

E. COMMUTER FAMILIES

Sometimes a couple or a family decides that a posting is just not feasible at the present time. There are as many reasons for this as there are people who make that decision: education of children, health of elderly parents, spousal career, loss of family income if the spouse stops working, reluctance to uproot another time, or family problems that can only be dealt with at home. As a result, the spouse may decide to remain in Canada.

As difficult as it is to come to this decision, it is even more difficult to navigate the separation successfully. The Department, through the FSDs, has recognized that this is an option being tried by more and more employees; there are a few more financial assists for the employee whose family has remained in Canada.

A successful period of being a commuter family would be an employee who remains rotational and a family that remains together.

Are there any indicators for success? Yes, a few. The more of them that are present, the better the chances for success.

Some of the positive factors are:

- that there is a mutual agreement that the reason for the separation is valid
- that there is a shared reason for the separation, for example, child care
- that separation is the only reasonable and satisfactory solution available
- that the separation is only a temporary situation which will be followed by a life together
- that the partners continue to regard their relationship as the primary relationship; that they are faithful to the relationship and find it adequate to their needs
- that both partners remain satisfied with the situation and the reasons for its existence
- that there is frequent and honest assessment by both partners of the situation and their feelings about it
- that no children are involved, i.e., that neither partner becomes in effect a single parent