

Department of the Air Force (DAF)
FAQs for Military Parental Leave Program (MPLP)
(as of 5 Jan 23)

Military Parental Leave Program (MPLP) Basics

Q1: What is the expanded MPLP?

A1: The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) published the Expansion of the MPLP Directive-type Memorandum (DTM-23-001) on 04 January 2023 with the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Service-specific guidance published in DAFGM2023-01 on 05 January 2023. The expanded MPLP authorizes *all* covered service members 12 weeks of non-chargeable parental leave following a qualifying birth, adoption, or placement of a child with the service member for long-term foster care (DAFI36-3003_DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.). The expanded MPLP also makes convalescent leave for the birthparent a separate and independent non-chargeable leave entitlement from the 12 weeks of Parental Leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.2.1.1)

Q2: Does a birthparent still receive 6-weeks of convalescent leave following a qualifying birth event?

A2: The length of convalescent leave, previously known as maternity convalescent leave, is not specified by OSD. Instead, the health care provider of the birthparent sets the length of convalescent leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.1.1.2.1.). The medical community is reviewing AFMAN 41-210 to determine compliance and provide updates as applicable.

Q3: Can convalescent leave be broken up, or does it need to be taken all at once?

A3: Convalescent leave following a qualifying birth event must be taken all at once, in a single period, prior to parental leave or ordinary leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.1.1.2.3).

Q4: Can parental leave be broken up, or does it need to be taken all at once?

A4: Parental leave may be taken incrementally or in one continuous period; the minimal incremental period is 7 days for a maximum of 12 incremental periods. Incremental periods are not required to be equal in length (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.4.1.- 3.2.2.4.1.2).

Q5: What about surrogacy?

A5: A service member who performs as a surrogate is only authorized convalescent leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.8.1.). Service members who use a surrogate and become the legal parents of a child follow adoption guidelines and are authorized to use parental leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.2.2.2.).

Q6: What about dual military parents?

A6: Each individual member, even if a dual-military parent, is authorized 12 weeks of Parental Leave. For cross-service dual military parents, their individual Service branch's policies will apply as appropriate. The 12 weeks may not be divided between the two members, nor transferred between them to create a shared benefit (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.6.2.).

Converting caregiver leave to the expanded Military Parental Leave Program

Q7: Is the expanded MPLP retroactive?

A7: The expanded MPLP has a transition period and applies to all service members who fall under one of the following three situations (DAFGM2023-01 paragraphs 3.2.2.10. - 3.2.2.10.3.):

- 1) All covered service members who have a qualifying birth, adoption or long-term foster care placement event occurring on or after 27 December 2022.
 - **EXAMPLE 1.** A service member adopts a child on 27 December 22. This member is eligible to take up to 12 weeks of non-chargeable leave in accordance with DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.10.2.
- 2) All covered service members in convalescent leave status on 27 December 2022 (this refers to the birthparent who is in convalescent leave status) will be allowed to continue their approved medical convalescent leave and then transition to 12 weeks of parental leave.
 - **EXAMPLE 2.** A service member designated as the primary caregiver is granted 6 weeks of maternity convalescent leave following the birth of a child and uses only 3 of the 6 weeks as of 27 Dec 22. Since the member will have unused caregiver leave as of 27 Dec 22, they would be eligible to transition to the expanded parental leave policy and take up to 12 weeks of non-chargeable leave after convalescent leave ends in accordance with DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.10.2.
- 3) All covered service members who have unused Primary or Secondary Caregiver Leave days by 27 December 2022; this means covered service members are authorized to take additional days beyond the previous 6-weeks of Primary Caregiver Leave or 3-weeks of Secondary Caregiver Leave to total a maximum of 12 weeks only if they have unused days by 27 December 2022. If a member has already used all (or forfeited unused) primary and secondary caregiver leave days by 27 December 2022, they are not eligible for the expanded MPLP.
 - **EXAMPLE 3.** An Airman adopted a child on 25 Nov 22 and then started secondary caregiver leave on 15 December 22. Since the Airman took leave in a consecutive increment from 15 December 22 to 26 December 22 (12 days), the remaining caregiver leave days converts to 72 days on 27 December 22 (84 days – 12 = 72 days) and can be taken in multiple increments of 7 days or more. The member must take the remaining 72 days by 24 November 23 or they will be forfeited.

- **Other Examples:**

- **EXAMPLE 4.** A service member designated as a secondary caregiver uses 2 of the 3 weeks of caregiver leave as of 27 December 22. With the service member having unused caregiver leave as of 27 December 22, they would be eligible to transition to the expanded parental leave policy and take up to 10 weeks of non-chargeable leave as they previously took 2 weeks.
- **EXAMPLE 5.** A service member designated as the primary caregiver uses 5 of the 6 weeks of caregiver leave as of 27 December 22. Since the service member has unused caregiver leave as of 27 December 22, they would be able to take 7 weeks of parental leave as they previously took 5 weeks.
- **EXAMPLE 6.** A service member did not take all the authorized caregiver leave in one increment. The remaining caregiver leave would not convert to the MPLP because any leave taken under the previous caregiver leave policy could only be taken at one time and was forfeited when the leave period ended; multiple leave events were not authorized.
- **EXAMPLE 7.** A Guardian had a child 15 January 22 but did not take secondary caregiver leave yet. The 3 weeks of caregiver leave converts to 12 weeks of parental leave on 27 December 22; however, under MPLP, members must take parental leave within one year. All unused leave not taken by 14 Jan 23 is forfeited.
- **EXAMPLE 8.** A service member fostered a child on 1 December 22. Service members who foster a child prior to 27 December 22 do not qualify for the expanded parental leave policy because foster care was not eligible for the MPLP under the previous caregiver leave policy.

ARC MPLP eligibility

Q8: Who is authorized to use the expanded MPLP? What about Traditional Guard/Reserve members?

A8: A covered service member that may use the expanded MPLP is an active component service member, Reserve component service members performing Active Guard and Reserve duty (AGR) or full-time National Guard duty (FTNGD) for more than 12 consecutive months, and Reserve Component service members performing duty under call or order to active service for more than 12 consecutive months (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.1.). For traditional Guard (DSG) or Reserve (IMA or TR) parental leave policies and eligibility, refer to the Reserve Component Military Leave (RCML) program found in DAFGM2023-01, paragraphs 3.2.2.11. – 3.2.2.17.4.

Q9. Can orders be extended to take parental leave if the qualifying event occurs while deployed on Active-Duty Contingency orders for 179 days?

A9. No, members cannot extend orders for parental leave, and an ARC member must be on active-duty orders for over 12 months to qualify for parental leave (DAFGM2023-01 paragraphs 3.2.2.1.and 3.2.2.6.4.1.).

Q10. Can the orders be extended for an ARC member on orders for over 12 months who experiences a qualifying event for parental leave during the time frame?

A10. A10. No, ARC orders cannot extend solely for leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.6.4.1.). However, the birth parents may change unused parental leave to the RCML program. Otherwise, the parental leave is forfeited (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.6.1.).

Q11. Is a member still eligible for parental leave given there was a change in orders however, there was no break in active duty service? (EXAMPLE: An ARC member is placed on 2-year consecutive orders through 30 Sep 2023 and had a qualifying event after 27 Dec 2022. At a later time, the ARC member's orders convert to school orders placed back to ADOS at the conclusion of the course.)

A11. Yes, even though the member had multiple orders, there was no break in active duty service which allows the member to utilize parental leave since they performed Active Guard and Reserve duty or full-time National Guard Duty for more than 12 months consecutively.

Taking MPLP

Q12: How does a covered service member apply for convalescent leave and/or parental leave?

A12: Covered service members apply using LeaveWeb or AF Form 988. Since convalescent leave and parental leave are two separate non-chargeable leave entitlements, birth parents must request each type of leave separately. The updated MPLP rules are available in LeaveWeb effective 6 Jan 23.

- In LeaveWeb, convalescent leave is requested by selecting (F) Convalescent on the 'type' drop-down menu and ticking the box labeled 'Postpartum Pregnancy.'
- Until LeaveWeb is updated, and although Parental Leave is not a Permissive TDY, members request Parental Leave by selecting (T) Permissive on the 'type' drop-down menu, then choosing the applicable rule number for the type of parental leave (DAFGM2023-01 Table 3.6). In the explanation box, at a minimum state, "Request for MPLP." Utilize this method until LeaveWeb allows proper tracking of non-chargeable parental leave in the system. Members must request these leave types separately. If taking parental leave in multiple increments, request and approved each increment separately. NOTE: It is important to select the correct rule to provide accurate utilization reports to Congress.

Rule	Parental Leave Purpose
26	Parental Leave - Birth
27	Parental Leave - Adoption
28	Parental Leave – Foster Placement

Example LeaveWeb Request for Parental Leave	Example LeaveWeb Request for Convalescent Leave
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Leave Request</p> <p>Duty Status: Active</p> <p>Type: (T) Permissive</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">This type of leave will require your commander's approval.</p> <p>Upload: <input type="text"/> ?</p> <p>AFI 36-36-30Q3 Military Leave Program</p> <p>Rule Number: 18 ?</p> <p>Explanation: Request for Parental Leave.</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Leave Request</p> <p>Duty Status: Active</p> <p>Type: (F) Convalescent</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postpartum Pregnancy?</p> </div>

Q13. Can a service member take parental leave in conjunction with terminal leave?

A13. Yes, the new parental leave policy does not restrict the use of parental leave in conjunction with terminal leave (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.6.6.).

Q14: Is the commander required to establish a mechanism to ensure members qualify for the expanded MPLP?

A14: No, but it is recommended commanders ask for documentation to verify eligibility of a qualifying birth, adoption or long-term foster care placement event (i.e., birth certificate, DEERS enrollment, etc.).

Q15: Can a member use MPLP days while attending court ordered appointments prior to the placement of a child for long-term foster care or adoption?

A15: No, the regulation currently only supports parental leave approval after a child placement event, not prior to the child’s placement. (DAFGM2023-01 paragraphs 3.2.2.2. and 3.2.2.3.).

Q16: Can a member be authorized permissive TDY for court ordered appointments to finalize the foster placement or adoption?

A16: No, a member would need to use ordinary leave for this type of event.

Extensions to the 1-year parental leave period

Q17: Are there any circumstances where a covered service member can take parental leave beyond the 1-year period following a qualifying birth or placement event?

A17: Yes, the 1-year period may be extended on a day-for-day basis only if the covered service member meets one of the conditions specified in the expanded MPLP (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.7 - 3.2.2.7.1.8.).

Q18. If a service member deployed from 2 January 23 to 28 June 23 and their child was born on 10 January 23, when does their 1-year clock start for parental leave?

A18. The 1-year clock will start on the first day following the member's post-deployment reintegration, recovery, and reconstitution (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.7.1.7.).

Convalescent Leave

Q19: Can convalescent leave or parental leave start when the child is discharged from the hospital if that date occurs after the birthparent is discharged?

A19: No, members must take the period of convalescent leave immediately following childbirth commencing on the first full day following the date of discharge or release of the birth parent from the hospital (or similar facility) where the birth took place (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.1.1.2.2.). Additionally, the parental leave start date will be no earlier than the date the child was born (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.2.1.2.).

Q20. Does treatment by an off-base civilian provider impact a birth parent's convalescent leave period?

A20. The birth parent should submit the civilian provider's convalescent leave recommendations to the PCM to determine the length of convalescent leave necessary to address recovery.

Q21. Does treatment at a joint base treatment facility with a doctor of a different service department impact the length of authorized convalescent leave?

A21. Having a sister-service doctor should not impact the length of convalescent leave as OSD determined the length as the amount a health care provider of the birth parent deems necessary to address the medical condition.

Q22. Is the service member required to stay in the local area while on convalescent leave or parental leave?

A22. The service member is not required to stay in the local area; however, they must receive approval from their attending physician prior to leaving the area.

Miscellaneous

Q23: Can commanders deny parental leave?

A23: No, commanders are encouraged to approve incremental periods of parental leave. If the unit commander does not approve taking incremental leave, they must allow the member to take 12 full weeks in one continuous period (DAFGM2023-01 para 3.2.2.4.1.2).

Q24: Who is my local contact at my base?

A24: Your unit CSS will be the best POC to contact with questions regarding MPLP.

Q25: Why wasn't this implemented sooner than Dec. 27, 2022?

A25: This could not be implemented earlier than Dec. 27, 2022, due to subsection (b) of Sec 621 within the FY22 NDAA, which stipulated the amendments did not go into effect until Dec. 27, 2022—one year from the date the FY22 NDAA was signed into law.