

Deployment Tip Sheet for Military Service Members

How to Prepare for Your Upcoming Deployment

VA is committed to supporting you through deployment, providing the information, resources and tools you need to make a smooth transition from your civilian to your military role.

The following tips will help to ensure all your bases are covered before military duty:

Inform Your Supervisor

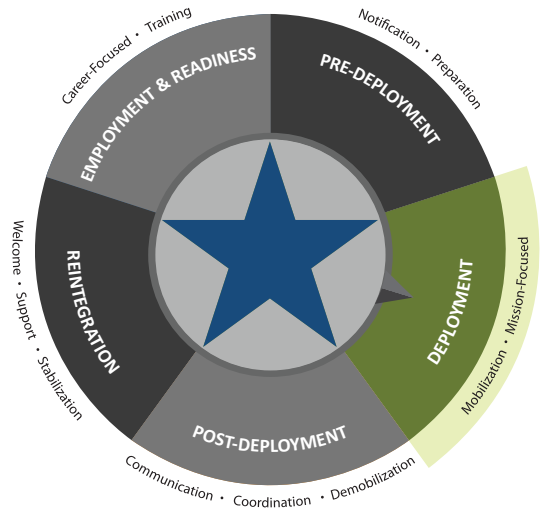
You do not need to wait for written orders to get started. A verbal notification is sufficient until your written orders are available.

Connect with your organization's human resources (HR) professional. Your supervisor can help you locate the appropriate HR professional. Schedule a meeting with him or her to review your rights and benefits options.

Meet With an HR Professional

An HR professional will guide you through your entitlements, benefits and leave usage, and assist you with the associated forms. Together, you can determine the best selections for you and your family.

- **Discuss health care:** You will be enrolled in TriCare, but you can also continue your Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB). Enrollment in TriCare is mandatory for deploying Military Service Members, but optional for family members. View the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) [FEHB Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- **Understand leave usage:** You are entitled to use accrued annual and military leave during deployment if you desire extra income. For more information, refer to OPM's [Military Leave Fact Sheet](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions on Military Leave](#).



- **Review your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP):** You can contribute to your military TSP while on active duty. Your civilian TSP will remain in place, but you cannot contribute to it. Automatic contributions will resume when you return to your federal position.
- **Review Standard Form 52 (SF-52):** A supervisor or administrative officer from HR will initiate your SF-52 and submit it to HR. Review your SF-52 with an HR professional to discuss the best options for you and your family and to ensure it is accurately completed. During military service, your employee status can be changed to any combination of military leave, annual leave and Leave Without Pay (LWOP-US).

Know Your Rights

Learn about your rights as a Military Service Member, particularly under the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA).

- **Be familiar with USERRA:** When you return, you are guaranteed a job with the same status, seniority and rate of pay you had when you deployed. You are also eligible for pay increases that you would have received if you had not deployed. For more information, refer to Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's (ESGR's) [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about USERRA.

Coming soon: *VA for Vets* USERRA training through VA's Talent Management System.

Access Support Programs

- **Use *VA for Vets* resources:** Reach out to a coach to discuss deployment questions related to your VA position. Visit the *VA for Vets* website for checklists, guides, online training, social media connections and additional deployment support services.
- **Connect your family:** Touch base with your unit's Family Support Program Coordinator or Yellow Ribbon Program for family support before, during and after deployment. The [Military OneSource](#) and [Military Homefront](#) programs also provide helpful support resources.

Know That You are a Valued Employee and Will be Missed

We value the sacrifice you are making to serve our country. Your military experience contributes to the important work you do at VA, and we look forward to welcoming you home.

Have Questions? Need Help?

Visit *VA for Vets* to access personalized, 24/7 support resources:

- **Coaches** – Contact a trained coach to discuss your deployment and reintegration questions one-on-one.
- **Virtual Collaboration Tool** – Interact with your coach, supervisor or HR professional in a personalized virtual workspace.
- **Training** – Attend online training programs through VA's Talent Management System to learn about deployment roles and your rights under USERRA.
- **Resources** – Use checklists, deployment and reintegration guides, resource directories, contact lists and other *VA for Vets* resources to plan for a successful deployment.
- **Videos and Events** – View videos and online webinars about the *VA for Vets* program and the hot topics surrounding the deployment process.

What is "*VA for Vets*?"

VA for Vets is a comprehensive program designed to attract, retain and support Veteran employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are dedicated to helping Veterans find jobs that maximize their military skills, while offering them effective career management tools to develop professionally. Come see how *VA for Vets* is connecting Veterans to the information, resources and tools they need to succeed at VA.

