SOFTWARE & TECH

Army Regulation Leaves And Passes

Published: November 20, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Understanding Army Regulation Leaves and Passes: A Comprehensive Guide

For soldiers serving in the United States Army, time away from duty is not just a privilege — it is a carefully structured entitlement governed by official policy. **Army Regulation Leaves and Passes**, formally outlined in AR 600-8-10, provides the legal and administrative framework for all types of authorized absences. Whether you are a new recruit navigating your first leave request or a seasoned non-commissioned officer managing your squad's schedule, understanding these regulations is essential for maintaining both operational readiness and personal well-being. This guide breaks down the key components of Army leave and pass policies, offering clear explanations, practical tips, and insight into how these rules support the balance between mission requirements and soldier welfare.

What Is Army Regulation Leaves and Passes?

AR 600-8-10, titled "Leaves and Passes," is the official Army publication that governs all authorized absences from duty for active-duty soldiers, reservists on active duty, and Army National Guard members in federal service. The regulation establishes uniform procedures for requesting, approving, recording, and managing time off. It covers everything from a short weekend pass to an extended ordinary leave. Understanding this regulation helps soldiers avoid administrative pitfalls, such as unexcused absences or leave pay issues, while ensuring commanders have the tools to manage personnel effectively.

The Purpose Behind the Policy

The regulation serves multiple purposes. First, it ensures that soldiers can take necessary time away from duty to rest, attend to personal affairs, or handle emergencies without jeopardizing their careers. Second, it provides commanders with clear guidelines to approve or deny requests based on mission needs. Third, it standardizes leave accounting across the entire Army, preventing discrepancies that could affect a soldier's pay or retirement points. Ultimately, **Army Regulation Leaves and Passes**is designed to balance individual needs with the collective requirements of the unit and the Army as a whole.

Types of Leave Under AR 600-8-10

Leave is generally defined as an authorized absence from duty for more than 24 hours, and it is typically charged against a soldier's accrued leave balance. The regulation outlines several distinct categories of leave, each with its own rules and purposes.

Ordinary Leave

Ordinary leave is the most common type of authorized absence. Soldiers accrue 2.5 days of ordinary leave per month, totaling 30 days per year. This leave can be used for vacations, personal business, or any other purpose. Commanders approve ordinary leave based on mission requirements, unit manning levels, and the soldier's leave balance. It is important to note that ordinary leave must be requested in advance through the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) system, typically using the DA Form 31. Soldiers cannot go into negative leave balance without

special authorization, and unused leave may be carried over up to 60 days at the end of the fiscal year under current policy.

Emergency Leave

Emergency leave is granted for urgent situations involving immediate family members, such as a death, serious illness, or other critical events. This type of leave is often approved quickly and may be charged to ordinary leave or, in some cases, granted as advance leave. Soldiers requesting emergency leave should provide documentation of the emergency, such as a Red Cross message or a statement from a medical professional. The regulation emphasizes that emergency leave should be processed as rapidly as possible to get the soldier to their destination without delay.

Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY)

Permissive Temporary Duty, often called PTDY, is a type of leave that is not charged against a soldier's leave balance. It is typically authorized for specific purposes, such as house-hunting during a permanent change of station (PCS), attending a job fair, or participating in professional development activities. PTDY is considered a duty status for pay purposes, meaning the soldier continues to receive full pay and allowances. However, it must be approved in advance and is subject to strict limits, usually not exceeding 10 days for most purposes.

Convalescent Leave

Convalescent leave is granted to soldiers recovering from a medical condition or surgical procedure. It is not charged against ordinary leave and is typically authorized by a military medical provider. The purpose of convalescent leave is to allow the soldier adequate time to heal without worrying about leave balances or duty obligations. Commanders must ensure that convalescent leave is properly documented and that the soldier's return to duty is coordinated with medical clearance.

Advance Leave

In certain circumstances, a soldier may be granted advance leave, which allows them to take time off before it is actually accrued. Advance leave is limited to a maximum of 30 days and must be repaid through future accruals. It is typically reserved for emergencies or other situations where the soldier's leave balance is insufficient. Commanders must carefully consider advance leave requests to ensure the soldier will be able to repay the leave within a reasonable timeframe.

Types of Passes Under AR 600-8-10

Passes are short-term absences, usually less than 24 hours, that are not charged against leave. They are often granted for weekends, holidays, or other short breaks. The regulation provides for several types of passes, each with different rules and expectations.

Regular Pass

A regular pass is a routine absence from duty, typically granted for weekends or holidays. Soldiers must be within the local area and remain available for recall if necessary. Regular passes are usually granted by the unit commander or first sergeant and do not require extensive paperwork. However, soldiers must still adhere to uniform and conduct standards while on pass, and they are expected to return to duty at the specified time.

Special Pass

A special pass may be granted for specific occasions, such as a family event, a religious observance, or a personal milestone. Unlike a regular pass, a special pass may allow a soldier to travel beyond the local area, provided they

can be reached in case of emergency. Special passes require advance approval from the commander and may be subject to additional conditions, such as providing an itinerary or checking in periodically.

Liberty Pass

Liberty passes are short, uncharged absences often granted during training or deployment to give soldiers a brief break. They are typically limited to a few hours and may be restricted to the immediate vicinity of the duty station. Liberty passes help maintain morale and reduce stress during demanding periods, but they are subject to mission requirements and unit policies.

How to Request Leave or Pass

The process for requesting time off under **Army Regulation Leaves and Passes**is straightforward but requires attention to detail. Soldiers should follow these general steps:

- Determine the type of leave or pass needed based on the purpose and duration of the absence.
- Check your leave balance on your LES to ensure you have sufficient accrued leave for ordinary leave requests.
- Complete the appropriate request form, usually DA Form 31 for leave or a pass request for short absences.
- Submit the request through your chain of command, allowing sufficient time for approval — typically at least 48 hours for ordinary leave.
- Receive written approval before departing, and ensure you understand any conditions, such as recall procedures or reporting requirements.

Commanders are required to act on leave requests promptly. If a request is denied, the soldier has the right to request an explanation and, in some cases, appeal the decision through the chain of command.

Key Differences Between Leave and Pass

Understanding the distinction between leave and pass is crucial for proper planning and compliance. The main differences include:

- Duration: Leave is typically for more than 24 hours; passes are for less than 24 hours.
- Charging: Leave is charged against accrued leave days; passes are not charged.
- Travel: Leave may involve travel outside the local area; passes are usually restricted to the local area.
- Recall: Soldiers on pass must be available for immediate recall; soldiers on leave may have more flexibility.
- Documentation: Leave requires formal paperwork (DA Form 31); passes often require only verbal or informal approval.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Even experienced soldiers can run into issues with leave and pass requests. Here are some common mistakes to avoid:

Failing to Plan Ahead

Ordinary leave requests should be submitted as early as possible, especially during peak periods like holidays or summer. Last-minute requests are more likely to be denied due to mission requirements.

Ignoring Leave Balance

Accrued leave is not unlimited. Monitor your LES regularly to avoid requesting more days than you have. Using leave before it is earned can lead to debt or negative balances.

Not Communicating with Leadership

Unexpected absences, even for a valid reason, can create problems if not communicated properly. Always inform your chain of command as soon as possible if you anticipate being late or absent.

Overlooking Return Requirements

Returning from leave or pass on time is a soldier's responsibility. Factor in travel time, potential delays, and check-in procedures to ensure you arrive back as scheduled.

Recent Updates and Changes to AR 600-8-10

The Army periodically updates AR 600-8-10 to reflect changes in policy, technology, and operational needs. Recent updates have focused on streamlining digital leave processing through the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A), making it easier for soldiers to submit and track requests. Additionally, changes to carry-over limits and special leave accrual rules have been implemented to give soldiers more flexibility during periods of high operational tempo. Staying informed about these updates through official Army publications and your unit's training briefings is essential for compliance.

Conclusion

Understanding **Army Regulation Leaves and Passes**is not just about following rules — it is about taking care of yourself and your family while fulfilling your duty to the Army. Whether you are planning a well-earned vacation, responding to a family emergency, or simply taking a short break to recharge, knowing your entitlements and responsibilities under AR 600-8-10 ensures that you can navigate the process smoothly and avoid unnecessary stress. By planning ahead, communicating clearly with your chain of command, and staying informed about policy updates, you can make the most of your time off while maintaining the professionalism and readiness that the Army demands. Remember, time away from duty is a benefit designed to support your overall well-being, so use it wisely and responsibly.

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