



Tips for Employers with National Guard or Reserve member Employees

Each employer has a role in maintaining a strong national defense. Today, the National Guard and Reserve are an integral part of our defense forces. More than half of the men and women serving in our armed forces are members of the National Guard and Reserve. Their performance must meet the same standards as their active duty counterparts. However, since they do not serve full-time, the cost to the government is far less.

As an employer, you are vital to enabling your employees who are members of the National Guard and Reserve to serve their country. Moreover, your active support and encouragement are key to their success. Here are some suggestions on how to help them help us all:

- **Learn more about the role of the National Guard and Reserve.** Attend open houses and public functions at local military units. Talk about the National Guard and Reserve with military and civilian leaders in your community. Ask your employees what they do and how they fit into the “big picture” of national defense.
- **Get to know** your employees’ military commanders and supervisors. Ask them to provide you with advance notice of your employee’s annual military duty schedule

and work out conflicts as early as possible, while alternative arrangements may be possible. If you would like an introduction, contact us and we’ll get your local ESGR representative to make arrangements for you to meet them.

- **Put your support in writing** by signing a Statement of Support for the National Guard and Reserve. Display it prominently for all your employees and visitors to see. These certificates can be obtained from the National or local ESGR committee or the ESGR Web site.

- **Look at your personnel policies** to see how they accommodate and support participation in the National Guard or Reserve. For example, do they include provisions for military leave of absence (exclusive of earned vacation time); do they ensure job opportunities and benefits equivalent to those of other employees? We would be happy to provide you with information on what other businesses are doing to accommodate National Guard and Reserve members in their workplace.

- **Get your entire management team** to promote your support of the National Guard and Reserve. Explain your position and address concerns as they may rise.

- **Encourage employee participation** in the National Guard and Reserve. Recognize and publicize their dedication and commitment to your business and the nation. Apply the training they receive from military duty. You'll be surprised to realize how much it enhances their job performance and value to your organization.

- **Accept that there may be occasional concerns** with your employment of 'citizen soldiers' and their requirement to perform military duty. Seek to resolve them as soon as they arise. Discuss with your employees their service requirements before problem situations arise, and keep an open dialogue to prevent them.

- **Seek assistance from your local ESGR committee** or from the National ESGR. Ask to speak with an ombudsman. Ombudsmen serve as confidential, neutral liaisons for employers and employees who seek assistance or clarification regarding their rights and responsibilities. More than 90 percent of the calls they receive are resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Our

ombudsmen work closely with the Veteran's Employment and Training Service/Department of Labor and will refer you to them if formal assistance is needed.

- **For more detailed information** about specific employment rights and responsibilities, our Web site is a great resource and includes a link to the Uniform Services Employment Rights and Responsibilities Act.

- **Don't hesitate to call** upon your employees; military commander or supervisor if you have a conflict. They face some of the same challenges you do in their business and know that it is in everyone's best interest to work together. Quite often, they can offer alternatives to meet individual needs. By taking a more active role in supporting the members of the National Guard and Reserve that work for you, you'll improve the quality of life for all your employees, you'll directly enhance the success of your organization, and you'll provide an invaluable service to the nation.