

The Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight

Employee Handbook

For

US Appropriated Fund Employees



1 March 2004

Introduction	1	<u>Designation of Beneficiary</u>	12
Beginning your employment	2	<u>Details</u>	13
Topics:		<u>Discipline and Adverse Actions</u>	14
<u>Appointment Types</u>	3	<u>Dual Compensation</u>	14
Career and Career Conditional (Competitive Service)		<u>Emergency Data System (EMDS)</u>	15
Family Member Appointments		<u>Emergency Essential</u>	15
Temporary		<u>Equal Employment Opportunity</u>	16
Term		<u>Ethical Conduct</u>	16
Veteran’s Recruitment Appointment (VRA)		<u>Executive Order (EO) 12721</u>	16
Overseas Limited Appointment Authority		<u>Family Members in Your Household</u>	17
<u>Appraisals and Performance Mgmt</u>	5	<u>Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)</u>	17
<u>Awards & Performance Recognition</u>	5	<u>Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)</u>	18
<u>Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST)</u>	5	<u>Flexible Spending Account</u>	21
<u>Career Brief (Data Record)</u>	7	<u>Holidays</u>	22
<u>Career Program</u>	8	<u>Hours of Work</u>	23
<u>Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS)</u>	9	Premium Pay	
<u>Code of Ethics</u>	9	Overtime	
<u>Complaint Systems</u>	10	Sunday Pay	
Appeals		Holiday Pay	
Discrimination Complaints		<u>Identification Cards</u>	24
Grievances		Extension	
Classification Appeals		Replacement	
Inspector General (IG) System		Child reaches age of 10	
<u>Conduct and Responsibility</u>	11	Student	
<u>Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003) /Performance Work Plan (AF Form 860)</u>	12	<u>Injury Compensation</u>	25
		<u>Leave and Earning Statement (LES)</u>	27

<u>Leave - Excused Absences</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>Probationary/Trial Period</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Leave</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>Prohibited Personnel Practices</u>	<u>37</u>
Requesting Leave		<u>Reduction in Force (RIF)</u>	<u>38</u>
Annual Leave		<u>Resignation</u>	<u>38</u>
Sick Leave		<u>Retirement Coverage</u>	<u>39</u>
Leave without Pay (LWOP)		Federal Employees	
Military		Retirement System (FERS)	
Court Leave		Civil Service Retirement (CSRS)	
Bone Marrow or Organ Donation		<u>Safety</u>	<u>43</u>
Home Leave		<u>Security Clearance and Investigation</u>	<u>44</u>
Absence Without Leave (AWOL)		<u>Self-Nomination</u>	<u>44</u>
Voluntary Leave Transfer Program		<u>Service Computation Date (SCD)</u>	<u>45</u>
Family Medical Leave Act		<u>Sexual Harassment</u>	<u>45</u>
<u>Merit Promotion</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>Skills Coding (Experience)</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>Merit Systems Principles</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>Special Emphasis Program</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>Nepotism</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>Substance Abuse Prevention and Control</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>Official Personnel Folder (OPF)</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>Overseas Allowances</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>Thrift Savings Plan</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>Overseas Tour - Self-sponsored Civilian</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>Time In Grade/Qualification</u>	
<u>Overseas Tour - Family Members</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>Requirements</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>Passports, Reports of Births Abroad, and</u>		<u>Training and Development</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>SOFA Stamps</u>	<u>33</u>	Priority of Training	
<u>Pay and Pay Periods</u>	<u>33</u>	DD 1556	
<u>Position Classification Principles</u>	<u>34</u>	Self-Development	
<u>Position Descriptions – Core Personnel</u>		Tuition Assistance	
<u>Document</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>Verification of Employment/Income</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Post Allowance</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>Whistleblower Protection Act</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>Priority Placement Program</u>	<u>36</u>		
<u>Privacy Act of 1974 and Freedom of</u>			
<u>Information Act</u>	<u>36</u>		

<u>Within Grade Increases (WGI)</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Work Schedules</u>	<u>53</u>
Tour of Duty	
Alternative Work Schedules	
<u>Appendix A: CPF Index of Telephone</u>	
<u>Numbers</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Appendix B: Internet Links</u>	<u>55</u>

*New Employee Handbook for US Citizen Employees
Paid from Appropriated Funds*

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME. We sincerely hope you find your employment here to be a satisfying and rewarding experience. If you are new to federal service employment, you probably have many questions. As you go along and learn more about federal employment, you will probably have more questions. There are many sources of information for you. This handbook is designed to be a summary of some key programs and aspects of federal employment. We recommend you take charge of your own career by learning as much as you can.

Your immediate supervisor, especially if he or she is a civilian employee, is a good first stop if you have any questions. Your supervisor, in most cases, has received training in those policies, procedures and regulations that affect you as a civilian employee. If your supervisor is unable to answer your question, you should request that he/she set up an appointment for you with the appropriate Human Resource Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). If you follow this procedure, it will accomplish two things. First, it will assure that your supervisor has been given the opportunity to answer your question and has approved your absence from your job site to visit the CPF. Second, by making an advanced appointment, the Human Resource Specialist will have reserved a time and a place to talk to you. We want to give you the best possible service – this is one way you can help us to do just that.

Appendix A has phone numbers by subject and some useful web sites are included in Appendix B or use our comprehensive web site for links to other useful sources of information. The Federal Times, a commercial weekly newspaper, provides current information about legislative proposals and initiatives and other items of interest to federal employees. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website (www.opm.gov) is a great, one-stop source for finding up-to-date information about current issues and news related to Federal Employees. One feature called “Hot Links” gives you new and pertinent information on current topics. “What’s New?” has current information in date order for news releases and Federal Regulation changes, as well as other useful information. There are a number of electronic newsletters available, including a quarterly issue published by our office, which is both distributed through organizational e-mail addresses and posted on our website. And you can always give us a call or send us an e-mail.

We have organized this booklet alphabetically by topic. It is intended to provide you as much information as we can to help you understand and manage your Federal career. Please take the time to review topics of interest and give us a call if you need clarification. Policy and procedure changes occur; therefore, please consult with a specialist regarding any of the subjects addressed in this Handbook. We are here to serve you, but you must also be proactive in seeking information. We suggest you retain this handbook for future reference. Your feedback on the usefulness and clarity of this handbook is solicited. Please send your comments to 435mss/dpc@ramstein.af.mil

BEGINNING YOUR EMPLOYMENT

You should receive the following documents soon after starting your civilian job:

Position Description or Core Personnel Document. This is the statement of the duties you are expected to perform. It does not cover every single task expected of you, but rather the major duties to be performed. The position description (AF Form 1378) or Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003) is used to determine the title, series, and grade of the job and the qualifications necessary for the job. You should receive a copy from your supervisor within 30 days of your employment.

Performance Work Plan. This is the written statement of your supervisor's performance expectations; what he or she sees as the most critical tasks of your job and how he or she will measure your performance. The work plan may be a separate document (AF Form 860) from your position description or will be included in your Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003), which is a combination of position description and work plan. In any event, you should be given this document within the first 30 days you are on the job. You and your supervisor should go over it to be sure you understand what is expected, and you should sign it to acknowledge receipt.

Electronic Official Personnel Folder (EOPF). The EOPF is an "electronic filing cabinet" where your personnel actions and other pertinent documents/information are stored. All documents created for actions effective on or after 1 October 1996 are filed in both an image or an electronically created data file in the Personnel Automated Records Information System (PARIS). The OPF is available for viewing and/or printing at your local workstation or Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). If you were hired into Federal service after 1 October 1996, you will have a completely Electronic OPF. If, however, you were on the Federal roles prior to 1 October 1996, the Regional Personnel Center (RPC) at Sembach maintains the paper OPF along with its electronic version. (See article on Official Personnel Folder)

Notification of Personnel Action, SF 50. A Notification of Personnel Action is produced whenever there is a significant change in your employment status –appointment, change in pay or position information, or to change any of the information printed on the SF-50. You should keep every SF 50 you receive for the same reasons you keep bank statements, tax records or school transcripts.

These notices are proof of your status, rate of pay and conditions of employment. SF 50s are no longer automatically printed and mailed to the supervisor; however, you can obtain and print a copy of the form as follows: Go to AFPC Homepage: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/> and double click on "Electronic Personnel Folder", next to "Civilian Personnel". On the next screen, double click on "EOPF". If you need to set up your PC, follow the instructions after clicking on "Setup Page". Current employees, who have established a USERID and Password, can enter those in and click on "Secure Login" (right hand side of screen). New users should follow instructions in "Create Password Accounts Here". After successful login, you will reach the secure sites. Click on "Civilian Electronic OPF". This will take you to the EOPF Documents.

Double click on the SF50 you want to review/print. The SF50 will show up as a Formflow document.

YOUR SUPERVISOR CANNOT ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT; THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND YOU MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR SUPERVISOR TO ANNOTATE AND/OR PLACE IN THE EMPLOYEE WORK FOLDER.

Supervisor's Employee Work Folder. Your supervisor should have a Work Folder on you. In that folder should be a copy of your Core Personnel Document OR position description and work plan, and an AF Form 971, an automated product which contains some basic information on you (current position information, previous experience, education and etc). In addition, copies of appraisals, records of training, leave schedules, letters of appreciation, or counseling may be retained in the Supervisor's Employee Work Folder. One of the most important things for you to provide your supervisor is emergency information – who to call if you are injured at work, who your next of kin for notification. Please be sure your supervisor has this information and keep it current with both a local and CONUS emergency point of contact (See article on EMDS).

TOPICS

• Appointment Types:

The type of “appointment” you have determines your status for various personnel actions including eligibility for transfer to other locations, reemployment and reduction in force standing.

Career and Career-Conditional Appointments (Competitive Service)

A career-conditional appointment is given to persons hired from competitive civil service registers based on a competitive examination or other competitive process. The examination may be a scored test or simply a review and scoring of your application. If you are a career-conditional employee, you must complete a one-year probationary or trial period. A career-conditional appointment is converted to career after three years of federal service with no break in service of more than 30 days. If you have veteran's preference and leave the federal service before being converted to a career appointment, you may be reinstated to a career-conditional appointment at any time by any federal activity without competing in another civil service examination. If you do not have veteran's preference and leave federal service while on a career-conditional appointment, you have reinstatement eligibility for three years after separation only. If you are a career employee and leave the federal service, you have reinstatement eligibility forever. You are considered a “status” employee. Upon transfer or rehire, you are again given a career appointment.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In the overseas area, individuals are not generally appointed using career or career-conditional authorities unless the applicant is a current career or career-conditional employee or a former career or career-conditional employee with reinstatement eligibility.

Family Member Appointments (Excepted Service: Schedule A, 213.3106(b)(6))

This type of appointment is designed to remove certain competitive service restrictions in filling positions and is primarily used to provide job opportunities to family members of active duty military members and CONUS-hired US citizen Federal (civilian) employees who are transferred to the overseas area. Family member for this purpose means the spouse or unmarried child (under age 23) residing with the military member or civilian employee within the commuting area. Family members who are eligible for reinstatement are given career or career-conditional appointment rather than a family member appointment in the excepted service. If you have an excepted appointment, you do not have regular civil service status and your employment may only continue as long as you remain a family member. If your family member status changes as a result of sponsor PCS or divorce, your employment must be terminated within 60 days of status change. In addition, you are generally not eligible to transfer to other government agencies or locations. The exception is if you accompany your sponsor to another overseas location. In that case, you may request leave without pay to avoid a break in service. Your continued employment would, of course, be contingent upon selection for a vacancy at that location. See article on Executive Order (EO) 12721 for additional information on opportunities once you return to the United States.

Temporary Appointment

This appointment is used when it is expected that a job will last less than one year. Individuals on temporary appointments may be terminated at any time and are not eligible for promotion, reassignment, or re-hire without competition. The appointment may be extended up to a maximum of two years.

Term Appointment

Term appointments are temporary appointments to work on a specific project and may be more than one year but not more than four years. Term appointments can be terminated before the scheduled expiration date, but employees are entitled to advance notice of such termination.

Veteran's Recruitment Appointment (VRA)

For Air Force positions, the VRA authority is used only in cases where the position is considered hard to fill, which is determined by the CPF. The VRA is a noncompetitive appointment of a veteran in the excepted service. After satisfactory completion of a two-year trial period, the VRA employee is converted to a career-conditional or career status appointment. VRA employees with less than 15 years of formal schooling will be placed on a training and/or education plan that is developed by the supervisor. Agencies may use the VRA authority to fill jobs up through GS-11 and equivalent under other pay systems. Veterans must be "qualified" for the job, i.e., meet the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodations for a disability, and given veteran's preference for hiring under this appointment, if eligible. The following veterans are eligible for a VRA appointment: 1) disabled veterans; 2) veterans who have been awarded a Campaign Badge, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) or Armed Forces Service Medal (AFSM); or 3) veterans who have separated from active service within the last three years. There are no time restrictions on appointment of the first two categories and no length of service requirements for all three categories.

Overseas Limited Appointment Authority

The overseas limited authority is used only in the overseas area and does not give the employee civil service status or reinstatement eligibility. The Air Force no longer uses this authority for new appointments to Air Force positions although it may still be used for DeCA.

• Appraisals and Performance Management

Your supervisor is required to complete a mandatory performance feedback session with you normally at the midpoint of the appraisal period from 1 April to 31 March. The AF Form 860B, *Civilian Progress Review Worksheet*, is the mandatory form to document this review. This feedback session will be a private communication between you and your supervisor. After the performance cycle ends on 31 March, you receive an appraisal rating (AF Form 860A) if you have worked for at least 90 days. Your Performance Plan (AF Form 860) or Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003) is used as the basis for both these reviews. You will receive copies of the feedback and appraisal and the supervisor maintains the originals in your Employee Performance File.

• Awards and Performance Recognition Program

This program provides special awards for superior accomplishments. You may receive cash, honorary recognition, and/or time-off awards for documented significant contributions related to your employment. In most cases, your supervisor must nominate you for the award. Exceptions to this include letters and certificates of appreciation or commendation, which you may receive from anyone who wants to recognize your exceptional performance, helpfulness, extra effort, etc. Information regarding specific types of awards may be found on the following web site:
http://www.ramstein.af.mil/435mss/cpo/US_PROGRAM/EMPLOYEE_MANAGEMENT_RELATIONS/awards/CIV_AWARDS/civilian_awards.htm

• Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST)

BEST provides customer service and current benefits information in the following program areas:

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program
Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
Retirement (and retirement related) Programs
Survivorship (Death-in-Service Survivor Benefits)

Exception: Since Ramstein is a limited service base; you must obtain retirement and survivorship services from the local Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). For a better understanding of limited services versus full services, read the article "[Full Versus Limited Servicing – What Does it Mean?](#)"

You must make all health, life, and TSP benefits elections through the BEST automated phone system or the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application. The BEST

automated phone and EBIS web systems provide a wealth of information in all the benefits areas. Information on EBIS can be found at

http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm

Benefits counselors are available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Central Standard Time (CST) to answer questions or provide assistance. Simply press zero (0) within any of the benefits areas voiced by the main menu. Since you are located overseas, you will dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country you are located in, then 800-997-2378. AT&T direct access numbers can be obtained from

http://www.att.com/business_traveler/guides_and_access/dialing_instr.html#outside

Hearing impaired employees in the overseas area with access to TDD equipment may contact a benefits counselor by calling a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country in which located. For more detailed information on systems and counselor access, see “[How to Access the BEST Automated Systems and Reach a Counselor.](#)”

Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Transactions

1. View Your Current Health Plan Enrollment
2. View and/or Void FEHB Projected Actions
3. New Permanent Employees and Temporary Employees Completing One Year of Continuous Federal Service Enrollments
4. Change FEHB Enrollment from Self and Family to Self Only (Note: If participating in Premium Conversion, may change to self only coverage only during open season unless employee has a qualifying life event.)
5. Add a Foster Child to Your FEHB Self and Family Coverage
6. FEHB Open Season Elections/Changes in Enrollments
7. FEHB Non-Open Season Enrollments/Changes in Enrollment
8. Cancel FEHB Health Plan Enrollment (Note: If participating in Premium Conversion, may cancel coverage only during open season unless employee has a qualifying life event.)
9. Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) - provides link for printing SF 2809 needed to enroll in TCC

Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Transactions

1. View Your Current FEGLI Enrollment
2. View and/or Void FEGLI Projected Action
3. New Employee or Employees Who Become Eligible for FEGLI Coverage

4. Elect or Increase Option B and/or C Due to a Change in Marital or Family Status
5. Waive/Decrease Optional Coverage A, B, C
6. Waive All FEGLI Coverage
7. FEGLI Open Enrollment Period

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Transactions

1. TSP Personal Transactions
2. View Your Current TSP Election
3. View and/or Void TSP Projected Action
4. TSP Open Season
5. TSP New Employee
6. Stop Your TSP Contributions
7. TSP Account Balance Data
8. Project Future Account Balances
9. TSP Annuity Estimates

To access your account information, your browser must have Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and 128-bit encryption. You will also need your social security number and your BEST PIN. Read more about web security in the FAQs located on the AFPC Secure Web Login Page.

Consent to electronic transmission of information.

Use of the Internet to process benefits transactions involves the electronic transmission of personal information relating to your benefits and entitlements. When you use this feature you are consenting to the electronic transmission of the information you have requested. Your consent is effective during the entire time you are accessing your benefits and entitlements personal information through the web site.

- **Career Brief (Data Record)**

As a permanent Air Force employee, you should not submit a resume when self-nominating for positions. Instead the automated system reviews the information in your personal data record to determine your qualifications and eligibility for the position. Because your data record is so important in this process, you need to periodically review your record to ensure your work experience, education, training, licenses, languages, special skills, etc. are complete and accurate. If you do not do this, your consideration for other Air Force positions may be negatively impacted.

If you are a new employee, you can expect your information to be coded into the data system within 90 days of your appointment. It is extremely important to review the resume/application you submitted for your current appointment since that information will be coded into the system. (If it is incomplete, submit a supplemental qualifications form to include the missing information.) The narrative descriptions for your non-federal employment will be translated into an equivalent Federal job experience and assigned appropriate codes. Information pertaining to your current Federal position is automatically in the system. After your record is coded, you will receive a career brief to review. The following categories of information are located on the career brief: Current Position Data, Certification/Language Proficiencies, Appointment Information, Pay/Benefits, Overseas, Special Placement, Career Program, Experience Current, Experience History, Education, Training, Awards, Appraisals, and Acquisition (if applicable).

The virtual career brief can be viewed through the AFPC Secure website at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecure/default.asp>, identified as *Civilian Career Brief - Virtual Career Brief for AF Appropriated Civilian Employees*. The virtual career brief contains all the information "real time" found on the standard career brief that now must be requested through our office. *The information contained in the virtual career brief may be printed using the "landscape" mode.* If you find missing or incorrect information, i.e., awards, training, education, or experience, go to http://www.ramstein.af.mil/435mss/cpo/US_PROGRAM/us_program_info.htm for a supplemental qualifications form. Print, fill out, and submit this form to your servicing Human Resources Specialist/Assistant with any supporting documentation, as follows: for work experience, contact your servicing Staffing Specialist/Assistant, DSN 480-7055; for education, training, licenses, etc., contact the Training Section, DSN 480-2167; and for awards contact the Employee Relations Section, DSN 480-2008.

Employees who are unable to access the brief may request a copy by sending an e-mail to the 435 MSS/DPCS Inbox or calling DSN 480-7055.

• **Career Program**

The Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) at Randolph AFB, TX centrally manages Career Programs. There are over seventeen different programs, each of which covers specific occupational groups and grade levels. With the conversion to the new Defense Civilian Personnel System (DCPDS), registration is no longer required to apply and compete for a Career Program position. However, registration is important and will continue to be used for training nominations and selections, management and leadership development, assessments, interviews, career counseling and workforce analysis. Registration is for career minded employees who aspire to achieve higher responsibilities. Career Program positions are considered the primary "feeder" to positions in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and Senior Intelligence Executive Service (SIES). Through registration, Career Programs develop procedures to identify high performers, by applying Master Development Plans (MDP) or career paths. The MDP serves as a guide for career progression and identifies specific courses, developmental activities, and career growth experiences such as enhancing job rotations, career broadening assignments, details, and special project assignments. To register, go to the AFPC website at

<https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>. Select “civilian” from the menu at the top of the page; select “career programs”; then “civilian career management homepage”; then “interactive”; and then “career program registration”. At the bottom of that screen, click on “enter the online career program registration”.

In order to receive consideration for any Career Program vacancy, you must view job announcements and self-nominate for each and every vacancy before the closing date of the announcement. All vacancy announcements are posted on the HQ AFPC Civilian Employment Web Site and the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) Job Line and open any day of the workweek, generally for a minimum of five working days. Although, this currently does not apply to USAFE positions, it is extremely important for individuals seeking employment outside of USAFE to check the website more than once per week or to register in the Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS).

To self nominate, current employees can:

- Call the HQ AFPC IVRS (from Germany) at 00-800-1997-2378, or
- Access the HQ AFPC Civilian Home Page at:
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/resweb/>

- **Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS)**

CANS is highly recommended for any employee seeking employment with the Air Force. By registering in CANS, you will no longer have to continually check for Air Force job vacancies. (**IMPORTANT:** Please refer to the article on Self-Nomination to understand the difference between an “internal” and “external” candidate.)

CANS is a very user-friendly program. Once you're logged on, the system will take you through the process step by step. All you need to do is list your specific job criteria, and CANS does the rest. Once the criteria are established, it will last for 180 days before expiring. You can list up to 20 different criteria combinations. The information can be changed at any time, initiating another 180-day cycle. The system will automatically search for jobs based on your search criteria. If there are any matches, an email will be sent to you listing the job announcement number, description, pay plan, occupational series, grade, job location, closing date and the Announcement’s URL. Vacancy announcements for USAFE positions open on Friday and close on Thursdays; however, other Air Force announcements posted on the AFPC website are opened any day of the workweek for a minimum of 5 workdays. If you are interested in moving to an Air Force position outside of USAFE, you may want, as a safeguard, to check the announcement website more than once per week or register in CANS.

- **Code of Ethics**

The citizens of the United States have confidence that Air Force personnel will do their part to preserve the security and well being of our nation. The public also expects that we conduct our mission honestly and with integrity. To ensure we do not betray or violate this public trust the

following Code of Ethics should guide our employment with the Air Force, Department of Defense and Federal Government.

Any person in Government should:

PUT loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or government department.

UPHOLD the Constitution, laws and legal regulations of the United States and all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.

GIVE a full day's labor for a full day's pay; giving to the performance of his/her duties, his/her earnest effort and best thought.

SEEK to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.

NEVER discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not; and never accept, for himself/herself or for his/her family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his/her governmental duties.

MAKE no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee has no private word, which can be binding on public duty.

ENGAGE in no business with the Government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his/her governmental duties.

NEVER use any information coming to him/her confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit.

EXPOSE corruption wherever discovered.

UPHOLD these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

• Complaint Systems

If you have a problem in the work place, or involving some employment related matter, you have a right to use one of several complaint systems available. Your first stop should be your supervisor or someone higher in your chain of command. Poor communication and misunderstandings cause many disagreements and problems. The best way to fix those is at the lowest level possible and without bringing in outsiders. If this approach does not work, there are formal procedures available.

Appeal

An appeal is your written request that the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) reconsider an Air Force decision to take adverse action against you, i.e., removal, suspension for more than 14 days, change to lower grade, separation or reduction in grade by Reduction in Force, or disciplinary action. If you are affected by an action you wish to appeal, submit an Appeal Form within 30 days of the effective date of the action or the date you receive the decision, whichever is later. An appeal is sent to the Merit Systems Protection Board, Washington DC Regional Office, 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 205, Alexandria, VA 22314-2840. MSPB rules provide that the 30 day limit will be extended by an additional 30 days in cases where the employee and agency mutually agree in writing to attempt to resolve the dispute through an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process.

Discrimination Complaint and EEO Purview

If you believe you have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and physical or mental handicap or reprisal for filing a previous discrimination complaint, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor within 45 calendar days from the date the act took place or otherwise became aware of the act.

Grievance

A grievance is a request by an employee, or a group of employees, for personal relief in any matter of personal concern or dissatisfaction not specifically excluded from the grievance procedure that relates to the employment and which is subject to the control of management. Each agency has a formal grievance procedure. For information on the Ramstein AB Administrative Grievance Procedure, please go to our home page or contact a Human Resources Specialist for information.

Classification Appeal

If an employee believes that the classification of his or her position – that is the pay plan, series, grade, and/or title – is wrong, he or she may file a classification appeal. The matter should be discussed informally with the immediate supervisor and the organization's assigned Position Classification Specialist. If the employee is still not satisfied, the procedure for filing an appeal will be through the Department of Defense Field Advisory Service or the Office of Personnel Management is explained in their respective websites at www.cpms.osd.mil/fas/class/pages/cl_filing.htm and www.opm.gov/classapp.

Inspector General (IG) System

The IG system should not be used for matters that are to be handled by one of the formal civilian complaint systems. If such a matter is brought to the attention of the IG, that office will usually refer it to the proper channels. Issues that may be appropriate for the IG include fraud, waste, and abuse issues, or complaints that are not personal to the person making the report.

- **Conduct and Responsibility**

Air Force employees must comply with prescribed standards of conduct in all official matters. You are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, responsibility and accountability as well as adhere to the Air Force Core Values of "Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do." As a representative of the Air Force, you are expected to maintain high standards of

conduct during your off-duty time, both on and off base. This policy is based on the principle that public office is a public trust.

You have the responsibility to furnish testimony or information to authorized officials concerning official matters about which you could reasonably be considered knowledgeable.

You may participate in demonstrations, petitions, speeches, private organizations and similar activities in your private capacity, while not in a duty status; however, when such expression interferes with a duty or mission of the armed forces, interferes with the performance of another employee or member of the Air Force, or creates an actual or apparent conflict of interest with official duties, you may not participate.

You are expected to pay your bills promptly and to honor any legal contracts you make. The Air Force cannot legally divert part of your salary to satisfy a private debt, except for child support, alimony payments or commercial debts. If you consistently, willfully or frequently incur debts that you do not pay, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

You are expected to perform your assigned duties conscientiously and effectively. You are to be present for duty unless authorized to be absent and you are expected to follow Air Force Instructions and comply in a timely way with proper instructions or orders given by a competent authority.

Use of government equipment or other resources for personal benefit or benefit of friends is prohibited unless otherwise authorized. Misuse of Air Force resources is misconduct, which may result in corrective disciplinary action against you.

You are expected to comply with reasonable dress and grooming standards based on comfort, productivity, health, safety and type of position occupied. Due to diverse work functions and locations, appropriate dress standards may vary significantly. Your attire should not be considered offensive, disruptive or unsafe. Take pride in your appearance and let good judgment be your guide.

- **Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003)/Performance Work Plan (AF Form 860)**

This is the written statement by your supervisor to define responsibilities and set expectations for your appraisal. It serves as the foundation used to evaluate your performance. The performance work plan (AF Form 860) may be a separate document from your position description or will be included in your core personnel document (AF Form 1003), which is a combination of position description and performance work plan. In any event, you should be given this document (whichever is appropriate) within the first 30 days you are on the job, you and your supervisor should review it to be sure you understand what is expected, and you should sign it to acknowledge receipt. The same should be done whenever you change jobs, work for a new supervisor or at the beginning of a new rating cycle.

- **Designation of Beneficiary**

Completing beneficiary forms is an option that every civilian employee may choose. However, if you complete beneficiary forms, it becomes your responsibility to ensure the currency of those forms. A change in marital or family status does not automatically change a beneficiary form that you previously submitted, nor does it prevent the benefactor from receiving the death benefits that you designated. The most common mistake is when the employee names a spouse and later divorces that spouse but forgets to change the beneficiary form.

There are several types of beneficiary forms that you can complete to designate your after-death payable benefits. These include the **Standard Form 2823**, Designation of Beneficiary Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance (FEGLI); **Standard Form 2808**, Designation of Beneficiary Civil Service Retirement System; **Standard Form 3102**, Designation of Beneficiary Federal Employee's Retirement System; **Standard Form 1152**, Designation of Beneficiary Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee; and **TSP-3**, Thrift Savings Plan Designation of Beneficiary.

You may access these forms electronically on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) web site at www.opm.gov/insure/designations/index.htm. Once there, you may print the forms and complete manually, or you may complete while on-line and then print. When you have completed and signed your beneficiary forms, be sure to review them one more time to ensure they are accurate. Submit the SF 1152 and SF 2823 to your servicing Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). Submit SF 3102, if applicable, to your servicing CPF. Submit the SF 2808, if applicable, directly to OPM at the address on the reverse side of the form. The TSP-3 should be sent directly to the National Finance Center at the address on the reverse side of the form. We recommend that you make copies of your beneficiary forms prior to submitting them to the appropriate offices.

If you do not complete beneficiary forms, your death benefits will be distributed in the order of precedence. The order of precedence is as follows, unless there is a valid court order on file with the employing agency:

1. The widow or widower.
2. If none, to the child or children in equal shares, with the share of any deceased child distributed among the descendants of that child.
3. If none, to the parents in equal shares or the entire amount to the surviving parent.
4. If none of the above, to the executor or administrator of the estate of the decedent.
5. If none, to the next of kin under the laws of the State in which the decedent was domiciled at date of death.

If you have any questions or need assistance with completing beneficiary forms, please speak with a Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) counselor at 00 800 199 72378. If you are hearing impaired, you may contact a Benefits Counselor by dialing our TDD number: 00 800 138 20893.

• Details

A detail is the temporary assignment of duties other than those officially assigned. There may be times where you will be needed to perform duties which are not included in the position description, e.g. the duties of a vacant position pending retirement, a temporary office project, etc. In order to be creditable as a detail, the assignment must be continuous and require a majority of your duty day. If you are going to perform temporary duties for over 30 days, a Request for Personnel Action (RPA) must be submitted to the CPF to receive credit for this experience. Supervisors should document details of less than 30 days in the Employee Work Folder. The experience gained while on an official detail for more than 30 days becomes a permanent part of your record. Details may initially be targeted to end sooner than the 30-day point, but for unforeseen reasons extend past 30 days. At that time, an RPA should be submitted to properly document the detail. Supervisors should plan ahead and submit the RPA before the detail begins whenever possible. When RPAs are submitted “after the fact” you will not receive experience credit in a timely manner.

The following are some facts concerning details:

- Official details are made in up to 120 days increments
- Official details to higher grades or occupational series that may provide promotion potential in excess of 120 days must be made under competitive merit promotion procedures
- Employees **do not** have to be qualified for the duties to which they are detailed, except when position requires minimum educational, licensure, and/or certification requirements.
- While on a detail, employee is compensated at the same rate of pay received in the permanent position.

• **Discipline and Adverse Actions**

Disciplinary action may be taken by management to correct an employee’s delinquency or misconduct. For example, if you violate a rule, regulation or procedure, or fail to fulfill an employee-related agreement, disciplinary action may be taken against you. Examples of disciplinary and adverse actions include oral admonishment, written reprimand, suspension from duty without pay, reduction in grade or pay, and removal from Federal service. It is Air Force policy to take necessary disciplinary action promptly and equitably, and to comply with the letter and intent of governing requirements. Disciplinary actions taken by your supervisor are designed to be constructive, that is to correct the problem, not to punish for the misconduct. An adverse action reduces your grade and/or your basic rate of pay, puts you involuntarily into non-pay, non-duty status, or separates you from the service. It is important to note, however, that an adverse action may be for reasons beyond your control, such as in a reduction in force, rather than based on your own misconduct. For example, an action is adverse but not disciplinary if you are downgraded or separated through reduction-in-force procedures, if you are separated for failure to transfer with your function to a new area, or demoted based on application of new classification standards. If you are fired for theft, however, it is disciplinary in nature.

• **Dual Compensation**

The Dual Compensation Act (5 U.S.C. 5533) prohibits an employee from receiving pay from more than one civilian U.S. Government position (including temporary, part time or intermittent

appropriated fund; non-appropriated fund (NAF) or Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)) for more than 40 hours of work in any calendar week. There is no restriction on the number of appointments the individual may hold, only on the number of hours for which he/she may be paid (e.g., an employee may work for NAF and AAFES, as long as the pay received is not for more than 40 hours a week.) Active duty military members are covered by a special exception to this act, which allows them to work part-time in NAF or AAFES activities; however, they cannot hold federal positions, except when on terminal leave. Federal employees cannot hold NAF or AAFES jobs if the pay received would exceed 40 hours per calendar week.

- **Emergency Data System (EMDS)**

The EMDS Web Application is to provide you the capability to provide and update the required information for Next-of-Kin (NOK) notification in the case of any emergency! This extremely important form is to be used by you to show the names and addresses of your spouse, children, parents, and any other person(s) you would like notified if you become a casualty or for any other emergency. As an employee in the overseas area, you should provide emergency contacts in the overseas area and in the US. As a new employee, you can go to: <https://ww2.afpc.randolph.af.mil/emds/default.htm> click "Enter EMDS" to start the AFPC security login process. Once you have entered your information, please print a copy and provide it to your supervisor. Only you will have update/change capability to the data on the NOK emergency form. Please remember, it's your responsibility to keep this form current!

- **Emergency Essential Program**

The Emergency Essential (E-E) program is part of the overall Civilian Readiness (Mobilization) program which ensures a sufficient number of qualified Air Force federal civilian employees are available to meet worldwide mission requirements during periods of national emergency, mobilization, war, military crisis, or other contingency. The E-E employee is defined as an incumbent of an overseas position (or who would be sent overseas during a crisis situation) that supports essential combat systems after a mobilization, evacuation order, or other military crisis. There is sometimes confusion between the terms E-E, Key, and Contingency Essential employees. The Key employee is incumbent of a CONUS position that cannot be vacated during war or national emergency without seriously impairing the mission; such employees have unique or scarce managerial or technical skills required by the wartime mission. The Contingency Essential employee is a local national employee in a position equivalent to a Key or E-E position.

E-E positions are identified prior to fill by notification in the vacancy announcement, as well as in the position description itself. Because of the requirement to remain after other civilians have been evacuated, employees on these positions must be removed from military recall obligation. The position description will include a statement similar to the following: "This position is emergency-essential (E-E). The incumbent of this position must meet all requirements of E-E positions and may be required as a condition of employment to take a series of vaccinations and annual boosters to immunize against anthrax and other diseases. In the event of a crisis situation, the incumbent or the designated alternate, may be required to take part in readiness exercises. This position cannot be vacated during a national emergency or

mobilization without seriously impairing the capability or the organization to function effectively. This meets the criteria of an E-E position and requires the incumbent, or designated alternate, be removed from any military recall status.”

If you as an employee accept an E-E position, you will be asked to sign DD Form 2365, DoD Civilian Employees Overseas E-E Agreement. This form documents that incumbents in E-E positions accept the E-E conditions of employment.

To find out more about E-E positions consult the following references:

DoDD 1404.10, Emergency-Essential (E-E) DoD US Citizen Civilian Employees Overseas

AFI 36-507, Mobilization of the Civilian Work Force

• **Equal Employment Opportunity Employer**

It is Air Force policy that all employees be provided a working environment that is free from discrimination and provides equal opportunity for all applicants and employees regardless of their race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, handicapping condition and/or other non-merit factor. In filling civilian positions, the Air Force will ensure selections are based on principles of merit and qualifications. If you believe you have been subject to discrimination, contact an EEO Counselor (DSN: 480-2250) within 45 days after the incident to be timely. The counselor will advise you of your rights and responsibilities. The discrimination complaint system allows for the review of such discrimination and every opportunity will be explored in an attempt to resolve the matter at the lowest possible level.

• **Ethical Conduct**

All Federal employees are expected to act in an ethical manner at work and in their private life. You should receive an orientation on the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), and this regulation should be available to you via the web or your office library. The JER covers issues such as use of government equipment and property, conflicts of interest, cooperating with investigations, safeguarding confidential information, etc. The Staff Judge Advocate office is the Office of Primary Responsibility for this subject matter. Ask your supervisor about the location of the JER and be sure you understand expectations about your standards of conduct and behavior.

• **Executive Order (EO) 12721**

EO 12721 provides certain former overseas employees noncompetitive appointment eligibility when they return to the United States. In order to be eligible for this special appointment authority, an individual must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be a citizen of or owe permanent allegiance to the United States
- Must have accumulated 52 weeks of creditable overseas service in an appropriated fund position under an overseas local hire appointment within any 10-year period beginning after 1 January 1980.

- Must have received a passing, fully successful or better performance rating (or equivalent) for the overseas service accrued after 1 January 1984.
- Must have been a family member (spouse or unmarried child under age 23) of a federal civilian employee, a federal nonappropriated fund employee, or a uniformed service member who was officially assigned to the overseas area
- Must have resided in the overseas area while the sponsor was officially assigned to the overseas duty station
- Must be appointed within 3 years of returning to the United States from the overseas duty station
- Must meet the qualifications and time-in-grade requirements for the position being filled
This is a benefit to eligible employees because it allows them non-competitive consideration for the highest grade held in the overseas area without having to openly compete with the general public. Once selected, individuals are given career-conditional appointments.

- **Family Members in Your Household**

In the United States, you decide who lives in your house and for how long. In a foreign country, you do not have that option. In Germany, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) allows Americans to live in Germany indefinitely, without a residence permit and without paying certain taxes, as long as they are members of the US Forces. To be considered a member of the US Forces, you must be command sponsored. Command sponsorship is extended only to active duty military members, American citizen employees of the forces, and eligible family members. Family members consist of spouses, unmarried minor children and step-children, and parents or parents-in-law who are dependent on the sponsor for more than half their support and reside in the sponsor's household. Unless someone falls into one of these categories, they are considered tourists by the German government and cannot stay in the country for longer than 90 days. For details and answers to your specific questions, contact the Legal Office or Affirmative Employment Section.

- **Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)**

FEGLI consists of Basic life insurance coverage and 3 options. However, it does not build up any cash value or paid-up value. In most cases, new Federal employees are automatically covered by Basic life insurance and payments are made through automatic deductions from your paycheck through your payroll office unless you waive the coverage. You must have Basic insurance in order to elect additional options. The additional options are not automatic. You must elect those options.

You and the Government share the cost of Basic insurance. You pay 2/3s of the total cost and the government pays 1/3. Your age is not a factor in Basic insurance. However, the government

does not contribute to the cost of Optional elections. You pay the full cost, which varies depending on your age.

Basic life insurance coverage is effective on the first day you enter a pay and duty status unless you waive your coverage before the end of your first pay period. If you choose to elect Optional insurance, you have 31 days from the date of your appointment to make an election. Optional insurance is effective on the first day you are in a pay and duty status or after the day you make the election.

To waive Basic insurance or elect Optional insurance, you must electronically submit your request through the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application or the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) automated telephone system. **Hardcopy elections forms will not be accepted.**

EBIS is a secure web program so you must log into the AFPC Secure Web via CAC card (not yet available for use) or regular UserID and password. To get started, go to www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm. Once within EBIS, you will enter your social security number (SSN) and BEST personal identification number (PIN). Your BEST PIN is the same for both EBIS and the BEST phone system. Detailed information on how to access EBIS can be found at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/docs/How_to_Access_the_System-Web.pdf.

The BEST phone system can be reached by calling a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country in which you are located. Direct access numbers can be found at http://www.att.com/business_traveler/guides_and_access/dialing_instr.html. You will then dial 800-997-2378. You will be required to enter your SSN and BEST PIN in order to access your personal records and conduct benefits transactions. Detailed instructions on how to access the BEST phone system and how to reach a Benefits Counselor can be found at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/docs/How_to_Access_the_System-Phone.pdf.

You can find more information about the FEGLI program at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm> and <http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/>.

- **Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)**

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program is paid through employee and employer contributions and is intended to assist you and your eligible family members with expenses of illness and accident. It is a voluntary program.

If you do not enroll during your first opportunity, you will not be eligible to enroll until open season, which is held once a year during November, or until you have a qualifying life event, such as marriage, birth of a child, divorce, death, loss of coverage, etc. You can obtain more information regarding qualifying life events through the BEST telephone automated system.

It is the largest employer-sponsored group health insurance program in the world, covering over 9 million Federal employees, retirees, former employees, family members, and former spouses. The FEHB program is intended to assist you and your eligible family members with expenses of

illness and accident, illness and accident, and is paid for through employee and employer contributions.

Who is Eligible to Enroll?

- All CSRS and FERS covered employees
- Employees serving a Term Appointment with a regularly scheduled tour of duty
- Temporary employees (only after completing one year of employment and beginning a second consecutive appointment)
- Part-time employees

What the Program Offers You

- .. An annual opportunity, during open season, to enroll in a health benefits plan or change enrollment selection, if already enrolled
- .. A choice of plans and options with group-rated premiums and benefits
- .. Guaranteed protection that cannot be canceled by the insurance carrier
- .. Coverage without medical examination or restrictions because of age, current health or pre-existing medical condition
- .. No waiting periods after the effective date of enrollment
- .. A government contribution toward the cost of your plan, unless you are on a temporary appointment
- .. A payroll deduction method of making premium payments
- .. A temporary 31 day extension of coverage after separation from employment, during which you may convert to a non-group policy
- .. Continued enrollment for eligible family members after the death of the employee or annuitant.

Fee-for-Service Plans

These plans provide reimbursement (full or partial) to you or your health care provider for covered services. Reimbursement is subject to co-payments and deductibles. If enrolled in such a plan, you may choose your own physician, hospital, and other health care providers. Most fee-for-service plans have preferred provider arrangements in many parts of the country. By using preferred providers, you can reduce out-of-pocket expenses and, in some cases, receive enhanced benefits. Fee-for-service plans include the Service Benefit Plan sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield and plans sponsored by unions and other employee organizations. Several employee organization plans are open to all eligible employees who are full or associate members of the organizations that sponsor the plans; other employee organization plans are restricted to employee organization groups and/or agencies.

Carriers in the Overseas Area

There are 8 Federal Health Benefit Plans in the Overseas Area:

1. Alliance Health Benefit Plan www.ahbp.com
2. APWU Health Plan www.apwuhp.com
3. Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan www.fepblue.org
4. Foreign Service Benefit Plan www.afspa.org

5. Government Employees Hospital Association, Inc. Health Benefit Plan www.geha.com
6. Mail Handlers Benefit Plan www.firsthealth.com/smfh/navigation.do
7. NALC Health Benefit Plan www.nalc.org/depart/hbp/index.html
8. Postmasters Benefit Plan www.postmasters.org/pbp.asp

Types of Enrollment:

Self Only enrollment provides benefits only for you.

Self and Family enrollment provides benefits for you and your eligible family members.

Family Members Eligible for Coverage

A determination of whether or not a person is a family member depends upon that person's relationship to you. A Self and Family enrollment covers all eligible family members. The following are family members:

- .. The employee's current spouse
- .. The employee's unmarried dependent children under age 22, including legally adopted children and recognized natural (born out of wedlock) children
- .. Stepchildren, foster children (which may include grandchildren) if they live with the employee in a regular parent-child relationship
- .. Unmarried dependent children age 22 or over who are incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical incapacity which existed before age 22

If this is your initial enrollment, you have 60 days from the effective date of your appointment to complete your transaction. If you enroll in health benefits, you will automatically participate in Premium Conversion unless you complete the waiver form and submit to BEST at the same time you enroll in health benefits. Premium conversion is a "pre-tax" arrangement, meaning that the part of your salary that goes for health insurance premiums is non-taxable. You will save on Federal income tax and FICA taxes. If you do not wish to participate, you must fax the waiver form to BEST at DSN 665-2936 or (210) 565-2936 at the time you enroll. The waiver form is available on the BEST homepage at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/fehb.htm, or as fax-back document number 1005 through the telephone automated system. You can obtain more information on premium conversion on the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehb/index.htm, the BEST homepage at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/fehb.htm, or via the fax-back module of the telephone automated system. Before enrolling, you should consult the *Guide to Federal Employees Health Benefits Plans* (RI 70-1) to see which plans you are eligible for, the basic services each plan provides, and the cost. The Guide and plan brochures are available from Office of Personnel Management's homepage at www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.htm.

If you are completing a health benefits change during the annual open season, you must complete your transaction in the automated system before the open season closes. You will need the birth dates and SSNs for all family members.

Cancellation of Enrollment

You may cancel your FEHB enrollment ONLY if you elected to waive participation in Premium Conversion. If you waived participation in Premium Conversion, you may cancel your health insurance coverage at any time. However, if you cancel your enrollment, you or your family

members are NOT entitled to the 31-day extension of coverage for conversion to a non-group policy. Moreover, you and your family members will not be eligible for temporary continuation of coverage (TCC).

Employees who elect to participate in Premium Conversion may only make changes during the FEHB open season or upon a qualifying life event, IF the reason for the change is “on account of and consistent with” the qualifying life event. Examples of qualifying life events include marriage, birth of a child, change in a spouse’s employment, or if you lose coverage due to your health plan quitting or becoming insolvent.

For more detailed information on FEHB, please visit http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/fehb_overview.htm and <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.asp>.

Some of the areas discussed are as follows:

- [What the FEHB Program Offers](#)
- [Eligibility for FEHB Coverage](#)
- [Enrollment Information](#)
- [Premium Conversion](#)
- [Plans Participating in the FEHB Program](#)
- [Cost Of insurance](#)
- [Opportunities to Enroll or Change Enrollment](#)
- [Termination, Conversion, and Temporary Continuation of Coverage](#)
- [FEHB Coverage After Retirement or While Receiving Compensation Benefits](#)

- **Flexible Spending Account**

What is a Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

It is a benefit that allows employees to set aside money, on a pre-tax basis, for certain kinds of common expenses. With an FSA, employees can reduce taxes while paying for services they normally have to pay for anyway. And of course a side effect of reduced taxes is an increase in take-home pay.

Who is responsible for administering the FSA program?

SHPS, Inc., one of the nation’s largest FSA administrators, has full responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the FSA program which includes enrollment, answering questions during and after open seasons, and providing an education campaign before the first regular open season in Nov/Dec 03. As a result, this web page provides only the basics of the FSA program. To obtain in-depth information, please visit the SHPS Web site at www.fsafeds.com, or speak with an SHPS customer service representative by calling toll-free 1-877-372-3337, or TTY 1-800-952-0450. SHPS customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 pm. Eastern Time.

Two Types of FSA Accounts

- **Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA)** - for health care expenses not paid by the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program or any other insurance, and not claimed on the employee’s federal income tax return. Benefits may be paid for

eligible expenses for the employee, spouse, and anyone claimed as a dependent on the employee's income tax return. Examples of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, co-payments, deductibles, co-insurance, dental care, orthodontic treatment, guide dogs, hearing aids, weight-loss programs at physician's direction, and laser eye correction.

- **Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA)** - for dependent care expenses that allow the employee (and spouse, if married) to work or look for work, or that allow the spouse to attend school full-time. Expenses can be paid for children under age 13 and for adults who qualify as dependents under IRS regulations.

How FSAs Work

New employees may enroll within 60 days of date of hire, or by 1 October of the plan year (1 Jan through 31 December), whichever comes first. (Example - An employee hired in September would have until 1 October to enroll rather than the 60 days) If hired after 1 October, employees will not be able to participate for that plan year, but may enroll during the Nov/Dec open season for the next plan year. Other eligible employees may voluntarily elect to participate in the HCFSA, the DCFSA, or both, during an open enrollment period. During the enrollment process, employees will elect the amount they wish to contribute, up to a maximum, to their FSA(s). Each pay period, the employee's payroll system will process as an allotment a portion of the total amount of the contribution. For instance, if an employee elects to contribute \$1,040 to a HCFSA and \$520 to a DCFSA and is paid biweekly, the payroll system will allot \$40 and \$20, respectively, each pay period.

Minimum and Maximum Amounts

For the HCFSA, employees may elect a maximum of \$3,000 per plan year. For the DCFSA, an annual maximum of \$5,000 may be elected (\$2,500 if married and filing a separate income tax return). For both benefits, the minimum contribution election is \$250. These limits were not prorated for the Initial Plan Year (1 Sep - 31 Dec 03).

Open Seasons

Annual FSA Open Seasons occur each year at the same time as the FEHB open season. You must re-enroll each year if you wish to participate.

Eligibility

Employees eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), even if not currently enrolled, are eligible to elect a Health Care FSA. All employees with qualified dependents may elect to enroll in the Dependent Care FSA except temporary employees with no fixed work schedule whose tour of duty is six months or less. At the present time, retirees are not eligible for coverage in either FSA.

Enrollment

Employees will enroll by the following method. **Your local Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) and the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) are NOT authorized to accept enrollments.**

- **By Phone:** Call an SHPS customer service representative toll-free at 1-877-372-3337, or TTY 1-800-952-0450. SHPS customer service representatives are available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, Eastern Time.
- **Web:** www.fsafeds.com

Employees will need to know the payroll office identifier for his/her payroll provider when conducting the enrollment. For DoD and Air Force employees, the payroll office identification number is located on the Leave and Earnings Statement in the Remarks section.

• **Holidays**

January	New Year's Day, 1 January
February	Martin Luther King's Birthday, 3rd Monday in January
February	Presidents' Day, 3rd Monday in February
May	Memorial Day, last Monday in May
July	Independence Day, 4 July
September	Labor Day, 1st Monday in September
October	Columbus Day, 2nd Monday in October
November	Veteran's Day, 11 November
	Thanksgiving Day, 4th Thursday in November
December	Christmas Day, 25 December

In Lieu of Holidays - A full-time employee is entitled to an in-lieu of holiday when a holiday falls on a non-workday. In such cases, the employee's holiday is the basic workday immediately preceding the non-workday, except if the non-workday is a Sunday. If Sunday is the non-workday, the next basic workday is the in-lieu of holiday. For employees with a 40-hour, Monday through Friday workweek, the day of the in-lieu of holiday would be as follows:

- (1) If a holiday falls on a Sunday, Monday is the holiday.
- (2) If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Friday is the holiday.

Part-time employees are entitled to paid holidays if the legal holiday falls on a day they are regularly scheduled to work and for the number of hours that they would normally be scheduled to work. Part-time employees are not entitled to in-lieu of holidays. Intermittent employees do not receive any paid holidays.

You must be in a pay status (not on LWOP, AWOL or suspension) on either the regularly scheduled workday preceding a holiday or the regularly scheduled day after a holiday in order to be paid for the holiday. If you are required to work on a holiday, you are entitled to holiday pay. You cannot be required to work a holiday and be given another day off.

USAFE commonly designates a day before or after a holiday weekend as a "family day." Family days are paid days off for military members, but are NOT paid days off for civilian employees. If you plan to be off on a family day, you must use leave, compensatory time or credit hours.

• **Hours of Work**

Most full-time employees work 40 hours per week, 8 hours per day, scheduled Monday through Friday. Work periods of different hours may be prescribed if necessary. Your supervisor will

advise you of your work schedule and any subsequent changes that may be needed. (Also see **Work Schedules**).

A lunch or other meal period is an approved period of time in a non-pay and non-work status scheduled within the basic workday. Most organizations schedule a 30-60 minute lunch period. However, if you are on a flexible work schedule, such as Flexitour, you may take up to a 2-hour lunch with approval of your supervisor. The lunch period cannot be taken at the end of the day to allow you to leave work early or at the beginning of the day for you to come to work late.

Breaks or rest periods are not mandatory. However, some organizations allow up to two 15-minute rest periods per workday, normally scheduling one for every 4-hour work period. Rest periods cannot be combined to create a longer rest period, lunch period or to allow you to leave work early. The rest period is paid duty time and you can be recalled to work.

Premium Pay: Both Wage Grade and General Schedule employees may earn premium pay, such as overtime, Sunday pay, holiday pay or a night differential. Premium pay for GS employees (excluding law enforcement officers) is capped. A GS employee may not be paid regular pay plus premium pay, if the total amount exceeds the bi-weekly rate for GS-15, step 10.

Overtime is work officially ordered and approved in advance, in excess of the normal 8-hour workday or 40-hour workweek. A supervisor should not require an employee to work overtime without proper compensation. Employees with a basic rate of pay less than the rate of basic pay for a GS-10, step 1, receive an overtime hourly rate 1.5 x their basic hourly rate. If your basic rate exceeds that of a GS-10, step 1, the hourly rate is 1.5 x the basic pay for a GS-10, step 1 or your current hourly rate of basic pay, whichever is greater. You may be granted compensatory time off instead of overtime pay. You are entitled to the same amount of compensatory time off as the number of overtime hours worked.

Night Differential: If you are assigned to work later hours, you may be eligible to receive a night differential. WG employees scheduled to work five hours or more between 1500 and 2400 will receive a 7 ½ percent Night Shift Differential. Between 2300 and 0800, the Night Shift Differential is 10 percent. GS employees regularly scheduled to work between 1800 and 0600 receive a Night Pay Differential of 10 percent of the basic hourly rate.

Sunday Pay: If you are a full-time employee, you are entitled to 1.25 x the basic hourly rate for a regularly scheduled 8-hour tour of duty that begins or ends on a Sunday. To receive Sunday premium pay, you must actually work on Sunday and not be on leave, excused absence with pay, compensatory time off, credit hours, or time off awards. Hours worked on a Sunday in excess of an 8-hour shift are considered overtime hours.

Holiday Pay: If you are directed to perform work on a holiday, you are entitled to 2 x the basic hourly rate of pay for up to 8-hours. Hours in excess of 8 hours are considered overtime. If you are required to work on a holiday, you must receive pay for at least 2 hours of holiday pay. You cannot be required to work a holiday and be given another day off.

Travel as Hours of Work: If you travel for duty purposes during your normally scheduled hours of duty, you will be paid as normal. However, if you travel outside of your normal duty hours, you normally cannot receive any compensation unless you are actually performing work.

• Identification Cards for Civilian Employees and their Family Members

Possessing a valid identification (ID) card is critical in the military environment overseas. Granting ID cards and validating a civilian employee and his/her family member's eligibility is the responsibility of the Civilian Personnel Flight, Customer Service Center, Bldg 2120, Room 123. Customer service hours are Monday – Friday, 0800-1600. The process for requesting ID cards varies. Some general guidelines on application procedures follow:

Extension: If your ID card is due to expire within 30 days, visit our Customer Service Center and complete an application form. Please allow us twenty-four hours to complete the documentation. Remember, where applicable, ***your overseas tour extension documents must be on file.***

Replacement: If you need a replacement card due to loss or mutilation, visit our office to complete an application. We will make every effort to work your request that day. For lost cards, the civilian sponsor must meet with his/her supervisor, Unit Commander or First Sergeant to obtain a form, Subject: Request for Replacement of Lost/Stolen Identification (ID) card, which must be taken to the Security Forces Squadron Law Enforcement Desk (Bldg 2371).

Child reaches age of 10: If your child reaches age 10, you must bring a copy of the birth certificate as validation.

Student: If you have a child over 21 years of age who is a full-time student, you must provide the following: birth certificate, a letter from the school (accredited institution of higher learning) certifying full-time status, degree being pursued, and anticipated graduation date. In addition, you must certify on the application that you provide more than 50 percent of the student's support. (**Note:** If the student needs an ID card for summer only, letter must include: full-time enrollment during semester immediately before the break and acceptance or pre-enrollment as a full-time student for semester immediately after the break.)

Family Member Employees: New appropriated fund employees who are also family members will be issued a Common Access Card (CAC) during the week of in-processing, if the CAC is required by the position and determined by the supervisor. Employees will be required to furnish evidence of their sponsor's current DEROS.

• Injury Compensation

If you are injured at work:

- Report the injury to your supervisor immediately and obtain first aid as necessary.

- You must complete a Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation or CA-2, Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation via the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Tracking System and forward to your supervisor electronically for submission. In addition, the Safety Office, Ramstein Air Base, requires all federal employees injured during duty hours to complete a USAFE Form 281 in an effort to track the on the job injuries within the Kaiserslautern Military Community.

The EDI Tracking System allows supervisors to electronically submit the completed CA-1 and CA-2 via the Internet. The form can be found at https://isdmid2.cpms.osd.mil/web_html/static_java_edi_sup.html). After the form is complete, electronically submit the claim form to your Injury Compensation Program Administrator (ICPA) in the Civilian Personnel Flight for authentication by clicking "submit". The ICPA will then transmit the information to the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP).

-- A **traumatic injury** is a wound or other condition of the body caused by external force, including stress or strain. The injury must occur at a specific time and place, and it must affect a specific member or function of the body. The injury must be caused by a specific event or incident, or a series of events or incidents, within a single day or work shift. Traumatic injuries include damage solely to or destruction of prostheses, such as dentures or artificial limbs. Traumatic injuries also include damage to or destruction of personal appliances, such as eyeglasses or hearing aids, when a personal injury requiring medical services occurred.

-- An **occupational disease or illness** is a condition produced by the work environment over a period longer than one workday or shift. The condition may result from infection, repeated stress or strain, or repeated exposure to toxins, poisons, fumes or other continuing conditions of the work environment. The length of exposure, not the cause of the injury or the medical condition which results, determines whether an injury is traumatic or occupational. For instance, if an employee is exposed to toxic fumes for one day, the incident is considered a traumatic injury. If the employee is exposed to toxic fumes for two or more days, the incident is considered an occupational disease.

- If a traumatic injury occurred, and further medical treatment is needed, obtain authorization (Form CA-16) from your supervisor for treatment by a physician of your choice. If that physician is not available, you still have the right to choose a treating physician. CA-16 must be completed within 48 hours after the date of injury, after those 48 hours the organization is not allowed to provide the employee with that form.

- If a traumatic injury is involved, furnish your supervisor with medical evidence of any disability within 10 calendar days of claiming continuation of pay (COP). COP is continuation of your regular pay for up to 45 calendar days of wage loss due to disability and/or medical treatment. It is paid only in connection with a traumatic injury. Employees who have an occupational disease claim are not eligible to receive COP.

- If there was lost time and the injured person is back to work, the supervisor needs to complete a CA-3 form (Report of Termination of Disability and/or Payment).

- If you become disabled from your regular job you are expected to return to suitable light or limited duty identified by your supervisor. If such work is not available, the Office of Worker's Compensation Programs (OWCP) may provide a nurse and vocational rehabilitation services to help you return to work, either with your original Federal employer, another Federal employer, or in the private sector.

OWCP considers return to work a benefit both to the injured employee, who once again becomes a productive member of society, and to the employer, who retains (or obtains) the services of a skilled and knowledgeable individual.

The Federal Employee's Compensation Act provides that an employee must actively seek suitable work as soon as he or she can do so. If the employee refuses to do so, or refuses or neglects to work after such work is offered or found, he or she is not entitled to compensation.

Additional information on the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) can be found at http://www.dol.gov/esa/owcp_org.htm. Remember to protect your rights and receive benefits as quickly as possible; do not delay in reporting work-related injuries. It is your responsibility to obtain the information needed to support your claim.

• Leave and Earnings Statement

You will receive from the Defense Finance and Accounting System office, a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) every two weeks, which is mailed to your PSC box, usually a day or two before payday or by going to <http://www.dfas.mil> and logging on to MY PAY. This LES notes all of your pay and allowances, deductions and allotments, leave earned and used, overtime, and variety of other important information. If you don't understand your LES, your timekeeper can probably help. Review your LES carefully each pay period to ensure all pay data is correct. If there is an error or you do not understand the information, either the finance customer service representative for your organization, or the personnel office will be able to assist you. Your timekeeper can tell you who your customer service representative is and how to contact him or her.

• Leave - Excused Absences

You may hear the term "Administrative Leave" when someone is talking about absence from work that is not chargeable to annual leave, sick leave, or some other official absence. The official term is an excused absence and there are few times when an excused absence is allowed. There must be legal or regulatory authority for an absence during the basic workweek to be excused without charge to leave. Generally, an excused absence must clearly serve the interests of management as well as the interests of the employee. Some examples where an excused absence is appropriate are: attending official or semi-official DoD or AF functions; donating blood, declared weather emergencies, etc. Managers and supervisors do have the very limited authority to excuse occasional short periods of unforeseen tardiness or other short absences or the early release of an individual employee, but DO NOT have authority to approve an early dismissal of groups of employees. Other excused absences, to include early group dismissals due to weather conditions, require the approval of the installation commander. DoD policies

specifically prohibit commanders or others from using this authority to create additional or extended holidays.

• Leave

Full-time and part-time employees earn both annual leave and sick leave, unless they are on an intermittent appointment or an appointment lasting less than 90-days. If you are not in a duty status, you will normally be in a leave status described below.

Requesting Leave

Your request for leave should be submitted to the first level supervisor using a Request for Leave or Approved Absence, OPM Form 71. Leave should be requested in advance of the absence, except in emergency situations. Sick leave for an illness or injury should be requested by calling the first level supervisor as soon as possible, but at least within the first hour or two of the absence. Leave is charged in 15-minute increments. You may not be placed in any leave status other than Absent Without Leave (AWOL) without your request.

Types of Leave

ANNUAL LEAVE (AL)

Annual Leave is granted to allow you time off for family days, vacations, personal errands, and emergencies or for any other purpose including an illness. When you resign, retire or separate from Federal service, you receive a lump-sum payment for the annual leave you have accrued. You cannot be granted leave in conjunction with retirement, resignation or LWOP granted to follow a relocating sponsor.

Accrual Rates: Employees earn 4, 6 or 8 hours of annual leave per pay period, depending on their years of creditable service. If you have less than 3 years of service, you earn 4 hours per pay period. If you have 3 to 15 years of service, you earn 6 hours per pay period (10 hours in the last pay period of the leave year). If you have more than 15 years of service, you earn 8 hours per pay period. The amount of leave earned by part-time employees is prorated based on the number of hours worked.

Maximum Annual Leave Accumulation: Most Federal employees may carryover up to 240 hours of annual leave from one leave year to the next. Certain employees recruited from the U.S. to work in the overseas area may carryover up to 360 hours of annual leave from one leave year to the next.

Advanced Leave: You may be granted advanced annual leave up to the amount you would earn during the current leave year. Advanced annual leave requires the supervisor's written approval and proper coding on the timecard.

SICK LEAVE (SL)

Sick leave may only be used for:

- Medical, dental or optical examination or treatment
- Incapacitation for physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth
- Exposure to a communicable disease
- To make arrangements for the adoption of a child

- To participate in drug or alcohol counseling programs
- To care for a family member as a result of illness, injury, pregnancy, childbirth, medical appointment or attend a funeral or make the necessary funeral arrangements. A full-time employee may use up to 40 hours of sick leave for the purposes listed above. You may use an additional 64 hours (104 total) sick leave, if your sick leave balance does not drop below 80 hours. Part-time employees and employees with uncommon tours of duty are also covered, and the amount of sick leave available for these purposes is prorated. You may take up to 12 weeks to care for a family member with a serious health condition (See FMLA below).

You are not paid for unused sick leave when you separate. Unused sick leave will be re-credited to your sick leave balance if you are re-employed with a federal agency. There is no limitation on the amount of sick leave that may be carried forward to the next leave year. Sick leave for more than 3 consecutive workdays must be supported by medical documentation. Medical documentation can also be required for other reasons specified in AFI 36-815.

Accrual Rates: All employees earn 4 hours of sick leave per pay period. The amount of leave earned by part-time employees is pro-rated based on the number of hours worked.

Advanced Sick Leave: You may be advanced up to 30 days of sick leave if you meet the requirements in AFI 36-815, 3.11. Requests for advanced sick leave with the required medical documentation must be submitted through Civilian Personnel to ensure it meets all of the regulatory requirements.

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)

LWOP is a temporary non-pay status granted to cover an approved absence upon your request. With the approval of your supervisor, LWOP may be used for a few days to cover a vacation or family emergency, or it may be for up to 12 months if the eligible employee is relocating with a spouse on official PCS orders. A Request for Personnel Action (RPA) must be submitted for all LWOP over 30 days. There are both mandatory and discretionary reasons to approve of LWOP. There are specific, regulatory criteria that you must meet before LWOP is granted for the mandatory reasons. LWOP for discretionary reasons is limited to 90-days or less.

OTHER TYPES OF LEAVE

Military Leave – Granted to employees who are members of the Reserve or National Guard to perform active duty, active duty training or inactive duty training. These employees normally earn 120 hours of military leave per fiscal year. Military leave is charged in one-hour increments, up to 8 hours per day, only for the days the employee would have otherwise worked.

Court Leave - Available to employees required to perform jury duty in a federal, state or municipal court, or to serve as a witness for the U.S., District of Columbia, or state or local government.

Leave for Bone Marrow or Organ Donation – You may use 7 days leave per calendar year to donate bone marrow. You may use 30 days leave to donate your organs. The employee receiving bone marrow or a new organ must use his or her own sick leave.

Home Leave – Earned by certain employees recruited from the US to work overseas. Most employees in this category will earn 5 days of home leave per year if they accrue 360 hours

annual leave. Home leave may be authorized after completing 24 months of continuous service abroad. Home leave can only be used for leave in the US, its territories or in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. For GSU employees, accrual of home leave days depends on Post Differential authorized.

Absent without Leave (AWOL) – You are charged AWOL when you do not receive prior approval for the absence or you do not have your supervisor’s approval for the leave. In addition to not being paid for the absence, you may be disciplined for AWOL.

Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP) This program allows you to receive leave donated directly from other employees for a personal emergency. A personal emergency is defined as a medical condition, family emergency, or other hardship situation that is expected to require an employee’s absence from duty for a prolonged period of time and result in a over 24 hours in a LWOP status. Employees must complete an application, provide medical certification or other evidence of the personal emergency, and deplete their own leave balances prior to being approved to receive leave donations. The leave recipient may only use the donated leave for the personal emergency described on the application. Leave donors may only donate annual leave to a leave recipient.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), covered employees are entitled up to 12 weeks Leave Without Pay (LWOP) during a 12 month period for their own serious health condition or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Accrued annual or sick leave, consistent with law and regulations governing the granting and use of annual or sick leave, may be substituted for LWOP. Employees must maintain a sick leave balance of 80 hours in order to use the full 12 weeks of sick leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Any employee may use an initial 40 hours of sick leave for family care purposes but to use more than 40 hours, an employee must maintain a sick leave balance of 80 hours at all times. The definition of a serious health condition is defined in AFI 36-815. This is not intended to cover short-term conditions for which treatment and recovery are brief. If an employee has already used any sick leave for general health care or bereavement purposes in the leave year, that amount is subtracted from the 12-week entitlement. To receive this benefit you must invoke FMLA by requesting it from your first level supervisor or checking the appropriate box on the OPM Form 71 to request the leave. Medical documentation is required.

• Merit Promotion

The Air Force uses an automated system to identify potential candidates for internal personnel actions where competition is required, such as merit promotion. However, in order to receive consideration for any Air Force vacancy, you must view job announcements and self-nominate for each and every vacancy. Air Force vacancy announcements are posted on the HQ AFPC Civilian Employment Web Site and the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) Job Line. USAFE announcements open on Fridays and close on Thursdays; however, other Air Force positions are posted any day of the workweek, generally for a minimum of five workdays. It is, therefore, extremely important for individuals seeking employment outside of USAFE to check the website more than one per week or to register in the Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS). See also the article on Self-Nomination.

Once you have successfully completed the self-nomination process, the Air Force will use Resumix and the Civilian Personnel Decision Support System (CPDSS) to rate and rank your qualifications based on the information in your data record (i.e., work experience, education, and training)(See also the article on Career Brief). The selecting official is then provided a referral certificate package, which includes a list of eligible candidates, career referral briefs, and affirmative employment information.

- **Merit System Principles**

The merit system principles are the public's expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, fair, open to all, free from political interference, and staffed by honest, competent, and dedicated employees. As the federal government experiences continued change in the management of human resources (centralization, deregulation, delegation, etc.), it becomes increasingly important that line supervisors and managers incorporate the merit system principles into every process they use and decision they make.

The merit system principles are:

1. Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition.
2. Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition.
3. Provide equal pay for equal work and reward excellent performance.
4. Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
5. Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
6. Retain and separate employees on the basis of their performance.
7. Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
8. Protect employees from improper political influence.
9. Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situations (i.e., protecting people who report things like illegal and/or wasteful activities).

- **Nepotism**

Nepotism occurs when relatives are in the same chain-of-command. A management official with authority to take personnel management actions may not select a relative for a position anywhere in the organization under his/her jurisdiction or control. Also, management officials, or other public officials having the authority to appoint, employ, promote, or advance persons or to recommend this action, may not advocate or recommend a relative for a position in the Department of Defense. 5 CFR 310.102 defines the term 'relative'.

The Affirmative Employment Section is responsible for ensuring at the time of "appointment" that nepotism does not occur. When it does occur and is brought to our attention, corrective action is taken immediately. Corrective action will be made and involves the following offices: Civilian Personnel, management officials in the organization affected, the Wing Legal Office, and the employee affected. Should you have questions regarding this topic, please speak to your servicing Affirmative Employment Specialist.

• Official Personnel Folder (OPF)

Your OPF documents your employment with the federal government. It is the property of the federal government. If you transfer to another federal agency, the folder is forwarded to the new agency. If you separate from federal service, it is forwarded to the General Services Administration, National Personnel Records Center, in St. Louis, Missouri for storage. OPFs are maintained by the Regional Personnel Center and are no longer readily available for review. The Electronic Official Personnel Folder (EOPF) is an "electronic filing cabinet" where your personnel actions and other pertinent documents/information are stored. The EOPF is available for viewing and/or printing at your local workstation or Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). All documents created for actions effective on or after 1 October 1996 are filed in both an image or an electronically created data file in the Personnel Automated Records Information System (PARIS). If you were hired into Federal service after 1 October 1996, you will have a completely Electronic OPF. If, however, you were on the Federal rolls prior to 1 October 1996, the Regional Personnel Center (RPC) maintains the paper OPF along with its electronic version. Be sure to retain your own copies.

• Overseas Allowances

Living Quarters Allowance (LQA) serves as a recruitment incentive for employees recruited in the US for overseas positions. There are two types of quarters allowances: Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance for the employee and each family member while residing in temporary quarters (e.g., hotel), before occupying permanent quarters; and LQA to substantially cover allowable costs for adequate living quarters; (e.g. rent, heat, light, fuel, gas, electricity, water, etc.). Total costs may not exceed maximum allowable rate, set by the State Department or estimated/actual costs whichever is less. For more information, see the LQA Fact Sheet on our home page.

• Overseas Tours: Self-sponsored Civilian

A long-standing DOD policy has been to limit overseas employment to 5 years for most US civil service employees. Some form of this rotation policy has been around since 1966. In a March 1997 memorandum, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy re-affirmed DOD's intent that civilian appropriated fund employment overseas be limited to 5 years, in all but "extremely rare" circumstances. The memo also emphasized that any extensions should be directly tied to mission needs, are intended to provide short-term management flexibility based on local needs and conditions, and are not intended to provide for permanent employment in the foreign area.

Most US civilian employees are subject to this rotation requirement. Exceptions include family members of military and civilian employees, employees who worked overseas prior to the rotation requirement, DODDS educators, and a few other limited exceptions.

A common misconception about the rotation policy is that your clock starts over if you change agencies or have a break in service while overseas. This is not true. All appropriated fund US civilian employment within DOD in a foreign overseas area counts toward the 5-year limitation, unless interrupted by a 12-month residency in the United States. This also applies to individuals who previously met the 5 year limitation, moved to a different pay system (i.e., nonappropriated fund or AAFES) and have reapplied for another appropriated fund (civil service) position. If the 12-month U.S. residency requirement has not been met, the individual will not be eligible for a new overseas appropriated fund appointment. What happens if you are not extended? The action depends on your specific status but there are a few common situations. You may self-nominate for other positions or exercise your return rights, if applicable. We try to notify your return rights base 90 days prior to the end of your tour of your intent to return. If you have return rights to a lower grade, you are eligible to register in the DOD Priority Placement Program (PPP) for your current (higher) grade. If there is no offer within 30 days prior to the end of your tour, you will be removed from the PPP and you must exercise your return rights. If you have return rights to the same grade, you are not eligible to register in PPP. If you do not have return rights and are a career or career-conditional employee, you are also eligible to register in PPP; however, you may remain overseas in your current position until a valid offer is received. If you decline a valid offer, you are subject to separation from Federal Service, in accordance with your overseas employment agreement.

• **Overseas Tours – Family Members**

If you were hired after you arrived overseas with your sponsor, you are not subject to rotation. Your tour corresponds to that of your sponsor. We will ask you to update your DEROS (rotation date) periodically to ensure we have the current information in our data system.

What happens when your sponsor rotates or your family member status changes? Generally, if your military or civilian sponsor PCSs, you are expected to do so also. If your sponsor retires or separates from active duty or civil service, or you divorce, you are no longer a family member and cannot remain employed as a family member, except under certain exceptions. If you are a career or career-conditional employee and lose your family member status for any reason, you can remain employed; however, you become subject to the rotation policy and all previous employment time in the foreign overseas area counts toward the five-year limit. Your DEROS will be established by granting a two-year tour or the remainder of the five-year period, whichever is later. If you were hired on a family member appointment (Schedule A, 213.3106(b)(6)), your employment will terminate 60 days after your status changes. In rare instances, usually related to mission requirements, you may be extended for a maximum of 12 months; however, this exception is seldom granted.

• **Passports, Reports of Birth Abroad, and SOFA Stamps**

If you have supporting documentation, you may pick up application forms for passports at the Mission Support Squadron, Military Personnel Flight, Building 2106, Room 101. Customer service hours are Monday – Friday, 0800-1600. Newborn birth registration appointments (only) are 0800 – 1030. Walk-ins are all day regarding other matters. Upon PCSing into Ramstein, all civilian employees and family members require the SOFA stamp within 90 days. To obtain your SOFA stamp, visit the Customer Service Office, Building 2120, Room 125 to obtain the SOFA Request form (AE 600-77A).

• Pay and Pay Periods

You are paid every other week, so in most years you are paid 26 times. Each payday covers a two-week period ending on Saturday. Approximately one week is required to compute your pay and prepare your check following the close of the pay period. Department of Defense regulations require that new employees have their checks deposited electronically to a bank account. You must complete a Standard Form 1199A at the time of your appointment (in-processing) to have this direct deposit started and avoid a delay in receiving your pay.

Payroll Deductions

Law requires certain deductions from your pay. These are:

- Federal Income Tax
- Social Security/Medicare and/or
- Retirement Deductions

Optional deductions (for employees who qualify and elect) include:

- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) premiums
- Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) premiums
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Contributions
- U.S. Savings Bonds
- Allotment to a Credit Union or other Savings Institution
- Combined Federal Campaign Contribution

You may also have state income tax withheld from your paycheck to avoid having to pay estimated taxes.

If you have a problem with your pay, first go to your timekeeper. Problems such as no pay at all, leave problems; withholding or allotment problems are likely to be caused by time card or payroll problems. Either your timekeeper or your payroll customer service representative can help. If the problem is related to data in the personnel system, such as grade or step, service computation date which may affect annual leave, post allowance or living quarters allowance, contact the Civilian Personnel Flight.

• Position Classification Principles

Every job in the Federal government is classified. This means that a title, series, grade, and pay plan have been assigned to the position. The classification determines the range of pay for the job and the type of qualifications needed by applicants, among other things. The classification of

a job is based on the duties and responsibilities described in the position description or core personnel document as evaluated against government-wide classification standards. Congress established the classification system now used in the Federal Government to insure equal pay for work of substantially equal difficulty and value.

The correct evaluation of each job is the basis for the integrity of the entire personnel management system. The supervisor is responsible for assigning duties; and has a major impact on the title, series, and grade of positions. Supervisors cannot classify positions. The Commander delegates the authority to the Civilian Personnel Officer and, specifically, to the Position Classification Specialist.

The Classifier may meet with the employee and/or supervisor to collect position information; evaluates positions by comparison to appropriate classification standards; and, advises managers on position management. Classifiers base classification decisions on the nature of work, difficulty of the work, authority and responsibility exercised, extent of supervisory controls over the work, and qualifications required to do the work. The classifier classifies the duties assigned and performed, not the employee.

The grade of the position determines the salary range paid to the employee. Since the grade determines the pay range, some supervisors try to pay an employee more by upgrading the position. What they don't realize is that unless the duties change significantly, the grade won't change.

• Position Descriptions - Core Personnel Document

Supervisors are responsible for assigning duties and responsibilities and insuring that the major duties and responsibilities are recorded in a written document. These days, this document is the Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003). This document replaces the old Position Description document (AF Form 1378). The Core Personnel Document is a single document containing essential information required of civilian positions: the duty description, the performance plan, and recruitment criteria.

The major duties and responsibilities of the position must be accurately described since the Core Personnel Document is used to assign the correct title, series and grade and to support other personnel actions such as performance evaluation and recruitment. The first-level supervisor certifies to the accuracy of duties assigned by signing the Core Personnel Document.

• Post Allowance

Post Allowance (PA) is a cost of living allowance granted to a full-time employee officially stationed at a post in a foreign area where the cost of living, not counting quarters costs, is substantially higher than in Washington, DC. All full-time employees submit a SF 1190, Foreign Allowances Application, Grant, & Report, upon entrance to duty. If Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) is claimed, the SF-1190 for post allowance should be completed when employee moves from temporary to permanent quarters. If TQSA is not claimed, a SF-

1190 for PA should be completed upon arrival at the overseas duty station and is effective the same date.

Changes Affecting Post Allowance

- Dependents arrive at or leave the overseas post
- Children reaching age 21, getting married or moving from home permanently (whichever comes first)
- Spouse employed full-time by U.S. Government
- Employee or family members are on official orders paying per diem (including Renewal Agreement Travel)
- Change in work schedule from full-time to part time or intermittent
- Transfer or separation
- Changes in exchange rates that affect the cost of goods and services bought on the economy

• Priority Placement Program

The DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) provides placement opportunities for those employees faced with separation or reduction in grade through no fault of their own (i.e., because of RIF or reorganization), or when self-sponsored civilian employees have successfully completed their overseas tour of duty. Family members may be eligible for registration in the PPP; however, the area of referral is typically limited to those DoD activities in the area of the sponsor's new assignment in the United States or in the sponsor's commuting area in the event of Reduction In Force. There are a number of different programs within the PPP; therefore, you should contact your Affirmative Employment Specialist to discuss your specific entitlements.

• Privacy Act of 1974 and Freedom of Information Act

The Privacy Act was established to guard individuals against an invasion of personal privacy by the misuse of Federal records. It also grants individuals access to records concerning them that are maintained by Federal agencies and a means to correct those records. There are certain records exempted from these provisions. In general, the exempted categories are:

1. Information identifying criminal offenders.
2. Criminal investigations.
3. Reports identifying a properly confidential source.
4. Classified information in any system of records.
5. Law enforcement investigative files.
6. Records maintained by statute and solely for statistical purpose.
7. Investigator materials to determine suitability or eligibility for Federal employment, security clearances, Federal contracts, and related matters if confidential source would be disclosed.
8. Testing examining and rating materials for appointment or promotion, which, if released, would compromise the objectivity or fairness of the test.

Freedom of Information Act, as amended, was designed to ‘open up’ the workings of Federal government by giving people access to information concerning the operations of the Executive branch (but not the Legislative or Judicial branch). The Act, in general, provides that certain information is not required to be released:

1. Classified in the interest of national defense or foreign policy
2. Internal personnel rules
3. Trade secrets
4. Intra-agency or interagency communications not routinely available
5. Personnel or medical information
6. Law enforcement files
7. Financial information
8. Information exempted by other statutes

• **Probationary/Trial Period**

Federal employees serve a probationary/trial period during their first year of permanent federal employment, and also upon their first assignment to a supervisory or managerial position.

The purpose of the initial probationary/trial period is to determine your fitness for continued Federal employment. During this period, the supervisor must look at job performance and work behavior as well as character, conduct, and attitude that directly affect job performance. If there is a problem in any of these areas, the supervisor should take action. Such action could be as serious as removal. Removal during probationary/trial period is easier for the supervisor to do, than later. There are very limited appeal rights if action is taken during the probationary/trial period.

The supervisory or managerial probationary period is designed to judge an employee’s ability to perform the supervisory or managerial duties. If an employee fails this probationary/trial period, he or she must be removed from that position.

• **Prohibited Personnel Practices**

Prohibited personnel practices are those things a Federal employee with personnel authority may not do. A federal employee has personnel authority if they can take, directs others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action. This includes appointments, promotions, discipline, details, transfers, reassignments, reinstatements, or any decisions concerning pay, benefits, and training. Changes to the law were made to protect whistleblowers and people with veteran’s preference. A personnel action includes any significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions, which is inconsistent with the employees’ salary or grade. People with personnel authority - managers and supervisors - - are charged with avoiding prohibited personnel practices.

PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES

1. Don’t DISCRIMINATE on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.

2. Don't SOLICIT or CONSIDER any personnel recommendation or statement not based on personal knowledge or records of performance, ability, aptitude, general qualifications, character, loyalty, or suitability.
3. Don't COERCE the political activity of any employee or applicant.
4. Don't DECEIVE or OBSTRUCT any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.
5. Don't INFLUENCE a person to withdraw from competition.
6. Don't GRANT any preference or advantage not authorized by law, regulation, or rule.
7. Don't EMPLOY or PROMOTE a relative.
8. Don't RETALIATE against a whistleblower, whether an employee or an applicant.
9. Don't RETALIATE against employees or applicants who exercise their appeal rights, testify, or cooperate with an inspector general or the Special Counsel, or refuse to break the law.
10. Don't DISCRIMINATE based on actions not adversely affecting performance.
11. Don't VIOLATE any law, rule, or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit principles.
12. Don't VIOLATE veterans' preference requirements.

Avoiding prohibited personnel practices will not guarantee you will never have to defend a decision or action, but it will give you a firm basis from which to start. You should remain conscious of Merit System principles and prohibited personnel practices.

• **Reduction in Force (RIF)**

RIF occurs when an agency is obliged to demote, separate, or furlough one or more employees because of lack of work, shortage of funds, reorganization, or base closure. The cause of RIF may come from an act of Congress, the President, the Office of Management and Budget, the head of an agency, or any other authorized official. The first procedural step in a RIF is to establish the boundaries within which employees will compete to retain their jobs. The competitive area identifies the organizational and geographical parameters for RIF. Air Force policy is that the competitive area is usually all Air Force activities within the commuting area that are serviced by the same Civilian Personnel Flight. Similarly, different agencies, such as DeCA, will define their own competitive areas for RIF. Employees of one agency (i.e., competitive area) will not normally compete with employees of another. Competitive areas must be determined not later than 90 days prior to issuing any RIF notices.

The second step is defining the competitive levels, which identify the grade and occupation of each employee in the competitive area affected by RIF. Competitive levels are assigned to each position when it is established. Positions that share competitive levels are usually of the same series, grade, qualifications, etc. so that someone in one job could move to another in the same competitive level with little or no interruption of the work.

The names of all employees in a competitive level are listed on a retention register in the order of their retention standing. Retention standing is based upon four factors: tenure group, veteran's preference, Service Computation Date (SCD), and performance appraisals. The tenure group (Career (1), Career-Conditional (2) and Indefinite (3) (usually serving on other than permanent appointments)) determines your retention group. Veteran's preference determines each employee's subgroup within the tenure groups. Within each subgroup, employees are further

ranked in order of their length of service (SCD) after adjustments are made for performance appraisals. The mechanics of operating a RIF are more complex than is practical to discuss here, but the procedure used is well defined and is applied uniformly to all employees affected by such action. Employees in the competitive service do not compete with those in the excepted service. The specific impact of a RIF will be explained in detail if you are to be affected.

• **Resignation**

If you resign from Federal service, you should provide your supervisor with at least 2 weeks notice. You should sign a Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, and state your reasons for resignation and including a forwarding address on the back of the form. The form is forwarded electronically to the CPF for processing. For an explanation of your benefits, please see BEST at: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/menu.htm

Retirement contributions. You may choose to withdraw your retirement contributions anytime after 31 days from your resignation if you are not eligible for an immediate annuity. You are not required to withdraw your retirement contributions and may leave the money in the fund until you are eligible for a deferred retirement. If you are thinking about withdrawing your retirement contributions, there are advantages and disadvantages for you to consider. If you are a FERS employee and you choose to withdraw your retirement contributions, the associated service period may never be used for the calculation of retirement benefits.

Health Benefits. When you lose your Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage, you have a 31-day temporary extension of coverage, at no cost, in the same enrollment category held at separation. You may be eligible for Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) for up to 18 months during which you would pay the total premium (both employee and government share) plus the 2% administration cost. You are also eligible to convert to an individual policy either at the time you resign or at the end of the 18-month TCC. If interested, contact BEST prior to your resignation, with your request. Additional information on TCC is available at: www.opm.gov/insure/health/tcc

Life Insurance. Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) coverage terminates at the end of the pay period in which you resign. You then have 31 days (no charge) extension of coverage during which you may convert to an individual policy or continue your Option B coverage through portability.

TSP. The following website provides further information for withdrawal of your TSP: <http://www.tsp.gov>

• **Retirement Coverage**

Federal civilian employees on permanent, non-intermittent appointments are eligible for retirement benefits. If you are a newly hired employee, you may be participating in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). However, some employees may be covered under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or CSRS Offset. To determine your retirement coverage, refer to Item 30 of your latest SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action or your LES.

All employees with retirement coverage may contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) to bolster their retirement income, however, only FERS employees receive matching contributions. For more information on retirement please make an appointment with your Human Resource Specialist (Employee Relations) and/or visit these websites:

- www.opm.gov
- www.tsp.gov/
- www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/

- **Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)**

There are three categories of benefits in the FERS Basic Benefit Plan:

- Immediate
- Early
- Deferred

Eligibility is determined by your age and number of years of creditable service. In some cases, you must have reached the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) to receive retirement benefits. Use the following chart to figure your minimum retirement age.

Minimum Retirement Age

If you were born	Your MRA is
Before 1948	55
In 1948	55 and 2 months
In 1949	55 and 4 months
In 1950	55 and 6 months
In 1951	55 and 8 months
In 1952	55 and 10 months
In 1953 through 1964	56
In 1965	56 and 2 months
In 1966	56 and 4 months
In 1967	56 and 6 months
In 1968	56 and 8 months
In 1969	56 and 10 months
In 1970 and after	57

Immediate-- An immediate retirement benefit is one that starts within 30 days from the date you stop working.

If you meet one of the following sets of age and service requirements, you are entitled to an immediate retirement benefit:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
62	5
60	20
MRA	30
MRA	10

If you retire at the MRA with at least 10, but less than 30 years of service, your benefit will be reduced by 5 percent a year for each year you are under 62, unless you have 20 years of service and your benefit starts when you reach age 60 or later.

Early-- Refers to special eligibility rules as follows:

The early retirement benefit is available in certain involuntary separation cases and in cases of voluntary separations during a major reorganization or reduction in force. To be eligible, you must meet the following requirements:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
50	20
Any Age	25

Deferred-- Refers to delayed payment of benefit until criteria are met, as follows:

If you leave Federal service before you meet the age and service requirements for an immediate retirement benefit, you may be eligible for deferred retirement benefits. To be eligible, you must have completed at least 5 years of creditable civilian service. You may receive benefits when you reach one of the following ages:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
62	5
60	20
MRA	30
MRA	10

If you retire at the MRA with at least 10, but less than 30 years of service, your benefit will be reduced by 5 percent a year for each year you are under 62, unless you have 20 years of service and your benefit starts when you reach age 60 or later.

FERS is a 3-part retirement plan, which includes: First, a basic FERS annuity plan, secondly, Social Security benefits, and thirdly, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). FERS and Social Security are automatic deductions that will appear on your LES. The deduction for TSP is voluntary and you must elect the deduction within the first 60 days you were hired or during an open season. You may also elect to contribute or increase your contributions to TSP during an open season, which occurs twice a year. TSP savings often make up the largest portion of retirement income for a FERS employee and it is important to start saving early in your career.

Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)

You may retire under CSRS at the following ages, and receive an immediate annuity, if you have at least the amount of Federal Service shown in the table below:

Type of retirement	Minimum Age	Minimum Service (Years)	Special Requirements
Optional	62	5	None
	60	20	None
	55	30	None
Special Optional	50	20	You must retire under special provisions for air traffic controllers or law enforcement and firefighter personnel. Air traffic controllers can also retire at any age with 25 years of service as an air traffic controller.
Early Optional	Any Age 50	20	25 Your agency must be undergoing a major reorganization, reduction-in-force, or transfer of function determined by the Office of Personnel Management. Annuity is reduced if under 55.
Discontinued Service	Any Age 50	20	25 Your separation is involuntary and not a removal for misconduct delinquency.
Disability	Any Age	5	You must be disabled for useful and efficient service in your current position and any other vacant position at the same grade or pay level within your commuting area and current agency for which you are qualified.

Must be prior to retirement, or within one year of separation, except in cases of mental incompetence.

CSRS covers most permanent employees hired before 1984. Employees pay 7 percent of their salary into this retirement system and the government contributes an equal amount. CSRS employees do not pay into Social Security; however, they do pay an additional 1.45 percent of their salary into Medicare. CSRS Offset employees do contribute to Social Security.

The total Basic Annuity cannot exceed 80 percent of the "high 3" average pay. CSRS employees must have been employed for at least 1 year within the 2-year period immediately preceding retirement to be eligible for an annuity. Accrued and unused sick leave to an employee's credit at date of retirement is used in computing the amount of annuity or survivor annuity. It is not used in determining the high 3 average salary and cannot be counted toward the minimum length of service necessary to retire.

Additional retirement information can be found at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/retirements.htm> and <http://www.opm.gov/retire/index.asp>.

• **Safety**

Your safety is a major concern to the Federal government. Management takes measures to assure that safe working conditions and safety instructions are given for each job. Your cooperation is also needed. Report any unsafe condition or practice to your supervisor for corrective action, follow safety instructions, and use every precaution to avoid accident or injury.

Observe safe driving practices, comply with the posted speed limits and traffic control devices and remember to "buckle up for safety." If you work in an area where the use of protective safety equipment is required, you are expected to comply with such requirements. Remember this equipment is designed for your safety.

In addition, there are many areas on base where smoking will create a fire hazard. These areas are plainly marked with "NO SMOKING" signs. Please observe these restrictions. Make sure you know where fire alarm boxes are located and are informed on the fire evacuation plan for your building. BE SAFE.

In addition, a government-wide safety initiative is in place. As part of the initiative, agencies were called on to reduce the occurrence of injuries, and reduce the rate of lost production days (days employees spend away from work). In 2002, a joint summit was convened to renew commitment to these safety goals.

You can assist in these goals of having a healthy and safe work force by practicing the four principles of Operation Risk Management (ORM). The four principles are:

- Accept no unnecessary risk

- Make risk decisions at the appropriate level
- Accept risk when benefits outweigh the costs
- Integrate ORM into operations and planning at all levels.

The great thing about ORM is that it is not just a process to reduce injury or property damage. It is designed to make you aware of the risks and from that decide on the action to take. ORM is a Command Policy that benefits each person in all situations. The bottom line is that we can live better and smarter if we practice ORM.

For more information on safety or ORM, visit <https://wwwmil.ramstein.af.mil/435/86aw/se/>.

• **Security Clearance and Investigation**

All new federal employees are subject to a background investigation. Position sensitivity determines the type of security investigation required before individuals can be assigned to sensitive positions and granted access to classified information (e.g., Secret, Top Secret). There are four sensitively levels:

- Nonsensitive
- Noncritical-Sensitive
- Critical-Sensitive
- Special-Sensitive

A National Agency Check plus Written Inquiries (NACI) investigation is required on individuals assigned to non-sensitive and noncritical-sensitive positions. We process the required forms (i.e. SF 85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions and SF-85P, Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions) and take fingerprints for all newly hired civilian employees.

Security investigations for sensitive positions can take a long time to complete and are costly.

• **Self Nomination:**

Permanent Air Force employees must self-nominate to receive consideration for other Air Force positions. Resumes are not required and may create problems in the self-nomination process if entered into the system. All internal Air Force vacancies will be posted on the HQ AFPC Civilian Employment Home Page and the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) Job Line. Internal candidates must view job announcements and self-nominate before the closing date of the vacancy announcement. Announcements for positions in USAFE open on Fridays for a minimum of five workdays and close on Thursdays. Other Air Force positions open any day of the workweek, generally for a minimum of five workdays. If you are interested in moving to an Air Force position outside of USAFE, you may want to check the announcement website more than once per week or register in the Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS).

Announcements will be open to “internal” and “external” candidates, so it is important to understand the distinction. You are considered "internal" if you occupy a PERMANENT position serviced by the Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight. An "internal" employee may be on a competitive service (e.g., career or career conditional) or excepted service (e.g., family member) appointment. It is important for excepted service family member employees to understand that they are "internal" candidates while in USAFE; however, they are not “internal” for other Air Force positions outside of the commuting area of their civilian or military sponsor. Family members on excepted service appointments wishing to be considered for positions in the United States prior to or in conjunction with the PCS move of their sponsor, must apply as “external” candidates. For more information on how to apply for positions in the US, please contact your servicing Human Resource Specialist/Assistant. (See article on Appointment Types).

An "external" candidate is any individual not currently on a PERMANENT appointment with the Air Force or serviced by the Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight (e.g., temporary employees, Army employees, NAF/AAFES employees). External candidates must apply for positions at the Job Information Counter, Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight, Building 2120, Room 123. New announcements are posted every Friday, closing date on Thursdays.

To self nominate, “internal” employees can:

- Call the HQ AFPC IVRS (from Germany) at 00-800-1997-2378, or
- Access the HQ AFPC Civilian Home Page at:
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/resweb/>

The first time you attempt to self-nominate, you’ll be prompted to establish a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which will work both for the telephone and the web. In order to use the web you must also have a USERID and Password. To create them you’ll need your Social Security Number, date of birth, Service Computation date (SCD) for leave, current pay plan, grade and step, DSN and valid e-mail address (this information can be found on your Leave and Earnings Statement). You’ll need to reference the vacancy announcement number for each self-nomination.

• Service Computation Date (SCD)

In the federal government, as in private industry, seniority is important for a number of reasons: leave accrual, reduction in force (RIF), and retirement. Federal employees have a Service Computation Date (SCD) for each.

The SCD for leave accrual purposes (reflected in block 31 on the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action), is used to determine the number of annual leave hours an employee is eligible to earn: 4 hours per biweekly pay period for a full-time employee with less than 3 years of service, 6 hours for those with 3 years but less than 15 years service, and 8 hours for those employees with over 15 years service. The time that counts toward your Leave SCD includes federal service, and in some cases all or part of military service.

The SCD for retirement reflects the actual civilian federal service creditable toward retirement. This could be different than the SCD-Leave. For instance, campaign time for retired military is creditable for leave purposes but may not be creditable toward retirement from federal service.

The SCD for reduction-in-force (RIF) is normally the SCD-Leave adjusted by the last three official performance ratings of record received during the four-periods prior to the date of the RIF. Additional retention service is added to the SCD based on previous ratings.

- **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment cannot and will not be tolerated within the Air Force. We all must be committed to the prevention of sexual harassment and to providing an environment of equal opportunity for all. If you believe you are being subjected to sexual harassment or any other form of discrimination or unfair treatment, you should notify your supervisor or chain of command. If that avenue doesn't work, or you do not feel comfortable using it, contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, 435 AW/CCD if you are an Air Force employee or the DeCA HQ EEO Office if you are a DeCA employee.

- **Skills Coding (Experience)(see also Merit Promotion)**

Skill codes are part of your computerized personnel record in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System. They reflect duties of the current position and previous work experiences. These codes are extremely important as they are used to determine qualifications and eligibility for referral in the self-nomination process and in determining training and development needs for employees and selection for training under competitive procedures.

You have the chance to review the skill codes assigned to your current position and to previous work experience by reviewing your career brief (see article on career brief). Discrepancies with the current position description should first be brought to the attention of your supervisor and then to your organization's Position Classification Specialist. Discrepancies with past work experience can be annotated on the brief and should be brought to the attention of your servicing Affirmative Employment Specialist. Discrepancies in previous work experience may require you to provide additional information in order to resolve any inconsistencies between previously certified applications or other descriptions of duties performed. AF develops skill codes for each occupational series authorized by the Office of Personnel Management. In some cases, an exact match for your past work experiences may not be available, but in most cases we can capture the most significant duties you performed.

- **Special Emphasis Program**

Each Air Force installation has programs that address the unique and special concerns of minority, women and disabled employees/applicants. Each Special Emphasis Program (SEP), as these are called has a program manager (SEPM) that develops and administers their SEP. The SEPMs are appointed to work with the Chief, Affirmative Employment on a collateral duty basis, spending approximately 20% of their duty time working their programs. There are usually six SEPMs:

- Federal Women's Program (FWP)

Black Employment Program (BEP)
Hispanic Employment Program (HEP)
People with Disabilities Employment Program (PDEP)
Asian American/Pacific Islander Employment Program (AA/PIEP)
American Indian/Alaskan Native Employment Program (AI/ANEP)

The SEPMs are responsible for:

Obtaining management's support by keeping them aware of program objectives and accomplishments.

Assisting in the development of affirmative employment initiatives.

Identifying potential or existing problems and artificial barriers, which impede the advancement of minorities and women, and recommend corrective action.

Identifying architectural and/or transportation barriers that impede the selection or advancement of people with disabilities and offer suggestions for modifications.

Assisting in counseling minorities, women and the disabled about career opportunities and encourage them to participate in self-development activities.

Encouraging management to use the Developmental Opportunity Program (DOP) and job restructuring to provide opportunities for employees in lower-graded, dead-end jobs.

Communicating to management, employees, and community organizations information which will enhance the employment of minorities, women, and disabled.

Along with the Chief of Affirmative Employment, developing annual SEP objectives and a plan to accomplish those objectives.

Participating in the development of the installation budget to ensure consideration of SEP objectives and activities.

Publicizing the program to increase management and employees' awareness of SEP objectives.

Ensuring recruitment efforts include sources most likely to produce qualified minority, women, and disabled candidates and actively recruit qualified candidates for career fields where they are underrepresented.

You are encouraged to actively support Special Emphasis Programs and/or get involved.

Employees should be released, on duty time, to serve on SEP committees and to participate in SEP sponsored activities.

• Substance Abuse Prevention and Control

Your decision to consume or abstain from alcoholic beverages during off-duty time is a choice that is personal to you. You cannot consume alcohol while on duty. However, if your alcohol consumption has an adverse impact on your performance or conduct on the job, then it becomes the concern of the supervisor. Professional counseling on alcohol or other substance abuse is available. If you desire more information about this, or would like to arrange for a confidential meeting with a counselor, contact a Human Resources Specialist (Employee Relations). Possession or use of illegal drugs is a crime and can be the basis of disciplinary action including removal. In addition, civilian employees are prohibited from possessing, selling or using drug abuse paraphernalia on or off duty. Failure to comply with this provision may result in disciplinary action. Violations of host nation laws are especially serious and also may result in

severe disciplinary and/or administrative actions up to and including removal from federal service.

• **Suggestions**

The Innovative Development Through Employee Awareness (IDEA) program is designed to encourage you to seek methods for simplifying your own work and that of others. The Air Force pays cash awards for suggestions put into use. You may have ideas on how to do a job better, faster or cheaper, to build morale or to prevent accidents. Submit your ideas on AF Form 1000. You can get this form from your supervisor or the suggestion program monitor. If your suggestion is adopted, you may be awarded a letter of appreciation/commendation or cash award depending on the benefits derived from your ideas adopted for government use.

• **Thrift Savings Plan**

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. The purpose of the TSP is to provide a savings plan for future retirement income. It offers you the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under so-called “401(k)” plans. The contributions to the plan and the earnings are tax-deferred until withdrawn. If you are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) you receive government matching contributions up to 5%, in addition to your own contributions. You may contribute to TSP within 60 days from the date you first became employed or during the semi-annual open seasons. You may obtain additional information in the TSP Summary Booklet, which is available at www.tsp.gov/. To enroll, you must contact BEST using the telephone automated, or web automated BEST system. Refer to the BEST topic in this handbook.

TSP Catch-Up Contribution Enrollment

What are “catch-up” contributions?

Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions. They are not the same as regular TSP contributions --- they are in addition to regular contributions. A TSP participant is eligible to make catch-up contributions if in a pay status; and is currently contributing to their regular TSP account either the maximum allowed regular TSP contribution percentage or a dollar amount which will result in reaching the IRS elective deferral limit by the end of the year; and is age 50 or older by 31 December of the year the catch-up contribution election is made; and is not in the 6-month non-contribution period following receipt of a financial hardship in-service withdrawal.

Does the IRS annual limit on elective deferrals apply only to regular TSP accounts?

The IRS annual limit applies to the total you contribute to your regular TSP account AND any other eligible tax-deferred plans. For example, in addition to your TSP account, you may be contributing to a 401k plan.

Do catch-up contributions have an annual limit?

Yes, catch-up contributions have their own annual limit separate from the IRS elective deferral limit for regular TSP contributions. The following chart demonstrates the annual catch-up contributions limits.

Year IRS Limit on Catch-Up Contributions

2004 - \$3,000

2005 - \$4,000

2006 and thereafter \$5,000*

* After 2006, this amount will be subject to increases to reflect inflation.

Can I make catch-up contributions by increasing my regular TSP contributions?

No. Catch-up contributions are separate and different from regular TSP contributions. Assuming you meet the eligibility requirements listed above, you must make a separate enrollment for catch-up contributions.

How do I enroll?

You'll enroll through EBIS or the BEST phone system. Instructions on how to access EBIS and the BEST phone system can be found on the BEST Homepage (<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm>) under "How to Access the BEST Automated Systems and Reach a Counselor."

To enroll in TSP Catch-Up Contributions via EBIS, simply click the "Transactions" icon, scroll down to the TSP Catch-Up Contributions transaction block, and click the "Change" button to begin your enrollment. The next screen will prompt you to select the type of TSP Catch-Up transaction you wish to make.

If using the BEST phone system to enroll – on reaching the main menus, press 3 for TSP, then 5 for Catch-Up Contributions. Then press 3 to elect TSP Catch-Up Contributions. You will hear the system voice, "During 2003 the maximum annual amount is \$3,000." Go ahead and submit your election. Regardless of what the system voices, any election made on or after 30 Nov 03 will be for 2004 (up to \$3,000). Updated verbiage may be loaded later to correct the maximum contribution amount for 2004 as \$3,000.

How can I get more information?

Additional information can be found in TSP Bulletin 03-4, 7 Feb 03, located on the TSP Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/cgi-bin/byteserver.cgi/bulletins/03-4.pdf>

•Time in Grade (TIG) and Qualifications Requirements

Eligibility for particular positions is determined by two separate criteria, **qualifications** and **time-in-grade**. Qualification requirements for all positions are described in two manuals: the Operating Manual Qualifications Standards for General Schedule Positions, and Job Qualification System for Trades and Labor Occupations. These two guides describe the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) required to perform a particular job in Federal service. These guides also state if there is an educational requirement or if education can substitute for experience. They may also describe the kinds of experience likely to give a candidate the KSAs required.

Time in Grade (TIG) is intended to prevent excessively rapid promotions. TIG starts for promotions to GS-6 and above. It does not apply at lower GS grades or in WG, WL, or WS positions. To advance to the next grade level employees must have completed a minimum of 52

weeks in the lower grade. For example, if you are currently in a GS-5 position, you must serve 52 weeks to be eligible for a GS-6. TIG requirements do not apply when an individual re-competes from a competitive register, i.e., Office of Personnel Management or Delegated Examining Unit, which are very seldom requested at Ramstein.

• Training and Development

Air Force policy is to provide training necessary to ensure maximum efficiency of civilian employees in the performance of their official duties. Generally, training must be related to the job you currently hold. Selection for training designed to prepare an employee for advancement must be on a competitive basis. Given the limited training funds available, the primary training focus is on completion of mission essential training requirements as expressed in DoD established training priorities.

Priority of Training

Priority I - Training that is essential to mission accomplishment.

Priority II - Training that must be accomplished to provide the systematic replacement of skilled personnel.

Priority III - Training that is required by an employee who is performing at an adequate level of competence but would increase his efficiency and productivity.

Training Form: DD Form 1556, Request, Authorization, Agreement, Certification of Training and Reimbursement, is the primary means of initiating, recording and transmitting civilian employee training data. It is a supervisory tool used to determine, fulfill, document and evaluate employee training. For all government sponsored training, this form must be completed, signed by the supervisor and presented to the Training Office for approval BEFORE training is attended – regardless of the source of funding.

Self-Development: Training is always valuable for both the employee and the organization. Periodically, supervisors and employees should discuss training needs/desires. Together a list of training needs and goals should be established which would identify those training needs you both agreed need to be accomplished in order to support the mission. If you and your supervisor's needs coincide, the Training Office should be approached regarding fund availability and arrangements for training attendance. For the training needs that do not coincide, you have other avenues available, which you can pursue on your own initiative, e.g. try to broaden your experience, knowledge and skills by self-improvement training on your own time and expense, such as adult education classes or extension courses (ECI). Furnish documentation of completed courses to your supervisor in order to report training to Training Section, for updating your Official Personnel Folder.

Tuition Assistance: There are limited opportunities for payment for college courses for civilian employees. Approval for payment must be obtained BEFORE the course starts. Please contact the Training Office for details and procedures.

• **Verification of Employment/Income**

The Work Number is an automated service that provides over 65 million employees a variety of human resource and payroll services, including employment and income verification. This fast, secure service is used when applying for a mortgage or loan, for reference checking, leasing an apartment or any other instance where proof of employment or income is needed. You benefit from having control of the process by authorizing third-party verifiers (like lenders and prospective employers) access to your information. This service must be used by Air Force serviced employees.

The Work Number can be used anytime, anywhere - available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To access The Work Number, go to: www.TheWorkNumber.com

For proof of employment ONLY (no income):

Step 1) Give the person (the verifier) needing proof of your employment, the following information:

- Your Social Security Number:
- Name of Employer: Department of Defense; Employer Code: 10365
- The Work Number Access Options:
 - Option a) <http://www.theworknumber.com/Verifiers>
 - Option b) 1-800-367-5690

For Proof of Employment *plus* Income:

Step 1) Obtain a Salary Key (click on "Login" next to "Ready to Get a Salary Key?")

Step 2) Enter the following information:

- Employer Code: 10365
- Your Social Security Number:
- Your PIN (temporary PIN is MMY of your birth) (You can change once you get into the system)

Step 3) Give the person needing proof of your employment plus income, the verifier, the following information:

- Your Social Security Number:
- Employer Code: 10365
- Your Salary Key (from Step 1):
- The Work Number Access Options for Verifiers:
 - Option a) <http://www.theworknumber.com/Verifiers>
 - Option b) 1-800-367-5690

The Work Number Client Service Center Information:

Monday - Friday; 7:00am - 8:00pm (CST)

1-800-996-7566

1-800-424-0253 (TTY - Deaf)

• **Whistleblower Protection Act**

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) provides a safe channel through which current and former federal employees, and applicants for employment, may disclose information that they believe shows:

- a violation of law, rule or regulation,
- gross mismanagement,
- gross waste of funds,
- abuse of authority, or
- a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

The OSC disclosure channel differs from other government whistleblower hotline channels in at least three ways:

- federal law guarantees confidentiality to the whistleblower;
- the Special Counsel may order an agency head to investigate and report on the disclosure; and
- after any such investigation, the Special Counsel must send the agency's report, with the whistleblower's comments, to the President and Congress.

Procedures

The OSC does not independently investigate allegations reported through its disclosure channel. The law requires the Special Counsel to send the information to the head of the agency concerned if the Special Counsel determines that there is a substantial likelihood that the information discloses the kind of wrongdoing described in the statute. The OSC will not divulge the identity of a whistleblower unless he or she consents.

When the Special Counsel sends the information to the agency, the agency head must conduct an investigation and submit a report to the Special Counsel. The Special Counsel sends the agency report, along with any comments provided by the whistleblower, and any comments or recommendations by the Special Counsel, to the President and the congressional committees with jurisdiction over the agency.

If the OSC does not send the whistleblower's disclosures to an agency head, it returns the information and any accompanying documents to the whistleblower. The OSC sends the whistleblower a letter explaining why the Special Counsel did not refer the information. This letter will let the whistleblower know what other disclosure channels may be available.

• Within Grade Increases (WGI)

This is a periodic increase in an employee's basic pay that moves the employee from one step to the next higher step in his or her grade. This applies to both General Schedule (GS) and Wage Grade (WG) employees.

WGI Waiting Periods (between each step)

GS

Steps 2, 3, 4 - 52 weeks

Steps 5, 6, 7 - 104 weeks

Steps 8, 9, 10 – 156 weeks

WG

Step 2 – 26 weeks

Step 3 - 78 weeks

Steps 4 and 5 – 104 weeks

Employees on intermittent work schedules have their WGIs computed based on one day of credit for each day they are in a pay status. Time in a non-pay status may affect waiting periods. Excess non-pay time extends the waiting period for a WGI. WGIs are effective the first day of the pay period following the completion of the waiting period. The completion date will not always fall on the beginning of a pay period, so the WGI may not be effective until the beginning of the next pay period. For example, on 29 October 2002 you were hired as a GS employee and on 28 October 2003 you will complete 52 weeks of creditable service to move to step 2. Your WGI will be effective at the beginning of the next pay period on 2 November 2003. Your servicing Affirmative Employment Specialist/Assistant can answer questions concerning your own WGI.

• Work Schedules

Your work schedule may have a direct affect on the benefits you receive. For example, post allowance is only paid to full-time employees. Only full-time and part-time employees earn annual and sick leave. Life and health insurance are usually NOT available to intermittent employees.

Work Schedule Options:

Full-Time: A full-time employee works basic 40-hour work week/80 hours per pay period. Most work schedules are full-time.

Part-Time: Part-time employees are scheduled to work from 16 to 32 hours per week.

Intermittent (WAE or When Actually Employed). Work which is not on a prearranged work schedule and varies from week to week or pay period to pay period. May include periods when no work is performed.

Tour of Duty – Your tour of duty is the hours and the days of the week that you are regularly scheduled to work. Your tour of duty is based on the organization’s needs and requirements. The basic workweek is scheduled from Monday through Friday 7:30 – 4:30.

Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) - If the mission of an organization will permit it, management may elect to have an AWS. There are a variety of different AWS available for the agency to establish. USAFE organizations and the 435 Air Base Wing, formerly a part of the 86

Airlift Wing have chosen an AWS policy called Flexitour with credit hours, which may be used with the required approval. With Flexitour, you are scheduled to work 8 hours per day, 5 days per week, but the hours are not necessarily 7:30 – 4:30. You may select your starting and stopping time within the flexible arrival and departure times available, subject to the supervisor’s approval. Once selected, the hours are set, unless the supervisor approves a change. You can choose to work more than the 8 hours scheduled with supervisory approval and earn additional credit hours to be used later, such as for a family day or a vacation day. The maximum credit hours that may be carried over per pay period is 24. Any hours in excess of 24 will be lost. There is no entitlement to overtime pay for these hours. Check with your supervisor and/or the timekeeper for the flexible hours available and any limitations to earning the credit hours within your organization.

APPENDIX A:

Index of Telephone Numbers CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FLIGHT SUBJECT DIRECTORY - (US PROGRAMS)

All phone numbers are DSN 480-XXXX or Commercial 06371-47-XXXX

Appeals & Grievances	2008	Home Leave	2196
Appeals (Classification)	2137	Identification Card Applications	7092
Application for Federal Employment	7092	Insurance (Health and Life)	BEST
Awards	4212	Job Vacancy Listings	7092
Base Clearance Form	7092	(See also lists on our home page)	
Benefits & Entitlements	BEST	Leave	2008
Career Briefs	7092	Leave Without Pay (LWOP)	2008
Career Program Information	7055	Life Insurance	BEST
Classification of Positions / Jobs	2137	Living Quarters Allowances (LQA)	5774
Clearance Procedures	7092	Local National Employment	5365
Conduct & Discipline of Employees	2008	Merit Promotion Program	7055
Core Personnel Documents/Library	2137	Military Spouse Preference	7092
Customer Comments or Complaints (Or send e-mail to 435MSS/DPC@ramstein.af.mil)	2052	Occupational Illnesses	4212
Data Systems	2454	On-the-Job Injury	4212
Details	7055	Orders (PCS, RAT, Student)	2196
Disciplinary Actions (US)	2008	Overseas Allowances	5774
Drug Testing Designated Positions	2137	Overseas Rotation Policy	7055
Emergency Essential Positions	2137	Overtime/Compensatory Time	2008
Emergency Travel	2008	Pay (Overtime, Holiday, etc.)	2008
Employment Information (US)	7092	Pay Setting	7055
Environmental Differential Pay	2137	Performance Appraisal/Management	4212
Family Member Employment	7092	Political Activity	2008
Grievances & Appeals	2008	Position Control	2137
Health Benefits	BEST	Position Sensitivity	2137
		Post Allowance	5774

Priority Placement Program (PPP)	7055
Reduction in Force (RIF)	7055
Renewal Agreement Travel	2196
Reports of Birth Abroad	2008
Return Rights and Obligations	7055
Resignations	2196
Retirement	2008
Skills Coding (Experience)	7055
Standard Core Personnel Documents	2137
Standard Form 52 (SF 52) Preparation	2137
Student Travel	2196
Substance Abuse Prevention	2008
Supervisor Training	2167
Support Agreements	2741
Temporary Promotions	7055
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)	BEST
Training Development/Instruction/Plans	2167
Transition Assistance (Family Spt Center)	5100
Travel Orders (PCS)	2196
Travel Orders (Training)	2743
Veterans Preference	7055
Within Grade Increases	7055
Within Grade Increases (Withholding)	2008

APPENDIX B: Internet Links

Air Force Personnel Center	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc
BEST Home Page	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST GRB/EBIS.htm
Career Programs	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/cpreg/cpreg.htm
Civilian Employment	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/resweb
Civilian Announcement Notification System (CANS)	https://ww2.afpc.randolph.af.mil/resweb/cans.htm
Health Benefits	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/fehb.htm
Life Insurance	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/fegli.htm
Standard Core Personnel Document	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/SCPD/default.htm
Training Guide	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/guide
Air Force Publications	www.e-publishing.af.mil
Defense Finance and Accounting Service	www.dfas.mil
Civilian Pay	www.dfas.mil/civpay
Understanding Leave and Earning Statement	https://dfas4dod.dfas.mil/systems/dcps/consolid/faqs/Link.pdf
DoD Civilian Personnel Management Service	www.cpms.osd.mil
Wage Grade Pay Tables	www.cpms.osd.mil/wage/wage.html
DoD Travel Regulations	www.dtic.mil/perdiem/jtr.html
Per Diem Rates	www.dtic.mil/perdiem/pdform.html
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:	www.eeoc.gov/
Federal jobs	www.jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/index.asp
Federal Times	www.federaltimes.com
First Look, Ramstein	https://firstlook.usafe.af.mil/

Office of Personnel Management (OPM):	www.opm.gov
Forms (Electronic)	www.opm.gov/forms/
GS Pay Tables	www.opm.gov/oaca/04tables/index.asp
Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Calculator	www.opm.gov/calculator/worksheet.asp
Designations of Beneficiary	www.opm.gov/insure/designations/index.htm
Personnel Management Information and Support System (PERMISS)	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/permis/
Ramstein Civilian Personnel Flight Home Page	www.ramstein.af.mil/435mss/cpo/
Social Security Administration	www.ssa.gov
Retirement Planner	www.ssa.gov/retire2/index.htm
Benefit Calculator	www.ssa.gov/planners/calculators.htm
Thrift Savings Plan	www.tsp.gov
Calculator	www.tsp.gov/calc/index.html
Forms	www.tsp.gov/forms/index-booklets.html
Training and Development	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/permis/