

 <p><b>New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation</b></p> <p>Section: <b>Operations</b></p>	<p>Policy Title: <b>Free Annual Empire Pass – Patriot Plan</b></p> <p>Directive: <b>OPR-POL-014</b></p> <p>Effective Date: <b>05/16/2022</b></p>
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### Summary

This policy establishes the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation’s (OPRHP) participation in the Patriot Plan, which was established by Governor Pataki’s Executive Order # 125 in 2003 and was continued by Governor Kathy Hochul’s Executive Order #6 on October 8, 2021. OPRHP will provide, upon receiving necessary documentation, one free Annual Empire Pass to any currently active duty member of the New York State Reserves, National Guard, or Militia.

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### Policy

Members of New York State’s National Guard, Military Reserves, and Militia play a vital role in safeguarding our Nation. In recognition of their commitment and sacrifices while in service, New York State established the Patriot Plan, a series of measures intended to lessen the burden on these military servicemen and women called to active duty in support of the war on terrorism. OPRHP participates in the Patriot Plan by offering one free Annual Empire Pass to each currently active duty service member and his or her immediate family.

The Annual Empire Pass, which is valid from January 1st through to December 31st of each year, provides unlimited day-use vehicle entry to most New York State parks as well as Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) forest preserve areas, state boat launch sites, and other state recreational facilities. Annual Empire Pass information and applications are available on OPRHP’s website as well as at OPRHP’s regional offices and most state parks.

To obtain the free Annual Empire Pass, a currently active duty service member should apply for an Annual Empire Pass and attach a copy of the orders calling the service member to active duty, and mail or fax it to OPRHP’s Albany Office (contact information is included in the application). Once approved, a free Annual Empire Pass will be mailed.

These free Annual Empire Passes are issued only from the Albany Office and will not be issued in regional offices or at individual state parks. Active service members must reapply, including

submission of orders, each year. The free Annual Empire Pass is available only for the time period when a service member is deployed to active duty.

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**Other Related Information**

OPRHP's Empire Pass webpage (<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/patriot-plan-benefit/>)

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**History**

- 05/16/2022 Policy updated to reflect the change in program from a State fiscal year basis to calendar year basis and the continuation of the benefit under Governor Hochul's administration.
  
- 11/12/2014 The 2011 policy was reviewed and reissued with formatting and minor language changes, updates to the specific type of Empire Pass, as well as additional information in the summary section. No material changes were made to the policy.
  
- 03/25/2011 This policy is effective immediately and replaces the former "Policy Number 41: Patriot Plan for Free Empire Passes to Reserve, National Guard, and State Militia Troops and their Families," dated March 27, 2003.