



THE NUGGET

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PACIFIC REGION CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS
CENTER, FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Patricia Pearson, Director

2001 – A Year For Change and Renewal

The Pacific Region has started off the year 2001 postured for change and new challenges. The new administration, hiring freezes and thaws, Commercial Activities, implementation of new personnel processes, advances in technology, personnel changes and opportunities for growth have set the tone and direction for the year. In January 01, the Pacific Region CPOC developed a new strategic plan and updated its mission and vision statements for the next few years.

Mission Statement: Pacific CPOC, in partnership with the CPACs, leading the way in providing quality civilian personnel services for our customers in support of the Army Mission.

Vision Statement: A region of excellence reaching Pacific wide to provide exceptional customer care through innovative products and services for our technically advancing work force.

This edition of the Nugget contains a wealth of information about employee benefits and the new way benefits will be handled from now on through the Army Benefits Center – Civilian. This is an important change that affects every civilian in our Region. I encourage you to share the Nugget information with your colleagues.

"A capacity to change is indispensable. Equally indispensable is the capacity to hold fast to that which is good."

-- John Foster Dulles (1888-1959)

ARMY BENEFITS CENTER – CIVILIAN IS HERE

Benefit-related issues for Federal civilian employees serviced by the Pacific Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) are now administered by the Army Benefits Center (ABC) located at the Southwest Civilian Personnel Operations Center, Fort Riley, KS. The Army Benefits Center for Civilians, or ABC-C, provides automated services for retirement, life insurance, health benefits, survivor benefits and the Thrift Savings Plan to more than 180,000 appropriated-fund civilian employees working at Army installations and activities throughout the United States. The CPOC will furnish the CPACs with the implementation date, videos and brochures to facilitate this transfer of function.

As of 11 March 2001, civilian employees will no longer have to complete the hard copy election forms to change their health benefits, thrift savings or life insurance. Instead, they will contact ABC-C by calling the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) at 1-877-ARMY CTR (1-877-276-9287), or by accessing the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS), a customized Web application, at <http://www/abc.army.mil> to make a change. For TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) assistance, employees can call the toll-free number 1-877-ARMY TDD (1-877-276-9833). OCONUS employees will use the toll-free number specified for their area. For Japan and Okinawa, the toll free number is: 00531-1-20378 then dial 1-877-ARMYCTR (1-877-276-9287).

Both systems are designed to guide employees through their benefit and entitlement needs. Employees may use either system from any location 21 hours a day, 7 days a week to access information

and process transactions. Those needing assistance can transfer to one of the benefit counselors via the telephone system, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central time. Benefits Counselors can walk employees through any troubles they may encounter. For faster service, customers are urged to call before 10 a.m., or after 2 p.m. Central time.

ABC-C replaces the face-to-face benefits counseling formerly offered by the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers. The system allows employees to access general and personal information, and process benefits transactions such as retirement. Retirees who have questions regarding their retirement checks can call OPM at the toll-free number 1-888-767-6738, which connects them to an automatic answering system at the Retirement Information Office. To use the automated features, retirees will need their retirement claim number and personal identification (PIN) number for OPM. Customer Service Specialists are available from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Once an employee decides to retire, they can contact a benefits counselor from the ABC-C to receive personal voice-to-voice retirement counseling. The employee will then complete the retirement forms down-loaded from the ABC-C website, and mail the package to the Army Benefits Center 90-120 days prior to retirement. The Center processes retirement packages and forwards them to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) no later than 10 workdays prior to employee's effective retirement date, provided they are received at ABC-C more than 60 days in advance of the employee's retirement date. Retirement packages received at the Center less than 60 days prior to or after the effective retirement date will be processed and forwarded to DFAS as soon as possible to prevent delays in receipt of annuity payments.

Employees planning to retire should contact ABC-C, via the Web or toll-free number, six to nine months prior to their retirement to ensure they fully understand the information requested on the forms. The biggest delay in processing retirement packages is that forms are not completely filled out and additional or missing information must be requested from the employee. Personnel need to be sure to answer all questions completely. Anyone having questions regarding retirement needs to call ABC-C and talk to a benefits counselor before mailing their package.

Retirement estimates will be completed for customers who are submitting a retirement package and for customers who are within one year of retirement and who have a complicated service history. The Center asks all others to use the telephone or Web systems'

retirement estimator.

The Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) allows customers to access the automatic system through a touch-tone telephone, and the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) allows customers to access the system via the Internet.

Employees will find that the ABC-C streamlines the benefits and entitlements function, eliminates manual processes, and provides better and more convenient services. Those using the EBIS to make elections electronically will find it offers a fast, convenient and easy-to-use application with features not available through the call center.

When contacting ABC-C through the IVRS from a touch-tone telephone, you will be prompted to enter your Social Security Number and your personal identification number (PIN). Initially, the PIN will be a four-digit number equivalent to an employee's month and year of birth (MMYY). For security purposes, once the system is accessed, an employee must change his/her PIN to a six-digit number of his/her choice. The use of one's SSN and PIN constitutes an electronic signature and should be safeguarded. This PIN can be used in either the IVRS or EBIS.

When contacting ABC-C through the EBIS, you must go to the website www.abc.army.mil on the Internet, which will take you to the Center's home page. Before you can conduct personal transactions or view benefit and entitlement information, you must establish a Point of Entry (POE) account, which enhances the security of personal data. To do so, click on "EBIS." Customers will create user identification and an eight-character password to get into the EBIS. Once account information is established, users can enter any of the five benefits sections - retirement, health, thrift savings, life insurance or survivor benefits.

Employees will find the instructions on creating the POE account on the individual screens as they move through the process. They will need certain personal information when navigating through the screens, but the information is readily available on their latest SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) or Leave and Earnings Statement. A major advantage to using the EBIS is the ability to easily navigate to the different programs, receive more detailed information, and process the same transactions as over the telephone.

Take Time to Learn your ABC's.....

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN NEW FUNDS

Beginning May 2001, all TSP participants will be able to invest in two new funds: the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund. Once these Funds become available in May, you will be able to change the way your payroll contributions are invested in all five TSP funds at any time, instead of only during a TSP open season. (However, interfund transfers, which change the way the existing balance in your account is invested, will still occur monthly because accounts will remain monthly valued). You will be able to allocate your payroll contributions and make interfund transfers using the TSP Web Site or the ThriftLine – or by mailing to the TSP Service Office, the new Investment Allocation form (TSP-50), which will be available in May.

The new funds will give you the opportunity to diversify your overall investment in the TSP more broadly. You will still be able to invest in the C Fund, the stock fund that tracks the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) index of large companies traded in U.S. stock markets. However, you will also effectively be able to expand your investments to U.S. companies outside the S&P 500. The S Fund will closely track the Wilshire 4500 index, which consists of stocks of medium and small U.S. companies (i.e., Amazon.com, Inc., Cox Communications, Inc., VeriSign, Inc.). The I Fund will closely track the EAFE index, which comprises stocks of companies based in Europe, Australia, and the Far East that are large relative to the size of the stock markets of their countries and industries (i.e., Lufthansa AG, Royal Dutch Petroleum Co., and Toyota Motor Corp.).

Earnings in the S and I Funds, like earnings in the C Fund, will be based on market fluctuations and on dividends paid. However, the S and I Funds, while potential vehicles for strong earnings over the long term, will carry more risk than the C Fund. This is because, in the case of the S Fund, the stocks of smaller companies tend to react more strongly to changes in the economy than those of larger firms, and in the case of the I Fund, the value of overseas investments is affected by changes in the value of the foreign currencies in which they are denominated relative to the U.S. dollar.

More information related to these new funds will be updated on the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov prior to May 2001. You can also find information about the EAFE index in the Foreign Markets area on section C of The Wall Street Journal under "EAFE MSCI" in the table called Morgan Stanley Indexes or on the website at www.msdata.com.

TSP CONTRIBUTIONS TO RISE

The percentage of salary investment limits in the Thrift Savings Plan will rise although a dollar cap still will apply under terms of the budget package enacted just before Congress adjourned for the year. The measure raises the maximum amounts that can be deducted from employee salaries each pay period effective with the TSP open season that begins May 15, 2001, to 11 percent for those under the FERS retirement system and 6 percent for those under the CSRS system, up from the current 10 and 5 percent limits, respectively. Effective with the open season beginning November 15, 2001, the percentage limits will rise by another point, to 12 percent for FERS and 7 percent for CSRS.

Under the measure, the TSP investment limit rises by 1 percentage point at the start of each fiscal year until it will reach 15 percent for FERS and 10 percent for CSRS in fiscal year 2005. Effective in fiscal year 2006, the percentage limits will be abolished. Many federal employees, along with some in Congress, have argued for years that the percentage limits were unfair and worked against the purpose of the program, which is to encourage individuals to save for their own retirement. The gradual implementation schedule was created to overcome objections to the loss in tax revenue that will result from employees making higher contributions, which are made with pre-tax money.

The change does not lift the IRS-imposed dollar maximums that apply to all retirement savings programs like the TSP. That dollar cap will be \$10,500 in 2001. The dollar cap currently is important only to highly paid FERS employees (those earning \$105,000 or more) but as the investment percentage limits rise, it will come into play for more employees. Employees may put in no more than the dollar cap during any calendar year; for FERS employees who hit the cap before the end of the year, agency matching contributions shut off.

The measure makes no change in the TSP's government contributions rules. CSRS employees will continue to get zero government contributions. FERS employees will continue to get an automatic 1 percent of salary contribution, dollar-for-dollar matches on the first 3 percent of salary they invest, 50 cents-on-the-dollar matches on the next two percent of salary they invest and no contributions on any investments above 5 percent.

TSP ELECTION OPPORTUNITY

Active duty military personnel will be eligible to enroll in the TSP program under legislation recently passed before Congress adjourned for the year. They will have the same investment fund opportunities but are not eligible for the government matching contributions that FERS employees receive.

FEHB COVERAGE WAIVER POLICY UPDATED

The Office of Personnel Management has updated its policy on waivers in buyout situations of the general requirement that FEHB coverage can only be continued into retirement by those continuously enrolled in the program in their last five years of employment preceding retirement or from their earliest opportunity to enroll, if less. OPM noted that while there no longer is a government-wide buyout program in effect, individual agencies continue to get such authority through separate legislation. Under the updated policy, employees in agencies that have or get buyout authority will get waivers from the general coverage requirement if they have been covered under the FEHB continuously since October 1, 1996 or the beginning date of an agency's latest buyout authority, whichever is later. For DoD, the beginning date would be October 30, 2000, based on the passage of Public Law 106-398.

To qualify for the automatic waiver of the participation requirement, employees must retire during the agency's buyout period and: (1) receive a buyout under that authority; or (2) take early optional retirement (VERA) as a result of early-out authority in the agency, or (3) take a discontinued service retirement (DSR) based on an involuntary separation due to RIF, directed reassignment, reclassification to a lower grade, or abolishment of position. Employees who do not qualify for such pre-approved waivers may request a waiver from OPM, which will consider each case on its merits.

FEHB MANDATORY COVERAGE

The Office of Personnel Management has issued guidance on the recently enacted legislation (Public Law 106-394) that requires mandatory self and family coverage for FEHB-eligible employees who do not comply with a court or administrative order to provide health benefits for their children. An employee subject

to such an order must enroll in self and family coverage in a plan that provides full benefits to his/her child(ren) in the area where they live or provide documentation that he/she has other health coverage for the children. If the employee does not enroll in an appropriate health plan or provide documentation of other coverage for the children, the agency must enroll the employee for self and family coverage in the standard option of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. This type of mandatory coverage has been in effect for several years in the private sector but until now has not applied to federal employees.

FEGLI CHANGE

Accidental death and dismemberment benefits are no longer payable for a death or loss of limb caused by the insured driving while intoxicated as defined by the jurisdiction in which the insured was driving. This change was effective November 1, 2000.

RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS ROLLED BACK

Public Law 106-346, effective October 23, 2000, amends the Federal civil service retirement law to reduce the scheduled rate of retirement contributions. After December 31, 2000, the required retirement contribution by Federal employees participating in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) will be set at 7 percent, and for participants covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), 0.80 percent. It reduces similarly the required percentage contribution for Members of Congress, Congressional employees, law enforcement and firefighting personnel, certain judges and magistrates, Capitol Police and nuclear materials couriers. The contribution rates were scheduled to be 7.5 percent for CSRS and 1.3 percent for FERS for calendar years 2001 and 2002.

FEDERAL ERRONEOUS RETIREMENT COVERAGE CORRECTIONS ACT (FERCCA)

Title II of Public Law 106-265, passed September 19, 2000, will give many employees and annuitants placed in the wrong retirement system an opportunity to choose between the Federal Employees Retirement System and the offset provisions of the Civil Service Retirement System. This law affects employees who may have been placed in the wrong retirement system and remained in the wrong system for three years after December 31, 1986, or employees who were

automatically placed in FERS and can elect to remain in FERS. OPM is in the process of establishing a panel to review these cases. If you feel that an error has occurred in your retirement coverage, you can furnish information directly to OPM via their website at www.opm.gov/benefits/corrections/index.htm. You can also notify your local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) who will furnish this information to the Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC). Your Official Personnel Folder will be evaluated and if a FERCCA error has occurred, this information will be furnished to OPM for resolution. The POC is Marilyn Seneviratne, Benefits Administrator, CPOC.

Survivor Benefits

Do you know what your loved ones are entitled to in the event of your death? If you do, have you passed this information on to them?

Unfortunately, death is not something we want to plan for, or think about, let alone talk about. But please, be proactive - check into what benefits your surviving spouse would be entitled to. A good web site that provides some valuable information is located at www.opm.gov. For example, there are three very good pamphlets on the web site - www.opm.gov/retire/html/library/index.html.

RI 25-26 CSRS Information for Survivor Annuitants
 RI 25-27 CSRS Survivor Benefits for Children
 SF 3114 Applying for Death Benefits under FERS.

Real Case Scenarios:

1. Employee dies leaving a surviving spouse; but when the counselor reviews the Official Personnel Folder (OPF) for beneficiary forms, the only beneficiary form on file for Federal Employees' Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) is a beneficiary form from 1970 naming a former spouse as the only beneficiary. Unfortunately, the counselor then has the difficult task of informing the current spouse that he/she is not the beneficiary of the spouse's life insurance proceeds.

2. Employee dies, but during his years of service he had transferred from the CSRS retirement system to the FERS retirement system. But the designation of beneficiary on file is the SF 2808, which is no longer valid since the employee died while covered under the FERS retirement system and the SF-2808 is for the CSRS retirement system. Lump sum payment of contributions then must be paid out according to the legal "order of precedence" which may not have been the intent of the deceased.

3. Employee dies and the surviving spouse has no funds to pay his/her monthly expenses until the

monthly survivor death benefits begin, which can take some time.

4. A single employee dies with valid beneficiary forms on file, but leaves all benefits to a minor child. No thought is given to funeral expenses which typically average about \$6000, so the next of kin must determine how the funeral expenses will be paid. The rules on the use of children's benefits are very limited and this must be considered.

Tips to prevent the above scenarios:

Employees need to give some consideration to keeping at least a six month ready cash reserve on hand for surviving spouses in case of death. Adjudication of death benefit claim forms do take time to process and many spouses are left with undue financial strain at a very stressful time. Money may well be tied up in stocks, bonds and other investments, but may not be readily available to survivors for funeral expenses and day-to-day living expenses, etc.

Make sure those individuals you want as designated beneficiaries are given a copy of the appropriate beneficiary form. There have been cases where a beneficiary form did not get filed in the OPF or not timely filed.

Review your OPF annually; especially if a life event has happened that might affect whom you want to be named as your designated beneficiary.

Important!! If you have a potential post-56 military deposit, check into whether it would be beneficial to pay it to increase an annuity. Don't leave this task to a grieving spouse.

Below is a list of the applicable beneficiary forms.

FORM #	NAME OF FORM
SF 2808	CSRS-Designation of Beneficiary
SF 3102	FERS-Designation of Beneficiary
SF 2823	Designation of Beneficiary - Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program
SF 1152	Designation of Beneficiary - Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee
TSP-3	TSP - Designation of Beneficiary

A reminder that a beneficiary form is only needed if you do not want the different benefits paid out according to the legal "order of precedence". "Order of precedence" is as follows:

Designated Beneficiary
Spouse
Child/Children in Equal Shares
Parents
Executor/Administrator of Estate
Next of Kin

(From ABC-C, Trailblazer SW CPOC Newsletter)

Performance Plans

Supervisors have a responsibility of ensuring that all of their employees have a performance work plan, established no later than 30 days after employee's assignment to the position or the beginning of a new rating period. A performance plan must be recorded on DA Form 7223-1 (Counseling Checklist in the Base System) or DA Form 7222-1 (Support Form in the Senior System). The plan consists of objectives/responsibilities (specific duties of the job) and standards (how the supervisor is going to measure how well the employee performs those objectives/responsibilities). Objectives/responsibilities may be changed or modified during the rating period.

It is vital that supervisors know what their employees' duties and responsibilities are, and it is equally important the employees know what they must do to attain the "Success" level and what is expected of them. Employees should be encouraged to participate in the development of their work plan, however, the final determination of objectives/responsibilities and standards rests with the supervisor/rater. During the initial discussion of the work plan, the rater and employee should discuss the Army values and ethics and how they relate to the employee.

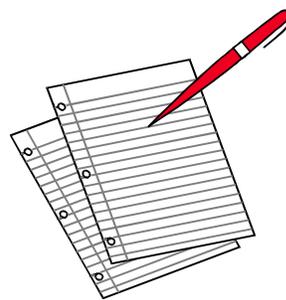
The work plan must be reviewed and approved by the rater before it can be implemented. In some instances, senior rater approval is also required. Performance plans become effective on the date they are signed/initialed by the rater (and the senior rater, when one is used). Therefore, it is important for the responsible official to initial and date the performance plan to indicate his/her approval. The sequence for initialing the counseling checklist/support form is as follows: the ratee, the rater, the intermediate rater (if used), and the senior rater (if used).

Raters must discuss work plans with their employees and ensure they initial the final plan. Discussions

should take place within 30 days after assignment into the position, at the beginning of the annual rating period, at the end of the annual rating period, and periodically in between - a semi annual basis is required, but more often is recommended. Record such discussions on the Support Form (DA Form 7222-1) or the Counseling Checklist (DA Form 7223-1). The midpoint discussion needs to be documented by initial on the performance plan.

Each year the work plan is reviewed for currency and re-certified by the rater, the senior rater (if used), and the employee.

The performance plan form must be attached to the appraisal form when the appraisal is processed through the rating chain to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.



"Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tell 'em, 'Certainly, I can!' Then get busy and find out how to do it."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

Who Does What in the Classification Appeal Process?

The Office of Personnel Management sets government-wide classification policy. It also develops and issues position classification and job grading standards and adjudicates classification or job grading appeals filed by current Federal employees or their designated representatives. A decision from OPM is the final administrative decision on an appeal.

Federal agencies have authority and responsibility under section 5107 of title 5, United States Code, to classify positions consistent with position classification and job grading standards issued by the Office of Personnel Management. To determine the proper occupational series, title, grade, and pay plan of a specific position, an agency evaluates the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of a position against the appropriate standards. Thus, similar or like positions throughout the Federal workforce should be classified in a consistent manner, since they are evaluated against the same standards rather than through position-to-position comparisons. Agencies are required to grade positions according to the duties required by the position; that is, positions are graded based on the content of the work and not on the employee's qualifications.

WHAT MAY BE APPEALED AND WHAT MAY NOT BE APPEALED

Only a current Federal employee may appeal the classification of his or her position. The employee may only appeal the classification of his or her current, official position.

What may be appealed:

- the grade of your position;
- the occupational series of your position;
- sometimes the title of your position; and
- the pay system of your position (that is, you may seek to have your General Schedule (GS) position changed to the Federal Wage System (FWS) or your Federal Wage System position changed to the General Schedule).

What may not be appealed:

- the content or accuracy of your official position description;
- the accuracy of a classification standard;
- an agency's proposed classification decision;
- the classification of a position to which you are not officially assigned; or
- the classification of a position to which you are detailed or temporarily promoted for a period of less than two years.

What You Should Do Before You Appeal

Before filing an appeal, you should make sure that your position description identifies the major duties you are assigned and perform. Because management is responsible for assigning duties to your position and including them in your current position description, and classifying the position accordingly, usually OPM will not accept an appeal until your agency has fulfilled this responsibility.

If the position description is significantly inaccurate, you should try to resolve the problem by discussing it with your supervisor and perhaps a representative of your local CPAC. If you are unable to resolve the problem at this level, you should use your local negotiated or administrative grievance procedures. If you are unable to obtain an accurate position description through the grievance procedure, OPM may accept your appeal and determine the proper classification based on the duties management assigns and you perform.

Information That Should Be Included in a Classification Appeal

When appealing the classification of your position, it is best to start with your local CPAC. A staff member there will describe the appeal procedures to you and will help you initiate the appeal process.

You may have a representative (designated in writing) help you prepare and submit your appeal case, but the representative cannot be someone with management or classification authority over your position.

- If you are a current General Schedule employee, you may appeal at any time to your agency or directly to the Office of Personnel Management but not both at the same time. Another option available to you as a General Schedule employee is to make your classification appeal to the Office of Personnel Management through your agency. Your agency must act on your appeal within 60 calendar days or forward it to the Office of Personnel Management for action. If your agency's decision on your appeal is not in your favor, your appeal is automatically forwarded to the Office of Personnel Management. Generally, you should first seek an appeal decision from your agency. If you appeal to your agency and its decision is unfavorable, you can still appeal to OPM. However, if you appeal first to OPM and receive an unfavorable decision, you cannot then appeal to your agency.
- If you are a current Federal Wage System

employee, you must first appeal to your agency. Then, if you are dissatisfied with your agency's decision, you may appeal to the Office of Personnel Management. Your appeal to the Office of Personnel Management must be filed within 15 calendar days of the date you receive your agency's decision. You must tell OPM which specific part of your agency's decision you disagree with and why.

Classification appeals can not be submitted electronically to OPM.

If you decide to submit a classification appeal, it should contain the following information in writing:

- your name, mailing address, and commercial office telephone number;
- the present classification of your position and the requested classification;
- the name of the department or agency and the office in which you work;
- the city where you are employed and the installation's mailing address;
- a copy of your official position description and either a statement affirming that it is accurate or a detailed explanation of the inaccuracies and an explanation of the efforts made to correct the position description;
- any additional information about the position that will aid in understanding it; and
- arguments supporting the requested classification by referencing the appropriate classification standards.

Your appeal will be cancelled if you fail to provide requested information in a timely way, if you leave the position under appeal, or if you request it.

Classification Appeals, Retroactive Effective Dates, and Back Pay

The effective date of a classification appeal decision can be retroactive only if CORRECTS a classification action that resulted in an actual decrease in pay. In order for the decision to be made retroactive, the employee must appeal the classification to either the agency or the Office of Personnel Management, but not both at the same time, within 15 calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification action.

Retroactivity may be based only on duties and responsibilities existing at the time of demotion and cannot be based on duties and responsibilities assigned later.

Additional Information

If you have specific questions or need more information on making a classification appeal, contact your local CPAC. The regulatory requirements for making an appeal request can be found in title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR). Part 511, subpart F, covers General Schedule positions, and part 532, subpart G, covers Federal Wage System jobs. Your local CPAC should have title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, or be able to locate it for you.

Emergency Essential (E-E) DoD US Civilian Employees

Some civilian positions contain highly specialized duties that must continue to be performed during crisis situations or are required for direct support to combat operations. Military replacements may not be readily available for continued performance of these functions. These positions are deemed critical to accomplishment of the military mission due to a military crisis and shall be designated as "Emergency-Essential" and are therefore subject to DoD Directive 1404.10.

Incumbents of E-E positions are subject to the following conditions of employment.

- All individuals occupying E-E positions must be exempted from recall to the military Reserves or recall to active duty for retired military. A person with military recall status (i.e., Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, or military retiree) is subject to mobilization. Therefore, if individuals with a military recall status are selected for E-E positions, their non-availability for military mobilization shall be reported promptly to the cognizant military personnel center so that they may be removed from a military recall status.
- E-E employees are required to sign an agreement (DD Form 2365) to perform the duties of the E-E position during a crisis situation until relieved by proper authority. Those employees who decline to sign the agreement should be detailed or reassigned to non-E-E positions and an E-E alternate civilian employee shall be identified. If the E-E position is overseas and the employee has not been reassigned out of the position by the end of the tour, the employee may not be extended or given a new tour, unless it is for a non-E-E position.
- E-E employees shall be provided protective equipment, work related training, law of war training, and training in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (Chapter 47 of 10 U.S.C.). (It is

not a violation of the law of war for an E-E employee to wear a uniform or to carry a weapon for personal defense while accompanying a military force.) Civilian employees may be issued a weapon for personal defense upon the request of the employee, and approved by the component commander, theater commander, or other authorized official.

- E-E civilian employees are responsible for ensuring that an adequate family care plan is in place at all times.

The specific crisis situation duties and responsibilities and physical requirements of each E-E position must be identified and documented to ensure that E-E employees know what is expected of them. Documentation can be annotation of E-E duties in existing peacetime position descriptions; brief statements of crisis situation duties attached to position descriptions if materially different than peacetime duties; or separate E-E position descriptions.

A statement shall be included in the position description of each E-E identified position. Example: "This position is emergency-essential (E-E). In the event of a crisis situation, the incumbent, or designated alternate, must continue to perform the E-E duties until relieved by proper authority. The incumbent or the designated alternate, may be required to take part in readiness exercises. This position cannot be vacated during a national emergency or mobilization without seriously impairing the capability of the organization to function effectively; therefore, the position is designated "key," which requires the incumbent, or designated alternate, to be screened from military recall status."

All vacant E-E positions shall be filled only by qualified persons who sign the E-E position agreement. Qualifications shall include physical and medical standards established in -theater by the employing activity following the criteria in the "Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures" (FPM Supplements 335-1 and 339-31). Any staffing system (manual or automated) used to identify candidates for E-E positions must incorporate a means to alert candidates to the E-E requirements of the vacant positions. At a minimum, they must know that selection for an E-E vacant position is contingent on signing an agreement to continue to perform the duties of the position subsequent to the onset of a crisis situation until relieved by proper authority, that they are required to be made exempt from military Reserved and/or retired recall, and that if they are accompanied by their dependents overseas, the dependents shall be

evacuated from the crisis zone with the same priority as family members of military personnel.

Decisions Issued for USAG-HI Logistics Operations

A four-year Commercial Activities study has been completed for the USAG-Hawaii, Directorate of Logistics. The study looked at how much the Army pays its civilian Directorate of Logistics employees to perform such functions as driving buses, maintenance of equipment, warehousing, and issuing equipment and compared it against how much it would cost to hire a contractor to do the same work. The determination was that the Army would save \$1.4 million over a five-year period by contracting with BAE Systems of Walton Beach, FL.

The initial decision was reversed by the U.S. Army Pacific Administrative Appeals Board. The new comparison showed that the in-house (Army) bid was \$1.3 million lower than the contractors submission.

The Department of the Army is Pleased to Offer "The Work Number for Everyone®"

Beginning December 4, 2000, all requests for employment and salary information were directed to "The Work Number for Everyone®", an automated employment verification service that allows you to have your employment and salary verified within a matter of minutes. This fast, secure service is used for mortgage applications, reference checks, loan applications, and apartment leases. Anything you need that requires proof of employment. It is quick, accurate and best of all its easy.

"The Work Number for Everyone®" will speed up this process by giving you and your verifier access to employment information 24 hours a day 7 days a week. "The Work Number for Everyone®" is a cost effective and environmentally smart way for Department of the Army employees to have their employment verified confidentially.

What are the benefits of this service?

- Faster, more efficient, and more complete responses to employment verification requests
- Increased security of sensitive salary information
- Standardized verification procedures
- An audit trail to insure proper verification procedures
- Longer hours of accessibility to employment verification information
- Dedicated Client Service Center

Detailed brochures will be located at your Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers. You may also visit our website on CPOL. Form the CPOL homepage at

<http://cpol.army.mil> click on "Links" at top of the page; then click on "[Employment Verification Service TALX](#)" for more information, or call 1-800-996-7566 to speak with a Work Number Customer Service Representative.
(Darryll G. Smith/(703) 325-4945 or DSN 221;
E-mail: darryll.smith@asamra.hoffman.army.mil)

RESUMIX Standardization Workshop

Decisions made at the DASA (CPP) Staffing conference held in December 2000 lead to a RESUMIX Standardization Workshop, January 16-19, 2001. The staffing conference identified the need to standardize the RESUMIX process Army-wide and improve the application process throughout DA's ten Civilian Personnel Operations Centers (CPOC).

The RESUMIX Standardization Workshop brought together expert RESUMIX functional users from each of the ten regions. The issues the workgroup reached consensus on were: standardizing the supplemental data requirements, the job kit, referral list format, and SOARS.

So keep your eyes and ears open for a welcoming change to the Department of Army's application processes.

SECTION 808 OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2001 - DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Section 808 of the Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act amends the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) by establishing mandatory academic qualifications for persons assigned to GS-1102 series (all grades) positions and similar military positions within the Department of Defense. These qualifications are a baccalaureate degree from an accredited educational institution authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees **AND** the completion of at least 24 semester credit hours (or equivalent) of study from an accredited institution of higher education in business or business-related disciplines.

These requirements were effective retroactive to October 1, 2000 and apply to appointments, promotions, reassignments, etc., to contracting positions made on or after the October 1, 2000. Personnel who do not meet these requirements, and serving in contracting positions on September 30, 2000, are grand-fathered and are exempt from the new educational requirements.

DoD employees who held a GS-1102 position any time prior to October 1, 2000 (regardless of whether

they were in the GS-1102 series on October 1, 2000) are exempt from the new educational requirements for GS-1102. Finally, GS-1102's outside Department of Defense, applying for DoD positions, must meet the new educational requirements.

OTA UPDATE

Last month the Pacific Region received a software update to the Oracle Training Administration (OTA) module of the Modern System. Upon successful validation of the revised OTA module the Department of the Army gave organizations in the Pacific Region the authority to resume inputting completed civilian training.

As you may recall, we originally implemented this procedure in August 2000. However, DA temporarily suspended training input by the field in October 2000 so that access to personnel information could be limited only to information related to completed training. That revision is now complete and the process to enter the data has even been simplified.

Access to the Modern System OTA module has not changed—meaning that those individuals who physically input the completed training data must still have a user account. Should you need to add or delete a user, please contact HelpDesk@cpocpac.army.mil for further information.

To input completed training, simply:

- Go to the Pacific Region web site at: <http://pacific-cpoc.ak.pac.army.mil/170300/index.htm>
- Click "Training"; then click "Updating Completed Training"

Specific instructions and handy "cheat sheets" (both for new and experienced users) are available. They were recently revised so it is probably a good idea to make a copy for desk-side reference.



Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About **Continuing Education Units (CEUs)**

Many of us have completed formal training or correspondence courses such as those offered by the Graduate School, USDA National Independent Study Center (NISC).

Besides the obvious benefit of gaining new skills, upon completion of the course students usually receive a certificate of completion and may also receive a certain number of CEUs. So just what are CEUs and how do they equate to credits earned from successfully completing a college course? Here are some answers to some common questions about CEUs.

What is the Continuing Education Unit (CEU)?
One Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is defined as 10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.

What is the purpose of the CEU?
The primary purpose of the CEU is to provide a permanent record of the educational accomplishments of an individual who has completed one or more significant non-credit educational experiences.

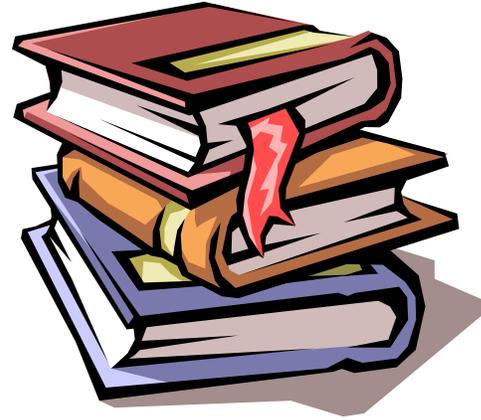
What is the difference between the CEU and college credit?
The CEU is a unit of measure for continuing education and training and is used by professionals for re-licensure or to track the hours of participation in continuing education and training activities, which may be added to one's resume or portfolio.

However, the CEU does not carry the same weight as a college credit. One major difference between the two is that to earn a CEU you don't have to pass a final exam or submit academic term papers. Someone who earns a CEU should not expect a college to automatically award academic credit based on the CEU.

Can participants transfer their CEUs into college credit?
Some colleges and universities have a program that allows them to review an individual's portfolio that includes past work experience as well as participation in continuing education and training activities, measured by CEUs as well as

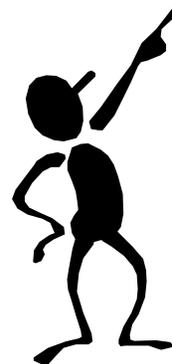
other units of measure. Individuals need to contact the college or university for its particular policy.

The above information was primarily obtained from the web site for the International Association for Continuing Education and Training. You can research additional information by visiting their home page at: <http://www.iacet.org/>.



"We must open the doors of opportunity. But we must also equip our people to walk through those doors."
-- Lyndon B. Johnson

"A mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimension."
~Oliver Wendell Holmes



BUSINESS OBJECTS APPLICATION

Business Objects Application (BOA) is the query tool selected by Department of Army for use with Regional Data Universe and Productivity Data Universe. Data in the Regional and Productivity Universes are extracts from the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (Modern DCPDS). Not all data coded in the Modern DCPDS is loaded into these universes. However, data often used by managers and personnelists are contained in these universes.

This query tool allows access to data through an intuitive, user-friendly interface. Point and click method through a query panel creates non-complex reports instantaneously. A small disadvantage occurs for users that do not understand personnel data. However, with frequent use of the query tool and the universe one can overcome this obstacle quickly. As with any new tool, users have a learning curve to overcome, so hang in there.

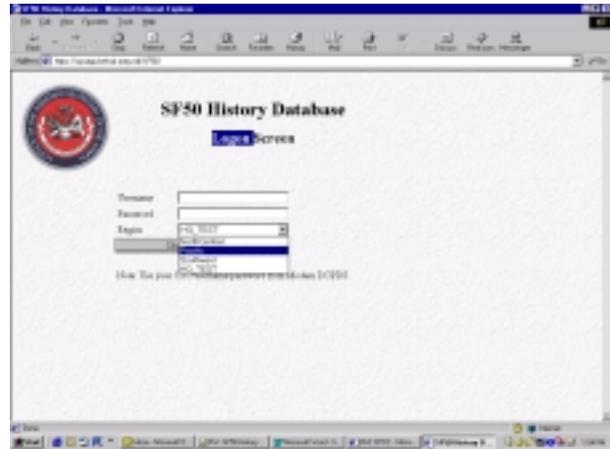
The Regional Data Universe is available for BOA query from users in the CPOC, CPAC, and MACOM CPDs. Managers requiring a report should place a request through the servicing CPAC. The CPOC systems staff will assist the CPAC PSM as needed. The Productivity Data Universe is being reviewed and currently not available for users outside the CPOC.

Business Objects Web Intelligence (WebI) uses your Internet browser and is available to some users in large organizations for a short period of time for evaluation and possible continued use. Currently Tripler Army Medical Center and Hawaii Garrison EEO are trying out the product. Continued use outside of the personnel offices may require purchasing a BO software license (approximately \$400). WebI has query capabilities to include access to developed and published BOA reports. Contact the servicing CPAC for additional information on access to this capability.

SF50 HISTORY DATABASE

The SF50 History Database has been revised to include all current SF50s/Notification of Personnel Actions (NPAs) that are generated by Modern DCPDS. The SF50 History Database is available through the PACIFIC CPOCs Web page under the Manager's Toolkit. http://pacific-cpoc.ak.pac.army.mil/170300/Features/Managers_Toolkit.htm. To access this data users must have a valid CSU Application Username and Password. The direct link to the SF50 History is <https://cpsapp.belvoir.army.mil/SF50/>. Users may

view/print the SF50s in either HTML or PDF formats. Remember the logon screen requires you to input your CSU User ID and Password and also select PACIFIC under Region to enter the database. Also make sure your web browser has been updated to support 128 bit encryption since this is a secure site. Try it you'll like it!



Pacific Region Key Assignment Changes

The Pacific Region's personnel community recently welcomed the selection of Ms. Ann McFadden as the Civilian Personnel Director, Headquarters, U.S. Army Pacific. Prior to her new assignment in Hawaii, Ms. McFadden was the Deputy Director of Civilian Personnel for U.S. Army Europe. She also served as the first Director, Army Center for Civilian Human Resource Management in Lancaster, PA, and as the Chief, Plans and Strategies Division in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) in Washington, D.C. Not only does Ms. McFadden have the experience and education required to meet the demanding challenges of the Pacific Region, she is an exceptional leader who deeply cares about the civilian work force in this region. We know Ann will do great things and are fortunate to have her on board.

The region also recently said good-bye to two long-time leaders in our career program. Mr. Russell Ikeda relocated to Portland, Oregon to assume the Human Resource Director for the Northwest Pacific Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer. Russ was a senior action officer at Headquarters, U.S. Army Pacific and prior to that was the Chief of the Classification Division at the Fort Shafter Civilian Personnel Office. On 14 Jan 01, Mr. Tony Whitehouse reported to his new assignment as Chief, Employment and Compensation Management, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During his 14 years in the Pacific, Tony held several jobs in the Pacific Region CPOC, at Headquarters,

U.S. Army Pacific, and in the Fort Richardson Civilian Personnel Office. We wish Russ and Tony well in their new assignments.

PUTTING MEANING IN THE SEASON.....

It was a pleasure to experience such inspiring events as the Angel Tree Program and the Toys for Tots Program during the holiday season. Arrangements and coordination for the Angel Tree at the Pacific Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center (PRCPOC) were done by Ms. Robin Bush, Staffing Team Leader. In all, the employees of the PRCPOC donated and carefully wrapped eighty-two gifts that were distributed to military dependents, boys and girls, of all ages within Alaska. It was a quite a sight to behold.



Mr. Dick Dooley, Employee Development Specialist, solicited vendors and was able to collect thirty-five toys that were donated to the Marines for the Toys for Tots Program. Thanks to Robin, Dick and their committee members for putting their thoughts into action to the benefit of the community.



From left to right, Robin Bush, Patricia Pearson, Linda Grue, Dick Dooley and the Marines-too fast for us to get their names.

PACIFIC PONDERERS



"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."

-- George S. Patton (1885-1945), American military leader

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." Winston Churchill