Expert Advice on Military Family Leave

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Adedayo: Welcome to Leading Edge Online. My name is Adedayo Adeniyi. I am the director for leadership and organization development in the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources. Joining me today is Sharon Williams. Sharon is a senior employee relations specialist. Welcome, Sharon.

Sharon: Thanks, Adedayo:

Adedayo: Today's focus is the Military Family Leave. Sharon, can you share with us the principal purpose of this leave and why this leave was established?

Sharon: This leave was established when the federal government created a new law that included this in the Family and Medical Leave Act. It's to cover situations where someone is in the military, and either their family needs to spend time with them before, during, or after deployment.

Adedayo: Sharon, what types of activities are actually covered by this leave?

Sharon: So the types of things that might qualify for this leave would be someone who's given very short notice that they're about to be deployed, any kind of military events or related activities, child care or school activities, financial or legal arrangements, counseling activities, rest or recuperation, post-deployment activities, and any additional duties that the employee and the employer agree fit with this type of leave.
Adedayo: Sharon, that seems like a lot of information to remember. Are there any tips that you would provide to the supervisor in terms of maintaining compliance with this policy -

Sharon: I think it's important for the supervisor not to try and remember the great list of things that could qualify for this, but anytime an employee comes to you and mentions that they need time off to be with their person who's on military leave, then that should be a clue to you to talk to human resources and figure out exactly what this person needs to do to complete the appropriate paperwork for this leave. When we're thinking about completing paperwork, there's actually a specific form under the FMLA for military situations. And so the employee would need to fill out the appropriate form, but, again, human resources will help navigate you through this.

Adedayo: Sharon, what are the common errors that supervisors or the employees make in connection to this particular leave?

Sharon: I think one of the common errors might be the inclination of the supervisor to try and make a determination on his or her own as to whether or not a person qualifies for this type of leave. You're better off to contact human resources and let us help you work through this process as it can be very complex.

Adedayo: Sharon, are there any parting thoughts that you have in connection to this particular leave policy?

Sharon: I think this leave policy is a good policy. It was implemented because of the law, but I think if all the procedures are followed correctly, this leave is a win-win for both employers and employees.
**Adedayo:** Sharon, thank you so much for your sharing your knowledge with us and your participation today. We look forward to talking with you son.

**Sharon:** Thanks, Adedayo.