



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND
2050 WORTH ROAD
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX 78234-6000

MCCG

OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 07-045

26 NOV 2007

Expires 26 November 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanders, MEDCOM Regional Medical Commands

SUBJECT: Deployment Following Refractive Eye Surgery

1. References:

- a. AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness, 29 May 2007.
- b. Army Regulation (AR) 40-63, Ophthalmic Services, 1 January 1986.
- c. DA Pam 40-506, Vision Conservation Program, 14 January 2006.

2. Purpose: To establish specific policies regarding deployment of Soldiers who have had Laser Refractive Eye Surgery.

3. Proponent: The proponent for this policy is the Health Policy and Services Directorate.

4. Policy:

a. Post-Laser Refractive Surgery Recovery Time: A Soldier who has had laser refractive surgery must have a satisfactory period for post-surgical recovery before deployment. In the weeks that follow laser refractive surgery, an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist provides continued post-surgical care and determines when each Soldier's recovery is complete and a Soldier meets vision readiness standards for deployment. As with any surgery, there is a large degree of patient variability which prevents establishing a set time frame for full recovery. Post-surgical time estimates are provided in the following paragraphs.

b. Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK): PRK is the most common refractive surgery performed in the military. This procedure abrades the surface of the eye prior to applying laser energy and does not involve creating a flap of tissue. Typically, a Soldier is non-deployable for 3 months following uncomplicated PRK. The managing eye care provider may clear patients earlier or later than this time frame, depending on the course of the post-surgical recovery. Related "surface ablation" procedures that should be considered equivalent to PRK include Laser Epithelial Keratomileusis (LASEK) and Epithelial Lasik.

MCCG

SUBJECT: Deployment Following Refractive Eye Surgery

c. Laser assisted *in situ* Keratomileusis (LASIK): The LASIK procedure creates a flap of ocular surface tissue prior to applying laser energy. Uncomplicated LASIK patients are typically non-deployable for at least 1 month following surgery. This time frame is also an estimate, and the managing eye care provider may clear a Soldier earlier or later depending on the outcome.

d. This policy must be followed to best ensure the post-surgical recovery of the Soldier, ensure his/her best visual outcome following surgery, and protect a Soldier from visual complications in Theater that would negatively affect the unit's mission.

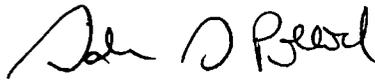
5. Responsibilities:

a. RMC Commanders are responsible for:

(1) Providing guidance to subordinate units regarding this policy.

(2) Providing adequate resources to implement this policy.

b. MTF Commanders will enforce this policy.



GALE S. POLLOCK
Major General
Commanding