



# *CPAC Newsletter*

May 2003



## **Reminders from the Army Benefits Center – ABC-C**

These Reminders may assist you in OPEN SEASON elections and/or changes or maintaining your benefits:

Please be advised that you need to create a Point of Entry (POE) password to log into the employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application.

If you are a new user, you will need to create a Point of Entry (POE) account. Please ensure you are entering the correct information (SCD, civilian pay plan, grade, step, etc) to identify yourself as a user of this application. Additionally, please follow the guidance provided in creating your password. Your password must contain 8-10 characters, cannot match any portion of your SSN, and must contain at least 3 of the following 4 characters: an upper or a lower case letter, or a number, or a special character. Please review the examples that are provided on the POE "Create Password" screen.

If you are an existing user, your SSN will replace the "User-ID" field. The password previously created is valid.

The email notification feature is not yet available when a successful or unsuccessful attempt to recreate or change your password has occurred.

If you have any problems creating your POE, please contact an ABC-C counselor at 1-877-276-9287 or call the Southwest Civilian Operations Center (SWCPOC) Help Desk at DSN 856-2000 or commercial 1-785-239-2000 during normal business hours for assistance. Please click [here](#) for step-by-step instructions on creating POE accounts!

Due to Premium Conversion you can no longer change your health coverage at any time. Please click [here](#) for more information!

## **How Federal Jobs Are Filled**

Many Federal agencies fill their jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job information and application processing. Previously the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintained large standing registers of eligibles

and required applicants to take standardized written tests. In addition, applicants completed a standard application form, the SF-171 to apply for all jobs. Today OPM no longer maintains registers of eligibles and only a few positions require a written test. The SF-171 is obsolete and no longer accepted by most Federal agencies. The new Federal application form is Optional Application for Federal Employment, OF-612. In lieu of submitting an OF-612, applicants may submit a resume. Another change is that job seekers do not need a rating from OPM to enable them to apply for non-clerical vacancies. But, while the process is now very similar to that in private industry, there are still significant differences due to the many laws, executive orders, and regulations that govern Federal employment.

### **Defense Civilian Pay System (DCPS) New Debt Module Employee Impacts**

In an effort to provide the most efficient payroll service possible and to deliver the best value for our customers, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will field a new Debt Module for DFAS civilian payroll effective April 6, 2003.

Payroll debts can occur when time and attendance information is changed for a previous pay period or when retroactive personnel actions are processed. One of the features of the module is the automation of the collection process for these debts. Payroll debts are further classified as Routine Debts and Non-Routine or Full Due Process Debts. A Routine Debt is defined as one having an amount less than \$50.00 or one that is greater than \$50.00 but is identified within four pay periods. A Non-Routine or Full Due Process Debt is defined as a debt greater than \$50.00 and not identified within four pay periods.

The Debt Module is being implemented in phases, the first of which will automate collection of Routine Debts. As a result of the implementation of the Debt Module, you may notice some changes from the current manual practices. Those changes include:

- The collection of Routine Debts will begin in the pay period that the debt is identified. There will not be a delay in starting the collection of newly identified Routine Debts.
- In the pay period that debt collections are started, a remark will appear on the Leave and Earning Statement (LES). The remark will include the amount being collected in the current pay period, the gross amount of the debt, what caused the debt (Allowance, Time & Attendance, or Personal), and a contact phone number including DSN. A sample of the LES message is:

***“\$ 21.00 collected this pay period for \$ 352.07 Time and Attendance correction debt in accordance with Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. POC: Payroll Office Customer Service Desk, (XXX) XXX-XXXX, DSN XXX.”***

- In the DEDUCTION section of the LES, the annotation 'DEBT, ROUTINE' and the debt type code (Q\*) will be displayed along with the current pay period deduction amount and the year-to date amount that has been collected. A sample of this is:

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>CODE</b>	<b>CURRENT</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
<b>DEBT, ROUTINE</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>\$21.00</b>	<b>\$42.00</b>

Collection of Non-Routine or Full Due Process Debts will be automated at a later date. The implementation of the DCPS Debt Module is another effort to provide world-class service to our world-class customers. Hopefully, this information will prevent unnecessary concern on your part should you encounter any of the changes described.

### **Accountability for Deployed Citizens**

By memorandum, DAPE-CP-PPM, May 31, 2002, subject: Implementation of the Army Civilian Tracking System (CIVTRACKS) for Accountability of Deployed Civilians and by DCS G-4 message, 161410Z Jan 03, subject: Army Contractor Personnel Accounting, Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) directed the use of CIVTRACKS for assuring the accountability of civilian s (Department of the Army civilians, contractor personnel, and other civilians deployed in support of military operations (unclassified missions only)). Deployed personnel are responsible for submitting their individual deployment information. Others may submit information on their behalf.

An Army-wide system, CIVTRACKS answers the "who, when, and where" of civilian deployments. Such information may be critical in the event of an emergency.

It is important that CIVTRACKS data be collected on each civilian who deploys in support of a military operation. Current data should be entered now. It should be updated every time there is a change in duty location while deployed, including moves from and returning to home station.

The CIVTRACKS web address is <https://cpol.army.mil/civtracks>. A user ID and password are required for log-on. These, along with brief instructions for CIVTRACKS, are posted to the Collaboration Center on the Army Knowledge On-line (AKO) website. Follow the steps below to subscribe to the "Civilian Personnel" community in the AKO Collaboration Center and open the appropriate file. (If you cannot open the file immediately, wait 24 hours for the system to process your subscription, then try again.)

Steps to follow are:

- 1) Log on to AKO.
- 2) Sign in.
- 3) Click on the "Collaborate" tab.
- 4) Click on "Army Communities" in the left hand window.
- 5) Click on "Personnel"
- 6) If you have not already subscribed, you should see "Civilian Personnel" in the "Unsubscribed Army Communities" section of the right hand window. Simply check it and click "Subscribe" on the tool bar. (There is on-line help available there as well.)
- 7) Click on the "CIVTRACKS Access" file.

Data to be entered into CIVTRACKS include name, social security number, type civilian (e.g., DA civilian), operation name, dates, and duty locations. Submitted data is protected by encryption and a firewall.

CIVTRACKS can provide a number of standard reports reflecting data for individual major Army commands (MACOMs) or other organizations. Further information on reports is in the "CIVTRACKS Access" file. Users of CIVTRACKS may send questions or problems to: [civtracks@asamra.hoffman.army.mil](mailto:civtracks@asamra.hoffman.army.mil)

Readers are asked to pass this information to appropriate personnel in their respective commands and activities.

## **Pay Raise**

Based on an Executive Order signed by President Bush on March 21, General Schedule (GS), Senior Executive (SES), and senior-level and scientific or professional (SL/ST) Federal civilian employees will receive an average 4.1 percent pay raise in 2003, which includes 1 percent for locality-based pay. Initially the 2003 civil service pay raise was capped by the president at 3.1 percent across-the-board and included no locality-based pay increase. The higher pay raise was included in fiscal 2003 appropriations legislation that became law in February 2003. The recently signed Executive Order makes the increase in the pay raise retroactive to the first pay period in January 2003.

## **Disability Retirement**

### **The supervisor will:**

- Direct employees to the ABC-C IVRS or EBIS automated system for retirement counseling and processing services.
- Complete SF 3112B, Supervisor's Statement, and attach at a minimum, the employee's Position Description, Performance Standards, and most recent Performance Appraisal.
- Approve requests for leave or leave without pay when employee has a pending disability application.
- Submit PAR when disability retirement is approved by OPM. Forward PAR through the FPIs to the CPAC without an effective date.
- Complete retirement certificate and initiate award action, if appropriate. Check Regional Application for length of service information for retirement certificate.

### **The employee will:**

- Contact the ABC-C for counseling and to obtain an annuity estimate.
- Obtain required retirement forms list from the ABC-C website or ABC-C Fax Back System.

- Obtain SF 3112 and appropriate immediate retirement form from appropriate source or <http://www.opm.gov/forms/index.htm>
  - Provide SF 3112B to supervisor and SF 3112C to physician for completion
  - When returned, forward completed SF 3112A with supervisor's and physician's statements to CPAC. Retain a copy of all paperwork submitted to the CPAC.

**The CPAC will:**

- Direct employee to the ABC-C IVRS or EBIS automated systems for disability retirement counseling and processing services
- Assist when on-site counseling is necessary (example: employee is in the hospital).
  - Coordinate closely with the ABC-C.
  - Deliver required forms and provide information on behalf of the ABC-C.
- Upon receipt of forms from employee, complete supervisor's statements on SF 3112B and provide copy to employee. Determine if reasonable accommodation is possible and complete the Agency Certification of Reassignment and Accommodation Efforts, SF 3112D. Review Applicant, Supervisor, and Physician Statements, and other pertinent documentation in coordination with the People with Disabilities Program manager. Forward documents to the ABC-C.
- Upon receipt of retirement PAR, determine if employee is on temporary promotion. If the local pay policy requires that an employee on temporary be changed to lower grade (CTLG) prior to separation, request management initiate a CTLG PAR to CPOC with a note that employee is retiring and effective date of retirement. Coordinate retirement PAR to the ABC-C In-box at the CPOC and fax hard copy PAR to the ABC-C at time of OPM approval.
- Provide SF-8, Notice to Federal Employee About Unemployment Compensation.
- Advise management officials of the appropriate recognition and to check Regional Application for length of service for retirement certificate. Process awards package, if applicable.

**The CPOC will:**

- Forward OPF to ABC-C within two workdays of receiving request.
- When applicable, advise ABC-C that a CTLG has been initiated for employee and effective date of CTLG.
- Process award package, if applicable.
- Receive OPF from ABC-C, and prepare for shipment to NPRC.
- Forward TSP withdrawal packet to employee containing the following documents:
  - TSPBK02 – Leaving Federal Service
  - TSPBK05 – TSP Annuities
  - TSP-3 - Designation of Beneficiary
  - TSP-9 - Change of Address for Separated Participants
  - TSP-16 - Exception to Spousal Requirements
  - TSP-17 - Information Relating to Deceased Participant
  - TSP-70 and 70T– Withdrawal Request/Transfer Information

- TSP-536 – Notice-Important Tax Information About Payments From Your Thrift Savings Plan Account

### **Active Military Service**

A position is obligated to an employee on active military service for up to five years. After military service, the individual must request restoration to the position within specified timeframes.

The obligated position may be filled with the understanding of the new employee that the position is obligated to another employee who has the right to occupancy upon restoration to the civilian position from active duty service. When the Civilian Personnel Operating Center receives a request for restoration from the military member, reduction in force (RIF) procedures may be invoked (if there is no available vacancy) in order to place the incumbent who filled the position in the absence of the military member. The employee who is exercising restoration is not included in the RIF if RIF is required.

If at the end of the five year term the military member does not exercise return rights, or has not provided the CPO with documentation of a restoration exception to the five year limitation, the incumbent assigned with obligation notice is notified that the obligation is no longer required. If the position was filled on a temporary basis, action may be taken to fill it on a permanent basis.

### **Personnel Records FAQ's**

**Q.**What goes in my Official Personnel Folder?

**A.**Your Official Personnel Folder contains records the Government needs to make accurate employment decisions throughout your Federal career.

These documents:

- Show your Federal appointment was valid (Examples: the Appointment Affidavit; the Declaration for Federal Employment).
- Verify your military service credit for leave, reduction-in-force, or retirement (Examples: the DD 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; the Military Service Deposit Election).
- Establish your employment history - your grades, occupations and pay (Example: the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action).

- Record your choices under Federal benefits programs (Examples: the Health Benefits Registration Form; the Designation of Beneficiary under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program).

**Q.** If something is not in my Official Personnel Folder, where would it be?

**A.** Agencies keep documents in a number of employment-related files besides the Official Personnel Folder. There are:

- Case files - containing working papers that led to a decision or action, like merit promotion case files and adverse action case files.
- Medical files - containing employment-related medical information, like health unit files and occupational medical records. Once an employee leaves Federal service, any long-term occupational medical records are put in an Employee Medical Folder and sent to the National Personnel Records Center.
- Security files - containing documents used to grant security clearances.
- Performance files - containing information used to evaluate employees' work, like performance plans and appraisals.

These files are generally retained in the agency that created them. .

**Q.** How can I get a copy of my Official Personnel Folder?

**A.** If you're currently a Federal employee, contact your Human Resources Office. If you're no longer working for the Government, write to:

National Personnel Records Center  
Civilian Personnel Records  
111 Winnebago Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126  
FAX: 314-801-9270

**Q.** Who can look at the records in my Official Personnel Folder?

**A.** You. Anyone you designate. Government officials who need to see the records to do their jobs. There are a limited number of special situations where others can see information from your personnel records. These situations are described in routine uses under the Privacy Act System of Records Notice covering the Official Personnel Folder.

**Q.** What should I do if my records are wrong?

**A.** If you disagree with the action that was taken rather than the way it was documented, then it's not a case where the records are wrong. In these cases, you have to file a grievance or appeal within the required time limits. If the records don't document what actually happened, then the records are wrong. If you're still employed, you should contact your Human Resources Office. If you're no longer employed, write to:

Assistant Director for Workforce Information  
U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, NW.  
Washington, DC 20415-6000

Include enough information to:

- Identify the record (your name and social security number, the name and date of the record).
- Explain why you think it's wrong, including any evidence supporting your position.
- Show how you would correct the record.

### **Student Positions**

Just a quick reminder that it's time for management to determine their needs for student positions for the summer months.

Managers will need to notify the Civilian Personnel Office, Irma Grazdan at x3-3344 if they would like a referral to select from. Once a selection is made we will need you to submit your Fill/Recruit RPAs for your summer vacancies, with the name request, 4-6 weeks prior to the proposed effective date. Please do not forget to complete the checklists with the SF 52s.

Please submit RPAs for students you are planning to return to duty at least four weeks before the effective date.

### **Non-Appropriated Fund Positions**

Child & Youth Program Assistant, \$9.24 per hour, Child Development Center  
Lifeguard, \$7.00 – \$8.25 per hour (\$8.25 for WSI – Water Safety Instructors)

