

Military Service |

Fifth Edition

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מודפס על ידי המדפיס הממשלתי

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The I.D.F. — An Introduction to the Israel Defense Forces



Most new immigrants to Israel from English-speaking countries are not familiar with armies in general or the Israel Defense Forces (I.D.F.) in particular.

Among the most highly respected armies in the world, the I.D.F. is exceptional in that it is a citizen army. Nearly all of Israel's men and women serve in it – the men throughout most of their lives.

The I.D.F. is a professional force capable of complex military operations using the most modern technologies. Yet new immigrants are sometimes surprised by the human, egalitarian approach toward the individual soldier. Relations between officers and soldiers are on a first-name basis once basic training is over, and consideration is generally given to each soldier's personal and family needs.

The I.D.F. recognizes the difficulties that immigrants face in adjusting to Israeli society, and understands that military service is an essential part of this integration.

Service in the I.D.F. involves learning army discipline, coping with fatigue, experiencing basic training (*tironut*), learning specific military skills, and becoming part of a large and sometimes incomprehensible system. Your fortitude, sense of humor and willingness to lend a helping hand, together with your basic belief in Israel's right to exist and the Jewish people's duty to defend itself, will greatly assist you during your military service.

This booklet is designed to help you anticipate what you will face when your time comes to serve. Just remember that many thousands of immigrants have come into the army before you, and today, despite the inherent difficulties of army service, are proud to do their share and be part of the Israel Defense Forces.



A portion of the material presented here is based on explanatory I.D.F brochures as well as the book "*Likrat Giyus*" (Towards Call Up) by Chaim Rabiya and Emmanuel Rozen (Keter Publishing, Jerusalem, 1988). You can find additional material in public libraries and bookstores.

You can also get information from the following websites:

- aka.idf.il
- www.mod.gov
- www.klita.gov.il

Note: this is the fifth edition of this booklet, and hereby nullifies all previous editions. The information contained in this booklet is based on data provided by various official sources. Details are subject to change. In case of any discrepancy, the regulations of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, the Israel Defense Forces, and other official bodies will prevail.

Compulsory Service

Eligibility for Service

New immigrants are conscripted for regular service (*sherut sadir*) or shortened service (*sherut mekutzar*) after 12 months in the country.

Even if you have not received a call-up notice (*tzav kriya*), you are legally required to register within 6 months of receiving "new immigrant" status. Contact an I.D.F. induction center (*lishkat hagiyyus*) in your community in order to receive more detailed information.

Length and Type of Compulsory Service

The length and type of your compulsory service is based on your age on the date you first arrived in Israel, regardless of your status at the time (tourist, temporary resident, new immigrant, etc.) and on your family status on the date of induction. Your medical profile is also taken into consideration. A stay in Israel as a tourist or temporary resident followed by two or more years away from Israel will usually not be counted in determining the date of your first arrival.

- If you stayed for up to one year on a program under the auspices of the Jewish Agency or the Student Authority, and have written authorization from these bodies, your date of arrival will be calculated as follows:
 - If you left the country upon completion of the program and returned to Israel after being absent for 12 months or more, the date you returned will be considered your "date of arrival."
 - If you stayed in Israel, or left and returned within 12 months, the date of your first entry into the country is considered your "date of arrival."



Table I. Compulsory Service for Immigrant Men Who Made Aliyah Prior to 1/7/06

Age on Arrival in Israel	Family Status			
	Profile	Single	Married	Married + 1 or More Children
To Age 18		36 Months	36 Months	Exempt
18-19	31-97	30 Months	18 Months	
20-21	31-97	24 Months	12 Months	
22-23	65-97 31-64	6 Months	6 Months (possibility of exemption)	
22-23	31-64	Exempt	Exempt	
24-25	65-97	6 Months (possibility of exemption)	6 Months (possibility of exemption)	
24-25	31-64	Exempt	Exempt	
26-29		*Reserves	*Reserves	
30 and Up	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	

Table II. Compulsory Service for Immigrant Men Who Made Aliyah Following 1/7/06

Age on Arrival in Israel	Family Status			
	Profile	Single	Married	Married + 1 or More Children
To Age 18		36 Months	36 Months	Exempt
18-19	31-97	30 Months	18 Months	
20-21	31-97	24 Months	6 Months	
22-25	65-97 31-64	6 Months *Reserves	6 Months *Reserves	
26-29	31-97	*Reserves	*Reserves	
30 and Up	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	

*If you are assigned to a reserve unit you are subject to conscription, but are only called up for service according to the needs of the army.

Note that length of service for new immigrants may be periodically updated based on the army's needs and guidelines. The information contained in this booklet is intended to give a general outline only. In the event of any discrepancy between the information contained here and the rules and regulations of the IDF, the rules and regulations of the IDF will prevail. Updated information is available from IDF conscription centers, and from www.aka.idf.il.

Table III. Compulsory Service for Immigrant Women

Age on Arrival	Unmarried	Married
to age 20	24 months	exempt
20 and over	exempt	exempt

Physicians and Dentists

The Military Service Law (1986) mandates the conscription of male physicians and dentists up to the age of 38 for military service with their consent (voluntarily). It also defines the conscription of new immigrant physicians according to the following guidelines:

1. Male physicians for mandatory service of 18 months.
2. Male dentists up to and including the age of 29 for mandatory service of 18 months.

Women physicians may not be conscripted without their consent.

Physicians and dentists that are conscripted serve according to the same conditions as soldiers in the career army (*keva*).

An immigrant physician or dentist that is conscripted, or that is interested in volunteering, is invited to meet with a military physicians' board, under the auspices of the Chief Medical Officer. During the meeting, the board decides if the candidate is suitable to serve as a military physician, and a draft date is set accordingly.



In order to serve as an army physician, it is necessary to have a license from the Israeli Ministry of Health and to undergo specialization training for one year in an Israeli civilian hospital.

Note: In all cases, your exact length of service is decided only after you report to the draft office, and may be influenced by additional factors that are not mentioned in this booklet.

Foreign Citizenship

The Military Service Law requires the conscription of every permanent resident, whether or not they hold foreign citizenship. If you are concerned about maintaining foreign citizenship in light of your service in the I.D.F, then before conscription you should check with the appropriate immigrant association or your native country's embassy or consulate in order to clarify and protect your status. If required, the I.D.F will provide a document affirming that your army conscription is an involuntary action and that it is compulsory and unavoidable.

Service in Foreign Armies

The I.D.F grants reductions in length of service to those who have served in foreign armies. Service is shortened according to the length of the foreign service, and in most cases is no less than a minimum of six months.

To qualify for this reduction, you must be able to present proof of your previous military service to a special committee. Documents must be translated and notarized.

Immigrant physicians and dentists that served in a foreign army can usually have their service in the IDF shortened according to the length of their previous service. In most cases, shortened service is no less than a minimum of six months of service.

Returning Israelis

Child of Israel Citizens Residing Overseas

The Army classifies a child of Israeli citizens residing overseas as a "ben mehagrim." If you are a candidate for military service and recognized as a "ben mehagrim," and have returned to Israel permanently, the same regulations that apply to a new immigrant will only apply to you if you have reached the age of 20 upon return. If you departed Israel with your parents in order to reside abroad before the age of 13, the same regulations will apply to you as apply to new immigrants, provided that you have reached the age of 18 upon return to Israel.

Israeli citizens of army age living abroad who return to Israel are required to serve in the army according to the following criteria:

If you either left Israel under the age of 16 (or 15, if you left prior to 1/5/97,) or were born abroad to Israeli parents, you are generally eligible for deferred service as long as you remain resident abroad. If you do return to Israel on a permanent basis, you are subject to conscription according to your age.

If you are a woman born to Israeli citizens overseas, and you return to take up residence in Israel after the age of 20, you are exempt from service on condition that you did not previously reside in Israel for a period of more than 120 days in a calendar year before the age of 20. If you do reside in Israel for 120 days in one calendar year before the age of 20, you can be exempt from army service only if you return to Israel following the age of 21.

If you visit the country on a one-time basis, for a period of up to one year, or make separate visits for a total of no more than 120 days, you are not considered as having "returned to Israel."

If you leave Israel with your parents before the age of 13 in order to reside overseas, and your parents return to Israel following your 18th birthday, you are not conscripted as long as you remain resident abroad.



If you leave Israel at age 16 or over, and one or both of your parents remain in Israel, you are subject to conscription when you become 18 according to the Military Service law. Duration of service is the same as for all other Israelis.

Exemptions from Service

Men

Exemptions from the army for men are extremely rare. Each case is investigated very carefully.

Women

A woman may be exempt from military service under any of the following conditions:

- She is recognized as leading a religiously observant lifestyle.
- She comes from a religious background.
- She is married.
- She is pregnant.
- She is a mother.

A woman may be granted an exemption on the basis of a religious lifestyle provided that:

1. She has declared that for reasons of conscience, or a religious way of life, she is prevented from doing military service and has proven this to the satisfaction of the exemption committee.
2. She keeps the laws of Kashrut at home and outside the home.
3. She does not travel on Shabbat.

Remember that women who arrive in Israel at age 20 and over are generally exempt from army service.

Many women who are exempt from army duty for religious reasons volunteer for "Sherut Leumi" (National Service). *Sherut Leumi* volunteers serve the country by assisting under-privileged children

and the handicapped, working in hospitals, institutions and in various other important capacities.

In order to be exempt on the grounds of a religious way of life, you must submit a statement from a Rabbinic Court, signed by a judge and confirming that you keep the laws of Kashrut both at home and away from home, that you do not travel on Shabbat, and that your religious lifestyle prevents you from serving.

Women may also be exempt from army service on the grounds that reasons of conscience or a religious-family life prevent them from serving. To be exempt on such grounds, you must appear before a special army exemptions board to request the exemption.

Deferments or Advancements of Service

Under certain circumstances, an immigrant soldier may defer or bring forward the date of conscription. Each case is judged on its own merit, and the I.D.F. retains the right to allow or reject the request. The length and type of service following deferral or advancement is also dependent upon the discretion of the I.D.F.

You should submit any request for deferment or advancement of service to the "*mador prat*" of the draft board in your area long before enlistment date. Include any documents or authorizations that support the request.

Change of Personal Status

If there is any change in your personal status change in the period between your date of arrival and your date of call-up (e.g., you get married or have additional children,) the length of compulsory service will be calculated in accordance with your family status on the date of call-up.

All reductions in length of service because of changes in personal status are valid only if you register for military service with the local draft board at the proper time, and notify the board of these



changes in advance, prior to your actual induction. If you postpone your initial registration, you may forfeit your right to have your service period shortened.

Service Options

Regular Service

Immigrants who do a full period of regular service – (*Sherut Sadir*) have the same service options as other Israeli recruits. At the induction center (*Bakum* – "*Basis Klita U'Miyun*") you will be presented with all the available service options (see section on *Bakum*). You will then begin basic training in the army unit to which you have been assigned.

The majority of I.D.F. job opportunities are open to both men and women, including technicians and communications specialists, weapons instructors, air force navigators, military and border police, cartographers, and administrative and ordnance personnel.

Immigrant Reserves

The Immigrant Reserves (*Atudat Olim*) is a military track for those that have completed high school overseas, and who are interested in studying for an academic or technical degree before their military service. If you have a matriculation certificate (*te'udat bagrut*) from your country of origin, or its overseas equivalent, and are of age for conscription into the IDF, you can request to join the immigrant reserves.

Conditions of Eligibility

- New immigrants that have a matriculation certificate or equivalent from their country of origin.
- Children born overseas to Israeli parents, who make aliyah following the age of 18 and who did not study in an Israeli high school, or alternatively, completed high school (studies equivalent to 12th grade) or academic studies overseas, regardless of where studies were begun.

- Israeli citizens that departed Israel before the age of 16, who complete high school studies overseas, and that are recognized as "*bnai mehagrim*."

Conditions of Acceptance

- New immigrants that have been accepted to an institute of academic or technical studies, or who are already studying in an institution, and will earn a BA or technology degree, provided that they commence academic study within 2 years of arrival, or technological studies within one year of arrival on any type of visa (e.g. tourist, temporary resident, new immigrant).
- Prior to military service, new immigrants may study at the bachelor's level only, although an immigrant that arrives in Israel following bachelor's degree study may study for a master's degree provided that they complete studies within three years.
- As stated above, the *atudat olim* is only open to candidates that did not attend high school in Israel, including "external high school." However, studies at a pre-military high school are not considered high-school studies in Israel.
- Students may study any subject, in any academic institution in Israel, including recognized Israeli branches of overseas universities, with the exception of institutions in which study is via correspondence.

Registration

Download information and registration forms from www.aka.idf.il/giyus, and attach the following:

- Authorization of acceptance to an institution of higher education from the secretariat of the institution. The authorization should state your field of study, and the academic year, and verify that you have student status.
- Up-to-date grades and details of credit points if you have already begun studies, as well as the projected date upon which you will receive your degree.



- Send documents to the "mercaz sherut kedam-tzva'i" (03) 7388880. Note that sending your application to the mercaz does not mean automatic acceptance into the Atuda.

Deferring Conscription

At the beginning of each academic year, and no later than September, you must reapply for deferral of conscription. Deferral is not automatic, and not initiated by the army. The maximum number of deferrals is 4 academic years for engineering studies and 3 academic years for exact sciences and other subjects. You can request an additional year for pre-academic preparatory subjects (*mechina*). Special permission may be granted for a further year.

Technology students can have conscription deferred for up to two years.

Deferral is for the purpose of studies only. If you discontinue studies, you will be conscripted according to your age, family status, and other factors.

Discontinuing Study

The Army may discontinue your studies for the following reasons:

- If your studies are discontinued at the institution for any reason (failure to meet academic standards, interrupted study)
- Failure to submit a request for deferral on time
- If you transfer from one discipline to another, or from one institution to another without notifying the Army and without receiving the proper authorizations.
- Failure to cooperate with the induction center or other military bodies with whom you must complete various procedures.
- If you fail to acquire the minimum required credit points in a given academic year.
- If there are disciplinary problems between you and the academic institution, or you and the army.

Placement in Your Profession

Once you have completed your studies, you are conscripted for IDF service according to the length of time you are obligated to serve according to your age, family status, and other factors. Although the army is not obligated to integrate you according to your profession, if you do function in your profession you are obligated to serve in the career army (*keva*) for a total of five years (three years of compulsory service plus 2 years in the career army or another combination as the Army sees fit).

Hesder

Hesder combines military service with yeshiva study. It is open to graduates of yeshiva high schools recognized by the IDF, or to students that take matriculation exams in five study units of Talmud. Service in Hesder usually requires a commitment of approximately 5 years in the army including the period of study. In most cases, this includes 16 months of active service, with the remainder of service with no salary. Registration for Hesder is at a conscription office during 12th grade, and is until the month of March. For more information, contact a conscription office, or see www.aka.idf.il, or www.hesder.org.il.

NOTE: For more information on service options, courses, etc. visit the IDF Website: www.aka.idf.il.

Vocational Classification

The vocational classification procedure begins at the end of 11th grade and is for military candidates that are not drafted into combat units. Following procedures at an induction center, candidates are invited to a vocational classification day at a placement center, where they take various forms of aptitude tests in order to determine personal capabilities and allow the Army to decide upon the optimal placement during military service. Candidates are then given an interactive questionnaire to fill out on the Army website in order to indicate service preferences.



Conscription

Every new immigrant should receive an "Order to Report for Registration" (*tzav hityatzvut*) during your first year in Israel. This order indicates the date you are to report, register, and undergo a preliminary medical examination at your local induction center. If you are not issued such an order, or if you become an immigrant some time after arriving in Israel, you must nevertheless report within 6 months of attaining new immigrant status.

When to serve in the army is one of the biggest decisions facing immigrants. Postponing military service may create a situation in which you find yourself in a unit with recruits much younger than you, since most Israelis enter the army at age 18. If you wait too long, it may become inconvenient in terms of work and family obligations when the army does call you. Delaying army service is particularly problematic for persons who establish a business before their initial service period.

Although the army does run Hebrew language courses (*ulpanim*), it is important to gain a basic working knowledge of Hebrew prior to induction.

Sometimes it is advisable to serve while you are still eligible for new immigrant benefits. The Ministry of Immigrant Absorption does provide some aid during regular service, and the period of benefits is extended for the term of compulsory army service.

You are advised to check with a personal absorption counselor regarding these matters before you are due for your initial visit to the draft board. Advice and counseling is also available from the various immigrant organizations.

The Registration Procedure

The first time that you report to the draft board, you will undergo medical examinations, tests, a personal interview, and will have to supply your personal information on numerous occasions.

The following items are required for your first appearance at the draft board:

- Order to report for registration (*tzav hityatzvut*), if you received one. Identity cards – *te'udat zehut* and *te'udat oleh*, passport(s), including canceled ones, showing all visas and dates of arrival, driver's license.
- Diplomas and other certificates of profession or education – (original and photocopy). Students should bring confirmation of studies, or of registration in an institution of higher education.
- Documents regarding previous service in a foreign army (if applicable,) original and photocopy, as well as photographs of yourself in uniform.
- The medical form which you should have received prior to induction (if you have not already returned it by mail).
- Medical documents that attest to any health problems. You should submit these with the medical form.
- Documents that certify personal status, e.g. those that attest to single or married status, in order to receive appropriate benefits.
- Results of a didactic test, if undergone, from a psychologist or didactic diagnostician, in Hebrew, if you have learning disabilities.
- Details of your health fund: name of the fund, branch, name of your physician, telephone number of the health-fund office.

NOTE: bring original documents for display purposes only. Only submit photocopies. NEVER give original documents to anyone!

The First Interview

At the draft board (*lishkat hagiyyus*), all pertinent facts should be brought to the attention of the clerks. These include family status – married, without family in Israel, etc. An only son (in families where there are no other children) cannot be sent to a front-line unit, unless



his parents sign a waiver. The same qualification exists if a member of the family was killed while serving in the army.

Tests

You will take a battery of tests, including a Hebrew test and psychometric tests. If you took the Hebrew test at the time of your initial registration, but are not due to be inducted for several months, you are advised to apply for a repeat Hebrew test if you feel that your command of the language has improved. A higher grade on the Hebrew test may mean a more interesting assignment during your army service.

Once you have completed the tests, you will be sent a questionnaire that requests your preferences of service (known as "the manila"). You must fill out the questionnaire in order to receive an appropriate assignment.

Medical Profile

A medical examination determines your "profile" rating. Your examination includes measuring your weight and height, and checking your blood pressure, pulse, and vision (if you did not bring results of an eye exam conducted by your optometrist). You will be requested to supply information about illnesses or medical problems that you are currently experiencing or have experienced in the past, as well as any past surgeries. You must supply all relevant medical documentation of any medical conditions. Two physicians will conduct a physical examination, and, if necessary, will refer you to additional examinations by a medical specialist.

Factors affecting your profile include medical history, vision problems, medications, operations, and psychological problems. Be sure to bring all relevant medical documents to this examination, and to furnish all your medical details in order to prevent problems during your army service.

Once the medical examination is complete, you then wait to receive a date to report for induction.

Meitav

"Meitav" is the Army unit responsible for classifying and placing candidates for military service. The unit is part of the Army's Manpower unit "Agaf Koach Adam – Aka." Meitav operates an information line for inductees that you can call starting from the day you are drafted. The information line can answer questions about medical issues, conditions of service (in unusual circumstances only,) and explanations about placement procedures. You can also call the information line in circumstances in which a soldier needs to be located in emergencies or if a soldier is in emotional distress. The information center operates 24 hours a day during the main inductions in July, August, November, and March. For inquiries prior to induction, contact one of the induction centers. See Useful Addresses.

Placement

Job assignments are determined by the needs of the IDF, as well as by your preferences for serving in a specific branch as you indicate in the questionnaire that you fill out. Other factors taken into consideration are your test results, educational background, professional training or experience, medical profile, extenuating family circumstances such as being married, being an only son, having a family member injured in an enemy action, and other factors.

Requesting a Deferment

If you feel that you have a specific personal problem preventing you from serving, you may submit a written request for postponement of your induction date when you first report to your local draft board. This request will be given all due consideration. However, if you have already received notice of an official date of induction, this



date should be considered in force until you receive an official reply to the request for postponement. It is advisable to check with a personal absorption counselor at the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption before submitting such a request. It is also recommended to report any personal problems that may affect your army service to the local draft board.

Overseas Travel before Induction

A new immigrant who wishes to travel overseas prior to compulsory service does not need any authorization from the army on condition that your overseas stay does not exceed three months, and that you return to Israel no later than three days before induction.

Before Induction – general tips

1. Talk to those who have finished their army service. Ask them what to do, what to say, and what to bring. Ask them about the different branches of service.
2. Find a place to live before you report for service. Israel is a small country and soldiers go home during leave. In particular cases the I.D.F will contribute towards the lodging expenses, but they will not provide you with a place to live during leave.
3. If you wish to retain foreign citizenship, check with your immigrant association and your native country's embassy or consulate.
4. Prior to induction, new immigrants are summoned to the draft board and informed of the various service opportunities available to them. During this interview you should explain any personal problems or difficulties that you may have.



The army frequently organizes parents' meetings when parents can get information and explanations about what their children are likely to encounter during army service.

Induction

New recruits first report to the Induction Center – "Bakum" (*basis klita u'miyun*). There you will be given an army identity card (*pinkas hoger*) with a serial number (*mispar ishi*). Memorize this number as soon as you can, since you will be repeating it often. Possession of a *pinkas hoger* entitles you to benefits as a soldier in compulsory service, such as discounts on public transportation. It is extremely important to take care not to lose your *pinkas hoger*.

Your order to report for induction should contain instructions about how to arrive at the induction center.

Be sure to bring with you the following:

- Order to Report for Induction
- Identity card (*te'udat zehut*) or Israeli passport.
- Bank card or details of your bank account.
- Driver's license (if applicable).
- Authorization of special conditions of service (if applicable) such as authorization of lone soldier status, eligibility for financial assistance, etc.
- Personal belongings.

Those entering compulsory service are issued uniforms, underwear, socks, a shaving kit and a toothbrush, sewing kit, towel, boots, and a kit bag (duffel bag) in which to carry your possessions. Women are given similar supplies. Those entering shortened service are given less equipment. Check that your uniform and boots fit properly as soon as you receive them. Exchange them immediately if they are uncomfortable.

On your first day at *Bakum* you will also be photographed, given injections, and given a cash advance against your monthly stipend. The army transfers your salary directly to your bank account, and you can either open a bank account at *Bakum*, or use an existing account. It is recommended to compare conditions for soldier's accounts at various banks prior to induction.



After you receive your gear, you will be interviewed by a selection officer (unless you had made a previous arrangement such as a pilot's training course). This officer is responsible for assigning you to a branch of the armed forces, such as tanks, artillery, or infantry, according to the manpower needs of the army. The officer will examine your medical profile and age, and ask you for your three preferred areas of service. The decision is based primarily on the needs of the army, although they will try to honor your requests if possible. Immigrants receive no special consideration in choice of assignments. The army's criteria for assignments include your educational background, medical profile, your overall proficiency rating, and your wish to volunteer for a particular unit. Immigrants are assigned according to the same criteria as any other recruit.

Among the initial induction activities, you will be photographed for your *te'udat hoger* (soldier's identification card) and you will be given the card. This card remains with you throughout your service and can entitle you to various benefits such as discounts on public transportation. You may also be given a haircut (men). Inoculations are administered at *Bakum* as needed, including tetanus, hepatitis, and meningitis. If you have any sensitivity to inoculations it is very important to present attesting medical documentation at *Bakum*.

From *Bakum*, you will be sent to an army ulpan or to basic training. Each branch has its own training base. At the end of basic training you will be assigned to a unit or be sent on to a specialized training course.

Volunteering for Special Units

If you wish to volunteer for a special unit, your induction procedures will be slightly different. You will have to take aptitude tests, psychometric exams and special medical exams, fill out a socio-metric questionnaire, a preference questionnaire, and pass motivation tests. If you pass all the tests you are invited to what is known as *gibush*. *Gibush* is essentially a series of further tests and exercises that lasts approximately one week. *Gibush* can often be very

grueling, and is designed to determine the candidates' suitability for elite units. If you are chosen you are sent on to basic training; if you are not, you are assigned to a regular unit. More information is available from the website of the IDF Manpower Unit: www.aka.idf.

Field Units

There is a large variety of assignments within field units. A number of them require participation in a preparatory course known as a "course *kedam tzvai – kadatz*" or training during service. You can view a list of assignments and courses at www.aka.idf.

Special Courses for Immigrant Soldiers

At the beginning of the service period, immigrant soldiers can participate in a "Nativ" course that surveys Jewish culture and heritage, or in an "Eitan" course, which is part of the conversion procedure.

For more information, contact the telephone information center of the Aliyah Division of the Educational Corps, (03) 7376037.

What To Take

Although the army takes care of all your basic physical needs, you will need to bring some personal equipment from home. The items recommended in the following list will go a long way toward facilitating your basic training and service.

- Personal first aid kit with band-aids (plasters,) mosquito repellent, aspirin and personal medications.
- Plastic bags to organize and separate your clothes and equipment as well as to keep everything dry and dust-free.
- Elastic (about 2 feet in length) for garters (*gumiot*) to hold up your pants' cuffs and also for eyeglasses.
- Pocket or draftsman's knife (*olar*) used for everything from opening packages to cutting materials.



- Razor blades (even if you have a beard,) matches, and candles are required for basic training.
- Siddur, Talit and Tefillin for observant soldiers; the army also supplies these upon request.
- Waterproof felt tip pen for marking all your army equipment with your name and serial number.
- Length of stout cord for clothes line, holding up your pup tent, tying together blankets with loose equipment and a hundred other uses.
- Small flashlight.
- Toilet paper (absolutely essential).
- Small screwdriver for cleaning your weapon.
- Long shackle lock to lock your kit bag.
- Laundry soap for washing out socks and underwear when you can't go home on leave.
- Shoe polish, black or brown, depending on what branch you serve in.
- Safety pins for pinning tags on your uniform.
- Shower sandals (*kafkafim*).
- Extra gray socks, shoelaces and underwear.
- Toiletries and hand soap.
- A covered watch strap.
- An old toothbrush for cleaning your weapon.
- Electrical tape.
- Sheet (optional).
- Towel.

It is usually not necessary to have more than one set of civilian clothes with you.

Everything you bring should be as small and light as possible, because in basic training you will often have to carry all of your equipment.

Basic Training

Probably the most difficult period in any soldier's career is basic training (*tironut*). *Tironut* differs in intensity depending on age, health, sex, and branch of service.

Basic training has two purposes:

1. To teach individuals the essentials of soldiering.
2. To teach people from different cultures and walks of life to work together and help one another.

Through the rigors of basic training, you learn about your own capabilities, those of your fellow soldiers, and a great deal about human nature under stress. Everyone is stretched to the limits of their endurance and strength. You may be surprised to discover that your physical and mental capacities are greater than you ever expected. One cannot really prepare for *tironut*, although some physical training, especially running, may help.

The day-to-day components of basic training include inspections, hikes, runs, carrying loaded stretchers, field exercises, and constant guard duty. Lectures, films, and excursions offer a welcome break from the daily routine.

There may be times during basic training when you feel like arguing and complaining. It is to your advantage not to cut yourself off from contact with your comrades, although this may not always be easy. You will find that it is better to try to establish friendships, even if they are with people that you would not otherwise normally choose as friends. The ability to laugh and joke together will ease tensions considerably and help to get you through the difficult moments.

Once you have finished *tironut*, you will probably be sent to a military specialty course where you will learn the skills you will use throughout the rest of your army service.



Helpful Hints for Basic Training

If you enter the army with a beard, you are not required to shave, but if you enter clean-shaven, you are expected to be clean-shaven at every morning inspection.

A large amount and variety of equipment is given to each soldier. Check all equipment immediately for defects – tears, missing buckles, incorrect size – and exchange defective equipment on the spot. You are responsible for every piece of your equipment. Write your name on all items and look after them carefully. Don't sign for anything you don't receive. Remember, you are liable to be tried and fined for the loss of any equipment or documents issued to you.

Your weapon is central to your basic training. **Never let it out of your sight! Loss of a weapon is a major offense and carries a heavy penalty.**



Always show up prepared and on time. Don't be a wise-guy, and avoid arguments with officers. Keep your wits and your temper about you. Don't take anything personally. You will find when it is all over that your officers and commanders were simply doing their jobs. Last, and most important, buoy up those around you, and they in turn will keep up your spirits.

During certain periods, especially during basic training, special days are set aside for parents to visit their children's bases. During the period of preparation for the army, the parents of soldiers are also prepared for the experience. The army organizes parents' nights when parents can get information and explanations about what their children are likely to encounter during army service.

Women in the Israel Defense Forces

Over the past few years the IDF has made great efforts to integrate women into military service on a par with men; assignments are now



more often based on personal ability and not on gender. A large variety of assignments are open to women, including combat positions, officer's courses, technological professions, maintenance positions, the technical and academic reserves, combat units and combat-support units, and more. Female recruits can choose from a wide range of courses (including pre-military courses) which enable you to receive high-level assignments, and to make a significant contribution during your service.

A special division within the IDF, known as the Advisor to the Chief of Staff on Women's Issues (*yoetzet leramat kal leinyanei nashim* "yohalan") works to advance equality and opportunities for women, and to help women soldiers to maximize their skills and potential. They also strive to ensure a respectful, secure, and non-discriminatory working environment for women soldiers. You can contact the division via: www.aka.idf/yohalan.

Female recruits are issued with information sheets about where to ask questions and seek help in the event of difficulties. If you feel that you are being discriminated against, or are experiencing any difficulty because you are a woman, and do not find an appropriate source of aid among the listings in the information sheets, you can consult with the "*mador prat vebikoret*" of the Advisor to the Chief of Staff on Women's Issues. See Useful Addresses.

Medical Issues

Female soldiers are provided with written information about medical examination policies with details about gynecological care and pregnancy. According to regulations, you are entitled to an examination by a unit physician, and have the right to request that a female medic or another female soldier be present during the examination. During the examination, men should be prevented from entering the room (except for doctors). Unit physicians are not authorized to conduct gynecological examinations; such examinations take place in a specialist's clinic. Women may make an appointment for a gynecological examination directly, with no need



of a referral from the unit physician, provided that the appointment is at a military specialist's clinic. You may also choose a civilian gynecologist from a list that is included in the "Guidelines for Women's Medical Examinations" (*nohal bedika refuit lechayelet*). You must receive a referral from your unit physician (form # 103).

Counseling and Guidance

Any woman soldier in need of counseling, guidance, or aid in situations of sexual harassment, domestic violence, or other issue, can consult with a military social worker. See Useful Addresses.

How to Guard Your Health

Despite the pressure and physical difficulties, and necessity of being active in every type of weather, the army does its best to send you home healthy and whole. However, there are steps that you can take personally in order to reduce the chances of illness and to keep yourself feeling fit. The following tips are designed to help you keep up your health.

Drink Plenty of Water. During the summer months particularly, it is vital to drink tremendous quantities. At least four liters of water daily is the minimum.

Protect Yourself From the Heat. During the months of April through October, you will hear radio and television weather reports refer to the "*omes hahom*." This is roughly translated as the intensity of the heat and refers to a combination of the temperature, humidity, and wind speed. Being aware of the *omes hahom* is especially important to soldiers, particularly those involved in field exercises. In areas where the heat is very intense it is possible to suffer from heat stroke even if you are careful to drink enough water. Don't take any chances – heat stroke can be fatal! When you are exerting yourself physically your body temperature rises and does not have the chance to cool down. Be sure to drink water at every possible opportunity. Take every available opportunity to

rest, in the shade if possible. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and loose clothing, but avoid sleeveless shirts. Seek medical attention immediately if you begin to experience any of the symptoms of heat stroke, including weakness, dizziness, or nausea.

Diarrhea. In any case of diarrhea, consult with a doctor immediately in order to ascertain that you are suffering from a simple digestive upset or virus, and not a more serious condition. Be sure to drink plenty of water in order to replace body fluids and avoid dehydration. If you have any doubts as to the cleanliness of water, use the water purification tablets provided by the army.

Protect Your Feet. Your feet take a great deal of punishment during basic training, especially during long marches. Make use of every chance to remove your boots and socks and let your feet breathe. Try to change socks at least once a day.

Medications. The army is solely responsible for your health. Therefore, it is forbidden to take any kind of medications, even simple aspirin for a headache, without reporting your complaint to an army doctor.

Rights and Obligations of Soldiers in Regular Service

Discipline

One of the fundamental principles of army service is that of discipline. Soldiers must carry out commanders' orders and instructions, remain present at their place of service, salute their officers, and present an appropriate appearance. "Appropriate appearance" includes wearing a uniform or work clothes according to instructions, as well as all insignia, tags, and identification badges, which must be worn at all times. The army has detailed regulations concerning the wearing of jewelry, hair coloring and nail polish, hairstyles, facial hair, etc. Religious soldiers are permitted to have beards. Similarly, soldiers may wear beards for health reasons,



provided that they receive medical authorization or permission from their commanding officers.

No alterations may be made to IDF uniforms, with the exception of shortening or lengthening trouser legs, on condition that the trouser leg reaches to the ankle. All trousers must be hemmed. Similarly, it is permissible to take in or let out trouser waistbands.

A male soldier in uniform may not wear any type of jewelry with the exception of a wedding ring and one small neck chain. Women soldiers may not wear any type of jewelry, except for one small necklace made of gold, silver, or similar metal, and one small pendant. Women may also wear up to two rings, in addition to a wedding ring, and one post-style earring in each ear (no dangling earrings), as well as one bracelet.

Women soldiers may wear short hair down to the nape of their neck. Women with long hair must wear it gathered at the nape of the neck or on top of the head, and secured with pins or a black or brown rubber band. Women may also wear their hair in one braid at the back of their head. Colorful hair ornaments are not permitted.

Male soldiers must wear their hair short. They are not permitted layered hairstyles; similarly they may not shave their heads either partially or completely.

Neither men nor women soldiers are permitted to wear any kind of "piercing" on their body while in military service.

Details about disciplinary regulations, guidelines for uniforms, etc. are provided to new recruits at the time of induction, and are reviewed at the beginning of service.

Medical Services

You are insured for medical care through the Army, and not through any of the health funds. A unit medic will examine a soldier in need of medical treatment. You also have the right to request an examination by a doctor, in accordance with your state of health.

Commanders are obliged to abide by any recommendations made by the doctor.

If you need corrective eyeglasses, you can receive one pair at the IDF's expense, upon referral from a unit physician.

A unit physician can refer you to a specialist, and you must bring the specialist's diagnosis and recommendations back to the unit physician. A specialist's recommendation is only binding upon the concurrence of the unit physician.

Sick leave or concessions for sick soldiers on base are granted according to the nature of the illness and upon the judgment of the physician.

If you need medical care during leave or vacation, you should report to the nearest local military clinic.

Leave

- Long weekends: soldiers in field units can receive "long weekend" leave (Friday and Saturday,) once a month. Long weekends are not cumulative.
- Regular Leave: soldiers can have regular leave of between 15 to 20 days per calendar year, depending on the type of unit. Between 5-7 days may be accumulated from year to year.
- Leave for Exams: soldiers nearing the end of compulsory service, who are preparing to study in an institution of higher education, can be given special leave of 4-12 days in order to prepare for entrance exams, psychometric exams, and other required exams. It is necessary for the commanding officer to give permission.
- Special leave: soldiers may request special leave for family or personal reasons. The leave may be authorized if the soldier has already used all regular leave days, and if the leave is for no more than 30 days in one year of service.





- Demobilization leave: Soldiers may be given leave close to the end of their period of compulsory service, according to type of service.
- Special leave for lone soldiers and immigrant soldiers: see the section entitled "Benefits to Immigrant Soldiers."



Whom to Approach

All complaints and requests (except in extraordinary cases) must go through the regular chain of command. An enlisted man is not allowed to approach an officer with a particular problem without going through the *mem-kaf*, (*mefaked kita* – N.C.O.) first. Most contact with the bureaucracy takes place in the office of the *mashakit tash* (she is responsible for conditions of service.) A good *mashakit* will save you lots of heartache. She can intercede on your behalf with your commanding officers, ask for special assistance, or do several little things that may make your stay in the army easier. However, she, like you, is a "low man on the totem pole."

Some units also have a "*mashakit aliyah*" who is responsible for helping immigrants being absorbed into their units, helping with Hebrew studies and advising on issues relating to conditions of service. The *mashakit aliyah* does not replace the *mashakit tash*.

Soldiers' Complaint Commissioner

The Soldiers' Complaint Commissioner (*Netzivut Kvilot Chayalim*) is part of the Ministry of Defense that handles inquiries and complaints from soldiers on issues including conditions of service, unreasonable orders or unfair treatment, injustice or blatant deviation from regulations, etc. Inquiries may be submitted in writing, and must include personal details including home address and telephone, and details of the incident. See Useful Addresses.

The Public Appeals Commissioner

The Public Appeals Commissioner (*Katzin/Katzinat Pniyot HaTzibur*) is an intermediary between the IDF and the civilian sector, and handles direct inquiries of soldiers in regular service and in reserve duty regarding irregularities, injustices, and mismanagement in their units. The Commissioner also deals with soldier's inquiries about deferments and exemptions from military service, family and psychological problems affecting soldiers, medical problems and



medical board decisions, and unanswered requests for easing of conditions of service. Families of soldiers may also consult with the Public Appeals Commissioner.

The Town Major

The Town Major's office (*Katzin Halr*) in each city may be able to assist in matters including salary advances, permits, authorizations and documentations (of rank, occupation, completion of courses, etc.). The Town Major may also be able help families to locate soldiers on bases.

Religious Services

The Israeli army is a Jewish army, but every soldier in the I.D.F. (regardless of faith) is entitled to practice their religion freely, and accommodations are made to ensure that they may do so.

All food preparation in the I.D.F. is required to comply with the laws of Kashrut. Officially, every base maintains Kashrut and every soldier has time to perform all the daily rituals. However, rules and reality are not always the same. It depends on the officers, the people in the unit, and the person responsible for religious matters on the base.

Problems include mixing dairy and meat dishes and utensils, especially out in the field when there is a shortage of such items.

During basic training you get only one mess kit and one set of silverware. Religious soldiers may request an additional mess kit. All mess kits must be "kashered" beforehand.

Time is of the essence in saying morning prayers and still being prompt for morning inspection. During maneuvers, this is sometimes difficult, but not impossible.

Shabbat and Jewish religious festivals are observed in the I.D.F., (except when observance may endanger human life or in emergency

situations,) and special religious articles for festival observance are issued to every unit before each holiday.

Soldiers are encouraged to contact their unit chaplain or religious coordinator (*mashak dat*), should they encounter any problems of a religious nature.

Soldiers who find violations in kashrut observance should report them to the *mashak dat*.



Benefits to New Immigrants

All soldiers receive general benefits (salary, leave, social services, etc.) The following benefits are in addition to the general benefits and are in two parts; 1. Benefits due to all lone or married soldiers, and 2. Benefits due to new immigrants, who may or may not fall into the categories of lone or married soldiers (note that these benefits do not apply to soldiers who are drafted only for reserve service.)

Lone Soldiers (*Chayal Boded*)

The I.D.F. defines a lone soldier as a single person who is in Israel without parents, and holds their own *te'udat oleh*. In some cases the I.D.F. may recognize others as lone soldiers even if they do not meet the above criteria. This includes new immigrants, returning minors, immigrant citizens, and returning residents.

In order to receive lone soldier status it is necessary to present your individual *te'udat oleh*. A soldier that has family in the country, but with whom he has no contact, must also present a report from a social worker or counselor, as well as bank statements for the prior 3 months and a recommendation from a recognized social services organization.

It is recommended that if you meet the requirements for a 'lone soldier,' you report to the nearest IDF recruitment office even before conscription, with your *te'udat oleh* and other relevant documents, in order to be recognized as a lone soldier at the time of induction.

Benefits

Monthly Grant: A lone soldier in compulsory service is entitled to a monthly grant from the I.D.F. equivalent to the salary of a private (*turai*), in addition to the regular army salary.

Ministry of Immigrant Absorption Grant: In addition to the monthly grant from the army, lone soldiers can receive a monthly

grant from the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption according to the following criteria:

- Residence in Israel of up to five years. (10 years for new immigrants from Ethiopia).
- A returning resident that is recognized as a lone soldier, and no more than two years have passed since recognition as a returning resident on the date of induction.
- The grant is paid on a monthly basis, and is equivalent to the salary of a private (*turai*).

In order to apply for the grant, bring the following documents to a personal absorption counselor at the nearest Ministry of Immigrant Absorption branch office:

- *Te'udat oleh*.
- *Te'udat chayal boded* (lone soldier certificate).
- Certification of service.
- If you have begun studies at an institution of higher education prior to induction you should bring authorization of studies.
- Bank account number.

Rental and Maintenance Expenses

The I.D.F. participates in rental and maintenance fees for all soldiers. A lone soldier can receive increased assistance. For information about Army housing assistance, consult with your *mashakit tash*. Bring your rental contract with you.

As an immigrant soldier you can receive assistance from the Ministry of Construction and Housing during your period of service. The period of assistance during army service is added on to the regular period of housing assistance.

If you are classified as a "child of immigrants" (*ben olim*) i.e., an immigrant who immigrated to Israel together with your parents before the age of 25, you are not eligible for housing assistance.



Housing assistance is provided through the housing assistance companies (Amidar, Matan-Chen, M.A.G.A.R.). In order to receive assistance you must obtain a *te'udat zeka'ut*. The *te'udat zeka'ut* is a document that outlines eligibility for housing assistance. The following documents are required:

- *Te'udat oleh*
- *Te'udat zehut*
- Certification of I.D.F. service.
- Certification from the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption that details any type of housing assistance you have already received (e.g. rental subsidies, placement in a hostel, etc).

NOTE: For more information on housing assistance, refer to the booklet entitled "Housing," available from the Publications Department. See the order form at the back of this booklet.

Marriage Stipend: If you are a lone soldier and you get married during compulsory service, you may receive a one-time grant equal to one half of a private's salary, in addition to the private's full salary which every married soldier receives. Apply to the unit officer responsible for conditions of service (*katzinat tna'ai sherut pikudati*).

Leave (Furloughs)

If you are a lone soldier you can be entitled to special furloughs for lone soldiers in addition to those furloughs granted to all soldiers.

A lone soldier whose parents live abroad is entitled to a special leave of 30 days, once a year, for the purpose of going abroad.

A lone soldier may be able to receive one-time assistance towards the cost of a flight. You must request a referral from the *mashakit tash* (conditions of service officer). This assistance is on a one-time basis only during the period of service, and is according to Army criteria.

In the event of a death in a lone soldier's immediate family abroad, the I.D.F. will facilitate an emergency flight overseas.

You can request one extra day of special leave related to personal matters in addition to that given to all soldiers. Such leave is granted once every two months with the permission of your commanding officer and with the recommendation of the *katzinat tash*. Your officer may grant an additional day per month as needed.

Four to twelve days' leave may be granted for the purpose of preparing for psychometric exams or university entrance exams.

You can be granted special leave if one or both parents that reside overseas come to visit you in Israel.

NOTE: When you go abroad on leave, you are not insured medically through the I.D.F.; it is usually necessary to make private insurance arrangements.

You should maintain an up-to-date passport in the event of an emergency abroad. You will not be able to leave the country without a valid Israeli passport.

Other Benefits

- You can be entitled to an international telephone calling card with 60 minutes on it per month if you immigrated to Israel after the age of 16 and your parents reside overseas. Consult with your *rakezet tash* to receive a card.
- During basic training, you are entitled to 10 free aerograms in order to correspond with your family abroad. You can receive the aerograms from your *mashakit tash*.
- During leave, you may receive room and board at a Soldier's Welfare Association hostel (*Beit HaChayal*), provided there is a vacancy, upon presentation of your "Lone Soldier Certificate" (*te'udat chayal boded*) and soldiers' identity card (*te'udat hoger*) at the offices of the town major (*Katzin Ha'ir*) of that



town. Hostels are open 24 hours a day. It is advisable to phone ahead to make sure of vacancies. Hostels are located in Tiberias, Haifa, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Beer Sheva. Hostels serve meals and offer laundry service.

- The Soldier's Welfare Association distributes gift coupons to lone immigrant soldiers for the holidays. The coupons can be used for purchases at a variety of shops. Lone soldiers may stay in one of the apartments maintained by the Soldiers Welfare Association throughout the country. Apartments are furnished and include appliances and other necessary items. There is no charge. Similarly, lone soldiers can be accommodated at one of the kibbutzim of the Kibbutz Movement and enjoy all of the amenities of the kibbutz including laundry service, as well as a monthly allowance.

Married Soldiers

Assistance from the I.D.F.:

Married soldiers, or soldiers who support immediate family members, and who serve in regular compulsory service (not shortened service – *Shlav Bet*) can receive family support payments in accordance with family income and other conditions according to Family Payment Regulations.

It is necessary to apply to the "*mador prat*" of an IDF induction center prior to conscription in order to receive family payments. For some forms of assistance, it is often necessary to undergo an income evaluation.

Note that families that own an automobile are generally not eligible for assistance that requires an income evaluation.

Assistance from the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption

Following I.D.F. authorization for a family allowance, married new immigrant soldiers, married children of immigrants serving in the IDF, or soldiers who support immediate family members can receive an additional allowance from the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. To receive this benefit, bring the following documents to the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption office nearest to your home:

- Te'udat Oleh
- Copy of marriage certificate
- Confirmation of dates of military service
- I.D.F authorization of entitlement to a family allowance

Housing Assistance

The I.D.F. offers assistance for apartment rental and maintenance fees. Married soldiers who receive a family allowance can receive partial assistance. It is also possible to request full coverage of rental costs in place of a family allowance.

Immigrant soldiers can also receive housing assistance from the Ministry of Housing through one of the housing assistance companies. You must present your *te'udat oleh* with details of the housing assistance your family has already received from the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, authorization of IDF service, and your rental contract.

Assistance to Parents or Spouses of Soldiers

In some cases, family payments are made to the parents or spouse of a soldier according to their financial situation. You must submit the following documents:

- Parents' or spouse's salary statements for the 3 months prior to application (according to the type of request).



- Bank statements of parents or spouse for the 3 months prior to application (according to the type of request).
- Authorization from the National Insurance Institute of payment of allowances for the 3 months prior to application (if applicable).
- Credit card statement for the 3 months prior to application.
- Photocopy of parent's or spouse's *te'udat zehut* with the addendum listing any additional children in the family.
- Application form filled out and signed by both the soldier and the soldier's parents or spouse.
- Authorization of guardianship if necessary.
- Authorization of ownership of an automobile if applicable.

Following authorization, payments are transferred directly to the bank account of the soldier or spouse. Assistance can include a monthly grant, a supplement to the soldier's salary, holiday gift coupons, and other items, according to need.

Additional Assistance to Soldiers Experiencing Economic Difficulties

- Assistance Fund of the IDF and the Soldier's Welfare Association – offers assistance for purchasing food, clothing, personal items, etc.
- Grant – a special grant "*ma'anak pikudi*" is a monetary grant to a soldier or soldier's family in the event of severe economic distress.
- Loans – as needed.
- Special Leave – a soldier with a severe and immediate economic or personal difficulty can receive leave for the purposes of working once he has used up all of his regular leave – up to 30 days for each year of service.
- Work permit – a soldier with economic difficulties can request a work permit for employment following the regular hours of his unit.

Soldiers with exceptional family difficulties can request concessions on their conditions of service. Concessions are according to the nature of the problem.

It is necessary to affix the following relevant documents to the request:

- Updated medical authorization attesting the medical problems of the soldier's family member.
- Financial statements – bank statements, credit card statements, documentation of debts, etc.
- Social worker's report.
- Any other documentation relevant to the request.

Benefits to Soldiers that Marry During Compulsory Service

- Soldiers that get married during compulsory service can receive 10 days of leave. This leave is deducted from special leave days.
- One-time grant as a wedding gift. The grant is equivalent to a private's salary.
- Wedding gift from the Soldier's Welfare Society.
- Rental subsidy to newly-married soldiers.

Benefits to Soldiers that Have Children Born During Compulsory Service

- Soldiers that have children born during compulsory service can receive 8 days of leave. This leave is deducted from special leave days.
- One-time grant as a baby gift. The grant is equivalent to a private's salary.
- Baby gift from the Soldier's Welfare Society



Additional Benefits to All Soldiers

- Some municipalities grant a discount in municipal taxes (*arnona*) to soldiers in compulsory service. To receive this discount you must present your soldier's identity card (*pinkas hoger*) and submit a copy of your certificate of military service at the municipality.
- Soldiers in compulsory service can receive reduced fares on inter-urban buses, discounts at Shekem stores, museums, and other places of entertainment on presentation of your *pinkas hoger*.



Discharged Soldiers

The Guidance Division and Fund for Discharged Soldiers (*HaYechida VeKeren LeHachvanat Chayalim Meshuchrarim*) of the Ministry of Defense aids former soldiers during the five years following demobilization from either the compulsory or career army.

The Division offers information regarding courses and work opportunities throughout the country, and sponsors a program to enable discharged soldiers to complete their matriculation examinations (*bagrut*).

The Department advertises the rights of discharged soldiers and opportunities for study and professional and industrial training in the booklet "*Zechuyot LeChayal HaMishuchrar*" (Information Bulletin for Discharged Soldiers) which is sent to discharged soldiers. The booklet is also available from the Unit for Discharged Soldiers.

Financial Benefits to Discharged Soldiers under the Discharged Soldiers' Law

Discharged soldiers are entitled to financial benefits designed to assist in returning to civilian life. These benefits are designated for specific purposes, namely acquiring housing, obtaining higher education or vocational training, establishing a business, or getting married. Benefits include a demobilization grant (*ma'anak shichrur*), a personal deposit account (*pikadon ishi*), and a fund for additional aid (*keren lesiua nosaf*). Benefit levels are based on your length of service as calculated by the number of complete months of compulsory service. For calculation purposes every day of compulsory service is counted with the exception of unavoidable periods of conscription as defined by law. The maximum length of service that is taken into account when calculating the period of rights is 36 months for men and 24 for women.



Any pre-army service, study periods in the Study Corps (*Atuda*) or deferred service for studies is NOT taken into account when calculating your period of benefits.

Eligibility

The following categories of discharged soldiers are eligible for financial assistance:

- Male and female soldiers who served at least 12 months or more in the army (not including obligations to serve in the standing army or unavoidable periods of service {for example general mobilizations}). Soldiers who served in compulsory service and who were discharged for reasons of ill-health or disability, even if they served for less than 12 months can also be eligible.

Women who have performed 12 or more months of National Service. Men or women who served in the Border Police or the Israel Police for 12 or more months.

Eligibility Information Form

Following the conclusion of your IDF service, an "Eligibility Information Form" (*tofes meda al zeka'ut*) will be sent to your civilian address. This form will list your personal eligibility for financial grants (if you are entitled to them). If you do not receive a form, or if you want to check for more information, consult with the Guidance Department for Demobilized Soldiers nearest you. Details will be updated within 14 days. You can also find updated information about financial grants on the website of the Guidance Division and Fund for Discharged Soldiers, www.hachvana.mod.gov.il.

The Demobilization Grant

A man or woman who serves in regular compulsory army or national service is eligible for the Demobilization Grant (*Ma'anak Shichrur*).

The amount is based on the length and type of service, including periods of service without payment, and is transferred directly to your bank account within 20-50 days of demobilization.

The Personal Deposit Account

Men and women who serve in compulsory service will have a personal deposit account (*pikadon ishi*) opened on their behalf through the Fund for Absorption of Discharged Soldiers. The amount is based on a specific shekel amount multiplied by the number of months served, including periods of service without payment. The sum is linked to the Cost of Living Index. You will be sent a statement of your account on a regular basis for as long as the deposit remains in the bank. You can access the account at Bank HaPoalim or Bank Leumi branches after two weeks following the conclusion of your service.

The money may be used for certain specific purposes:

- To enable the discharged soldier to complete high school, pursue academic studies, post-high-school yeshiva studies, or professional training at a recognized institution.
- To purchase an apartment, to establish a business, or purchase into an established business.
- To get married (for one who gets married as of 1/1/02).

It is not permissible to use funds from the account for any other purpose; however, funds may be used for more than one of the above-listed reasons.

You can make use of the funds within five years from discharge. After seven years the money may be used for any purpose, for an additional two years only. The money is available for use after thirty days following discharge. Once thirty days have passed, you can then obtain an application form from Bank HaPoalim or Bank Leumi. The form should be submitted to one of the banks together with the documents required for the purpose of the funds, as illustrated below:



- For studies or professional training:
 1. The application form.
 2. Certification of accreditation of the institution.
 3. Certification of acceptance at a recognized institution of higher education.
 4. A receipt for payment of one year's tuition.
 5. *Te'udat zehut*.

- For purchasing an apartment:
 1. The application form.
 2. A contract made out in your name, signed after the date of conscription.
 3. A text of the registration of the property with the Israel Lands Authority which proves that the seller is the owner of the apartment, or authorization of ownership in cases where the apartment is built on Israel Lands Authority land.
 4. *Te'udat zehut*.

- For starting a business or for a partnership in an existing business:
 1. Request form.
 2. Certification from the VAT authorities that the business is authorized.
 3. Authorization of opening a file with the Income Tax Authority.
 4. A contract or other legal document testifying to ownership or partnership of the business, or a contract for rental of business premises, or receipts or bills for expenses directly related to the business and which are dated following discharge from service.
 5. *Te'udat zehut*

Be sure to notify the Fund of any change of your address so that you can receive updates about your balance.

The Fund for Additional Aid

The Fund for Additional Aid (*keren lesiua nosaf*) is designed to provide assistance for study within 5 years of demobilization. It can be used for the following:

- Tuition fees for academic preparatory courses (*mechina*,) or for completing or improving your matriculation (*bagrut*) and a living allowance for the period of studies. Aid is according to socio-economic criteria.
- Financing for psychometric courses.

In order to apply for assistance from the special fund for any of the above purposes, apply to the secretariat of the institution in which you choose to study. The institution will coordinate your application together with the Fund for Discharged soldiers

For more information about the Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law and the financial benefits available, contact the Unit and Fund for Guidance of Discharged Soldiers in your area.

Grant for "Essential Occupations" - The National Insurance Institute

National Insurance Institute regulations specify that demobilized soldiers that serve in regular compulsory service can receive a one-time grant if they work for 6 months in one of the following areas (excluding clerking positions):

- Gas stations
- Construction
- Hotel work
- Agriculture and produce-packing
- Certain industrial factories and plants
- The National Insurance Institute
- Nursing (from September 2008)



Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the grant for employment in an "essential occupation," it is necessary to fulfill the following criteria.

- Type of work: you must be employed in one of the recognized areas in order to receive the grant (it is advisable to check with the National Insurance Institute that your job is recognized for the purposes of the grant).
- Duration of employment: you must be employed in an "essential occupation" in a full-time capacity for at least 6 full months, and that within those months you worked at least 150 days, on either a consecutive or a cumulative basis, within the 24 months following the date of demobilization, for one or more employers.

In order to receive a grant, apply to the National Insurance Institute following 6 months of employment, and no later than 2 years following the conclusion of the 6-month period. You can get a claim form for the grant from a branch office of the National Insurance Institute, or download the form from the National Insurance Institute website: www.btl.gov.il. You must attach a copy of your authorization of discharge from compulsory service. The back of the form must contain details of your employer, the type of work, and the number of days you worked each month.

For updated information on grant amounts, consult the National Insurance Institute, or visit their Website: www.btl.gov.il. You can also consult the Website of the Unit and Fund for Discharged Soldiers: www.hachvana.gov.il.

NOTE: The types of jobs considered "essential occupations" and conditions of eligibility are subject to change. Consult with the National Insurance Institute for updated details.

Unemployment Compensation

Discharged soldiers are entitled to unemployment compensation for a period of up to 70 days during the first year following demobilization, following the conclusion of half a year of employment. During your second year following discharge, you can be entitled to up to 50 days of unemployment compensation if you worked for 12 months out of the 18 preceding your appearance at the Employment Bureau. You can receive compensation on condition that you are registered with the National Employment Service and the Service has not succeeded in placing you in employment. Note that soldiers above the age of 20 whose income is below a set level can also be eligible for assured income payments according to criteria of the National Insurance Institute. Consult with the National Insurance Institute for details.

Vocational Training Through the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor

The Manpower Division of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor offers a variety of vocational training courses through the Employment Bureaus to discharged soldiers seeking employment. Courses include construction, computers, administration, and others. The costs of the courses are subsidized, and the price of a course depends on the subject. All discharged soldiers are entitled to register for a course through an employment bureau. During the first year following demobilization, discharged soldiers can be entitled to a vocational training allowance during studies without the necessity of a previous period of employment. For more information, consult with a vocational advisor at one of the employment bureaus.



Income Tax Concessions

Demobilized soldiers who serve in regular compulsory service or National Service (*Sherut Leumi*) are entitled to credit points for discounts on income tax, according to your length of service. These points are in addition to credit points granted to all other employed persons. Each credit point represents a reduction of the amount of income tax paid.

The credit points are given for 36 months following discharge. In order to receive the credit points, you must present your employer with your discharge certificate (*te'udat shichrur*) or authorization from the army of your length of service and date of conclusion. To check how many credit points you may be entitled to, check the website of the Unit and Fund for Discharged Soldiers: www.hachvana.gov.il.

Benefits to Discharged Soldiers Categorized as "Lone Soldiers" Or "Soldiers Entitled to Assistance"

- Lone Soldiers, or soldiers who are categorized as entitled to assistance until the conclusion of their period of service, can receive additional benefits from the Unit for Guidance of Discharged Soldiers: One-time grant to be used for housing, studies, marriage, medical care, opening a business or special needs.
- Scholarships for completion of high school studies and preparation for matriculation exams, or improving matriculation scores.
- Scholarships from "Keren Gross."
- Assistance towards Psychometric exam fees, pre-academic studies, psychometric preparatory courses, preparatory studies for new immigrants (*mechina*).
- One-time assistance towards rental costs and initial housing expenses.
- Finding employment.

- 30-days stay in a Soldiers Hostel (in particular circumstances a stay may be extended with the regional director's permission).



Note that this information is general, and that the benefits listed here depend upon various conditions of the Fund for Addition Aid of the Ministry of Defense, which can change from time to time. In order to confirm your personal eligibility for any benefit, consult with a Guidance Department for Discharged Soldiers nearest you.

You can begin consultations with a Guidance Department for Discharged Soldiers within 6 months prior to your demobilization, and continue to consult with them for 5 years following your demobilization. Your benefits as a discharged soldier can be utilized for a five-year period following demobilization from compulsory service. When visiting an office, be sure to have authorization of your "lone soldier" status valid up to the conclusion of your service. You can receive this authorization from the *Katzin Halr*, or from the I.D.F. website, www.aka.idf.il/ishurim. The authorization of lone soldier status that you were issued during your service is not valid for purposes of benefits for discharged soldiers following your demobilization.

NOTE: As the period of service for "lone soldiers" ends, meetings are organized in order to provide information to help prepare for civilian life. Details are available from the *mashakit tash* in individual units.



Reserve Duty

Most soldiers are placed in a reserve unit following discharge from initial compulsory service. The "Reserve Duty Law" (2008) requires men to perform reserve duty until approximately age 40 for soldiers and 45 for officers, although the age can vary from individual to individual. Women are not generally called up for reserve duty if they are married or if they are beyond age 24.

In most cases, your length of reserve duty varies according to security and budgetary conditions. It usually ranges from 2 to 5 weeks a year, depending on your specialty and your rank.

Students that study in a pre-military preparatory program usually serve 12 days per academic year, while students in a recognized institution of higher education serve 21 days per academic year. It is necessary to provide authorization of student status to the I.D.F.

Notice of reserve duty is usually sent out several weeks in advance so that there is enough time to arrange personal matters. Sometimes there is no previous warning, as in emergency call-up exercises.

It may be possible to postpone reserve duty by contacting your unit.

All salaries, up to a certain maximum, are paid to reservists either directly by the National Insurance Institute (*Bituach Leumi*) or through their employer.

Though conditions on reserve duty may be quite spartan, and the period of service itself may fall at an inconvenient time, most Israelis accept annual reserve service as a basic fact of life in the country. Some even look forward to *miluim* as a welcome break from their everyday routine and a chance to enjoy the camaraderie of their army unit.

Reserve Duty Compensation

Anyone who does two or more consecutive days of I.D.F. reserve duty (one day for air and submarine crews and frogmen) is entitled

to receive reserve duty compensation from the National Insurance Institute (*Bituach Leumi*).



When you complete a period of reserve duty, you are issued I.D.F. form # 3010. Check that the number of days you served is listed correctly.

If you are a salaried worker, submit the I.D.F. form to your employer as soon as you receive it. The employer will submit it to Bituach Leumi and you will receive your regular salary.

If you are self-employed, or unemployed, go promptly and directly to Bituach Leumi and submit the I.D.F. form and your claim for payment. If you have a special employment situation, or have any questions about compensation for reserve duty, contact Bituach Leumi. You can also find information on their website: www.btl.gov.il.



Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Telephone numbers and some addresses change frequently in Israel. Consult the latest telephone directory or information operator if you do not reach a number listed here. When a telephone number has been changed, there may not be a recorded message noting the change. Thus, if the number continues to be unanswered, check whether it is still in use.



Address

Tel/Fax

Ministry of Immigrant Absorption

www.klita.gov.il

info@moia.gov.il

Main Office

2 Rehov Kaplan

(02) 6752611

Kiryat Ben Gurion

POB 91950

Jerusalem 91130

National Telephone Information Center (03) 9733333

Returning Residents Division (02) 6750365

Public Inquiries (02) 6752765/766/762

Southern and Jerusalem District Headquarters

31 Rehov Zalman Shazar

(08) 6261216/1-599-500-921

Beer Sheva

Fax: (08) 6230811



Jerusalem District Office

15 Rehov Hillel
Jerusalem

1-599-500-923
Fax: (02) 6249398

Publications Department

Fax: (02) 6241585

Branch and District Offices

1 Rehov HaAvodah
Ashkelon

(08) 6970777
Fax: (08) 6726374

8 Rehov HaNasi
Beit Shemesh

(02) 9903666
Fax: (02) 9939116

Municipal Bldg.
Kiryat Arba

(02) 9962288
Fax: (02) 9964277

5 Sderot Lachish
Kiryat Gat

(08) 6878662
Fax: (08) 6878660

Canyon HaKiryat, Second Floor
Kiryat Malachi

Telefax:(08) 8581688

Haifa and Northern District Headquarters

15 Sderot HaPalyam
Haifa 33095

(04) 8631114
Fax: (04) 8631110

Branch and District Offices

15 A Sderot HaPalyam
Haifa

(04) 8632323
Fax: (04) 8632336

7 Rehov HaMeyasdim
Kiryat Bialik

(04) 8807400
Fax: (04) 8742957



Binyan "Big" (04) 9086300
Carmiel Fax: (04) 9580875

Rehov HaMalacha, "Lev Esekim" (04) 6025300
Upper Nazareth Fax:(04) 6564019

47 Rehov HaShomer (04) 6720399
Tiberias Fax: (04) 6717061

45 Rehov Nitzanim Tel/Fax: (04) 6540331
Migdal HaEmek

9 Derech HaAtzmaut (04) 9950400/0404
Nahariya

28 Rehov Yehoshua (04) 6523611
Afula Fax: (04) 6528724

Kikar Tzahal, Tzahar Bldg. (04) 6818400
Kiryat Shmona Fax: (04) 6818405

Kanyon Sha'arei Halr, (04) 6920218
"Club Market" Bldg. (04) 6820571
Tzfat

302 Rehov Ma'aleh HaBanim (04) 9078311
Ma'alot Fax: (04) 9078312

Tel Aviv and Shfela District Headquarters

6 Rehov Esther HaMalka 1-599-500-901
Tel Aviv 64398 Fax: (03) 5209173



Branch and District Offices

Binyan Tzamir, Kiryat HeMemshala Sderot Begin, Ashdod	(08) 8546000 Fax: (08) 8668
36 Rehov Eilat Holon	(03) 5023111 Fax: (03) 5056997
91 Rehov Herzl Ramle	(08) 9789055 Fax: (08) 9208019
3 Rehov Yisrael HaGili Rishon LeTzion	(03) 9427000 Fax: (03) 9525893
12 Rehov Binyamin Rehovot	(08) 9378000
23 Rehov HaTa'ash Kfar Saba	(08) 7632800 Fax: (08) 7663515
13 Rehov Hillel Yaffe Hadera	(04) 6108400 Fax: (04) 6108417
3 Rehov Bareket Netanya	(09) 8890300 Fax: (09) 8629435
26 Rehov HaHistadrut Petach Tikva	(03) 9123000 Fax: (03) 9312606

Southern and Jerusalem District Headquarters

31 Rehov Zalman Shazar Beer Sheva	(08) 6261216/1-599-500-921 Fax: (08) 6230811
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Branch and District Offices

31 Rehov Zalman Shazar Beer Sheva	(08) 6261222 Fax: (08) 9938660
Solel Boneh Bldg., Sderot HaTamarim Eilat	(08) 6341621 Fax: (08) 6372367
34 Rehov Yehuda Arad	(08) 6592444/2 (08) 6591440
8 Rehov HaTzala Dimona	(08) 6563881/2 Fax: (08) 6563880
364/7 Rehov HaVered Sderot	Telefax: (08) 6897033
29 Rehov Golomb Ofakim	(08) 9961284
Tzvi Burstein Community Center Rehov Tzvi Burstein, Yerucham	(050) 6214547
1 Rehov Nachal Tzihor Miztpe Ramon	(08) 6595497

Local Authority Information Lines

106/7/8 (Moked Ironi)

National Meitav (Induction) Information Line

*3529/(03) 7388888/6666



I.D.F. Induction Centers

www.aka.idf.il

103 Rehov Rashi
[Jerusalem](#)

Tel HaShomer (main induction center)

18 Rehov Omar Al Kayam
P.O.B. 22210
[Haifa](#)

22 Rehov Yad VaShem
[Beer Sheva](#)

Rehov Nazareth
[Tiberias](#)

Note that induction centers may also be located in other cities. Call your municipal information line 106/7 for information.

Soldiers' Ombudsman

(*Netziv Kvilot HaChayalim*)
nakhal@mod.gov.il
P.O.B. 7052

Fax: (03) Tel Aviv 64734



Public Appeals Commissioner

(Katzin/katzinat Pniyot HaTzibur)

Open Line

(03) 5691000

Fax: (03) 5691400

Doar Tzvai 02919, HaKirya

(03) 5691000

Tel Aviv 61909

Town Major (Katzin Halr)

27 Rehov Hillel

(02) 6257933

Jerusalem

31 Rehov Tchernikovsky

(03) 5694438

Tel Aviv

10 Rehov Y.L. Peretz

(04) 8692337

Haifa

49 Rehov Gershon

(08) 9904428

Beer Sheva

205 Rehov HaDekel

(08) 6374334

Eilat

1 Rehov HaRishonim

(08) 8527195

Ashdod

84 Rehov Ben Gurion

(08) 6722511

Ashkelon



32 Rehov Shmuel HaNatziv (09) 8972661
Netanya

12 Rehov Smilansky (08) 9363581
Rehovot

The Advisor to the Chief of Staff on Women's Issues

www.aka.idf.il/yohalan

Mador Prat Vebikoret Military Number 0302-9034/9038
Civilian Number (03) 5699-34/8

Social Worker Military Number 0303-7955/6
Center of the Country Civilian Number (03) 9577955/6

Social Worker Military Number 0469-4313
North Civilian Number (03) 8300313

Social Worker Military Number 0753-3125
South Civilian Number (08) 6293125

Military Police Inspector Military Number 0304-4540/1
Civilian Number (03) 7374540/1

Sexual Harassment Hotline Military Number 0302-1000
Civilian Number (03) 5691000

Sherut Leumi (National Service)

Amuta Shlomit

16 Rehov Menachem Begin (03) 6129202
www.shlomit.org.il
P.O.B. 1738 Ramat Gan



HaAguda LeHitnadvut

www.slim.sl.co.il

3 Rehov Norok
Jerusalem 96106

1-800-233-133

Bat Ami

Batami.org.il

22 Rehov Guatamala
Jerusalem

(02) 5411333

Soldiers' Hostels

(Beit HaChayal)

911 Rehov Aluf David Shaltiel
Jerusalem

(02) 6256773

Beit HaShiryon
51 Rehov Lochemai Galipoli
Tel Aviv

(03) 7303393

13 Sderot Ben Gurion
Haifa

(04) 8511234

2 Rehov Beit Lechem
Beer Sheva

(08) 6416411/2

Rehov Hativat HaNegev
Eilat

(08) 6331112/3

12 Rehov HaShomer
Tiberias

(04) 6766003

Assistance Fund for Lone Soldiers

(03) 7375200



Guidance Department for Discharged Soldiers

(Yechida LeHachvanat Chayalim Meshuchrarim)

www.hachvana.mod.gov.il

17 Rehov Mendler (03) 6975992/3

HaKiryat, Tel Aviv

24 Rehov Hillel (02) 6251725

Jerusalem

44 Rehov HaMelech David (04) 8301104/6

Haifa

Mercaz HaNegev (08) 6494548

6/23 Derech Massada

Beer Sheva

The National Insurance Institute

www.btl.gov.il

National Call Center *6050 or (04) 8812345

IDF Reserve Soldiers (24 hours a day) (02) 06463010

Computerized Appointment Center *9050 or 1-222-9050

24 hours a day

English-Speaking Immigrant Organizations

Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI)

www.aaci.org.il

info@aaci.org.il

37 Rehov Pierre Koenig (02) 5617151

Jerusalem

Fax: (02) 5661186



76 Rehov Ibn Gvirol
POB 16266
Tel Aviv 61162

(03) 6965244/65/6/7
Fax: (03) 6967049

28 Rehov Shmuel HaNatziv
Netanya 42281

(09) 8330950
Fax: (09) 8629183

Matnas "Yud Aleph"
Rehov Mordechai Namir
Beer Sheva 84483

(08) 6433953
(08) 6434461

[UJIA Israel \(Incorporating Olim from Britain, Australia, and New Zealand\)](http://www.ujia.org.il)
www.ujia.org.il

76 Rehov Ibn Gvirol
POB 16266
Tel Aviv 61162
E-mail: Israel@UJIA.org.il

(03) 6965244/65/6/7
Fax: (03) 6967049

37 Rehov Pierre Koenig
Jerusalem

(02) 5617151

Mercaz Klita
P.O.B. 348
Carmiel
Karmiel@ujia.org.il

(04) 9904232

South African Zionist Federation

www.telfed.org.il
telfed@inter.net.il

Head Office (09) 7446110
19/3 Rehov Schwartz, First Floor Fax: (09) 7446112
Ra'ananna 43212

13 Sderot Ben Maimon (02) 5634822
Jerusalem 92223 Fax: (02) 5663193

ESRA – English Speaking Residents Association

esra_her@trendline.co.il
Herzliya Fax: (09) 9565728





Other Available Publications

The following booklets are available from the Publications Department. To order, simply indicate the booklets you wish to receive and return the order form to the Publications Department, English Section, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, 15 Rehov Hillel, Jerusalem 94581. The publications will be mailed to you free of charge.

- Guide for the New Immigrant
- The Absorption Basket
- ConsumerFocus Magazine
- Employment
- Employment Guidance Centers
- Education
- Guarding Your Health in Israel
- Higher Education
- A Guide to Services for the Disabled
- A Guide to Transportation in Israel
- A Guide to Ulpan Study
- First Steps in Israel
- Health Services in Israel
- Housing
- The Life Cycle in Israel
- Military Service
- National Insurance Institute
- Retirees
- Accountants
- Artists, Writers, and Athletes
- Computer and Hi-Tech Professionals
- Engineers and Architects
- Lawyers
- Medical Professionals
- Nurses
- Psychologists
- Scientists and Researchers
- Social Workers
- Teachers
- Where to Turn
- Assistance to Victims of Enemy Actions
- Registering for a Health Fund
- Information for Olim Newspaper
- Shiluv Magazine

Name _____

Address in Full _____

Date _____



A moment of your time!

In order to improve the level and usefulness of the material presented in this booklet, we would appreciate it if you would answer the following questions:

1. Where did you get the brochure "Military Service"?

Airport Ministry of Immigrant Absorption Other (specify)

2. To what extent did this booklet provide you with the information that you needed? (1 is the lowest rating, 5 is the highest)

1 2 3 4 5

3. Please rate the following areas from 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating)

<input type="checkbox"/> Clarity of the Text	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficiency of Details	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Usefulness of the Brochure	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Design of the Brochure	1	2	3	4	5

We would appreciate the following information for statistical purposes:

Profession _____ Gender M F Age _____

Country of Origin _____ Year of Aliyah _____

Place of Residence _____ Date _____

Please send the completed questionnaire to the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, Publications Department, English Section, 15 Rehov Hillel, Jerusalem, 94581, or by fax to (02) 6241585. You can also place this questionnaire in the public suggestions box at an office of the Ministry of Absorption nearest you.

Thank you for your cooperation. Best wishes for an easy and successful absorption!