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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Patricia Pearson, Director

TAKING STOCK – ARMY CIVILIAN ATTITUDE SURVEY FOR 2001

The Honorable Thomas E. White recently announced the Army Civilian Attitude Survey for 2001. The announcement said, in part, "The Army is conducting a survey of how civilian employees view our Army. Your participation is important. Your views - where we are and where we need to go - will help us improve our business practices and working conditions."

This survey features total online survey administration, an opportunity for all appropriated fund (AF) and non-appropriated fund (NAF) civilians to complete the survey (i.e., a census), and results at sub-command and installation levels.

I encourage you to take advantage of this prime opportunity as an Army Civilian to provide your opinions and assessment of the Army. Please see the article **How to Complete the Army Survey** in this issue of the Nugget for instructions to complete the survey. ([top](#))





NEW POINT OF ENTRY (POE) MODULE NOW IN PLACE TO HELP EMPLOYEES CREATE PERSONAL ARMY BENEFITS CENTER - CIVILIAN (ABC-C) ACCOUNT

(Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md) - The Army Benefit Center –Civilian (ABC-C) web based Employee Benefits Information system (EBIS) now has a new Point of Entry (POE) module in place to make it easier for employees to create their POE account.

As of August 22, 2001, modification of the POE application will allow existing EBIS users to enter their Social Security Number (SSN) to access the EBIS, eliminating the need to create a separate user ID. If passwords are forgotten, users can change passwords on-line without having to call ABC-C or the Help desk. Users can also choose to be notified of successful or unsuccessful attempts of a change to a password. Presently, the email notification feature is not available. Users will be notified when this feature is activated. What didn't change was the eight-day waiting period between password changes, this is still in effect. Also, if your password expires, you will receive a warning notice and you must reestablish your password. The same password cannot be used within a 6-month period. If your password is soon to expire, you will also receive a warning notice that passwords must be changed every 90 days.

Kathy Cole, Chief of the ABC-C stated " These POE changes will allow easier access to EBIS, thus enabling employees to become more self-sufficient in managing their Federal benefits and entitlements."

If you are a new user, you will need to create a POE account. Please follow the guidance in creating your password. Examples are provided on the POE "Create Password" screen in the POE module. Additionally, ensure the correct information (service computation date, civilian pay plan, grade, step, etc.) is entered to identify you as a user of this application. Users may find additional information on the ABC-C home page under the "Announcement" section at www.ABC.army.mil. [\(top\)](#)



Application of the New Information Technology Position Classification Standard

The Office of Personnel Management released for application the new Job Family Standard for Administrative Work in the Information Technology Group, GS-2200. The standard establishes a new Information Technology Management series, GS-2210 that includes all work previously classified in the Computer Specialist series, GS-0334. The standard also covers work in the Telecommunications series, GS-0391 and work in other two-grade interval series where the paramount requirement is knowledge of IT principles, concepts and methods.

DASA (CPP) memorandum dated June 25, 2001, subject: New Job Family Position Classification Standard for Administrative Work in the Information Technology Group, GS-2200, outlined Army-wide procedures for implementation of the IT standard. Implementation is in two phases, Phase I - GS-0301, GS-0391, and all GS-5 through GS-12 positions potentially covered by the new standard, Phase II - GS-13 and higher and all GS-0334 positions. December 9, 2001 is the completion date for Army-wide implementation.

Managers should initiate personnel actions to affect this review as soon as possible. [\(top\)](#)



Pay For Being On-Call Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can employees be compensated for being "On-Call"?

A: Employees cannot currently receive pay for being placed in an on-call status. On-call is considered to be a non-pay and non-duty status. Employees do receive a minimum of two hours of overtime compensation if actually called back to perform work. However, since being on-call is not considered hours of work, employees may not be compensated in the form of either overtime pay or compensatory time off.

Q: What does it mean to be on-call?

A: When designated to be on-call, employees may not have their freedom of movement "unduly restricted". They may, however, be required to remain within a reasonable call-back time or distance, be permitted to carry a pager/beeper, or leave a telephone number at which they may be reached. They may also make arrangements with another qualified employee to perform the call-back work if needed.

Q: How is Standby duty different from on-call?

A: Standby is a scheduled duty status. It is considered hours of work for which employees receive overtime pay or annual premium pay (up to a maximum of 25% of salary depending on the average number of hours of standby duty scheduled per week and number of Sundays scheduled per year).

When in a standby status, employees must remain in an employer-designated duty location in a state of readiness. They must have their activities substantially limited and cannot use the time effectively for their own purposes.

Q: Are these matters negotiable?

A: As a general rule, the procedures and the impact and implementation of decisions to establish on-call requirements and/or standby tours of duty are negotiable areas with recognized unions. However,

managers must comply with appropriate law and government-wide regulations when establishing and negotiating on-call and standby tours of duty procedures.

Q: Isn't it unfair not to compensate for being on-call?

A: Many employees and their unions question the "fairness" of being placed in an on-call status without pay, and want employees to receive "standby pay" for being in an on-call status. Unfortunately, this is not legal under current pay law contained in Title 5 U.S. Code, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations.

Q: Could this change in the future?

A: There is the possibility that on-call pay may be available in the future for a number of medical occupations under Title 38 U.S. Code if the Department of Defense (DOD), Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS), and Department of the Army (DA) take the steps necessary for implementation. Title 38 is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pay law governing VA professional medical occupations. Legislation was passed several years ago to allow OPM/DOD the authority to use some of the VA pay authorities. DOD published regulations in 1996/97 governing the use of these authorities. To date, however, DA, DOD, and DFAS have not pushed for implementation of these pay authorities because of cost factors and because of the requirement to change the DOD civilian automated pay system to accommodate their use.

Q: How is on-call pay different under Title 38?

A: One of the Title 38 pay provisions that could become available provides for on-call pay for defined medical occupations. This on-call pay (computed at 10% of the overtime rate for each hour of on-call) has potential to help reduce dissatisfaction and the number of complaints in Army hospitals regarding the use of on-call rosters. This pay would provide a middle ground between no pay for being on-call and the more expensive overtime/standby duty pay. ([top](#))

Use of Compensatory Time

Taken from a MEDCOM Memorandum

The granting of compensatory time (comp time) to employees for overtime worked is one of the most widely practiced pay authorities in the MEDCOM, or Federal government for that matter. Unfortunately, too many supervisors and employees don't fully understand the regulatory requirements controlling the use of comp time.

The following statutory and regulatory requirements or principles apply to the use of comp time:

- a. Comp time, like overtime pay, is a form of compensation, and should be formally approved and documented.
- b. Comp time may only be granted for "irregular and occasional" overtime work (overtime work that is not part of an employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek or scheduled in advance of the employee's workweek). Employees shall be compensated for every minute of "regular overtime work".
- c. An equivalent amount of comp time may be granted for irregular/occasional or call-back work (minimum of two hours) performed.
- d. Comp time is not intended as compensation for regularly scheduled overtime work (overtime work that management scheduled in advance of the administrative workweek).
- e. Comp time, instead of overtime pay, may be granted at the request of exempt (those covered by Title 5 USC) and non-exempt employees (those covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act).
- f. Exempt employees whose rate of pay exceeds the maximum rate for GS-10 may be required to take comp time instead of overtime pay.
- g. Except as stated in f above, agency managers may not require that employees be compensated for overtime work with comp time. Agencies may not directly or indirectly intimidate, threaten, or coerce employees for the purpose of interfering with their right to request or not to request comp time off in lieu of payment for overtime hours.
- h. There is no provision under Title 5 USC or the Fair Labor Standards Act for granting comp time as compensation for employees being placed on-call. On-call is considered a non-duty status for which comp time is not allowed by current regulations or statutes.
- i. In accordance with current DOD pay policy, comp time may be placed in two accounts. Comp time earned before 8 June 1997, but not used prior to 7 June 1998, was placed in an "old comp time account". Comp time earned after 8 June 1997 is placed in another account, "the current comp time account". The "old" account will be charged only when employees have insufficient "current" comp time to cover the comp

time requested. Comp time in the "current" account must be used by the end 26 pay periods after it is earned. Comp time in the "old" account continues until used or employees separate or transfer to another agency. Unused comp time in both accounts will be paid at the overtime rate at which it was earned when employees separate or transfer.

- j. Comp time, like overtime, should be authorized and approved in advance by management officials with the authority to do so. Employees generally do not "self-schedule" overtime work. However, even if management does not direct, but allows, non-exempt employees to come in early, stay late, or work through lunch, it may have "suffered and permitted" employees to work overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act for which the employee may be entitled to overtime pay, or requested comp time.

- k. Employees are entitled to overtime pay or comp time off for official travel during non-work hours only in limited circumstances. The requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act and Title 5 USC are different. The general rule is that travel is scheduled or administratively controlled by the agency and is not compensable unless it occurs during regular working hours. There are very limited exceptions to this rule under both Title 5 and the Fair Labor Standards Act. The most notable being that employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act are entitled to overtime compensation (pay or requested comp time) for travel on non-duty time that corresponds to their regular working hours (e.g., an employee who works 0800-1630 hours Monday through Friday, travels during those hours on Saturday or Sunday).

We recognize that some managers grant comp time to civilian employees in order to be "fair". However, there are too many Inspector General complaints and cases of employee dissatisfaction over real or perceived abuse of comp time. Some of this is caused by a lack of knowledge on the supervisors' part, and some is caused by the need for scheduling flexibility in a medical or patient care environment when funds for overtime pay are not available. Failure by supervisors and employees to be aware of comp time rules, or to consistently follow them, may result in unnecessary grievances, complaints, allegations of preferential treatment, and to charges of waste, fraud, and abuse against management officials by unhappy employees. These situations are avoidable, and if not prevented, can lead to employee discontent, loss of productivity, and unnecessary costs.

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HOW TO COMPLETE THE ARMY CIVILIAN ATTITUDE SURVEY

The survey is available on a secure website.

Click on <http://cpol.army.mil/survey/dasurvey> or copy this hyperlinked text into your browser to get to the survey. If you get "security alert" messages click the "OK" and/or "YES" buttons and proceed to the survey.

You may take the survey at work, during your regular duty hours. If you do not have access to a computer at work, your supervisor will help you identify one that you can use. It should take 15 to 20 minutes to complete the survey. If you start the survey and cannot complete it, close your browser and start over later. For those of you on leave or temporary duty, take the survey as soon as you return.

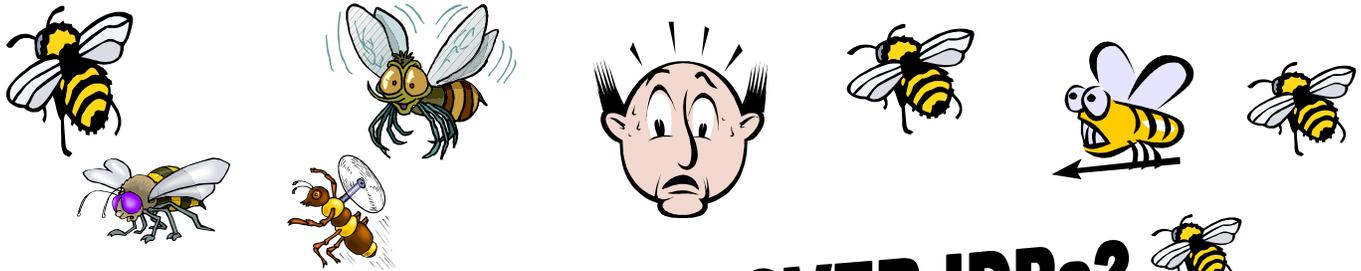
This year, for the first time, we are able to survey the entire civilian workforce on a secure Army website.

This enables us to provide survey results specific to your installation. Your commander will provide you feedback and a plan for the use of survey results.

Your candid input is critical. To protect your privacy, no names are collected and only group results are reported. The survey is voluntary. If you have any questions, address them to the survey office at

ArmySurvey2001@hqda.army.mil.

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WHAT'S THE BUZZ OVER IDPs?

Q. First of all, what's an IDP?

A. IDP is short for Individual Development Plan.

Q. So, what does an IDP do?

A. It is a process that permits both supervisors and employees to identify in writing training and developmental needs to ensure personal/organizational success.

Q. Why is this important for me to know?

A. On 10 July 01, LTG E.P. Smith, USARPAC Commander, issued guidance which (in part) directs leaders to ensure that all civilians have formal IDPs.

Q. Why the increased visibility for IDPs?

A. LTG Smith and his leaders recognize some very serious challenges in the human resource arena, to include the void that is created when senior civilians retire; contracting out concerns; new technologies, and more. The IDPs are an effective way to officially plan and document what training & education is needed.

Q. Is that the only use for an IDP?

A. No. Additionally, the IDP and developmental objectives are connected to (and should be completed in conjunction with) an employee's annual performance appraisal and supporting job standards and elements. IDPs can also indicate planned developmental experiences (such as details, course work, special projects, on-the-job training, career development, etc.).

Q. Where do I go to find out more about the IDP process?

A. There is a wealth of helpful information on the Pacific Region web site (<http://pacific-cpoc.ak.pac.army.mil/220600/index.html>)--click on "Training and Leader Development"; then, click on "DA Leadership Training Tools and Opportunities"—Presto!...you're there) You will find an IDP Plan Guide which explains in detail this process; how to prepare IDPs, how to use them, and what to expect from them. Also, there are several IDP templates (depending if you are a supervisor or non-supervisor) you can download and fill out electronically or manually.

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Federal Employees Health Benefits

The Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) Open Season will be 12 November - 10 December 2001. Effective date for open season change will be 13 January 2002. All employees are reminded to implement any change through the ABC prior to 11 December 2001. ([top](#))

Thrift Savings News

Address Changes - Has your address changed? If you are currently employed and have moved recently, notify your Payroll Liaison immediately so that your agency can update your TSP account record and your November statement can be mailed to your correct address. If you have left Federal service, you must submit Form TSP-9 to the TSP Service Office. You can download Form TSP-9 from the TSP Web site (<http://www.tsp.gov/>), or you can request it from the TSP Service Office at (504) 255-6000.

Financial Hardship In-Service Withdrawals — Financial hardship in-service withdrawals may no longer be transferred to Individual Retirement Accounts or qualified retirement plans. Also, there are changes in the way such withdrawals are taxed. If you are thinking of making a financial hardship in-service withdrawal, be sure to read the information on Form TSP-76 and in the booklet *TSP In-Service Withdrawals*. Both the booklet and the form were revised in July. Previous editions of Form TSP-76 are obsolete and will not be accepted by the TSP. The new versions are now available on the TSP Web site.

Uniformed Services Participation in TSP - Beginning on October 9, 2001, members of the uniformed services will be able to enroll in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) during a special 60-day enrollment period. Members of the uniformed services will participate under most of the same rules and receive the same benefits as civilian TSP participants. However, the contribution rules are different for uniformed service members. Because the TSP record keeper must maintain separate accounts for civilian and uniformed services participants, participants who are both Federal civilian employees and uniformed services members (i.e., reservists) may have two separate accounts. ([top](#))

Mobilization and Deployment of Civilians

It is Army's policy (AR 690-11, Civilian Personnel Mobilization Planning and Management) that civilians will be used to support the military in carrying out their

missions. Installations/Activities mobilization and deployment plans ensure that qualified Army civilian employees are available in adequate numbers and skills to meet worldwide mission requirements during periods of national emergency, mobilization, war, military crisis, or other contingency.

Basic definitions associated with this program:

Key position. A position, located in the United States, that cannot be vacated during a national emergency or mobilization. The position affects the organization's capability to perform effectively the emergency or mobilization mission.

(1) Normally very few positions meet the definition and criteria for key positions. Key positions perform work vital to the national defense or national or community health, safety or welfare. Positions not considered key include clerical and administrative support positions.

(2) Key positions may not be filled by Ready Reservists or military retirees with recall obligations. This precludes positions from being vacated by recall during mobilization. Reservists who must be retained in the position shall be transferred to Standby Reserve or Retired Reserve or discharged. Military retirees subject to recall who are assigned to key positions must be exempted from recall or removed from the position.

b. **Emergency-Essential (EE) position.** A position, located in an overseas area or that would deploy overseas during a crisis situation, required to provide immediate and continuing support for combat operations and/or to support maintenance and repair of combat essential systems.

(1) DOD and Army policy is to limit the number of EE civilian positions to those positions specifically required to ensure the success of combat operations or the availability of combat essential systems.

(2) EE positions cannot be converted to military and may not be filled by Ready Reservists or military retirees with recall obligations. Reservists and retirees retained in EE positions must be removed from military recall status.

(3) Commanders may designate alternate EE employees. These employees will perform EE functions when the designated EE employee is not available.

(4) EE and alternate EE employees are required to sign DD Form 2365, DoD Civilian Employee Overseas Emergency-Essential Position Agreement.

c. Cadre positions. A core of positions activated during mobilization to set up new operations and to train others to perform new or expanded functions. Functions may be performed at an existing installation or at an installation activated during mobilization.

(1) Some cadre positions will meet the criteria and definition of key positions. These positions are designated as key positions on the MOBTDA. Restrictions on fill by reservists and retired military apply.

(2) Cadre employees should be designated based on the specialized skills of the employee, management's knowledge of employee's ability to perform the mobilization assignment, and the individual's willingness to accept the assignment.

(3) Commanders may designate cadre employees on an involuntary basis if no cadre designees or volunteers are willing to serve as cadre members.

d. Essential position. A position whose incumbent performs functions vital to continuity of medical services, public safety, national defense or other crucial operations requiring a presence at the place of duty. (Also called emergency positions, mission-essential positions or critical positions.) Essential positions are those required in crises such as natural disasters or when commanders determine that only essential employees are to report for duty.

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Rights and Benefits of Reservists

The Office of Personnel Management has recently updated its information on the rights and benefits of reservists who are called to active military duty. Executive Order 13223, dated Sept. 14, 2001, authorizes the Department of Defense and the Department of Transportation to respond to the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks of the United States by ordering any unit and any member of the Ready Reserve to active duty for not more than 24 consecutive months.

For those federal civilian employees who perform active military duty, the OPM web site provides very beneficial information on a

wide variety of topics related to pay, benefits, leave, retirement and return to civilian duty. The information can be found at www.opm.gov/oqa/compmemo/2001/2001-09.htm, specifically attachment 1 of that letter. [\(top\)](#)

REMINDER ABOUT BENEFICIARY FORMS

Due to the recent events in New York City and Washington, DC, Federal employees need to be reminded about keeping their designations of beneficiary current. Also, please note that there is a revised SF-2823, FEGLI Designation of Beneficiary form; the date of the revised form is April 2001. You may access these forms electronically by clicking on the Office of Personnel Management's (OPMs) web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms> for the SF 1152, 2808, 2823, and 3102. You can obtain a copy of the TSP 3 from the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Homepage at <http://www.tsp.gov>. Once you complete your forms, you should submit the SF 1152, 2823, & 3102 to your CPAC. You will submit the SF 2808, if applicable, to OPM at the address on the reverse side of the form. The TSP 3 should be sent to the National Finance Center at the address on the reverse side of the form. You should make copies of your beneficiary forms prior to submitting them to the appropriate offices, but when you get your copies back certified by the appropriate personnel, ensure your family members know the location they are filed.

There are also some common mistakes made on completing beneficiary forms so ensure you review them before signing.

1. Failure of the employee to sign the form
2. Failure to properly date the form
3. Failure to have two witnesses who are NOT designated beneficiaries sign the form
4. Erasures or items crossed out on form – this is NOT allowed – if you make a mistake, you should complete a new form
5. Failure to read the instructions for the SF-2823 PRIOR to completing the form. These instructions are extremely important to read and should NOT be skimmed.

Below is a list of the applicable beneficiary forms.

Form #	Name of Form	Dissemination of Forms
SF 2808	CSRS-Designation of Beneficiary	Send both original and copy to the Office of Personnel Management. Copy will be returned to you after certification
SF 3102	FERS-Designation of Beneficiary	Send both original and copy to CPOC. Copy will be returned to you after certification
SF 2823	Designation of Beneficiary - Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program	Send both original and copy to CPOC. Copy will be returned to you after certification
SF 1152	Designation of Beneficiary - Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee	Send both original and copy to CPOC. Copy will be returned to you after certification
TSP-3	TSP - Designation of Beneficiary	Make a copy for your records and send original to the Thrift Savings Plan Service Office

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

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

This statutorily defined order is not superseded by the deceased employee's will. This order of precedence does not include stepchildren. [\(top\)](#)

