

It's time to tell...

Telling your civilian employer

- By joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces you are making an important commitment which will affect your family and your employer.
- Once you have completed your basic training, it is possible that you could be called up for full-time service, or 'mobilised' as the military call it. In 2003, over 8,000 Reservists were mobilised to serve in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.
- It is very important that you discuss your intention to join the Volunteer Reserve Forces with your family and employer and try to gain their support.
- Experience shows that the more employers know about the implications of employing a Reservist, the more supportive they are likely to be.
- It is also unreasonable to expect your employer to support you if you are mobilised if he or she doesn't find out that you are in the Volunteer Reserve Forces until you are mobilised.
- As well as feeling deceived, your employer will have been unable to make any contingency plans in advance or even familiarise themselves with their rights and obligations.
- Everyone joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces has to provide their new Unit with details of their employer, if they have one.
- Except in some very exceptional circumstances, it is also a requirement of joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces that you give your consent to your employer being contacted by the Ministry of Defence.
- Even if this requirement has been waived because of exceptional circumstances, your employer will still be contacted by the Ministry of Defence if you are mobilised. This is because your employer must be made aware of their legal rights and obligations.
- Your employer will not be contacted for at least four weeks after you complete your phase 1 recruit training.
- This should give you plenty of time to inform your employer yourself first. It is much better if you talk to your employer before the letter from the Ministry of Defence arrives!
- You may also find that your civilian employment contract forbids you from taking a second job without your employer's permission.
- If you do not currently have an employer, because you are a student, for example, you are still required to tell your Unit what your employment status is and you may be asked for evidence to support this. If your status changes you must inform your Unit straight away.
- If you have a short-term contract of six months or less your employer will not be contacted unless you are mobilised.



Sources of further information

- You should be provided with a guide called 'It's time to tell... A Reservist's guide to employer notification' and a card for your employer giving contact details if they would like further information. You should also be shown a video also called 'It's time to tell...'
- Your first point of contact for more information should be your training team or normal commander. They may refer you to either your Unit Employer Support Officer (UESO) or your administrative staff.
- In complex cases, they are able to draw upon support from a range of sources, including SaBRE.
- SaBRE is a national Ministry of Defence campaign which provides advice to the employers of Reservists. It has a representative in every region as well as a website and a helpline for employers.
- The SaBRE website contains a great deal of information for both Reservists and their employers. The address is www.sabre.mod.uk.
- Another website, www.en.mod.uk, provides information specifically relating to the arrangements the Ministry of Defence will follow in contacting your employer.

Preparing to tell your employer

Make sure you do your homework first.

- Find out whether your employer has any policies in place relating to the Volunteer Reserve Forces or other similar activities.
- Make sure that you know about your rights and those of your employer. If you are mobilised, these rights include: the right for either of you to apply for the mobilisation to be delayed or cancelled; the right to financial assistance for your employer; and, for you, the right to have your job back when you are demobilised.
- Stress the benefits that your membership of the Volunteer Reserve Forces brings in terms of new skills and the development of leadership, initiative and teamwork. You should also explain about the role of the Volunteer Reserve Forces, which includes providing the Civil Contingency Reaction Forces.
- Make sure that you tell your employer about SaBRE and provide details of how your employer can find out more information, including responses to detailed questions which you may not be able to answer.
- Finally, remember that Britain's Armed Forces are widely respected and that being a member of them should be something of which you are proud.

