

MILITARY FAMILIES AND RELOCATIONS



RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

MILITARY POSTINGS



Over the course of their careers, CAF personnel will move through Canada and in some cases around the world. The process for relocating for work reasons is referred to as a posting. Postings may occur for a number of reasons including career promotions, training opportunities, to fill high-priority vacancies or to expand the member's knowledge, skills and experiences.

- State of Military Families in Canada: Issues Facing Regular Force Members and Their Families

ANNUAL NUMBERS

1 in 2

RegF receive a posting instruction annually

1 in 4

RegF have to relocate to a new base/wing

1 in 5

RegF relocate to a new province each year

10,000

Estimated # of families relocating to new locations each year, of which approximately 8,000 are moving to new provinces*



30%

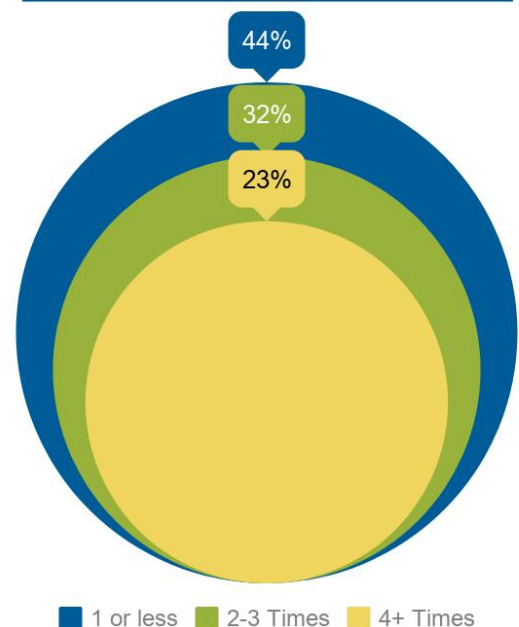
of all interprovincial moves are to Ontario

27%

of all interprovincial moves are to Quebec



AVERAGE # MOVES **

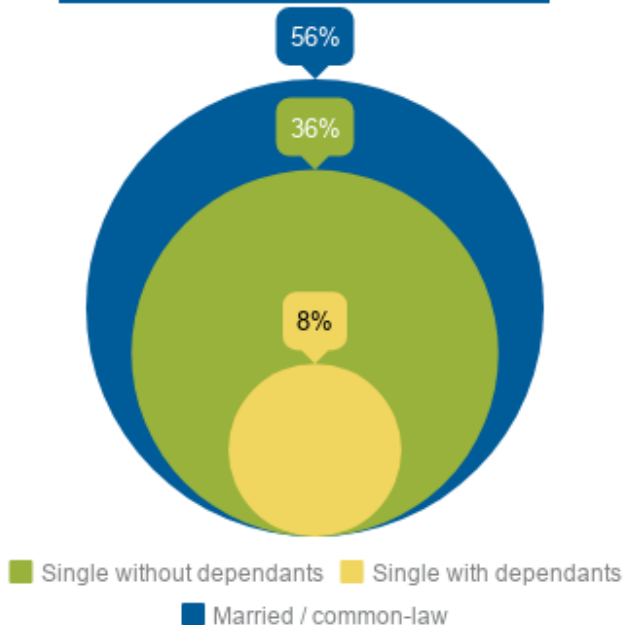


* estimate based on percentage of RegF with spouses and/or dependent family members and considering 20% of all relocations involve St-Jean, which has a much higher percentage of single RegF members with no dependent family members

** based on respondents to surveys, so a snapshot of CAF as a whole each year, rather than the average sum of all moves at the completion of the career

IMPACT ON FAMILY MEMBERS

MARITAL STATUS



Spouses feel relocation is the biggest military lifestyle challenge overall.

of all RegF posted in Canada
47% have children



14% single parents
of all RegF in Canada who have children



number of other declared dependants (like dependent parents, siblings, etc.) beyond spouses and children
1,734



"Most families respond to the notice of relocation with happiness and excitement. Smaller numbers responded with fear, apprehension, anxiety or sadness."



There are no differences in physical health, mental health or life satisfaction between spouses who had relocated and those spouses who had not.

The relocation process adds stressors to intimate partner relationships, but many felt their relationship improved after the relocation.



Children found the anticipation before a move stressful, but their stress quickly diminished after the move.

Adolescents struggle with relocations more significantly, both academically and socially.



RegF members caring for elderly parents feel they must make decisions to either accept a posting requiring relocation at the expense of providing adequate care to their parent, or requesting early release from service.

"The consequences of relocations are stressful and challenging to address (e.g. financial stress, intimate partner relationship strain, health care, spousal employment, child care and education). The majority of families manage relocations with little external support. Some face more difficulties than others and may require additional external supports."

-State of Military Families in Canada: Issues Facing Regular Force Members and Their Families

IMPACT ON FAMILY FINANCES

Geographical relocations resulting from postings have financial impacts on the family, primarily due to changes in cost of living, mortgage/rent differences, and employment changes (most commonly increased CAF wages and/or decreased non-military spousal wages/hours).

- *State of Military Families in Canada: Issues Facing Regular Force Members and Their Families*



50%

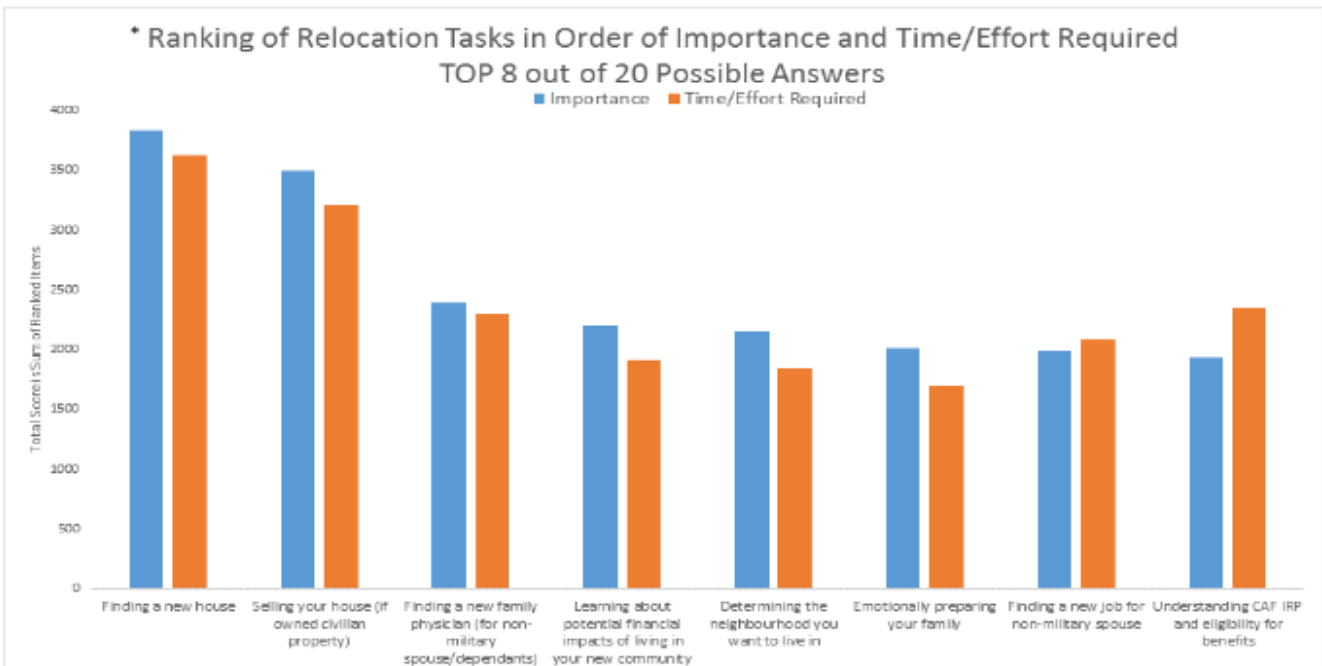
feel their family financial situation became worse after a relocation, primarily due to:

- non-military spouse wages / hours of employment decreased
- mortgage / rent increase
- higher cost of living in new location

25%

feel their family financial situation became better after a relocation primarily due to:

- wages / hours of employment increased (military and non-military spouse)
- provincial income tax rates decreased



Finding and selling the family home, learning about potential financial impacts of living in the new community, determining which neighbourhood to live in, finding a new job for the non-military spouse and understanding CAF IRP eligibility and benefits are among the top tasks, both in importance and time/effort required for families when relocating.

63% of DND housing occupants choose DND housing primarily because it is more affordable and less expensive than private housing. This percentage has risen 37% from 2005.

- *State of Military Families in Canada: Issues Facing Regular Force Members and Their Families*

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

More than half of all annual relocations involve St-Jean, Ottawa, Borden, Gagetown and Kingston.

20%
of all moves

St-Jean

10%
of all moves

Borden

10%
of all moves

Ottawa

7%
of all moves

Gagetown

6%
of all moves

Kingston

The bases who experience the highest proportion of their total family population moving each year are St-Jean, Borden, St. John's, Toronto and Wainwright.

70%
of total RegF + family
population

St-Jean

24%
of total RegF + family
population

Borden

20%
of total RegF + family
population

St. John's

20%
of total RegF + family
population

Toronto

20%
of total RegF + family
population

Wainwright

Family Impacts to Consider:

- Financial Consequences
- Intimate Partner Relationship
- Medical and Special Needs Care
- Non-Military Spouse's Career
 - Child Care and Education
- Family Stability and Well-Being



CAF Impacts to Consider:

- Operational Requirements
- Individual Career Progression
 - Personnel Retention
 - Financial Cost to Move
- Staff Time Required to Move
 - Operational Efficiencies

When relocating, families mostly have questions about their entitlements / benefits / envelopes / finance (52%), the new location cost of living and resources (17%), and housing (17%). A smaller percentage (14%) have questions on a wide variety of issues like schools, child care, non-military spousal employment, packing and moving, etc.

Families look to BGRS most commonly for additional support when required. A smaller percentage sought support from MFRCs, but for the most part did not receive the type of assistance they were looking for to connect them with services in the new location.

Sources - Relocation Experiences; State of Military Families in Canada

RECOMMENDATIONS

While some posting instructions are required for CAF operational requirements, some are for the military member's career progression. In the latter case, while refusing a posting may stall or end the military career, accepting the posting quite frequently ends or interrupts the civilian spouse's career, can negatively impact children's education, and can add stress and instability to the family, especially if the family has additional requirements like elder care or special needs. These decisions to relocate for postings need to be made after much serious discussion between couples about the pros and cons of both careers, their financial situation and their family's needs.

Likewise the CAF needs to examine the posting process and the career progression process outside of operational requirements, to ensure retention of CAF personnel is not compromised without reason. The effects of examining this process could result in decreased risk to families, increased personnel retention, decreased relocation expenses and increased efficiencies.



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www.cfmws.com/cmfp

Full Report: L. Manser (2018). State of Military Families in Canada: Issues Facing Regular Force Members and Their Families. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services.