

Article 139 Claims

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate
CLAIMS SECTION
U.S. Army Japan



If a soldier deliberately damages, willfully destroys, or wrongfully takes your property, you are entitled to compensation directly from the guilty soldier. Article 139, UCMJ, provides an easy, effective way for victims of deliberate misconduct to obtain compensation for their losses.

To start the recovery, the victim makes a written demand for a specific dollar amount to the commander of the accused soldier. A simple letter is enough. The letter should identify the guilty soldier, explain how the loss occurred, and the amount of the loss or damage. (If there are any witnesses, it is helpful to have statements from them or at least provide their names and phone numbers). The amount should be substantiated with estimates of repair cost or replacement cost.

You must submit written demand promptly. Generally, it must be submitted within 90 days of the incident. An unreasonable delay may result in the claim being denied. An Article 139 claim is an administrative action and is independent of any other criminal action against a soldier. There is no reason to delay filing or processing the Article 139 claim, even if criminal charges are pending.

In addition, Article 139 claims can be made for personal property or real property damage. Bodily injuries are not payable under Article 139. Contract disputes, such as arguments over a Family Childcare contract or the sale of a POV, are also generally outside the scope of Article 139.

Each claim is different; this summary provides general information only. The procedures and requirements for Article 139 Claims are found in AR 27-20, Chapter 9. For more information, please contact the Camp Zama Claims Office.

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Article 139 Claims is distributed by the Camp Zama Claims Office, located in Building 101, Room CE 209. Our office hours are 0830 to 1630 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, our hours are 0830 to 1200. You may call for an appointment at DSN 262-4698/commercial 046-407-4698.