



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY

**SUBJECT: Implementation of Commissary, Exchange, and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
Retail Facility Patron Expansion for Certain Veterans and Caregivers**

Pursuant to section 621 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (codified at 10 U.S.C. § 1065), DoD is preparing for the largest patronage expansion for commissary, exchange, and certain morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) retail facilities in more than 65 years. Starting January 1, 2020, DoD and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are expanding in-store commissary, Military Service exchange, and MWR Category C activity privileges to Purple Heart recipients; former prisoners of war; veterans with service-connected disabilities; caregivers or family caregivers enrolled as the primary caregiver for veterans in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers; and Medal of Honor (MOH) recipients. This memorandum does not apply to MOH recipients and veterans with 100 percent service-connected disabilities, since privileges for those patron categories are covered in other DoD policies. Implementation of this patronage expansion applies only to the newly specified groups.

This patronage expansion applies to commissary, exchange, and MWR Category C activities (e.g., clubs, golf courses, and recreational vehicle parks) at DoD and DHS installations in the United States and in the U.S. territories and possessions. Access at installations in foreign countries is subject to status of forces agreements and other host nation and international laws and agreements. This patronage expansion does not apply to MWR activities that are funded primarily with appropriations (e.g., fitness centers and libraries) or otherwise restricted (e.g., child development programs).

Installation access for these new patron groups is pursuant to Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.08 and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Memorandum of August 5, 2019. For point-of-sale eligibility verification, DoD and the VA have determined that the scannable Veteran Health Identification Card is the approved credential for new veteran categories. The

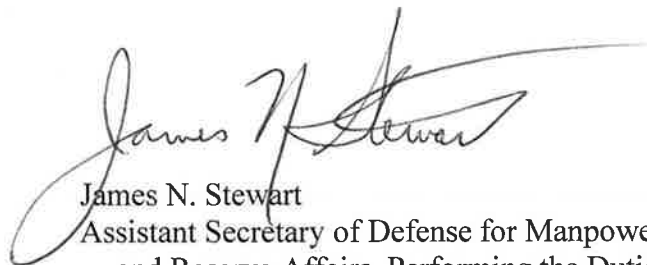
VA will issue eligible caregivers a letter indicating they are the primary caregiver or family caregiver for a veteran enrolled in the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers; this letter will facilitate point of sale eligibility verification when presented with a valid government-issued identification card (e.g., drivers license, etc.). Presenting the required credentials for installation access is the responsibility of the individual. Commissary, exchange, and MWR entities will not engage in sponsorship to effect installation access for individuals in these patronage expansion categories. In addition, family members of these new patron groups are not authorized to receive these privileges.

Remember, 10 U.S.C. § 1065 requires the collection of a user fee at commissary stores in order to recover expenses to the Department of the Treasury that are associated with processing commercial credit or debit cards used by these new patron categories. The user fee applies only to new patrons who are eligible patrons solely pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1065; the user fee will not apply to MOH recipients or veterans with 100-percent service-connected disabilities. Since credit card purchases made with the MILITARY STAR card do not result in expenses to the Department of the Treasury, no such fee will be charged for its use.

The MWR and Resale Policy Office within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy is the DoD lead for implementing the patronage expansion. A cross-functional team of subject matter experts from DoD, DHS, and the VA has analyzed anticipated impacts to DoD installations, commissaries, exchanges, and MWR systems, and is now developing the implementation framework for the patronage expansion. A directive-type memorandum outlining the policy implementation details of this patronage expansion is in coordination within DoD. The Secretaries of the Military Departments are responsible for preparing their installations, resale organizations, and MWR departments for implementation of this patronage expansion starting on January 1, 2020.

Each of these newly eligible patrons have contributed to the military community, either through a service-related sacrifice or by caring for a veteran with a service-connected disability. DoD is honored to help implement this expansion for the benefit of these veterans and valued members of our community and eligible caregivers. Your support and assistance in ensuring a smooth and welcoming launch of this effort are appreciated.

My point of contact is Mr. Berry Patrick, who may be reached at (571) 372-6584, or berry.w.patrick.civ@mail.mil.



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