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Are you ready?

Web site offers checklist spouses can use to prepare the family when their soldier deploys

Staff Sgt. Haley Swart, a signal intelligence analyst with HHC, 103rd Military Intelligence Bn., from Grand Junction, Colo., watches a tape of her 2-year-old son, Rodney, with Diane Sawyer of ABC's "Good Morning America" that aired live from Camp New York, Kuwait, in February.

When a soldier with a family deploys, the family's well being can depend on how well prepared the soldier and spouse are, according to information posted at the Army Family Liaison Office Web site.

One of the resources available on the site is a series of links to tools like a checklist that soldiers and spouses can use to help them remember which questions to ask about preparing for a deployment. The following are the areas the checklist covers.

- ❑ **Automotive** – Seeing that periodic maintenance checks are updated to knowing what coverage there is for roadside assistance.
- ❑ **Spouse and family** – Ensuring the spouse knows how to contact the unit rear detachment to having current ID cards and Social Security numbers.
- ❑ **Financial** – Ensuring the spouse has access to checking and savings accounts.

- ❑ **Legal** – Becoming acquainted with gaining access to legal assistance for wills and powers of attorney to allow the spouse to act on the soldier's behalf.

- ❑ **Medical** – Making sure prescriptions are up to date to ensuring the rear detachment is aware of special family needs.

- ❑ **Security/Safety** – Having military or local police conduct a crime prevention survey on the home to knowing how to turn off gas, water and electricity in case of emergency.

Other resources and advice for those facing deployments are available from the site at www.aflo.org. Or, you can follow the link "Army Family Liaison Office" in the Army Quick Links section of the Army Knowledge Online portal at www.us.army.mil.

On the following page, we've assembled our own checklist for families to cut out and use.

Family checklist

What to know before your soldier goes

- Military identification cards for all family members
- Power of attorney
- Checking account/savings account information
- Wills for both spouses
- Marriage license
- Telephone numbers for:
 - Unit (Rear Detachment NCOIC)
 - Family Readiness Group
 - Red Cross
 - Army Emergency Relief
 - Army Community Service
 - Medical facilities/CHAMPUS
 - Legal Assistance Office
- Birth certificates for all family members
- Social Security Numbers for all family members
- Medical and dental records (including pets)
- Citizenship/Naturalization papers
- Adoption papers, court orders for support or custody of legal dependents
- Passports/visas
- Insurance policies:
 - Cars
 - Health (TRICARE and Delta Dental Plan information)
 - Life
 - Home owner's/Renter's
- Real estate documents (leases, mortgages, deeds or promissory notes)
- Telephone numbers for:
 - Landlord
 - Mortgage company
 - Government Housing Office
- Copies of loan agreements
- Household budget
- List of all creditors and account numbers
- List of all credit card account numbers and contact telephone numbers
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers for:
 - Immediate next of kin (family members of both spouses)
 - Family attorney
 - Trusted family friends
- Car title in a safe location and registration (stored in the car)
- Spare keys for home, garage, cars, safety deposit box and personal storage unit
- Copies of servicemember's orders
- Tax records
- Leave and earnings statements for the past three months

Emergency notification procedures:

Initiate a Red Cross notification for your spouse in the case of death or serious illness in the immediate family. The Red Cross representative will ask for the following:

- Soldier's full name
- Social Security Number
- Branch of service
- Military unit
- Rank
- Name of person involved in emergency
- Nature of the emergency
- Name and location of the hospital (if applicable)

If your spouse (the servicemember) has an emergency, such as serious illness or injury, the military chain of command, the Red Cross or a military chaplain will notify you.