

Guide to PCSing to MCAS Iwakuni

Welcome to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan!

Some web sites you may find helpful:

<http://www.IwakuniMCAS.com> (Lisa's web site about PCSing to Iwakuni)
<http://www.StewartLane.com> (our personal web site with pictures of Iwakuni, contact info, etc)
<http://www.iwakuni.usmc.mil/index.htm> (the official Iwakuni web site)
<http://www.mccsiwakuni.com/> (MCCS Iwakuni, great information here)
http://benefits.military.com/misc/installations/Base_Content.jsp?id=2545
<http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites/> (full of information, you need to log in to access it)
<http://www.usarj.army.mil/organization/vet/>

A great source of information is people who are already here. Check out the Iwakuni Spouses Yahoo Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iwakunimcas/>.

You Have Orders; Now What?

The following items need to be addressed as soon as possible to expedite your move. You may have already begun some or all of these; if so, great! If not, this list serves as a starting point.

MEDICAL

As soon as you obtain your official online orders, report with them to your military medical facility's Overseas Screening Office to begin the required medical screening process. The process includes your completion of an entire medical background, so have that information available, but you are not required to bring it with you to the screening appointment; the appointment is just to provide you with the necessary paperwork, to be filled out and returned as soon as possible. This can take some time to complete, so it needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

PASSPORTS

You will need to obtain a passport for each member of your family prior to flying to Japan. You should obtain them as soon as possible, because it can take up to two months to receive a passport (though it is often much sooner than that, especially when applying for a "no-fee" passport on base).

There are two types of passports: "no-fee" and "tourist." There is a difference! "**No-fee**" passports are available on base free of charge, however, these can only be used in conjunction with official orders for PCS purposes; you will not be able to travel or go on leave with a "no-fee" passport. "**Tourist**" passports may be used to PCS as well as travel and go on leave. A "tourist" passport may be obtained through your local post office, and you will be charged a fee of about \$80 per passport. This fee may be submitted on your travel claim for possible reimbursement.

Regardless of which type of passport you decide to obtain, you will need to present a certified copy of your birth certificate when you apply, which will be mailed in to obtain your passport and returned to you when you pick up or receive your passport.

Active duty on official orders may travel on the orders without a passport.

More information about passports can also be obtained online at http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html.

CERTIFIED BIRTH CERTIFICATES

A certified birth certificate has a registrar's raised, embossed, impressed or multicolored seal, registrar's signature, and the date the certificate was filed with the registrar's office, which must be within 1 year of your birth. To obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>, locate the state in which you were born, and follow the instructions provided on the appropriate link. You may be charged a small fee (around \$10) for

obtaining the certified copy of the birth certificate, and you should allow 30 days for processing (though most states do not take that long).

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE/LICENSE

Be sure you have a copy of your marriage license/certificate at this time, as they are often ordered through the same department that handles birth certificates (vital records).

PETS

If you plan to bring your cat or dog (or perhaps other pets) to Iwakuni, you will need to begin the process of preparing your pet immediately, because the entire process from start to finish takes a considerable amount of time. You are allowed to bring a maximum of two fur-bearing pets to Iwakuni. Please be aware, however, that dogs are only allowed to reside in the townhouses, which are currently undergoing renovation, and your wait time may be extensive, possibly to the point of your having to obtain housing off-base until a townhouse is available. Cats are allowed in both the mid-rises and townhouses. Many off-base living quarters do not allow pets, so you may opt to leave dogs behind with family or friends until you can obtain suitable housing, then send for them to be shipped to you via a commercial air pet cargo shipping service, such as that offered by United.

Step 1: Microchip, First Rabies Vaccination

To begin the process for your pet, call your local base veterinary treatment facility and inform them of your upcoming overseas move. They will make an appointment for your pet to begin the necessary requirements. At this appointment, the pet will be implanted with a microchip (a tiny device about the size of a grain of rice imprinted with a bar code, which can be scanned using a hand-held scanner to identify the animal). If the pet already has an approved microchip, you will be required to present documentation for verification (approved microchips are Avid and Home Again). Your pet will also be administered the first of two required rabies vaccinations. I also strongly recommend that you take this opportunity to catch up on all other vaccinations for your pet, and the vet will likely require you to do so anyway. Start your pet on a monthly flea and tick preventative, such as FrontLine or Revolution. Though this is not a requirement, it is required that the pet not be infested with such pests, and beginning a monthly routine now will avoid the problem later.

Step 2: Second Rabies Vaccination

You will then need to make an appointment for the second rabies vaccination, which will be administered 30 days after the first rabies vaccination/microchip visit.

Step 3: FAVN (Fluorescent Antibody Viral Neutralization) Test (aka Rabies Antibody Titer Test)

At least two weeks after the second rabies vaccination, you will need to schedule another appointment to have blood drawn for a simple blood test, which will ensure that your pet has the required rabies antibody titer (level) in the bloodstream to sufficiently protect the animal from being infected with rabies. This level must be 0.5ul or greater. You will be required to pay the expenses to ship the blood sample overnight to an approved laboratory (cost is about \$50). The vet clinic will give you instructions on how to do so, and where to send the sample. Just be aware of the fact that you will need to make time to drop off the sample at the nearest overnight shipping facility (Mailboxes, Etc., for example) immediately after the vet appointment.

Step 4: Begin Quarantine

The 180-day quarantine period begins the day after the blood is drawn for the rabies titer, provided the titer meets the specified requirement of 0.5ul. Under the new rules at MCAS Iwakuni, you are allowed to bring your pet into Japan and keep it in on-base quarters (housing) or in the kennel on base during the quarantine period, you just can't take the pet off base or have it around other animals on base during the quarantine period. If your pet is still under quarantine upon arrival at Iwakuni, you will be required to bring your pet to the vet every 30 days until the end of the quarantine for a general health check-up.

AREA CLEARANCE

Mr. Thompson will be in charge of your area clearance from New River, NC. This part may take a while. One part of the area clearance is completion of an Anti-Terrorism Awareness Course, which can be done online at <https://atlevel1.dtic.mil/at/at11/civ/begin/links.html>. Be sure to print the certificate at the end of the course, and turn it in to Mr. Thompson. This must be done individually for each person who is coming to Iwakuni.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS ON THE IWAKUNI SIDE OF THINGS

Once you have obtained your area clearance, please e-mail a copy of it, along with a copy of your orders (web orders will suffice) to your sponsor. These forms are required for your sponsor to take care of business here at Iwakuni on your behalf. You will be provided with a mailing address (P.O. Box) that you will use to receive all of your personal mail while aboard Iwakuni. You may want to begin forwarding your mail to it a few weeks before you leave your current duty station. To expedite the housing process, your sponsor will ensure that your name is added to the advance housing list. Reservations will be made for you at temporary lodging, and if applicable, at the base vet for kennel space for your pet(s). Pets are not allowed in temporary lodging.

Lodging is available for up to 60 days. You are responsible for paying your bill every 15 days. Keep your receipts to file for reimbursement with the Finance Office.

COPIES OF YOUR OFFICIAL ORDERS and AREA CLEARANCE

You will need to make many copies of your orders and area clearance. You will need one copy of orders in each piece of luggage that you bring. You will need copies of both to submit to every office, every step along the way. Most places will make copies for you, but it is always good to have at least five to ten copies at every step along the way, and when you get down to two copies, make more!