

Tips to tackle a worker's military deployment

Letting veterans return to work is required by law; here's how to handle it
The Associated Press

More than 1.4 million forces have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the law, returning service members are guaranteed their jobs back under nearly all circumstances. Some tips for employers:

Know the law: The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) covers deployed employees' rights. One facet is an "escalator clause" that ensures employees in line for a promotion during their deployment are given a chance to get it.

"I've seen the Chicago Police Department actually send a team to Iraq to give detective tests," said Tom Aiello, vice president of Military.com, a division of Monster Worldwide Inc.

Set expectations: "Look the person dead in the eye and tell them, 'We're going to watch out for your spouse and put you back in your job, or one that's a better fit, when you come home,'" said Andrew Hollitt, team leader for military recruiting at the Lucas Group, a Dallas-based recruiting company that specializes in military transition placement.

Stay in touch: Allianz Life gave John Flor a laptop so he could keep in touch while he was deployed. Some companies have set up toll-free numbers for deployed employees to call with questions, Hollitt said. Some also send cards, e-mails and company newsletters to the service persons' spouses and invite them to company events. "The impact of that is beyond measure," he said.

Set up a veterans group: A group of employee-veterans will help with recruiting and give returning veterans support, Aiello said.