



Fort Eustis

Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Bulletin

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Voting and Excused Leave
- 1 Civilian Common Access Card (CAC)
- 1 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season
- 2 How Will The 2008 January Pay Increase Affect Spiral 1 Employees Under NSPS?
- 2 Dealing With Employees' Personal and Health Issues
- 3 Political Activity in the Federal Workplace
- 3 Donating Blood and Excused Leave
- 3 Feedback

Voting and Excused Leave

Election time brings questions concerning granting excused absence to vote. Excused absences are limited and must be requested and approved in advance of Election Day. Department of Army 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. Normally, where the polls are open either three hours before or three hours after the employee's regularly scheduled duty hours, no time off is granted. This is the case in most jurisdictions.

For example, the polls are open from 0600 hours to 1900 hours. The employee's tour of duty begins at 0630 and ends at 1500. 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 0800 to 1700. 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.

Lastly, 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. Employees on flexible work schedules can be excused only for those hours that cannot be accommodated by their flexi-time schedule.

Civilian Common Access Card

When you log into My Biz/My Workplace/DCPDS, you will be greeted with a new splash page announcing Common Access Card (CAC) information that will be coming within the next few months. To adhere to DoD IT security policies, the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (including My Biz and My Workplace) will be Common Access Card (CAC) enabled. This means you will need your CAC card and personal identification number (PIN) to access My Biz/My Workplace, IN ADDITION to your user name and password. We are transitioning to a login process where you will need ONLY your CAC and PIN, **but we're not there yet**. Currently, both your CAC/PIN and DCPDS login and password are required to access your account. You will be notified through the Portal on the timelines for transitioning to the CAC only login.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season

The Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season will be held this year from 12 November 2007 through 10 December 2007. During the open season, eligible employees can enroll or make changes to their health benefits. To enroll/change health benefits, employees must access the Army Benefits Center - Civilian website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> or call the toll-free number at 1-877-276-9287.

If you have not used the system in the past few months you will notice that the new entry log in is now your AKO information. Once you log in you will immediately see another login for a pin. If you can not remember your ABC pin after you get into EBIS, you will need to reset that pin as well. This pin will be 6 numeric digits only.

This is also your opportunity to change your Pre-Tax election. If you no longer wish to have your FEHB pre-taxed you can change your election during the open season.

2008 Rates are available at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/08rates/index.asp>.

The effective date of FEHB Open Season Changes is January 5th, 2008. You will see the change reflected in your paycheck on February 1st.

How will the 2008 January Government-wide Pay Increase Affect Spiral 1 Employees under NSPS?

Under the General Schedule, most employees currently receive the January Government-wide Pay Increase (GPI) in two parts: a base salary increase and a locality pay increase. While the final amount of the GPI is still not known, it will be distributed differently under NSPS.

The Department is taking the next step towards a more robust pay-for-performance system to enable the Department to better compensate its employees based on contribution to mission accomplishment. As a result, the GPI for Spiral 1 employees will be distributed as follows:

- ✓ Local market supplements will be the same as the Government-wide increases for locality pay for employees with an acceptable performance rating (rating of record of 2 or higher).
- ✓ 1.25% of the January 2008 GPI (not allocated for locality pay) will be added to pay pools and distributed through the pay pool process based on performance.
- ✓ The remaining portion of the GPI (not allocated for locality pay) will be granted as an increase to base salary for employees with an acceptable performance rating. (Although employees on pay retention are eligible for locality pay increases, they are ineligible for this base salary increase.)

The *minimum* of NSPS pay bands will be adjusted by this remaining portion of the GPI. Additionally, the *maximum* of pay bands will be adjusted by the full amount of the GPI, not including locality pay (pay bands for Physicians and Dentists will be adjusted if the Department of Veterans Affairs makes adjustments).

Spiral 1.0 employees ineligible for a rating of record and performance payout and all Spiral 2.0 employees will receive the equivalent of the full January 2008 GPI.

Dealing With Your Employees' Personal and Health Issues

From time to time, employees have personal or health problems that could affect office operations. There may be times when they need to take leave to deal with certain issues or there may be times when employees can report to work, but need a special accommodation or arrangement to perform their duties. While this can sometimes be disruptive to a manager's ability to effectively meet the mission, he or she must remember to remain sensitive to the employee's needs and to treat each situation on a case by case basis with the intent of making a fair and equitable decision for all those involved.

Usually, employees are not required to provide medical documentation for periods of less than three days. Managers should keep in mind that even though employees are entitled to take sick leave for extended absences, it must relate to a medical condition and after three days the employee is expected and may be required to provide that documentation prior to approval of leave. Managers, however, need to remember that they are not entitled to demand medical documentation that goes beyond the scope of the specific medical issue for which leave is requested. In those cases when an employee can not come to work, the manager should consider how that employee's work can be covered by others in the office or devise and implement options to alleviate the temporary loss of the employee.

In those cases where an employee has a medical condition requiring a reasonable accommodation, managers are entitled to request medical documentation. As in the case of sick leave requests, requested medical documentation can only be related to the disability claimed by the employee. Keep in mind that not every employee will be entitled to a reasonable accommodation. Managers will need to evaluate a variety of factors to decide whether or not an accommodation request should be granted.

When attempting to do the right thing, the manager must keep in mind that there is a delicate balance to maintain when considering employee request against the requirements of the mission. A balance that requires the consideration of management's needs vs the needs of the employee. You are encouraged to consult with the Equal Employment Opportunity and Civilian Human Resource Offices to determine the best ways of meeting employee needs as well as continuing to meet the mission of the organization.



Political Activity in the Federal Workplace

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:

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

Donating Blood and Excused Leave

Excused absence is an administratively authorized absence from duty without loss of pay and without charge to other paid leave. The time spent on excused absence is considered part of an employee's basic workweek. The approving official's discretion in situations involves brief absences. Where absences are for longer than brief periods, excused absence is inappropriate unless the absence is clearly in connection with furthering a function of the Department of the Army.

In addition, the Office of Personnel Management advises limiting approval of excused absence. First, managers should ensure that the law does not specifically prohibit the granting of excused absence. Secondly, the absence should:

1. Relate to the agency's mission;
2. Be officially sponsored or sanctioned by the head of the department or agency;
3. Enhance the employee's professional development; or
4. Be in the agency's best interest.

Employees who donate blood may be granted excused absence to cover travel to and from the donation site, the actual donation of blood, and recovery. This provision does not cover an employee who gives blood for his or her own use or receives compensation for giving blood.

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.

