

USCENTCOM Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave Program

Question and Answer (Q&A) 18 Day Chargeable R&R Leave

Q. What is the new R&R Leave policy?

A. Service Members who are deployed for 15 months in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility in one of 17 previously designated countries in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom are eligible for 18 chargeable days of R&R leave.

Q. Why was the old policy changed?

A. In Jan 07 the Department of Defense announced that Army deployments would be extended to 15 months from the standard 12 month tour. In recognition of the increased sacrifice and operational hardship, USCENTCOM requested the increase in leave duration. The Department of Defense has supported the deployed forces by approving the increase in the rest and recuperation period.

Q. What about Service Members who do not deploy for 15 months?

A. Service Members deploying for less than 15 months but who are in theater (boots on ground – BOG) for at least 270 days, remain eligible for the standard 15-day chargeable R&R leave period.

Q. To whom does the new policy apply?

A. The policy applies to any Service Member deployed on a 15-month tour. However, only the Army currently has deployments of 15-month duration.

Q. Does this new policy apply to DoD civilians?

A. Military and DoD civilians deployed to the USCENTCOM area of operations (AOR) on 12 month deployments, with the minimum 270 days, boots on ground (BOG) continue to be eligible for 15 days chargeable R&R leave at the commander's discretion. When DoD civilians meet the criteria of being deployed for 15 months in the CENTCOM AOR, they are also eligible for the extended 18 days leave.

Q. Will this new policy apply to Active Component only or to Reserve personnel as well?

A. The policy is applicable to Active Component and mobilized Reservists who deploy for 15 months. However, current Reserve mobilizations are for less than 15 month deployments with options for extensions.

Q. When was the new R&R policy effective?

A. The amended policy became effective July 13, 2007 and applies to military and deployed DoD civilians. Only those who departed for R&R leave on or after July 13, 2007 may take the 18 days R&R leave.

Q. Is the new policy retroactive?

A. No. Service Members who departed for R&R leave prior to July 13, 2007 are not eligible for the additional chargeable R&R leave days. Regrettably, a line must be drawn at some point. To make the policy retroactive would cause severe turbulence in field units and undermine their mission oriented posture.

Q. Why was the non-available strength cap raised to 12% for Reserve Component personnel?

A. The theater desired that all eligible personnel should have the opportunity to take a chargeable R&R leave period during deployment. Reserve Component units are often deployed for shorter tour periods than the Active Component; thereby, they often have a reduced opportunity to take a chargeable R&R leave period, even when eligible. The theater advised that an authorization for Reserve units to raise unit absences up to 12% per day would provide most eligible reservists the opportunity to take a chargeable R&R leave period, within their 9-month BOG window. However, use of this limitation requires approval of the first General/Flag Officer in their chain of command, based on operational conditions. Active Component personnel on 15 month tours, now have an 11-month window of eligibility with no problem expected keeping Active Component units within the 10% non-available strength rule.

Q. Can I divide up my 18 days of leave into two or more blocks and spread it out?

A. No. Rest and Recuperation Leave consist of one 18-day block of chargeable leave plus travel time. To break the 18 days into two or more blocks would double the cost and demands on in-theater and international air assets, double the disruption to unit stability and increase time away from the unit by more than 20% - all prejudicial to mission accomplishment.

Q. I began my leave on the July 13th. How do I get my leave extended for three days?

A. Service Members and DoD civilians who qualify for 18 days R&R leave should contact their unit commander or approving official and the Personnel Assistant Point at the Atlanta or Dallas airport listed on their leave form to ensure correction on their scheduled return date.