

**Department of
Veterans Affairs
Deployment
Lifecycle Guide**
for Military Service Members



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You are important to VA.

You serve your country, and VA stands ready to serve you when you prepare to deploy, while you are on active military duty, and when you return to VA.

We understand that balancing a civilian job, family obligations and military duties can be challenging. It only gets tougher if you are called up to active duty. This guide is designed to provide you with information to address the challenges of deployment and to share the many ways that VA will support you along the way. Our goal is to ease your transition between civilian employment and active military duty.

**VA is committed to
being your advocate,
anticipating and
meeting your needs
and those of your
loved ones.**

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Introduction

Your supervisor and HR professional are your first line of support. Additional resources are available from *VA for Vets*, a website created just for you, and *VA for Vets Coaches*, a trained cadre of support personnel who will guide you through the process, answer your questions and listen to your concerns.

VA for Vets Web Site

VA for Vets (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>) provides centralized access to training, coaching, communications and career development tools for you, your supervisor and your co-workers, as well as for human resource (HR) professionals. Highlights of the website include:

- **Training** – Access training on your rights and responsibilities as well as your interactions with others in VA
- **Job Aids** – Download deployment checklists, guides and much more
- **Links to** – Quickly locate other websites that provide information and support
- **Social Media Tools** – Keep in touch with others using *VA for Vets* Facebook page
- **Videos** – View presentations about *VA for Vets* program

VA for Vets Coaches

VA for Vets coaches are ready to provide you with deployment information and support as well as career guidance.

Coaches are available to take your call from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST at 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387).



When you contact a coach, he or she will create a case in the Case Management System (CMS) that only you or the coach can view. You can check the status of your case in the CMS by logging on at <https://mycase.VAforVets.VA.gov>.

Learn more about the services offered by *VA for Vets* Coaches at <http://VAforVets.VA.gov>.

Deployment Lifecycle

Each branch of service has its own terms for the process Military Service Members go through when they are called to perform military service.

The VA for Vets program defines the process as five phases:

- Employment & Readiness**
 Begins initially when service members are hired by VA and ends when they receive written or verbal orders to perform military service.
- Pre-deployment**
 Starts when service members receive orders or notification to perform military service and ends when they depart from VA to their deployment assignment.
- Deployment**
 Starts when service members depart from VA to perform military service and ends when they complete active duty.
- Post-deployment**
 Begins when the service members start the military out-processing procedures and initiates the transition back to VA employee status and ends when they return to VA employment.
- Reintegration**
 Begins when service members complete active duty and ends when they determine they are fully integrated back into the VA workforce.



Your Role in the Deployment Lifecycle

This roles matrix defines when the service member, his or her supervisor, and the Human Resources (HR) professional should be involved to ensure a standardized approach throughout the deployment lifecycle.

Exhibit 1 – Roles Matrix

Employment & Readiness Key Activities	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Sign <i>VA for Vets Letter of Agreement</i>	●	●	
Create or revise <i>Transition Plan</i>	●	●	
Take Employment & Readiness lesson of USERRA Web-based Training (WBT)	★	●	●
Pre-deployment Key Activities	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Inform VA supervisor, preferably in writing, of upcoming deployment	●		
Enter deployment date in the Case Management System (CMS)	●		
Verify deployment date has been entered in the CMS		●	
Initiate <i>Request for Personnel Action, SF 52</i>		●	
Use <i>Pre-deployment Advisor</i>	●		
Participate in HR pre-deployment session (using results from <i>Pre-deployment Advisor</i>)	●		●
Update medical, dental, life and long-term care insurance information	●		
Complete <i>Transition Plan</i>	●	●	
Meet to discuss staffing		●	●
Process <i>Request for Personnel Action, SF 52</i>			●
Take <i>Leading the Way WBT</i>		●	
Take Pre-deployment lesson of USERRA WBT	★	●	●
Deployment Key Activities	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Communicate with deployed service member as agreed upon		●	●
Take Deployment lesson of USERRA WBT		●	●
Post-deployment Key Activities	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Inform VA of upcoming return to employment	●		
Revise <i>Transition Plan</i>		●	
Initiate <i>Request for Personnel Action, SF 52</i>		●	
Process <i>Request for Personnel Action, SF 52</i>			●
Meet to discuss staffing		●	●
Revisit <i>Leading the Way WBT</i> and webcasts on effective communications		★	
Take Post-deployment lesson of USERRA WBT	★	●	●
Reintegration Key Activities	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Recognize the service member's service to our country		●	●
Use <i>VA for Vets Career Center</i> to update resume	★		
Provide information on leave and benefits options			●
Update medical, dental, life and long-term care insurance information	●		
Take Reintegration lesson of USERRA WBT	★	●	●
VA for Vets Annual Training	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Take <i>Introduction to USERRA WBT</i>	●	●	●
Take <i>Supervising throughout the Deployment Lifecycle WBT</i>		★	
VA for Vets On-boarding Training	Military SM	Supervisor	HR
Take <i>Effective Communications with Military Service Members</i> instructor-led training		●	

★ Optional activity but recommended

Employment & Readiness



The best time to prepare for a deployment is before you receive orders. During this phase you should work with your supervisor in drafting a transition plan and discuss the *VA for Vets* Letter of Agreement (LOA).

Transition Plan

A transition plan is a document that lists the tasks and activities that you perform in your current position at VA.

The purpose of transition planning is to ensure a smooth and rapid transition from your civilian position to your military duty.

The Transition Plan should include the following:

- A list of responsibilities: tasks, meetings, reports, business contacts and computer systems used
- A list of required training activities
- A checklist of steps for handing off the position to whomever will temporarily assume your role during your deployment

Exhibit 2 - Transition Plan Template

Employee	Insert name	Last Updated	Insert date
Position	Insert title	Supervisor	Insert name
Position Description:			
List your primary responsibilities and any employees, if any, who report to you.			
Position Qualifications:			
List your qualifications such as college degrees, certifications and so forth.			
Current Work Schedule:			
Enter your work schedule, i.e., Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.			
Position Responsibilities			
Tasks:			
1. Describe your tasks and how often you complete those tasks.			
Note: For recurring tasks, document each task by listing the specific steps to complete the task including paper and electronic processes. List other employees who are responsible for various parts of the task.			
Recurring Meetings You Attend:			
1. Record the meeting title and day and time, meeting point of contact and your role in the meeting.			
Automated Computer Systems Documentation			
If you use automated computer systems, document the name of the system, the purpose of the system, who uses the system and how they use it, who owns the data (who is the manager in charge of the data), the technical contact, user permissions and the application and data sources that the system uses.			
Business Contacts			
List all business contacts with whom you interact and the purpose of the relationship.			

Transition Activities for Deployment (Overseen by supervisor)	Completion Date	Comments
Information provided on relevant business issues.		
Information provided on projects, initiatives and tasks.		
Information provided on direct reports, if applicable.		
Location of documents and records disclosed.		
Key contact information provided.		
Current colleagues notified.		
Tasks discussed between employee and supervisor.		
Support role of incumbent during transition period finalized, if applicable.		
Training requirements for position discussed and executed/in progress.		
Staff notified of position being temporarily filled by [insert name].		
IT/Facilities notified of access changes.		
Provide supervisor with most recent or updated federal resume.		

Transition Activities for Reintegration (Overseen by supervisor)	Completion Date	Comments
<i>Request for Personnel Action, SF 52</i> submitted to HR.		
Physical relocation carried out, if applicable.		
Information provided on relevant issues.		
Information provided on projects, initiatives and tasks.		
Information provided on new direct reports, if applicable.		
Location of documents and records disclosed.		
Key contact information provided.		
Relevant system IDs and passwords provided to supervisor.		
Meeting held with staff.		
Tasks discussed between service member and supervisor.		
Training requirements for position discussed and executed/in progress.		

Transition Plan Agreement

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

VA for Vets Letter of Agreement

The agreement outlined in the *VA for Vets* Letter of Agreement (LOA) is between you and your supervisor. The purpose of this agreement is to promote effective communication between you and your supervisor to support the rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Your supervisor will set up a meeting to discuss the *VA for Vets* LOA. After you both have signed the letter, your supervisor will make a copy for you and send the original to HR. HR will file the signed *VA for Vets* LOA in your deployment file.

You may download a copy of the *VA for Vets* LOA from the *VA for Vets* website.

Exhibit 3 – VA for Vets Letter of Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to promote effective communication between the Military Service Member and his or her supervisor for supporting their rights and responsibilities under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

I, *[insert supervisor name]* located at *[insert work site location]* agree to:

- Keep the service member informed of changes and/or updates during his or her deployment as agreed upon by service member.
- Provide necessary training to the service member to ensure successful reintegration into the workforce.
- Consider reasonable workplace accommodations, if needed by the service member, upon return from military service.
- Understand that the service member is entitled to return to VA after deployment.

I, *[insert service member name]* located at *[insert work site location]* agree to:

- Adhere to time constraints regarding applying for reemployment or returning to work.
- Participate in retraining if necessary in order to prepare for reemployment.
- Keep my supervisor informed of estimated dates of deployment, return from deployment, and post-deployment absence.
- Understand that a temporary replacement may be hired while I am deployed.
- Understand that serious injury may cause an unreasonable expectation of reemployment or retraining and a VA for Vets coach, along with other organizations, will provide guidance if this occurs.

We agree to the following:

- Changes to this document will be made by mutual agreement in writing.
- A coach from the VA for Vets program may act as a liaison between the workplace and the service member at the request of *[insert name]*.

We acknowledge that we will actively abide by this agreement.

Supervisor

<i>[insert name]</i>	Date
<i>[insert job title, organization]</i>	

Service Member

<i>[insert name]</i>	Date
<i>[insert job title, organization]</i>	

USERRA Training

The VA for Vets program has developed an online USERRA training that is customized for you and organized by the phases of the deployment lifecycle. You can access the training on the VA for Vets website from any computer with Internet access at any time.

Consider reviewing the Employment & Readiness lesson of the USERRA training.

Employment & Readiness Checklist for Military Service Members

VA has created a concise checklist that lists the job-related actions you need to complete during the Employment & Readiness phase. The checklist is available on the VA for Vets website.

Exhibit 4 - Employment & Readiness Checklist for Military Service Members



Employment & Readiness Checklist Military Service Members

This checklist suggests activities that you should complete each time you are assigned to a new supervisor at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). For more details, see the Employment & Readiness section of the *VA Deployment Lifecycle Guide for Military Service Members* on the VA for Vets website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>).

Directions: Complete each activity on this checklist. Place a check mark in the box provided next to the activity when completed.

1. Review your rights and responsibilities under USERRA (strongly encouraged)

- Access *USERRA for Military Service Members* training on VA Talent Management System (TMS)
 - Review Employment & Readiness lesson

2. Discuss VA for Vets Letter of Agreement

- Sign the *VA for Vets Letter of Agreement* with your supervisor
- Obtain a photocopy of the signed *VA for Vets Letter of Agreement* from your supervisor

3. Draft Transition Plan

- Coordinate with your supervisor on completing the Transition Plan available on the *VA for Vets* website

PRE-DEPLOYMENT: Preparing for Active Duty



VA understands that being called up for active military duty can introduce uncertainty and stress in your life. Our goal is to help minimize your work-related concerns so that you can focus on your family and your preparations. This section of the guide provides workplace guidance and outlines the key activities you will want to undertake before deployment.

Employer Notification

Notify your supervisor and HR professional of your upcoming deployment so they can help you prepare for the deployment. It is a good idea to give them as much advance notice as possible. Then, when you receive your orders, you will want to provide the specific date of your deployment, preferably in writing, to your supervisor and/or HR professional then enter the deployment date in the Case Management System (CMS). After you have entered your deployment date, the CMS creates a deployment case. VA for Vets coaches will track the case to ensure that the checklist for each phase is being completed. For more information on the CMS, go the VA for Vets website.

Your Supervisor. Schedule a time to meet one-on-one with your supervisor. In that meeting, you and your supervisor can talk about how your job responsibilities can be transitioned to another individual while you are deployed. Your supervisor will coordinate closely with Human Resources and inform them of the date of your deployment by submitting a *Request for Personnel Action*, SF 52.



Your HR Professional. Schedule a pre-deployment session with your HR professional. Before meeting with your HR professional, use the *Pre-deployment Advisor* to help you examine your benefit needs. In preparation for the session, review the results from the *Pre-deployment Advisor* and jot down any questions you would like your HR professional to answer.

If you would like your supervisor and/or HR professional to contact you while on active duty, be sure to provide them with an email address. You should also provide the contact information of a spouse, family member or trusted friend who can be called in case of emergency.

Pre-deployment Advisor

Managing your health care, dental and life insurance can seem complex and time-consuming especially when you are trying to prepare yourself for deployment. The *Pre-deployment Advisor* is an online tool that assists you in examining your benefit needs. The *Pre-deployment Advisor* helps you by asking you questions about your coverage needs in health care, dental and so forth. Based on the answers you provide, the *Pre-deployment Advisor* determines the best benefit choices for you and your family. These results can be printed and brought with you when you meet with your HR professional.

Pre-deployment Session

You want peace of mind that your employee compensation package (benefits and leave use) is in order while you are on active duty. To prepare for deployment, schedule a pre-deployment session with your HR professional. Your HR professional is trained to convey accurate information and guide you through key decisions.



In advance of your pre-deployment session with an HR professional, use the *Pre-deployment Advisor* to help you determine your coverage needs. The *Pre-deployment Advisor* asks questions and provides the best choices for your benefits based on your answers to the questions. You may want to print and bring the results to your meeting with the HR professional.

During the pre-deployment session, you and your HR professional will talk over each item in your employee compensation package so that you have all the information you need to make decisions about your leave and benefits.

Be sure that your contact information, elections and beneficiaries are accurate and up to date. Your HR professional can provide you with copies of any of the forms you will need. Contact information for insurance providers is listed below.

For information on...	Go to...	Or call...
USERRA (<i>VA for Vets</i> Coaches)	http://VAforVets.VA.gov	1-855-VA4VETS (824-8387)
Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)	http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/	1-888-767-6738 TTY 1-877-847-4385
Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI)	http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/	1-888-767-6738 TTY 1-877-847-4385
Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)	http://www.benefeds.com	1-877-888-FEDS (3337) TTY 1-877-889-5680
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)	http://www.tsp.gov	1-888-767-6738 TTY 1-877-847-4385
Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)	http://www.ltcfeds.com	1-800-582-3337 TTY: 1-800-843-3557
Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS)	http://www.fsafeds.com	1-877-372-3337 TTY 1-800-952-0450

Health Insurance Protection

If you leave your job to perform military service, you have the right to elect to continue your existing employer-based health plan coverage for you and your dependents for up to 24 months while in the military. Even if you don't elect to continue coverage during your military service, you have the right to be reinstated in your employer's health plan when you are reemployed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., preexisting condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.



Personal Pre-Deployment Activities

Knowing that your deployment involves much more than making arrangements at work, we have identified five important things you should do before your departure:

- Complete a power of attorney so that someone you trust can conduct business on your behalf while you are away
- Prepare a will
- Register for online access to your accounts
- Obtain a PIN and passwords as needed
- Establish automatic payment plans to have your bills paid

Job Security

Federal and state laws are in place to provide you with job security. Before you deploy, talk to your supervisor and HR professional about returning to your place of employment. If you have questions regarding job retention, restoration rights or other employment-related issues, you may contact your HR professional. In addition, you may contact a *VA for Vets* coach who is ready to provide you with deployment information and support, as well as career guidance.

USERRA Training

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) clarifies and strengthens your reemployment rights.

The *VA for Vets* program has developed an online USERRA training that is customized for you and organized by the phases of the deployment lifecycle. You can access the training on the *VA for Vets* website from any computer with Internet access at any time.

Consider reviewing the Pre-deployment lesson of the USERRA training to learn more about your rights and responsibilities under USERRA.

USERRA Resources

A good resource is the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) website (<http://www.esgr.org/site/>) where you will find resources, guides and support services. You may contact ESGR's Customer Service Center regarding USERRA rights, Monday through Friday (except Federal Holidays), 8 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (EST) at 1-800-336-4590 (press option 1).

Another source of information about your employment and reemployment rights is the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment & Training Service (DOL-VETS) at 1-866-487-2365. An interactive online USERRA Advisor can be viewed at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>.

Pre-deployment Checklist for Military Service Members

VA has created a concise checklist that lists the job-related actions you need to complete during the Pre-deployment phase. The checklist is available on the *VA for Vets* website.

Exhibit 5 - Pre-deployment Checklist for Military Service Members



Pre-deployment Checklist Military Service Members

This checklist will help you prepare for deployment as an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The actions you take will depend on your personal circumstances as well as the length and location of your deployment. For more details, see the Pre-deployment section of the *VA Deployment Lifecycle Guide for Military Service Members* on the VA for Vets website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>).

Directions: Complete each activity on this checklist. Place a check mark in the box provided next to the activity when completed.

1. Review your rights under USERRA (optional)

- Access *USERRA for Military Service Members* training on the VA Talent Management System (TMS)
 - o Review the Pre-deployment lesson

2. Notify your supervisor

- Inform your supervisor as soon as possible:
 - o You are anticipating receiving deployment orders
 - o You have received military deployment notification
- You may, but are not required, to provide your supervisor with a written copy of your deployment orders
- Let your supervisor know what you need to prepare for deployment, such as use of leave, medical, etc.

3. Enter deployment date in the Case Management System (CMS)

- Log on to the CMS (<https://mycase.VAforVets.VA.gov>) to enter your deployment date

4. Get pre-deployment support from Human Resources (HR)

- Schedule a meeting with your HR professional to discuss leave, compensation and benefit options
- Use the *Pre-deployment Advisor* to review your benefit options
- Bring the results from the *Pre-deployment Advisor* to your meeting with your HR professional to discuss leave, compensation and benefit options

5. Complete Transition Plan

- Assist your supervisor with the Transition Plan

6. Update your resume

- Provide your supervisor with your resume for consideration of advancement opportunities that may present themselves while you are deployed

7. Determine the type of communication from VA you want to receive while deployed

- Discuss with your supervisor and HR professional the type of communication you want to receive from VA; if you want to be contacted while deployed, provide your contact information

Note: You can inform your supervisor and/or HR professional that you do not want to be contacted while you are deployed.

8. Seek other pre-deployment support (optional)

- VA for Vets coaches: 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387)
- Military OneSource (<http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com>)
- Military HOMEFRONT Program (<http://www.MilitaryHomeFront.dod.mil>)
- National Resource Directory (<http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov>)
- Yellow Ribbon (<http://www.YellowRibbon.mil>)

DEPLOYMENT: Serving Your Country



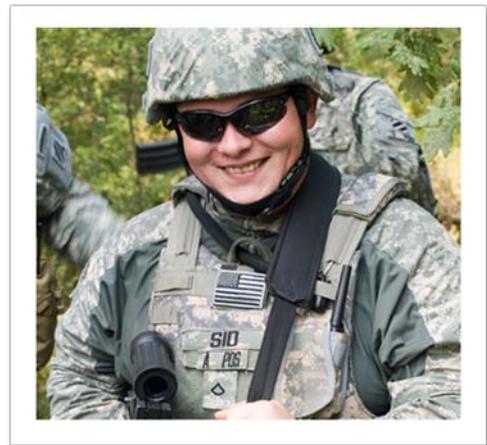
VA recognizes that when you are on active military duty you have a job to do. You cannot afford to lose focus because of work-related concerns and distractions. This section of the guide provides workplace guidance and outlines the key activities available when you are ready and able to give them your attention.

Employer Communication

While you are on active military duty, your focus is rightly on the job at hand—VA respects your commitment to the National Guard or Reserves. There may be times during your deployment that you have questions or need support from your supervisor, HR professional or a VA for Vets coach. Be assured that they want to hear from you and meet any needs that may arise.

Support

VA encourages you to reach out to others for support while you are deployed. Your supervisor, HR professional and VA for Vets coaches are available to meet your needs. If you are seeking confidential support, please be assured that anything of a confidential nature that you share with a VA for Vets coach will not be shared with others. You may speak with a coach anonymously as well.



POST-DEPLOYMENT: Getting Ready to Return to Civilian Employment



VA wants you to be able to focus on demobilization and returning to your family—not on worries about reemployment. Your supervisor will coordinate closely with an HR professional so that your preparations to return to civilian employment go as smoothly as possible. An HR professional will also coordinate with you on getting your employee compensation package (benefits and leave use) in order.

Employer Notification

You will want to notify your supervisor of your intent to return to your position as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for your return to your position or in some cases, a comparable job. Once you know the exact date that you will return to your VA position, your supervisor will submit a *Request for Personnel Action*, SF 52 to HR so that your pay and benefits will all be in order when you return. Be sure to submit a copy of the documentation of your military service (Form DD214) to HR.

Your Supervisor. Your supervisor will schedule a one-on-one meeting on the day you return to VA. In that meeting, your supervisor will talk to you about how your job responsibilities will be transitioned back to you. After the meeting, your supervisor will introduce you to any new staff that have been hired while you were deployed.

Your HR Professional. You may want to contact your HR professional prior to your return to ensure your pay and benefits are in order.

USERRA Protections

Your civilian job is protected if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed services and:

- You ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service
- You have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer
- You return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service
- You have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than “honorable conditions”

Know Your Rights...

You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed services.

As an organization that values Veterans, VA is committed to protecting Veterans’ jobs.

If you are eligible to be reemployed under USERRA, you must be restored to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job.

You are eligible for protections under USERRA reemployment rights if you have been absent from your position of employment because of service in the uniformed services.

Service in the uniformed services means the performance of duty on a voluntary or involuntary basis in a uniformed service, including:

- Active duty (including activated Guard and Reserve members)
- Active duty for training
- Initial active duty for training
- Inactive duty training
- Full-time National Guard duty
- Absence from work for an examination to determine fitness for duty
- Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or Reserve members

For you to have reemployment rights following a period of service in the uniformed services, you must meet five eligibility criteria. You must have:

1. Held a civilian job
2. Informed your supervisor and/or Human Resources (HR) that he or she was leaving the job for service in the uniformed services
3. Not exceeded five years of cumulative service in the uniformed service
Note: Many types of duty, such as training and contingency operations, are exempted from the five-year limitation.
4. Been released from service under "honorable conditions"
5. Reported back to your supervisor and/or HR in a timely manner or have submitted a timely application for reemployment. Timely is defined as:
 - 1–30 days of service, report the next scheduled work day
 - 31–180 days of service, apply or report within 14 days after completion of service
 - 181 or more days of service, apply or report within 90 days after completion of service

USERRA Training

The VA for Vets program has developed an online USERRA training that is customized for you and organized by the phases of the deployment lifecycle. You can access the training on the VA for Vets website from any computer with Internet access at any time.

Consider reviewing the Post-deployment lesson of the USERRA training to learn more about your rights and responsibilities under USERRA.

Post-deployment Support

If you are facing challenges as a result of your military service and/or recent deployment, the VA Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other Veteran-specific resources can help.

VA Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Sometimes we all need a little help—if not for ourselves, for a loved one. The VA EAP offers confidential assessment, referral and short-term counseling to employees and immediate family members. Counseling is available on a voluntary basis to help you and your family deal with alcohol and drug abuse, smoking cessation, financial planning, debt referral, stress management, weight reduction and other health, personal or work-related issues.

VA for Vets Coaches: Take advantage of the expertise of coaches who have answers to your questions about getting ready to return to the workplace. Coaches can also direct you to other organizations that provide support for returning members of the National Guard and Reserves. When you contact a coach, the coach creates a case file to manage your questions. You can check the status of your case in CMS by logging on at <https://mycase.VAforVets.VA.gov>.

VA for Vets Website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>): Has links to excellent websites for post-deployment and reintegration information and support, such as:

- Vet Center (<http://www.VetCenter.VA.gov>)
- National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (<http://www.PTSD.VA.gov>)

Post-deployment Checklist for Military Service Members

VA has created a concise checklist that lists the job-related actions you need to complete during the Post-deployment phase. The checklist is available on the *VA for Vets* website.

Exhibit 6 - Post-deployment Checklist for Military Service Members



Post-deployment Checklist Military Service Members

This checklist will help you prepare for your return to civilian employment at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The actions you take will depend on your personal circumstances as well as the length and location of your deployment. For more details, see the Post-deployment section of the *VA Deployment Lifecycle Guide for Military Service Members* on the VA for Vets website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>).

Directions: Complete each activity on this checklist. Place a check mark in the box provided next to the activity when completed.

1. Notify your supervisor

- Of your anticipated date of return to employment
- When you have a firm date for your return to employment
- If you need any special accommodations

2. Review your rights under USERRA (optional)

- Access *USERRA for Military Service Members* training on the VA Talent Management System (TMS)
 - o Review the Post-deployment lesson

3. Get post-deployment support from HR (optional)

- Discuss any questions with your HR professional that you may have about returning to VA

4. Update Resume (optional)

- Add new skills to your resume that you may have acquired while deployed using the *VA for Vets Career Center* or contact a *VA for Vets Coach* for career and resume support at 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387)

REINTEGRATION: Returning to VA



VA recognizes that returning home safely is just the first step toward reintegrating with your family, work and life. VA wants you to find balance and stability. Your supervisor will coordinate closely with you so that your transition back into civilian employment is as smooth as possible, including the reestablishment of your job, responsibilities, retraining and other considerations.

VA Check-in

Your Supervisor: When you return to VA, you will want to meet with your supervisor so that you can:

- Learn about any organizational changes that have occurred
- Hear about any changes to your position and opportunities for training
- Talk about the skills and experience you gained while deployed
- Discuss your career goals
- Determine work priorities
- Ask questions or share concerns

Your HR Professional: VA encourages you to schedule time with an HR professional to talk about your leave and compensation package. In particular, you will want to talk about:

- Reinstatement of any health, dental or insurance benefits not maintained while on active duty
- Reinstatement of deferred compensation deductions
- Your eligibility for Retirement Military Service Credit

Career Growth

While deployed, it is very likely that you are acquiring new skills that you can apply at VA.

If you have access to the Internet, you may update your resume using the military skills translator at the VA for Vets Career Center. The VA for Vets Career Center provides career exploration resources such as a military skills translator, resume builder, assessment tools, virtual collaboration rooms and dynamic job-search capabilities. You may also want to check USAJobs (<http://www.usajobs.gov>) for job postings that map to your career goals.

It is a good idea to update your resume and email it to your supervisor and HR professional when your skill set and/or level of experience have changed.

Reintegration Support

If you are facing challenges as a result of your military service and/or recent deployment, the VA EAP and other Veteran-specific resources can help. Consider contacting:

VA Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Sometimes we all need a little help—if not for ourselves, for a loved one. The VA EAP offers confidential assessment, referral and short-term counseling to employees and immediate family members. Counseling is available on a voluntary basis to help you and your family deal with alcohol and drug abuse, smoking cessation, financial planning, debt referral, stress management, weight reduction and other health, personal or work-related issues.

VA for Vets Coaches: Take advantage of the expertise of coaches who have answers to your questions about getting ready to return to the workplace. Coaches can also direct you to other organizations that provide support for returning members of the National Guard and Reserves. When you contact a coach, the coach creates a case file to manage your questions. You can check the status of your case in the CMS by logging on at <https://mycase.VAforVets.VA.gov>

VA for Vets Website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>): Has links to excellent websites for reintegration information and support, such as:

- Vet Center (<http://www.VetCenter.VA.gov>)
- National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (<http://www.PTSD.VA.gov>)
- AfterDeployment.org (<http://www.AfterDeployment.org>)

Suicide Prevention: Contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

USERRA Training

The VA for Vets program has developed an online Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) training that is customized for you and organized by the phases of the deployment lifecycle. You can access the training on the VA for Vets website from any computer with Internet access at any time.

Consider reviewing the Reintegration lesson of the USERRA training.

USERRA Complaint Resolution

If you feel your USERRA rights have been violated, contact your HR professional first so that he or she can resolve the complaint.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of USERRA violations. Contact VETS only if your HR professional is unable to resolve your complaint.

For assistance in filing a complaint, or for any other information on USERRA, contact VETS at 1-866-4-USA-DOL or visit its website at <http://www.dol.gov/vets>. An interactive online USERRA Advisor can be viewed at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>. The USERRA Advisor is an online tool that helps you

understand your rights and responsibilities under numerous Federal employment laws including USERRA.

If you file a complaint with VETS and VETS is unable to resolve it, you may request that your case be referred to the Department of Justice or the Office of Special Counsel, as applicable, for representation. You may also bypass the VETS process and bring a civil action against an employer for violations of USERRA.

Reintegration Checklist for Military Service Members

VA has created a concise checklist that lists the job-related actions you need to complete during the Reintegration phase. The checklist is available on the *VA for Vets* website.

Exhibit 7 - Reintegration Checklist for Military Service Members



Reintegration Checklist Military Service Members

This checklist will help you return and reintegrate into civilian employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The actions you take will depend on your personal circumstances as well as the length and location of your deployment. For more details, see the Reintegration section of the *VA Deployment Lifecycle Guide for Military Service Members* on the VA for Vets website (<http://VAforVets.VA.gov>).

Directions: Complete each activity on this checklist. Place a check mark in the box provided next to the activity when completed.

1. Complete VA check-in with:

- Your Supervisor and Human Resources (HR) on the:
 - o Date you will return to duty at VA including whether you intend to use your 14 - 90 day USERRA return rights, if applicable
 - o Five days of authorized absence, if entitled
- HR professional
 - o Provide a copy of DD 214 to HR
 - o Discuss health insurance issues, e.g., reinstatement of health insurance, electing health insurance once TRICARE ends
 - o Update Veteran status and preference if necessary

2. Review your rights under USERRA (*optional*)

- Access *USERRA for Military Service Members* training on VA Talent Management System (TMS)
 - o Review the Reintegration lesson

3. Seek reintegration support (*optional*)

- VA for Vets coaches: 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387)
- VA Employee Assistance Program (EAP): contact HR for more information
- Military OneSource (<http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com>)
- AfterDeployment.org (<http://www.AfterDeployment.org>)
- Yellow Ribbon (<http://www.YellowRibbon.mil>)
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

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