



CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

A conscientious objector is one who is opposed to serving in the armed forces and/or bearing arms on the grounds of moral or religious principles.

HOW TO APPLY

In general, once a man gets a notice that he has been found qualified for military service, he has the opportunity to make a claim for classification as a conscientious objector (CO). A registrant making a claim for Conscientious Objection is required to appear before his local board to explain his beliefs.

He may provide written documentation or include personal appearances by people he knows who can attest to his claims. His written statement might explain:

- how he arrived at his beliefs; and
- the influence his beliefs have had on how he lives his life.

The local board will decide whether to grant or deny a CO classification based on the evidence a registrant has presented.

A man may appeal a Local Board's decision to a Selective Service District Appeal Board. If the Appeal Board also denies his claim, but the vote is not unanimous, he may further appeal the decision to the National Appeal Board. See also Classifications.

WHO QUALIFIES?

Beliefs which qualify a registrant for CO status may be religious in nature, but don't have to be. Beliefs may be moral or ethical; however, a man's reasons for not wanting to participate in a war must not be based on politics, expediency, or self-interest. In general, the man's lifestyle prior to making his claim must reflect his current claims.

SERVICE AS A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

Two types of service are available to conscientious objectors, and the type assigned is determined by the individual's specific beliefs. The person who is opposed to any form of military service will be assigned to Alternative Service - described below. The person whose beliefs allow him to serve in the military but in a noncombatant capacity will serve in the Armed Forces but will not be assigned training or duties that include using weapons.

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ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

Conscientious Objectors opposed to serving in the military will be placed in the Selective Service Alternative Service Program. This program attempts to match COs with local employers. Many types of jobs are available, however the job must be deemed to make a meaningful contribution to the maintenance of the national health, safety, and interest. Examples of Alternative Service are jobs in:

- conservation
- caring for the very young or very old
- education
- health care

Length of service in the program will equal the amount of time a man would have served in the military, usually 24 months