

# Paragon Pulse



## Commuter Marriage

January 2009

### The distance between two points...

Worldwide ERC defines a Commuter Marriage as one in which the transferee accepts a relocation and moves to the new work location without the spouse. The spouse and family remain indefinitely in the old location creating a commuting situation for the couple/family.

In 2007 the Worldwide ERC *Family Issues* report stated that nearly 75 percent of respondents to the survey have encountered and addressed at least one commuter marriage situation that resulted from a relocation in the past two years, a significant increase from the 53 percent who reported having done so in 2003, the last time the survey was completed.

And our Paragon Pulse results support those findings with 67 percent having encountered a Commuter Marriage relocation situation in the past two years.



What drives a Commuter Marriage? Our survey findings reveal that 50 percent made the decision based on children not wanting to leave school as social dynamics in the new location can be daunting—sports, friends and activities that are important during the middle school/high school years can suffer with a move to another school. With the challenges of the current U.S. Domestic real estate market, 38 percent reveal that the financial hardship with selling the home holds the spouse behind as the value depreciation of the home would cause serious damage to their financial stability. Dual incomes is reflected in the 12 percent whose reason for the Commuter Marriage was spousal career concerns.

Regarding benefits offered, 62 percent have specific policies that cover what benefits are offered and 38% report that they offer benefits across all policy types. Of the five types of benefits that were on the survey four were chosen, the highest being “periodic travel between new and old locations” at 86%, “extended temporary living” 71 percent, “lump sum to cover travel expenses” 29 percent and the lowest response for “coverage of meals for visiting spouse” at 14 percent. Length of time permitted for the benefits had a high response rate for the “other” category of 67 percent with 22 percent limiting the length of time to 1 year and 11 percent to 2 years.

It was noted by Worldwide ERC in the *Family Issues* survey that most relocation professionals believe commuter marriage situations ultimately decrease the chances for a successful relocation due to the difficulty extended time away can have on the employee and family. Keeping the family together positively impacts the employees professional and personal life. With this goal in mind, utilization of services offered by third-party relocation companies such as Dual Career Assistance and Family Acclimation Assistance will assist in this endeavor thus decreasing the distance between two points.

Survey results are included on the second page



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### Survey Results

#### Have you encountered a Commuter Marriage relocation situation in the past two years?

Yes	67%
No	33%

#### Was there a specific reason for the request?

Children not wanting to leave school	50%
Spousal career concerns	12%
Financial hardship with sale of home	38%
Other please specify	0%

#### Are Commuter Marriage benefits covered by all relocation policy types or specific policies only?

All Policy Types	38%
Specific Policies	62%

#### What type of benefits do you provide in a Commuter Marriage situation?

	<u>Number of responses</u>
Periodic travel between new and old locations	6
Lump sum to cover travel expenses	2
Lump sum for incidental expenses	0
Extended temporary living	5
Coverage of meals for visiting spouse	1

#### Is there a specific length of time permitted for the benefits?

1 year	22%
18 months	0%
2 years	11%
Other, please specify	67%

### Survey Participation

January's Pulse data represents results from corporate relocation professionals in the following industries:

Industrial Manufacturing	25%
Communications	17%
Financial Services	17%
Retail	17%
Technology	17%
Other	7%

Location of corporate headquarters for respondents:

U.S.	100%
EMEA	0%
APAC	0%

Questions or comments? Email us at [consultingservices@paragondri.com](mailto:consultingservices@paragondri.com) or visit the News section of our website at [www.paragonri.com](http://www.paragonri.com)

