

BE PREPARED: KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE WHILE YOUR SERVICE MEMBER IS ON DEPLOYMENT

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Planning to safeguard your family will give both you and your service member the reassurance of knowing you'll be OK during the deployment. It will also give your family a workable plan if something happens.

Tell only those who need to know

As tempting as it may be, don't tell others that your service member is away. Only your family, close friends, a trusted neighbor and your children's school need to know.

- **Be careful what you post online.** Keep your full names and city or town private. Make sure pictures don't reveal your location by showing your home address or nearby landmarks.
- **Teach your children to be discreet when talking about their deployed parent.** When they answer the phone, instruct them to say their parent is unavailable or busy rather than away on deployment.

Don't advertise yourself as a victim

Be aware of signs that reveal your service member is away.

- If your service member's car is parked at your home, move it regularly so it looks like it's being driven regularly.
- Keep your service member's car clean and in good working order so it doesn't look like it's owner is away. Remove any stickers that display rank or unit.
- If possible, vary your route home and time of arrival.
- If you make banners welcoming your service member home, hang them in a community area rather than at your home.
- Use a nickname on the banner rather than the service member's name or rank.

Before traveling

When you go out of town for an extended period, be sure to:

- Let your ombudsman or family readiness contact know. Give them your destination, approximate departure and arrival times and a contact number.
- If you live on an installation, let your housing office know you'll be away. Ask for periodic checks on your home.
- Have your mail held and suspend newspaper delivery. Or, ask a neighbor to bring in your mail, newspapers and fliers from your mailbox, front lawn or driveway.
- Make your home appear that someone is there at all times by leaving on a light and a soft radio. Set up timers to turn lights on in various parts of your house throughout the evening.

For more tips on planning for personal and home safety while your service member is deployed, attend your unit's pre-deployment briefing.

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DoD's Section 508 Commitment

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