



Update to the Total Force: Informing Active and Reserve Marines, Sailors, and Civilians on Manpower Policy reform and talent management efforts.

Indo-Pacific Cell: Making Waves for Marines and Families Across the Pacific

Moving overseas in the military would likely never be described as easy. Potential language barriers, different service policies, changing timelines, flight schedules, pet policies, medical readiness for families, spousal employment—the list goes on. These difficulties present consistent obstacles for Marines and their families living and working outside the continental United States. As the Marine Corps focuses on the Indo-Pacific as the priority theater under Force Design 2030, Manpower & Reserve Affairs has stepped up with a dedicated solution: The Indo-Pacific Cell.

Building the Bridge to Better Service

Created by then-M&RA Deputy Commandant LtGen James Glynn in 2024, the Cell's mission is straightforward—improve quality of life for Marines, civilian workers, and families serving throughout the region by enhancing policies related to assignments, compensation, travel, and more.

The Cell operates as part of the Manpower Plans and Policy (MP) Division and pulls together representatives from across M&RA divisions and commands like MCIPAC, MARFORPAC, and III MEF. This team approach ensures solutions that address the real challenges faced by personnel in the Indo-Pacific theater.

In its first year, the Cell scored an early win by developing the Prioritized Policy and Incentive List (PPIL)—a tracking tool that compiles all major issues affecting service in the region. This innovation enables HQMC to systematically tackle concerns and measure progress on solutions that directly impact Marines and their families.



The Manpower Plans and Policy Division leadership pose with senior leaders at Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz, Guam, Sept. 08, 2025. MP Division leadership arrived at MCB Camp Blaz to discuss the Manpower Policy issues and as part of their Indo-Pacific site visit. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Rey Moreno Marilao)

Boots on the Ground: Listening to the Fleet

To strengthen partnerships and gather direct feedback, the MP Division team led by BGen Edwards and SgtMaj Turner, traveled to Okinawa, Guam, and Hawaii in September 2025. They met with senior leaders including LtGen Turner (III MEF), MajGen Wolford (MCIPAC), MajGen Annibale (1st MAW), BGen Good (3d MARDIV), Col Marshall (Camp Blaz), and the staff at MARFORPAC.

The trip revealed several hot-button issues. The overseas screening process continues to create headaches for Marines and families despite recent improvements like the Family Member Screening Cell. Commands also highlighted civilian staffing challenges, including complicated waiver processes for tour extensions and limited job opportunities for military spouses throughout the region.

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DEPARTMENT OF WAR'S FIVE-YEAR TOUR EXTENSION PILOT PROGRAM

The Department of War initiated a pilot program aimed at enhancing the flexibility of overseas assignments for federal employees as outlined in Section 1106 of the FY25 NDAA. This initiative allows for a one-time extension of tour lengths, providing a structured approach to managing overseas assignments while ensuring compliance with existing regulations.

One-Time Tour Extension

Under the new pilot program, the first GS-15 or O-6 in an employee's chain of command has the authority to grant a one-time tour extension of up to five years.

Limitations on Tour Duration

While the program offers an extension, it is important to note that the approved extension cannot result in the employee working in the foreign area for more than a total of 10 years. This limitation ensures that tour lengths remain manageable and that employees have opportunities for career development in diverse environments.



Federal employees from MCCS Okinawa host a cultural education seminar to learn about Japanese culture and local teas. MCCS employees make up part of the federal workforce actively employed overseas by providing comprehensive programs to support Marines and their families. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Janessa K. Pon)

Simplified Extension Request Process

One of the significant advantages of this pilot program is that the extension request does not require a business case or similar analysis to justify the extension. This streamlined process reduces administrative burdens and facilitates quicker decision-making for those involved in overseas assignments.

Documentation Requirements

Prior to the tour extension, employees must have their extension or expiration of their return rights documented in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System.

Regulatory Compliance

Despite the introduction of this pilot program, the conditions and regulations governing overseas tour lengths, Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT), and other entitlements remain unchanged. All extensions will be granted in accordance with applicable regulatory guidance, ensuring consistency and compliance with established policies.

Program Duration

It is important to note that this pilot program is set to conclude on December 23, 2026. After this date, no further tour extensions may be granted under this initiative.

INDO-PACIFIC CELL

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From Feedback to Action: What's Next?

The Cell isn't just identifying problems—it's driving solutions. Based on what they heard from the fleet, the cell is transitioning into its next stage of evolution. The PPIL will get a refresh by the end of 2025, incorporating feedback from commands across the region. The cell will then establish a formal process with MCIPAC to vet future initiatives, ensuring alignment with what commands actually need. Finally, the cell will establish focused working groups on three priority areas: streamlining the overseas screening process, addressing civilian staffing challenges, and easing the financial burden of Indo-Pacific assignments.

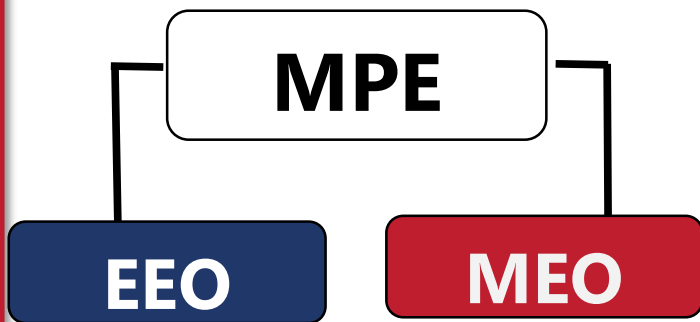
Want to learn more or have issues to raise? Reach out to the Indo-Pacific Cell at smb_hqmc_mpo@usmc.mil.

MANPOWER EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BRANCH REALIGNMENT

The Manpower Equal Opportunity (MPE) Branch is now integrating Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) responsibilities, strengthening its commitment to fairness and inclusivity for all personnel – both military and civilian. This enhancement builds upon the existing Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) program, ensuring coordinated oversight while maintaining each program's distinct purpose.

This significant change enhances MPE in fostering talented workforces by addressing inequality holistically, creating a more positive and productive command climate.

- **Enhanced Proactive Prevention:** MPE can now proactively identify and address potential EEO concerns across the Fleet Marine Force before they escalate into formal complaints, fostering a more preventative and positive approach to equal opportunity.
- **Streamlined Resolution:** EEO integration streamlines discrimination resolution with a single point of contact and consistent policy application, tailored appropriately to MEO and EEO cases as needed.



- **Improved Employee Education and Awareness:** With MEO and EEO under its purview, MPE Branch delivers comprehensive equal opportunity training, tailored for military and civilian personnel, promoting organizational understanding and respect.
- **Centralized Expertise for Commanders:** Commanders now have a single HQMC point of contact for all Equal Opportunity and Equal Employment Opportunity matters.

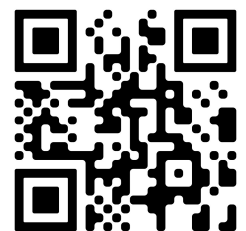
MPE reinforces its commitment to helping commanders build workplaces where every individual thrives based on merit, strengthening teams and mission readiness.

Call to Action!

Encourage members to view MARADMIN 565/25, Solicitation for Fiscal Year 2027 Equal Opportunity Advisors, for current information on joining the EOA workforce.

Information
to become
an EOA

→
Scan here



MP LEADERSHIP

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