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CHAPTER 7.

 ABSENCES IN MILITARY SERVICE

**SECTION 8‑7‑10.** Definitions.

For the purpose of Sections 8‑7‑10 to 8‑7‑80, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them by this section, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) “Officer” means any officer or employee of the State or any political subdivision thereof who is elected or appointed for a definite term which is fixed by law;

(2) “Military service” means service in the Army, Navy or Marine Corps of the United States or any compulsory service in any capacity to the Federal Government for the purpose of national defense; and

(3) “Appointive authority” means (a) the person, board, commission or other authority originally electing or appointing the officer, (b) if the officer was elected to his office in a general election or nominated in a primary, the Governor of the State, with the advice and consent of the Senate, if the officer is a State official or employee, (c) the Governor, upon the recommendation of the county legislative delegation, if the officer is an official or employee of a county or any of its political subdivisions and (d) the Governor, upon the recommendation of the mayor and city council or other governing body of a city or town if the officer is an official or employee of a municipality.

**SECTION 8‑7‑20.** Leaves of absence authorized for public employees serving in armed forces.

Every employee of the State or any political subdivision thereof who, on or after June 25, 1950 has been, or shall be, commissioned, enlisted or selected for service in the armed forces of the United States shall, so long as the requirements and regulations of the armed forces shall prevent his return to his civil employment and for a period of ninety days thereafter, but in no event for a period longer than five years from the date of his entry into the armed forces of the United States, be entitled to leave of absence from his duties as an employee of the State or any political subdivision thereof, without loss of seniority or efficiency or register rating.

The word “employee” as used herein shall not be construed to mean an officer or official elected or appointed to a term pursuant to a statute or the Constitution of this State.

**SECTION 8‑7‑30.** Absence of public officer in military service creates temporary vacancy; “forfeiture of office” and “vacancy in office” defined.

The absence of any officer from his office or position caused by his being in the military service shall not create a forfeiture of or vacancy in the office or position to which such officer was elected or appointed but shall be construed merely to create a temporary vacancy. Wherever the terms “forfeiture of office” or “vacancy in office” or other words of similar import are used in any law of this State in relation to an officer they shall be construed in accordance with the provisions of Sections 8‑7‑10 to 8‑7‑80 and shall not be construed to apply to any absence of such officer who is absent from his office or position by reason of his being in the military service. An officer who is present at and able to perform the duties of his office shall not be considered absent within the meaning of this section.

**SECTION 8‑7‑40.** Appointment of person to fill temporary vacancy; terms.

In case a temporary vacancy is created in any office or position by reason of the absence of the officer in the military service the appointive authority shall appoint some person to fill temporarily the office or position to which such officer was elected or appointed. All such appointees shall hold the office or position which they are temporarily to fill during the absence of the officer in the military service or until the expiration of the term for which such officer in the military service was elected or appointed, whichever period of time is the shorter.

**SECTION 8‑7‑50.** Duties, powers and pay of temporary appointee.

The person appointed in accordance with the provisions of Sections 8‑7‑10 to 8‑7‑80 to fill temporarily any office or position shall have and may exercise all the rights, powers, authority and jurisdiction and shall perform the duties vested in or required by law of the officer whose office or position such person is so appointed to fill temporarily and shall receive the same salary, fees, expenses or other compensation as such officer would be entitled to receive.

**SECTION 8‑7‑60.** Qualifications and bond of temporary appointee.

Every person who shall be appointed to fill temporarily any office or position shall possess the qualifications prescribed by law, if any, for the regular holder of such office or position. If a bond be required by law of the regular holder of such office or position then such person so appointed shall give bond in the manner and in the amount so prescribed by law and shall be liable thereon in like manner as the regular holder of the office.

**SECTION 8‑7‑70.** Bond requirement shall be waived during military absence.

Any officer temporarily in the military service shall not be required to be under bond during the period of such absence.

**SECTION 8‑7‑80.** Compensation and resumption of office by officer in military service.

An officer who shall be absent from his office or position in the military service shall not be entitled to any compensation as such officer during such absence, but upon his return, if he return before the expiration of the term for which he was elected or appointed, after thirty days’ notice, in writing, he shall be entitled to possession of the office or position from which he was absent and upon reassuming the duties of the office to receive the compensation for the remainder of the term to which the holder thereof is entitled.

**SECTION 8‑7‑90.** Leaves of absence for public officers and employees in National Guard or reserve military forces; service in combat zone.

All officers and employees of this State or a political subdivision of this State who are either enlisted or commissioned members of the South Carolina National Guard, the United States Army Reserve, the United States Air Force Reserve, the United States Naval Reserve, the United States Marine Corps Reserve, or the United States Coast Guard Reserve are entitled to leaves of absence from their respective duties without loss of pay, time, or efficiency rating for one or more periods not exceeding an aggregate of fifteen regularly scheduled work days in any one year during which they may engage in training or any other duties ordered by the Governor, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Treasury, or any other department or agency of the government of the United States having authority to issue lawful orders requiring military service. Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays may not be included in the fifteen‑day aggregate unless the particular Saturday, Sunday, or holiday to be included is a regularly scheduled work day for the officer or employee involved. In the event any such person is called upon to serve during an emergency he is entitled to such leave of absence for not exceeding thirty additional days.

A state employee in a full time position who serves on active duty in a combat zone and who has exhausted all available leave for military purposes is entitled to receive up to thirty additional days of military leave in any one year.

As used in this section, “in any one year” means either a calendar year or, in the case of members required to perform active duty for training or other duties within or on a fiscal year basis, the fiscal year of the National Guard or reserve component issuing the orders. The provisions of this section must be construed liberally to encourage and allow full participation in all aspects of the National Guard and reserve programs of the Armed Forces of the United States and to allow state officers and employees who are enlisted or commissioned members of the National Guard or reserve components to excel in military and emergency preparedness and service by taking full advantage of all career‑enhancing assignments and training opportunities.