

# MCAS Beaufort Housing & PCS

## Guide

MCAS Beaufort sits in the South Carolina Lowcountry, three miles from downtown Beaufort, and the housing market here is one of the more financially favorable in Marine Corps aviation. BAH covers most off-base options comfortably, and the Beaufort area genuinely rewards families who take time to understand the neighborhoods before they sign anything.

[\[Explore MCAS Beaufort Housing Guide\]](#)

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### SNAPSHOT BAR

Branch Marine Corps

Area Beaufort, SC

Best For Families and Active Duty

Market Affordable, Coastal SC

On-Base Housing Yes (Privatized)

Commute 5-45 min

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## On-Base Housing at MCAS Beaufort

On-base family housing at MCAS Beaufort is privatized and managed by Atlantic Marine Corps Communities at Tri-Command. The two primary communities are Laurel Bay, a gated neighborhood three miles from the base, and Freedom Sound, a newer development also about three miles out. Both serve families across MCAS Beaufort, MCRD Parris Island, and Naval Hospital Beaufort under the Tri-Command umbrella.

### **Housing Amenities**

- Atlantic Marine Corps Communities manages Laurel Bay and Freedom Sound, with two to four bedroom single-family and duplex homes available across both neighborhoods
- Laurel Bay features a community center with pool, 24-hour fitness center, tennis courts, playgrounds, walking trails, and a fishing pier
- Freedom Sound adds 170 brand-new duplex-style homes with modern finishes and fenced yards
- DoDEA schools Elliott Elementary and Bolden Elementary and Middle School serve on-base residents through eighth grade in the Laurel Bay area

### **Housing Management**

- Contact the AMCC at Tri-Command Welcome Center at (843) 846-5300 to begin your application
- The Housing Office at 640 Laurel Bay Road, Building 1140, is your first stop before signing anything
- Required documents: PCS orders, DD Form 1746, and a Dependency Application

- Rank determines community placement, with Wake Village for E-1 through E-5, Weapons Sound for E-6 through E-9, and Marsh Landing for O-4 through O-6

### **Availability Tips**

- Apply before leaving your current duty station since waitlists are real and build fast during peak PCS season from May through August
  - Ask specifically about wait times for your rank category and bedroom size
  - Confirm DoDEA school enrollment procedures for Laurel Bay before accepting a unit, since on-base schools only serve residents through eighth grade
  - Ask about flood zone status for any specific unit before you commit, since coastal South Carolina properties vary meaningfully on this
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## **MCAS Beaufort Housing Communities**

MCAS Beaufort operates under the Tri-Command structure alongside MCRD Parris Island and Naval Hospital Beaufort. Your specific unit and duty assignment shape which off-base direction makes the most sense, though most MCAS-assigned families cluster around Port Royal, Burton, and Lady's Island for the balance of commute and price.

The coastal character here is genuine. Spanish moss, tidal waterways, and a pace of life that differs from most Marine Corps duty stations make

neighborhood selection feel more personal than at installations surrounded by generic suburban sprawl.

### **Best For Schools**

- **Best For:** Families who want to stay in Beaufort County's well-regarded school system
- **Beaufort County School District:** Serves all off-base families and covers 38 schools across the county, with Battery Creek and Beaufort High as the primary high school feeders for base-adjacent neighborhoods
- **DoDEA at Laurel Bay:** On-base residents have Elliott Elementary for PreK through second grade and Bolden Elementary and Middle School for third through eighth grade, both exclusively available to on-base residents
- **Character:** South Carolina fully exempts active duty military pay from state income tax, which is a meaningful financial factor for families budgeting around this assignment

### **Commute Connected**

- **Best For:** Families who want a predictable, short daily drive to the flight line
- **Port Royal:** Five to ten minutes from the main gate, the closest off-base community with a growing waterfront food and entertainment scene
- **Burton:** Ten to fifteen minutes, newer construction at some of the lowest price points in central Beaufort County

- **Lady's Island:** Twenty-five to forty minutes depending on traffic and route, consistently the top pick from families who want water proximity and larger lots without the full Bluffton commute

Knowing your squadron building and gate access before choosing a neighborhood saves real commute time here, since the base's layout affects which direction is actually shorter.

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## Where People Live Near MCAS Beaufort

**Port Royal** Five to ten minutes from the main gate. Families choose Port Royal for the shortest off-base commute, a walkable waterfront boardwalk with restaurants and community events, and affordable home prices with a growing new-construction presence. Best For: families who want minimal daily drive time and a genuine neighborhood feel close to base.

**Burton** Ten to fifteen minutes from MCAS Beaufort. Families choose Burton for the newest construction and the lowest entry prices in the immediate base area, making it the most accessible choice for junior and mid-grade pay. Best For: families watching their budget who still want off-base independence without an aggressive commute.

**Lady's Island** Twenty-five to forty minutes depending on the route. Families choose Lady's Island for larger lots, tidal waterway access, scenic neighborhoods with mature oaks, and a mix of established and newer construction. It sits just across the bridge from historic downtown Beaufort.

Best For: families with school-age children who want more space and water access and are comfortable trading a longer drive for the lifestyle.

**Bluffton** Thirty to forty-five minutes from MCAS Beaufort. Families choose Bluffton for newer master-planned communities, strong Beaufort County school options, easy access to Hilton Head, and a growing retail and dining corridor. Best For: dual-income or dual-military families who prioritize amenities, modern construction, and a suburban setting over a short base commute.

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## Map Placeholder

[Map Placeholder: Interactive map showing MCAS Beaufort, Laurel Bay, Freedom Sound, Port Royal, Burton, Lady's Island, and Bluffton with commute time markers to be added here]

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## Renting vs Buying Near MCAS Beaufort

### Renting vs Buying

| Factor       | Renting | Buying        |
|--------------|---------|---------------|
| Upfront Cost | Lower   | Higher        |
| Flexibility  | High    | Lower         |
| Equity       | None    | Builds Equity |

|                |            |           |
|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Responsibility | Landlord   | Homeowner |
| Best For       | Short-Term | Long-Term |

### **When Renting Makes More Sense**

- Tour under two years or a first assignment to the Lowcountry where you want to understand neighborhoods before committing
- Still deciding between Port Royal, Burton, and Lady's Island based on school district and commute
- Hurricane season flood zone uncertainty for a specific property you are considering

### **When Buying Makes More Sense**

- Three or more years expected and BAH at your pay grade comfortably covers a monthly VA loan payment
- Ready to build equity in a market where South Carolina's low property tax rate of 4% on primary residences keeps annual carrying costs well below most coastal states
- Planning to hold the property as a rental given the permanent military demand from Tri-Command families cycling through Beaufort

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## **BAH and Affordability Near MCAS Beaufort**

**Affordability Rank** A Very Affordable compared to most Marine Corps coastal duty stations.

**BAH Coverage** Strong E-5 BAH at \$2,403 per month covers most family rentals and many VA loan payments in Port Royal and Burton.

**Buying Power** \$375K Estimated purchase target price bracket within typical BAH limits (E-5 with Dependents, VA loan).

**Cost of Living Snapshot** Below Average Beaufort County costs run below the national average in most categories outside of coastal waterfront property.

MCAS Beaufort falls under the Beaufort and Parris Island Military Housing Area (SC258). BAH for an E-5 with dependents runs \$2,403 per month in 2026, and median home prices in Beaufort County are accessible enough that buying with a [VA loan](#) frequently makes more financial sense than renting. The Redfin March 2026 median sale price for the Beaufort metro sits at \$488,195, though Burton and Port Royal entry points remain well below that figure. South Carolina fully exempts active-duty military pay from state income tax for legal residents, and the state's 4% primary residence property tax rate is among the lowest in the country. Families arriving from high-cost duty stations consistently describe the financial shift as significant.

Hurricane season runs June through November, and flood zone status varies enough across Beaufort County that checking any specific property's FEMA designation before signing is worth doing regardless of how far inland it appears on a map.

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# **Commute, Gates, and Daily Access**

## **Gate Access**

- Main Gate (POV Gate) at MCAS Beaufort is open 24 hours a day and is the primary access point for most daily traffic
- Visitor access through the Visitor Control Center at Building 2077, open Monday through Friday 0630 to 1200 and 1300 to 1530
- Visitors need a sponsor present and a valid government-issued ID to obtain a pass

## **Traffic and Routes**

- US-21 and Ribaut Road connect Port Royal and Burton directly to the main gate in under 15 minutes from most neighborhoods
- SC-170 and US-278 serve Lady's Island and Bluffton families with generally manageable traffic outside peak summer beach season
- The MCAS Beaufort and MCRD Parris Island Hurricane Hotline at 1-800-343-0639 should be saved in your phone before hurricane season begins each June

## **Best Areas for Shorter Commutes**

- Port Royal and Burton consistently deliver under 15 minutes to the main gate for most families
- Lady's Island adds meaningful drive time but stays manageable for families willing to leave earlier in the morning
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**Pro Tip** Drive your actual gate route at morning rush hour before signing any lease or purchase agreement, particularly if you are considering Lady's Island or Bluffton, since bridge crossings and summer beach traffic can change the real commute considerably.

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## PCS Arrival, Temporary Lodging, and First 30 Days

### First 30 Days Checklist

- Contact the AMCC at Tri-Command Welcome Center at (843) 846-5300 as soon as orders are confirmed
- Visit the Housing Office at 640 Laurel Bay Road, Building 1140, before signing any off-base lease or purchase agreement
- Contact the [MCAS Beaufort School Liaison](#) for enrollment guidance if you have school-age children

**Temporary Lodging Info** On-base temporary lodging fills quickly during peak PCS season from May through August. Book through the installation lodging office as early as possible after orders arrive and keep a Beaufort-area hotel as a confirmed backup since Tri-Command bases share a limited pool of temporary quarters.

**[PCS PLAN]**

**Start Strong. Settle In Faster.** Families who arrive at MCAS Beaufort with their neighborhood shortlist already researched, their flood zone

questions already asked, and their DoDEA versus Beaufort County school decision already made consistently have a smoother first month than those who start from zero on arrival day.

[\[Get My PCS Plan\]](#)

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## **Find the Right Fit for Your Family**

[Kids & Schools - DoDEA schools at Laurel Bay serve on-base residents through eighth grade. Off-base families attend Beaufort County School District. Contact the School Liaison at MCAS Beaufort before finalizing your neighborhood. [Explore Schools](#)]

[Pets - Atlantic Marine Corps Communities is pet-friendly with specific breed and weight policies to confirm directly with AMCC. Off-base landlords in Port Royal and Burton vary on pet terms. [Explore Pet Info](#)]

[EFMP & Special Needs - Access resources and supports through the MCAS Beaufort installation's family support programs. Beaufort Memorial Hospital covers general family care needs in the community. [Learn More](#)]

[Spouse Support - Beaufort County's economy combines healthcare at Beaufort Memorial, education, government contracting, and coastal hospitality, offering a wider range of spouse employment than the town's size suggests. [Explore Resources](#)]

[Commute & Lifestyle - Compare commute times across Port Royal, Burton, Lady's Island, and Bluffton before choosing a neighborhood. [Hunting](#)

Island State Park is 20 minutes east and Hilton Head beaches are 35 minutes south. Explore Lifestyle]

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## **Local Market Insights Near MCAS Beaufort**

Stay ahead with the latest home trends, pricing charts, and real estate indicators for your next duty station.

**Median Sale Price** \$488,195 Beaufort Metro, March 2026 Coastal SC Market

**Port Royal and Burton** More Accessible Below Metro Median Best Value Near Gate

**Rental Competitiveness** Moderate Steady Year-Round Demand

**Market Summary** A genuinely affordable coastal South Carolina market where VA loan buyers carry real leverage, property taxes rank among the lowest in the country, and military demand from Tri-Command bases creates a reliable floor under property values.

[\[View Full Report\]](#)

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## **Understand Housing Before You Move**

[BAH & Affordability - Check SC258 BAH rates and see how far your housing allowance goes near MCAS Beaufort. BAH (E-5 with Dependents) \$2,403/mo. View BAH Rates]

[Neighborhood Insights - Explore school ratings, commute times, flood zone data, and more across Port Royal, Burton, and Lady's Island. Beaufort County Schools Well-Rated. Explore Neighborhoods]

[Local Market Reports - Get the latest market trends for Beaufort, Port Royal, and Lady's Island. Market Trend: Balanced. View Market Reports]

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## Trusted Military Housing Support Near MCAS Beaufort

Our agents know Port Royal, Burton, Lady's Island, and the broader Beaufort County area from genuine, local experience. They understand Tri-Command tour lengths, flood zone realities, the DoDEA versus Beaufort County school question, and how to position VA loan offers in a market that has been welcoming military buyers for decades.

4.9 ★★★★★ (510+ Reviews)

*Military-Friendly Experts | Local Market Experts | Verified Reviews*

*"We thought we had to live in Lady's Island to get the lifestyle we wanted. Our agent showed us Port Royal had the same waterfront access and saved us \$80,000 on the purchase price." — The Garza Family, USMC*

★★★★★

*"Our agent flagged a flood zone issue on the first house we fell in love with before we made an offer. We would not have caught that on our own." — The Thornton Family, USMC ★★★★★*

*"We were trying to figure out the DoDEA versus Beaufort County school decision from across the country. One call with our agent cleared it up completely." — The Mwangi Family, USMC ★★★★★*

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## Get Personalized Housing Help Near MCAS Beaufort

Work with a military-friendly local expert who knows Beaufort County and your mission.

- Local expertise you can trust
- Save time and reduce stress
- Personalized options for your needs
- Support from PCS to home

I Want To: Buy / Rent Timeline: Within 3 Months / Within 6 Months

Budget Range: \$200k - \$400k / \$400k - \$600k Assigned Area: Select Area

Your Name Your Email Subject Your Message (optional)

[Form Placeholder: Add the housing support form here]

[SUBMIT]

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# Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know about military housing and PCSing near the base.

**Who manages on-base housing at MCAS Beaufort and what communities are available?** Atlantic Marine Corps Communities at Tri-Command manages all privatized family housing at MCAS Beaufort. The two primary communities are Laurel Bay, a gated neighborhood three miles from the base with established amenities, and Freedom Sound, a newer development also three miles out with 170 duplex-style homes. Contact the AMCC Welcome Center at (843) 846-5300 as soon as orders arrive.

**Do DoDEA schools at MCAS Beaufort serve all military children?** DoDEA schools at Laurel Bay, specifically Elliott Elementary for PreK through second grade and Bolden Elementary and Middle School for third through eighth grade, are available only to families living in on-base housing. Families living off base attend Beaufort County School District, and all students in ninth grade and above attend Beaufort County high schools regardless of where they live.

**How far does BAH typically go in the Beaufort housing market?** Very well at most pay grades. BAH for an E-5 with dependents runs \$2,403 per month in 2026 under the SC258 Military Housing Area, which covers most Port Royal and Burton rentals comfortably and supports a VA loan payment on homes in the \$300,000 to \$375,000 range. Lady's Island and Bluffton properties can push above that threshold depending on the specific home.

**What should I know about hurricane season before choosing a neighborhood?** Hurricane season runs June through November, and coastal South Carolina takes it seriously. Flood zone designation varies across Beaufort County, so checking the FEMA flood map for any specific property before making an offer is essential. Save the MCAS Beaufort and MCRD Parris Island Hurricane Hotline at 1-800-343-0639 before your first summer here.

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### Link Reference Table

| Type     | Anchor Text                  | Full URL                                                                                                                                                    | Placement                       |
|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Internal | VA loan                      | <a href="https://milhousingnetwork.com/home-buying/">https://milhousingnetwork.com/home-buying/</a>                                                         | BAH and Affordability section   |
| External | MCAS Beaufort School Liaison | <a href="https://www.beaufort.marines.mil/Offices-Staff/School-Liaison-Program/">https://www.beaufort.marines.mil/Offices-Staff/School-Liaison-Program/</a> | First 30 Days Checklist section |