



City Delivery: Military Service for annual leave purposes

Anual leave is a benefit all letter carriers receive and can use for rest, for recreation, and for personal and emergency purposes. For full-time career letter carriers, they receive their annual leave upfront at the beginning of each year, or upfront for the remaining portion of the year upon their conversion to full-time career status. For part-time flexible career letter carriers, their leave is earned and credited to their balance as they work.

The *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* defines the rules and regulations which govern the amount of leave earned by career employees, including letter carriers. The *ELM* includes certain prior military service as a factor used in determining the amount of leave career employees earn.

ELM Section 512.21 states that active military service is used when computing years of service, which determines an employee's annual leave category. It reads as follows:

512.2 Determining Annual Leave Category

512.21 General Policy

Annual leave category is determined by using the leave policy in effect at the time an employee enters a career appointment or transfers into the Postal Service.

Both active military and civilian service, as outlined in 512.22 and 512.23, are used in computing the years of service that determine an employee's annual leave category, but leave credit is not allowed for both civilian and military service that cover the same period of time. Other service not counted is listed in 512.24.

ELM Section 512.23 defines what types of active military service count toward computing years of military service, which determines the annual leave category in which they are placed as a USPS

employee. It states:

512.23 Military Service Counted

512.231 Service of an Employee Not Eligible for Military Retirement Annuity

The following military service is used in computing the years of service that determine the annual leave category:

a. Periods of active service terminated by honorable discharge or transfer to inactive reserves under honorable conditions. Active service may be in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and/or Coast Guard and their respective academies.

b. Service performed by employees who are members of the National Guard Service or Air National Guard Service only during periods of active duty with the U.S. Army or U.S. Air Force.

c. Service performed by Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps students during periods of active duty or training duty as members of the Naval or Marine Corps Reserve.

ELM Section 512.3 details how full-time career employees earn annual leave based on their number of creditable years of service, including their active military service. It reads:

512.3 Accrual and Crediting

512.31 Employee Categories

512.311 Full-Time Employees

The following provisions concern full-time employees:

a. Accrual Chart. Full-time career employees earn annual leave based on their number of creditable years of service:

Leave Category	Creditable Service	Maximum Leave Per Year
4	Less than 3 years	4 hours for each full biweekly pay period; i.e., 104 hours (13 days) per 26-period leave year.
6	3 years but less than 15 years	6 hours for each full biweekly pay period plus 4 hours in last full pay period in calendar year; i.e., 160 hours (20 days) per 26-period leave year.
8	15 years or more.	8 hours for each full biweekly pay period; i.e., 208 hours (26 days) per 26-period leave year.

According to the chart above, full-time career letter carriers earn 104 hours of annual leave per year if they have less than three years of creditable service; earn 160 hours of annual leave per year if they have at least three years, but less than 15 years, of creditable service; and earn 208 hours of annual leave per year if they have 15 years or more of creditable service. Creditable military service counts toward computing their overall creditable service for leave.

These provisions detail an important benefit for carriers who also have creditable military service. As an example, a carrier who has three years of creditable military service is automatically placed into "Leave Category 6" upon his or her conversion to full-time career status and is immediately credited with annual leave at the 20-days-per-year rate. Upon completion of 12 years of USPS service, this carrier will be placed into "Leave Category 8" and immediately be credited with annual leave at the 26-days-per-year rate.

For letter carriers whose military service also entitles them to a military retirement annuity, the provisions described in this article may or may not apply to them, depending on their type of service and depending on the type of military retirement they are receiving. Those conditions are quite lengthy and are explained in great detail in *ELM* Section 512.232. Veterans who are receiving a military retirement annuity should refer to that section of the *ELM* to determine which part of their military service is used in calculating their leave entitlements with the USPS.