

# Recruiting for Today's Army Reserve

## LESSONS LEARNED



# RETAIN TO TRAIN



National  
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nationale

Canada 

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**RECRUITING FOR TODAY'S ARMY RESERVE,  
LESSONS LEARNED**

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## **BACKGROUND**

To successfully meet the ever-increasing demands placed upon the Canadian Army Reserves, we must continue to attract, enroll and train the very best women and men across the country. We have a rich history, an essential role within the Canadian Forces and a future full of challenge and promise.

In order to meet this challenge, the recruiting process needs to be as effective and efficient as we can make it. An effective system needs to balance the expectations of the individual applicant with the requirement to enroll candidates who will excel. An efficient system needs to accomplish this goal within reasonable time frames, while covering all the necessary steps. Recruiting and enrolling in the reserve world provide some particular challenges. This pamphlet has been produced after consultation with experts from all branches of the reserves and is a collection of the best practices in use today to keep the system working at its maximum effectiveness and efficiency. It is meant to augment the existing processes not replace them.

Our thanks to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group personnel and the brigade and area recruiting staff, who have contributed greatly to this effort.

This pamphlet covers the recruiting and enrollment process, which actually encompasses four major areas:

- **Attraction**
- **Recruiting**
- **Enrollment**
- **Retain to Train**

## PART 1—ATTRACTION

### Advertising-Do's and Don'ts

It is useful to consider the basic elements of a good advertising campaign, which include:

- **Paid Advertising**
- **Unpaid Advertising**
- **Recruiting Events**
  - ✓ **Open Houses**
  - ✓ **School Visits**
  - ✓ **Job Fairs**
  - ✓ **Unit Activities**

- **Paid Advertising.** The national advertising campaign does a good job of capturing the "big picture" of what the CF would be like as a career, both full time and part time, but it depends on you to give a local flavour to the advertising. A coordinated approach is best, so brigades need to conduct regular advertising coordination meetings (at least annually) along with the local Canadian Forces recruiting centre (CFRC) or detachment to ensure that advertising meets DND specs, fits in with the national plan (as well as other unit plans to prevent overlap), and targets the ad frequency to facilitate the recruiting process and meet training deadlines. This coordination will give the reserves an opportunity to time their ad campaign when they need it most. Part of this exercise should include the fair and equitable distribution of the advertising budget at the unit level.

To illustrate the close relationship between recruiting, advertising and training schedules, consider the following cycle:

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Crse1 Starts</b>
	<b>Intensive Advertising</b>	<b>Intensive Advertising</b>			

Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs) or ADM(PA) is a great resource for advertising formats, ideas and advice. Check out their useful web site at: [http://dgap-dgap.mil.ca/DAILYSUMMARIES/DAYSUM01\\_E.HTM](http://dgap-dgap.mil.ca/DAILYSUMMARIES/DAYSUM01_E.HTM)

There are ad formats in this web site, which can be personalized with local information to highlight a specific element or unit. It is critical to follow the ad formats closely in order to adhere to DND regulations and federal laws. Once again, ADM(PA) can be of great assistance to ensure your ads meet all the criteria.

Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Intensive Recruiting</b>	<b>Crse1 Starts</b>
	<b>Intensive Advertising</b>	<b>Intensive Advertising</b>			

#### HELPFUL HINT

Units that find they need to attract experienced personnel aim their advertising at ex-Regular or Reserve Force members. This directed advertising is a great way to keep members of our military family involved, and it can bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to your unit.

- **Unpaid Advertising.** Remember: the best advertising is word-of-mouth from your existing members. Some top performing units have incentive programs to encourage individuals to recommend the reserves as a great part-time career. Incentive programs can include rewards for "sponsoring" potential recruits and include items from the unit kit shop or a plaque for "Recruiter of the Year."

In conjunction with the brigade or area public affairs officer, make sure you identify unit events such as ceremonial parades or field exercises that the local media could attend or participate in and provide a positive story for publication. Keep in mind that these events should provide good photo opportunities and a positive spin while minimizing the time investment for the busy media representatives. Whenever possible, ensure that the media includes a recruiting message such as "The \_\_\_ Regiment is recruiting new members. If interested, call 123-4567 or visit us on \_\_\_night at the armoury, located on \_\_\_street."



#### HELPFUL HINT

As part of your planning process for the training year, consider the public affairs/media attractiveness of all training activities and events. A formal estimate could include the following headings:

- **What part of particular exercises would be most attractive to the TV media?** Consider fast-paced, exciting training with vehicles and equipment and events of short duration.
- **What part of an exercise might be attractive to radio journalists?** Think of good background sounds and opportunities to interview local soldiers.
- **What part of the exercise would appeal to print media?** Good photo ops and interviews help build unit morale and provide great stories that will attract new recruits.

Consider the location of your training events when you build your media plan. One unit moved its winter indoctrination training to an in-town location, thus making it easier to invite the local media to cover and participate in the appropriate elements of the training.

Remember: your brigade or area public affairs team can assist you in putting together a productive media plan.

- **Recruiting Events.** Recruiting events appeal to the natural curiosity of the public. When well organized and very well advertised, specific recruiting events can generate a significant influx of potential recruits in a short period of time. Make sure you have enough staff on hand to handle the rush to join your unit!

#### HELPFUL HINT

Coordinate your recruiting plan with all unit activities, just as you would for all the other parts of the training plan. With a bit of foresight and planning, every unit activity has the potential to also be a recruiting activity.

Invite the public to attend local training and ceremonial events. Hold a "Teachers and Employers" day to spread the word on the value of having students and employees belonging to the reserves. A little positive word of mouth goes a long way to build the reputation of the reserves and build interest in joining your unit!

- **Recruiting Events for Specific Groups.** Certain professions such as police officers or firefighters are familiar with life in a uniform and have a sense of duty that would make them feel comfortable in the military. Build alliances with these members of your community and participate in their events whenever possible. One unit participates annually in the local municipality-sponsored police week and puts on a display for several days including personnel and equipment.



✓ **Open Houses.** Open house events, if well advertised, can provide units with unique opportunities to attract large concentrations of potential recruits to armory locations. This offers several recruiting advantages, including:

- Access to unit museums, static displays, etc.
- Opportunities to witness, or participate in, dynamic displays such as the small arms trainer.
- The group dynamic of having a large number of interested potential candidates vying for a limited number of unit positions. Create some competition and enthusiasm!



One Quebec based unit has choreographed several high tempo dynamic displays, including rappelling down the face of the armory, and conducted tactical demonstrations in nearby parks, including one and two rope bridging.

#### HELPFUL HINT

Advertising is critical to a successful open house. Urban units may wish to deploy uniformed members to nearby transportation hubs such as mass-transit stations or shopping malls to promote the event.

## PART 2—RECRUITING

Units are responsible for their own attraction campaigns (in some cases these campaigns are handled at the brigade level), but these need to be carefully coordinated so that schools, shopping malls or other good recruiting venues are not overwhelmed with requests. The local CFRC or detachment is the central point for this activity and can make sure visits are planned and our hosts are happy to see us. Don't forget to target specific requirements or skill sets, such as vehicle technicians or computer operators, that you may be looking for. Guidance Office personnel often respond better to jobs they understand and those that are easily explained to prospective recruits. Consistent follow up with the host organizations is critical to maintaining successful relationships and a constant flow of potential candidates, but don't overwhelm host organizations with calls.

## Dispelling the Myths

Many people have already formed an opinion of what life in the military is like. For some it is an opinion based on movies, media reports and even misinformation. The really successful recruiters format their presentations and information sessions to clarify these myths. Understand the issues that keep people from applying, such as:

- Do I have to sign up for a specific length of time?
- Can I get "called up" to go away to a danger zone, or do I have a choice?
- Is life always like the "boot camp" we see in movies?

### HELPFUL HINT

Recruiting and enrolment can be a lot easier if you build a good working relationship with your local CFRC/Det counterparts. The most successful units work hand-in-hand with the recruiting centre. REMEMBER: RECRUITING IS A PEOPLE BUSINESS!

## Understand the Numbers

Before you begin the task of attracting potential new members, it is important to clearly understand what your goals are:

- How many course vacancies do you have?
- What are the start dates for those courses?
- What is your target unit strength?
- What is the expected attrition rate during the enrollment process? Understand attrition rates at every step of the process!
- How are vacancies and budgets determined between units, and how much flexibility is there in reallocation to meet changing needs?
- Can you recruit based on guaranteed summer employment, or not? Summer jobs are a great attractor, but make sure you know well in advance if you can make this promise or not.

Remember: the recruiting objectives are determined through a planning process that includes your unit input to the brigade G3 cell and allocations that come from area headquarters. The more input you have throughout this process, the better your chances of achieving your goals. Last minute changes are difficult to manage and lead to lost opportunities, so plan ahead!

## What Tools are Available?

There are numerous sources available to unit recruiters to help attract and inform potential candidates, including:

- Your local supporting CFRC or detachment may produce Recruit Information Aids (RIAs - see examples included in this publication), which provide information on local units.



- Inexpensive items that constantly remind potential recruits seem to be the most valuable. Fridge magnets, scratch pads and business cards are very effective reminders.
- Units have advertising and promotion budgets for producing local ads or handouts.
- You need to clearly understand the pay and benefits the reserves have to offer individuals. Include all potential benefits such as:
  - ✓ **Summer employment**
  - ✓ **Medical and dental coverage**
  - ✓ **Group insurance**
  - ✓ **Tuition**
  - ✓ **Callout opportunities**
  - ✓ **Travel**
  - ✓ **Retirement gratuity**

Details are available on the following web site:

[http://pep.mil.ca/engraph/home\\_e.asp](http://pep.mil.ca/engraph/home_e.asp)

#### **HELPFUL HINT**

The educational reimbursement for Primary Reserves is a great attraction tool. Recruiters must understand the system as outlined in DAOD 5031-1-3

### **PART 3—ENROLLMENT**

Once you have attracted a potential candidate to your unit, the task of enrolling him/her begins. This is by far the most difficult part of the process since the system has been developed to meet strict criteria developed mainly to address the mission-deployable Regular Force security requirements. While these processes can frustrate reserve recruiters, they are in place to protect the best interest of the CF as well as to protect the individual.



## HELPFUL HINT

CFRC has an abbreviated version of the National Recruiters Course available for reservists to take to give them a better understanding of the process.

The system is not very flexible. A good checklist for each stage of the enrollment process will ensure that delays for missing or incomplete information are avoided. A good list is included in this publication. The length of time it takes to process an applicant from beginning to end causes some applicants to drop out of the process or seek other part-time employment. With this in mind, it is essential that the unit recruiting staff track the progress of each candidate and have a well-understood process to keep the individual informed at regular intervals. Make sure you know who is tracking whom! Is this the responsibility of the unit, the brigade or CFRC? As long as you plan this out, nobody will feel left out!

In areas of the country where geography allows, some brigades have established a recruiting co-coordinator's position physically located at CFRC. This position has proven to be extremely valuable in overcoming roadblocks in the process. This individual occupying it acts as a link between the units and CFRC. He/she ensures that good communications are maintained, can assist in priority setting at the recruiting centre and ensure that applicant files are complete before passing them on to CFRC. Another benefit is that this person can distribute management reports out of CFRIMS that keep track of applicant status and make sure nobody gets lost in the system. Applicant files that are closed for any reason drop off the Canadian Forces Resources Information Management System list, and these names would need to be tracked separately in order to keep the units informed. This individual needs to be a qualified interviewer and can then assist CFRC during peak demand times. Brigades that have created this type of position have found it to be a great benefit to the enrolment process.

➤ **What can be Done at the Unit Level?** Through consultation with your brigade and CFRC, you may be able to perform some of the enrolment requirements at the unit. The physical fitness test, for example, may be conducted at this level as long as the standards are carefully monitored and adhered to. Check with CFRC to find out if this is possible in your area. There may be other steps you can do to assist the process, such as the Canadian Forces Aptitude Test (CFAT), but some of these may require direct assistance from your local recruiting centre or your brigade.

## The Interview

Interviewing is a skill. The initial interview should be at the unit level with a properly trained interviewer. There are a number of critical do's and don'ts when conducting an interview, and for a good reference on these basic interviewing techniques, check out the Canadian Human Rights Commission web site at [www.chrc-ccdp.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca). Click on your choice of language, then click on "Publications" and find "Guide to Screening and Selection in Employment."

The purpose of the interview is two-fold. Firstly, the interview presents an opportunity to lay out the realities of the process the applicant is embarking upon and have a two-way discussion that helps clarify the stages of enrollment and what he/she can expect from the military, including MOC availability and long-term desires for employment. Secondly, the basic suitability of the applicant must be determined. See the RIA included in this publication called "Reliability and Security Information."

## Peak Demand

The nature of the reserve recruiting and training schedules means that the workload for recruiting staffs at all levels has some inherent peaks and valleys. Although the system has some built in flexibility, careful planning and forecasting of unit requirements is necessary to minimize the surges in demands placed upon the CFRC to process large numbers of files. Work closely with your recruiting centre or detachment to find ways to smooth out the load. The ability of the system to meet your needs will be greatly enhanced. Remember, you are not the only "customer" for the recruiting centre, so help them to balance the load!

CFRCs have to prioritize their workload in order to address the needs of the total CF. Close communication will ensure that both sides understand how priorities change and will provide for a smooth transition from one priority to another. The normal cycle will mean the Reserve Force gets priority at some times of the year and the Regular Force will get the nod at other times. Understand the big picture and how your needs fit in.

Have a back up plan prepared to deal with unexpected priority changes and shifts in the workload.

Talk to your local CFRC about you supplying personnel to provide assistance during peak periods. This will often help to meet your needs.

## Co-op Programs

Running co-op courses in conjunction with your local school board is very labour intensive at both the CFRC level and at unit and brigade levels. It normally requires six to nine months of lead-time, so plan well ahead if you are trying to organize this type of program. Our research has shown that the retention rate of these programs tends to be lower than regular recruiting and basic training streams. The units that have been most successful in retaining co-op students at the end of the course have carefully interviewed applicants up front and reinforced the benefits of continued service in the reserves throughout the enrollment and training process.

Remember: schools like co-op programs because they can add value to the curriculum and help students focus on their futures. It is our task to add that value and make it rewarding enough to retain the students at the end of the program.

## The Administrative Process

### HELPFUL HINT

The key to retaining an applicant through the process is to keep him/her informed along the way. Explain the process up front and keep the the applicant informed at every step. Communication is the key to success!

*The critical issue is that someone must be appointed as the key point of contact for the applicant, and the lines of communication must be kept open throughout the process.*

The key to success throughout the process of enrolling an applicant is communication. A primary point of contact needs to be determined and well understood by the applicant, by the unit, by the brigade and by CFRC. This point of contact needs to be available to the applicant during business hours and after hours as well, so it seems to work best at the unit level. Some brigades have successfully centralized this function, but the organization that conducts the initial interview seems to work the best because the applicant can put a face to the contact and this increases his/her comfort level.

In order for the key contact to communicate effectively with the applicant, he/she must have good communications with his/her brigade and with CFRC. Our study showed that the most successful recruiting operations had established a series of scheduled communications, which included:

- weekly or bi-weekly conference calls conducted by brigade or CFRC.
- face-to-face meetings monthly or quarterly to establish priorities for the next period of time and examine the status of the plans from the previous meeting.
- regular daily or weekly reports from CFRC or brigade that outline the status of each applicant. One organization needs to be the central point for updating the applicant's file and keeping the others informed.
- some units have personnel that work out of the CFRC on a full- or part-time basis to assist with the processing of applicants and maintain an open communication link. Keep in mind that there is a training requirement to do the job right, and this may mean loaning staff for a minimum stay of three months to bring them up to speed.

## **The Medical**

All applicants to the CF must undergo a medical examination to determine their medical suitability for the military. The medical process can be a lengthy one, based on the individual applicants medical history and the limited number of resources the CF and civilian medical system has to handle the peak workload times. As an interviewer, you cannot ask medical questions, but the RIA entitled "Preparing for your Medical," which is included in this publication, gives the individual applicant insight into the process.



## **PART 4—RETAIN TO TRAIN**

The link between recruiting and training is essential to the success of any recruiting program. During the planning process at the area and brigade levels, the recruiting staff must have input into the scheduling of courses.

### **HELPFUL HINT**

Units must have a solid plan to employ members brought on strength if courses are not immediately available.

Once accepted, members should not be allowed to sit around waiting for a call.

The attrition rate for new members is high during the period after they have been accepted into the system and before the start of the next basic course.

This leads to course vacancies going unfilled and a waste of scarce resources to recruit and process new applicants.

Minimizing this attrition requires the complete co-operation of the recruiting centre and the area and brigade recruiting and training cells and careful monitoring at the unit level.

The retention of new recruits is handled differently across the country. In large urban areas, they are sometimes held in a brigade training detachment, while in smaller centres, they are held at the unit level. In either case, it's important to keep very close track of these individuals, and a number of activities can be completed such as:

- Issue of kit
- ID cards
- Pay system induction
- Unit history

The critical issue is to have the person feel like they belong and keep his/her interest level high.

## Summary

Recruiting and enrolling new members is a complex process that requires a dedicated, sustained effort on the part of recruiters and administrators at many levels.

All our research into what makes a recruiting program most successful came down to three key points:

- **Understand the system in great detail.** Anticipate the gaps and traps and have plans to prevent them from slowing you down.
- **Build relationships.** Recruiting is a people business, and the more the entire team works together at all levels, the better the outcome.
- **Communicate.** The more people know about the status of every individual applicant, the higher the success rate.

**ANNEX A**  
**PRIMARY RESERVE APPLICANT FILE CHECKLIST**

**APPLICANT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROGRAM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MOC:** \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIT RECRUITER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**

**SUBMITTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

The following checklist is to be completed by the unit recruiter prior to submitting an application package for processing. The checklist is complete when "Certified True Copies" of the following documents are included. A copy of this checklist shall remain with the applicant's file.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS	UNIT RECRUITER	CFRC STAFF
Canadian Forces Employment Application (Parental consent if under 18 years of age)		
Birth certificate or Proof of Birth		
Official high school transcript(s)		
Official post-secondary transcript(s)		
Education evaluation (for those educated outside Canada)		
Social insurance card		
Citizenship card / Landed immigrant card (for those born outside Canada)		
Questionnaire personal security assessment (QPSA) (short form)		
Pre-enrolment security pre-assessment checklist		
Personal security clearance questionnaire (long orange form) (for those requiring a pre-enrolment security pre-assessment)		
Reliability screening message (if applicable)		
Two (2) standard letter of reference forms		
Prior service information forms (for applicants with prior CF service)		
Unit referral letter (for officer applicants)		

**SUBMITTED BY: (Unit Recruiter)** \_\_\_\_\_

**RECEIVED AT CFRC**  
**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Reliability & Security Information

**D**ue to the nature of military training and employment, all applicants to the Canadian Forces (CF) must go through two distinct screening checks: an enhanced reliability check; and a security clearance pre-assessment.

### Enhanced Reliability Check

The Enhanced Reliability Check (ERC) process is defined and required by Government Security Policy, which applies to all Canadian Federal Government departments, including the CF.

Because all military personnel, from the commencement of their training, have access to sensitive information and assets, successful completion of an ERC is a mandatory condition of eligibility for enrolment into both the Regular Force and the Primary Reserve.

Government Security Policy dictates that at least five years of verifiable information be made available in order to properly assess an individual's reliability. Due to the fact that obtaining verifiable information from certain countries or regions of the world can be either difficult or impossible, for those applicants that do not have five years of residence within Canada, the granting of a favourable reliability status can be seriously diminished.

Therefore, if you have not been living in Canada for at least five years there is a possibility that your application to the CF may be closed due to a favourable reliability status not being granted.

### Security Clearance Procedures

If a favourable reliability status is granted, you then have to be granted a security clearance. DND security standards state that to be granted a security clearance, a favourable assessment of a subject's loyalty will normally require certification of the following citizenship status for the security level indicated:

- Level I (Confidential)  
Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status having taken verifiable steps to become a Canadian citizen; and
- Levels II & III (Secret & Top Secret)  
Canadian citizenship required.

### Security Clearance Pre-assessment

A Security Clearance Pre-assessment will be initiated when there is evidence available which casts doubt on the ability to obtain the required level of security clearance for an individual who is being considered for a military occupation, which requires a security clearance during early occupation training phases.

This type of assessment is mandatory when an applicant:

- is not a Canadian citizen;
- has not resided in Canada for a continuous ten-year period immediately prior to application: Applicants who accompanied their parents while the latter were employed outside Canada, are not to be considered in this category; or
- has an immediate relative who is currently residing in a country of security concern, or in a country with which Canada has non amicable relations.

A Security Clearance Pre-assessment can take between six and eighteen months to complete, depending on the number of out of country checks that have to be done, and the countries or regions of the world involved.

### Questions

Please speak with a member of our recruiting staff if you have any question with regards to security screening requirements in the Canadian Forces.



## Preparing for Your Medical

**A**s a part of the selection process, all applicants to the Canadian Forces must undergo a medical examination to determine their medical suitability for military training and service life. The medical procedure is broken into three distinct stages.

### Stage One

During the first stage of your medical you will be required to complete a questionnaire on your medical history. This questionnaire covers such things as past and current illnesses, and any prescribed medication that you may use or have used, including type of medication and dosage. You should be prepared to answer these types of questions when you arrive for your medical.

Following this your height and weight will be measured and your visual acuity, colour perception and hearing will be evaluated. A urine sample will also be required during this stage.

If you wear contact lenses ensure that you have removed them for a period of 24 hours prior to your visual test. Also ensure that you bring your glasses to the examination.

### Stage Two

The second stage of the medical procedure is an actual physical examination. Qualified personnel, who are either military medical staff or civilian doctors contracted by the military to conduct medical exams, will carry out this examination.

Examination of genitals will not be conducted, and you will be wearing your undergarments at all times during this medical. A gown will also be provided to female applicants.

No needles will be administered at this stage of the medical procedure.

### Stage Three

The last stage of the medical procedure is a review of your complete medical records by the Recruiting Medical Officer. This stage is transparent to you, and can take two to three weeks to complete depending on the amount of material to be reviewed, and the complexity of the medical information.

### Additional Examinations

Following the physical examination, you may be required to submit additional medical reports from your family physician or specialist. In these cases you will be given a form containing all of the necessary instructions and questions to be addressed by the appropriate physician. Any costs associated with providing these reports are your responsibility, as it is your responsibility to prove that you are medically fit for enrolment and military training.

You should make every effort to ensure that any additional medical reports required are provided to our medical staff as quickly as possible, as any delay will result in a delay in the processing of your application and could result in missed employment and training opportunities.

### Chaperone

At your request, a third person of your gender will be present at all times when the medical examination is being conducted by medical personnel of the opposite sex.

### Questions

If you have any questions of a medical nature, or concerning the medical examination procedure, please ask a member of our medical staff.