



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



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## Navy JAG Corps – Meeting Sailors’ Legal Needs

*“Sailors and their families will remain the Navy’s most important asset. Military personnel must be prepared for short notice deployment and must be free of unresolved legal problems that distract from mission focus.”*

– Vice Adm. James W. Houck, Judge Advocate General

Sailor legal readiness ensures each Sailor and his or her family have a plan that addresses their unique legal requirements. This enables our Navy service members to be [fully deployable](#) and focused on the mission, while remaining confident their legal needs are met. The Navy [legal assistance program](#) is the most effective and efficient way to ensure the legal readiness of military personnel and their families.

### Preventive measures are available to ensure legal needs are met before they have a negative impact on readiness.

- Leadership should emphasize at every opportunity, including command briefs and stand-downs, the importance of Sailors seeking Navy legal assistance as soon as they become aware of a legal issue.
- Sailors experiencing domestic legal issues that could interfere with an upcoming deployment or planned IA should visit a legal assistance office.
- Sailors having creditor or landlord-tenant issues should seek early legal advice.
- Your local Naval Legal Service Office (NLSO) is available to provide a Servicemember’s Civil Relief Act (SCRA) brief on the numerous protections available to Sailors and the options for seeking legal advice on those protections.

### The DON legal assistance program provides free attorney assistance to servicemembers and their dependents regarding personal legal matters.

- Legal services include in-office attorney advice, waterfront outreach programs, referral services, and document preparation for wills and powers of attorney. Legal advice is available on a broad range of issues, such as consumer law, landlord/tenant law, family law, immigration law, and estate planning.
- 37 [NLSOs](#) located in all fleet concentration areas will schedule command visits for pre-deployment and post-deployment briefs, preventive law briefs, and legal readiness briefs.
- The NLSO locator is online at [http://www.jag.navy.mil/legal\\_services/nlso\\_map\\_global.htm](http://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/nlso_map_global.htm)
- Sailors and their families may use the [Armed Forces Legal Assistance Locator](#) to find the nearest military legal assistance office if they are not located near a NLSO.
- Legal assistance information can be found at <https://www.nko.navy.mil/portal/jag/legalassistance/home/> and on Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.com/>.

Key Messages	Facts & Figures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal readiness is not just a personal issue, it affects both combat readiness and quality of life.</li> <li>• Utilization of a NLSO for an annual legal checkup can prevent legal issues and alleviate distractions from mission focus.</li> <li>• Sailor legal issues are often exacerbated by deployments and other mission requirements. Failure to identify and address legal issues can result in a Sailor becoming undeployable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to a lawyers.com study, only 35% of Americans have a will. Any Sailor with dependents or significant property interests should consult a legal assistance attorney about obtaining a will.</li> <li>• DOD reports more than 50% of active duty personnel are married and 43% have children. Legal assistance offices saw more than 70,000 clients for family law and estate planning issues in FY09.</li> <li>• As of June 2010, there are more than 25,000 Sailors who are non-US citizens and may be eligible for expedited naturalization. See <a href="#">MILPERSMAN 5352-010</a>.</li> </ul>