

Military Personnel Guidance (Supplement 1) for DoD and OSD Component Heads and Military Commanders in Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

This attachment provides supplemental military personnel guidance to DoD and OSD Component Heads and military commanders (collectively referred to as “commanders”) for the administration of personnel policies and pays and benefits in the context of the effects created by the spread of COVID-19. It is intended to identify flexibilities to help DoD minimize risk to military personnel and their families, respond to evolving situations, as well as ensure the readiness of our force to continue to execute our missions and support our domestic and international partners. Commanders have broad authority to exercise sound judgment in all cases, and this guidance describes available authority and flexibility that can be applied to promote, rather than to restrict, possible solutions.

Most pay and benefits for military members continue and are unaffected by the effects of COVID-19, and unless addressed by this supplemental guidance, will continue to be paid in accordance with existing laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Supplemental guidance follows:

PAY, ALLOWANCES, AND BENEFITS GUIDANCE

15. Special and Incentive Pays

As a result of the effects or extended effects of COVID-19, members who are receiving special or incentive pays that require the performance of specific duties (e.g., Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay, Aviation Incentive Pay) may be unable to perform the required duties through no fault of their own. As an exception to policy, for members who, but for the effects or extended effects of COVID-19, would otherwise be eligible to receive performance-based special or incentive pays, the Secretary concerned is hereby authorized in the interest of equity to suspend, for a period not to exceed 12 months, the requirement to perform specific duties and allow members to continue to receive their pay. This authority may be delegated no lower than the first general or flag officer, or civilian equivalent, in the chain of command of the members. To the extent that this authority may conflict with broader, more liberal waiver authorities contained in existing policy guidance, existing policy shall take precedence.

16. Basic Allowance for Subsistence

Members of the armed forces (both officer and enlisted), who are not entitled to the meals portion of a per diem and who, in response to the spread of COVID-19, are restricted in their movements—for self-monitoring, to protect the health of our personnel and their families, or to assure essential mission function capability—and, as a result of such restriction of movements, are housed in Government quarters (unaccompanied or leased) and subsisted through Government-provided meals (from a Government/appropriated fund dining facility or a Government-contracted vendor), may be authorized by the Secretary concerned (to be delegated no lower than to commanders of installations, bases, stations, or ships), to receive those Government-provided meals without charge during such period of restriction in movement and also continue to receive their pre-existing BAS at the applicable standard monthly rate without automatic deduction.

RESERVE COMPONENT SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

17. Inactive Duty Training (IDT) at Alternate Place of Duty

DoDI 1215.06, “*Uniform Reserve, Training, and Retirement Categories for the Reserve Component*,” dated March 11, 2014 (and incorporating Change 1, effective May 19, 2015), stipulates that “IDT consists of attendance at regularly scheduled unit training periods (regularly scheduled drills), additional IDT periods, and voluntary IDT.” Commanders are granted an exception to the in-person attendance portion of this policy and may use their discretion to authorize the performance of IDT at an alternate place of duty to conduct scheduled training for drills, to include telework. This exception to policy is granted only in cases where warranted due to local conditions from COVID-19. IDT periods will continue to be not less than 4 hours. IDT at alternate places of duty may not be compatible for all units or all members within a unit. Commanders who authorize telework at an alternate place of duty should follow current telework policies. Compensation for IDT will be in accordance with 37 USC § 206.

Guidance on the conduct and appropriate compensation for correspondence courses and Electronic-based Distributed Learning can be found in the following references:

- 37 USC § 206(d)
- DoDI 1215.06, “*Uniform Reserve, Training, and Retirement Categories for the Reserve Component*,” dated March 11, 2014 (and incorporating Change 1, effective May 19, 2015)
- DoDI 1215.21, “*Reserve Component (RC) Use of Electronic-based Distributed Learning Methods for Training*,” dated October 10, 2014

18. Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Coverage for Reserve Component (RC) Members:

Under existing policy, RC members with SGLI, Traumatic SGLI (TSGLI), and/or Family SGLI (FSGLI) coverage do not lose coverage due to non-payment of premiums when RC members do not receive active or inactive duty pay, from which premiums were normally deducted, as a result of previously scheduled IDT, Annual Training (AT), or Active Duty for Training (ADT) being cancelled, suspended, deferred, or excused. RC members should expect that any missed premiums will be subsequently deducted in a lump sum once IDT, AT, or ADT resumes and they are once again in a pay status.

19. TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)

The TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) health plan is available for purchase by qualified members of the Selected Reserve (SelRes). Since members must pay monthly premiums that represent 28 percent of the cost of the coverage by law, TRS premiums cannot be waived. However, to address concerns that members of the SelRes may be unable pay the monthly TRS premiums due to the COVID-19 emergency, if the TRICARE contractor is unsuccessful in collecting the premium at the beginning of the month from the member's bank account or credit card on file, the contractor will delay terminating coverage until 90 days after the date the COVID-19 emergency has ended as determined by the Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA).

SELRES members are strongly encouraged to continue to pay their premiums each month, if possible, as unpaid premiums accumulate each month and cannot be waived. If not fully paid within 90 days after the end date of the COVID-19 emergency period, as determined by the Director, DHA, the TRS coverage will be terminated retroactive to the last premium paid-through date. If any TRICARE payments were made for those uncovered dates of service, the TRICARE contractor will be required to recoup the payments.

OTHER INFORMATION

DoD is providing guidance on the response to COVID-19 at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>. This guidance and additional information can also be found at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus>.

Service members and their families are encouraged to call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 and consult <https://www.militarysource.mil/coronavirus> for information and referrals to helpful resources. Relevant information will be added or updated on the website as it becomes available. Military OneSource is available 24/7/365 and is also accessible via phone outside the United States at no cost to the caller (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/international-calling-options> for details).