

Reference No: E109/173/01; **Date:** 20/03/2002

Circular 15/2002:- 1. Leave for attendance at training courses with Voluntary Search and Rescue Organisations 2. Leave for call out to an emergency search and rescue

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that agreement has been reached at the General Council on a claim made under the Scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration for the introduction of special leave with pay to facilitate training of members of voluntary search and rescue organisations. The relevant organisations are the Irish Coast Guard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Community Inshore Rescue Service, Irish Water Safety, and the Irish Mountain Rescue Association. It has also been agreed that members of these voluntary search and rescue organisations may be granted special leave with pay when called out on search and rescue operations.

Training Courses

2. Civil servants who wish to attend training courses with voluntary search and rescue organisations will be facilitated as far as possible provided their release is consistent with the exigencies of the public service and the work of the Department/Office.

3. Officers may be granted special leave with pay for half the period of the training course subject to the following qualifications:

- (i) no more than 10 days special leave with pay, for attendance at a training course, in any one leave year;
- (ii) documentary evidence of attendance for the full period of the course will be required;
- (iii) officers will be eligible for release to attend a training course once only in any leave year;
- (iv) special leave is also available under circulars 22/62 (Civil Defence) and 51/79 (Reserve Defence Force). Officers availing of special leave under these circulars may not apply for special leave under the present circular in the same calendar year.

Search and Rescue Operations

4. Special leave with pay may also be granted where officers are called out on search and rescue operations, subject to satisfactory documentary evidence being provided as soon as possible after the call-out. No more than 5 days special leave with pay will be allowed in any one leave year. An absence for part of a day should be counted as one day for the purposes of this leave.

5. Periods of leave, over and above the allowances of special leave with pay, which are necessary in order to cover the full course of training, may, at the officer's option, be treated as annual leave or as special leave without pay or partly in each category.

6. Special leave with pay may also be granted in respect of any time necessarily spent travelling to and from a course of training.

Queries in this regard may be directed to Mr. Maurice Kiely 73-79 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2, Telephone: 6045739; maurice_kiely@finance.irlgov.ie or Mr. Derek Newcombe Telephone: 6318282; derek_newcombe@finance.irlgov.ie.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary