

# Taking Care of Service Members and Families

## BEREAVEMENT LEAVE FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

MAY 22, 2023

**THIS INITIATIVE** WILL PROVIDE NONCHARGEABLE BEREAVEMENT LEAVE TO ELIGIBLE SERVICE MEMBERS WHO EXPERIENCE THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE OR CHILD.

### **FAST FACTS:**

- **WHAT IS IT?** Bereavement leave is a new type of nonchargeable, paid leave of up to 14 consecutive days that is available for eligible service members with less than 30 days of accrued leave.
- **WHAT DOES IT DO?** It enables commanders to provide up to 14 consecutive days of nonchargeable leave to an eligible service member who experiences the death of his or her spouse or child in order to make arrangements and attend the funeral, burial and memorial service.
- **WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE?** In the past, a service member taking two weeks of emergency leave in connection with the death of his or her spouse or child could potentially exhaust their accrued leave or go into a negative leave balance. The new policy permits up to 14 consecutive days of nonchargeable bereavement leave for a service member with an accrued leave balance below 30 days.
- **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?** Active-component service members, reserve component service members performing Active Guard and reserve duty or full-time National Guard duty for longer than 12 months consecutively, and reserve component service members performing duty under a call or order to active service for more than 12 months consecutively.
- **WHEN CAN IT BE USED?** The timeframe in which an eligible service member may use bereavement leave is the period from the date of death of the service member's spouse or child through the date that is no later than two weeks after the funeral, burial or memorial service, whichever occurs last.
- **LEAVE INCREMENTS.** Once bereavement leave begins, it must be used in one continuous increment of up to 14 consecutive days.
- **CAN BEREAVEMENT LEAVE BE TAKEN WITH OTHER LEAVE?** Bereavement leave may be taken in combination with chargeable leave or other types of nonchargeable leave. No particular sequence of taking these types of leave is required, subject to the below limitations.
- **LIMITATIONS.** Service members may not be authorized to use bereavement leave unless their accrued leave balance is less than 30 days. Bereavement leave may only be authorized from the date of death of the service member's spouse or child through the date that is no later than two weeks after the spouse or child's funeral, burial or memorial service, whichever occurs last.

- **IS BEREAVEMENT LEAVE RETROACTIVE?** An eligible service member whose spouse or child died on or after June 25, 2022, and before the effective date of the bereavement leave policy, and who was charged leave taken in connection with the death, may request to have up to 14 days of leave restored to his or her leave balance if the service member would have been eligible for bereavement leave.
- **DOES THE USE OF BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AFFECT THE ACCRUAL OF ORDINARY LEAVE?** Taking bereavement leave does not affect a service member's entitlement to accumulate ordinary leave at a rate of 2.5 days for each month of active service.
- **DO REGULAR LIBERTY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS COUNT AGAINST THE 14 CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF BEREAVEMENT LEAVE?** Yes. Bereavement leave is taken in one increment for up to 14 consecutive days. Bereavement leave that falls on a service member's normal workdays, regular liberty days or holidays counts against the 14 consecutive days of bereavement leave.
- **IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD OR A CHILD AND SPOUSE DIE ON THE SAME DAY, HOW MANY DAYS OF BEREAVEMENT LEAVE MAY THE SERVICE MEMBER RECEIVE?** The eligible service member is authorized up to 14 consecutive days of bereavement leave for the death of the spouse and an additional 14 consecutive days for the death of each child whether the deaths occur on the same day or different days. For example, a service member's two children die on the same day. In this example, the service member is authorized up to a total of 28 days of bereavement leave. However, bereavement leave must not extend past the date that is two weeks after the deceased spouse or child's funeral, burial or memorial service, whichever occurs last.
- **DOES A SERVICE MEMBER QUALIFY FOR BEREAVEMENT LEAVE WITH A LOSS OF PREGNANCY (I.E., MISCARRIAGE OR STILLBIRTH)?** Unfortunately, the service member does not qualify for bereavement leave for a pregnancy loss. However, the service member may be authorized ordinary leave or emergency leave. Additionally, the service member may also be authorized convalescent leave as recommended by the Defense Department health care provider in accordance with medical practice standards.

For details on bereavement leave for service members, visit <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/DoD-Issuances/DTM> and search "DTM 23-003."