled out before the border
- Fill up whenever you can — gas stations can be far apart
- Handguns and many other firearms can't enter Canada — ship them or check CBSA rules first
- Dogs and cats need a current rabies certificate
- Carry a spare tire, emergency kit and paper maps; cell service drops out

Car prep for Alaska

ITEM	WHY
Block heater and battery	Plug in below about 20°F; many parking lots have outlets
Antifreeze to -60°F	Required for vehicles shipped or arriving October to April at Wainwright
Winter or studded tires	Studs are allowed roughly mid-September to May 1
Registration	Nonresident service members can keep home-state registration; no emissions checks

FOUR-LEGGED FAMILY

Bringing pets to Alaska

There's no quarantine for Alaska, but the trip itself is the hard part — long flights, summer heat embargoes or a week in the car through Canada.

What you need

1
Rabies vaccine
Current, with the certificate on hand.

2
Health certificate
From a vet, usually within 10 days of travel.

3
Microchip
Not always required, but strongly recommended.

4
Canada papers
Rabies certificate for dogs and cats crossing by car.

Military-specific notes

- DoD can reimburse some OCONUS pet travel costs — keep every receipt
- Airline heat embargoes can block cargo travel in summer
- Moose, bears and eagles are real risks for small pets outdoors
- Base housing limits the number of pets and restricts some breeds — check with your housing office
- Base vet clinics fill up; book the health certificate early
- Booties and paw wax help in deep cold and on salted roads

Cold is dangerous for pets too

At -20°F and below, even hardy dogs can get frostbite quickly. Limit time outside and never leave pets in a car in winter.

WHERE TO LIVE

Housing, BAH and COLA

JBER uses the Anchorage BAH rate; Fort Wainwright and Eielson use Fairbanks. COLA comes on top to help with groceries and utilities.

GRADE	ANCHORAGE WITH	ANCHORAGE W/O	FAIRBANKS WITH	FAIRBANKS W/O
E-1 to E-4	$2,277	$1,707	$2,106	$1,581
E-5	$2,874	$2,157	$2,436	$1,827
E-6	$2,892	$2,169	$2,454	$1,887
E-7	$3,045	$2,283	$2,610	$1,989
E-8	$3,240	$2,430	$2,814	$2,166
E-9	$3,486	$2,616	$3,018	$2,265
W-1	$2,895	$2,172	$2,457	$1,965
O-1	$2,886	$2,166	$2,448	$1,881
O-2	$2,889	$2,286	$2,451	$2,064
O-3	$3,360	$2,643	$2,937	$2,301
O-4	$3,789	$3,051	$3,210	$2,619
O-5	$4,095	$3,162	$3,405	$2,733
O-6	$4,131	$3,348	$3,432	$2,922

2026 monthly BAH. 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/

Housing tips

- JBER housing (Aurora Military Housing) waits often run 1–3 months; apply when orders arrive
- Off base, ask about heating costs, plug-ins and snow removal before you sign
- On-base homes often have garages and plug-ins — a big deal in winter
- Utilities off base commonly run $200–$400 a month

KIDS AND HEALTH

Schools, child care and medical

There are no DoDEA schools in Alaska. Local districts run the schools on base.

AREA	DISTRICT AND ON-BASE SCHOOLS
JBER	Anchorage School District: Aurora, Mount Spurr, Orion, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor elementary on base
Fort Wainwright	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, with schools on post
Eielson AFB	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, with schools on base
Fort Greely	Delta/Greely School District in Delta Junction

School liaison

JBER School Liaison Office: (907) 384-7500. Each base has one.

Military Interstate Compact

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

Child care

Request on-base CDC care on MilitaryChildCare.com the day you get orders.

Medical

FACILITY	DETAIL
JBER hospital (673d Medical Group)	5955 Zeamer Ave; appointments (907) 580-2778
Bassett Army Community Hospital	On Fort Wainwright; serves the Fairbanks area
Eielson clinic	Primary care on base; hospital care at Bassett or in Fairbanks
EFMP	Screening is required for families at most Alaska bases — JBER EFMP (907) 580-4609

Specialty care can mean travel

Some specialty care isn't available in Fairbanks or at small bases. EFMP screening checks this before you move — be honest and thorough on the forms.

DAILY LIFE

Money, taxes and the PFD

Alaska has no state income tax and no statewide sales tax. Groceries and shipping cost more, which is what COLA is for.

Groceries

Often 30–40% more off base. The commissary makes a big difference.

Shipping

Some online sellers won't ship to Alaska or charge extra. Check before you order.

Gas and heat

Heating is a real cost. Ask landlords for winter utility history.

Everyday details

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
State income tax	None in Alaska
Sales tax	No statewide sales tax; some towns add a local tax
Permanent Fund Dividend	Residents who live here a full calendar year may qualify. Talk to legal before changing your legal residence.
Driver's license	Service members and dependents can keep a valid home-state license
Time zone	Alaska Time: 4 hours behind the East Coast
Phones	Major carriers work in cities; coverage drops fast on highways
Flights	Long and pricey to the Lower 48; space-available flights leave from JBER

Use your COLA wisely

Put COLA toward the things that really cost more here — groceries, heating, winter gear and flights home — not just everyday spending.

LIVING IN THE NORTH

Winter, darkness and wildlife

Winter living

- Dress in layers: base layer, insulation and a windproof shell
- Plug in your car on cold nights; carry an ice scraper and brush
- Ice fog and early darkness make driving harder — slow down
- Snow removal is your job off base: shovel, salt and roof rakes

The light

- Daylight swings from a few hours in December to nearly all day in June
- Vitamin D and a daylight lamp help many people in winter
- Blackout curtains help kids sleep in summer
- Northern Lights season runs roughly late August to April

Wildlife safety

- Moose are everywhere, including on base — give them lots of space
- Secure trash and pet food so you don't attract bears
- Carry bear spray on trails and make noise as you hike
- Watch for moose on roads at dawn, dusk and in the dark

Car winter kit KEEP IT IN EVERY VEHICLE

- [ ] Warm blankets or a sleeping bag
- [ ] Jumper cables or a jump pack
- [ ] Flashlight and spare batteries
- [ ] Extra hats, gloves and boots
- [ ] Shovel, scraper and traction mats
- [ ] Water, snacks and a phone charger

Earthquakes happen

Southcentral Alaska has frequent earthquakes. Secure heavy furniture, know drop-cover-hold, and keep a home emergency kit.

BASE NOTES · ANCHORAGE

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

JBER AIR FORCE · ARMY

- More than 64,000 acres at the base of the Chugach Mountains, on the edge of Anchorage
- Housing: Aurora Military Housing, 19 neighborhoods; junior enlisted live in the dorms
- JBER hospital (673d Medical Group) serves both sides of the base
- Home of the 11th Airborne Division headquarters, the 3rd Wing and ALCOM
- Schools: five Anchorage School District elementary schools on base
- On-base Hillberg Ski Area, Otter Lake cabins and miles of trails

Gates and neighborhoods

AREA	NOTES
Boniface Gate (Elmendorf)	Open 24/7; visitor center daily 6 AM to 10 PM
Richardson Gate	Open 24/7; visitor center weekdays 9 AM to 5 PM
Anchorage (Midtown, East)	10–20 minutes to the Boniface Gate
Eagle River	20–30 minutes; newer homes, many military families
Chugiak / Palmer / Wasilla	30–50 minutes; more space and lower costs

HOUSING OFFICE | M&FRC / ACS | LODGING | VET CLINIC

Ask about recreation permits

Hunting, fishing and many trails on JBER need an iSportsman permit. Sign up online before you head out.

BASE NOTES · FAIRBANKS AND THE INTERIOR

Wainwright, Eielson and Greely

Fort Wainwright ARMY · FAIRBANKS

- Next to Fairbanks; home to an 11th Airborne brigade and Arctic aviation
- Bassett Army Community Hospital is on post
- Sign in at the Welcome Center, Building 3401, Santiago Avenue: (907) 353-4311
- Summers can top 90°F; winters can drop to -40°F or colder

HOUSING OFFICE	ACS	LODGING	VET CLINIC

Eielson AFB AIR FORCE · NEAR NORTH POLE

- About 25 miles south of Fairbanks; home of the 354th Fighter Wing
- Fairbanks North Star Borough schools on base
- Many families live on base; North Pole and Fairbanks are the off-base options
- Bassett and Fairbanks hospitals handle hospital care

HOUSING OFFICE	M&FRC	LODGING	CLINIC

Fort Greely ARMY · DELTA JUNCTION

- Missile defense mission, about 100 miles southeast of Fairbanks
- Big trips to Fairbanks for shopping and specialty care
- Small, remote community with limited shopping and services
- Coast Guard Kodiak and Clear SFS have their own pre-arrival guides

HOUSING OFFICE	ACS	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
Aurora Military Housing (JBER)	(907) 753-1023
JBER School Liaison	(907) 384-7500
JBER hospital appointments	(907) 580-2778
JBER EFMP	(907) 580-4609
JBER Finance	(907) 552-8080
JBER Life Lodging	(907) 552-2454

OFFICE	PHONE
JBER Family Advocacy (24/7)	(907) 947-0888
JBER Legal (Richardson)	(907) 384-0371
Fort Wainwright operator	(907) 353-1110
Wainwright Welcome Center	(907) 353-4311
Nurse advice line	1-800-874-2273
TRICARE West	(888) 874-9378

Links

JBER · USAG Alaska · Eielson AFB · No-fee passports · Overseas COLA Rate Lookup · Plan My Move

Sources: PCS Pay It Forward JBER guide; MilitaryINSTALLATIONS Fort Wainwright overview; U-Pack PCS to Alaska 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

Road trip and budget

ALCAN trip planner

DAY	START	STOP FOR THE NIGHT	MILES	LODGING BOOKED
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Monthly budget

ITEM	AMOUNT
BAH + COLA	$
Rent or mortgage	$
Heating and electricity	$
Groceries	$
Left over	$