SOFTWARE & TECH

Army Regulation Leave And Passes

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Understanding Army Regulation Leave and Passes: A Complete Guide

For soldiers and their families, navigating the administrative side of military life can sometimes feel overwhelming. Among the most important policies to understand is the framework governing time away from duty. This article provides a comprehensive look at **Army Regulation Leave And Passes**, the official policy that dictates how soldiers can take time off, whether for rest, personal obligations, or emergencies. Written for human readers—soldiers, family members, leaders, and anyone supporting the military community—this guide breaks down the key components, eligibility, approval processes, and best practices. We'll cover everything from ordinary leave to emergency leave, pass privileges, chargeable versus non-chargeable time, and the critical role of proper documentation. By the end, you'll have a clear understanding of how to manage your time off within the bounds of Army regulation.

The primary governing document for these policies is **Army Regulation 600-8-10 (AR 600-8-10)**, titled "Leaves and Passes." This regulation supersedes earlier versions and provides the authoritative rules for all Army components, including Active Duty, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard. Understanding this regulation is essential for maintaining readiness, morale, and a healthy work-life balance. Let's dive into the details.

The Purpose and Scope of Army Leave and Passes

Army Regulation Leave And Passes serves several critical purposes. First, it ensures that soldiers have opportunities for rest and recuperation, which directly impacts mental health, physical readiness, and overall retention. Second, it provides a structured way for soldiers to handle personal emergencies, family obligations, and legal matters without negatively affecting unit readiness. Third, it creates accountability—every leave or pass must be accounted for in the soldier's records to ensure accurate pay, benefits, and service time.

The regulation applies to all soldiers unless specifically exempted by higher authority. It outlines the types of leave (ordinary, emergency, convalescent, etc.), pass categories (regular, special, and permissive), and the procedures for requesting, approving, and recording time off. Leaders at every level must be familiar with these policies to make informed decisions that support both the soldier and the mission.

Key Types of Leave Under Army Regulation

Leave is defined as authorized absence from duty for a specified period, typically chargeable against a soldier's accrued leave balance. Here are the primary categories defined under AR 600-8-10:

- Ordinary Leave – The most common type, used for vacation, personal time, or family visits. Soldiers earn 2.5 days of leave per month (30 days per year). Ordinary leave is chargeable and must be approved in advance.
- Emergency Leave – Granted for urgent personal or family situations, such as the death or serious illness of an immediate family member. Emergency leave can be advance leave (chargeable) or non-chargeable under certain circumstances (e.g., compassionate reassignment).
- Convalescent Leave – Prescribed by a medical officer for soldiers recovering from illness, surgery, or injury. This type is non-chargeable, but the soldier must provide medical documentation.
- Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY) – Also known as "house-hunting" or "job-hunting" leave, PTDY is non-chargeable but requires command approval. It is often used when a soldier is moving to a new duty station.

- Advance Leave – Allows a soldier to take leave beyond their current accrued balance, up to a maximum of 60 days (with approval). Advance leave must be repaid through future accruals.
- Leave Without Pay – Rarely used for military personnel, but possible in certain administrative situations. It does not count toward service time for pay or retirement.

Each type of leave has specific eligibility criteria and documentation requirements. Soldiers should always check their leave balance in the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) before requesting time off.

Passes: Short-Term Authorized Absences

While leave is typically for multiple days, **passes**are short-term absences that do not count against a soldier's leave balance. Army Regulation Leave And Passes distinguishes between regular passes (up to 4 days) and special passes (linked to holidays or unit morale events). Passes are often granted at the discretion of the unit commander.

- Regular Pass – Usually for a weekend or a few days, such as a 96-hour pass over a holiday. Soldiers must remain within the local area unless otherwise authorized.
- Special Pass – Granted for exceptional performance, completion of a major training event, or family emergencies. Special passes can be up to 4 days and are non-chargeable.
- Permissive Pass – Not officially defined in AR 600-8-10, but often used colloquially for time off granted by a leader for informal purposes (e.g., "take a half day"). These are at the commander's discretion and should be documented.

Passes are an excellent tool for unit morale, but they must be managed carefully to avoid abuse. Soldiers on pass are still subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and must report back on time.

Eligibility and Documentation Requirements

Requesting leave or a pass under Army Regulation Leave And Passes is not automatic. Soldiers must meet certain eligibility criteria:

1. Accrued leave balance: For ordinary leave, the soldier must have enough accrued days (or request advance leave). Passes do not require a balance.
2. Unit readiness: The soldier must not be in a critical training phase, deployment preparation, or other mission-essential status that precludes absence.
3. Medical fitness: Soldiers must be medically cleared to travel, especially for convalescent or emergency leave.
4. Disciplinary status: Soldiers under investigation or facing courts-martial may be restricted from leave.

Documentation is crucial. For ordinary leave, soldiers submit a DA Form 31 (Request for Leave or Pass) or process the request through IPPS-A. Emergency leave often requires supporting documents (e.g., a Red Cross message, medical records, or death certificate). Leaders must ensure all forms are completed accurately to avoid pay issues or administrative delays.

The Approval Process and Command Responsibilities

The approval authority for leave and passes depends on the length and type. For ordinary leave of 30 days or less, the battalion commander or designated representative can approve. For longer leave (up to 60 days), higher-level approval is needed. Emergency leave can be approved by the first commander in the chain of command with authority to grant leave.

Commanders have a legal obligation to ensure that leave and passes do not negatively impact the unit's ability to perform its mission. They must balance individual soldier welfare with operational requirements. When denying a request, the commander should provide a written reason, and the soldier has the right to appeal through the chain

of command.

Technology has streamlined the process. IPPS-A is now the primary system for leave requests, approval, and record-keeping. However, paper DA Form 31s are still used in some units or when the system is unavailable. Soldiers should keep copies of all approved requests for their personal records.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Even experienced soldiers can make mistakes with leave and passes. Here are common pitfalls and how to avoid them:

- Not checking leave balance – Requesting leave when you don't have enough days can lead to denial or unexpected chargeable time. Always verify your balance in IPPS-A.
- Late submission – Emergency leave aside, routine leave should be submitted at least 30 days in advance. Last-minute requests are often denied due to mission requirements.
- Incomplete documentation – For emergency or convalescent leave, missing paperwork can delay approval. Use the Red Cross for emergency notifications when possible.
- Misunderstanding non-chargeable leave – Not all "free" time is non-chargeable. PTDY, for example, is non-chargeable but still requires command approval and is not an entitlement.
- Failure to return on time – Overstaying leave is a serious offense under UCMJ Article 86 (Absence Without Leave). Always communicate with your chain of command if you anticipate a delay.

Best practices include maintaining open communication with your supervisor, using leave forecasting tools, and understanding your unit's standard operating procedures (SOPs) for time off. Leaders should set clear expectations and lead by example.

Leave and Passes for Reserve and National Guard Components

Army Regulation Leave And Passes applies differently to Reserve and National Guard soldiers, especially those not on active duty. For drill weekends and annual training, these soldiers are not typically eligible for leave, but passes can be granted by the unit commander on a case-by-case basis. When activated (Title 10 or Title 32 orders), they fall under the same rules as Active Duty.

It's also important to note that Reserve soldiers may use military leave from their civilian employers—provided by law under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). This is separate from Army regulation but often coordinates with scheduled training.

The Connection to Morale and Retention

Predictable, fair leave and pass policies are a cornerstone of military morale. Soldiers who know they can take time to recharge or handle personal matters are more likely to reenlist and perform well. Conversely, units that deny reasonable requests or make the process bureaucratic and stressful risk losing talented personnel.

Leaders should view leave and passes not as a burden but as a tool for sustaining readiness. Encouraging soldiers to take leave regularly—rather than hoarding days until the end of the fiscal year—reduces burnout and improves unit cohesion. Army Regulation Leave And Passes provides the framework, but unit culture determines how it is implemented.

Conclusion

Army Regulation Leave And Passes is more than a set of administrative rules—it is a vital component of a soldier's career and well-being. By understanding the types of leave, pass privileges, eligibility requirements, and approval

processes, both soldiers and leaders can navigate time off with confidence. Proper planning, timely documentation, and adherence to regulation ensure that soldiers can take care of themselves and their families while still meeting mission objectives. Whether you are a new private or a seasoned command sergeant major, mastering this regulation will serve you throughout your Army career. Always refer to the latest version of AR 600-8-10 for official guidance, and remember: leave is a benefit earned, a right protected, and a responsibility to manage wisely.

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