

# Center on Conscience & War

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objection

## REGISTRATION AND BASIC DRAFT INFORMATION



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“Stopping war one soldier at a time”



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National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objection

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# CENTER ON CONSCIENCE & WAR'S REGISTRATION AND BASIC DRAFT INFORMATION

## ADVICE TO YOUTH FACING REGISTRATION WITH THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

*Before you Register:*

- ⇒ *Carefully read the information below*
- ⇒ *Seek out a qualified draft counseling agency*
- ⇒ *Consider all of your options*

**A**ll males residing in the United States are required to register for the draft during a 60 day period that begins 30 days before their 18th birthday. Some males may feel conscientiously opposed to cooperating with draft registration.

If you are a conscientious objector whose conscience allows you to register you should go to the post office and fill out the registration card. Write somewhere on the face of the card, between the lines or above your signature, "I'm opposed to participation in war in any form because of my ethical, moral, or religious beliefs," or words to that effect. You should make a photocopy of the card before surrendering it to the postal clerk. This cannot be done if you register electronically so we obviously suggest you register by mail! In the event you are only able to register online or were registered by the Department of Motor Vehicles when you applied for a drivers license you will still have the opportunity to note you are a conscientious objector on Form 3B (read paragraph below).

Selective Service will enter the registration information into its computer, microfilm the registration card, and destroy it. Selective Service will also send a "registration acknowledgment" letter, which repeats the information you gave on the registration form, and assigns you a Selective Service number. This letter, Selective Service Form 3A, should be kept by the registrant as proof of his registration. The instructions say that if any information is incorrect, the registrant should return the accompanying Form 3B to correct any mistakes.

The registration acknowledgment will contain no reference to the fact that you registered as a conscientious objector. Note on Form 3B that you are a conscientious objector and wish this to be noted in Selective Service records. Selective Service will not change its data in the computer to acknowledge that you would like to be registered as a CO. However, if you send this statement to Selective Service by **certified mail return receipt requested**, and keep a

photocopy together with your receipts, you will have documented that you attempted to get your beliefs on record with Selective Service long before they attempted to draft you. (If you registered without mentioning that you are a conscientious objector, you could send a letter stating this to Selective Service at any time.)

Remember that none of these actions take the place of formally filing your claim at the appropriate time in the event of a draft. (That time is about 7-10 days after you are called up for the draft) The initial claim is made on Selective Service Form 8 or 9 *during the narrow window of time that Selective Service provides* when your number comes up for draft processing. The actual written claim is documented using Selective Service Form 22.

The careful paper trail you have kept when registering with the Selective Service merely documents that you tried to get your conscientious objector convictions on record. In the event you are drafted, this will help you prove the consistency and longevity of your beliefs.

In anticipation of a draft, you should prepare a file of evidence of your beliefs. At minimum, include in this file photocopies of your registration card and other attempts to get on record, a comprehensive statement of your beliefs, documentation of activities in your life that help to support your claim, and letters of support. This evidence can be provided to the local board who will hear your claim for CO classification if you are drafted. A qualified draft counselor or agency such as the Center on Conscience & War can help you compile this file.

### **In summary, if you decide to register:**

- ⇒ Print in legible black ink on the face of all Forms sent to Selective Service (not on the edges) : **I am a conscientious objector.**
- ⇒ Make a photocopy all Forms for your own records before you submit it to the postal clerk for date stamp and initials. Send all mail return-receipt requested.
- ⇒ Prepare a statement of your beliefs. Get it on file with your church or a reputable peace organization such as CCW. Such a statement could be helpful in getting the government to recognize your CO beliefs.



# CENTER ON CONSCIENCE & WAR'S REGISTRATION AND BASIC DRAFT INFORMATION

## Basic Draft Information

### Registration For The Draft:

All males are required to register with the Selective Service System for a potential draft for military service. You can register at any U.S. post office, over the phone, on line, and a number of other ways authorized by the Director of Selective Service. The official registration period is 60 days, beginning 30 days before your eighteenth birthday. If you fail to register within the window you have up until the age of 26 to comply.

Non-citizens who live in the U.S. must also register although those with student visas, dependents of members of the diplomatic corps, and visitors do not have to register.

To register, you should go to a Post Office and fill out a card (SSS Form 1) giving your name, address, date of birth, sex, and social security number (if you have one).

You will receive an acknowledgment giving you a Selective Service Number (SSN), with a section to keep for your own records (Form 3A), and a section to make changes if the information is incorrect (Form 3B). Periodically, the Selective Service System also sends a verification letter (Form 3V) to selected registrants to check whether the information is still correct.

Registrants have a legal obligation to inform Selective Service of changes in their name and address within ten days of the change. Very few seem to be doing so, although Selective Service Form 2, Change of Information Form, is available at some post offices.

### Penalties:

Any violation of Selective Service law is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and fines up to \$250,000. Millions of men have violated the law.

Since 1980, twenty people have been prosecuted for failure to register. About half went to jail for about 6 months, and the other half received probation, fine and/or public service. During an active draft, prosecutions will be more vigorous and penalties will be greater.

No one has been prosecuted since 1985 and the Justice Department is not currently prosecuting non-registrants. However, failure to register will make you ineligible for federal grants or guaranteed loans for college or job training, or for employment in the executive branch of government. Non-citizens can be denied citizenship. Some state and local governments add other penalties such as denial of state financial aid and drivers' licenses. If you are considering not registering, see CCW's "Should I Register For the Draft?" and contact CCW.

### The Selective Service System:

The draft will not begin until after Congress passes a law to allow inductions. Classifications such as hardship and conscientious objection will not be considered until the government begins drafting people. In the 1980's, Selective Service was given a mandate to have the first draftees in Boot Camp less than two weeks after Congress and the President declare a mobilization draft. The regulations detail the rules for the operation of registration and the draft and were totally rewritten during the 1980's. [32 Code of Federal Regulations at Section 1600 ff.]

The Selective Service System is in place. Eleven thousand volunteers are presumed ready to serve the government on local claims boards and appeal boards. National Guard troops, reservists, and military recruiters have been given training to operate the system in case a draft is initiated. At first, the system will be run by active duty military personnel, not civilians.

A 1994 report from the Secretary of Defense concluded that draft registration is not needed for national security. The House of Representatives cut funds for the agency in 1999 but the Senate prevailed in conference committee and funding continued.

At the end of 1994, the Department of Defense gave new instructions to Selective Service, extending by six months the time to induct the first draftee after mobilization in a defense emergency. As a result of this change, Selective Service developed a new set of procedures, but didn't change the regulations. Selective

Service now has two sets of procedures, and in September, 2007, indicated they weren't sure which one they would use should the draft resume. **Be aware that the procedures described below could change.**

### **How The Draft Will Work:**

Should the draft begin, the first people drafted would be those turning 20 during the current calendar year. (The age 20 selection group in the year 2007 consists of all those born in 1987, so in January almost all the members of that group would be 19 years old.) Selective Service would hold a lottery to randomly assign a number to every date in the year. Potential draftees would get whatever number is assigned to their birthday. Selective Service would first draft all those who have the number one, then all the twos and so on in that age 20 selection group. Each subsequent year, Selective Service will hold a new lottery for those who are turning 20 during that upcoming year. In order for someone in the age 21 selection group to get drafted, every eligible person in the age 20 selection group must first be drafted and then Selective Service would go to those with the #1 in the age 21 selection group.

More than half the draftees are expected to fail the physical or mental standards, and still others will obtain postponements, deferments, exemptions, or conscientious objector classification. Therefore, more than twice as many as are needed will have to be ordered to appear for examination and induction.

If Selective Service uses the two week emergency scenario, the lottery will be held soon after Congress and the President authorize the mobilization draft. The next day, Selective Service will send induction orders to those who "lose" the lottery. The induction order would actually be an express letter from the Selective Service instructing them to report to a MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station). The regulations say that if someone wants to file a claim for exemption, deferment, or conscientious objection, he cannot file the claim until after the Selective Service issues him an order to report for induction, and he must file his claim by the day before he is scheduled to report for induction. There is a paragraph in the express mail letter that briefly explains this. These letters should get to most people within a day or two of being

issued, so that leaves about a week for filing claims. Failure to file a claim during that narrow window of time means that you waive your right to whatever classification you may otherwise qualify for. The Selective Service System can grant exceptions to these time limits for good cause, but it's their decision and it's not appealable. If you report to MEPS and pass the examination, *you will be on a bus to boot camp that day.*

If Selective Service uses the six month scenario, things are only a little better. Presumably, there would be a large amount of publicity about the decision to resume a draft and the Selective Service gearing up to draft folks, so there will be some advance warning. According to this scenario, draftees would be ordered to report to the MEPS for a pre-induction physical. If they flunk the physical, they will be classified 4-F. Those who pass the physical will be classified 1-A, available for unrestricted military service. They will be informed of their right to apply for reclassification, given information on how to do that, and at least 10 days to file such a claim. They could be ordered to report for induction very quickly if they don't file a claim.

Whichever system the Selective Service uses, once someone properly files a claim, which means submitting the paperwork during the small window of time that Selective Service provides, he cannot be drafted until there has been a final determination of his claim. That means until he has exhausted all of his appeals or fails to appeal within the proper time. If his claim is approved, he will be reclassified and not drafted as long as he remains qualified for that classification. But keep in mind that if someone gets a deferment or exemption, then later loses it, he goes to the top of the order for being drafted. He would be drafted before the next person in the "age 20 selection group."

Your options are briefly explained in a booklet, *Information for Registrants*, which in the event of a draft, should be available at post offices and at your Selective Service Area Office. In a mobilization draft, you must take the initiative to obtain Form 9 (SSS claims form) from the post office or Selective Service Area Office to file your claim. In the six month scenario, the procedures suggest that Selective Service will make Form 8 available to you. Filing a claim at the proper time will result in Selective Service sending you the appropriate documentation form for the claims you have made.

Claims for postponements of induction (Form 27) will be processed by the Area Office staff. These claims will be decided on the basis of documents submitted with Form 27. Full-time high school students, satisfactorily

pursuing their studies, can receive a postponement to graduate or until they are twenty; if twenty and in their final year of high school, they will be allowed to complete it. College students are postponed to the end of the semester (or the year, if in the last year). Students will use Form 109 to document their claims. Other reasons for postponement include a death in your immediate family, temporary illness or injury, emergency beyond your control, a state or national examination to be licensed or certified for a profession or occupation, acceptance in a military academy or ROTC, your observance of your faith's religious holiday, or unspecified "other reasons." If your claim is rejected, only the student postponement can be reviewed by the local board and changed.

Claims for administrative reclassification (Form 21) will be processed by the staff at the Area Office. Form 21 lists all the classes for which you may qualify that can be decided on the basis of documents submitted: Active or Reserve Military or Uniformed Service (1-C), Student taking military training (1-D-E and 1-D-D), Prior Military or Uniformed Service (4-A, 4-A-A, 1-0-S, 3-A-S), Official Deferred by Law (4-B), Alien or Dual National (4-C) (Form 26), Surviving Son or Brother (4-G), Confinement, Physical or Mental Disability (4-F), Treaty Alien (4-T) (Form 130).

If the Area Office staff denies your claim, it can be reviewed by the Local Claims Board at your request. The local claims board can change the classification that was given. If the board's decision was not unanimous, the classification action can be appealed to the District Appeal Board.

Claims for judgmental reclassification are the only ones decided initially by the local board: Hardship for dependents (3-A) (Form 24), Divinity Student (2-D) (Form 23) or Minister (4-D) (Form 25) for ordained or regular ministers of religion. Conscientious Objectors to participation in war based on sincerely held ethical, moral, or religious beliefs (Form 22) come in two categories: those opposed to combatant training and service in the Armed Forces (1-A-0) or those opposed also to noncombatant service in the military (1-0).

Any time your claim is being heard by the local board, you have the right to a personal appearance before the board, and you should request it. COs are required to appear before the local board. At a personal appearance, you will have

at least twenty minutes and may present up to three witnesses. You may be accompanied by an advisor and may request that the meeting be open to the public. The board must give a reason if they reject your claim. You cannot record the hearing, but you can submit your own summary within five days after the hearing. All the reclassifications for judgmental classes by the Local Claims Board can be appealed to the District Appeal Board. Decisions by the Appeal Board that are not unanimous may be appealed to the National Appeal Board.

If the claim is denied after all appeals have been exhausted, the person would then be ordered to report for induction. Even if Selective Service uses the six month scenario, there will be very little time for submitting claims, documenting them, and filing appeals. Selective Service anticipates that it will be a matter of weeks, not months, between the time a draftee is initially alerted that his number has come up until his claim is finally adjudicated and he is either reclassified or in the military.

Conscientious Objectors classified 1-0 will be assigned to civilian work in "the national health, safety, or interest." You may present your own choice of qualifying jobs for approval. Otherwise, you will be assigned by the Alternative Service Office Manager to a job selected by a computer match of employer needs and alternative service worker skills. You can appeal a job assignment which conflicts with your conscience to an Appeal Board.

### **Precautions:**

- ⇒ Keep records carefully and make your own file and keep track of every transaction with Selective Service, including phone calls. Do not rely on oral promises from Selective Service officials. Put things in writing and attach receipts and even envelopes to the correspondence in your file. A second set of those records should be in the custody of someone you can rely on to forward copies as needed.
- ⇒ When you make a record of a transaction with Selective Service, you should send a copy to Selective Service for inclusion in your file with the Area Office. When local boards become operational, you can see and copy information in your file. You can authorize others to do so on your behalf.
- ⇒ While most administrative classifications simply require submitting the proper forms from the appropriate government agency, ALL claims must be well documented. The written materials submitted should be sufficient to convince a stranger that you do in fact qualify for whatever classification you claim.

⇒**Send your letters and claims to Selective Service by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested. Observe all deadlines scrupulously. Be sure to include your Selective Service number; sign and date all papers submitted.**

⇒Get on file with your religious organization, according to its rules, or file a provisional version of your claim with CCW, requesting an analysis, if you have not done so with your counselor. Arrange for letters of support.

⇒Get help. Check out whether the counselor you are consulting was trained (preferably by CCW) and has the most current CCW Draft Counselor's Manual. Most attorneys know nothing about Selective Service law; ask their qualifications. Draft counselors will tend to know about qualified attorneys. Conscientious objectors must begin to document their claims well in advance of being drafted since they will not have enough time otherwise.

⇒Call Center on Conscience & War if all else fails.

### **Other Information:**

The Center on Conscience & War has many resources and information on conscientious objection. Request a Resource List.

Literature and counseling are available from local draft counselors, usually affiliated with a local church or peace organization. If a draft is imminent, due to heavy demands and with the development of trained counselors in most parts of the country, the national organizations would prefer to provide backup to those counselors, and take individual counseling requests only when such resources are not otherwise available. Write them instead for literature or for information about being trained as a counselor.

The following are qualified national counseling organizations:

The Center on Conscience & War, with representatives in many regions, 1-800-379-2679; and

AFSC-Youth and Militarism Program, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 241-7176.

Other information related to conscientious objection are:

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, 2121 Decatur Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20008, (202) 483-3751, or

NWTRCC (National War Tax Resister Coordinating Committee) PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215, (800) 269-7464, [nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org](mailto:nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org)



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# CENTER ON CONSCIENCE & WAR'S REGISTRATION AND BASIC DRAFT INFORMATION

## Letters of Support for Conscientious Objector Claims

Selective Service will not accept any material from you for a conscientious objector claim until the draft is resumed and you have been selected for processing. It is important to prepare a solid CO file in advance. Statements of conscientious objection should be filed with your religious body or counseling agency. If this service is not available, CCW will keep your CO statement on file and will offer suggestions, where appropriate, to strengthen the statement.

If the draft is reinstated, letters of support for a CO claim will be vital. They can be as important as the answers one gives in the CO claim. It would be difficult for a draft board to deny a claimant's sincerity if there are several supporting letters from respected individuals stating otherwise. These letter writers may be people you choose later to be witnesses at your hearing before a draft board.

Choose references carefully. They should know you well, be familiar with the position you are taking, and believe in your sincerity. Try to get a variety of people— teachers, relatives, classmates, friends. It is not necessary for the letter writer to agree with your beliefs. The best letters are often from people who disagree with the CO position and will say so in their letter, but believe in your sincerity. Obtain letters from people who have known you various lengths of time. Some people, such as recent friends can attest to the strength of your current beliefs. Others, such as parents, ministers, or teachers can attest to the length of time you have held your beliefs. Any statements your references can make verifying the sincerity or strength of your beliefs would be significant. They can help by answering the following questions in their letters:

1. What is your relationship with the applicant, and how long have you known him or her?
2. Do you believe that the applicant is sincere in his or her claim as a conscientious objector?

3. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant's conduct since arriving at this belief been consistent with the claim being made?
4. Do you believe the applicant's claim is based on deeply held moral, ethical or religious beliefs, however broadly defined?

If possible, give examples of influences or training in the life of the applicant which you think might have led to the development of his or her beliefs.

Each reference should be given a brief statement of your position in which you try to answer any questions the person may have about your CO claim, the claim in general, and why you are filing a claim during a time of standby draft. You can include some helpful brochures. CCW's "Who is a Conscientious Objector?" answers many questions and dispels some misconceptions regarding COs and the law. The more specific a letter of support can be, the more attention it will receive. A personal letter with details that demonstrate the claimant's convictions is more convincing than a general, impersonal one.

You are responsible to see that references listed on your claim are contacted and the letters of support are filed with your claim. It would be best if letters could be collected and filed with your claim, but additional letters and other helpful materials, like term papers or speeches, in which you include your CO beliefs can be added at any time.

Try to obtain three or four good letters now and a similar number if and when individual Selective Service classification resumes. Letters should be approximately one page in length, typed or clearly written, and addressed, "To Whom it May Concern." The person writing a letter of support should include your name, address, and Selective Service number. Request that all letters be sent to you rather than the local board. If you receive a letter that is vague, inaccurate, or doesn't speak to the points listed earlier, do not include it in your file or ask the person to rewrite it. Otherwise it could prove detrimental.

**Above all, keep duplicate copies of everything you put in your file!**



# CENTER ON CONSCIENCE & WAR'S REGISTRATION AND BASIC DRAFT INFORMATION

## What Do I Believe About War?

### *...questions for the Conscientious Objector*

The world still faces difficult questions about war and peace. Each of us probably asks at some time in his or her life, "What do I believe about war?" The purpose of this questionnaire is to encourage people who have strong concerns about participating in war and who might be conscientious objectors to answer that question and make a record of it. The answers could prove useful especially for those who might deal with the Selective Service System or the military in the future. The answers could also help those who are struggling with questions concerning paying taxes for war and working in war-related jobs.

### **What is conscientious objection?**

It is a sincere conviction, motivated by conscience, that forbids someone from participation in war. This objection may apply to all forms or to particular aspects of war.

### **What types of conscientious objectors are recognized by federal law?**

The military Selective Service Act and government regulations recognize two types of conscientious objectors:

- **CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO ALL FORMS OF MILITARY SERVICE:**

These are persons who, by reason of religious, ethical, or moral belief, are "conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." These people may be discharged from the military. In the event of a draft, if called up, they would perform alternate service as civilians.

- **NONCOMBATANT CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR:**

These are persons who, by reason of religious, ethical or moral belief, are conscientiously opposed to killing in war in any form but who do not object to performing noncombatant duties in the armed forces. These people are reassigned to non-combatant duties in the Armed Forces or, in the event of a draft, are

trained without weapons and assigned to noncombatant service.

### **What other types of conscientious objectors are there?**

The Military Selective Service Act and government regulations do *not* recognize the following types of conscientious objectors:

- **CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS TO PAYING FOR WAR:**

These are people whose consciences forbid them to pay the military portion of their taxes because of ethical, moral and religious beliefs. Many impoverish themselves by living below taxable levels, others suffer garnishment, court appearances, property loss, and, in some cases, imprisonment. If the Peace Tax Fund is enacted, most of them will be able to pay their taxes without this agonizing, moral dilemma.

- **SELECTIVE OBJECTORS:**

These are persons whose consciences would not permit them to participate in what they believe to be an "unjust" war. For example, some people who were conscientiously opposed to the Vietnam War because they believed it was unjust said they would have fought in WWII. Many objected to the war in Iraq but could not say they were opposed to all war. Selective objectors may also object to certain weaponry or to particular targeting and therefore request reassignment.

- **NUCLEAR PACIFISTS:**

These are persons whose consciences would not permit them to participate in a nuclear war, or what they believe would likely become a nuclear war. Some nuclear pacifists are opposed to all war because of their belief that any war fought today could lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

At this time, federal law does not recognize war tax objectors, selective objectors, and nuclear objectors. Unless the law changes, these persons would not be granted conscientious objector exemptions from military service in a draft situation or from taxes for war. These people might enter CO claims in the hope

of expanding the law, asserting their beliefs, or mitigating the penalties for violating the law.

- **NON-COOPERATORS WITH THE DRAFT:**

These are persons whose consciences forbid them to cooperate with draft law requirements. Non-registration is currently illegal. Current law stipulates that young men who fail to register within 30 days of their 18th birthday are subject to possible criminal penalties of up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. They also forego federal financial aid for higher education and job training as well as employment in the federal government. Some states have similar penalties, even prohibiting enrollment in their colleges and universities and obtaining a driver's license.

### **Am I a conscientious objector?**

It is important to give this question serious thought. You may want to consult your relatives, friends, teachers, or religious advisors. It may take some time to come to a conclusion. The important thing is to start thinking about this now. What do you believe about war? Why is it so important to think about this now?

If a war were declared today, the draft could begin immediately. Or a peacetime draft or compulsory national service might be enacted. A plan to register and conscript health care professionals has been prepared and probably would be implemented in a war emergency before other conscription measures. Under current regulations, conscientious objectors will have a very limited time following their induction order to document their claim for exemption from military service. Conscientious objectors should think through the basis of their claim now. In peacetime or war, early documentation of beliefs is one evidence of their sincerity.

Few reservists or active duty personnel ever consider conscientious objection prior to enlistment or commissioning. (They cannot enter the military as conscientious objectors.) When military personnel begin to question their tasks, responsibilities, and mission, they should take a careful look at their beliefs about war. **Contact CCW for the different questions that military COs need to answer.**

About half of federal income taxes are for military purposes. Many taxpayers object to paying for war. If the law is changed to accommodate conscientious objectors to paying for war (the Religious

Freedom Peace Tax Fund bill, RFPTF), taxpayers will have to establish that they are conscientious objectors in order to have their federal income tax redirected for peaceful purposes. They, too, should begin to document their beliefs.

### **What about women?**

Despite the fact that women are not yet required to register for the draft, Congress has the power to include women in a draft and women do pay taxes. Plans for a draft of health care professionals include women, and women already make up fifteen percent of the U.S. military. It is, therefore, important that women, as well as men, consider what they believe about war.

### **What obligations do I have as a CO?**

As a result of being classified by Selective Service as a CO, you would be required to give two years of alternative service in some civilian agency or noncombatant service in the military, if you are drafted. Taxpayers would still have to pay the amount of taxes due.

### **What should I do if I am a CO?**

Prepare now. If you think you are a CO, answer the questions on the attached worksheet as clearly and completely as possible. Make copies. Mail it to CCW and to your own faith community or counseling agency. Keep a copy for your own records. CCW will be happy to receive your statement whether or not your objection is based on traditional religious grounds. We also recommend that you gather letters of support.

### **What happens next?**

If the draft begins, provisions are made in the tax laws, or you decide to apply from within the military, you will have all of the answers to the questions on your worksheet plus letters of support on file with CCW and/or your faith community or counseling agency. You will also have your own copy. These records will be invaluable in documenting your CO claim.

The following worksheet based on Form 22, the Selective Service System documentation form for COs facing the draft. While future IRS forms cannot be predicted, if the tax laws change, these questions will likely be reflected in those forms. For more information, consult CCW publications "*Draft Law: Who is a CO?*," "*COs and the Draft*," and "*Should I Register For the Draft?*" and literature from other foundations listed on page 5 or your faith community.

**QUESTION 1: DESCRIBE THE BELIEFS WHICH ARE THE BASIS FOR YOUR CLAIM AS A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR. IF APPROPRIATE, STATE WHETHER THOSE BELIEFS WOULD PERMIT YOU TO SERVE IN A NONCOMBATANT POSITION IN THE ARMED FORCES, OR PAY TAXES FOR WAR.**

*(Form 22, the Selective Service System Documentation Form for Conscientious Objectors, says: "Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for your claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.")*

This question asks you to describe, in some detail and as honestly as possible, the basic principles by which you guide your life. You should describe those values which are of utmost importance to you, such as God, love, truth, etc., and why these beliefs are in conflict with participation in war or paying for war or preparations for war. You should begin by saying that you are conscientiously opposed to participation in war, and then describe the beliefs that lead you to such opposition. (Feel free to use additional paper for the answer to this and other questions.)

The second part of this question seeks to determine whether as a draft registrant you claim noncombatant status in the military or a full exemption from military service. You should specify what it is about noncombatant service that would violate your conscience if this is the exemption you seek. Conscientious objectors to paying taxes for war should specify what it is about paying taxes for war that violates your conscience. If your convictions lead you to be a non-cooperator, your answer to this question might be useful should you ever be prosecuted or seek financial aid or other help from sources such as FEAT which provides school loans to CO non-registrants.

**QUESTION 2: DESCRIBE HOW YOUR BELIEFS DEVELOPED.**

*(Form 22 says: "Describe how and when you acquired these beliefs.")*

In answering this question, you should include anything of significance which helped to form your beliefs. Mention any religious training you have had if you feel such training has helped you arrive at your position. If you feel you arrived at your beliefs with no formal training, there is, of course, no need to mention any. The influence of clergy, teachers, family members, books, television, movies, membership in organizations, and experiences in your life should be listed. Be specific. You need to show that strong influences in your life have stimulated you to think clearly and seriously about participation in war.

Specific incidents can be mentioned, such as seminars or assemblies you have attended, courses taken, trips taken, contact with refugees, demonstrations you were in, to show that your beliefs had substantial formation beyond merely an "academic interest." Obviously, if you have experienced war, be sure to reflect on it. Take care not to give the impression that your belief is primarily a matter of political considerations, expediency, or merely an arbitrary, personal moral code unrelated to higher values. Unconventional beliefs do qualify, but they will require careful statement.

**QUESTION 3: DESCRIBE HOW YOUR BELIEFS AFFECT THE WAY YOU LIVE AND THE TYPE OF WORK YOU DO OR PLAN TO DO.**

*(Form 22 says: "Explain what most clearly shows that your beliefs are deeply held. You may wish to include a description of how your beliefs affect the way you live.")*

This may be a difficult question for objectors who have not had many experiences which can show sincere beliefs. Select the best illustrations of your convictions. Think about community service; church, mosque or synagogue participation; clubs; sports; or relationships with friends. You can always discuss how your future plans are strongly affected by a commitment to those beliefs. Describe kinds of employment you have had or plan to have which reflect your commitment. Discuss any public expression, written or oral, you have given to your beliefs. Describe your lifestyle, mention your life's goals as you have set them, and show how they are an outgrowth of your beliefs. Don't forget to mention movies, video games, and other aspects of our violent culture that you don't participate in, if that is the case. This question allows you to demonstrate the sincerity with which you hold your beliefs.

**Because of the beliefs I have explained, I am a conscientious objector to (check all that apply):**

participation in war in any form     paying for war     unjust wars, selective     nuclear war

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If this worksheet was sent to you by a faith community or a counseling agency, you may want to receive counseling only from them. If you are a member of a religious body that maintains a registry of conscientious objectors you may also want to file a copy of your statement with them. CCW can help you contact the appropriate religious agency.

Please review my conscientious objector statement and send me any recommendations that might help in the presentation of a future claim.

***PLEASE PRINT***

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAIL TO YOUR ORGANIZATION LISTED BELOW OR TO CCW:

**Center on Conscience & War  
(NISBCO)**

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