

Rear-Detachment Risk Management Options

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With the fast pace of today's Army, it would be easy to overlook the details of deployment preparation. However, we must diligently complete these preparations in order to ensure a successful deployment for all. Part of this preparation should include consideration for hazards faced by rear detachments and the families of deployed service members. The overall risk management of the deployment should be done as an integral part of deployment planning. It should be a part of the military decision-making process and must include rear-detachment operations and families.

There are seven primary areas that should be addressed, in addition to the normal hazards: geographic location of the unit, geographic location of services, leadership experience, leadership training, planning, training/exercise schedule, and family support (see Table 1). Geographic considerations are more important for the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, and organizations outside of the continental United States. Leadership experience and training are key for all rear detachments. The farther down you go from the rank designed to command a unit, the more risks you assume.

The geographic location of the unit (if separated from its parent unit), as measured in driving time, can cause or contribute to the hazards of operating a motor vehicle—one of the most dangerous things rear-detachment personnel and family members do. The hazard is determined by comparing the type of unit with the driving time. This can range from thirty minutes to well over an hour. The longer the driving time, the more risk involved.

Geographic location of services involves distances from services measured in driving time. Again, this measures the risk involved with operating a motor vehicle to obtain services. These measurements are by service type, which would include the hospital, dental clinic, family assistance center, commissary, post exchange, and recreation services. The more important the service, the more times personnel are likely to visit it. The second measurement can be the miles that must be driven to get to the service. The more important the service, and the more driving time, the more risk involved. However, additional risk is often present if essential services are not provided. Many of us can live for a short time without a library, but if a medical facility is a great distance from our home and we have no transportation, the risk becomes high that we will not have appropriate medical treatment when it's needed.

Leadership experience can cause or contribute to accidents in many ways. The most obvious is that lower-ranking military personnel normally have less knowledge, skills, and abilities than higher-ranking personnel. This is due to the training, education, and job experience of a normal career. Leadership positions for rear detachments often range from brigade-command level down to platoon level. If you compare this with the individual assigned as the rear-detachment commander, you can obtain a risk level. The rear-detachment commander at the brigade level might be a captain, while the company rear-detachment commander might be a sergeant first class. Units can also offset this risk by providing training to personnel to prepare them for the duties and issues of rear-detachment command. With training provided, you can

Rear-Detachment Risk Management	
Geographic location of the unit	Distance from parent unit in driving time compared with unit type
Geographic location of services	Distance from services in driving time compared with service type
Leadership experience	Leadership position held prior to rear detachment compared to rear detachment command level
Leadership training	Type of training provided and the level of rear detachment command
Planning	Preparation guidance compared to time for preparation
Training/exercise schedule	Operating tempo guidance compared to type of training
Organized family support group	Includes access and availability of privately owned vehicles, commercial transportation, telephones, a family support group alert roster, and a medical and dental facility

Table 1

compare the rank of the individual assigned with the training received. The training can be in the classroom, on the job, or both. Without any training, the risk may be high; with classroom and on-the-job training, the risk could easily be reduced to a low level.

Planning preparation and guidance will still be necessary for the rear detachments and family member activities. Planning is often measured as in-depth, adequate, minimal, vague, implied, and specified. The more time that can be provided to the rear-attachment commander, the lower the risk during mission execution. The general rule of thumb is to take one-third of the time allotted to conduct your planning and then give the subordinate unit two-thirds of the time for them to plan. This allows additional time for rear-attachment commanders who have little planning experience.

Training and exercises will still be conducted at the rear-attachment level. The operating tempo, compared to the guidance provided, determines the risk level. A field training exercise or a command post exercise with good guidance present less risk than an exercise with medium or low guidance.

Whether or not a unit has an organized family support group determines the risk level of family members while the service members are deployed. The better organized and the lower the unit level, the less the risk. These support groups can provide invaluable assistance to family members that can reduce their risk. It also relieves a great deal of stress on family members when they know they are not alone at this difficult time. Young family members with privately owned vehicles might be at a higher risk than older, more experienced drivers. Furthermore, some vehicles may not be in good working order. Sharing rides or using public transportation through the family support group can produce less risk.

Whether or not family members have access to a telephone can determine the type and availability of medical treatment. Again, the family support group can help family members work through this issue by using neighbors or other means to provide telephone service. Sharing rides and telephone support are made much easier and more effective with a family support group alert roster. This document can be a family member's best friend, by listing other family members who want to help.

You should include the hazards posed by these seven categories just as you would hazards from missions and operations. It works just like the procedures outlined in Field Manual 100-14, *Risk Management*. The leader identifies the hazards present. The highest risk of these initial estimates becomes the initial risk. The leader then identifies risk reduction measures to reduce the risk and then identifies the risk based on the control measures.

After reducing the initial risk as much as feasible without adversely affecting the rear detachment's ability to conduct its mission, we then identify the residual risk. This level of risk is accepted or refused by the rear-attachment commander. The amount of approval authority should be determined in the early stages of the deployment planning process (see Table 2).

This risk acceptance approval authority should be agreed to by the individuals at the various levels of command within the organization. In addition, the risk acceptance levels should be documented in the operations order or operations plan to ensure that commanders and staff at all levels understand who the approval authority is. These levels are based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of personnel at different ranks. These levels describe the amount of risk each level agrees to accept.

A good safety program must include the particular hazards faced by rear detachments and the families left behind. By including these two areas in the initial risk management process conducted during deployment planning, you can identify and reduce the hazards to rear-attachment personnel and families. The risk management process can and should be updated periodically as the mission and situation changes.

For additional information, please refer to the U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center Safety Web page at www.wood.army.mil/safety/.

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Rear-Attachment Risk Acceptance Matrix				
Risk Level	Approval Level			
	Squad	Platoon	Company	Battalion
Low	Squad leader	Platoon leader	Company commander	Battalion commander
Medium	Platoon leader	Company commander	Battalion commander	Brigade commander
High	Company commander	Battalion commander	Brigade commander	Division commander

Table 2