

Frequently Asked Questions

Question Categories	<u>Page</u>
1. General Information about Senior Missionary Service	1
2. Health Considerations	3
3. Restrictions	5
4. Expectations	6
5. Homes, Vehicles, and Recreational Equipment	8
6. Legal and Financial Matters	9
7. Family	11
8. Mission Housing and Transportation	12
9. Senior Missionary Lifestyle	13

1. General Information about Senior Missionary Service

What kinds of mission assignments are there?

Most missions have a variety of opportunities for senior missionaries. Assignments generally fall into the following categories:

- Administrative and office tasks
- Ward or branch leadership and member support
- Welfare or humanitarian coordination in underdeveloped countries
- Temple support
- Church department support
- Public relations
- Health-related services
- Physical labor (all types of trade skills)

Mission assignments are described in the Types of Missions document located on the Mission and Service Opportunities for Senior Adults and Recommended Young Adults Web site.

Can I serve wherever I want?

Preferences are taken into consideration, but the Brethren desire that members be willing to serve wherever they are needed. Members of the *First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve* make all full-time mission assignments. They make every effort to match mission needs with the qualifications of the candidates. Senior missionaries will not be assigned to a mission that they cannot afford or that does not have the medical services they need. Senior missionaries are not expected to acquire language skills they do not already have.

What personal factors influence where I may be called?

1. Length of time you are available (for example, international assignments require an 18- or 23-month commitment).
2. Date of availability (the earliest you can begin your missionary service).
3. Personal health.
4. Finances available to support yourself while serving. You will list on the recommendation forms how much you and your family are able to provide on a monthly basis. If your skills fill a special need in the Church and you are assigned to a place where expenses are beyond this amount, you will receive additional funds from your home stake.
5. Background and experience, particularly in some specialized fields.
6. Language skills.

How long will I serve?

Senior missionaries have more flexibility than younger missionaries in how long they serve. Most serve 12, 18, or 23 months, although a few six-month missions are available (March through October). Assignment possibilities vary for each term of service:

1. 12 months: Resident country only.
2. 18 or 23 months: Foreign and resident-country missions.
3. Six months: Some historic sites in the United States or to meet short-term needs.

Will I attend an MTC?

Your call letter will specify if you will attend an MTC.

What type of training will I receive?

All missionaries who attend an MTC will receive several days of training on *Preach My Gospel*. Depending on the assignment (office, welfare, medical, CES, etc.), senior missionaries will receive additional training and orientation at the MTC or in the mission field.

To whom will I report?

All missionaries report to an Area President, mission president, or temple president. Depending on the assignment, senior missionaries may receive day-to-day direction from a Church department or a local Church department representative.

How much do missions cost?

Costs vary by mission. Mission costs for senior missionaries (not including live-at-home missionaries) range from \$800–\$4,000 per month for housing (including utilities), food, and transportation. The average cost of a mission in the United States for couples who do not live at home is approximately \$1,500 per month, and 80 percent of all missions cost less than \$1,800 per month. You cannot channel your funds through your bishop, but should pay mission costs directly in the field.

Are mission expenses tax deductible?

You should consult a tax adviser before making any deductions. Some senior missionaries may, in some instances, deduct costs for mission meals and lodging.

Do I need a passport?

If you are assigned to your resident country, you will not need a passport. If you are assigned to a foreign mission, you will need a passport. If you currently have a passport but it will expire before your mission ends, renew it now. If you do not have one, apply for one as soon as possible because the process usually takes several weeks.

Do I need to take a driver's license on a foreign mission?

You should take a driver's license with you because it is a good form of identification. In addition, you may have to drive as part of your mission assignment. If your license will need to be renewed during your mission, renew the license before you leave. If you drive in a foreign mission, you may also need to obtain a driver's license for that country.

2. Health Considerations

What do you need to know about my health?

The health of missionary candidates plays a role in the mission assignment process. You should make sure that you answer every question in the personal health history and the physician's health evaluation portion of the missionary recommendation form. Depending on your health history, someone from the Missionary Department may contact you to provide additional information.

I have chronic health problems. Can I still serve?

Health conditions are taken into consideration when making a mission assignment. If you have a chronic health problem and a desire to serve, try to get the condition under control, pray for guidance, and counsel with your bishop. The medical screening will provide a basis for assessing your eligibility to serve.

What immunizations and medical tests are required?

The following are required for all missionaries:

1. Hepatitis A and B
2. Tetanus and diphtheria (within the last five years)
3. Tuberculosis (within the last year)
4. Mammogram (within the last year for females over 40)
5. Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) (If 4 or above, you will need a urologist report)
6. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) (If born after 1957)
7. Colonoscopy (within the last five years)

Depending on various conditions, additional tests and immunizations may be required.

What about health insurance?

Senior missionaries must have adequate medical insurance. If your assignment is in the United States and you qualify for Medicare, that coverage will be adequate.

However, if your assignment is in a foreign country, Medicare does not provide coverage. If you have retirement or private insurance, check with your provider to verify coverage.

If Medicare, retirement, or private insurance does not have adequate coverage for your assignment, policies are available through Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrators. For information call 1-800-777-1647 and select phone menu option 4 and then option 3. Or you can go online to www.missionarymedical.org and select the link **Prospective Senior Service Medical Plan Members**.

You should keep your Medicare, retirement, or private insurance, if you have it, while you are out of the country.

How do I prepare physically and emotionally?

Missionary service is physically and emotionally demanding. To prepare for the rigors of missionary life, you should:

1. Strive to be in your best physical health.
2. Follow a daily exercise program, including walking.
3. Work with your physician to get chronic health conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, etc.) under control.
4. Develop a positive attitude.
5. Spend as much time with your spouse as possible.
6. Pray and study the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel* with your spouse.

3. Restrictions

What are the age limits?

The minimum age for senior missionaries is 40. There is no maximum age limit for senior missionaries as long as they are in good health and they have no dependent children living at home.

Can single men 26 years of age or older serve missions?

Single men 26 years of age or older may not serve full-time missions away from home. However, they may serve full-time missions in their local area while living at home if there is a need and the missionary service is authorized by the proper priesthood authority.

May I take my pet with me?

You cannot take pets with you on your mission. Most senior missionaries leave their pets with family, friends, or neighbors.

May senior missionaries take dependent children or aging parents with them?

Generally, this is not allowed. Some exceptions may be granted to fill a critical need.

4. Expectations

Do I have to learn a language? Can I learn a language?

Senior missionaries are not required to learn a second language, although you can if you wish. If you have language skills, you may be asked to use those skills. Some assignments in foreign-language countries do not require couples to learn the language of the country. If you desire to improve foreign language skills, limited telephone tutoring is available through the MTC after you receive your call.

Will I be required to tract (proselyte)?

Senior missionaries are not normally given proselyting assignments unless they specifically request such an assignment. Your assignment will provide many opportunities to interact with members and nonmembers. As you shop, travel to your assignments, and go about the community, the Spirit will help you touch the lives of others. The most memorable parts of your mission will be when you testify to others about the restored gospel.

What is expected of me as a senior missionary?

As a missionary you are expected to dedicate full or part time (depending on the type of mission) to serving the Lord. You will receive general direction on your assignment from someone in your mission. You will do personal and companion prayer and study, plan your day using the *Missionary Daily Planner*, and send weekly letters to your president.

Senior missionaries do not proselyte as young full-time missionaries do. They are generally assigned to attend a specific ward or branch and are involved in shadow leadership, member activation, referral follow up, community service, and helping members become involved and be successful in all aspects of Church membership. Under normal circumstances you will not be given a calling in the Church unit you attend, although you might receive a call to serve as a home teacher or visiting teacher, time permitting.

Missionaries called to specific assignments in CES, family history, temple, or welfare receive direction in their mission from the applicable Church department. These missionaries can also assist with ward or branch tasks defined above, as time permits.

Depending on your assignment, you may be involved in the mission's district and zone meetings and conferences.

Will I be asked to work at the same pace as the young elders and sisters?

No. Although your assignment will require all your time, you are not expected to meet the same level of intensity in your work as young missionaries. You will have more flexibility in your daily goals and schedule.

What skills will I need?

You have years of experience in the Church. You also have career and family experiences that will be of great value in your service. Missionary assignments are

made to use these talents and skills to strengthen the Church throughout the world. Training is provided at the MTC or in the field when additional skills are needed.

Do most senior missionaries have positive mission experiences?

Yes, most senior missionaries greatly enjoy their missionary service. Your association with other missionaries, members, and investigators will be a life-changing adventure. You will enjoy many heartwarming experiences as you touch the lives of others. You and your family will be blessed beyond your expectations.

5. Homes, Vehicles, and Recreational Equipment

What should I do with my home?

You have many options:

- Have relatives live in the home
- Lease the home
- Sell the home
- Leave the home vacant

You should evaluate each option to determine the best approach for you. A financial advisor may be helpful in assessing the implications of each option.

How should I handle my home utilities, insurance, and property taxes?

Most of these expenses can be set up on an automatic payment system, or you can have the person handling your finances make the payment. Monthly statements should go to the person who will handle your finances.

How have senior missionaries handled their yard care?

Some hire lawn-care and snow-removal services; others have family, friends, or relatives handle it for them.

Don't forget to arrange for someone to maintain your sprinkler system, if applicable.

How have senior missionaries handled their home mail?

Most couples have the post office forward their mail to a family member or to the person handling their finances. They also do an address change on all utilities, insurances, taxes, IRS, Medicare, pension, and investment accounts. In most cases, you can change your address by logging on to a company's Web site.

What should I do with my vehicles and recreational equipment?

- If you are from the United States or Canada and are called to serve in the United States or Canada, you will need to take a car with you.
- If serving in a foreign country, you can store your vehicles or sell them. If you store them, consult with a mechanic or car dealership for information on how to prepare a vehicle for storage.
- Recreational equipment can be sold, stored, or placed under the care of family members. If it is placed in storage, make sure that it is properly stored in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

Note: Make sure you arrange for the payment of taxes and insurance.

6. Legal and Financial Matters

In order to devote all of your time and energy to missionary service, you should have all of your legal and financial affairs in order.

What legal matters do I need to be concerned about prior to serving a mission?

You should consider setting up a will and legal and medical power of attorney to document your expectations during unforeseen emergencies. You may want to set up a living trust. You should also resolve all pending legal matters. If you are living in the United States but were born outside of the United States, you will need documentation of legal resident status and a certificate of birth abroad or a United States passport.

How do I manage financial affairs at home and in the mission field?

You should authorize a family member, accountant, bank, or other representative to pay local bills, make local deposits, and, if needed, do wire transfers to your mission bank account. This representative must receive all statements that will be needed to support federal and state tax preparation. You should arrange for deposits in your home bank for all income from social security, pensions, and investments. Use direct deposit when possible.

Will I be able to write checks from my home bank in the mission field?

For missions in the United States, the answer is generally yes. For missions outside the United States, the answer is maybe. You also may be able to use credit or debit cards to obtain local currency to pay for living expenses.

It may be advantageous to set up a bank account in the foreign country so you can pay for day-to-day living expenses. If you set up a local bank account, a family member, bank, or an accountant can use the wire transfer process to make periodic deposits to the foreign bank for you. This can take several weeks, so you will need to arrive in the mission field with enough money to meet your financial needs until you can establish a bank account.

Your mission president will send guidelines on how much money you will need to take with you.

Will I be able to manage investments (stock portfolio and property) or businesses while serving a mission?

You may be able to monitor some financial matters over the Internet if you take a laptop computer. Remember, you have been called to devote all of your time to missionary service. Therefore, the best way to handle investments is to authorize a family member, accountant, or business or financial manager to conduct business for you.

How should I handle federal and state tax filing?

Authorize a family member or tax preparer to file your taxes.

How do I handle payment of tithes and offerings?

If serving in the United States or Canada, you can use the mail system for payment of tithing to your home ward or branch. If serving in a foreign country, you can have the person handling your finances make your tithing contribution, or you can set up an automatic payment with your bank. Contribute monthly fast offerings in the ward or branch where you serve.

7. Family

Will I be allowed to communicate with my family?

Senior missionaries are encouraged to follow the guidelines of communicating with family on preparation day as outlined in the *Missionary Handbook*. This practice helps missionaries remain focused on their missionary duties.

Does the Church allow family members to visit senior missionaries in the mission field?

Visits from immediate family members must be cleared with the mission president in advance of any plans, and, if approved, they should be infrequent and short. Any disruption of your missionary duties should be kept to a minimum.

Does the Church allow senior missionaries to go home for weddings, deaths, or other major events and then return to the mission field?

Senior missionaries should not leave their *assigned area* without authorization from their Area President, mission president, or temple president. Senior missionaries should not leave the *mission* without authorization from the Area Presidency or Church headquarters.

If a member of a senior missionary's immediate family dies, the Church encourages the missionary to remain in the field. However, based on conditions at home, the home stake president may request an exception through the Missionary Department. If an exception is granted, all expenses for the trip home and back will be the responsibility of the missionary.

How have senior missionaries coped with missing family events?

Most couples have found that this is not a problem. The blessings that you and your family receive while you are serving make up for what you miss.

The Internet and related technology have made it possible to keep up-to-date with happenings at home. For example, pictures of family and mission events can be shared via the Internet on preparation day. Some couples take a laptop computer and digital camera to accommodate communications. It is also possible to make voice and video calls over the Internet so you can see and hear each other. This capability requires high-speed Internet connections at home and in the mission field, but many countries now have high-speed Internet access.

8. Mission Housing and Transportation

Will an apartment or house be arranged for me when I arrive?

In some cases you will be able to rent or lease an apartment or house that previous senior missionaries occupied. In other cases, you may need to stay in a hotel until you find an apartment or house. In some countries, a deposit (generally one month's lease) and the total lease amount is required at the beginning of the lease period. In this case, the mission office will pay the deposit and the total lease amount and you will pay the office on a monthly basis. Guidelines for your mission will be sent from your mission office.

Will utilities be included in the lease agreement?

In most countries, you will be required to sign up for utilities just like you do at home. Make sure you completely understand the procedure and payment process to ensure that your service is not turned off. Your mission office will help you with this process.

Will I have high-speed Internet access?

Most countries have high-speed Internet. In remote areas, you may have to rely on dial-up Internet service. All Internet expenses are your responsibility.

Will I need private transportation?

If you are from the United States or Canada and are called to serve in the United States or Canada, you will be encouraged to take your own car. In some missions outside the United States, public transportation will meet your needs. Couples serving in some countries will be provided with Church-owned vehicles but will pay for gasoline and will also pay a monthly fee. In other countries, you may have to lease or purchase a car. You will have to weigh the cost of leasing or purchasing to determine which will be best for you. Guidelines will be sent from your mission office. Many mission assignments in missions outside the United States can be performed without a personal vehicle.

Will I be able to drive in foreign countries?

Driving is allowed in some missions, but you will first need to obtain a local driver's license. Your mission president can provide advice on this matter. If your mission president recommends that you hire a driver, a written contract identifying what is expected should be prepared.

Should I plan to bring household items for my living quarters?

Most household items are available locally, or the mission office may have an inventory of items from previous senior missionaries. Guidelines and direction will be provided by your mission office.

9. Senior Missionary Lifestyle

What is a typical day for senior missionaries?

A typical day will include exercise, companionship prayer and study, daily planning, and a focus on your assignment (welfare, humanitarian, CES, family history, etc.). Senior missionaries can determine how many hours they are physically able to work. Rest periods are allowed.

Are senior missionaries allowed to participate in community and cultural events?

Yes. These events provide opportunities to meet people, be an example, promote good will, and develop relationships that will open doors for the Church. Always dress according to mission standards. Your mission president will provide these standards.

Do senior missionaries have activities with other senior missionaries?

Generally couples serving in the same area can get together for date night, cultural events, firesides, holidays, local sightseeing, and family home evenings. Such wholesome activities build lasting friendships. Your mission president will provide guidelines.

Can senior missionaries take short vacations outside of their assigned area?

Senior missionaries cannot take vacations or travel outside their area without permission, but they can visit sites in their area as time permits.

How do I work with local members and fellowship them?

You will develop friendships with other members through participation in Church meetings, events, and socials. You may also be involved in home teaching, visiting teaching, and activation efforts. The relationships you build will help teach local members how to balance home, work, and Church responsibilities. Senior missionary couples should always demonstrate the proper relationship between husband and wife.

Do not lend money to members or offer to sponsor them to immigrate.

How do senior missionaries relate to the young missionaries?

Senior missionaries, except those exempted by their mission assignment, participate in district meetings and zone conferences with the young missionaries. They may also assist with proselyting in a supporting role. Senior missionaries can be great examples and a source of strength and encouragement. Senior missionaries may invite the elders and sisters to dinner periodically.

Senior missionaries do not supervise, correct, interview, or lend money to young missionaries. They should also avoid becoming a taxi service for them.