

Writing Your Trainee

Welcome to AFWM's Writing Your Trainee topic!

Our mission is to encourage you to **Write Your Trainee... every day!** We will provide tips with positive encouragement and support you to Write Your Trainee.

Mail Call is every Duty Day Monday - Friday (no mail on holidays). One thing all Trainees have in common, they want to hear their name. Mail is what keeps them going, keeps them connected to the 'real' world, reminds them you care and haven't forgotten about them.



Your Trainee is required by regulation to get one phone call (within 72 hours of arrival) to let you know they are safe. Your Trainee may or may not provide the BMT address. It's a scripted call and can come at any time, so be prepared (mine came just after 10 pm Texas time the night he arrived). Remember, your Trainee is starting a life-long transformation and this will likely be a stressful and confusing moment. Don't fret if your Trainee omits the address (I didn't get the address), the Air Force has a back-up plan. Your Trainee will send a post card with the BMT address to one person. It should arrive within a week, hopefully sooner (mine arrived the first Saturday).

The BMT Address Format is:

AB Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial

TRS / FLT # # # Dorm "letter A or B" - # (the letter is either "A" or "B")

1320 Truemper Street Unit 36 # # # #

Lackland AFB, TX 78236 - # # # # (zip extension)

[Click here for help discovering your Trainee's BMT address.](#)

Writing Your Trainee - THE DO NOT's:

1. **Do NOT send food, candy, gum or other consumable items.** It is NOT ALLOWED. Sending any consumable can create hardship for your Trainee. Please don't do it. Instead, eat them yourself!
2. **Do NOT send a package to your Trainee** (unless they asked you to send something specific since BMT arrival). When sending a package (requested from your Trainee) only send the item(s) requested. Your Trainee will have to open the package in front of the TI, so keep this business only.
3. **Do NOT print comments/posts from the AFWM discussion groups to send your Trainee.** This is your space to connect and support each other. AFWM works hard to provide you with a closed group, so you can speak freely to each other, please do not betray your Wing Family's trust.

4. **Do NOT assume colored envelopes are OK to send.** Traditionally TIs give Trainees "extra attention" when receiving a colored envelope, but some don't care. We coach to using white envelopes (just to be safe) as most Trainees don't welcome "extra attention". My motto is to say NO to anything controversial, it's only 8.5 weeks, save this for Tech School. At the very least, ask your Trainee first.
You may wonder why "extra attention" may be given to a Trainee for anything related to mail? Simply put, the TI will look for any reason to challenge or strengthen your Trainee and mail is an easy target. It's a tried and true practice of Basic Military Training. Rest assured, your Trainee will receive a lot of "extra attention" during the BMT journey, but we don't want it to interfere with mail time.
5. **Do NOT send musical cards.** Your Trainee is almost sure to get 'extra attention' if a musical card is opened. Personally, I love musical cards, but I love my Trainee more. Save this for Tech School.
6. **Do NOT send anything with glitter or small decorations that can easily fall off.** This will guarantee your Trainee (and possibly others) "extra attention". Not long ago I was told by a lovely wife that she send a card with little beads on the cover. She said it was a gorgeous card, unfortunately some of those little beads fell to the floor when her Trainee opened it and the flight had to sweep the dorm, using their shoes! I give that TI credit for having a sense of humor, but his flight mates weren't too happy about it.
7. **Do NOT send cash.** While not against policy, your Trainee will have to record the serial number of each bill in their possession and who wants to do that? They are extremely busy and any free time should be spent reading your letters!
If a personal debit card was taken to BMT, please add money to the account instead of sending cash.
You may send a pre-paid credit card (like a gift card), if necessary.
FYI - Your Trainee should receive a debit card with \$400 on it (from their first paycheck) for supplies.
8. **Do NOT send Magazines, Newspapers, Books, Crossword Puzzles or any media that is not of a religious nature.**
You may cut (or copy & paste) a specific article and send it, but nothing of bulk.
9. **Do NOT send anything explicit.** This can cause harm to your Trainee. No sexually related material and no explicit words. We suggest keeping it clean and PG-13.
10. **Do NOT write anything on the outside of the envelope** (other than TO & FROM addresses). This includes: lipstick stained lips (it's been done), hearts that dot the i's (my son's girlfriend did this, doh!) or any type of greeting/ message. These can elicit 'extra attention' for your Trainee.
11. **Do NOT spray your letter/envelope with perfume.** This may elicit 'extra attention' for your Trainee. Another fabulous idea to save for Tech School.
12. **Do NOT assume you can overrule a TI.** If you have doubt about something, please ask your Trainee.

Writing Your Trainee - THE DO's:

1. **DO** Write Your Trainee, every day!
2. **DO** listen to your Trainee. My Trainee specifically stated we were not to send cards. Are cards allowed? Yes! However, my Trainee feared family/ friends may not understand about colored envelopes, musical cards or no glitter. To be safe, he instructed us to avoid it altogether. I've heard other Trainees make the same or similar requests from family/ friends. Please respect their wishes or ask your Trainee for clarification when you can.
3. **DO** create a list of questions (to keep handy when your Trainee calls) regarding questions about BMT and mail! The call can come at any time and may be short, so plan accordingly!
4. **DO** give your Trainee's address to loved ones, friends and family who you trust will follow the rules while writing your Trainee.
5. **DO** focus on Positive Support and Encouragement when writing your letters, for example:

- **True Emotion:** I'm so sad you are not here with me.
 - **PSE:** I'm counting down the days 'til The Airman's Run!
 - **True Emotion:** I saw a video about a Trainee's arrival to BMT, "Pick Up and Put Down" exercise. What is the point? They should give you a day to adjust before throwing you to the wolves (or whatever they call themselves).
 - **PS&E:** I've been educating myself about your experience at BMT, wow, do they really do the "Pick Up and Put Down" exercise? I know who will be handling my luggage the next time we're on vacation together! LOL
 - **True Emotion:** Did you know the Air Force posts pictures of you while at BMT? Unfortunately, they post pictures of everyone but you! People brag about seeing their Trainee, but I didn't see any of you, it's so unfair! I miss you, so much and it would be easier if I saw a picture of you.
 - **PS&E:** Did you know the Air Force posts pictures of Trainee during BMT? I wake up every day and check morning, noon and night for pictures of you. I haven't found you yet, but it's been fun to see what you're going through. It makes the descriptions come to life. I know you don't like your picture taken, but if you see a camera, smile pretty and know I'll be looking for it! OK, you don't have to smile pretty if you don't want to, but at least look at the camera.
6. **DO** include inspirational quotes in your Trainee's letters. Things that will lift your Trainee's spirit.
7. **DO** look for our Writing your Trainee Missions (just one of the gems found in the [TRS DG Groups](#)). Some are zany ideas, but all are intended to help you Write your Trainee, every day.

Just a few comments received:

- *Love, Love, Love the Writing missions! I've had so much fun with them!*
 - *Another great idea. Just did this and it was very easy. Thanks Wyt WingMom. our AB's just love all the things we sent them.*
 - *I got two letters today telling how great & how fun my letters are. He cannot wait to open them & see what I have written today. Someday I will have to tell him where I get my ideas, but for now I am taking all the credit.*
8. **DO** educate yourself about the postal office guidelines, because size does matter! Did you know the postal service examines the thickness of your mail as well as the weight? The official postal website is www.usps.com
- General guidelines include:
 - Postcards:
 - Must be rectangular.
 - Minimum size of 5" long x 3 1/2" high x 0.007" thick.
 - Maximum size is 6" long x 4 1/4" high x 0.016" thick.
 - Postcards over 6" long x 4 1/4" high x 0.016" thick will be charged as a letter or large envelope, depending on size.
 - Letters:
 - Must be rectangular.
 - Minimum size is 5" long x 3 1/2" high x 0.007" thick.
 - Maximum size of 11 1/2" long x 6 1/8" high x 1/4" thick.
 - Maximum weight is 3.5 oz.
 - A letter will be charged a nonmachinable surcharge if it's a square letter 5" x 5" or larger, it doesn't bend easily, has clasps or similar closure devices, has an address parallel to the shorter dimension of the letter, is lumpy, or the length divided by height is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5. Most hazardous materials cannot be shipped.
 - Large envelopes:
 - Must be rectangular.
 - Minimum size is either more than 11 1/2" long x 6 1/8" high OR 1/4" thick.

Maximum size is 15" long x 12" high x 3/4" thick.

Maximum weight of 13 oz.

Large envelopes that exceed these dimensions will be charged package rates.

Most hazardous materials cannot be shipped.

Visit [ship/first-class](#) for more information.

FAWQ – Frequently Asked Writing Questions:

1. Can I send pictures? Yes, pictures are allowed. They should be PG-13. It may be a printed picture or it can be printed on paper. Size does matter as Trainees only have a small drawer to hold all of their personal items. Some Trainees have to show the picture to their TI.
2. Can I send cards? Yes, cards are acceptable. We strongly suggest using white envelopes only (just to be safe).
3. How long does it take for my mail to arrive? That depends on where you live.
4. I put the wrong address on my Trainee's letter, will he receive it? Yes, the post office on base will route it to the proper address. It may arrive late (due to being re-routed), but your Trainee will receive it.
5. My Trainee said the flight lost letter writing privileges, is that legal? Yes, of course. Writing is a privilege and Trainees must earn and sometimes re-earn it. It can be effective TI tool, especially when the flight is not working as a team or struggling to learn or listen effectively. PS. My Trainee's flight lost letter writing privileges, so I empathize with all of you who find yourself in this position. Please stay positive, because it was done for a good reason (even if your Trainee can't see it) and keep writing.
6. Will Trainees get mail during BEAST? Yes.
7. Can Trainees write letters during BEAST? No, they can receive, but are not supposed to write and cannot send.
8. When should I stop sending mail to my Trainee? It's recommended to stop sending mail after Wednesday of week 6.
9. What happens if my Trainee doesn't receive all the mail before graduation weekend? Mail will be forwarded to your Trainee's Tech School for 1 week after BMT graduation.

[Questionnaires for your Airman](#)