



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST
937 NO. HARBOR DR.
SAN DIEGO, CA 92132-0058

IN REPLY REFER TO:

COMNAVREGSWINST 1500.1A
N05R
28 JUN 2002

COMNAVREGSW INSTRUCTION 1500.1A

Subj: LEAVE AND LIBERTY RESTRICTIONS FOR THE MEXICO BORDER AREA

Ref: (a) COMNAVREGSWINST 5400.2
(b) COMNAVREGSWINST 5820.2C
(c) SECNAVINST 5820.4G

Encl: (1) Briefing material for personnel visiting Mexico

1. Purpose. To publish requirements for leave and liberty in the Mexican border area for all Navy personnel E-3 and below. R)

2. Cancellation: COMNAVREGSWINST 1500.1

3. Scope. This instruction is applicable to all active duty Navy personnel in paygrades E-3 and below, permanently or temporarily serving, stationed, or assigned within the regional coordination authority (California, Nevada and Arizona) of Commander, Navy Region Southwest (CNRSW), including personnel assigned to transiting units, who travel across the Mexican border into the Mexican "border area." The "border area" is defined as the territory of Mexico within 75 miles of the United States and Mexico border.

4. Background. Liberty within the Mexican border area can be an interesting and broadening experience, but the lower legal drinking age (18) and criminal activity in the area, combined with cultural, language, and other unfamiliarity, create an atmosphere which can put military personnel at risk. The risk level is especially high for junior personnel who travel alone, late at night. Therefore, Commanding Officers should educate their personnel about these risks through welcome aboard briefs, quarters, GMT, and other methods. Information about the latest scams and trouble spots is available from the NRSW Border Shore Patrol, NRSW "off-limits" notices, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and other sources. Commanding Officers should also familiarize themselves with references (a), (b) and (c) and be prepared for immediate action to assist their personnel who, despite command educational efforts, nonetheless manage to become involved in liberty incidents in Mexico. R)

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5. Action.

a. As a leadership tool for commands within the CNRSW regional coordination authority, and as recommended by the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board and the NRSW Customer Advisory Board, liberty request chits and mandatory briefings are hereby required for certain junior Navy personnel entering the Mexican border area.

b. Specifically, all Navy personnel E-3 and below must have an approved Liberty Request chit (use Special Request/ Authorization NAVPERS 1336/3(Rev. 5-96) prior to entering the Mexican border area in a leave or liberty status. Requests shall be submitted via the member's regular chain of command to the level of authority designated by the member's Commanding Officer for granting leave. This is not intended as a "liberty risk program" or inappropriate restraint on liberty.

R)

c. In addition to obtaining an approved chit, personnel who are E-3 and below shall use the "buddy system" while in the Mexican border area. A "buddy" is any adult, eighteen or older, military or civilian, whom the service member chooses, his command approves, and whose identity shall be specified by the request chit.

R)

d. Commands approving liberty chits shall counsel members regarding the risks inherent within the Mexican border area incident to approval of liberty/leave requests. Enclosure (1) is recommended for command use in counseling members and should be attached to approved liberty/leave requests. NRSW will make available to all commands a training video to assist with educating our Sailors on liberty in Mexico. Use of other more expansive briefing materials is encouraged as commands deem helpful.

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e. Exceptions to this Liberty Chit/Buddy System policy may only be granted by the member's Commanding Officer. For example, a Commanding Officer may waive the request chit requirement for personnel who travel to Mexico frequently to be with family or relatives. Such a waiver should be in writing and in the possession of the individual involved.

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f. Commands within the CNRSW regional coordination authority are encouraged, for purposes of uniformity of application and enforcement, to adopt this instruction in lieu of any local command instruction regarding leave and liberty restrictions in Mexico. In any case, this instruction

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establishes minimum requirements, which may not be modified or eliminated by local command policies.

g. Incidents of suspected violation of the policy will be administered as follows: R)

1) The suspected violator will be detained by Border Shore Patrol. The parent command must send an E-6 or above representative to the border crossing to take custody of the suspected violator.

2) The parent command will also be informed of a suspected violator by naval message with an information copy provided to the Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC). A detailed Incident Complaint Report will also be provided.

3) Commanding Officers are required to respond by naval message to NRSW within 30 days indicating specific disposition of the incident with an information copy provided to their ISIC. This reporting requirement is not intended to affect or influence disciplinary proceedings, which remain within the sole discretion of the suspected offender's Commanding Officer.

4) NRSW will provide summary data regarding violation of this policy to type commanders and ISIC's quarterly.

5. Punitive effect and authority. Paragraphs 4a, b, and c of this instruction constitute lawful general orders, punitive in nature. Violations are punishable in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice.


J. L. BETANCOURT

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GOING TO MEXICO?

BE SMART - MAKE IT A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE VISIT

1. Automobiles

- Don't drive in Mexico unless absolutely necessary.
- Don't take a rented car into Mexico.
- Do buy Mexican insurance if you must drive in Mexico; a U.S. policy, almost without exception, is not good in Mexico.
- Do remember that even a minor auto accident can result in your being imprisoned in a Mexican jail until disposition of money damages occur.

2. Personal Conduct

- Don't go to Mexico in uniform.
- Don't buy, sell, or possess marijuana or other controlled substances.
- In Mexico, many drugs may be purchased over the counter that are controlled substances in the US. This includes sedatives, steroids and other such drugs that are illegal to possess in the US without a valid doctor's prescription.
- Don't become intoxicated; and if you drink DO NOT drive.
- Don't argue with shopkeepers, bartenders, and taxi drivers.
- Don't carry firearms or any other weapons into or within Mexico.
- Do avoid confrontations such as fights and arguments; and do serve as a proper representative of the United States armed forces.

3. Personal Safety

- Do not put yourself in a situation with a stranger where you may be victimized.

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- Don't interfere with Mexican police in the performance of their duties.
- Don't wander around back streets.
- Don't use public ATMs late at night.
- Don't be on the streets late at night.
- Don't drink water from a tap or public supply.
- Don't purchase food from street vendors.
- Do take the least money and personal property (watches, jewelry, etc.) necessary.

4. Remember.

- When in a foreign country the rights you enjoy as a U.S. citizen are not assured. You are subject to the laws and rules of that country.
- Mexican jails and prisons are definitely not pleasant places to be.
- If you park your car on the U.S. side and walk into Mexico, and if you drink while there, DO NOT walk back across the border, get into your car and drive. California police frequently patrol these parking areas.

5. Help.

- IF YOU DO GET INTO TROUBLE in San Ysidro, call U.S. Navy Shore Patrol Liaison, (619) 428-2427 or the U.S. Consulate, Tijuana: 66-81-7400 or (619) 692-2154 (Consulate duty officer pager).
- In the vicinity of Naval Air Facility, El Centro, call (760) 339-2524.
- In the vicinity of MCAS Yuma, call (928) 269-2226.