

Living Quarters Allowance Talking Points

What Caused This?

1. Discuss reasons why the LQA review was conducted and by whom (i.e., the trigger event).

Background-

Historically, employees recruited outside of the United States into Federal civilian employment from a U.S. firm were considered eligible for LQA, if they otherwise met all of the other Department of State, Department of Defense, and Command LQA policy requirements for the grant. This included employees who were originally recruited in the United States by the Armed Forces, i.e., former military members separating in the overseas area, or U.S. firms and who subsequently accepted employment with other U.S. firms under conditions that provided for return transportation to the United States, thus being considered to be in substantially continuous employment prior to accepting Federal employment.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has since emphasized in recent compensation decisions that “substantially continuous employment in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), section 031.12b, must be with an employer (*singular*) which recruited the employee in the United States and induced the employee to accept overseas employment.”

Since May 2011, locally hired employees’ LQA eligibility determinations have been made consistent with the OPM decisions. However, a number of locally hired employees, whose determinations were made prior to May 2011, are estimated to be erroneously receiving the LQA. Consequently, as of January 3rd, 2013, DoD has directed the Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and Field Activities to complete an audit of the pay accounts of all locally hired overseas employees who are currently receiving LQA. Headquarters Department of Army (HQDA), AG1, has tasked the Civilian Human Resources Agency to complete the audit by April 3rd, 2013.

Where do I go from here?

This will be a life changing event for most impacted employees. Be prepared to assist or discuss with employees, the following areas of concern.

2. Explain the LQA determination to employees.

-What made them ineligible to receive LQA?

3. Discuss who the different points of contact are for LQA issues (Reconsideration/Contest/Appeal, Waiver).

-CPAC or Command, OPM, DFAS

4. Discuss process/steps to request a reconsideration of the LQA decision or appeal the LQA decision.

-CPAC/COMMAND/OPM

5. Review with the employee some of the options available, based on the employee’s particular situation:

-Initiate an early return of dependents

-Move to a place he/she can afford

-Curtail tour and register in PPP (Discuss PPP)

-Apply for other jobs

-Contact Garrison Legal Office for guidance on lease termination issues

6. Review with the employee the actions the command can take to immediately assist:

- Consider a request for Early Return of Dependents
- Consider a Tour Curtailment
- Consider a Release from Transportation Agreement

7. Review with the employee the debt waiver process:

- Timeline
- Package Requirements
- Process

8. Review with the employee available resources to assist with the stress this situation may cause (Employee Assistance Program, Military Family & Life Consultant, Military OneSource, Army Community Services, etc.).