

Naval Support Facility, Diego Garcia

Diego Garcia is the largest of many atolls that form the Chagos Archipelago. The horseshoeshaped atoll is located seven degrees south of the equator in the North Central Region of the Indian Ocean. It is heavily covered with vegetation, has a land area of 6,720 acres and is 37 miles long from tip-to-tip. The maximum elevation is 22 feet, with an average elevation of four feet above sea level. The enclosed lagoon is approximately seven miles wide and thirteen miles long. The three small islands at the mouth of the lagoon and the shape of the atoll give the impression of a footprint, hence the term "Footprint of Freedom". Annual rainfall averages 102 inches with the heaviest precipitation occurring during October to February. Humidity remains high throughout the year and temperatures are generally in the upper-80's Fahrenheit by day, falling to the mid-70's F by night. The almost constant breezes keep conditions reasonably comfortable. The atoll has been used primarily for the harvesting of coconuts from which coconut oil and copra were processed. It has also been a coal station, and guano mining was carried out for a brief period.

Britain granted independence in the 1950s and 1960s to many of its former colonies in the Indian Ocean. The remaining islands were joined under the title of the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT), Diego Garcia being one of these islands. The British and United States Government agreements allowed the U.S. access to part of the island to construct a communication station and subsequently a Naval Support Facility. The British do not charge the U.S. any rent.

Diego Garcia is an unaccompanied tour area; concurrent travel and/or visitation of dependents are not authorized. Furnished BOQ is available upon arrival. Since the BOQ is fully furnished, shipment of household goods into Diego Garcia is limited to one thousand pounds of personal items. Appliances, television, bed, and furniture is provided. EML is available to Singapore. <http://ngis.dodlodging.net/property/Diego-Garcia>

Dental and Health Care

Welcome to Branch Health Clinic, Diego Garcia. We are a tenant command onboard Diego Garcia (<http://www.cnic.navy.mil/diegogarcia/index.htm>) and our parent command is U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan. We are designed and staffed to provide routine and urgent care to residents of this very isolated island located in the Indian Ocean.

Our services include:

- Family Practice/Military Medicine
- Basic Pharmacy, Laboratory, Radiology and Physical Therapy
- Routine Military Immunizations (Supplies may be limited)
- Overseas/Sea Duty Screenings

- Military and Civilian Physical Exams (Annual, Flight, Occupational, etc.)
- Emergency Medical Response (Ambulance Service)
- Routine and emergency dental treatment including limited dental laboratory services

Personnel transferring to Diego Garcia should attend to any medical or dental problems which require surgical treatment prior to departing their last duty station. Since the supply chain for the island can be lengthy, incoming personnel are also advised to bring a three month supply of any prescription medication they require on a routine basis.

Because the clinic is designed and equipped to primarily treat general medical conditions, anyone requiring referral or ongoing care from cardiology, dermatology, gynecology, internal medicine, neurology, orthopedic, ophthalmology, or psychiatric specialties will not be considered suitable for this isolated duty station. If you have an ongoing medical or dental condition, you must obtain special clearance through the Overseas Screening Process before you transfer. If a medical emergency condition develops which is beyond the scope of the health services provided here, the patient will be air evacuated to Singapore.

Eye Care and Eye Wear – Though general eye care is available, corrective lens prescriptions cannot be written or filled on the island. Those who wear contact lenses should bring an extra pair of lenses and a pair of glasses. If you wear glasses, be sure to bring two pairs and a current prescription. Glasses for active duty beneficiaries may be ordered by the Branch Medical Clinic with a current prescription; however, this is a slow process. Even if you do not wear corrective lenses, it is still advisable to bring sunglasses designed to block ultra-violet rays.

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhyoko/Pages/DiegoGarcia.aspx>

Military flights are the only authorized flights in and out of Diego Garcia to Singapore.

Commercial and military flights are available from Singapore. Facilities include a gymnasium, clubs, galley, Ship's Store, library, Post Office, Navy Federal Credit Union, Community Bank, and chapel.

<http://www.dg.navy.mil/>

Post Office

The US Military Post Office is available at all duty stations and provides services identical to those of the USPS. Operating hours vary, but the offices are generally open Monday through Saturday. Mail is delivered to the FPO in San Francisco and then entered into the USPS, and conversely, picked up at the FPO and delivered to the military post offices overseas. Postage rates are the same as intra-US.

Banking

Community Bank (<http://www.dodcommunitybank.com>) and Navy Federal Credit Union (<http://www.navyfcu.org/>) are two financial institutions available in the overseas area. However, the Navy Federal Credit Union is not available at all locations. These financial institutions offer a range of services including check cashing, checking and savings accounts, automatic payroll deposits, loans, certificates of deposit, traveler's checks, money orders and foreign currency conversion. Please check with your sponsor to see if any other banking facilities are available in the area where you will be located.