

C. WHO GOES ON A POSTING?

Regardless of its specific configuration, a family is composed of individuals who have much in common with other people in the same position, the employee, the accompanying spouse, the single parent, the unaccompanied employee. Dependants belong to age groups, infants, young children, adolescents, elders.

Single Employees

For a person without dependants, preparing singlehandedly for a posting is a lot of work. You are not only managing all the physical details, you will be finishing up all your current projects and reports, trying to tidy up all those loose ends that litter your desk. At the same time, you will be learning about your new position and responsibilities. Your present and future managers will be making requests for your time. There is no one to relieve you of any of the preparations.

Take off the days to which you are entitled for relocation, say no to unreasonable requests for last minute projects, don't stay up all night pre-packing your library.

Not only does the rotational service make it difficult to begin relationships and acquire a social and professional support system, it makes it extremely difficult to maintain the relationships already established. You cannot physically take any of your extended social structure with you. It is very easy to allow old relationships to lapse, relying totally on the new environment. This can be emotionally dangerous and destructive to self-identity. Establish and maintain your global network of friends and professional contacts. They provide the necessary continuity and background for you to keep track of who you are and how you are doing.

As a single person you need to be very aware of local customs as you are more dependent on the local community for social activity and support than a married couple who can retreat within the family for comfort and sharing. Inadvertently, misconceptions can arise quickly on both sides of any relationship and you can innocently spoil an entire posting.

Gender Baggage

The feeling that male singleness is more respectable than female has plagued women for centuries. This feeling is fading but some host countries still adhere to traditional ways of life for women, and view a single, career oriented female with less respect than her male counterpart. They may be uncomfortable with you and find it difficult to treat you as a business colleague.

Local culture and tradition may mean that a woman will find her personal freedom much more restricted at a post than a man. Man or woman, however, if your behaviour conflicts with local custom, you may find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.