

## Tips for Reserve Component Members and Military Commanders to Improve Employer Support

**T**he employer-servicemember relationship can suffer when communication breaks down. Unit commanders have a responsibility to seek and encourage support from employers, while servicemembers need to maintain a positive relationship with them. Employer outreach can minimize future challenges with the employer-servicemember relationship. Here are a few suggestions to promote employer support through effective communication.

**Coordinate your activities** with your Unit Employer Support Representative. There are thousands of volunteer business executives, senior government representatives, educators and military personnel who serve on state and local ESGR committees. They conduct a wide variety of information and assistance programs designed to educate unit personnel and capture the attention of employers to win their support.

**Keep employers and supervisors posted** on drill dates. Be fair with employers – let them know as far in advance when training is scheduled. Give them plenty of time to plan around your absence.

**Tell employers about the productive things** their Reserve employees are learning and accomplishing while performing

military service. An employee returning from drill or training should talk to their employer about the unit's accomplishments.

**The Reserve employee shouldn't** give the employer the impression that military duty is a vacation from work -- that could hamper future participation. Tell employers about their employees' achievements. Whenever a unit member is promoted, completes a course, wins an award or does something outstanding, the commander should write the employer about it and express appreciation for his or her cooperation.

**Thank the employer and the supervisor** for their cooperation at least once a year. Let them know their support in arranging schedules to fit military duty is appreciated by both the employee and the unit

commander. Remind your unit members of the ESGR awards program, and encourage them to nominate their employers or supervisors for recognition using the on-line award form at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil). Plan and conduct appropriate presentations when you receive the award packet.



**Use military training at the civilian job.**

The military operates some of the best technical schools in the world and many National Guard and Reserve members are graduates. Leadership and management experience received in uniform are valuable, too. They can lead to a better job and higher pay in civilian occupations.

**Iron out misunderstandings personally.** If employer issues develop, try to resolve them by personal contact. Cordial relations with employers usually will reap cooperation. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, ombudsman services are available at both the local and national levels.

**Publish an annual financial report.** Let the community know what the unit contributes to the local economy through salaries, construction, and local purchases. Send a brief release to local papers and television stations, particularly when pay raises are announced.

**Be active in the community.** Make the unit a live, vital element in the community. Cooperate in community affairs and work on supportive projects whenever possible within the military mission. One of the benefits will be increased employer support.

Gaining the support of all employers for the role played by the National Guard and Reserve in today's Total Force structure is the responsibility of each servicemember and unit commander. Initiative and cooperation can be important factors in employer support and understanding. Without the support and cooperation of their civilian employers, members of the National Guard and Reserve could encounter difficulties in their efforts to perform their military duty. With support, our national defense will remain strong and ready. For further information, contact National ESGR through the toll-free number or via the Web site.