GENERAL

army regulation leave and passes

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Army Regulation Leave and Passes: A Comprehensive Guide

Every member of the U.S. Army knows that the rigors of military life can take a toll on personal well being. Whether you're stationed overseas, deployed on a mission, or training on a domestic base, the Army provides structured mechanisms to manage time away from duty. These mechanisms are codified in **Army Regulation Leave and Passes**(AR 700 1, formerly AR 600 8 8). Understanding how these regulations work is essential for maximizing your benefits while maintaining readiness and compliance. This article offers an in depth exploration of the regulation, covering the types of leave and passes, eligibility criteria, application procedures, approval processes, common pitfalls, and practical tips for navigating the system.

What Is the Army Regulation Leave and Passes?

Army Regulation Leave and Passes establishes the policies, procedures, and responsibilities related to leave and passes for soldiers. It defines the various categories of time off, the eligibility requirements, and the administrative steps required for requesting and approving such time. The regulation ensures that soldiers can balance personal responsibilities with their professional duties, while also safeguarding unit readiness and operational security.

Key Components of the Regulation

- Types of Leave: Regular, Special, and Emergency Leave
- Types of Passes: Passes for Travel, Family Care, and Medical Reasons
- Eligibility Criteria: Rank, Length of Service, and Duty Status
- Application Process: Forms, Timelines, and Documentation
- Approval Hierarchy: Unit Commanders, Personnel Offices, and Higher Headquarters
- Record Keeping: Leave Tracking and Accountability

Types of Leave Covered by the Regulation

Leave is typically categorized based on the purpose and duration of the absence. Understanding the distinctions between each type helps you choose the correct request and increases the likelihood of approval.

Regular Leave

Regular leave is the most common form of leave, allowing soldiers to take a set number of days per fiscal year. The regulation specifies that a soldier is entitled to 30 days of regular leave per fiscal year, which can be carried over for a maximum of 60 days. Regular leave is generally used for vacations, family visits, or personal matters that do not require immediate attention.

Special Leave

Special leave is granted for specific circumstances that require a soldier to be away from duty for an extended period. This includes:

- Extended family events (e.g., weddings, funerals)
- Educational pursuits (e.g., enrolling in a civilian school)
- Medical treatments that require prolonged hospitalization

Special leave can be granted for up to 90 days, but it must be approved by the commanding officer after a thorough review.

Emergency Leave

Emergency leave is reserved for unforeseen or urgent situations such as:

- Serious illness or injury of a family member
- Natural disasters or emergencies at home
- Other critical events that demand immediate attention

Emergency leave can be granted on an as needed basis, typically up to 5 days per fiscal year, but the regulation allows for additional days if justified.

Types of Passes: When Leave Is Not Enough

While leave provides soldiers with a block of time off, passes allow for shorter, more specific absences. Passes are often used for travel, medical appointments, or other urgent needs that do not warrant a full leave request.

Passes for Travel

Travel passes are granted for soldiers who need to travel to a specific destination for a short period, usually up to 3 days. Common reasons include visiting a family member abroad, attending a wedding, or completing a short-term assignment.

Medical Passes

Medical passes are intended for urgent medical appointments or procedures that cannot be scheduled during regular leave. These passes can range from a single day to a week, depending on the severity of the medical issue.

Family Care Passes

Family care passes are designed for soldiers who must care for a sick or disabled family member. The regulation allows for up to 5 days per fiscal year, with the possibility of extension if the situation warrants it.

Eligibility Criteria: Who Can Apply?

Not every soldier is automatically eligible for all types of leave and passes. The regulation outlines specific eligibility rules based on rank, service length, and duty status.

Rank-Based Eligibility

- Enlisted Soldiers: Eligible for regular, special, and emergency leave; passes are available to all enlisted ranks.
- Officers: Similar eligibility as enlisted, with additional discretionary leave for certain commands.
- Warrant Officers: Follow the same policy framework but may have additional responsibilities that affect leave allotments.

Length of Service

Newly commissioned soldiers may have limited leave days until they reach a certain service milestone. For example, soldiers with less than 3 years of service may receive fewer regular leave days than those with longer tenure.

Duty Status

Soldiers on active duty, reserve, or National Guard status each have distinct leave allowances. Reserve and Guard members often have additional restrictions during training periods or when called to active duty.

The Application Process: Step by Step Guide

Submitting a leave or pass request is a structured process designed to maintain order and accountability. Below is a detailed walkthrough of the steps required.

Step 1: Determine the Correct Request Type

Before filling out any forms, confirm whether you need leave or a pass. If you require more than a few days off, you likely need leave. For brief absences, a pass is appropriate.

Step 2: Gather Required Documentation

Most requests require supporting documents. Common items include:

- Personal identification (e.g., ID card copy)
- Proof of travel itinerary for travel passes
- Medical records for medical passes
- Family member's death certificate or hospital discharge papers for special leave

Step 3: Complete the Appropriate Forms

The Army uses standardized forms for leave and pass requests. Key forms include:

- AR 700 1 Leave Request Form (for regular, special, and emergency leave)
- AR 700 1 Pass Request Form (for travel, medical, and family care passes)

Fill out all sections accurately, including dates, reasons, and signatures.

Step 4: Submit the Request to Your Unit's Personnel Office

Once the forms are complete, hand them to the personnel office or submit them electronically through the Army's web portal. Ensure you keep copies for your records.

Step 5: Await Approval

The approval process involves several layers:

1. Unit Commander: Reviews the request for operational impact.
2. Personnel Officer: Verifies documentation and compliance with regulation.
3. Higher Headquarters: May be involved for special leave or large-scale absences.

Approval can take anywhere from a few hours to several days, depending on the type of leave and the operational tempo.

Step 6: Receive Confirmation

Once approved, you'll receive a written confirmation or an electronic notification. Keep this confirmation in your personal file.

Approval Hierarchy and Decision Factors

Understanding the decision making process can help you anticipate potential issues and tailor your request accordingly.

Operational Readiness

Commanders must evaluate whether the absence will affect unit readiness. If your role is critical to ongoing missions, you may need to provide a substitute or adjust the timing of your leave.

Legal Compliance

All requests must comply with the regulation's legal requirements, including length limits and documentation standards. Failure to meet these standards can result in denial.

Equity and Fairness

Commanders strive to treat all soldiers fairly. If you have a history of frequent absences, you may face stricter scrutiny.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Even seasoned soldiers can stumble over common mistakes when requesting leave or passes. Here's a quick checklist to help you avoid costly errors.

- Late Submissions: Submit requests at least 30 days in advance for regular leave and 7 days for passes.
- Incomplete Documentation: Double check that all required paperwork is attached.
- Ignoring Operational Constraints: Coordinate with your squadron to ensure coverage.
- Misusing Leave Types: Use emergency leave only for truly urgent situations.
- Failing to Follow Up: If you haven't heard back within the expected timeframe, check with the personnel office.

Benefits of Adhering to the Regulation

Following Army Regulation Leave and Passes brings tangible advantages, both personally and professionally.

- Readiness Preservation: Proper scheduling prevents last minute disruptions.
- Legal Protection: Compliance shields you from disciplinary action.
- Career Advancement: Demonstrating responsibility can positively influence promotions.
- Personal Well Being: Adequate rest and family time reduce burnout.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can I Combine Leave and Passes?

Yes, but you must coordinate with your unit commander. For example, you could take a 10 day leave and then request a 2 day pass for a medical appointment during that period.

What Happens if I Need to Extend My Leave?

Extensions require a new request and approval. Provide a clear justification and updated documentation.

Do I Lose Leave Days if I Miss My Scheduled Time Off?

Yes. Unused leave days are forfeited unless you have a valid reason and receive approval to carry them over.

Can I Request Leave While Deployed?

Deployments have strict limits on leave. You may be eligible for a brief pass or emergency leave, but regular leave is usually not available.

What Are the Consequences of Unapproved Absences?

Unapproved absences can result in disciplinary action, loss of pay, or even administrative separation.

Practical Tips for a Smooth Leave Process

- Plan Early: Anticipate operational cycles and schedule leave during quieter periods.

- Use the Army’s Digital Portal: Electronic submissions reduce paperwork and expedite approvals.
- Maintain Open Communication: Keep your chain of command informed about your plans.
- Document Everything: Save copies of all correspondence and approvals.
- Review the Regulation Periodically: Updates may alter leave entitlements or procedures.

Conclusion

Army Regulation Leave and Passes is more than a bureaucratic requirement—it’s a vital framework that balances the demands of military service with the personal well being of soldiers. By understanding the types of leave, the eligibility criteria, and the step by step application process,

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