

Defence Force Reserve Leave Policy

Symal Group Limited

Date of adoption: 13/11/2024

1. Policy Overview

ADF Veterans are defined as any individual who has served in the ADF as part of the Navy, Army, or Air Force, either in a full-time or part-time capacity. This includes those who have completed their service, as well as individuals who continue to serve in the Reserves. For those who wish to render effective service in a Reservist capacity undertake Reserve Service Days (RSD) in what is known as a Service Category (SERCAT). There are numerous different SERCATs applicable but for simplicity they are defined below simply as Active Reserve and Inactive Reserve.

Inactive Reserve

Following discharge from fulltime permanent service (SERCAT 6 or 7) there is a mandatory period of 5 years in which the member can be recalled at any point for national emergencies, warlike scenarios or other extreme situations. This period is non-negotiable and expires after 5 years if a new engagement is not contracted or if the member upgrades to a higher SERCAT.

Active Reserve

This classification is for active Reservists, rendering RSD to a unit and has many different subtleties around engagement period, location or operational requirements to the ADF. SERCAT 3-5 are essentially contracted agreements with a specified end date and can range from flexible days worked out of hours all the way to deployment on operations.

2. Policy Legislation

Under the [Defence Reserve Service \(Protection\) Act 2001](#), employers are required to release Reservists from their civilian employment to undertake any Defence service, including training and operational duties. This legislation protects Reservists from discrimination, dismissal, or any disadvantage because of their Defence service. Employers must reinstate Reservists to their civilian roles upon completion of their service. Additionally, the [Fair Work Act 2009](#) reinforces these protections by ensuring that Reservists cannot be forced to use annual or long service leave for Defence-related absences, while also providing access to community service leave for other voluntary roles.

Table 1 – Responsibilities

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Employer Responsibilities	Reservist Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow employees to take leave for any Defence service without penalty. Refrain from discriminating against, disadvantaging, or dismissing employees due to their Reserve duties. Reinstate employees to their roles upon completion of their service. Ensure contingency measures are in place to allow for any deviation from agreed plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide their employer with as much notice as possible before taking Defence leave. Ensure they balance their civilian and military commitments by adhering to company policies. Communicate clearly with their employer regarding their anticipated return to work after completing service. Ensure contingency measures are in place to allow for any deviation from agreed plans

3. Goals

Support and prepare employees undertaking Reserve Service

We aim to facilitate the employee's Reserve service by providing support and resources to prepare both the individual and the respective workgroup for their absence.

Manage Workload During Absence

We aim to facilitate the employee's Reserve service by providing support and resources to prepare both the individual and their workgroup for their absence.

Ensure Smooth Reintegration

We will support a seamless transition for the employee returning from Reserve service, ensuring they are reintegrated smoothly into their role and the team.

4. Employee Process

Initial consideration

- Review the demands of the proposed Reserve service and how they align with your current role, including a discussion with your unit commander for accurate details of time requirements
- Contact the Veteran Engagement Manager for a discussion about the requirements and how to best proceed
- Discuss your intention to render Reserve service with your supervisor and Human Resources to understand how your absence might impact your work

Prepare for Reserve service

- Provide Notice: Submit a formal notice to your employer indicating the dates of your intended Reserve service.

- Complete Part A of the AE380 form found on the veterans intranet homepage
- Apply for ADF Reserve Service Absence through normal leave channels
- Develop a Transition Plan: Work with your team and supervisor to create a plan for managing your workload and responsibilities during your absence
- Follow normal HR procedures for absence – out of office setup etc
- Articulate service requirements in terms of how contactable you may be
- Develop a contingency plan to be activated in the event of changed operational requirements and you are unable to communicate this to your supervisor

During Reserve service

- Where practicable and appropriate stay in communication with your workplace supervisor
- If operational requirements change while you are undertaking RSD and you are unable to communicate with your supervisor, rest assured that the contingency plan will be activated to ensure your job security

Upon return from Reserve service

- Reach out to your supervisor and provide an update on your wellbeing and readiness to return to work
- If additional support is needed, then access the Employee Assistance Program or contact the Veteran Engagement Manager
- If an immediate return to work is not possible then engage Human Resources to commence the standard company policy around returning to work
- Activate your transition plan to commence taking back your workload and seek feedback as required
- Complete Part B of the AE380 form found on the veterans intranet homepage and submit to HR for consideration of ESPS top up payment, including a payslip verifying RSD pay amount

5. ADF Reserve Service Absence – Employee Support Payment Scheme (ESPS)

Symal recognises the valuable contribution Reservists make to both the Australian Defence Force and the workplace. To support employees undertaking Reserve service, Symal aims to provide financial assistance through the Employee Support Payment Scheme. This initiative helps bridge the gap between the typically lower pay provided by the Department of Defence for Reserve service and the employee's civilian income. Additionally, by completing a minimum of 20 days of Reserve service per year, Reservists remain eligible for significant benefits such as the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS) and other advantages associated with ADF service.

Eligibility and Application

This policy entitlement is accessible to employees who are permanently employed on a full-time or part-time basis. Reserve Leave for part-time employees will be allocated proportionally based on their ordinary hours of work. For example, if you work at Symal as a permanent part-time employee as a 0.5 FTE, the maximum entitlement to be accrued across any given calendar year is 10 days of RSD.

Symal Contributions

Symal acknowledges that the pay received from the Department of Defence during Reserve service may be substantially lower than an employee's regular salary. To address this disparity, Symal will "top up" the employee's income, covering the difference between the Defence pay and their Symal base wage. Specific details of this remuneration support can be found in Table 2, which outlines the calculation methodology and conditions of this top-up arrangement.

Table 2 – Entitlements Definition

Category	Definition of Payment Top Up	Amount
Workforce wages	Calculation of applicable base hourly rate (excluding all entitlements, allowances etc) multiplied by your ordinary daily working hours, minus the amount paid by the Department of Defence.	Maximum of 20 days per annum
Salaried staff	Calculation of employees TFR amount into a day rate minus the amount paid by the Department of Defence.	Maximum of 20 days per annum

6. Summary

This ADF Reserve Leave Policy reflects Symal's commitment to supporting employees who serve in the Reserves and all team members with ADF service experience. We value the unique skills and expertise they bring to our workforce and are dedicated to respecting their contributions and ensuring their job security. Through clear communication, structured contingency plans, and alignment with legislative protections, we foster an environment that supports Reserve service and demonstrates our commitment to ADF veterans. This approach promotes the wellbeing and career growth of Reservists and veterans, ensuring they feel valued and supported within the Symal Group.