

# Chief Human Capital Officers Council



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UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

## MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

**FROM:** Michael W. Hager  
Acting Director

**Subject:** Minimum Service Requirement to Receive 5 Days of Excused Absence for Employees Returning from Active Military Duty

The Federal Government proudly expresses its gratitude for the great sacrifices made by Federal employees who serve as active duty service members, including the National Guard and Reserve members. To continue our support for Federal employees who have been called to active duty to serve our nation in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), we are revising our “Questions and Answers on Excused Absence for Employees Returning from Active Duty,” issued on August 6, 2008, to better reflect the authorized practices for the activation of Federal employees.

### Background

On November 14, 2003, President George W. Bush issued a Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies entitled “Return of Activated Military Members to Federal Civilian Employment” (see [www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14b.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14b.asp)) directing agencies to grant Federal civilian employees who were called to active duty in support of the GWOT 5 days of excused absence. On that same date, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued guidance entitled “Guidance on the Return to Civilian Employment for Activated Military Members” to implement the President’s memorandum, which included Questions and Answers on Excused Absence for Employees Returning From Active Duty (see [www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14a.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14a.asp)). The intent of the President’s memorandum was to grant 5 days of paid time off (excused absence) to employees returning to Federal civilian service from active duty to aid in their readjustment to civilian life.

To continue our support for Federal employees who continue to serve in the GWOT, OPM issued CPM 2008-12, “Update on Excused Absence for Employees Returning from Active Military Duty” on August 6, 2008. CPM 2008-12 provides a broader interpretation of the President’s memorandum to authorize agencies to provide an additional 5 days of excused absence each time a Federal employee returns from active military duty related to GWOT. Since the publication of the President’s memorandum, the use of short-term active duty for National Guard and Reserve members has increased. As a result, OPM has received several inquiries regarding how to administer our guidance for multiple short-term activations. After consultation with the Department of Defense (DOD), including input from the National Guard, we are revising and updating our guidance.

### Revised Policy

In summary, the revised Questions and Answers clarify that in order to receive 5 days of excused absence, members must spend at least 42 consecutive days on active duty in support of the GWOT. This is parallel to the requirement to qualify for a post differential when a civilian employee works in a hardship post

location on extended detail or in a temporary duty travel status in an overseas location with an approved post differential. This minimum standard reflects the rationale for the excused absence, which is to facilitate an employee's return to civilian service and family life after a significant absence resulting from activation in support of the GWOT. It was never envisioned that employees would have separate, multiple activations for very short periods of time and that such employees would receive 5 days of excused absence for each activation. Furthermore, employees are entitled to 5 days of excused absence only once in a 12-month period. A new 12-month period begins after the first use of excused absence. See the attached revised Questions and Answers for additional guidance and examples.

**Effective Date**

Policies reflected in this memorandum will be in effect on the date of this memorandum.

**Additional Information**

For additional information, agency Chief Human Capital Officers and/or Human Resources Directors should contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officer. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices to obtain information on their entitlements.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers  
Human Resources Directors

**Attachment:**

- [Questions and Answers on Excused Absence for Employees Returning from Active Duty in the Global War on Terrorism](#)

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