

## § 1002.20

### **§ 1002.20 Does USERRA protect an individual who does not actually perform service in the uniformed services?**

Yes. Employers are prohibited from taking actions against an individual for any of the activities protected by the Act, whether or not he or she has performed service in the uniformed services.

### **§ 1002.21 Do the Act's prohibitions against discrimination and retaliation apply to all employment positions?**

The prohibitions against discrimination and retaliation apply to all covered employers (including hiring halls and potential employers, see sections 1002.36 and .38) and employment positions, including those that are for a brief, nonrecurrent period, and for which there is no reasonable expectation that the employment position will continue indefinitely or for a significant period. However, USERRA's reemployment rights and benefits do not apply to such brief, nonrecurrent positions of employment.

### **§ 1002.22 Who has the burden of proving discrimination or retaliation in violation of USERRA?**

The individual has the burden of proving that a status or activity protected by USERRA was one of the reasons that the employer took action against him or her, in order to establish that the action was discrimination or retaliation in violation of USERRA. If the individual succeeds in proving that the status or activity protected by USERRA was one of the reasons the employer took action against him or her, the employer has the burden to prove the affirmative defense that it would have taken the action anyway.

### **§ 1002.23 What must the individual show to carry the burden of proving that the employer discriminated or retaliated against him or her?**

(a) In order to prove that the employer discriminated or retaliated against the individual, he or she must first show that the employer's action was motivated by one or more of the following:

(1) Membership or application for membership in a uniformed service;

## 20 CFR Ch. IX (4-1-24 Edition)

(2) Performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in a uniformed service;

(3) Action taken to enforce a protection afforded any person under USERRA;

(4) Testimony or statement made in or in connection with a USERRA proceeding;

(5) Assistance or participation in a USERRA investigation; or,

(6) Exercise of a right provided for by USERRA.

(b) If the individual proves that the employer's action was based on one of the prohibited motives listed in paragraph (a) of this section, the employer has the burden to prove the affirmative defense that the action would have been taken anyway absent the USERRA-protected status or activity.

## **Subpart C—Eligibility For Reemployment**

### **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR REEMPLOYMENT**

### **§ 1002.32 What criteria must the employee meet to be eligible under USERRA for reemployment after service in the uniformed services?**

(a) In general, if the employee has been absent from a position of civilian employment by reason of service in the uniformed services, he or she will be eligible for reemployment under USERRA by meeting the following criteria:

(1) The employer had advance notice of the employee's service;

(2) The employee has five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services in his or her employment relationship with a particular employer;

(3) The employee timely returns to work or applies for reemployment; and,

(4) The employee has not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

(b) These general eligibility requirements have important qualifications and exceptions, which are described in detail in §§1002.73 through 1002.138. If the employee meets these eligibility criteria, then he or she is eligible for

reemployment unless the employer establishes one of the defenses described in §1002.139. The employment position to which the employee is entitled is described in §§1002.191 through 1002.199.

**§ 1002.33 Does the employee have to prove that the employer discriminated against him or her in order to be eligible for reemployment?**

No. The employee is not required to prove that the employer discriminated against him or her because of the employee's uniformed service in order to be eligible for reemployment.

COVERAGE OF EMPLOYERS AND POSITIONS

**§ 1002.34 Which employers are covered by USERRA?**

(a) USERRA applies to all public and private employers in the United States, regardless of size. For example, an employer with only one employee is covered for purposes of the Act.

(b) USERRA applies to foreign employers doing business in the United States. A foreign employer that has a physical location or branch in the United States (including U.S. territories and possessions) must comply with USERRA for any of its employees who are employed in the United States.

(c) An American company operating either directly or through an entity under its control in a foreign country must also comply with USERRA for all its foreign operations, unless compliance would violate the law of the foreign country in which the workplace is located.

**§ 1002.35 Is a successor in interest an employer covered by USERRA?**

USERRA's definition of "employer" includes a successor in interest. In general, an employer is a successor in interest where there is a substantial continuity in operations, facilities, and workforce from the former employer. The determination whether an employer is a successor in interest must be made on a case-by-case basis using a multi-factor test that considers the following:

(a) Whether there has been a substantial continuity of business operations from the former to the current employer;

(b) Whether the current employer uses the same or similar facilities, machinery, equipment, and methods of production;

(c) Whether there has been a substantial continuity of employees;

(d) Whether there is a similarity of jobs and working conditions;

(e) Whether there is a similarity of supervisors or managers; and,

(f) Whether there is a similarity of products or services.

**§ 1002.36 Can an employer be liable as a successor in interest if it was unaware that an employee may claim reemployment rights when the employer acquired the business?**

Yes. In order to be a successor in interest, it is not necessary for an employer to have notice of a potential reemployment claim at the time of merger, acquisition, or other form of succession.

**§ 1002.37 Can one employee be employed in one job by more than one employer?**

Yes. Under USERRA, an employer includes not only the person or entity that pays an employee's salary or wages, but also includes a person or entity that has control over his or her employment opportunities, including a person or entity to whom an employer has delegated the performance of employment-related responsibilities. For example, if the employee is a security guard hired by a security company and he or she is assigned to a work site, the employee may report both to the security company and to the site owner. In such an instance, both employers share responsibility for compliance with USERRA. If the security company declines to assign the employee to a job because of a uniformed service obligation (for example, National Guard duties), then the security company could be in violation of the reemployment requirements and the anti-discrimination provisions of USERRA. Similarly, if the employer at the work site causes the employee's removal from the job position because of his or her uniformed service obligations, then the work site employer could be in violation of the reemployment requirements and the anti-discrimination provisions of USERRA.