



HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

BULLETIN



NUMBER 21-01

8 January 2021

ABSENT UNIFORMED SERVICES (ABSENT-US) PROCESSING

1. **References:** 5 USC 5538, 5 CFR 353, CNGBI 1400.25 Volume 630
2. This bulletin applies to any HING Federal Technician/Employee (all tenures) who are being placed on active duty orders (Title 10 or Title 32) for a period of 30 consecutive days or more.
3. **Placement on ABSENT-US:** HING Federal Technicians/Employees will notify their immediate supervisor when they are placed on military orders and wish to be placed on long-term leave without pay status (Absent/Separation-US). Technician/Employee must schedule an appointment with the HING Human Resources Office, Benefits Section, at **(808) 672-1006, option 3**, to process a leave without pay checklist (Absent/Separation-US) and receive a USERRA briefing. Technician/Employee will also provide a copy of their orders. Should circumstances not permit for an in person appointment, contact the **CPT Beth D'Atri at (808) 672-1234, or email beth.a.datri.mil@mail.mil** to coordinate processing by electronic and telephonic means.
4. **Return to Duty:** Supervisors must ensure that the technician/employee reports to the HING HRO Benefits Section at **(808) 672-1006, option 3, NLT 14 working days** prior to the technician's/employee's return to duty date. Technician/Employee will provide a copy of their DD214 or DD220 from the period (if available), or a Statement of Service from FSS (Air) or G1 (Army) certifying character of service and identifying any lost time (if applicable), and a copy of their release from active duty (Refrad) orders. HRO will ensure that a Request for Personnel Action (RPA) is entered into DCPDS along with the following attachments: Copy of refrad orders, Return to Duty – Absent-US checklist (available at <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hro/info-for-deploying-soldiers/>).
Technicians/Employees will NOT be allowed to return to their duty location of employment until this process is completed.
5. **Amendments / Extensions:** In the event that an order is amended or extended, a copy of the modified order must be sent promptly to nq.hi.hiarng.mbx.nghi-hro-benefits@mail.mil . Email containing attachments with PII must be encrypted. Amended orders will be uploaded to the employee's eOPF. Orders that are initially less than 30 days which are extended to exceed 30 days will be promptly sent to HRO for processing in accordance with paragraph 3 of this bulletin. The employee will be placed on Absent-US status as soon as orders are received, and returned to duty when HRO is notified

IAW paragraph 4 of this bulletin. Copies of the original order *and* the amended order must be included.

6. Placement of a HING Federal Technician/Employee on Absent-US status is a legal requirement under 5 U.S.C. 5538 and 5 CFR 353. Employees are protected by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act under 38 U.S.C. 4301 et seq.

7. Employees in an Absent-US status are permitted, upon request, to use any accrued annual leave (LA), military leave (LM) (if eligible), earned compensatory time off for travel (CF), or accrued sick leave (LS) (consistent with the statutory and regulatory criteria for using sick leave), during such service. This leave may be used intermittently with leave without pay (KG) while in Absent-US status. The Absent-US period **MUST** cover the entire duration of the order, and may not be adjusted to accommodate leave.

8. Presidential Leave (for those returning from contingency operations in excess of 42 days) must be taken the first 5 days after the technician returns to duty, and must be taken consecutively. Leave will be coded as “excused absence” (LV) on the first 5 days of the employee’s return to duty, not to exceed 40 hours.

9. Employees who are not placed on Absent-US status are susceptible to consequences including, but not limited to:

- a. Loss of health benefits
- b. Default on TSP loans (which incurs a financial penalty)
- c. Loss of life insurance
- d. Incorrect coding or loss of leave
- e. Incorrect coding or delay of automatic pay adjustments
- f. Incursion of debt due to incorrect pay (due to wrong duty status)
- g. Incorrect accrual of annual leave
- h. Delay of pay upon return to duty status

10. Failure to place employees on an Absent-US status can also result in complications for military buy back and TSP matching actions. It is extremely important that DD214’s or Statements of Service are included for all periods of service. Incorrect active duty records in the employee’s eOPF will **create gaps that can affect the ability to buy back eligible military time**. This can result in lower pensions, and/or later retirement eligibility dates. Even if military leave is taken during the period of service, the *complete period of military service must be properly documented in order to be credited by OPM*. This record is extremely difficult to rebuild at the time of retirement, so it is critical that the record be accurately kept as the military service is occurring.

11. Employees are responsible for monitoring their record on a regular basis. This can be done by visiting eOPF at <https://eopf.opm.gov/nationalguard>. It is recommended that the employee briefly review their record at least quarterly. Employees should verify that DD214s or Statements of Service are present for all active duty periods. If any are missing, they can be sent to HRO for credit toward leave accrual, benefits processing and upload to their record at ng.hi.hiarng.mbx.nghi-hro-benefits@mail.mil . Encrypt all emails containing documents with PII.

12. Point of contact for this bulletin is Ms. Noelani DeSilva, employee benefits specialist at noelani.m.desilva.civ@mail.mil or 808-672-1231.