

Welcome Guide Afghanistan Engineer District – South



[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Afghanistan Engineer District - South

Welcome to the Afghanistan Engineer District–South

We've designed this welcome guide to provide you with information about the mission of the Afghanistan Engineer District–South, your living and working conditions once you arrive here, and the country of Afghanistan. This guide provides information that should make your transition smoother. We have an incredibly exciting mission, and we are proud of the work that we are doing for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Every

member of our team contributes to the delivery of products, projects and services, and we're delighted that you are bringing your skills, energy and can-do attitude to one of the most exciting programs in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The South District may also be referred to as TAS (a derivative of the office symbol, CETAS).



[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Table of Contents

4 USACE History in Afghanistan

6 South District Mission

11 Getting to South District

- Pre-deployment, page 11
- USACE Deployment Center (UDC)/CONUS Readiness Center (CRC) (or Equivalent), page 11
- Movement to Kandahar, page 12
- What to Bring, page 13
- Points of Contact, page 13

14 Working Conditions

- Hours of Work, page 14
- Security/Force Protection, page 14
- Personal Readiness, page 15
- Uniforms, page 16
- Civilian Attire, page 16

17 How You Will Live

- Accommodations, page 17
- Electricity, page 18
- Communications, page 18
- Dining Facilities, page 18
- Finances, page 19
- Gyms - Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), page 19
- Laundry, page 19
- Legal Assistance, page 19
- Mail, page 20
- Medical, page 20
- Post Exchange, page 21
- Religious Services, page 21
- Souvenir Shopping, page 21

22 About Afghanistan

- Background, page 22
- Country Information, page 23
- People, page 23
- Geography, page 24
- Government and Political Conditions, page 25
- U.S./Afghan Relations, page 26
- NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), page 27

28 Frequently Asked Questions

31 Acronyms and Abbreviations

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

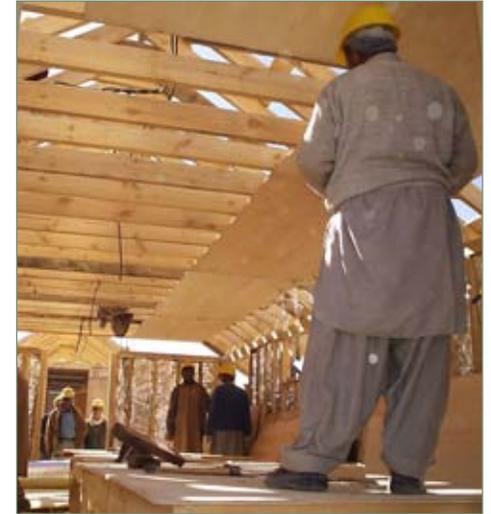
[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

USACE History in Afghanistan



In October 2001, the United States and its coalition partners sent military forces into Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, which had the goals of displacing the al-Qaeda terrorist organization, ousting the Taliban government and establishing a new Afghan central government. A six-person Forward Engineer Support Team (FEST) from USACE deployed with the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps and worked with that unit's engineers during combat operations. The USACE team provided the XVIII Airborne Corps with engineering, construction, planning, contracting and real estate services.

In a country racked by decades of war, the fledgling government needed a national army to secure internal peace and stability. But the new Afghan National Army (ANA) needed adequate facilities to support its new fighting force, and by fall 2002, it became

clear that the renovation and construction of support facilities would be the pacing factor in the ANA's expansion. The Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan asked the Army Corps of Engineers to manage the renovation and construction of facilities for the new national army.

To manage this program, the Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Programs Center (TAC, now the Middle East District) in Winchester, Virginia, established the Afghanistan Area Office at Kabul in September 2002. With the help of the FEST already in place, TAC planners completed the ANA facilities master plan and awarded the first ANA construction contracts by the end of 2002. Initially, those contracts were to renovate existing facilities to house the first soldiers graduating from the ANA training program.

The facility requirements for the ANA expanded as the numbers of soldiers increased, with new brigade

USACE History in Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

facilities identified for construction throughout Afghanistan. Concurrently, the military construction (MILCON) workload for the U.S. and coalition forces increased during 2003, primarily because the growing number of forces at Bagram Airfield (north of Kabul) and Kandahar Airfield (in southern Afghanistan) required housing and operational facilities. Additionally, USACE entered into an agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide design review, construction management and quality assurance services for certain projects.

The growth in mission and the long-term commitment to Afghanistan prompted USACE to convert the area office to a district. On March 1, 2004, the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED), reporting directly to USACE headquarters, assumed command and control of Corps of Engineers assets in Afghanistan and the bordering countries. While no longer reporting to TAC, AED continued to receive the majority of its reach-back support from the Winchester organization.

Five years after its creation, USACE enacted another organizational change to meet the

engineering requirements in Afghanistan. With the increasing mission to provide facilities for more than 30,000 U.S. troops to support the surge ordered by President Obama, USACE created the South District from the existing Kandahar Program Office, with the North District continuing to be based in Kabul. Both districts report to the Transatlantic Division (TAD) in Winchester, which was established September 29, 2009. In theater, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A) has operational control over both the North and South Districts. TAD has a Forward element based in Kabul that directs and coordinates the efforts of both districts; TAD-Forward is responsible to USFOR-A.

USACE missions in Afghanistan play a vital role in the international efforts to establish a secure and stable environment in this republic.



South District Mission

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)



MISSION

Execute quality and timely construction and engineering operations in the Regional Commands (RC) South, Southwest and West regions of Afghanistan in support of the U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A) mission and the integrated Afghan National Security/Coalition Forces' counterinsurgency (COIN) operations aimed at protecting the population and defeating the insurgency forces. On order, provide sustainable development projects for the Afghan people that employ the populace, build skilled human capital and promote the future stability of Afghanistan.

The South District was established August 3, 2009, with its headquarters located at Kandahar Airfield (KAF). It has area and resident offices located throughout the areas where ISAF Regional Commands South, Southwest and West operate.

Our mission is to design and construct projects in three broad areas:

- Facilities that support Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) – which are comprised of the national army and national police – and the operations and maintenance (O&M) of those enduring sites and facilities. Projects include complete operating bases, training ranges, hospitals and police headquarters compounds.

South District Mission, continued

Welcome to South District

USACE History in Afghanistan

South District Mission

Getting to South District

Working Conditions

How You Will Live

About Afghanistan

Frequently Asked Questions

Acronyms and Abbreviations



- Projects under the Afghan Sustainable Development Program – such as roads, potable water supply and distribution, and power production – that are accomplished primarily through the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP).
 - MILCON projects that support USFOR-A operations, such as airfields, cargo handling areas, utilities infrastructure, fuel systems, entry control points, warehouses and medical facilities.
- South District employs more than 400 people – military, civilian and contractors including Afghan

citizens. They are based in the headquarters on KAF and in four area offices having 12 resident offices located throughout southern Afghanistan. The headquarters has an engineer commander, deputy commander, command sergeant major and deputy for programs and project management (the senior civilian position).

The headquarters has project management, engineering, contracting and construction professionals, supplemented by a business support staff that includes human resources (J1), intelligence

South District Mission, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

(J2), operations (J3), logistics and supply (J4), information technology (J6), counsel, internal review, public affairs, resource management and safety.

The field offices are generally comprised of an officer in charge, an area or resident engineer, office engineers, project engineers, construction representatives, safety specialists, IT specialists and administrative personnel.

South District Headquarters, Kandahar Airfield Area Office

The South District headquarters compound and the Kandahar Airfield Area Office are located on Kandahar Airfield (KAF), 10 miles from Kandahar City. Kandahar is located in the southeastern portion of Afghanistan at the edge of the Margow Desert, lying between the Arghandab and Tarnak Rivers.

KAF is the military hub for the region and is under ISAF command. The base sits on an ancient dry lake bed and is surrounded by mountains. Conditions are dusty and the environment is harsh.

The base has NATO and U.S. forces and contractor personnel. The base is a mix of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians as well as the military forces of our allies – Great Britain, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and other nations.

South District headquarters sits on its own secure, compact compound with offices, housing and recreational facilities.

The Kandahar Airfield Area Office has a newly constructed compound in an area known as South Park. This compound is much closer to its military construction projects for the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. These projects – totaling more than \$500

million – include airfields, housing, command and control facilities and other infrastructure projects.

Kandahar Area Office

The Kandahar Area Office provides oversight for a \$500 million construction program that promotes construction and infrastructure development in the Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan and Daykundi provinces – an area covering approximately 36,000 square miles – and falling under ISAF Regional Command South.

The area office is located on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Lindsey, adjacent to Camp Hero, the ANA base, just outside KAF's perimeter. The area office has three subordinate resident offices.

The Kandahar Vicinity Resident Office, also located at FOB Lindsey, works in the Kandahar province, managing projects for the Afghan National Army and Police; and infrastructure projects such as construction of diesel generator power plants and roads.



South District Mission, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)



The Tarin Kowt Resident Office works in the Uruzgan and Daykundi provinces, with a number of projects on Multinational Base Tarin Kowt as well as road projects.

The Qalat Resident Office is located on FOB Apache, with responsibility for work in the Zabul province. The main effort is construction of three road projects.

Helmand Area Office

The Helmand Area Office supports operations in ISAF Regional Command Southwest, which includes the Helmand and Nimruz provinces, an area of approximately 40,000 square miles. The area office is located on Camp Shorabak, an ANA camp in the Helmand province. Camp Shorabak is adjacent to Camp Leatherneck (which is used by U.S. Marines) and Camp Bastion (which is used by the United Kingdom).

The Helmand Area Office began as the Lashkar Gah Resident Office when there was only one engineer district in Afghanistan. The office has overseen the construction of Camp Shorabak and has

seen the growth of Camps Bastion and Leatherneck since 2007. In 2011 and 2012 the area office will oversee construction on Camp Shorabak that will double the size of the ANA garrison.

The area office has three resident offices: the Tombstone Resident Office, also located on Camp Shorabak; the Dwyer Resident Office, located on Camp Dwyer near Garm Ser; and the Delaram Resident Office, located on FOB Delaram near the town of Delaram.

The resident offices are responsible for the U.S. military and ANSF construction projects in their geographical locations. Combined, the offices have about \$235 million worth of projects underway and another \$400 million that will be awarded in the next four to six months. Long term, the Helmand Area Office is anticipating a workload exceeding \$1 billion.

Herat Area Office

The Herat Area Office covers four provinces – Herat, Badghis, Ghawr and Farah, an area of approximately 62,000 square miles – and supports ISAF Regional Command West. The area office is located on FOB Stone, a U.S. camp shared with Spanish and Italians primarily, which is adjacent to the Afghan National Army 207th Corps headquarters at Camp Zafar. These locations are about 12 miles south of Herat City.

The Herat Area Office is working on 32 projects totaling more than \$300 million in fiscal year 2011. At the mid-point of fiscal year 2011, 12 projects totaling \$250 million remain to be awarded. The Herat Area Office has a staff of 27 Corps of Engineers personnel. There are also 42 Afghan project engineers and quality assurance representatives and eight Afghan

South District Mission, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

operations-and-maintenance engineers.

The area office has four resident offices. The Herat Resident Office is co-located with the area office and is responsible for a wide range of police facilities, ANA expansions, Ministry of Interior headquarters and a university building.

The Shindand Resident Office is located on the rapidly expanding Shindand Air Base, with more than \$100 million in military construction projects to support the base. Additionally, the office has facilities underway for other customers.

The Farah Resident Office is located on FOB Farah just outside of the town of Farah. Its work includes police facilities and ANA projects at Camp Sayar.

And the Qala-I-Naw Resident Office is located in the Badghis province near the Qala-I-Naw airport and the Spanish base, with projects underway for the ANA and upcoming projects for the Afghan National Police.



South District Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Support Program

In 2010, South District stood up a support program for the U.S. PRT teams operating in the southern portion of Afghanistan to add engineer capacity and capability to the teams. PRT teams are located at Camp Nathan Smith and in Farah and Qalat. South District employees assigned to these teams are managed by PRT program managers and directed by the PRT commander, his/her representative and the senior military engineer.

Members provide engineering technical expertise, including initial area assessments, project identification and scoping, statements of work, minor project design, proposal evaluations, design documentation review and resolution of construction technical issues. Additionally, members provide mentoring for PRT personnel along with contractors on proper construction techniques to enhance the team's overall capability and help with counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in southern Afghanistan.

This program has yielded positive feedback from both PRT team leadership and battle space owners.



[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Getting to South District



Pre-deployment

For civilians, the Administrative Personnel Processing Office (APPO) at the USACE Deployment Center (UDC) is your source for information such as the required paperwork, medical and dental examinations, security clearances and passports necessary before your deployment. Direct your questions to your APPO representative; review the UDC website [www.tam.usace.army.mil/UDC/index.asp]; or check with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center's human resources specialist who extended your job offer. South District J-1 (Human Resources) will assign a sponsor to you once your deployment tasker is issued.

For military personnel, your primary source of information is the South District J-1 Adjutant. Depending on your type of orders, military members will receive information from either the Personnel

Force Innovation staff, Reserve Component Mobilization Team or South District J-1. In all cases, the South District J-1 staff will contact you with a welcome package, assign a sponsor and track your progress through the pre-deployment cycle.

USACE Deployment Center (UDC)/CONUS Readiness Center (CRC) (or Equivalent)

In accordance with U.S. Central Command guidance, each person deploying to South District must process through a deployment center. Civilians process through the UDC located at the Middle East District in Winchester, Virginia, and Army military members process through the CRC at Fort Benning, Georgia. Other services have combat skills training and mobilization processing sites at various locations.

The deployment process usually takes about five days for most deploying civilian personnel. You will

Getting to South District, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

attend a series of deployment preparation and training classes, plus receive a clothing and equipment issue for your tour of duty. The UDC sets the deployment schedule, arranges transportation for your departure to Afghanistan and provides notification to the South District J1 office of your arrival information. The UDC will also provide you with contacts and telephone numbers if you have questions or problems during travel.

For military, the experience will vary depending on your billet requirements, Active Duty or Reserve affiliation, and service. Active Duty members can generally expect a short week of mobilization in-processing and Rapid Fielding Initiative gear issue, followed by a three-week combat skills training period. Army Reserve members have a much shorter one-week processing period at CRC prior to deployment.



For Army members, the CRC will coordinate your travel to Camp Ali Al Salem, Kuwait. A USACE Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI) team will meet you and coordinate your remaining travel to Kandahar. Navy Sailors will pass through Camp Virginia, Kuwait, while Air Force Airmen will pass through the Transit Center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, before arriving in Kandahar.

When you process through the UDC or the CRC, you will be advised concerning the mandatory documents that you must bring with you. ***Always carry your common access card (CAC) and your passports with you during your travel to Afghanistan. Once deployed, you must always carry your CAC.***

Military members should bring a copy of all pre-deployment training, several copies of their orders and a copy of the last military evaluation and summary record (ORB/2A). They should have it readily available upon arrival at South District.

Movement to Kandahar

All employees, no matter where you're assigned, will land on KAF.

South District headquarters and its Kandahar Airfield Area Office have office compounds and living quarters on KAF. If you are assigned on KAF, you will be placed in temporary or permanent quarters, depending on housing availability.

If you are assigned to a field office, you will be billeted in temporary facilities on KAF until you have completed the new employee orientation and your transportation is arranged for movement to your designated field office.

Getting to South District, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

PERSONAL ITEMS YOU MAY WANT TO BRING

- ___ Your Passwords*
- ___ Checkbook/credit and/or debit card*
- ___ Personal hygiene items*
- ___ Small flashlight with batteries*
- ___ Dual-voltage appliances, adapter plug or transformer
- ___ Skin and hair products, lip balm (especially if you have preferred brands)
- ___ Towels (2), washcloths (2)*
- ___ Small sewing kit
- ___ Adhesive hooks
- ___ Two sets of civilian attire
- ___ Twin-sized sheets, blanket, pillow
- ___ Sunglasses*
- ___ Shower shoes*
- ___ Bath robe
- ___ Laptop
- ___ Athletic workout attire
- ___ Prescriptions*
- ___ Over-the-counter medications*
- ___ Reading material
- ___ Battery alarm clock*

*Denotes hand carry

What to Bring

Because of strict baggage limitations, which are outlined on the UDC website, you may want to consider mailing some items ahead of time that will make you feel more comfortable on your deployment. Reimbursement for mailing your personal items is not authorized. Also, you can shop online for your personal needs while deployed.

We offer suggestions for items you may wish to bring with you or to ship. These are suggestions only, and you cannot claim them on a travel voucher as a required expense.

What not to bring: General Order No. 1 prohibits you from bringing certain items to the theater: privately owned firearms and ammunition, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances and pornographic or sexually explicit materials. It has additional requirements once you are deployed. The order will be provided during your deployment process.

POINTS OF CONTACT

CONUS Replacement Center

Fort Benning, Georgia

Duty NCO: Commercial 706-544-6500

MED Emergency Operations Center

Winchester, Virginia

Commercial 540-665-4111

DSN 312-265-4111

South District J1 Office (TAS.J1@usace.army.mil)

OIC: Commercial 540-722-6293, DSN 312-265-6293

HR Specialist: Commercial 540-722-6820, DSN 312-265-6820

NCOIC: Commercial 540-722-6848, DSN 312-265-6848

Travel Coordinator: Commercial 540-665-5360; DSN 312-265-5360

South District J3

NCOIC: Commercial 540-678-6631; DSN 312-265-6631

USACE-RSOI Kuwait

DSN 318-442-0375/0909/0201

Cell 965-970-2532/From CONUS 011-965-970-2532

Working Conditions

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)



Hours of Work

South District strives to provide an adequate working environment for all personnel. You may find yourself working in a wide range of facilities. Generally, the area offices provide similar work amenities as those provided at South District headquarters on KAF, but conditions do vary by location.

Personnel requirements may change rapidly, as projects are completed and new projects begin, sometimes necessitating reassignment to a different location.

South District employees put in long hours. The typical workweek schedule is 64 hours. Additional overtime may be authorized by your supervisor but should not be assumed. There are no regularly scheduled days off, but Friday is a low battle rhythm day, with four hours of work required.

South District employees have these holidays off – Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

HOURS

Sunday – Thursday: 10 hours per day

Friday: 4 hours per day

Total scheduled work week:

- 40 hours of regular time, of which 8 hours are Sunday premium pay
- 24 hours of overtime

Security/Force Protection

Afghanistan is designated a combat zone by the Department of Defense. U.S. and coalition forces regularly engage remnants of extremist organizations. The intensity of fighting may fluctuate based on regional or local conditions. Threats of indirect fire, rockets and improvised explosive devices are always possible. In fact, when Kandahar Airfield experiences

Working Conditions, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

rocket attacks, KAF residents must take shelter in a bunker or bunker building until the “all clear” message sounds.

The South District commander and staff work with the battle space owners to mitigate the risks for our employees. However, Corps of Engineers employees have sustained injuries because of these risks. Since this is a combat zone, it is vitally important that you maintain situational awareness at all times.

In addition, law and order are not observed everywhere in the manner that you are accustomed to in the United States. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its partners are working to establish the rule of law, so the environment is changing gradually. If you observe something suspicious, report it. You just might save a life.

The Security/Force Protection staff has strong working relationships with military organizations throughout the South District areas of responsibility. They keep abreast of the latest threat and intelligence information which may impact movement of personnel. When South District personnel travel

outside of secure areas, they are integrated into the security plans of the regional military commands or are accompanied by military and/or contracted security personnel.

You must follow all requirements for travel in and around Kandahar and around field offices. You must abide by any established travel restrictions, and you must wear your fire-retardant uniform, body armor, helmet and other required items in unsecured locations or while traveling. These restrictions and requirements are necessary to ensure your safety, which is our primary concern.

Personal Readiness

Working in South District requires individuals to be vigilant in maintaining their health, wearing personal protective equipment, following established protocols and driving responsibly.

Emergency care is available, but transitional health care is limited. Unique medical and dental problems must be resolved prior to deploying. Incoming employees must be in good physical condition, able to climb stairs and walk on rough terrain.

Maintaining a regular fitness routine helps you feel better and manage stress. Plan to include physical exercise in your daily activity.

Medical facilities in theater provide malaria prevention medication, but you should obtain this medication in the pre-deployment cycle. Unless you are under written doctor’s orders not to take this medication, you should take it as prescribed since Afghanistan is at high risk for malaria.

The sun is intense so be sure to wear sunscreen and a hat.

Dust is intense in most locations within the South



Working Conditions, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

District area of operations. If you have or have had asthma, perhaps this isn't the deployment location for you.

Working in a combat zone for long hours and on fast-paced programs is stressful. Plan for this and set realistic goals. Be flexible and accept that you can't control everything. Keep a sense of humor where appropriate; it helps.

Uniforms

South District has a detailed uniform policy. In short:

- Military personnel:
 - Must wear the Army Combat Uniform (ACU), MultiCam or joint service equivalent during the course of a normal duty day. The Fire Retardant Army Combat Uniform (FRACU) is worn for "outside the wire" or flight operations.
 - Must wear the physical fitness uniform in compliance with service regulations.
 - Are not authorized to wear civilian clothing.
 - Department of the Army (DA) civilians may wear:
 - Desert Camouflage Uniform (DCU).
 - Army Combat Uniform (ACU).
 - Optional Civilian Uniform (OCU), which you may purchase and which must be worn in compliance with the uniform policy.
- The Nomex flight suit or the FRACU is required, with other personal protection items, for travel in unsecured locations.

Civilian Attire

Civilians may wear civilian attire during off-duty

hours only. Attire should be conservative and in good condition. Civilians are not authorized to wear civilian attire during the normal duty day from 0700-1730 or during the four-hour "low battle rhythm" workday; they must comply with the uniform policy.

Dressing conservatively means you cannot wear halter or tank tops, muscle shirts, see-through shirts or blouses, and short shorts. Other inappropriate clothing includes clothing that is sexually provocative or suggestive; tight-fitting pants, shirts or blouses; sleeveless or strapless blouses; and clothing with racial slurs or clothing that promotes violence or anything illegal.

Civilians may wear conservative shorts and short pants on South District compounds only. Civilians may also wear conservative shorts and short pants when participating in exercise or physical training.

No open-toe shoes, such as flip flops, are permitted in the workplace or in dining facilities.

Bags are not permitted in the dining and gymnasium facilities or on the boardwalk at KAF.



[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

How You Will Live



Accommodations

Living conditions are constantly changing for everyone working for South District, no matter your location. The district is improving conditions for employees assigned to Kandahar Airfield; several facility improvements are planned or underway for employees assigned in field offices.

Living conditions vary by location.

South District members may have a private room; they may share a room; or they may be in the bunkhouse or a tent for a short period while awaiting a permanent housing assignment.

Most rooms are equipped with a bed, free-standing closet or chest of drawers, refrigerator and telephone. In some locations, you may have a small desk in your room. You may need to buy certain comfort items, such as a lamp, mirror and small drawer units. These items are generally available in the Post Exchange.

Storage is limited. All rooms are equipped with individual units for heating and air conditioning.

In practically all instances, you will share bathroom facilities. Bathrooms are cleaned daily, except for Fridays. You are expected to keep the bathrooms in acceptable condition just as you would at home by cleaning up after yourself.

You are responsible for cleaning your own room. Post Exchanges carry cleaning supplies.

If you want a television and/or DVD player, you will need to provide them. The Armed Forces Network (AFN) is available at most locations.

Please direct any questions about quality of life to your sponsor, who should be familiar with what's available at your destination.

How You Will Live, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

HOUSING AT KAF

Managing expectations for housing is important to the South District leadership. If you are assigned to KAF, single rooms are limited and are assigned based on housing policy.

- Single rooms are assigned to persons occupying certain leadership positions.
- Remaining single rooms are based on “boots on ground.”

If you are assigned to KAF, most likely you will have a roommate for two or three months before you are assigned single billeting.

ELECTRICITY

Your 110/120-voltage appliances will work on the South District compound at Kandahar Airfield, but they won't work on the FOBs.

FOBs have 220-volt electricity.

- Bring an adapter plug if you have dual-voltage appliances, or
- Bring a transformer if you have 110-voltage appliances.

Always have your coffee pot, refrigerator and microwave on separate outlets.

Never overload power strips; make sure they have the CE or UL approval.

Never “daisy chain” power strips.

Communications

You will be issued a local mobile phone for local interaction and as a force protection measure. For calling back to the United States and intra-theater business, we use voice over internet protocol (VOIP) capability. The phones use a stateside area code (540 - Winchester, Virginia) so calls can be made without incurring an international rate. This will allow you to make morale calls back to your families, as well as conduct personal and professional business while deployed. In addition, access to the Internet and popular social networking sites is also available through the .com network.

Those assigned to KAF and most other FOBs will have VOIP and television (AFN) services in common areas or their living quarters (remember that televisions are not provided in your living quarters). Many people use their personal laptop to play movies, listen to music and watch AFN. If you want to watch TV on your computer, it will require a computer TV tuner card that should be acquired and tested prior to your arrival in theater. Your sponsor should be able to provide you specifics for your assignment destination.

Dining Facilities

Every location has at least one dining facility. Some dining facilities serve three meals a day; others also serve a midnight meal. You must dress conservatively in the dining facilities.

Kandahar Airfield has at least six dining facilities.

KAF hosts several restaurants and food concessions on the Boardwalk, including coffee shops, hamburger and hot dog stands, pizza shops, and dining-in establishments.

How You Will Live, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Because of the remote and austere nature of the FOBs, eating establishments other than the dining facilities may be limited or nonexistent.

Finances

An Army finance office is located on KAF, where you can cash personal checks. However, the limit may vary, and the finance office has strict monthly limits on the amount of money you may withdraw.

You may also cash a check up to \$300 at the U.S. Post Exchange.

ATMs may be limited at your location. At KAF, there are two, located at the Boardwalk, with a limit of \$200 per transaction. Be aware that sometimes the ATMs run out of money, so don't rely solely on the ATM to get cash.

Most of the post exchanges accept your debit/credit card. The post exchanges operated by other nations may carry a transaction fee. You can only get up to \$20 over your purchase amount at the U.S. Post Exchange.

Most locations accept the Eagle Cash card. The military uses this debit-type card in lieu of cash to save on the cost of doing business with cash. You will learn about that card when you process through your deployment location.

Local currency is not required.

Gyms – Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)

Exercise options are available at every South District location in some form, be it the South District gym or a FOB weight room. In addition, the military installations have exercise programs and MWR classes to help you keep fit.

Laundry

No laundry service is provided on South District compounds, but common-use washers and dryers are provided. You will need to provide your own laundry detergent and dryer sheets. The Post Exchange generally carries laundry supplies, irons and ironing boards.

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance is limited in Afghanistan and dependent upon available resources. You are strongly encouraged to take care of all legal matters before you deploy. The South District Office of Counsel will, by necessity, refer you to other resources in theater, which include USFOR-A or Regional Command South Army attorneys.

Please note, however, that the availability of in-theater attorneys is determined by the supervising attorney, and they will provide assistance only for those matters that relate to processing for employment or deployment. These services are limited to notarization, power of attorney and simple will preparation. More extensive and complicated legal services – such as estate planning, forming trusts and representation in matters that involve civil proceedings – extend beyond the intent of these provisions.



How You Will Live, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Service members, both Active Duty (and their family members) and Reserve Component, may receive services in-theater and continuing legal services upon redeployment.

Legal assistance will not be denied or delayed on the basis of the command, area office or military department in which a client is assigned to or with which a client is affiliated except for individuals who are affiliated with a military department that does not routinely provide such legal assistance services. For example, if the Air Force, as a matter of its legal assistance policy, does not routinely provide separation agreements to its domestic relations clients, then an Army commander may direct that such agreements not be drafted by Army legal assistance attorneys for Air Force clients. The servicing USFOR-A or Regional Command South commanding general may delegate this authority to his or her staff judge advocate.

Mail

You may mail letters and post cards free, weighing up to 13 ounces. For larger items or boxes, you will need to use the U.S. Post Office on base and mail the items at your expense.

Mail takes 7-10 days to arrive from the United States. We receive mail seven days a week. It may take up to two weeks for mail to arrive in the United States from here.

The U.S. Post Office accepts cash and the Eagle Cash card only. All boxes will be inspected before being shipped to ensure you are not sending prohibited items home. A list of prohibited items for mailing back to the United States is provided by J1 (Human Resources).

Boxes being mailed home are limited to 60 pounds.

Medical

Troop medical clinics are available for all deployed personnel – military and civilian.

They are staffed by trained medical corps service members. Hours are established at the individual locations for sick call and for other appointments such as vaccinations. Services include emergencies and outpatient visits. Emergencies (life, limb or eyesight) are seen 24



MAILING

Mailing Address:

Your Name – No Rank
USACE – AES
APO AE 09355

Mail Tip: Mailing an envelope weighing 13 oz. or less is **FREE**. Just write “Free” in place of a stamp.

If you are assigned to a forward operating base, you will be provided the address to use upon arrival at your duty location.

How You Will Live, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

hours per day, 7 days per week. Only emergency dental care, however, is available in theater.

Bring enough prescription medication for your entire stay. You are encouraged to take malaria medication since malaria is prevalent in Afghanistan and 100 percent preventable. Contracting malaria is a Uniform Code of Military Justice offense and is dealt with harshly. Take your meds!

Post Exchange

Most locations have a Post Exchange of some type. There are multiple post exchanges on KAF, including exchanges operated by the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. You should be able to find most of what you'll need, but you may not be able to find specific brands. Arrange to have specific items shipped to you or plan to order them on line.

Sometimes there are shortages of even the most basic supplies because of in-theater shipping priorities. Plan and keep a stock.

The post exchanges carry clothing, military gear, boots, food and snacks, laundry and cleaning supplies, some toiletries and paper products, bedding and towels, electronics, movies, and music.

Additionally, you will be able to order most anything you need online.

Religious Services

Religious services are available at most locations, though they may be limited at the remote sites. KAF has several chapels, offering services for multiple denominations. Religious programs may be available periodically.

Friday is the Muslim holy day. Therefore, most jobsites operate limited hours with minimal crew and staff.

Souvenir Shopping

Many of the installations have approved vendor-run shops or bazaars where you may buy wares from Afghan merchants. The more popular goods include traditional wool and silk rugs, leather, jewelry, scarves, handbags, brass statues, and DVDs. It is customary to haggle about the cost of goods at bazaars. The shops take U.S. dollars and the Eagle Cash card; some will take U.S. credit cards for payment. The bazaar vendors take cash only.



About Afghanistan

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)



Background

Afghanistan was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani, who originally created a kingdom of Afghans or Pashtuns that he later unified. The Afghan kingdom breaks down into three principalities: Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. In 1837, Iran, with the support of the Russians, invaded Herat. After years of conflict, a stable, ostensibly pro-English government was installed in 1880. For the next 70-plus years, the country served as a buffer between the British and Russian Empires until it won independence from notional British control on August 19, 1919. This date is celebrated as National Independence Day.

Brief experiments in democracy ended in a 1973 coup and a 1978 Communist counter-coup. On Christmas Day 1979, the Soviet Union invaded to support the tottering Afghan Communist regime, touching off a long and destructive war. The Soviet

Union withdrew in 1989 under relentless pressure by internationally supported anti-Communist mujahedin rebels.

A series of subsequent civil wars saw Kabul finally fall in 1996 to the Taliban, a hard-line Pakistani-sponsored movement that emerged in 1994 to end the country's civil war and anarchy. Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, a United States/allied/anti-Taliban Northern Alliance military action toppled the Taliban for sheltering Osama Bin Ladin.

The UN-sponsored Bonn Conference in 2001 established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution on January 4, 2004, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005. In December 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first democratically

About Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

elected president of Afghanistan, and the National Assembly was inaugurated the following December. President Karzai was re-elected in August 2009 for a second term.

Country Information

While commonly referred to as “Afghanistan,” the conventional long form of the country’s name is Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The government is referred to as the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA).

Its capital is Kabul. Other major cities include Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kunduz.

Each of Afghanistan’s provincial governments has a provincial governor, a provincial council, a provincial development committee and a provincial administrative assembly. Provincial governors are generally nominated by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance and appointed by the president. Additionally, most national line ministries responsible for the delivery of government services, such as health and education, maintain departmental offices in provincial centers, as do some national independent agencies and offices.

Each province is divided into small districts. There are approximately 364 districts although this number fluctuates. Afghanistan also has approximately 150 municipalities, with this number fluctuating as well.

“Afghan” is used in reference to the country, such as Afghan National Army.

PROVINCES

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ Badakhshan | ▪ Jowzjan | ▪ Nuristan |
| ▪ Badghis | ▪ Kabul | ▪ Paktika |
| ▪ Baghlan | ▪ Kandahar | ▪ Paktiya |
| ▪ Balkh | ▪ Kapisa | ▪ Panjsher |
| ▪ Bamian | ▪ Khost | ▪ Parwan |
| ▪ Daykundi | ▪ Kunar | ▪ Samangan |
| ▪ Farah | ▪ Kunduz | ▪ Sar-e Pul |
| ▪ Faryab | ▪ Laghman | ▪ Takhar |
| ▪ Ghazni | ▪ Logar | ▪ Uruzgan |
| ▪ Ghawr | ▪ Meymaneh | ▪ Wardak |
| ▪ Helmand | ▪ Nangarhar | ▪ Zabul |
| ▪ Herat | ▪ Nimruz | |

People

Afghanistan’s ethnically and linguistically mixed population reflects its location astride historic trade and invasion routes leading from Central Asia into South and Southwest Asia. While population data is somewhat unreliable for Afghanistan – estimated at 29 million people – Pashtuns make up the largest ethnic group at 42 percent of the population, followed by Tajiks (27 percent), Hazaras (9 percent), Uzbek (9 percent), Aimaq, Turkmen, Baluch, and other small groups.

Dari (Afghan Farsi) and Pashto are official languages. Dari is spoken by more than one-third of the population as a first language and serves as a lingua franca for most Afghans, though Pashto is spoken throughout the Pashtun areas of eastern and southern Afghanistan. Tajik and Turkic languages are spoken widely in the north. Smaller groups throughout the country also speak more than 70 other languages and numerous dialects.

About Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Afghanistan is an Islamic country. An estimated 80 percent of the population is Sunni, following the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence; the remainder of the population – primarily the Hazara ethnic group – is predominantly Shi'a. Despite attempts during the years of Communist rule to secularize Afghan society, Islamic practices pervade all aspects of life. In fact, Islam served as a principal basis for expressing opposition to communism and the Soviet invasion. Islamic religious tradition and codes, together with traditional tribal and ethnic practices, have an important role in personal conduct and dispute settlement. Afghan society is largely based on kinship groups, which follow traditional customs and religious practices, though somewhat less so in urban areas.

The age structure is as follows: 43.6 percent, birth to 14 years; 54 percent, between 15 and 64 years; and 2.4 percent, over 65.

“Afghan” may be used to refer to the citizens of Afghanistan, such as an Afghan child. The proper terms for people in Afghanistan are *“Afghans,”* *“Afghan citizens,”* or *“local citizens.”* Never use “Afghan nationals,” “local nationals,” or “indigenous population;” these are militarized terms that are not common language.

“Afghani” is the country’s monetary unit (approximately 44 Afghanis to the dollar).

Geography

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is a landlocked country, slightly smaller than the state of Texas, in southern Asia. It is north and west of Pakistan, east of Iran, and has borders with China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan’s terrain is mostly rugged mountains with plains in the north and southwest and desert throughout. The Hindu Kush Mountains run northeast to southwest, dividing the northern provinces from the rest of the country. The highest peaks are in the Vakhn Corridor, a mountainous region and panhandle in the Pamir Mountains of northeastern Afghanistan.



PROPER TERMS

“Afghan”

- Used in reference to the country; e.g. Afghan National Police
- Refers to the citizens of Afghanistan; they are Afghans

“Afghani”

- Refers to the monetary unit

About Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

The climate is dry, with extremes in weather from cold, snowy winters to hot, dry summers. Typically, the wet season runs from winter through early spring. The country is generally dry and falls in to the classification of desert or desert steppe climate. Very little snow falls in the lowland deserts of the southwest, but the snow season is October-April in the mountains and varies considerably with elevation.

Temperatures vary widely, from as cold as minus 51 degrees Fahrenheit in the north central mountains at an elevation of 7,162 feet, to as hot as 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the southwestern deserts at an elevation of 3,300 feet. Sunny skies characterize the dry summers, while low clouds bring rain and snow to much of the country during the winter season.

Government and Political Conditions

Afghanistan's constitution was signed January 16, 2004. Afghanistan's president serves as both chief of state and head of government. The president and two vice presidents are directly elected. They serve five-year terms. Under the constitution, the president may only serve two terms and appoints 27 cabinet members with ratification by the National Assembly.



On October 9, 2004, Afghanistan held its first national democratic presidential election. More than 8 million Afghans voted, and 41 percent were women. Hamid Karzai was announced as the official winner on November 3 and inaugurated on December 7 for a five-year term as Afghanistan's first democratically elected president.

The country's bicameral National Assembly consists of the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) directly elected for five-year terms; and the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders with 102 seats) with a third elected from provincial councils for four-year terms, a third elected from local districts for three-year terms, and a third appointed by the president for five-year terms. Half of the presidential appointees must be women. The first democratically elected National Assembly since 1969 was inaugurated December 19, 2005.

The second national democratic presidential and provincial council elections were held in August 2009, and National Assembly elections were held in September 2010. On November 2, 2009, officials of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) declared Hamid Karzai president of Afghanistan for another five-year term. Unlike previous election cycles, the elections were coordinated by the IEC, with assistance from the United Nations. NATO officials announced in March 2009 that 15.6 million voters had registered to vote, roughly half of the country's population, and that 35-38 percent of registered voters were women.

The government's authority is growing, although its ability to deliver necessary social services remains largely dependent on funds from the international donor community. Overall, the international

About Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

community has made multi-year reconstruction and security assistance pledges to Afghanistan and continues to assist GIRoA.

With more than 40 countries participating in Operation Enduring Freedom and the NATO-led ISAF, the government's capacity to secure Afghanistan's borders and maintain internal order is increasing. The ANSF continues to grow, which consists of Afghan National Army soldiers and Afghan National Police officers, including border and civil order police. Reform of the army and police, to include training, is an extensive and ongoing process, and the U.S. is working with NATO and international partners to further develop the ANSF.

U.S./Afghan Relations

After the fall of the Taliban, the United States supported the emergence of a broad-based government, representative of all Afghans, and actively encouraged a United Nations role in the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The United States has made a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan rebuild after years of war. The United States and others in the international community currently provide resources and expertise to Afghanistan in a variety of areas, including humanitarian relief and assistance, capacity building, security needs, counternarcotics programs, and infrastructure projects.

During his December 1, 2009, speech at West Point, President Obama laid down the core of U.S. goals in Afghanistan, which are to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and

to prevent their return to Afghanistan. While the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to end in 2014, the United States plans to remain politically, diplomatically, and economically engaged in Afghanistan.

The United States is supporting fully the agenda set out by President Karzai, focusing on reintegration, economic development, improving relations with Afghanistan's regional partners, and steadily increasing the security responsibilities of Afghan security forces. Rapid progress on this agenda is important and requires international support. Toward this end, the United States is encouraging the Afghan Government to take strong actions to combat corruption, improve governance and provide better services for the people of Afghanistan, while maintaining and expanding the democratic reforms and advances in women's rights that have been made since 2001.



About Afghanistan, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

ISAF was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference in December 2001. Afghan opposition leaders attending the conference began the process of reconstructing their country by setting up a new government structure – the Afghan Transitional Authority. The concept of a United Nations-mandated international force to assist the newly established Afghan Transitional Authority was also launched at this occasion to create a secure environment in and around Kabul and support the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

These agreements paved the way for the creation of a three-way partnership between the Afghan Transitional Authority, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and ISAF.

On August 11, 2003, NATO assumed leadership of the ISAF operation, ending the six-month national rotations. The Alliance became responsible for the command, coordination and planning of the force, including the provision of a force commander and headquarters on the ground in Afghanistan.

In support of the Afghan government, ISAF conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the

capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the ANSF, and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population.

Security: In accordance with relevant Security Council Resolutions, ISAF's main role is to assist the Afghan government in establishing a secure and stable environment. To this end, ISAF forces conduct security and stability operations throughout the country, together with the ANSF, and are directly involved in developing the ANSF through mentoring, training and equipping.

Reconstruction and Development: Through its provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), ISAF supports reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, securing areas in which reconstruction work is conducted by other national and international agencies.

Governance: Through its PRTs, ISAF helps Afghan authorities strengthen the institutions required to fully establish good governance and the rule of law necessary to promote human rights. In this respect, PRTs help build capacity, support the growth of governance structures and promote an environment within which governance can improve.

U.S. Forces - Afghanistan (USFOR-A) is the functioning command and control headquarters for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan. It was activated October 6, 2008. USFOR-A headquarters provides command and control of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and provides integration and coordination between U.S. and coalition forces operating under NATO ISAF.

Sources – U.S. State Department; CIA World Fact Book; ISAF Joint Command Stylebook and Lexicon; ISAF; USACE South District.



[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Frequently Asked Questions



Do I need a passport?

As a civilian, you will need both an official and a tourist passport for travel to Afghanistan. Follow the instructions from the USACE Deployment Center. Comply with the directions they provide about which passport you should use when you travel to Afghanistan.

As a military member, a passport is not required for duty; you can travel on your orders and common access card. However, if you want to travel other than military air for your rest and recuperation, you will need a tourist passport.

Will I need a visa for Afghanistan?

Yes. Civilians will work through the USACE Deployment Center to get a visa.

How will I travel?

Most civilians fly from Washington Dulles International to Dubai and from Dubai to Kandahar via commercial airlines. Military travel varies, depending on the respective service. Both the Army and Navy fly through Kuwait while the Air Force travels through Kyrgyzstan. Use your tourist passport when traveling through Dubai.

Where will I eat?

There are no-cost dining facilities at every location. Meal times may vary. Many locations also offer fast food vendors and concessions, which you will pay for.

What is the voltage?

Electricity is 110 volt/60 cycle on South District compounds at Kandahar Airfield. At all other

Frequently Asked Questions, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

locations, it is 220 volts/50 cycles. If you bring an electrical appliance from the United States, bring a plug converter or look for dual voltage items to buy and bring with you, along with an adapter plug. Electronic devices that have input voltage on their transformers reading AC 100-240 volts and 50/60 Hz will work without any problems. Batteries and stand-alone transformers are available from the Post Exchange and installation vendors.

How do I pay for things?

You may use your debit or credit card in many locations; you may cash checks at the Post Exchange or the finance office (some limits apply); you may use the ATM in certain locations; and you may use the Eagle Cash card.

Must I wear my uniform to work every day?

Yes. You must comply with the South District uniform policy. Military personnel have specific requirements. Civilian personnel generally may choose between various authorized uniforms. No matter what uniform you wear, it must be worn professionally and correctly. Head gear is mandatory for uniforms, except the Optional Civilian Uniform.

How can I buy souvenirs?

Many of the installations have approved vendor-run shops or bazaars where you may purchase a variety of souvenirs, rugs, custom-made clothing, jewelry and unique gifts to send home. All the shops take U.S. dollars and the Eagle Cash card and some will take U.S. credit cards for payment. Bazaar vendors take cash only.

Are there religious services on the installations?

Yes, military chaplains conduct services. Service times vary from place to place.

How long does it take to receive a letter or package?

Depending on the location, it takes one to two weeks to receive a package from the United States. Expect your mail to take up to two weeks to reach the United States from Afghanistan.

Will I have email access?

Yes. Once you get to your assigned work area, you will likely have daily access. Sometimes there are outages, usually due to weather or line interruption. South District has the best communications in theater.

How can I make calls from Afghanistan?

Our phones use voice over internet protocol (VOIP) capability. You will be able to make calls to and receive calls from the United States using commercial lines and DSN. The VOIP phones have a Winchester, Virginia, area code so your family and friends can call you without incurring an international rate.

Will my personal cell phone work in Afghanistan?

Most do not. If you want to use your personal cell phone in Afghanistan, check with your provider to see if they will unlock the phone for you (some will, some will not). This way, you can use the Roshan or AWCC (the local networks) chips in your cell phone. Some U.S.-based cell phone providers offer

Frequently Asked Questions, continued

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

international service, but it is usually very expensive.

Will I drive while in Afghanistan?

If you drive, it will only be on base. South District has a limited number of vehicles, and employees must share. They are standard transmission. To drive a vehicle, you must have completed the Army Traffic Safety Accident Avoidance course. Speed limits will be strictly adhered to. A limited number of gators (all-terrain vehicles) are authorized for use and will be driven in a conscientious and safe manner. ATV drivers must have a state driver's license to operate the four-wheelers.

What are the weather extremes in southern Afghanistan?

At Kandahar, during the summer the days may reach up to 130 degrees Fahrenheit, with the nights having little relief. Winters are relatively mild, but you will likely need a coat and gloves. The rainy season occurs in the February-March timeframe, and heavy rains can cause flooding that may close the roads on Kandahar Airfield.

Herat experiences temperate summer temperatures with violent winds blowing from the northwest during May through September. The winters in Herat are not severe; when it snows, it melts almost immediately.

Because of its higher elevation, Qalat enjoys cooler temperatures, which also means colder winters.

Helmand, due to its southern location, is hotter in the summer and more temperate in the winter.

Am I authorized leave during my deployment?

For civilians: If you have a six-month tour, you are allowed one 21-day rest and recuperation (R&R) period, inclusive of travel time. If you are on a one-year tour, you are authorized three 21-day R&R periods. If you are on a tour of duty of less than six months, no R&R period is authorized. South District has specific requirements for taking these R&R periods.

For military members: You will receive one 21-day R&R period consisting of 15 days of leave for tours longer than 270 days.

R&Rs are a privilege, not a right. R&Rs may be moved or canceled due to mission requirements. Fortunately, this happens rarely, but it is a possibility.

Will I carry a weapon?

If you are a civilian, no; however, there will be a few exceptions. Our mission is to construct projects in support of the ISAF mission to help Afghanistan with security and governance. Personal security where you live, work, and travel will always be provided by assigned military members, contracted security forces or the battle space owners. As a civilian, you are a noncombatant, and your uniform patches will signify that status.

[Welcome to South District](#)

[USACE History in Afghanistan](#)

[South District Mission](#)

[Getting to South District](#)

[Working Conditions](#)

[How You Will Live](#)

[About Afghanistan](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACU: Army combat uniform
AED: Afghanistan Engineer District
AFN: Armed Forces Network
ANA: Afghan National Army
ANP: Afghan National Police
ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces
APPO: Administrative Personnel Processing Office
CAC: Common Access Card
CERP: Commander's Emergency Response Program
COIN: Counterinsurgency
CONUS: Continental United States
CRC: CONUS Readiness Center
DCU: desert camouflage uniform
E9: Command Sergeant Major
FEST: Forward Engineer Support Team
FOB: Forward Operating Base
FRACU: Fire Retardant Army Combat Uniform
GIRoA: Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IEC: Independent Election Commission
ISAF: International Security Assistance Force
J1: Human Resources
J2: Intelligence
J3: Operations
J4: Logistics and Supply
J6: Information Technology
KAF: Kandahar Airfield
MED: Middle East District
MILCON: military construction
MWR: Morale, Welfare and Recreation
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTM-A: NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
O&M: Operations and Maintenance
OIC: Officer in Charge
O5: Lieutenant Colonel
O6: Colonel
OCU: optional civilian uniform
PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team
R&R: Rest and Recuperation
RC South: Regional Command South
RC Southwest: Regional Command Southwest
RC West: Regional Command West
RSOI: Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration
TAC: Transatlantic Programs Center
TAD: Transatlantic Division
UDC: USACE Deployment Center
UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
USACE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USAID: U.S. Agency for International Development
USFOR – A: U.S. Forces – Afghanistan
VOIP: Voice Over Internet Protocol

