



7 Tips for Reservists with Civilian Jobs: Setting the Conditions for a Successful Military-Leave Request

If you're a reservist with a civilian job, you will eventually need to ask your employer for time off for military duties (e.g., course, training, deployment). It can sometimes be a challenge to ask for military leave, but you can set yourself up for success by following these tips.

#1 – Show Impeccable Work Ethic

Consistently demonstrate to your civilian employer commitment, loyalty and a strong work ethic. Seek and accept responsibility and be a proactive problem-solver. Deliver results and keep your promises. If you're a strong member of the team, your employer has a vested interest in retaining you and approving reasonable requests for flexibility.

#2 – Establish Your Personal Brand

Introduce yourself to colleagues at work. Earn respect through your actions and how you treat people. It's human nature to support people we like—and this can be important when you need to ask for flexibility or time off.

#3 – Talk About Your Reserve Work

It shouldn't be a surprise to your colleagues—especially your direct supervisor—that you're a reservist. The Canadian Armed Forces are genuinely interesting to those with little knowledge of the military, so don't be afraid to talk about your military work and the competencies you build through enduring reserve service (e.g., leadership, situation analysis, planning and contingency-planning, time-management, stress-management, technical skills).

#4 – Invite Your Supervisor to a Unit Event

Units regularly organize opportunities for employers to learn more about the Reserve Force. Ask your chain-of-command about events on the horizon and invite your supervisor (e.g., boss' night, employers' visit to an exercise).

#5 – Know Your Employer's Military Leave Policy (MLP)

Contact your human-resources team or union to ask if an MLP applies to reservists. Policies or collective agreements often explain the procedures for this kind of leave. If your organization doesn't have an MLP, ask what it would take to implement one and volunteer to draft it. Ask your Unit Employer Support Representative for advice.

#6 – Provide as Much Advance Warning as Possible

Avoid surprises. If there's a good chance you'll be on a course, exercise or deployment, let your employer know as soon as possible—even before a formal course or task nomination—so they can plan accordingly. Sometimes, it's impossible to avoid short-notice scenarios (e.g., rapid deployment, last-minute slot on a course) but this shouldn't be the norm when requesting military leave. Consult our tip-sheet [I Need to Ask My Boss for Military Leave](#).

#7 – Take the Time to Thank Your Employer

Appropriately thank your employer when they support your military-leave request(s). You or your chain-of-command can [send a letter of appreciation](#). The "thank you" can also be more elaborate, if you nominate your employer through the [Canadian Armed Forces Employer Support Recognition Program](#).

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