



# Fort Eustis

## Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Bulletin

[www.eustis.army.mil/cpac](http://www.eustis.army.mil/cpac)

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670 Lee Blvd, Fort Eustis, VA 23604-5096



### Political Activity in the Federal Workplace

It's election time again, and time to review the "MAYs and MAY NOTs" for federal employees who may engage in partisan political activity. Under the 1939 Hatch Act, federal employees faced significant restrictions on their ability to participate in political activities. In 1993, Congress amended the Hatch act to permit more political activity by federal employees. The penalties for violating the Hatch Act are very severe, up to and including removal from government service. Therefore, it is very important that employees understand these restrictions. Below is a list of permitted/prohibited activities:

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#### Federal Employees May:

- Be candidates for public offices in nonpartisan elections
- Register and vote as they choose
- Assist in voter registration drives
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Contribute money to political organizations
- Attend political fundraising functions
- Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings
- Join and be an active member of a political party or club
- Sign nominating petitions
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments and municipal ordinances
- Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections
- Make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections
- Distribute campaign literature in partisan elections
- Hold office in political clubs or parties

#### Federal Employees May Not:

- Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election
- Solicit or discourage political activity of anyone with business before their agency
- Solicit or receive political contributions (may be done in certain limited situations by Federal or other employee organizations)
- Be candidates for public office in partisan elections
- Engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, wearing an official uniform, or using a government vehicle
- Wear partisan political buttons on duty

## Voting and Excused Leave



Election time always brings questions concerning granting employee's excused absence to vote. Such excused absence is limited and must be requested and approved in advance of Election Tuesday. Federal employees may be excused to report for work 3 hours after the POLLS OPEN or leave work 3 hours BEFORE the POLLS CLOSE, whichever results in the LESSER amount of TIME OFF. For example, the polls are open from 6:00 a.m. (0600 hours) to 7:00 p.m. (1900 hours). The employee's tour of duty begins at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. The employee has 4 hours (at least 3) BEFORE the POLLS CLOSE to vote after the end of the tour of duty, therefore there is no basis to grant excused leave. Another example would be a tour from 8:00 a.m. (0800 hours) to 5:00 p.m. (1700 hours). The polls are open 2 hours before the beginning of the tour and 2 hours after the end of the tour. The employee could be excused 1 hour to vote, either in the morning or the afternoon, subject to approval by their supervisor. An employee working a compressed work schedule from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. could be excused for 1 hour in the morning to vote since excusing the employee in the morning requires the LESSER amount of TIME OFF.

## Do You Have Excess Use Or Lose Annual Leave?



You may want to consider donating it to another employee who is in need. What better time of the year than during the season of holiday cheer and gifts! If you are interested in donating, contact your HR Liaison within your organization to determine individuals in the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. Complete OPM Form 630-A with the appropriate information and provide it to the Customer Service Representative (CSR) for submission to DFAS. For further information, contact your servicing HR representative in the CPAC.

Leave Year	Leave Year Beginning Date	Leave Year Ending Date	Date for Scheduling "Use or Lose" Annual Leave
2008	January 06, 2008	January 03, 2009	November 22, 2008

## TAPES Reminder

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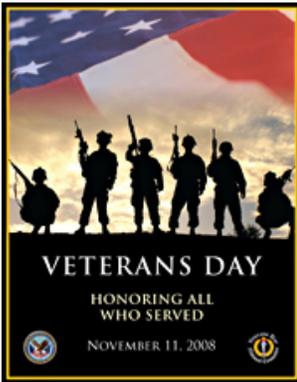
TOTAL ARMY  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION SYSTEM  
(TAPES)

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The GS/WS 9-12 performance appraisal cycle ends 31 October 2008, and evaluation reports are due at the CPAC by 15 December 2008. Only one copy of the DA Form 7222 and DA Form 7222-1 are required to be submitted for the official record. The employee copy and official record copy should not contain any award data. Award nominations should be submitted by making an extra copy of the Evaluation Form, DA Form 7222.

## Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans

Federal law has established special authorities allowing the noncompetitive appointment of eligible veterans. Agencies can, at their discretion, make use of these special authorities; no one is entitled to one of these special appointments. There are 4 special appointing authorities with their own unique requirements; Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans, Disabled Veterans Enrolled In VA Training Programs, and Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA). The information that follows, as well eligibility criteria and other pertinent facts, can also be found in the comprehensive *VetGuide* at the Office of Personnel Management's website: <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.



**The Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)** is a special authority by which agencies can appoint an eligible veteran without competition. The VRA is an excepted appointment to a position that is otherwise in the competitive service. After 2 years of satisfactory service, the veteran is converted to a career-conditional appointment in the competitive service

**30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans** - These veterans may be given a temporary or term appointment (not limited to 60 days or less) to any position for which qualified (there is no grade limitation). After demonstrating satisfactory performance, the veteran may be converted at any time to a career-conditional appointment.

**Disabled Veterans Enrolled In VA Training Programs**- Disabled veterans eligible for training under the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) vocational rehabilitation program may enroll for training or work experience at an agency under the terms of an agreement between the agency and VA. The veteran is not a Federal employee for most purposes while enrolled in the program, but is a beneficiary of the VA.

**Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA)** - This authority permits an agency to appoint an eligible veteran who has applied under an agency merit promotion announcement that is open to candidates outside the agency.

### How Do I Make an Appointment to See a CPAC Representative?



If you are a customer, employee, or a manager and need to see a CPAC representative it is strongly encouraged that you schedule an appointment to ensure your visit to the CPAC is efficient. Visitor's to the CPAC that do not make appointments are sometimes disappointed because the representative they are there to see may not be available because they are not in the office, already have an appointment with them, or may be in a meeting. To ensure you are able to see your representative at the CPAC, call ahead or email to schedule an appointment. Your CPAC representative will be expecting you and may even know your needs before you arrive so they can prepare for your issue and allot the time needed for your visit. To contact a CPAC representative you can access our CPAC Directory on our website at [www.eustis.army.mil/cpac](http://www.eustis.army.mil/cpac).

## Senate Panel Approves 3.9 Percent Civilian Pay Raise

A Senate subcommittee has approved a bill granting civilian federal employees a 3.9 percent pay raise for 2009. This figure is equal to the adjustment that has been authorized by the House for military service members.



The Senate Appropriations Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee voted for the civilian raise as part of the fiscal 2009 financial services spending bill. The adjustment is 1 percentage point higher than the increase the Bush administration proposed in February.

Part of the 3.9 percent civilian pay raise will go toward the locality pay, while the rest will go to an across-the-board increase.

The full Senate committee is expected to consider the pay raise when it takes up the appropriations bill.

## Using Time Off Awards



Time Off awards must be scheduled and used within one year of the approval date. Unless an employee is given a copy of the DA Form 1256 or informed of the date a TOA was approved, the employee has no way of knowing when the one-year count down begins. Supervisors should ensure that employees schedule and use the time off award. The Defense Civilian Pay System (DCPS) automatically forfeits time off awards on the first day of the biweekly pay period in which the one-year anniversary day falls. For example, a time off award approved on 14 December 2005 must be used by 9 December 2006 or be forfeited. The last day of the pay period before the one-year anniversary date is 9 December 2006. The pay period beginning 10 December 2006 includes the anniversary approval date of 14 December. The employee could not use the TOA on 12 December because the award is automatically forfeited on 10 December 2006. There is no provision for restoring time off awards. In addition, a TOA is not transferable outside of Army.

## You Told Us...We Listened...Introducing PAA v3.0 Launching Soon!

The Department of Defense (DoD) will release the latest version of the Performance Appraisal Application (PAA v3.0) soon in time for employees, rating officials and higher level reviewers to begin planning for 2009.

We heard you! PAA v3.0 enhancements include:

- **A new look and feel** that uses tabs to display key tasks in the order they are performed. For example, there are tabs for Plan, Interim Review and Appraisal.
- **Assessment by Job Objective** that allows employees and rating officials to enter up to 2000 characters for each assessment by job objective.
- **Improved copy and paste functionality** that correctly converts most MS Word format characters such as carriage returns and quotes.
- **An improved character counter** that provides a more accurate count of the number of characters entered or pasted.
- **An enhanced Email notification process** that provides employees, rating officials and higher level reviewers status information within the email.
- **Easy and standardized approvals and acknowledgement processes** for establishing plans and conducting Interim Reviews and Appraisals.
- **The ability to copy plans from year to year.**
- **A Track Progress Page** that lets you know where you are in the process.

Stay tuned – we will continue to update you on PAA v3.0.

### Feedback



This bulletin is designed to inform employees and supervisors of new civilian human resources issues and refresh their knowledge of existing policies and procedures. We welcome your [feedback](#); contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist. The bulletin is available on our web page, <http://www.eustis.army.mil/cpac> Request you print and post on Bulletin Boards throughout your organization for those employees who do not have access to our web page.