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## Volunteer Reserve Forces

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Contents

1 Overview ..... 3

2 Officer/Staff ..... 4

3 Manager ..... 9

4 Resources ..... 13

Appendices

Appendix A	Glossary of Terms
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## **1 Overview**

### **1.1 What is this about?**

1.1.1 The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland support membership of the Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF). This procedure provides information about our commitment and obligations to volunteers including entitlement to leave and pay.

### **1.2 Who is this for?**

1.2.1 This is for officers and authority/police staff.

### **1.3 Key information**

- Membership can be used for personal development and to gain transferable skills.
- Reservists normally commit to between 30 and 40 days training each year.
- Up to 10 paid days are available for training.
- We will do our best to support time off for VRF activity but requests are subject to operational requirements.
- No request for leave will be unreasonably refused in line with our annual leave procedure.

## **2 Officer/Staff**

### **2.1 What you need to do:**

- Request permission to join the Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF).
- Book time off for training.
- Forward copies of call-out/mobilisation papers to People Direct.
- Advise us of your return to duty after your period of mobilisation.

### **2.2 Permission to join VRF**

2.2.1 You need to complete the Volunteer Reserve Forces - Application Form (012-003) if you want to join the VRF. If you are not already a reservist you must complete your officer probationary period before applying. The form should be sent to your manager for consideration.

2.2.2 If you join the organisation and are already a member of the VRF, you must follow the application process and complete Volunteer Reserve Forces - Application Form (012-003).

2.2.3 If approved, the application form will be held in your personnel file and the details will be updated on SCoPE.

2.2.4 No more than one per cent of officers and one percent of staff will be allowed to join VRF in combatant roles. The Chief Constable has the authority to review this figure, if necessary. There is no upper limit for non-combatant roles.

### **2.3 Employer notification**

2.3.1 The Ministry of Defence (MOD) send us notification of staff who become or re-engage as members of VRF. The reservist notification will be held in your personnel file and details will be updated on SCoPE.

2.3.2 The Commanding Officer from VRF Units will write to advise of the likely training commitments for the year ahead, and where possible, the dates for the reservist's annual camp.

### **2.4 Time off for training**

2.4.1 You normally have to commit to between 30 and 40 days training each year. This can include evenings, weekends and also an annual deployment exercise of up to a maximum of 15 days.

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- 2.4.2 A maximum of 10 paid days are available each annual leave year for training. You need to complete Volunteer Reserve Forces – Request for Leave to Attend Training Form (012-004) to apply for leave.
- 2.4.3 You are responsible for making arrangements to attend evening or weekend training. There is no automatic right for time off to attend training. Requests for this leave are similar to those for annual leave, TOIL or flexi and will be managed with reference to operational requirements.
- 2.4.4 There is no right to appeal if your request for leave is not approved.
- 2.4.5 If you are a Probationer, who was already a member of the VRF before joining, you will not be allowed any leave while you are attending your initial training at the Scottish Police College.
- 2.4.6 Requests for leave during the probation period will only be considered if work commitments can be met and your attendance and performance levels are satisfactory.

## 2.5 Mobilisation process

- 2.5.1 You will receive a 'call-out notice' if you are needed for full time service. This is known as 'mobilisation'.
- 2.5.2 You have to upload a copy of the call-out/mobilisation papers onto the People Direct portal as soon as possible. The MOD will give 28 days' notice of call-out although the notice period is reduced to 10 days if you are serving on High Readiness Reserve (HRR).
- 2.5.3 The period of mobilisation is normally between three and 12 months. This will normally not happen more than once in five years but it could depend on specialist reservist roles or national emergencies.
- 2.5.4 Sometimes, the period of mobilisation may be compulsorily extended or there may be a request from the MOD to extend it beyond the original date.

## 2.6 Exemptions, deferrals and revocation

- 2.6.1 You can apply to delay or cancel mobilisation. This could be if you are called up at a difficult time (e.g. you are caring for someone) or if your absence will cause serious harm to our ability to provide a service.
- 2.6.2 The application has to be made within seven days of getting the call-out notice. The call out paperwork includes the necessary forms and procedure you will need to follow.

## 2.7 Authorised firearms officers (AFO)

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- 2.7.1 If you are an AFO there will be a temporary withdrawal of your AFO status during periods of mobilisation.
- 2.7.2 When you return to work you will have to undertake a period of evaluation and training before your firearms authorisation is re-instated.
- 2.7.3 The Chief Firearms Instructor at Armed Police Training will determine the period and nature of the training required.

### **2.8 Sick leave**

- 2.8.1 If you are on sick leave you cannot be involved in any VRF activities without authorisation from your Chief Superintendent/Head of Department.

### **2.9 High Readiness Reserve (HRR)**

- 2.9.1 If you wish to join the HRR you must send in a formal request in writing (email or letter). This should be sent to the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department for consideration, due to the very short period of notice required if mobilised (10 days).
- 2.9.2 If this is approved, you must request consent annually.

### **2.10 Volunteering for non-compulsory mobilisation**

- 2.10.1 You may be asked to volunteer for operations where there is no compulsory mobilisation. If you want to be considered for these types of operations you would have to ask for permission.
- 2.10.2 To do this, write in to your Chief Superintendent/Head of Department with details of the request. The request will be sent on to the Director of People and Development and be considered, on a case by case basis.
- 2.10.3 If approved, the request will be progressed in line with the Career Break Procedure.

### **2.11 Pay and deductions**

- 2.11.1 The MOD is responsible for paying your salary during the period of mobilisation. Basic salary will be paid based on your MOD rank. If your

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police salary is higher than this pay, you have to claim the difference from the MOD.

- 2.11.2 You will receive full salary from SPA/Police Scotland from the time of the call up, until the first full salary has been paid by the MOD. We will recover any excess salary paid when you return to work.
- 2.11.3 Any voluntary deductions from salary (e.g. childcare vouchers) will stop being paid by SPA/Police Scotland during mobilisation and you will need to make other arrangements to cover these payments.

### **2.12 Pension**

- 2.12.1 You can choose to continue to pay pension contributions for the period of the mobilisation. Payroll will send you the relevant information when they receive a copy of the call-out notice. The MOD will cover the cost of the employer contributions for the period of mobilisation.
- 2.12.2 If a pay increase or increment is awarded while you are mobilised, this will not be reflected in your pension contributions. Any increase will be recoverable on your return to work.

### **2.13 Annual leave**

- 2.13.1 You will not accrue annual leave during the period of mobilisation.
- 2.13.2 Your annual leave will be adjusted on a pro rata basis e.g. if your full entitlement is 30 days and mobilisation is for six months then your pro rata entitlement will be equal to 15 days.
- 2.13.3 The conditions regarding carry over of annual leave still apply.

### **2.14 Notice of returning to work**

- 2.14.1 You have to tell your manager in writing as soon as you know when you can return to work.
- 2.14.2 After mobilisation you are given a period of demobilisation leave based on the period you were away by the MOD. Any demobilisation leave must be taken before you return to work. You cannot be forced to return to work before the end of the leave period.
- 2.14.3 If you want to return to work before the end of the leave you have to get permission from either the Commanding Officer or the Demobilisation Centre.

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2.14.4 You must let us know immediately when you commence demobilisation leave, if you have not already been in touch, to discuss your return to work. The MOD requires that this notice is supplied no later than the third Monday after the end of your active service period.

### **2.15 Returning to work**

2.15.1 You should have a discussion with your line manager in order to clarify any changes that may have occurred and to confirm what post you are returning to, if applicable.

2.15.2 You are entitled to return to the same type of role you were doing before you were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions. Where this is not possible, we will offer you a similar role on the same terms and conditions.

2.15.3 You should think about any refresher training or support you may need to help your return to work and talk it over with your manager.

2.15.4 You will be assessed by Occupational Health to make sure you are fit to return to operational duties, where applicable.

### **2.16 Withdrawal of VRF**

2.16.1 If you want to withdraw from the VRF you need to log a call to People Direct requesting this.

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### **3 Manager**

#### **3.1 What you need to do:**

- Consider requests to join the Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF).
- Consider requests for time off.
- Liaise with your staff when they are in their demobilisation period.
- Arrange any necessary training after demobilisation.

#### **3.2 Considering applications to join VRF**

3.2.1 When you receive a request from one of your team to join the VRF, you have to think about the impact it may have operationally. You should look at any specialist skills or experience that the team member has that, if withdrawn, could impact on our ability to deliver an effective service. Requests for joining should not be unreasonably refused.

3.2.2 You have to complete the manager's section of the application form to confirm whether you support the request or not. Send the form onto the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department for final authorisation.

3.2.3 We have set an upper limit of one per cent for officers and one per cent for staff to join VRF in combatant roles. This figure can be reviewed by the Chief Constable if necessary. There is no upper limit for non-combatant roles.

3.2.4 The Chief Superintendent/Head of Department will contact the Resource Planning and Co-ordination Manager to make sure there is capacity to accept a request before approving an application.

3.2.5 Once the application has been approved and signed off, it should be returned to you so that you can upload the completed form onto People Direct and it can be sent for processing.

#### **3.3 Time off for training**

3.3.1 When you receive a request for leave to attend training you should look up SCoPE to make sure the requested leave does not exceed the maximum amount for the year. A reservist is entitled to be paid up to 10 days each year, between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> March, to attend training.

3.3.2 You should consult with the Resource Deployment Unit when considering any requests for time off.

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- 3.3.3 There is no automatic right for time off to attend training. Requests are subject to operational requirements but they should not be unreasonably refused.
- 3.3.4 There is no right of appeal if a request for leave of any type is not approved.
- 3.3.5 Probationers, who were already members of the VRF before joining will not be allowed any leave while they are attending their initial training at the Scottish Police College. You should only consider requests for leave during the probation period if work commitments can be met and attendance and performance levels are satisfactory.
- 3.3.6 Once the leave has been approved please upload the completed form on to the People Direct portal where it will be processed and scope updated with special leave.

### **3.4 Mobilisation**

- 3.4.1 If the team member is needed for full time service they will receive a 'call-out notice'. This is known as 'mobilisation'.
- 3.4.2 The MOD will give 28 days' notice of call-out, although the notice period is reduced to 10 days if the staff member is serving on High Readiness Reserve (HRR).
- 3.4.3 The team member has to upload a copy of the call-out papers to People Direct as soon as possible.
- 3.4.4 The period of mobilisation is normally between three and 12 months. This will normally not happen more than once in five years but it could depending on specialist reservist roles or national emergencies.
- 3.4.5 Sometimes, the period of mobilisation may be compulsorily extended or there may be a request from the MOD to extend it beyond the original date.

### **3.5 Exemptions, deferrals and revocation**

- 3.5.1 SPA/Police Scotland, or the team member, can apply to delay or cancel mobilisation. This could be if the absence will cause serious harm to our ability to provide a service, or if the team member is called up at a difficult time e.g. they have caring responsibilities.
- 3.5.2 Where the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department believes that the mobilisation will impact on operational effectiveness then the matter will be referred to the Assistant Chief Constable/Director.

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- 3.5.3 The Assistant Chief Constable/Director will decide if the organisation will apply for an exemption or deferral against the call-out. This would only be where the reservist is in a specialist role that is crucial to maintaining operational effectiveness.
- 3.5.4 The application for exemption or deferral has to be made within seven days of the reservist getting the call-out notice. The paper work and process is outlined on the call out document.

### **3.6 Authorised firearms officers (AFO)**

- 3.6.1 If the team member is an authorised AFO we will temporarily withdraw their AFO status during periods of mobilisation.
- 3.6.2 When they return to work they will have a period of evaluation and training before their firearms capability is re-instated.
- 3.6.3 The Chief Firearms Instructor at Armed Police Training will determine the period and nature of the training required.

### **3.7 Sick leave**

- 3.7.1 The team member cannot be involved in any VRF activities while on sick leave, without authorisation from the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department.

### **3.8 High Readiness Reserve (HRR)**

- 3.8.1 Due to the very short period of notice required if mobilised (10 days) a reservist who wants to join the HRR must send in a formal request in addition to their standard application. An email or letter must be sent to the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department for consideration.
- 3.8.2 If this is approved, the team member must request consent on an annual basis.

### **3.9 Volunteering for non-compulsory mobilisation**

- 3.9.1 Your team member may be asked to volunteer for operations where there is no compulsory mobilisation. They would have to ask for permission if they want to be considered for these types of operations.

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- 3.9.2 The team member, would have to write in to the Chief Superintendent/Head of Department with details of the request. The request will be forwarded to the Director of People and Development and be considered, on a case by case basis.
- 3.9.3 If approved, the request will be progressed in line with the Career Break Procedure.

### **3.10 Annual leave**

- 3.10.1 The team member will not accrue annual leave during any period of mobilisation.
- 3.10.2 Their annual leave will be adjusted on a pro rata basis e.g. if their full entitlement is 30 days and mobilisation is for six months then the pro rata entitlement will be equal to 15 days.
- 3.10.3 The conditions regarding carry over of annual leave still apply.

### **3.11 Returning to work**

- 3.11.1 After mobilisation the team member is given a period of 'demobilisation' leave subject to the period they were away. Any demobilisation leave must be taken before they return to work. They cannot be forced to return to work before the end of this leave period.
- 3.11.2 If they want to return to work before the end of the leave they have to get permission from the Commanding Officer or the Demobilisation Centre.
- 3.11.3 The team member will advise you as they know when they can return to work. This has to be no later than the third Monday after their last day of active service as a reservist.
- 3.11.4 As soon as you are aware of the return date, log a call on the People Direct online portal to let them know. They will contact the relevant Resource Planning and Co-ordination unit so your team member will be included in future planning.
- 3.11.5 Discussion should be had with your returning staff member in order to clarify any changes that may have occurred and to confirm which post they are returning to, if applicable.
- 3.11.6 They are entitled to return to the same type of role as they were doing before they were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions. Where this is not possible they must be offered a similar role on the same terms and conditions.

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3.11.7 You should think about any refresher training or support they may need to help their return to work and talk it over with them. Discuss any changes to working procedures and provide any relevant updates that they should be aware of.

3.11.8 You will need to send in a referral to Occupational Health for them to be assessed to make sure they are fit to return to operational duties, where applicable.

### **3.12 Withdrawal of VRF**

3.12.1 If the team member wants to withdraw from the VRF they need to advise People Direct of this in writing.

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## 4 Resources

### Forms

- Volunteer Reserve Forces - Application Form (012-003)
- Volunteer Reserve Forces - Request for Leave to Attend Training Form (012-004)

### Related Procedures

- Annual Leave and Public Holidays (Police Officer)
- Annual Leave and Public Holidays (Staff)
- Attendance Management
- Special Leave
- Career Break

### Useful Links

- ASAP is the Armed Services Advice Project and provides information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces community in Scotland. Funded through Poppy Scotland, the service is delivered by Citizens Advice Bureaux in 10 regions across Scotland and a national Freephone helpline. ASAP is for anyone who is currently serving or who has served, and their dependants (partner or spouse, including those bereaved). This includes the regular and reserve forces, and early service leavers. Helpline: 0808 800 1007 (9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday) [www.asapadvice.org.uk](http://www.asapadvice.org.uk)
- **Combat Stress** is the UK's leading veteran's mental health charity and provides free timely, effective clinical treatment and welfare support to veterans who suffer from psychological wounds. [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)
- [Defence Relationship Management](#)
- **Veterans First Point** (V1P) is a support network set up to assist people who have served in the military, including reserve forces. It is staffed by ex-military personnel and has access to specialist Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Trauma staff and various other specialist support agencies. [www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk](http://www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk)
- Legislation relating to this procedure may be found at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk):

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- Defence Reform Act 2014
- Reserve Forces Act 1996
- Reserve Forces (Call out and Recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005

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## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms

**Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF):** The VRF consists of the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal (Auxiliary) Air Force and Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. They provide individuals and / or ready-formed units to bolster the Regular Armed Forces at times of increased operational demand. These roles hold “Combatant” status.

**Standard Volunteer Reservist:** Volunteer Reservists are recruited directly from the civilian community into the VRF. Although Volunteer Reservists train over many years for active duty, they are only mobilised when absolutely necessary. Volunteer Reservists are committed to the possibility of **mobilisation** under the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

**High Readiness Reservist (HRR):** High Readiness Reservists have specific skills which the Armed Forces may need, but which are only required occasionally. They volunteer for High Readiness status and can be deployed at short notice (10 days). Written consent from the employer is required and this takes the form of an agreement which is renewed annually. In the event of mobilisation, an HRR can be asked to serve for up to nine months.

**Full-Time Reserves:** Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) gives Reservists the opportunity to apply for a full-time post for a fixed period (this is different from mobilisation). There is no legal obligation to reinstate an employee who resigns to carry out FTRS commitments.

**Additional Duties Commitment:** Additional Duties Commitment (ADC) gives Reservists the opportunity to undertake part-time work with the Armed Forces. The minimum commitment is 13 weeks - at least one day a week throughout this period. There is no requirement to give any Reservist additional time off to undertake ADC work.

**Cadet Forces Adult Volunteers:** CFAV’s are instructors within the uniformed Cadet Organisations – Sea Cadets, Marine Cadets, Army Cadets and Air Training Corps. They are sponsored by the Ministry of Defence however the cadets and adult volunteers have no commitment to mobilised service with the armed forces and hold “Non-Combatant” status. They are treated the same as reservists in terms of the procedure.

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**Mobilisation:** Mobilisation is the process of calling combatant reservists into full-time service to support military operations. Mobilisation can be compulsory or voluntary. In most circumstances, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) uses intelligent selection, which is the process of identifying willing and available individuals for specific appointments. This includes consulting with the Reservist's employer.

**Demobilisation:** Demobilisation is the period that follows a period of active duty. Reservists are entitled to a period of demobilisation leave before they end their service for the MOD. The length of the leave depends on how long they have been mobilised for.

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