



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: June 1, 2011

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(j): Consideration of resolution authorizing a revision to the Employee Handbook section covering military leave.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a revision to the Employee Handbook section covering military leave.

Background: The current Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Employee Handbook section on military leave does not allow for the continuation of health insurance benefits during the leave, if that leave extends beyond 30 days. Staff has recently determined that this puts an unnecessary hardship on families. While the military covers the health benefits of the employee during the time of service, it does not cover the employee's family. Per the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), an employee who leaves to perform service in the uniformed service has the right to elect to continue existing health plan coverage for families for up to 24 months.

The revised section will read as follows:

### **Uniformed Services Leave**

If an employee leaves to perform military service or certain types of service in the National Disaster Medical System, he or she is eligible for unpaid leave of absence. Employees are required to present their supervisor with a copy of the service papers as soon as they are received, and to comply with other requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

The employee will be reinstated upon return in accordance with applicable law. Employees on extended uniformed service leave are not entitled to holiday pay, vacation, or personal leave accrual. However, the agency's portion of health benefit premiums will continue to be paid while the employee is on uniformed service leave and on active duty upon the request of the employee for self, spouse, domestic partner, and/or dependent coverage. Employees on uniformed service leave of 30

days or less are entitled to insurance benefits and accrual of vacation or personal leave benefits; however, they are not eligible for holiday pay.

An employee who is on active uniformed service leave may drop his or her insurance coverage for the duration of the leave of absence. Upon return to active employment, the employee's insurance coverage shall be restored on the same terms as would be in effect if the leave of absence had not occurred. Alternatively, an employee may continue health insurance during military leave of absence on the same terms as active employees.

Uniformed service members with family coverage may want to compare their current health benefits coverage with those offered by the Federal Government to determine whether the Federal Government's coverage will be sufficient for spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents. Employees with family coverage may want to continue coverage for the benefit of his or her family. MRCA will directly bill the employee for his or her share of the premiums. As long as the monthly premiums are paid, the employee's family can continue with their health benefits.