220 POST ALLOWANCE

221 Definition

"Post allowance" means a cost-of-living allowance granted to an employee officially stationed at a post in a foreign area where the cost of living, exclusive of quarters costs, is substantially higher than in Washington, D.C.

222 Scope (Eff. 09/27/2020; TL:SR 1004)

The post allowance is a balancing factor designed to permit employees to spend the same portion of their basic compensation for current living as they would in Washington, D.C., without incurring a reduction in their standard of living because of higher costs of goods and services at the post. The post allowance payment tables (Section 229) represent a percentage increase over Washington cost-of-living, applied to "spendable income", i.e., that portion of basic compensation available for disbursement after deduction for taxes, gifts and contributions, savings (including insurance and retirement) and U.S. shelter and household utility expenses. Education and other costs peculiar to one segment of personnel at a post are not considered. The amount paid is a flat rate varying only by basic salary, size of family, and post, regardless of individual expenses.

223 Commencement

223.1 Newly Appointed or Transferred Employee

The post allowance grant to a newly appointed or transferred employee shall commence as of the following applicable date:

a. the date the employee arrives at a new post (also see Section 053), except that no post allowance authorized under this section shall be paid during any period when an employee or family member is receiving payment of a temporary quarters subsistence allowance authorized under Section 120 of these regulations;

b. the date the family arrives at the new post when the employee's arrival is delayed because of their being ordered to report at another place for consultation or detail and the family arrives at the new post before employee;

c. the date of the employee's entrance on duty, if the employee is recruited at the post;

d. the effective date of transfer when the employee is already at the post to which transferred (the effective date of transfer being considered the date of first arrival at the new post).

223.2 Upon Return to Post

The post allowance grant to an employee whose allowance was discontinued during a period of absence shall begin as of the date of return to the post, or as of the date of return of the family if they precede them to the post after such period of absence.

224 Termination

224.1 Transfer

The post allowance grant to an employee who is transferred shall terminate as of:

a. the date the employee or family member occupies temporary quarters prior to departure and for which the temporary quarters subsistence allowance under Section 120 of these regulations is payable;

b. the date the employee commences official travel under transfer, or combined leave and transfer order;

c. the effective date of transfer when no travel by the employee under the transfer order is involved.

224.2 Leave Orders (for other than leave orders, see Section 225)

The post allowance grant to an employee who has been issued official travel orders for leave, unrelated to transfer, shall terminate as of:

a. the date they commence travel under such orders which authorize payment of travel per diem allowance, including home leave travel with return to post authorized;

As an exception, the post allowance grant shall be revised to the appropriate lower family size rate while an employee with family is absent from the post under official orders for leave unrelated to transfer, in instances where the head of agency determines that the employee is required to continue the usual expenses of their residence at the post to maintain one or more members of family who remain at the post.

b. the 31st calendar day of absence from the post under travel orders which do not authorize payment of travel per diem allowance.

224.3 Separation

The post allowance grant to an employee who is separated (Section 040r) shall terminate as of the date of their departure from the post or the last day of employment, whichever is earlier.

The Office of Personnel Management advises that upon separation from Federal service, a post allowance in a foreign area under 5 U.S.C. 5924(1) and these Standardized Regulations (DSSR) is included in an employee's lump-sum payment for annual leave if the employee’s official duty station is in the foreign area when they becomes eligible for a lump-sum payment under 5 U.S.C. 5551, 5 CFR 550.1203, and 5 CFR 550.1205(b)(9). The receipt of a temporary subsistence allowance under 5 U.S.C. 5923 prior to departure from the post and the projection of the lump-sum payment period does not prohibit the inclusion of a post allowance in the employee's lump-sum payment for annual leave. (eff. 7/22/07 TL:SR 679)

225 Continuance During Absence from Post

225.1 Employee Without Family

The post allowance grant to an employee without family continues:

a. while they remains in the country of assignment (Section 040g); and

b. while they are outside the country of assignment for short periods of absences (up to 30 consecutive calendar days) unless the officer designated to authorize allowances determines that the grant should not continue. On the 31st day of absence, the grant is to be terminated. (For travel under leave orders, see Section 224.2.)

225.2 Employee With Family (eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)

The post allowance grant to an employee with family continues at the appropriate family size rate:

a. while the employee and all members of the family are outside the country of assignment for short periods of absences (up to 30 consecutive calendar days) unless the officer designated to authorize allowances determines that the grant should not continue. On the 31st day of absence the grant is to be terminated. (For travel under leave orders see Section 224.2.);

b. while the employee is temporarily absent from the country of assignment under official duty orders and all members of the family remain in the country of assignment. On the 31st day of absence the family size will be reduced by one member; and (eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)

c. for a period not in excess of 30 days while any or all members of the family are temporarily absent from the post and the employee remains in the country, except as otherwise provided in Sections 227.1 and 227.2. On the 31st day any grant shall be reduced appropriately.

226 Determination of Rate

Except as otherwise prescribed in Sections 223.1, 224.1 and 226.1, a post allowance shall be granted to an employee at a rate to be determined by the classification (Section 061 and Section 920) of their post (Section 040h), as prescribed in Section 920; their salary (Section 040l); family size (Section 040m); and the applicable annual rate prescribed in Section 229. (Eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)

226.1 Special Rule - Married Couple Employees or Domestic Partnership Employees at the Same Post (Interim eff. 7/5/2009 TL:SR 711; final eff. 8/30/2009 TL:SR 715)

When married couple employees or domestic partnership employees without family members are both eligible for the post allowance, each may be granted the post allowance in Section 229.1 for one person.

When married couple employees or domestic partnership employees with family members are both eligible for the post allowance, one employee, at their option, may receive the post allowance for family members (Section 040m). The other employee may be granted the post allowance for one person only.

227 Revision of Grant

227.1 Change in Applicable Rate

The post allowance grant shall be appropriately revised effective the date of change in any of the following:

a. classification of the post (Section 920); (eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)

b. payment tables (Section 229);

c. employee's salary; or

d. employee's family size (for example: reducing family size when a family member capable of self-support reaches age 21 or adding to family size for a birth or adoption). (eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)

227.2 Change Pursuant to an Away from Post Education Allowance and Educational Travel

When a child on whose behalf an employee is currently receiving either an away from post education allowance or educational travel leaves the post for a period in excess of 30 days, the employee's post allowance shall be revised to the next lower family size rate. When the child returns to the post for a period in excess of 14 days, the allowance may again be revised to restore the reduced amount. Revisions shall be made effective as of the date of departure or arrival of the child if such date falls on the first day of a pay period. Otherwise, the revision shall be made effective as of the first day of the pay period next following the applicable date.

228 Post Allowance Levels

228.1 The post allowance level is based on the foreign cost of living as compared with that of the Washington, D.C. area. The post allowance levels for all locations are on the Department of State's Office of Allowances internet website at <https://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp>. (Eff. 09/27/2020; TL:SR 1004)

The six tables in Section 229 list annual amounts of post allowance payments for employees with different base salaries and the number of persons eligible for the post allowance. The word person means the employee or family members eligible for post allowance payments under these regulations.

228.2

The post allowance level is based on a cost of living index number which shows living costs in the foreign location relative to living costs in Washington, D.C. as 100. (See DSSR 073.2a) (Eff. 09/27/2020; TL:SR 1004)

Post allowance payments are based on the cost of living index as applied to the employee's spendable income. Spendable income is defined as that portion of base salary available to the employee after typical deductions for Federal, State and local income taxes; U.S. shelter and household utility expenses; retirement funds; contributions and gifts to persons and organizations outside the family; life insurance programs and personal savings. The post allowance payment tables (Section 229) are based on national Consumer Expenditure Surveys as conducted periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The following table shows how the cost of living index number is used to derive specific post allowance levels.

Cost of Living Index Post Allowance Class

for Foreign Location (percent applied to

(Washington = 100) spendable income to

Determine allowance)

103 - 107 5%

108 - 112 10

113 - 117 15

118 - 122 20

123 - 127 25

128 - 132 30

133 - 137 35

138 - 145 42

146 - 155 50

156 - 165 60

166 - 175 70

176 - 185 80

186 - 195 90

196 - 205 100

206 - 215 110

216 - 225 120

226 - 235 130

236 - 245 140

246 - 255 150

256 - 265 160

The above post allowance classes represent the mid-points of the cost of living index ranges. The index ranges were selected so as to provide increases of approximately five percent from the mid-point of one index range to the next. (e.g. an increase from 105 to 110 and from 210 to 220 are 5 and 10 index points, respectively, but both are approximately 5% increases.)

The post allowance classes are in Section 920 and the payment tables are in Section 229 of these regulations. Although the present tables are designed to show allowance levels up to 100% above those of Washington, D.C. the tables may be revised as necessary to reflect any current post allowance level indicated by new cost of living data. (Eff. 09/27/2020; TL:SR 1004)