

Southwest Civilian Personnel Operations Center
Fort Riley, Kansas

SWCPOC



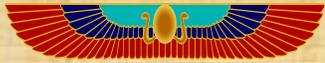
Trailblazer



Issue 1-04

Together Everyone Achieves More

February 2004



From the Southwest Regional Director Ken Nephew

As a region, we are in our 3rd month of the transition to the HR-IPT. As hard as it has been for many, I feel very good about where we are in terms of working together as one team. For sure, we have a long way to go, but we have overcome numerous obstacles. We are working with new administrative procedures, tasking flow changes, new reporting methods, and the lack of a definite budget. I believe we have become a more unified region in spite of, and as a result of these challenges. We are all in a learning mode and every time we reach out to assist one another, we gain knowledge and experience.

I encourage you to continue to ask questions and share your work experiences with each other. The monthly tele-conferences with the CPAC and CPOC staffs have proven to be very valuable and well worth the time we have all committed to these. Please do not hesitate to contact the Regional Office. We are ready and willing to assist you.

It is truly an understatement to say that our strength as a region lies in our degree of unity. There was no better example of that when one CPAC voluntarily shared their CyberFEDS licenses with others. I am grateful for that level of teamwork. The processes and procedures that we develop and refine together as a team, will engage people, empower leaders, and accelerate team development. This growth and development ensures that we will continue to be a motivated and committed workforce that provides exceptional service.

On a related subject, I want to thank Al Pagliarello and his staff at Fort Carson for volunteering to host the upcoming Spring Regional HR workshop. Another fine example of how we are embracing the regional HR concept.

Till next time.

Common Questions About FASCLASS



What is FASCLASS?

FASCLASS is a collection of all position descriptions in use throughout DA. The position descriptions in FASCLASS are meant to be viewed as drafts to assist managers in the creation of position descriptions for their individual situation.

I sent in a position description I found in FASCLASS for use in my organization and the classifier rejected it saying the grade was not supportable. What is the problem?



The classification of the positions in FASCLASS may or may not be accurate. Classification Specialists are allowed to question any position submitted from FASCLASS for proper classification and may advise against the establishment of any position that appears to be incorrectly classified. In all instances, the position description submitted must match the organizational setting where management wants the position established.

For instance, if a position is established at the MACOM level and is selected for use by a Branch at the Garrison level of an installation, there may be problems in the level of work, knowledge, complexity, scope, etc., credited to the position. It would not fit the local situation.

In these cases, the classifier will identify the problems and advise the manager. The organization setting can explain many differences in the grading of a position. Sometimes there are differences in evaluations of positions where duties appear to be



the same but most of the time there is some difference in the organizational setting or responsibilities that will explain the difference in classification.

The position descriptions in FASCLASS are not considered as "good to go" or that they "meet all requirements". Again, FASCLASS is a tool and not a substitute for experienced classification determinations.

I'm not happy with the classifier's recommendation, what can I do?



When managers disagree with a recommended classification, they may exercise their Delegated Classification Authority (DCA) to approve the contents of a PD and to make a final determination on title, series and grade. Army DCA policy provides that those who exercise this authority accept the accompanying accountability in their decision. If you do not have DCA, you should coordinate with your local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center on the proper steps to take.



Continuing Life Insurance Into Retirement

To obtain more information about your options for continuing your life insurance into retirement, contact the Army Benefits Center for Civilians (ABC-C).

Here is a typical example of how the ABC-C counselors can help you make an informed decision:

Joe Smith is retiring on 6-30-2004. He received a call from a counselor at the Army Benefits Center who noticed that he had completed an SF 2818, Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage, electing to continue his current coverage into retirement. He elected Option B (5X) and Opt C (5X) during the Open Season. He already had Basic + Family coverage since 1987. He wishes to continue Basic + Opt B (5X) + Opt C (5X). The counselor advised him he was not eligible to continue his currently OFEGLI coverage into retirement. Joe wanted to know why? The counselor explained that he must have been continuously enrolled for the 5 years of service immediately preceding

retirement or for the full period of service during which optional life insurance was available, if less than 5 years. The counselor then advised Joe of which coverage he would be allowed to continue into retirement. Joe would be allowed to continue Basic + Opt C (5x).

This is the type of assistance the ABC-C counselors can provide to all Army employees. They are a very good resource to contact when you have to make important benefits decisions.



Spring Conference In Colorado!

THE SOUTHWEST REGION'S SPRING CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AT THE SHERATON HOTEL IN COLORADO SPRINGS FROM 11-12 MAY 2004.

IT PROMISES TO BE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IDEAS, IMPROVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND DISCUSS THE MANY CHANGES THAT AFFECT THE CIVILIAN HUMAN RESOURCES COMMUNITY.

THANKS GO TO MR. AL PAGLIARELLO AND HIS STAFF AT THE CPAC FOR HOSTING THIS IMPORTANT EVENT.



Most employees know that it's a good idea to review

Reviewing Your OPF



your Official Personnel File (OPF) periodically. This can be done at your local CPAC after scheduling an appointment.

But do you know what to look for? In addition to verifying your appraisals, awards, training, etc., here are a few tips to help you ensure that necessary documentation will be in your file at the time of your retirement.

1. **Beneficiary Designations:** While reviewing your OPF, make note of any designations on file. Any designations you may have made previously for CSRS and TSP are on file with OPM and the TSP Service Office, respectively. Designations for FEGLI, FERS and Unpaid Compensation will be on file in the OPF. If you have never filed these designations or would like to make a change, the

forms are available at _____, or at OPM's web site at _____.

- 2. **Military Service:** Verify that copies of your DD-214(s) are on file. If you have already paid your Post-56 deposit and proof of this payment has not been placed in your OPF, this is the time to include it.
- 3. **Deposit/Redeposit Service:** If you have made a deposit for service performed under FICA or have redeposited funds which you previously withdrew from your retirement account, it's advisable to include proof of this payment as well.

For information on these topics or to speak with a

Meeting Management Quick Tips



benefits specialist, visit the ABC-C website shown above or call 1-877-276-9287 toll free for assistance anytime between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. (CST) Monday thru Friday.



Preparation:

- ✓ Schedule meetings well in advance to ensure attendance.
- ✓ Have a printed agenda to keep the meeting on task.
- ✓ Take a few minutes to collect your thoughts just before the meeting begins.

Conducting the Meeting:

- ✓ Remember to get updates from committees and individual projects.
- ✓ Give everyone a chance to have input and respects others' opinions when new ideas come up.
- ✓ Acknowledge questions or comments and if you don't know the answer, write the question down and have an answer by the next meeting.



Basic Principles for Sick Leave Usage



- ✓ Try to end the meeting with some FUN whenever possible.



Employees earn sick leave and are entitled to use it for specific purposes. In general, employees are entitled to use sick leave when they are incapacitated for duty illness or injury, or are caring for a family member who is sick.

In addition, employees are eligible to use sick leave to receive medical, dental or optical treatment or examination.

Although employees earn sick leave as a benefit established in law and are entitled to use it for specified purposes, its use is subject to supervisory approval.

Under the Family Friendly Leave Act, employees may use up to 104 hours of sick leave each leave year to care for a family member or to arrange for or attend the funeral of a family member. Employees may use 40 hours of sick leave for these purposes without regard to their current sick leave balance. An additional 64 hours may be used if the employee maintains a balance of at least 80 hours of sick leave in his/her sick leave account.

Under the Family Medical Leave Act, employees may use a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave for certain specific reasons. Federal employees are also permitted to substitute annual leave or sick for all or part of the unpaid leave.

For specific guidance and requirements, talk to your supervisor or the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.



Send comments or suggestions to:

Lucy Gonzalez
Office of the SWDirector
(785) 239-0015 (DSN prefix 856)
email: Lucy.Gonzalez@cpocswr.army.mil