



# Fewer PCS Moves for Soldiers As Army Lengthens Tours

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**I**n an effort to increase unit preparedness and efficiency, the Army is looking to keep Soldiers in place for a longer period of time during their permanent changes of station, or PCS.

Col. Robert Bennett, Human Resources Command's director of enlisted personnel management, said in late 2012 that senior Army leaders "asked us to look for ways to increase unit readiness, stability and predictability for Soldiers and families."

Keeping Soldiers on station for at least 36 months would accomplish those goals, said Bennett, who said he met with leaders in his directorate to go over options and implementation of the plan. Assignments could last as long as 48 months.

The move is also a cost-cutting measure, saving roughly \$100 million in PCS travel.

Increased time on station offers more flexibility to commanders and NCOs in how they schedule Soldiers for military education courses.

The move affects most, but not all of about 432,000 enlisted Soldiers. There are multiple exceptions to the

effort to keep Soldiers on station for 36 months.

The most important of those is deployment, Bennett said. If there is a need for Soldiers to deploy, then the mission comes first, he said.

If the Army needs Soldiers to fill high-demand positions, an exception will be made for a move before completion of 36 months at a duty station.

Soldiers' professional development is also an exception, Bennett said. For example, if a staff sergeant gets promoted to sergeant first class, he or she might be moved to fill a billet that is more commensurate with their increased rank and ability to lead.

Soldiers with special needs children might also be exempt from the time-on-station effort. For example, Bennett said, a Soldier may get a compassionate re-assignment to a location with better support for their special needs child.

Soldiers assigned to Korea will continue to serve there for one year, not three. But existing policies for Soldiers assigned in Germany, Hawaii and Alaska remain as three-year tours.

Soldiers have previously been able to choose a new duty station as part of a re-enlistment option. The previous requirement for first-term Soldiers reenlisting was 12 months on station, Bennett said. That has now been increased to 24 months for priority 1 and 2 assignments, which include some units that are deploying, warrior transition units, ROTC cadre and other special assignments that have “senior leader emphasis.” Re-enlisting Soldiers who choose follow-on assignments that are not priority 1 or 2 will likely have to remain on station the full 36 months before getting their location choice, Bennett said. ■



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