Invitational Travel Orders (ITOs)

Since you are already at your service member's bedside, you probably already know the basics about Invitational Travel Orders (which are also called "travel orders" or "ITOs"). The information here will give you some more details.

Invitational Travel Orders are issued when doctors determine that the presence of a family member is essential to the recovery of the patient. When you receive ITOs, you are eligible to receive money for travel, lodging, and daily food expenses. This daily expense reimbursement is called a "per diem."

It is a good idea to make an extra copy of your travel orders and keep it with you at all times—for example, in the ITO pocket of this notebook. Keep the original in a different safe place where you can find it easily.

Covered and not-covered expenses

For each family member on travel orders, reimbursement can be made for:

- One round-trip ticket from your home to the hospital, or mileage if you drive
- Lodging expenses within a certain cost limit
- Per diem ("per day") expenses for food and necessities

The amount of money you receive in the per diem will vary depending on the average cost of living in your location. Ask someone at the military treatment facility Finance Office to tell you the amount of the current local per diem and lodging rates.

Keep in mind that some expenses are not covered by travel orders. These may include telephone calls, taxis, rental cars, or other expenses. You will be expected to pay expenses not covered by travel orders with your own money.

Which family members will receive ITOs? How many family members can come?

Invitational Travel Orders are offered to immediate family members (spouse, children, mother, father, siblings including step-siblings) or to people acting *in loco parentis* (in place of the parents). You—the family members—make the decision as to who among you should come. In general, up to three family members can receive travel orders to visit a seriously injured service member.

Lodging

Finding a place to stay will probably be one of your first concerns when you arrive at the military treatment facility. If you traveled on Invitational Travel Orders (which are also called "travel orders" or "ITOs"), the service may have already arranged for lodging before you arrived at the facility. If this hasn't happened, you have several options, and people on the Recovery Team will help you find a good place to stay. As long as you have ITOs you're eligible for lodging assistance, even if you don't have a military ID.

As you make travel and lodging arrangements for yourself and other visitors, try to take advantage of your own sources for discounts, such as frequent-flier miles, motor clubs, and retirement associations. (Keep in mind that many organizations offer special discounts for families of U.S. service members.)

Some of the lodging options that may be available include:

On-post lodging

Some military treatment facilities have special buildings for family lodging; others do not. If it's available, lodging "on post" at the military treatment facility is your best choice. You can be close to your service member and stay free of charge. The length of time you can stay will vary depending on your ITOs and the needs of your service member.

Your Recovery Coordinator will be able to tell you more about options at your facility. At Walter Reed Army Medical Center and at the National Naval Medical Center options include:

Walter Reed Army Medical Center
The Mologne House
Telephone: 202-726-8700
Web site: *www.wramc.army.mil*

National Naval Medical Center
Navy Lodge Bethesda
Telephone: 301-654-1795
Web site: *www.Navy-Lodge.com*

Fisher House

Fisher Houses are large homes with private suites, built to provide comfortable temporary lodging for families of wounded, ill, and injured service members. Thanks to donations from the Fisher House Foundation and the Fisher family, Fisher Houses exist near many military treatment facilities across the United States.