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An Air Force Reserve Newspaper

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SGLI RAISES LIMIT THIS MONTH

December marked the beginning of increased insurance coverage for service members participating in the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance program (SGLI). The total coverage a member may have is now set at \$35,000, as compared to the previous \$20,000 limit.

According to Maj. Lawrence J Sprenz, Chief, CBPO, the insurance is available in \$5,000 increments only. The premium levels are set at 75 cents per \$5,000 for a maximum premium of \$5.25 for \$35,000. Major Sprenz also added that members who previously elected reduced or no coverage will be automatically covered for \$35,000.

If a member should desire less than full coverage, they must complete a new SGLI election, VA Form 29-88286, indicating their desired level of coverage.

35-10 RECEIVES RENEWED EMPHASIS

A recent inspection visit to Tinker AFB resulted with the inspection team finding "numerous appearance violations in the length of hair, mustaches and sideburns" of personnel assigned to the 507th TFG.

In order to reinforce Air Force appearance standards, effective immediately, all assigned personnel of the 507th TFG will comply with AFR 35-10 standards or they will not participate with this unit in any form of military pay status. In other words, if a member fails to comply with 35-10, he will be red-lined and subsequently, not paid for UTA duty.

CHECK YOUR EMERGENCY DATA

Keeping your Emergency Data Information Form (DD Form 93) up-to-date is one of the most important things you can do for your family. If you are seriously injured or killed in some sort of accident, the Air Force will make every effort to get information and the right kind of help to your family. The job of helping becomes complicated, however, when inaccurate or outdated information exists on your records. Help your family by making sure that your records are current.

TIME OFF FOR TRAINING: A GUIDE TO JOB RIGHTS FOR RESERVISTS

A Rand Corporation study, conducted for the Pentagon, confirmed what Reservists have known all along: Hassles with their bosses cause reenlistment offers to get turned down.



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Many bosses fully support the military training needs of their employees. More than 380,000 employers have pledged that support--signing on the dotted line to that effect--in recent years. Many employers, both public and private, pay Reservists their full salaries during annual training. Many others voluntarily make up the difference between the employee's regular civilian pay and two-week military money,

But other employers are no help at all. Quite the contrary, in fact. Some don't understand the law; a few actively seek ways to avoid it. The Rand study reported that almost 31 percent of a sample population of former Reservists cited employment conflicts as the reason they quit the ranks. Only a slightly higher percent cited family and leisure time demands as their reason for getting out--but Department of Defense analysts believe that these pressures from the family and lure of time off frequently relate to employment conflicts as well,

Employer conflicts take many forms: A common one is the problem of getting the word of a firm's support down to the level where it really counts, to the first-line supervisors. Too often, the chief executive officer may support the Reserve but lower-level bosses never hear of it.

Some conflicts are blatant and some are subtle. "Go off to play war this weekend and you're fired," has been heard by more than one Reservist just before a drill weekend. Others may find themselves overlooked at promotion time for no apparent reason, while some find that their bosses require them to use paid vacation time to go on annual training.

Problems are not limited to the private sector. Federal and state government supervisors often are offenders.

(More)



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Reservists often cause problems themselves, while placing responsibility on employers, the law builds in some protections for them too. Members who need to take time off from work to go to training must give their bosses as much advance notice as possible--a requirement too often ignored. Some members have been known to exploit the law as well, signing up for repeated tours of active duty not essential to their skill development or unit mission.

Employer support is vital to the readiness of the Reserve. So much so that a national team of prominent civilian business and civic leaders exists to promote it. The group is the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an agency of the Department of Defense.

Here's the message the committee is in business to get out: When it comes to taking time off from the job for Reserve duty, Reservists have rights. So does the boss, although they are fewer and not quite so elaborate. With the rights go responsibilities for both the Reservist and the boss. And it's all grounded in law, specifically in chapter 43 of Part III of Title 38, U.S. Code. The law has been amended a number of times, and over the years the courts have clarified it in a number of test cases.

The Law

Under the rights and responsibilities conferred by the law, as interpreted by the courts, Reservists:

- ° Must be released from work to attend military training.
- ° Cannot be fired because of their military status or because they seek time off to go to training.
- ° Get their vacation. Normally, military training time cannot be charged against vacation.



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◦ Can belong to any service. Army or Air National Guard members and Army, Marine, Naval, Air Force, or Coast Guard Reservists enjoy the same protection.

◦ Can perform voluntary duty with the same rights.

◦ Have no limit on the number of times they can go to training.

◦ Will get their jobs back, or the equivalent, when they return from military duty. The length of time they can be away from the job and retain the right to reinstatement varies: For extended active duty and active duty Reserve service, the limitation is four years (five at the convenience of the government),

◦ Retain their benefits, such as seniority, status, vacation, rate of pay and other benefits, as if they had never been away.

Reservists, in turn, must:

◦ Ask for the time off. They cannot simply fail to show up for work and use the excuse that they had military duties to attend to.

◦ Report back to work on the next scheduled workday after completion of duty. A failure to report to work won't change their reemployment right, but it will subject them to whatever penalties the boss hands out to people who don't show up without a prior OK.

◦ Consider the boss's point of view. Though the law allows Reservists to take time off repeatedly, abusing the law by asking for frequent or unnecessary training tours is in no one's best interest.

Employers have rights, too. They are entitled to:

◦ Know their employees' military training schedule, as far in advance as possible.



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° Require paperwork. The boss may ask to be provided copies of orders or other military paperwork,

° Deny pay or special work scheduling arrangements to Reserve member employees. Though the Department of Defense urges employers to help their employees make up regular work time, overtime or pay lost because of military duty, the law does not require them to do so,

Employers also have responsibilities. They must:

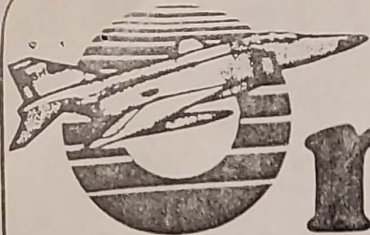
- ° Let Reserve member employees go to training.
- ° Take the employees back when their military training is completed,
- ° Not fire, demote or deny promotion or benefits to employees because of their military duties,
- ° Grant employees their earned vacation time in addition to any military leave they require.

An Ounce of Prevention

Sooner or later, most Reservists experience some sort of conflict between their military duties and their civilian careers. Most know the value of prevention and practice it. But if a problem arises, it is important to know where to go for help,

The wise ones who go the prevention route go out of their way to let the boss know, as far in advance as possible, exactly what military participation requires. They also prepare the boss for the possibility of special training requirements.

Employers also appreciate knowing what is going on at drill, especially if the work is related to the civilian job. A boss likes to know that any sacrifice he may be making is worthwhile.



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When insoluble problems between military and civilian duties seem to be shaping up, there are steps to take. The first, long before looking for help on the outside, is to talk to the boss. Most problems are worked out through face to face communication.

But some problems cannot be resolved easily and in those cases, the unit commander is the next person to consult. A talk between the boss and the commander often can result in a mutual agreement to adjust schedules that meet the needs of both the unit and the employer.

But even then, some problems persist. Then it's time to contact the employer support representatives in each state. They are usually well-known business leaders, closely associated with military commanders in their states. They can bring considerable influence and experience to bear to straighten matters out. Names, addresses and phone numbers of local employer support volunteers can be obtained from the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

The National Committee's ombudsman is ready to help if the problem is big or immediate. And, if all else fails, the U.S. Department of Labor's Labor Management Services Administration can intervene on behalf of a Reservist who is being denied job rights protected by federal law.

The National Committee can be reached toll free at (800) 336-4590.