



**The Ramstein Civilian Human Resource Flight
Employee Handbook
For US Appropriated Fund Employees**



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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. There are a number of sources of information for you that will help to answer your questions. 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 to set up an appointment with the appropriate Human Resource Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Section (CPS). By following this procedure, you 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 CPS; and second, by making an advanced appointment, your HR Advisor will have reserved a time and a place to talk to you. Our goal is 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; plus we've included some useful web sites in Appendix B; or you can use our comprehensive web site containing 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 monthly issue published by our office, which is 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 possible to help you understand and manage your Federal career. Please take the time to review topics of interest and let us know if you need clarification. Policy and procedure changes occur; therefore, please consult with an HR Advisor 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 86fss.fsecustomerservice@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 or critical duties to be performed. The Position Description (PD) or Core Personnel Document (CPD) is used to determine the Title, Series, and Grade of your 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 PD or will be included in your CPD (AF Form 1003), which is a combination of PD 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. If you are not certain you understand what your supervisor's expectations are, this is the time to voice your concerns.

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 are filed in either 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 via MyBiz in DCPDS, or by logging into AFPC Secure at <https://w20.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecurenet20/CheckPortal.aspx>.

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 can retrieve your SF-50s from your eOPF. 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 through either My Biz (DCPDS portal) or AFPC's secure portal as follows:

Log into the DCPDS Portal:

1. <https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/>
2. Click on My Biz
3. Click on My Information
4. Click on the Personnel Actions tab and click on the SF-50 you wish to review/print

-or-

Log into AFPC's Secure Portal

1. <https://w20.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecurenet20/PKI/MainMenu1.aspx>
2. Click on Civilian Electronic OPF and click on the SF-50 you wish to review/print

On or about 1 November 2012, OPM will manage the electronic OPF files. You will be required to login to a secure website (<https://eopf.nbc.gov/opm/>) to access your files.

NOTE: *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 ("971 Folder"). Your supervisor should maintain a work folder on you. In that folder should be a copy of your CPD or PD and work plan, and an AF Form 971, an automated product which contains some basic information on you such as current position information, previous experience, education, etc. In addition, copies of appraisals, records of training, leave schedules, letters of appreciation, or counseling may be retained in the 971. One of the most important things for you to provide your supervisor is emergency information – who to call if you are injured on or off work, who is 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.

Chain of Command. Your immediate supervisor will provide you with important information regarding who is in your chain of command. Your supervisor possesses the authority to direct your assigned duties and to attempt to resolve problems that relate to the job. You have the right to confer with line management (starting with your immediate supervisor) to discuss matters/concerns, obtain information or solve various problems concerning your work requirements.

The basic concept of civilian personnel management is that authority and responsibility to manage human resources follows the Air Force chain of command from first level supervisor up to the Secretary of the Air Force. This information is contained in AFI 36-102, *Basic Authority and Responsibility for Civilian Personnel Management and Administration*. As a minimum, management must give supervisors authority and responsibility to:

- Select employees and ensure their proper placement and use
- Recommend employees for promotion and reassignment
- Assign duties and certify the accuracy of position descriptions/core documents
- Establish work standards and evaluate employee performance and conduct
- Initiate corrective action when an employee's performance or conduct is not acceptable
- Recognize superior performance
- Identify training needs; conduct on-the-job training; and evaluate training results
- Resolve complaints and grievances and maintain discipline
- Make personnel management decisions that control costs

Supervisor's duties are to be performed without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and age, handicapping condition, marital status, political party or any other non-merit factor; and observe strictly all merit system principles and prohibited practices.

There are numerous directives, regulations, laws and other guidance that must be used to properly and effectively perform our duties; therefore, management must carefully review and insure compliance. If, for some reason, your supervisor cannot resolve your concern, we may be able to help. We encourage you to contact us at 86fss.fsecustomerservice@ramstein.af.mil.

TOPICS

CIVILIAN FIRST STOP OFFICE (86fss.fseccs@ramstein.af.mil)

FAMILY MEMBERS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

- ◆ 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.

PASSPORTS, REPORTS OF BIRTHS ABROAD, & SOFA STAMPS

- ◆ If you have supporting documentation, you may pick up application forms for passports at the 786 Force Support Squadron, Military Personnel Flight, Building 2106, Room 101. Customer service hours are Monday – Friday, 0800-1600. Appointments are required.
- ◆ Newborn birth registration appointments (only) are 0800 – 1030.
- ◆ Upon PCSing to Ramstein, all civilian employees and family members require the SOFA stamp within 90 days. To obtain your SOFA stamp, visit the Civilian First Stop Office, Building 2120, Room 221 to obtain the SOFA Request form (AE 600-77A).

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

- ◆ 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 Human Resource Flight, Civilian First Stop Office, Bldg 2120, Room 221. Customer service hours are Monday – Friday, 0730-1630. Please contact them at 86fss.fseccs@ramstein.af.mil for complete instruction on ID cards. 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 Civilian First Stop Office 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 visits the First Stop Office 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** — when 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 (APF) 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.
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STAFFING

APPOINTMENT TYPES

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

Career & Career Conditional (Competitive Service)

- ◆ Given to persons hired from competitive civil service registers based on a competitive examination or other competitive process.
- ◆ You must complete a one year probationary or trial period.
- ◆ Career-conditional appointments are converted to career after three years of Federal service with no break in service exceeding 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.
- ◆ If you do not have Veteran's Preference and leave the federal service while on a career-conditional appointment, you have reinstatement eligibility for three years after separation.
- ◆ If you are a career employee and leave the federal service, you have reinstatement eligibility forever.

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 appointment is designed to remove certain restrictions in filling positions and is primarily used to provide job opportunities to family members of active duty military members and CONUS-hired US civilian Federal (civilian) employees who are transferred to an 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.

- ◆ 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 will be terminated within 60 days of status change.

Temporary Appointment

- ◆ The job is expected to 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 total.

Term Appointment

- ◆ These appointments are 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)

- ◆ The VRA authority is used only in cases where the position is considered hard to fill, which is determined by the CPS.
- ◆ VRA is a non-competitive 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.
- ◆ 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:
 - Disabled veterans; OR
 - Veterans who have been awarded a Campaign Badge, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; OR
 - Veterans who have separated from active service within the last three years.

**Note: VRA appointments are not used in the overseas area*

Overseas Limited Appointment Authority

- ◆ Only used in the overseas area and does not give the employee civil service status or reinstatement eligibility.
- ◆ Air Force no longer uses this appointment type although it may still be used for DeCA.

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 Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) 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. However applicants must self-nominate, be qualified, and not blocked by a Military Spouse PPP match. Once selected, individuals are given career-conditional appointments.

SECURITY CLEARANCE & 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 sensitivity levels:
 - Nonsensitive
 - Noncritical-Sensitive (Secret)
 - Critical-Sensitive (Top Secret)
 - 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 SF 86, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions and take fingerprints for all newly hired civilian employees.
- ◆ Keep in mind that security investigations for sensitive positions can take a long time to be completed.

CAREER FIELD MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Civilian Career Programs are managed by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) at Randolph AFB, TX. These programs provide a centralized merit promotion system used to fill senior management positions throughout the Air Force.
- ◆ These programs are for **current civilian Air Force employees only** and the grades, and pay schedules at which individuals can register vary among the differing Career Programs.
- ◆ Registration is not required to apply; however, it is important and will continue to be used for training nominations and selections, management and leadership development, assessments, interviews, career counseling, and workforce analysis. Career program positions are considered the primary “feeder” to positions in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and Senior Intelligence Executive Service (SIES).
- ◆ To register or for information please visit: <https://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

DETAILS

- ◆ A detail is the temporary assignment of duties other than those officially assigned. 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 CPS to receive credit for this experience. Your supervisor should document any additional work less than 30 days in your Employee Work Folder.
- ◆ 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 education, licensure, and/or certification requirements. You will not receive credit for Time-In-Grade purposes, only Specialized Experience.
- ◆ While on a detail, employee is compensated at the same rate of pay received in their permanent position of record.

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 include 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 is 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.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

- ◆ 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. Organization commanders, managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that objectives of equal employment opportunity are met.
- ◆ If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination, contact an EEO Counselor (DSN 489-8565) within 45 calendar 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.

- ◆ Attachment 3 to AFI 36-704, *Discipline and Adverse Actions* provides further guidance.

MERIT PROMOTION

- ◆ The Air Force uses resumes 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 USA Jobs. 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 for notification of announcement to be e-mailed to you.
- ◆ Once you have successfully completed the self-nomination process, the Air Force will use USA Staffing to rate and rank your qualifications based on the information in your resume (i.e., work experience, education, and training). The selecting official is then provided a referral certificate package, which includes a list of eligible candidates, resumes, and affirmative employment information.

MERIT SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

- ◆ The merit system principles are the public's expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, and 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:
 - Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition.
 - Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition.
 - Provide equal pay for equal work and reward excellent performance.
 - Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
 - Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
 - Retain and separate employees on the basis of their performance.
 - Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
 - Protect employees from improper political influence.
 - 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).

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:
 1. Federal Women's Program (FWP)
 2. Black Employment Program (BEP)
 3. Hispanic Employment Program (HEP)
 4. People with Disabilities Employment Program (PDEP)
 5. Asian American/Pacific Islander Employment Program (AA/PIEP)
 6. American Indian/Alaskan Native Employment Program (AI/ANEP)
- ◆ 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

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.
- ◆ 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.

TIME IN GRADE/QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Eligibility for particular positions is determined by two separate criteria, **qualifications** and **time-in-grade**. Qualifications 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), education, and experience required to perform a particular job in Federal service.
- ◆ 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.

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'.
- ◆ Staffing is responsible for ensuring at the time of "appointment" that nepotism does not occur. If it should, corrective action is to be taken immediately and will involve the following offices: Civilian Personnel, management officials in the organization affected, the Wing Legal Office, and the employee affected.

OVERSEAS TOUR – SELF-SPONSORED CIVILIAN

- ◆ It is DoD policy to limit overseas employment to 5 years for most US civil service employees since 1966. Any extension should be directly tied to mission needs, is intended to provide short-term management flexibility based on local needs and conditions, and is not intended to provide for permanent employment in the foreign area.
- ◆ Exceptions to this 5 year limit 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.
- ◆ All Appropriated Fund (APF) US civilian employment within DoD in a foreign overseas area counts toward the 5-year limitation, unless interrupted by a 24-month residency in the United States. This also applies to individuals who previously met the 5 year limitation, moved to a different pay system (NAF, AAFES, etc.) and have reapplied for another appropriated fund position.

OVERSEAS TOUR – 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.
- ◆ 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 considered a

family member for employment purposes and cannot remain employed, 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 5 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.

PRIORITY PLACEMENT PROGRAM (PPP)

- ◆ 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).
- ◆ 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 HR Advisor to discuss your specific entitlements.

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 (all activities within the commuting area) identifies the organizational and geographical parameters for RIF. 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.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION

POSITION CLASSIFICATION PRINCIPLES

- ◆ Congress established the classification system now used in the Federal Government to insure equal pay for work of substantially equal difficulty and value. 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 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. The classification determines the range of pay for the job and the type of qualifications needed by applicants, among other things.
- ◆ 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.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS – CORE PERSONNEL DOCUMENT

- ◆ The Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003) is a single document containing essential information required of civilian positions: the duty description, the performance plan, and recruitment criteria. Supervisors are responsible for assigning duties and responsibilities and insuring that the major duties and responsibilities are recorded in a written document.
- ◆ 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 the accuracy of duties assigned by signing the Core Personnel Document.

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. E-E positions must be removed from military recall obligation because of the requirement to remain after other civilians have been evacuated.
- ◆ A Contingency Essential employee is a local national employee in a position equivalent to a Key or E-E position.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ For more information 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

TESTING DESIGNATION POSITION (TDP) (Drug Testing Positions)

- ◆ The Air Force, as a result of its national defense responsibilities, and the sensitive nature of its work, has a compelling obligation to eliminate illicit drug use from its workplace. Civilian employees of the Air Force must refrain from illicit drug use whether on or off-duty. Performing duties under the influence of illicit drugs adversely affects personal safety, risks damage to government property, significantly impairs day-to-day operations, and exposes sensitive information to potential compromise. Use of illicit drugs is inconsistent with the high standards of performance, discipline, and readiness necessary to accomplish the Air Force mission.
- ◆ There are three categories of TDP:
 - **Category I – Presumptive Included TDP.** (Category I positions are those that meet the ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy) criteria and must be locally identified as TDP even when they are not specifically identified in AFI 44-107 by series/code).
 - **Type 1:** Employees who carry firearms on a routine or recurring basis. At a minimum, positions in the following occupational series/codes will be reviewed and designated as appropriate: 0083, Police; 0085, Security Guard; 1712, Training Instructor/Marksmanship; 1811, Criminal Investigating.
 - **Type 2:** Motor Vehicle Operators. At a minimum, positions in the following occupational series/codes will be TDP – 0081, Fire Protection and Prevention (driving duties); 5701, General Mobile Equipment Operating; 5703, Motor Vehicle Operating; 5704, Forklift Operator; 5705, Tractor Operator; 5767, Airfield Clearing Equipment Operating
 - In addition, positions in Recreation and Child/Youth Development that regularly drive passengers on tours and field trips in the following occupational series/codes will be TDP: 0188, Recreation Specialist; 0189, Recreation Aid and Assistant; 1701, General Education and Development; 1702, Education and Training Technician.
 - **Type 3:** Aviation flight crewmembers and air-traffic controllers and Railroad operating crews.
 - **Category II – Preferred TDP.** (Category II positions require the Air Force to consult with ASD (HA) and the DoD Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support (CDEP&S) prior to identification as a TDP; therefore, installations are prohibited from identifying any position which is not specifically identified in AFI 44-107, Attachment 2 by occupational series/code).
 - **Type 1:** Health and safety responsibilities involving a potentially dangerous instrument or machine. Employees authorized to carry firearms on less than a routine or recurring basis, ie., in emergencies.
 - Railroad employees engaged in safety sensitive tasks.
 - Aviation personnel including attendants, instructors, flight testing personnel, dispatchers, maintenance, security and safety inspectors.
 - **Type 2:** Presidential appointees requiring Senate confirmation.
 - **Type 3:** Front line law enforcement personnel with proximity to criminals, drugs, or drug traffickers.
 - **Type 4:** Drug Rehabilitation employees providing direct client care.
 - **Type 5:** Positions requiring routine access to truly sensitive information that has the potential to damage national interests if compromised will be identified as TDP. All positions and personnel requiring access to Top Secret or higher are testing designated. Positions requiring access to Secret, not meeting criteria for other Categories or Types of positions listed in AFI 44-107, Attachment 2 may be testing designated. (The Air Force elects to identify all positions with access to truly

sensitive national security information as TDP. Such positions involve information that if disclosed could seriously damage national security interests and jeopardize the lives of members of the United States armed services and allies. The use of illicit drugs demonstrates a disregard for the laws of the United States, poor judgment, and exposes the individual to risks of extortion, thereby rendering such individuals unsuitable for continued access to sensitive information.

- **Type 6:** Positions covered by the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP)
- **Category III – Discretionary TDP.** (Category III positions require the Air Force to consult with DoD and the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) Executive Committee prior to identification as a TDP; therefore installations are prohibited from identifying any position which is not specifically identified in AFI 44-107 Attachment 2 by occupational series/code).
 - **Type 1:** Protection of life and property.
 - **Type 2:** Health occupations providing direct patient care.
 - **Type 3:** Personnel working with armament, explosives, and hazardous materials.
 - **Type 4:** Personnel working with Biological Select Agents and Toxins.
 - **Type 5:** Health and safety responsibilities involving a potentially dangerous instrument or machine.
- ◆ Employees placed into a TDP position are subject to the following:
 - It will continue to be mandatory to refrain from the use of illicit drugs, and the employee will continue to be subject to testing under the following circumstances:
 - When there is a reasonable suspicion the employee has used illicit drugs;
 - As part of a safety/mishap investigation; OR
 - As part of or follow-up to counseling or treatment for illicit drug use.
 - The employee will be subject to urinalysis testing on an unannounced random basis.
 - If the employee refuses to furnish a urine specimen, or if they provide a urine specimen that ultimately reflects the use of an illicit drug, the employee may be removed from Federal Service.
 - If illicit drug use is detected through a MRO verified/validated positive test result, the employee may be disciplined, ranging from reprimand to removal from Federal Service. Additionally, employees are subject to assignment to a non-TDP position. The employee will be removed from Federal Service if they fail to agree to participate in a counseling or treatment program. However, even if the employee agrees to participate in and subsequently complete a counseling or treatment program, they may still be subject to disciplinary action, which may include removal based on the totality of the circumstances in each situation. An employee's agreement to participate in a counseling or treatment program will be one of the factors considered in determining the level of discipline or disciplinary action imposed.

CLASSIFICATION APPEALS

- ◆ 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 HR Advisor.
 - ◆ 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.
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EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS (EMR)

LEAVE & EARNINGS STATEMENT (LES)

- ◆ You will receive from the Defense Finance and Accounting System office, a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) every two weeks, which is available to you, usually a day or two before payday or by going to <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.
- ◆ The LES notes all of your pay and allowances, deductions and allotments, leave earned and used, overtime, and variety of other important information.
- ◆ 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.

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 your 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.

CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITY

- ◆ As an Air Force employee you must comply with prescribed standards of conduct in all official matters during your off-duty time, both on and off base. 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." 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.
- ◆ While not in a duty status you can participate in demonstrations, petitions, speeches, private organizations and similar activities in a private capacity; 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.
- ◆ The Air Force cannot legally divert part of your salary to satisfy a private debt, except for child support, alimony payments or commercial debts; therefore, you are expected to pay your bills promptly and to honor any legal contracts you make. If you consistently, willfully or frequently incur debts that you do not pay, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

- ◆ You are expected to be present for duty unless authorized to be absent, to follow Air Force Instructions and comply in a timely way with proper instructions or orders given by a competent authority as well as perform your assigned duties conscientiously and effectively.
- ◆ Use of government equipment or other resources for personal benefit or benefit of friends is prohibited unless otherwise authorized and 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. Your attire should not be considered offensive, disruptive or unsafe. Due to diverse work functions and locations, appropriate dress standards may vary significantly. Take pride in your appearance and let good judgment be your guide.

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.

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 Staff Judge Advocate office is the Office of Primary Responsibility for this subject matter.

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).

OFF DUTY EMPLOYMENT

- ◆ If you plan on working another job you must inform your supervisor and receive authorization (5 CFR 2635.502(a)). Off-duty employment means compensation from outside the DoD, including NAF employment as well as off-duty business activity, including self-employment. To work outside your regular job you must complete an AF Form 3902, Off-Duty Employment and Business Activity form, have it signed by your supervisor, and then have a legal review completed by the base legal office.

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:**
 1. Full-Time: A full-time employee works basic 40-hour work week/80 hours per pay period. Most work schedules are full-time.
 2. Part-Time: Part-time employees are scheduled to work from 16 to 32 hours per week.
 3. 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 86th 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. 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 number of 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.

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.
- ◆ 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. The lunch period cannot be scheduled 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.

HOLIDAYS

January	New Year's Day, 1 January Martin Luther King's Birthday, 3 rd Monday in January
February	President's Day, 3 rd Monday in February
May	Memorial Day, last Monday in May
July	Independence Day, 4 July
September	Labor Day, 1 st Monday in September
October	Columbus Day, 2 nd Monday in October
November	Veteran's Day, 11 November Thanksgiving Day, 4 th 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.

LEAVE – EXCUSED ABSENCES

- ◆ Administrative Leave or an excused absence is an absence from work that is not chargeable to annual leave, sick leave, or some other official absence and is rarely allowed.
- ◆ There must be legal or regulatory authority for an absence during the basic workweek to be excused without charge to leave.
- ◆ Examples of excused absences are attending an official or semi-official DoD or AF function, donating blood, declared weather emergencies, etc.

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, 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.
1. **Annual Leave (LA):** 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 but have not used.
 - a. **Accrual Rate:** 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.
 - b. **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. Upon the employee's return to the U.S. they can maintain the 360 hour ceiling, however if the employee's leave balance falls below that ceiling it will be lowered to match the actual accrued balance until it reaches 240 which would then be the maximum allowable.
 - c. **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.
 2. **Sick Leave:** Sick leave may be used for:
 - i. Medical, dental or optical examination or treatment
 - ii. Incapacitation for physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth
 - iii. Exposure to a communicable disease
 - iv. To make arrangements for the adoption of a child
 - v. To participate in drug or alcohol counseling programs
 - vi. To care for a family member as a result of illness, injury, pregnancy, childbirth, medical appoint or attend a funeral or make the necessary funeral arrangements.
(up to 40 hours for full-time employees)
 - a. You may take up to 12 weeks to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
 - b. 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.

- c. Sick leave for more than 3 consecutive workdays must be supported by medical documentation. Medical documentation may also be required for other reasons specified in AFI 36-815.
 - d. 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.
 - b. 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 the Civilian HR Flight to ensure it meets all of the regulatory requirements.
3. 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 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.
 4. 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.
 5. 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.
 6. 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.
 7. Home Leave: Earned by certain employees recruited from the U.S. 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 and can only be used for leave in the U.S., its territories or in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. For GSU employees, accrual of home leave depends on Post Differential authorized.
 8. 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.
 9. 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.

10. 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. 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. The definition of a serious health condition is defined in AFI 36-815. 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.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- ◆ The GS and WG appraisal cycle runs from 1 April to 31 March, and appraisals and associated awards are effective 1 June.
- ◆ **Core Personnel Document (AF Form 1003), also referred to as a Position Description / Performance Work Plan (AF Form 860)** — This is a written statement by your supervisor to define responsibilities and set expectations for your appraisal. The performance work plan may be a separate document from your position description or will be included in your core personal document, which is a combination of position description and performance work plan.
- ◆ You should be given this document 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 anytime you change jobs, work for a new supervisor or at the beginning of a new rating cycle.
- ◆ **Appraisals** - Your supervisor is required to complete a mandatory performance feedback session with you normally at the midpoint of the appraisal period. The AF Form 860B, *Civilian Progress Review Worksheet*, is the mandatory form to document this review.
- ◆ After the performance cycle ends you receive an annual 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 reviews.
- ◆ You will receive copies of the feedback and appraisal; the supervisor maintains the originals in your Employee Performance File.
- ◆ **Awards & performance recognition** — 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. For information regarding specific types of awards please contact our awards office at 480-2741.

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.
 - Waiting Periods Between Each Step:

- GS Steps 2, 3, 4 – 52 weeks
 - GS Steps 5, 6, 7 – 104 weeks
 - GS Steps 8, 9, 10 – 156 weeks
 - WG Step 2 – 26 weeks
 - WG Steps 3 – 78 weeks
 - WG 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. Excess non-pay time extends the waiting period for the WGI for all employees.
 - ◆ WGIs are effective the first day of the pay period following the completion of the waiting period.

DISCIPLINE & ADVERSE ACTIONS

- ◆ Disciplinary action may be taken by management to correct an employee's delinquency or misconduct. 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 may reduce your grade and/or your basic rates of pay, put you involuntarily into non-pay, non-duty status, or separate 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.
- ◆ Examples of disciplinary and adverse actions include:
 - a) Oral Admonishment – the least severe penalty. It is a formal, polite, and private admonishment recorded on the Supervisor's Employee Brief. It is often adequate to effect the required correction or improvement, particularly when the employee has no previous history of misconduct. For a 2 year period thereafter it can be used in determining whether to impose a reprimand for an offense which alone would usually result in a lesser penalty.
 - b) Reprimand – severe disciplinary action that should be adequate for many disciplinary situations which require an action more severe than an oral admonishment. It is used to correct significant misconduct or repeated minor offenses and is documented for 2 years in the Official Personnel Folder as well as included in the electronic personnel record.
 - c) Suspension – an extremely severe penalty. Ordinarily, it is the final step in the disciplinary process before removal and is accompanied by a warning to the employee that a further violation of rules could result in removal. It imposes a loss of income for the employee and is documented permanently in the Official Personnel Folder as well as included in the electronic personnel record. Suspensions normally range from one day to 30 days.
 - d) Removal – most severe and ultimate penalty and often supported by prior disciplinary actions. It is considered rehabilitative since it could help employees improve their performance in future positions.
- ◆ For specific information and Air Force guidance, please refer to AFI 36-704, *Discipline and Adverse Actions*. This instruction provides instructions for maintaining discipline and for taking disciplinary and adverse actions against civilian employees.

GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD

- ◆ All DoD personnel are required to use the government-sponsored, contractor-issued travel charge card for all expenses arising from official government travel, unless otherwise exempted.
- ◆ Although a traveler may be required to use the travel card, failure to use the travel card shall not be a basis for refusing to reimburse the traveler for otherwise appropriate charges. Such failure may, however, subject the traveler to appropriate administrative or disciplinary action (Public Laws 107-248 & 107-314)
- ◆ The DoD Government Charge Card Disciplinary Guide can be found at the Civilian Human Resources Flight's website at (insert hyperlink).
- ◆ It continues to be DoD policy that improper, fraudulent, abusive, or negligent use of a government charge card is prohibited. This includes any use of government charge cards at establishments or for purposes that are inconsistent with the official business of DoD or with applicable regulations.

COMPLAINT SYSTEMS

- ◆ Your first stop for problems in the work place should be your immediate supervisor or someone higher in your chain of command. Poor communication and misunderstandings cause many disagreements and problems. 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 Alternate 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 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 your Human Resources Specialists 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 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

http://www.cpms.osd.mil/fas/classification/class_filing_appeal.aspx 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.

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.
- ◆ **OSC 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.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- ◆ The Air Force is required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. An individual with a disability is one who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as

having such an impairment. Specifically, a reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or alteration that enables a qualified person with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. The concept of reasonable accommodation applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, work location and scheduled training, promotion, reassignment, and developmental assignments. Examples of reasonable accommodations are as follows:

- Adaptive equipment
 - Requests for a reader or sign language interpreter, or other staff assistance
 - Removal of architectural barriers
 - Reconfiguration of work space
 - Materials in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print)
 - Requests for reassignment
- ◆ *How do you request Reasonable Accommodations?* The individual requesting the accommodation may present a request for a reasonable accommodation in writing or orally. The request does not have to use any special words, such as “reasonable accommodation,” “disability,” or “Rehabilitation Act.” Someone designated by the requestor to act on the requestor’s behalf may also present the request. Requests by employees should be made to the employee’s supervisor or a manager in the employee’s chain of command, or to other appropriate individuals (such as an HR Specialist, Disability Program Manager or Special Emphasis Program Manager).
 - ◆ *Do you need medical documentation?* The supervisor will make a determination as to whether written medical documentation is necessary. If it is, the supervisor will make a written or oral request for information or documentation. The supervisor will only request medical information sufficient to substantiate that the individual has a disability and needs the reasonable accommodation requested.
 - ◆ *What happens if you are denied?* Denials of reasonable accommodations will be in writing and include specific reasons for the denial and the employee or office that made the decision. If an alternate accommodation is approved, the written notification should explain both the reasons for the denial of the requested accommodation and the reasons it is believed the chosen accommodation will be effective.
 - ◆ For additional information on reasonable accommodation see <http://www.eeoc.gov/>.
 - ◆ Questions concerning reasonable accommodations for current Federal employees should be directed to your servicing Human Resources Specialist in Employee-Management Relations (DSN 480-7608 / 2019). Questions concerning reasonable accommodation for employment applicants should be directed to your servicing Human Resources Specialist in Staffing.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- ◆ Sexual harassment cannot and will not be tolerated in the Air Force. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an employee’s employment; submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

- ◆ We all must be committed to the prevention of sexual harassment and to providing an environment of equal opportunity for all. Air Force personnel have the right to work in an environment that respects personal dignity and is free from sexual harassment. As an Air Force civilian you are prohibited from using sexual harassment to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, job or personal rights of any Air Force military or civilian member. Any person in a supervisor or command position who uses or condones any form of sexual behavior to control, influence or affects the career, pay, or job of a civilian employee is engaging in sexual harassment. Any civilian employee who makes deliberate or repeated unwelcomed verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature in the workplace is also engaging in sexual harassment.
- ◆ 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 at DSN 480-2250](#)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION & 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 your servicing Employee Relations Specialist (480-7608 / 2019).
- ◆ 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. 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.

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

- ◆ Workplace violence is a serious and continuing problem in the federal service. Violence covers intimidation, harassment, and other inappropriate or disruptive behavior that threatens or frightens employees. You are responsible for maintaining a safe work environment and encouraged to report incidents to your supervisor or manager promptly. Employees who commit violent acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.
- ◆ Management cannot ignore unacceptable behavior and involvement will be swift, decisive and taken with the utmost concern for the safety of everyone. Management will hold employees accountable for unacceptable behavior and this includes confronting relatively minor infractions early. In most cases in which someone has committed workplace violence, there is a history of unacceptable/confrontational behavior which was never addressed by management. Early intervention is the key to diffusing many potentially violent situations.

ALLOWANCES

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. 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 the Civilian HR Flight home page.

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 quarter's 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.
- ◆ 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

BENEFITS

BENEFITS & ENTITLEMENTS SERVICES TEAM (BEST)

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

BENEFITS	ELECTION PERIOD (from effective date of appointment)	HOW TO ENROLL
Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)	60 Days	EBIS or the BEST Phone System
Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)	31 Days	EBIS or the BEST Phone System
Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)	60 Days	www.BENEFEDS.com or call 1-877-888-3337 TTY 1-877-889-5680
Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) <i>(for</i>	60 Days (or by October 1 st ,	www.fsafeds.com or call 1-877-

<i>reimbursement of health and dependent care expenses not paid by health insurance)</i>	whichever occurs first)	372-3337 TTY 1-800-952-0450
Long Term Care (LTC) Insurance	60 Days (for abbreviated underwriting application)	www.ltcfeds.com or call 1-800-582-3337 TTY 1-800-843-3557
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) (<i>Retirement savings plan</i>)	Automatically Enrolled; May make changes at any time	EBIS or the BEST Phone System
Election of FERS (<i>CSRS/CSRS Offset only</i>)	Within 6 months of date of reemployment	Obtain SF 3109 from local or servicing Civilian Personnel Office
Waiver of Federal Employees Health Benefits Premium Conversion	60 Days	Obtain Premium Conversion Waiver Form

- ◆ Hearing impaired employees with access to Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) equipment may reach a benefits counselor by calling our toll-free TDD number: 1-800-382-0893. 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.

DESIGNATION OF BENEFICIARY

- ◆ Completing beneficiary forms is an option that every civilian employee may choose; however, if you complete beneficiary forms it is your responsibility to ensure the currency of those forms.
- ◆ The most common mistake is when the employee names a spouse and later divorces that spouse but forgets to change the beneficiary form.
- ◆ Beneficiary forms include:
 - 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
 - TSP-3: Thrift Savings Plan Designation of Beneficiary
- ◆ You can access the forms at www.opm.gov/insure/designations/index.htm
- ◆ You can either print them and submit via hardcopy or complete them online. If completing them hardcopy please submit the SF 1152, SF 2823 and SF 3102 to your servicing Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF). Submit the SF 2808 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 of the form. Please ensure you keep copies of all forms for yourself.
- ◆ If you do not complete the beneficiary forms, your death benefits will be distributed in the order of precedence as seen below:
 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 on 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 please contact a Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) counselor.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI)

I'm not sure if we need this because we're referring them to the BEST chart above...

The FEGLI program is intended to provide immediate protection against financial hardship or loss in the event of death, as well as coverage for accidental death or dismemberment. FEGLI provides group term life insurance. As such, it does not build up any cash value or paid-up value. Enrollment in the program is voluntary.

Most Federal employees, including part-time employees, are eligible to enroll in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program. There are some exclusions, though, by law and regulation. Some of the exclusions, but not all, include employees serving on temporary appointments limited to one year or less; employees on intermittent appointments; employees whose annual pay is \$12 or less; and those paid on a contract, fee, or piecework basis. There are exceptions to the exclusions. For example, if a full or part-time temporary appointment with a regular tour of duty, or an intermittent appointment without a regularly scheduled tour of duty, follows a position in which you were insured with a break in service of no more than 3 days, you're eligible to continue FEGLI coverage (unless you completed 12 months in a nonpay status during the previous appointment). Also, temporary employees who receive a provisional appointment as defined in 5 CFR 316.403 are eligible for FEGLI coverage. There are other exclusions and exceptions. To see them all, we suggest you review the FEGLI Handbook on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website at www.opm.gov/insure/life/handbook/eligibl2.htm.

How do you submit an election to enroll in or waive Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)?

- **Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS):** EBIS can be accessed from the BEST Homepage (www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm). An advantage to enrolling via EBIS is that once you have completed the transaction, you can print a copy of the Life Insurance Election Form -- SF 2817 for your records.
- **BEST Phone System:** Stateside employees can reach the BEST phone system by dialing toll-free 1800-616-3775. Employees located overseas will first dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number (Germany: 00-800-2255-288) for the country in which located, then 800-616-3775. AT&T direct access numbers can be found at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp. Hearing impaired employees with access to TDD equipment will dial toll-free 1-800-382-0893, or (commercial) 565-2276 if calling from within the San Antonio, Texas area.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS (FEHB)

I'm not sure if we need this because of the BEST chart above...

The FEHB program is intended to assist you and your eligible family members with expenses of illness and accident, and is paid for through employee and employer contributions. A voluntary program, FEHB offers the following advantages and guarantees:

- An annual opportunity (open season) to enroll in a health benefits plan or change enrollment selection

- 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're 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

As a Federal employee, you are eligible to elect FEHB coverage, unless your position is excluded by law or regulation. Generally, the following employees are eligible:

- Most Federal employees on permanent appointments
- Employees serving a Term Appointment (that will last more than one year) with a regularly scheduled tour of duty
- Temporary employees who receive a provisional appointment as defined in 5 CFR 316.401 and 316.403 (check the nature of action on your Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action)
- Temporary employees whose appointment is limited to one year or less may enroll under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 8906(a) after completion of one (1) year of current continuous employment if the appointment is renewed or extended and there is not a break in service of more than 5 days
- Employees converting from non-covered appointments to covered appointments

Air Force-serviced civilian employees must enroll in health insurance electronically through the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application or the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) automated telephone system.

EBIS can be accessed on the Web at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm. Once logged into EBIS, click the Transactions icon. Go to the FEHB Current Coverage box and click the Change button. Select the type of transaction you will be making and follow the prompts to enroll. If you are a new employee, the "event date" is your date of hire.

To access the BEST automated phone system, employees located in the United States will call toll-free 1-800-616-3775 (press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then 2 again for BEST benefits and entitlements services, and follow the prompts). Once you reach the benefits main menu, you will press 1 for Federal Employees Health Benefits. Listen carefully to the options available.

Employees located overseas will reach the BEST phone system by dialing a toll-free AT&T Direct Access number (Germany: 00-800-2255-288) for the country in which located, then 800-616-3775. AT&T Direct Access Numbers can be obtained from http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp. Hearing impaired employees may contact a benefits counselor by dialing TDD 1-800-382-0893, or (commercial) 565-2276 if calling within the San Antonio, Texas area.

Detailed instructions on how to access EBIS and the BEST phone system are located on the BEST homepage under "[How to Access the BEST Automated Systems and Reach a Counselor.](#)"

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT (FSA)

- ◆ Flexible spending accounts (FSAs) are a benefit, a tax-favored program that allows Federal employees to set aside pre-tax money from their paychecks to pay for a variety of expenses.

- ◆ There are two types of FSA accounts, as follows:
- ◆ Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA) – covers 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.
- ◆ 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 eligible children under age 13 and for adults who qualify as dependents under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations.
- ◆ FSA open seasons occur each year at the same time as the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season, i.e., from the second Monday in November through the second Monday in December. You must re-enroll for each year that you wish to participate.
- ◆ To enroll please call 1-877-372-3337, TTY 1-800-952-0450 or visit <https://www.fsafeds.com>

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP)

I'm not sure if we need this because of the BEST chart above & I'm sure the information has changed...

- ◆ 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.** 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.
- ◆ Eligible employees may start, stop, change, or resume their TSP contributions at any time. Exception: Employees who make in-service financial hardship withdrawals may not make TSP contributions for a 6-month period following the withdrawal.
- ◆ With regard to agency contributions, newly-hired FERS employees must still serve the appropriate waiting period before they can begin to receive agency contributions. FERS employees reappointed following a break in service must also serve the waiting period if they had not been previously eligible to receive agency contributions.
- ◆ You will submit elections to contribute, change the amount of contributions, or terminate contributions electronically 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. As a result, before you can access EBIS you must log into the AFPC Secure Web via CAC card or regular UserID and password. To get started, go to www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm and click on "Enter the AFPC Secure Web Site Login." Follow the prompts, and after logging into AFPC Secure, click on EBIS. Within EBIS, enter your social security number (SSN) and BEST personal identification number (PIN) -- another method of ensuring the security of your personal records and benefits transactions. Your BEST PIN is the same for both EBIS and the BEST phone system. Detailed information on how to access

AFPC Secure and EBIS is contained in our brochure “[How to Access the Benefits and Entitlements Web Automated System.](#)”

- ◆ Stateside employees, including those located in San Antonio, Texas, will reach the BEST phone system by dialing toll-free 1-800-616-3775 (press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian, then 2 again for BEST benefits and entitlements). Overseas employees will first dial a toll-free AT&T direct access (Germany: 00-800-2255-288) number for the country in which located, then 800-616-3775. (Click on “Contact B&E” at the top of the page to find a link to AT&T direct access numbers.) You’ll 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 is contained in our brochure “[How to Access the Benefits and Entitlements Automated Telephone System.](#)”
- ◆ The TSP Website is located at www.tsp.gov (click on Account Access to see your participant statement, your account balance, to make interfund transfers or make a contribution allocation).
- ◆ **The Thrift Line has a new toll-free number for callers located in the 50 United States, District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and Canada: 1-877-968-3778. Other international callers will continue to use the old Thrift Line number, 1-504-255-8777, which unfortunately is not toll-free. Hearing impaired callers may call the Thrift Line's new toll-free TDD number, 1-877-847-4385; however, TDD callers outside the United States and Canada must continue to call the old TDD number, 1-504-255-5113 (not toll-free).**
- ◆ TSP Catch-Up Contribution Enrollment
- ◆ Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions. They are not the same as regular TSP contributions --- they are in addition to regular contributions.
- ◆ TSP participant is eligible to make catch-up contributions if:
 - he or she is 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 in the year in which catch-up contribution deductions begin; and
 - is not in the 6-month non-contribution period following receipt of a financial hardship in-service withdrawal.
- ◆ Air Force-serviced employees may enroll to make catch-up contributions for 2005 beginning 12 Dec 04. The last date an election can be accepted for 2005 is 10 Dec 05. You can start, change, or stop your catch-up contributions for 2005 at any time during this period -- there's no open season. The following chart shows when the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) automated system will be ready to accept catch-up contribution enrollments for each new calendar year, as well as the last date the system will accept an enrollment or change.

◆ Calendar Year	◆ First Date Enrollment Accepted	◆ Last Date Enrollment/Change Accepted
◆ 2004	◆ 30 Nov 03	◆ 11 Dec 04

◆ 2005	◆ 12 Dec 04	◆ 10 Dec 05
◆ 2006	◆ 11 Dec 05	◆ 9 Dec 06

- ◆ Air Force-serviced civilian employees must enroll electronically via the web-based Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) or the BEST phone system. **BEST does not accept hardcopy enrollment forms.**
- ◆ Within EBIS, to enroll in TSP catch-up contributions 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 benefits main menu press 3 for TSP, then 5 for catch-up contributions. Then press 3 to elect TSP catch-up contributions. Beginning 12 Dec 04, you should hear the system voice "During 2005 the maximum annual amount is \$4,000." You'll then press 1 to submit your election. (You'll select the amount you wish to have deducted from your pay each pay period. Do not enter an amount that exceeds your net pay.)
- ◆ Instructions on how to access EBIS and the BEST phone system are located on the BEST Website at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/automated.htm.

RETIREMENT COVERAGE

I'm not sure if we need this because we're referring them to the BEST chart above...

Determining when a civilian employee can retire is complicated -- not all service included in your service computation date for leave (SCD-Leave) is creditable towards retirement. Some examples of service that may not be creditable for retirement include temporary civilian service, nonappropriated fund (NAF) service, military service for which a deposit may be required, and civilian service where a refund of retirement contributions was received. In addition, employees who are retired military receive credit for campaign service in their SCD-Leave for annual leave accrual purposes, but it is not creditable towards civilian retirement.

- If you are covered under the **Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)**, you must have at least 5 years of creditable civilian service and be subject to CSRS for 1 out of the last 2 years of service before the date of separation on which your retirement is based.
- If you are covered by the **Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)**, you must have at least 5 years of creditable civilian service to be eligible for an annuity and be covered by the FERS retirement system on the day of separation.

To qualify for an immediate retirement under either system, you must meet the age and service requirement as follows:

CSRS	
Age	Years of Service
62	5
60	20

FERS	
Age	Years of Service
62	5
60	20

55	30
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Minimum Retirement Age	30
Minimum Retirement Age	10 (Reduced Benefit)

Firefighters (FF), Law Enforcement Officers (LEO), and Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) may retire voluntarily under special retirement provisions if they meet the following age and service requirements:

- Firefighters/Law Enforcement Officers:
 - If CSRS, age 50 with 20 years of FF or LEO civilian service.
 - If FERS, age 50 with 20 years FF or LEO civilian service, or any age with 25 years FF or LEO civilian service.
 - Air Traffic Controllers: Age 50 with 20 years ATC civilian service, or any age with 25 years ATC civilian service. Applies to both CSRS and FERS.
 -

We recommend reviewing the articles "*Eligibility for Retirement – FERS*" or "*Eligibility for Retirement – CSRS*," (ADD LINK) as applicable, located on BEST's Retiring Employees page. These documents explain retirement eligibility requirements in more detail and provide a chart explaining Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) under FERS.

If you are within one year of retirement, you should contact a BEST benefits counselor to obtain individual retirement counseling and receive information about the retirement process. Employees located in the United States can reach a benefits counselor by calling toll-free 1-800-525-0102 (press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian, then 2 for BEST benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts). If located overseas, you'll first dial a toll-free AT&T Direct Access Number (Germany: 00-800-2255-288) for the country you are in, then 800-525-0102. When you reach the benefits and entitlements main menu, press "2" for retirement, then "0" to transfer to a counselor. AT&T Direct Access Numbers can be obtained on the web at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.

Hearing impaired employees with access to Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) equipment may contact a benefits counselor by calling our toll-free TDD number: 1-800-382-0893, or commercial 565-2276 within the San Antonio, Texas area.

Additionally, we encourage you to review BEST's homepage and fax-back documents that address retirement, FEHB, FEGLI, TSP, and death in service. OPM also has information regarding retirement in a brochure titled "*Thinking About Retirement*" (RI 83-11) (ADD LINK). This brochure can be found on the OPM Web site at www.opm.gov/retire/html/library/index.html, under both CSRS and FERS publications.

We recommend you obtain a retirement annuity estimate at least one year before your planned retirement date. This will help you make some key retirement decisions and effectively plan for your retirement. You may obtain an annuity estimate(s) by using the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application or the BEST automated phone system. However, the annuity calculations under both systems contain certain assumptions that may make the annuity estimates inaccurate for some employees. If you have non-appropriated fund (NAF) service, part-time service, civilian temporary service, civilian service for which you took a refund of your retirement contributions, or post-1956 military service for which you have not made a deposit, you will need to contact a BEST benefits counselor to obtain an annuity estimate.

Before completing an estimate via EBIS or the phone, be sure to review our brochures titled "*Retirement Estimates-CSRS*" or "*Retirement Estimates-FERS*" (ADD LINK) for detailed guidance on the types of annuity estimates available, the assumptions of the retirement estimator, and guidance on how to compute your high-3 average salary.

If you use the BEST automated phone system and select the real-time/on-line annuity estimate option, the system will use your current salary as your high-3 average salary **unless** you input a different figure. If using EBIS, click the “Calculators” icon and use the Retirement Annuity calculator if you wish to enter the effective date and high-3 average salary information yourself. In fact, in EBIS, you can use the High-3 Average Salary calculator to compute your high-3 average salary. If your projected retirement date is 3 years or more from January 1 of the current year, you can use your current salary, including locality pay, as your high-3 salary. If your projected retirement date is less than 3 years from January 1 of the current year, a percentage of your current salary should be used. We suggest using 94% of your current annual salary if your retirement date is within 3 - 5 months; 95% if within 6 - 9 months; 96% if within 9 - 12 months, 97% if within 12 - 20 months; 98% if within 21 - 29 months, and 99% if within 30 - 35 months.

This recommendation is based upon an assumption that the only pay increases during the last three years were the annual pay adjustments. If you were promoted, or if you received some other type of salary increase within the last three years, you should reduce the percentage you use.

If you are a firefighter, law enforcement officer, air traffic controller, or retired military employee combining your service, you will need to use the EBIS web application or contact a benefits counselor to obtain an annuity estimate. Do not use the BEST phone automated system.

If you receive a retirement estimate from EBIS or the BEST phone system and you are within one year of retirement, we recommend that you discuss the estimate with a benefits counselor. To speak with a benefits counselor, call the BEST phone system and when you reach the benefits and entitlements main menu, press “2” for retirement, then press “0” to transfer to a counselor. Benefit counselors are available Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Time.

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	2019	Overtime/Compensatory Time	2008
Appeals (Classification)	5850	Pay (Overtime, Holiday, etc.)	2008
Application for Federal Employment	7092	Pay Setting	2137
Awards	4213	Performance Appraisal/Management	4213
Base Clearance Form	7092	Political Activity	2008
Benefits & Entitlements	BEST	Position Control	7055
Career Briefs	7092	Position Sensitivity	2137
Career Program Information	7055	Post Allowance	5774
Classification of Positions / Jobs	2137	Priority Placement Program (PPP)	2137
Clearance Procedures	7092	Reduction in Force (RIF)	2137
Conduct & Discipline of Employees	2008	Renewal Agreement Travel	5850
Core Personnel Documents/Library	2137	Reports of Birth Abroad	2008
Customer Comments or Complaints	2052	Return Rights and Obligations	7055
Data Systems	2454	Resignations	2196
Details	7055	Retirement	BEST
Disciplinary Actions (US)	2008	Skills Coding (Experience)	2137
Drug Testing Designated Positions	2137	Standard Core Personnel Documents	2137
Emergency Essential Positions	7906	Standard Form 52 (SF 52) Preparation	2137
Emergency Travel	2008	Student Travel	5850
Employment Information (US)	7092	Substance Abuse Prevention	2008
Environmental Differential Pay	2137	Supervisor Training	2167
Family Member Employment	7092	Support Agreements	2741
Grievances & Appeals	2008	Temporary Promotions	2137
Health Benefits	BEST	Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)	BEST
Home Leave	2196	Training Development/Instruction/Plans	2167
Identification Card Applications	7092	Transition Assistance (Family Spt Center)	5100
Insurance (Health and Life)	BEST	Travel Orders (PCS)	2196
Job Vacancy Listings	7092	Travel Orders (Training)	2743
(See also lists on our home page)		Veterans Preference	2137
Leave	2008	Within Grade Increases	2137
Leave Without Pay (LWOP)	2008	Within Grade Increases (Withholding)	2008
Life Insurance	BEST		
Living Quarters Allowances (LQA)	5774		
Local National Employment	5365		
Merit Promotion Program	7055		
Military Spouse Preference	7092		
Occupational Illnesses	4213		
On-the-Job Injury	4213		
Orders (PCS, RAT, Student)	2196		
Overseas Allowances	5774		
Overseas Rotation Policy	2137		

APPENDIX B: Internet Links

Air Force Personnel Center	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc
Employee Benefits Information System	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST GRB/EBIS.htm
Career Programs	http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/
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
Personnel Management Info	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/permis
Retirement	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/retirements.htm
Standard Core Personnel Document	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/SCPD/default.htm
Secure Login	https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecure/Default.asp
Training Guide	www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cp/guide
Air Force Publications	www.e-publishing.af.mil/
Civilian Personnel Flight Home Page	www.ramstein.af.mil/435mss/cpo
Defense Finance and Accounting Service	www.dod.mil/dfas/
Civilian Pay	https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx
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	https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/trvlregs.html
Per Diem Rates	www.dtic.mil/perdiem/pdform.html
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:	www.eeoc.gov/
Federal jobs	http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/
First Look Ramstein	https://firstlook.usafe.af.mil/
Internal Revenue Service	www.irs.gov
Merit Systems Protection Board	www.mspb.gov
National Security Personnel System	http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsp/index.html
Office of Government Ethics	www.usoge.gov
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	www.opm.gov
Forms (Electronic)	www.opm.gov/forms/
GS Pay Tables	www.opm.gov/oca/05tables/index.asp
Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Calculator	www.opm.gov/calculator/worksheet.asp
Designations of Beneficiary	www.opm.gov/insure/designations/index.htm
Office of Special Counsel	www.osc.gov
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

<http://www.tsp.gov/forms/pubintro.html>

Veterans Administration

www.va.gov