

When Does Friendship Become a Crime in the Army?

Army fraternization policies are contained in [Army Regulation 600-20](#), *Army Command Policy*. (Note: The term "officer" as used below includes both commissioned and warrant officers).

The below provisions to both relationships between Army personnel and between Army personnel and personnel of other military services. This policy applies to different-gender relationships and same-gender relationships.

Prohibited Relationships

Relationships between soldiers of different rank are prohibited if they:

- (1) Compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of supervisory authority or the chain of command.
- (2) Cause actual or perceived partiality or unfairness.
- (3) Involve, or appear to involve, the improper use of rank or position for personal gain.
- (4) Are, or are perceived to be, exploitative or coercive in nature.
- (5) Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale, or the ability of the command to accomplish its mission.

Relationships Between Officers and Enlisted

Certain types of personal relationships between officers and enlisted personnel are prohibited, even if they don't meet the above criteria. Prohibited relationships include:

(1) Ongoing business relationships between officers and enlisted personnel. This prohibition does not apply to landlord/tenant relationships or to one-time transactions such as the sale of an automobile or house, but does apply to borrowing or lending money, **commercial solicitation**, and any other type of ongoing financial or business relationship. In the case of Army National Guard or United States Army Reserve personnel, this prohibition does not apply to relationships that exist due to their civilian occupation or employment.

(2) Dating, shared living accommodations other than those directed by operational requirements, and intimate or sexual relationships between officers and enlisted personnel. This prohibition does not apply to

(3) Gambling between officers and enlisted personnel.

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(a) Marriages that predate the effective date of this policy (March 1, 2000)

(b) Situations in which a relationship which complies with this policy would move into noncompliance due to a change in status of one of the members (for instance, a case where two enlisted members are married and one is subsequently commissioned or selected as a warrant officer).

(c) Personal relationships outside of marriage between members of the National Guard or Army Reserve, when the relationship primarily exists due to civilian acquaintanceships, unless the individuals are on active duty (other than annual training) or Full-time National Guard duty (other than annual training).

(d) Personal relationships outside of marriage between members of the Regular Army and members of the National Guard or Army Reserve when the relationships primarily exists due to civilian association and the Reserve component member is not on **active duty** (other than annual training) or Full-time National Guard duty (other than annual training).

(f) Soldiers and leaders share responsibility, however, for ensuring that these relationships do not interfere with good order and discipline. Commanders will ensure that personal relationships which exist between soldiers of different ranks emanating from their civilian careers will not influence training, readiness, or personnel actions.

These prohibitions are not intended to preclude normal team building associations which occur in the context of activities such as community organizations, religious activities, family gatherings, unit-based social functions, or athletic teams or events.

All military personnel share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships. However, in any relationship between soldiers of different grade or rank the senior member is generally in the best position to terminate or limit the extent of the relationship. Nevertheless, all members

may be held accountable for relationships that violate this policy.

Commanders should seek to prevent inappropriate or unprofessional relationships through proper training and leadership by example. Should inappropriate relationships occur, commanders have available a wide range of responses. These responses may include counseling, reprimand, order to cease, reassignment, or adverse action. Potential adverse action may include official reprimand, adverse evaluation report(s), [nonjudicial punishment](#), separation, bar to reenlistment, promotion denial, demotion; and courts martial. Commanders must carefully consider all of the facts and circumstances in reaching a disposition that is warranted, appropriate, and fair.

Other prohibited relationships

Trainee and soldier relationships. Any relationship between permanent party personnel and (Initial Entry Training (IET) trainees not required by the training mission is prohibited. This prohibition applies to permanent party personnel without regard to the installation of assignment of the permanent party member or the trainee.

Recruiter and recruit relationships. Any relationship between permanent party personnel assigned or attached to the [United States Army Recruiting Command](#) and potential prospects, applicants, members of the [Delayed Entry Program \(DEP\)](#), or Members of the Delayed Training Program (DTP) not required by the recruiting mission is prohibited. This prohibition applies to United States Army Recruiting Command Personnel without regard to the unit of assignment of the permanent party member

and the potential prospects, applicants, DEP members, or DTP members.