

are not service-related (or for the employee's dependents, if he or she has dependent coverage), must be reinstated subject to paragraph (a) of this section.

§ 1002.169 Can the employee elect to delay reinstatement of health plan coverage until a date after the date he or she is reemployed?

USERRA requires the employer to reinstate health plan coverage upon request at reemployment. USERRA permits but does not require the employer to allow the employee to delay reinstatement of health plan coverage until a date that is later than the date of reemployment.

§ 1002.170 In a multiemployer health plan, how is liability allocated for employer contributions and benefits arising under USERRA's health plan provisions?

Liability under a multiemployer plan for employer contributions and benefits in connection with USERRA's health plan provisions must be allocated either as the plan sponsor provides, or, if the sponsor does not provide, to the employee's last employer before his or her service. If the last employer is no longer functional, liability for continuing coverage is allocated to the health plan.

§ 1002.171 How does the continuation of health plan benefits apply to a multiemployer plan that provides health plan coverage through a health benefits account system?

(a) Some employees receive health plan benefits provided pursuant to a multiemployer plan that utilizes a health benefits account system in which an employee accumulates prospective health benefit eligibility, also commonly referred to as "dollar bank," "credit bank," and "hour bank" plans. In such cases, where an employee with a positive health benefits account balance elects to continue the coverage, the employee may further elect either option below:

(1) The employee may expend his or her health account balance during an absence from employment due to service in the uniformed services in lieu of paying for the continuation of coverage as set out in § 1002.166. If an employee's health account balance becomes de-

pleted during the applicable period provided for in § 1002.164(a), the employee must be permitted, at his or her option, to continue coverage pursuant to § 1002.166. Upon reemployment, the plan must provide for immediate reinstatement of the employee as required by § 1002.168, but may require the employee to pay the cost of the coverage until the employee earns the credits necessary to sustain continued coverage in the plan.

(2) The employee may pay for continuation coverage as set out in § 1002.166, in order to maintain intact his or her account balance as of the beginning date of the absence from employment due to service in the uniformed services. This option permits the employee to resume usage of the account balance upon reemployment.

(b) Employers or plan administrators providing such plans should counsel employees of their options set out in this subsection.

Subpart E—Reemployment Rights and Benefits

PROMPT REEMPLOYMENT

§ 1002.180 When is an employee entitled to be reemployed by his or her civilian employer?

The employer must promptly reemploy the employee when he or she returns from a period of service if the employee meets the Act's eligibility criteria as described in Subpart C of these regulations.

§ 1002.181 How is "prompt reemployment" defined?

"Prompt reemployment" means as soon as practicable under the circumstances of each case. Absent unusual circumstances, reemployment must occur within two weeks of the employee's application for reemployment. For example, prompt reinstatement after a weekend National Guard duty generally means the next regularly scheduled working day. On the other hand, prompt reinstatement following several years of active duty may require more time, because the employer may have to reassign or give notice to another employee who occupied the returning employee's position.