

4.2.4. Exemptions and deferrals

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a) Exemptions

According to the law, exemptions from obligatory military service apply to individuals deemed unfit for military service due to health reasons, those who have already completed the obligatory military service or alternative civilian service, holders of academic (doctoral) degree, and those whose father or brother died during military service, training, or as a result of injury sustained during military service. Other groups exempted from military service are convicts serving their sentence, persons with an outstanding criminal record, or persons under investigation.[783]

Medical exemptions are 'the most popular way to avoid military service,'[784] with approximately 30-40 % of conscripts seeking exemption on health grounds.[785] As noted by Russia-based human rights organisations helping potential conscripts and their families, obtaining medical exemptions remain difficult across the county due to bureaucracy and subjective medical interpretations of medical documents at military enlistment offices. Moscow in particular has been 'a trouble spot' for a long time, with doctors reporting 'that they are prohibited from assigning non-draftable diagnoses.'[786]

Beginning from 5 September 2025 – for the first time since years[787] – the authorities have reclassified certain medical conditions previously leading to exemptions from military service[788] and introduced stricter documentation requirements. The main changes affect conditions such as primary and secondary syphilis, stage I hypertension, stage I sarcoidosis, well-controlled asthma, epilepsy under treatment, skin and endocrinal conditions, and obesity, which now do not result in the category unfit for military service. In addition, it became harder for individuals suffering from mental health issues to prove their condition.[789]

As noted by Huseyn Aliyev, in many cases, there is 'a strong element of corruption' at the level of local military enlistment offices. There were cases, both regarding conscription into obligatory military service and partial mobilisation, where individuals with conditions qualifying for exemption were denied it. Those who did not challenge the conscription decision in court were ultimately conscripted into military service. The source further added that the situation varies across military enlistment offices, and legal procedures are not always followed, including numerous cases where individuals were denied the right to apply for an exemption or were intimidated.[790]

b) Deferrals

According to the law, deferrals from compulsory military service may be granted on the grounds of health (up to one year), full-time studies in accredited educational programs, and family care obligations, such as caring for relatives or young siblings. Other grounds for deferrals are employment in state institutions and law enforcement agencies, being an elected official to governmental institutions of state and municipal level, and presidential decrees granting special deferments.[791]

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  Russia, Федеральный закон “О воинской обязанности и военной службе” от 28.03.1998 N 53-ФЗ (ред. От 29.09.2025) [Federal Law “On Military Duty and Military Service” dated March 28, 1998, No. 53-FZ (amended 29.09.2025)], 29 September 2025, url , Art. 23

- [784]

  Prizyv k sovesti et al, Resistance during the 2025 Spring Conscription, August 2025, url, p. 9

- [785]

  Artem Klyga, Online Interview with EUAA, 8 October 2025 and email communication, 23 October 2025

- [786]

  Prizyv k sovesti et al, Resistance during the 2025 Spring Conscription, August 2025, url, p. 8

- [787]

  Artem Klyga, Online Interview with EUAA, 8 October 2025 and email communication, 23 October 2025

- [788]

  Pervaya Liniya, Изменения в Расписании болезней [Changes to the Schedule of Illnesses], 8 September 2025, url; DSO–Dvizhenie Soznatelnyh otkazchikov [Movement of Conscientious Objectors], Telegram, 9 September 2025, url; Artem Klyga, Online Interview with EUAA, 8 October 2025 and email communication, 23 October 2025

- [789]

  Pervaya Liniya, Изменения в Расписании болезней [Changes to the Schedule of Illnesses], 8 September 2025, url; Artem Klyga, Online Interview with EUAA, 8 October 2025 and email communication, 23 October 2025

- [790]

  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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  Russia, Федеральный закон “О воинской обязанности и военной службе” от 28.03.1998 N 53-ФЗ (ред. От 29.09.2025) [Federal Law “On Military Duty and Military Service” dated March 28, 1998, No. 53-FZ (amended 29.09.2025)], 29 September 2025, url , Art. 24

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