



Fort Eustis

Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Bulletin

www.eustis.army.mil/cpac

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670 Lee Blvd, Fort Eustis, VA 23604-5096

MY Biz and My Workplace - Logout Procedures



After doing some research into the slow response times in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS), it was found that many users are getting out of the My Biz and/or My Workplace by using the "X" button on the "Window" instead of clicking on the word "Logout" located at the top right hand portion of the screen. Clicking on the "X" does not log you out and the session stays active even though you are no longer doing work in the application.

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So from now on, remember to always select the “**Logout**” command when you are ready to exit My Biz and/or My Workplace particularly after working on the NSPS Performance Appraisal Application. Granted the location of the “Logout” command is not readily accessible (upper right hand corner of the screen) and may take some effort on your part to find, but your efforts will significantly improve the response time in DCPDS by reducing the number of active sessions still logged on to the database but not actually being used. Your cooperation and action in this matter is greatly appreciated.

NSPS - The Performance Appraisal Application (PAA)

The Performance Appraisal Application (PAA) is an electronic support tool which helps employees and supervisors manage performance under NSPS. You can access PAA screens by one of two links: My Biz and My Workplace. Employees use My Biz to manage their own individual information. Rating officials use My Workplace to access performance plans and appraisals for each employee for whom they are responsible. Employees with no rating responsibilities will see only My Biz whereas employees who are also rating officials will see My Biz and My Workplace.

If you would like more information on the Performance Appraisals and the Automation Tools developed to process the Appraisal (Performance Appraisal Application), you can access some very good sources of information including user guides and screen cams for NSPS Tools at http://www.chra.army.mil/NSPS-training/how-to_videos.htm . You may also contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist in the Fort Eustis CPAC.

Employee Assistance Program

Are you aware of the services provided by the Ft Eustis **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**? This program is cost-free to civilian employees and their family members and is designed to help you effectively address and overcome problems such as work and family issues, job stress and alcohol and drug abuse which can adversely affect your performance, reliability, and personal health.



The EAP is staffed by experienced counselors who are available to discuss problems in a confidential, helpful manner. The details of your discussions with the counselor may not be released to anyone without your written consent.

Office of Personnel Management evaluations of these programs indicate that they are highly successful in helping employees.

Remember, your EAP can help you to sort out and address a wide variety of problems, but only if you, the employee, use it. It is located at 2794B Harrison Loop on Fort Eustis. Appointments may be made by calling 878-2924.

New FEHB Rule on Disaster Situations

As a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has redefined “discontinuance of a health plan” to include situations in which a plan becomes incapable of providing services, either on a permanent or temporary basis, because of a disaster. If a disaster occurs, FEHB enrollees are now allowed to change health plans.



Depending on the nature of the disaster, it may not be possible to locate enrollees and notify them of the need to change health plans. So, to prevent loss of coverage, anyone unable to make a change in these circumstances will be transferred automatically to the standard option of the nationwide Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan.

To the extent practical, OPM will work with carriers and agencies to notify affected employees. Additionally, OPM will make general notifications or announcements on its Web site. This change will affect employees, retirees, survivor annuitants, and former spouses in affected regions.

Benefit Information for New Hires About Insurance

Newly hired employees have the option to enroll in the following benefit programs:

- ✓ Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP);
- ✓ Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI);
- ✓ Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSA-FEDS);
- ✓ Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP); and
- ✓ The new Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).



The time limits that apply to enrollment are listed below:

- FEHBP, FSA-FEDS, and FEDVIP allow employees 60 days from the date of hire to enroll. After the initial 60 days, employees must have a qualifying life event such as a change in marital, dependent, or employment status; otherwise, employees may enroll only during an annual open season.
- For FEGLI, enrollment is automatic for basic coverage, and employees may enroll for various forms of optional coverage up to 31 days after the date of hire.
- Employees and their spouses enrolling in FLTCIP within 60 days from the date of hire may use abbreviated underwriting applications. Those who enroll later must submit full underwriting applications.

Pension Protection Act Makes a Number of Enhancements to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

(Taken from CPMS Express, April 07)

In August 2006, Congress enacted legislation that enhanced the protection of pension plans to include the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) as well. Those enhancements are outlined below for your information:

- Previously, when an unmarried TSP participant died, the non-spouse beneficiary would receive their TSP funds in a single lump sum payment and be subject to a 10 percent tax penalty. Under the new provisions, non-spouse beneficiaries can receive TSP funds without the tax penalty if they transfer the funds to an “inherited” Individual Retirement Account (IRA). An “inherited” IRA is an IRA that the non-spouse beneficiary received from another individual. In other words, the non-spouse beneficiary is not the original owner of the IRA.



- In addition, the retirement-savings tax credit available to lower income participants is now a permanent tax credit. Lower income participants receive this credit as an enticement to contribute to TSP. These participants may lower the amount they owe for Federal taxes by up to \$1,000 or \$2,000 if they file a joint return. For more information about this tax credit, visit the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov and click “TSP Features”.

- Another change involves reservists who are called to active duty. They may be exempt from the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty if they meet certain conditions:

- They must make the withdrawal between the beginning date of the order or call to active duty and the close of the active duty period; and
- They must have completed more than 179 days or an indefinite period of active duty service between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2007.

Furthermore, these reservists may be able to repay their TSP funds into an IRA up to 2 years after the military service ends or August 17, 2008, whichever is later.

- The next improvement applies to members of the uniformed services who contribute their tax-exempt money into their TSP account. These individuals may also transfer tax-exempt money from their TSP account into a 403(b) annuity contract if the 403(b) administrator allows this transfer of funds.

- The final change, which will take effect on January 1, 2008, pertains to separating employees who withdraw their TSP funds. They may now transfer these funds into a Roth IRA. This change also applies to employees who take an age-based withdrawal. The Thrift Saving Plan will provide more information once the Internal Revenue Service has published its regulations.

NSPS: Making Progress and Positive Adjustments

(Taken from CPMS Express, April 07)

The first performance appraisal cycle for employees in NSPS Spiral 1.1 showed that employees could successfully work with supervisors and managers to develop meaningful, mission-aligned job objectives; performed work that helped meet the organization's strategic goals; and regularly communicate with supervisors and managers on performance.

The first performance-based payouts were completed in January, and NSPS employees were rewarded based on meaningful distinctions in work performance and significant contributions to the organization's mission.

Several Lessons Learned Workshops were conducted with senior leaders to review progress and chart the way forward. Feedback collected during the workshops identified areas for attention and paved the way for incremental program adjustments, such as:

- **CONVERSION WINDOW:** Organizational leaders requested more flexibility in scheduling NSPS conversion to ensure sufficient time for training and implementation. For instance, NSPS provided a conversion window for Spirals 1.2 and 1.3, versus a single date.

- **ROBUST AUTOMATION:** Leaders offered numerous suggestions for functional improvement of the automated tools that support NSPS.

- **MORE TRAINING:** Employees and supervisors expressed the need for additional training on writing job objectives and self-assessments. NSPS expanded its' training program and recently launched **iSuccess**, a Web-based course to assist employees.

- **MORE GUIDANCE:** Supervisors requested further guidance in the areas of pay setting and compensation management. NSPS developed a pay setting guide and a compensation guide for supervisors and managers.

At the beginning of May, approximately 114,000 civilian employees had been transitioned work under the NSPS pay-for-performance system. The Program Executive Officer (PEO) will continue to collect feedback, identify adjustments that meet organizational and employee needs, and enhance the system.



NSPS - Appeals Court Allows Pentagon to Limit Collective Bargaining

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt bballenstedt@govexec.com May 18, 2007

(Summarized from above titled article)

On May 18, 2007, an appeals court reversed the district court ruling that had struck down the labor relations portions of the DOD's new personnel system. The court said that the law creating the system grants the agency temporary authority to curtail the collective bargaining rights of employees.

The [decision](#), issued by a panel of judges for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, holds that DOD has the authority under a 2004 law to limit the collective bargaining rights of its civilian employees through November 2009. But following that date, they must ensure collective bargaining consistent with the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, unless Congress votes to extend the changes.....

..... The Office of Personnel Management praised the court's decision Friday, arguing that it "confirms the [Defense Department's] direction with important personnel reforms in support of our critical national security mission."

The American Federation of Government Employees, one of the 10 federal labor unions to file the lawsuit, said that the fight over the labor relations rules is "far from over," adding that because of the strong dissent and previous court rulings, a full court review seems appropriate.

The president of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, another of the parties to the lawsuit, said "we will continue to work to put NSPS to rest, no matter how long that takes."

The unions could appeal the decision to the full appeals court, to the Supreme Court or both.

The Department of Defense is evaluating the court's ruling prior to making any decisions on the labor relations rules.

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.

