



DEFENCE RESERVES SUPPORT

Supporting Australia's Reservists and their Employers

EMPLOYER SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME

Financial support for employers of Defence Reservists

What is ESPS?

The Employer Support Payment Scheme (ESPS) provides financial assistance to eligible employers to help offset the costs of releasing employees for most categories of ADF Reserve service.

Employer Support Payment Scheme (ESPS) payments are paid at a set weekly rate regardless of the employee's salary and there are no restrictions on the way employers can use the money. The weekly rate is equivalent to the average weekly full-time adult ordinary time earnings (AWOTE). This figure is set for 12 months beginning on 1 July each year.

Who is eligible to claim ESPS payments?

All employers including government organisations, public and proprietary companies, private employers, trusts and self-employed Reservists.

What are the criteria?

To qualify for ESPS payments:

- your employee must have worked for you for at least three months before the commencement of the period of claimed Defence service
- your employee's period of claimed Defence service must be a minimum of five consecutive days
- your employee must have served a qualifying period of two weeks of Defence service (in a single period or blocks of five consecutive days or longer) in the current financial year. ESPS payments are not payable for qualifying period service
- you must submit claims within six months of the first day of service for which the claims are being made. Claims submitted outside this period require special justification
- you must release your employee on Defence leave (this includes leave without pay) to undertake the Defence service
- you must not require your employee to use their own accrued leave entitlements (e.g. Defence service on annual leave or long service leave is not eligible for ESPS payments), and
- you must agree to protect your employee's job.
- your employee may not continue to work in your business while undertaking Defence service.

Does it apply for all employees?

ESPS payments are payable for full-time employees. To be classed as a full-time employee, your employee must be employed to work full-time hours, generally at least 35 hours per week.

ESPS payments may be paid on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees, as long as the employee is not also in full-time employment elsewhere.

ESPS payments are not available for casual employees unless they are engaged in work on a regular and reliable basis.

You may be asked to provide additional evidence about your employee's actual weekly hours of work so an ESPS Decision-maker can determine whether an employment is full-time or part-time.

This evidence will normally relate to a 26 week period, although a different length of period may be used in some circumstances.

Self-employed Reservists

Additional criteria apply to claims from self-employed Reservists.

Self-employed Reservists must show their business is bona fide and operating/trading and that it

- provided their Principal Source of Income over the previous 12 months, or
- provided their Principal Source of Employment over the previous 12 months.

How do I claim?

ESPS claims may be submitted online at **www.defencereservessupport.gov.au** and following the link to Employer Support Payment Scheme. You'll need a valid AUSkey (or myGov) account.

With the 1st claim in the financial year):

- evidence of the Reservist's employment (e.g. payment summary, payroll slip, group certificate, employment

contract or other similar evidence) immediately prior to the claimed Defence service, and

- evidence of the Reservist's normal weekly hours of work for the employer.

For part-time employees, work hours evidence should cover the three month period prior to the claimed Defence service. The online claims system will guide you through the claims process, and identify which supporting evidence will be required.

Injury/illness

If your employee is injured or becomes ill as a result of their Defence service, you may be entitled to receive ESPS payments while they are recovering.

For more information on the ESPS

1800 001 696 or esp@defence.gov.au
www.defencereservessupport.gov.au