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I Need to Temporarily Reduce My Military Commitment

Service in the Reserves is meant to be flexible. It's designed so you can increase your commitment when you have the time, and reduce it when family, school or civilian-work obligations need to take precedence. Follow these five tips so you can temporarily adjust your commitment to the Reserves when necessary.

#1 – Be a Reliable Sailor, Soldier or Aviator

When you are a committed member of the team and a hard worker, you become a key asset to your unit. Your chain of command has an incentive to accommodate reasonable requests for flexibility, because they want you to commit your time again when your circumstances revert to being more favourable to reserve service.

#2 – Establish Your Personal Brand

When you show respect for others, you are much more likely to be treated with the same considerations. This is the 'Golden Rule' and it applies everywhere—even in the military. Earn respect through your actions and how you treat people. When you give respect you will get respect, and this will be helpful when you need flexibility.

#3 – Keep Your Chain of Command Informed About Your Civilian Life

Just as we suggest keeping your civilian employer informed about your military commitments, your military superior should also know about your important civilian commitments (e.g., family, school, work). It shouldn't be a surprise to them that you have exams or a key work project coming up, or that you are about to have your first child. Help your supervisor to plan by keeping them updated about important developments in your civilian life.

#4 – Learn About the Different Ways You Can Take Time Off the Military

Provided you abide by certain conditions and maintain applicable standards, there are several ways you can reduce your reserve commitment without penalty. Your options might include:

- Parading the minimum but keeping your yearly qualifications up to date;
- Being temporarily excused from military work (e.g., exemption from duty and training); or,
- Transferring to the [Supplementary Reserve](#).

Talk to your chain of command about what is most appropriate given your circumstance. Whatever you do, don't just stop showing up.

#5 – Provide as Much Advance Warning as Possible

If you know that family, school or work commitments are going to impact your ability to commit time to the Reserves, tell your chain of command as soon as possible. Sometimes, short-notice scenarios can't be avoided (e.g., family emergency) but this shouldn't be the norm when requesting flexibility from your unit.

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