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CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER



Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland

Welcome to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center of Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). You are now one of approximately 7,500 civilian employees working at APG and employed in one of over 250 different occupations. We hope that you find your work here both challenging and rewarding.

The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center stands ready to provide you with professional and timely guidance and assistance in personnel matters. This booklet is designed to give you general information on various services provided, and some points of contact to get you started.

We look forward to working with you and assisting you in a variety of ways. You need only call us. It is our hope that your career at Aberdeen Proving Ground will be a long, pleasant and rewarding one. Welcome Aboard!

**WILLIAM W. LOWE
Director
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center**



History of Aberdeen Proving Ground

Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Army's oldest active proving ground, was established on October 16, 1917, six months after the United States entered World War I, to provide the military a facility where design and testing of ordnance materiel could be carried out in close proximity to the nation's industrial and shipping centers. The post officially opened on December 14, 1917, and the first gun was fired on January 2, 1918.

Aberdeen Proving Ground occupies more than 72,500 acres in Harford County, Maryland. The installation is comprised of two principal areas, separated by the Bush River. The northern area is known as the Aberdeen Area, and the southern sector, formerly Edgewood Arsenal is the Edgewood Area. The two areas were administratively combined in 1971. APG property not attached to the main installation includes the Churchville Test Site in Harford County and Carroll Island and Grace's Quarters in Baltimore County.

Aberdeen Proving Ground is home to more than 50 tenants and a host of satellite activities. Among the major tenants are the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command (APG's parent command), U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School, U. S. Army Developmental Test Command, U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Northeast Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for the Chemical Defense, Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, 203rd Technical Intelligence Unit, and major elements of the Army Research Laboratory.

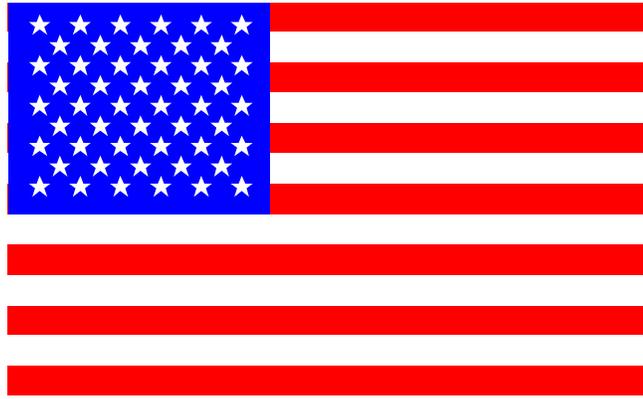
As a center for Army materiel testing, laboratory research and military training, the post is a key element in the nation's defense. All tanks and wheeled vehicles which have served U.S. forces for the past 50 years have been tested for performance and durability at APG - from the M4 Sherman tank of World War II to the MI tank and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle of today.

Known as the "Home of Ordnance," APG has been training Army ordnance personnel since 1918. The Army's ordnance training was consolidated at the proving ground during World War II and today the U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School provides mechanical maintenance training for more than 20,000 U.S. and foreign personnel each year. OC&S also is regimental headquarters for the Army's Chief of Ordnance.

APG's Edgewood Area has been a center for chemical warfare research and development since it was established. From the trenches of France and Belgium in World War I to the desert battlefields of Iraq nearly seventy-five years later, the work done at APG has contributed to the defense and safety of American forces threatened by chemical-weapons.

Approximately 7,500 civilian, 3,900 military personnel and 3,000 contractors and private business employees work at APG. There are 2,700 military family members living on the post and another 243-post. The post supports more than 16,000 area military retirees and retiree family members. The post is Harford County's largest employer and one of the largest employers in the state of Maryland.

Respect to the Flag & Code of Ethics



RESPECT TO THE FLAG:

At 5:00 p.m. every day the Flag is lowered in a ceremony known as Retreat. During this **brief** ceremony, as a sign of respect for our American Flag, you should stop, face the flag, and stand at attention until Retreat has finished playing. If you are in your car, you should stop and wait for the conclusion of the ceremony before you proceed.

At a parade or review ceremony, as the flag passes by you should stand at attention and face the flag. Also any time the “National Anthem” or “To The Colors” is played you should stand, face the flag, and place your right hand over your heart. Gentlemen should remove their hats.

CODE OF ETHICS:

Public Service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws and ethical principles above private gain. No employee shall engage either directly or indirectly in any action which conflicts with official duties, represents any private interest, discloses confidential information, obtains privileges for self or others, or benefits financially. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in Department of Defense Regulation 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation



ABOUT YOUR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

Welcome to the Federal community! Many people believe that the Federal workplace is one that is filled with acronyms, codes and mystery when it comes to understanding your job status and benefits.

We want to get you started on the right foot--provide a foundation from the beginning—this handbook is not intended to provide all the circumstances for all situations. We would like to think of it as the ground floor that you can build from.

The one document that you will receive once you are appointed is the **SF50, “Notification of Personnel Action.”** This is a very important document which gives you a lot of very important information such as the type of appointment you are on, what retirement system you are covered by, what your service computation date is, etc. You should establish a personal file to keep all of your SF50’s, other forms regarding your benefits (life insurance, health insurance, thrift savings plan), as well as your Leave and Earnings Statements (LES). The Northeast Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) will maintain an Official Personnel Folder commonly referred to as the OPF. It contains a history of your employment—all of your SF 50’s, election forms, and other pertinent information. However, it is still important that you maintain your own file.

TYPE OF APPOINTMENT:

Basically there are only two categories of appointments, temporary or permanent. There are many types of appointments within each of the categories, such as excepted, indefinite, term, career, and career- conditional that have been established to meet the needs of the agency.

Temporary Appointments: If your SF 50, in block 5B, states Temporary Appt (NTE date), it means that you are serving on an appointment not to exceed (NTE) a certain date. Normally, with this type of appointment, you are NOT eligible for retirement coverage, health or life insurance. (Block 30 of SF 50 will have a “2” in it which means no retirement coverage.) You do pay a Social Security wage tax of 6.2%. If you become covered by retirement in the future, temporary service will be credited for leave, reduction-in-force, and required time for vesting in the government contribution to the Thrift Savings Plan.

Another type of temporary appointment is “**term appointment.**” It is still an appointment of limited time, but it is made for a specific period exceeding one year and lasting no more than four years. In contrast, term appointments are covered by the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) and you will be eligible for health and life insurance. (Block 30 on your SF 50 will show a “K”.) You will pay a 6.2% Social Security wage tax.

Permanent Appointments: This means there is no time limitation with your appointment. You are covered by retirement and are eligible for health and life insurance. There are many types of permanent appointments such as a career-conditional appointment, which means that you are on a permanent appointment but you have not met the service requirement for career tenure. Career tenure is a 3-year period of substantially continuous, creditable service.

Probationary Period: When appointed under a career or career-conditional appointment, employees are required to serve a probationary period. The appointment SF 50 will have a statement in the remarks section which says "Appointment is subject to completion of a one-year (three-year for employees appointed under the Laboratory Demonstration Project) initial probationary period beginning (date). During this probationary period, an agency may terminate an employee because work performance or conduct fails to demonstrate fitness or qualifications for continued employment. Employees may not appeal removal during probationary periods unless the appeal is based on discrimination or improper procedures.

Performance Evaluations: Your performance will be evaluated annually under the Total Army Personnel Evaluation System (TAPES). Under TAPES there are two performance systems. The **Base System** covers employees in grades 1 through 8 in pay plans WL, WG, WS and GS except for Career Interns. The **Senior System** covers employees in grades 9 and above in pay plans ES, ST, SL, GM WS and GS and career interns. **Within the first 30 days of your employment** your supervisor is required to meet with you to discuss your duties, responsibilities and goals. At this meeting your performance standards will be developed and you will be asked to initial your performance plan.

If you have questions regarding TAPES you may refer to DA Pamphlet 690-400 or Army Regulation 690-400. Your supervisor or admin person should have a copy of these documents. Exception: If your organization participates in a Personnel Demonstration Project, your performance evaluation will be completed in accordance with the policies of the specific Demo Project.

Awards: The Army Incentive Awards Program is governed by Army Regulation 672-20 and its goal is to foster mission accomplishment by recognizing excellence and motivating employees to achieve high levels of performance and service. Awards are not mandatory but may be initiated by management when applicable criteria are met. Some types of awards are:

Performance Awards which are based on your annual performance evaluation.

Special Accomplishment Awards such as Special Act or Service Awards, On-the-Spot Cash Awards, or Time Off Awards which are based on a meritorious personal effort, act, service or achievement.

Honorary Awards which may be utilized to recognize accomplishments or achievement when a monetary or performance award may not be appropriate.

WHAT ARE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS?

OPM has approved the conduct of demonstration projects that are designed to test unique personnel systems and programs. Participating organizations are re-engineering their work processes and have delegated authorities and responsibilities beyond the norm which allow them to waive DoD and Army regulations and policies that would otherwise hinder improved efficiencies and process re-engineering efforts. One of the major initiatives under the demonstration projects at APG is the concept of pay for performance which allows organizations to compensate employees based on their contributions to the organization rather than through established within-grade increases. Also the demos use a broadbanded grade structure rather than the traditional General Schedule (GS) structure which allows flexibility in moving an employee within the pay band. Other benefits of the projects include streamlined hiring processes, simplified job classification, revised reduction-in-force procedures, expanded training opportunities and sabbaticals.

CPAC CPOC
Confused????

It used to be so simple; there was one Civilian Personnel Office and they were the experts on all civilian personnel issues. Now you are hearing CPAC and CPOC. How do you know who to call?

The CPAC is the **Civilian Personnel Advisory Center**. They are still the primary point of contact for matters concerning personnel issues. Your organization is serviced by a team of personnelists who advise managers on issues concerning staffing, labor/management employee relations, position management, classification, benefits, and training and development. If you have questions, your first point of contact should always be your supervisor. If your supervisor cannot answer your question, he/she will call the CPAC for advice. If you must contact the CPAC personally, please call to make an appointment. **See the CPAC organization chart on page 2.** The new **Self-Service Job Information Center** is also located at the CPAC. At the Center you can view local job announcements, pick up application forms, query the Federal Job Opportunity Listing on the touch screen computer, or obtain information about the Spouse Preference Program. Or you may call the automated phone line-- From on Post dial 4-CPAC—From off Post dial (410)-306-CPAC.

The CPOC is the **Civilian Personnel Operations Center**. They maintain your personnel records and they **process** all personnel actions. For example, if you are eligible for a promotion, your manager will initiate an SF 52 (Request for Personnel Action), send it through the CPAC to the CPOC. The CPOC will input the information into the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) which will generate the personnel action (SF 50) authorizing the promotion. You will receive a copy of the SF 50 once the action has been completed. The CPOC is also responsible for administration of the Merit Promotion Plan, classification of positions, and coordination of regional training courses.



You will be paid bi-weekly and you must have your check direct deposited to your bank. Your check should reach your bank by Thursday of each pay week. You may want to check with your bank on your first direct deposit to ensure that your pay was deposited correctly. A Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) will be mailed to your home each pay period. You should look at your LES each time to make sure it is accurate.

Your Leave and Earnings Statement contains information regarding your earnings for the period such as hourly wage, number of hours worked, gross pay, deductions, and net pay. It also contains information regarding your Annual and Sick leave such as how much leave you have used for the pay period and the year, and your leave balance.

If you find that there is an error on your LES you should contact your supervisor or the administrative point of contact in your organization.

Within Grade Increases:

Full time and part time employees who occupy **permanent positions** classified and paid under the General Schedule (GS) and who are paid less than the maximum rate of their grade are eligible for within grade increases (WGIs) based on the waiting periods below. For GS employees, an appointment for more than one year is considered permanent for WGI purposes. GS employees serving on appointments with a definite time limit of one year or less are not eligible for WGIs.

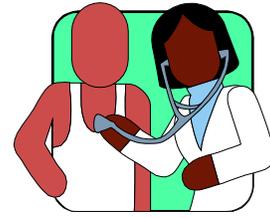
Full time and part time employees classified and paid under the Wage Schedule (WS, WL, WG) who are paid less than the maximum rate of their grade are eligible for WGIs based on the waiting periods below, regardless of the length of their appointment.

Employees in demonstration projects or pay plans that have no steps, members of SES, and Presidential appointees are not eligible for WGI's. To receive a WGI an employee must have completed the required waiting period; be performing at an acceptable level of competence; and have not received an equivalent increase during the waiting period. The waiting period is as follows:

GS:	<u>TO STEPS</u>	<u>REQUIRED WAITING PERIOD</u>
	2, 3, 4	52 calendar weeks (1 yr)
	5, 6, 7	104 calendar weeks (2 yrs)
	8, 9, 10	156 calendar weeks (3 yrs)
WG:	<u>TO STEPS</u>	<u>REQUIRED WAITING PERIOD</u>
	2	26 calendar weeks (6 mo)
	3	78 calendar weeks (18 mo)
	4, 5	104 calendar weeks (2 yrs)



Benefits



ARMY BENEFITS CENTER – CIVILIAN

The Army Benefits Center – Civilian is a fast, convenient, self-service system that allows you to obtain general information, access personal information and conduct benefits transactions by using a computer or a touch-tone telephone.

They administer all benefits, to include Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

ABC-C is located at Fort Riley, Kansas. Employees may contact them via telephone at 1-877-ARMY CTR (1-877-276-9287) or via the Internet at www.abc.army.mil. The Center may be accessed 21 hours a day, 7 days a week. Neither the phone line nor the Internet are available from 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. Central Time.

Benefit counselors are available from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time to assist you and to provide retirement counseling.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS (FEHB):

If you are a Permanent or Term employee, you may elect health insurance coverage without a medical examination or restriction because of age, current health or pre-existing conditions. You have 60 days from the date of your eligible appointment. Once you elect your health insurance coverage plan, it will be effective at the beginning of the next pay period. Time is an important consideration since you will not have coverage until you make the election.

Health insurance is an important benefit. The cost is shared by the employee and the government. The government's share may not exceed 75% of the total enrollment cost—you as the employee, pay the remaining amount. There are many plans available. Your choices range from a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) to a Fee for Service Plan. You must review the various plans and make a determination of what is best for you. If you do not enroll within the 60-day time-frame, you will not be able to elect coverage until there is an open season or you have a life event that would allow you to enroll. **It is your responsibility to notify the Army Benefits Center in a timely manner of these events.** The open season occurs each year from Monday of the second full workweek in November to the Monday of the second full workweek in December.

For More Information:

- Contact the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287 or www.abc.army.mil
Access information on the internet at: <http://www.opm.gov/insure>

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI):

Life insurance is a term insurance policy with no cash value. As a new permanent or term employee, you are automatically enrolled in Basic Life Insurance unless you waive the coverage. Within the first 31 days after your eligible appointment, you may waive or elect optional insurance coverage. You may elect coverage without a medical examination, so don't worry about any pre-existing issues. Any options not elected will be deemed as waived. To elect options, you must also have Basic coverage.

Basic: The Basic value is your annual salary, rounded up to the next \$1,000, plus \$2,000. (Example: annual salary is \$25,982 rounded up to \$26,000 plus \$2,000 equals \$28,000 worth of insurance.)

Option A-Standard: Standard life insurance in the amount of \$10,000.

Option B-Additional: Allows you to choose from one to five times your salary. If you chose two times, it would mean your annual salary rounded up to the next thousand, times the number elected. (Example: annual salary of \$25,982, rounded up to \$26,000 times two would equal \$52,000.)

Option C – Family: Does not give you insurance on your life, but **does** insure your eligible family members. You may elect 1 to 5 multiples of the following: \$5,000 for spouse, \$2,500 for dependent children. If you are unmarried and later marry, or acquire a dependent child, you may elect family coverage.

Changing Life Insurance Coverage: To change your insurance coverage you must:

- Wait for an Open Enrollment which is **relatively rare, OR**
- Experience a Life Event such as marriage, birth or adoption of a child, divorce, or death of spouse, **OR**
- Wait at least one year from the effective date of your last election and obtain a physical at your own expense using form SF 2822. If the results are approved you will be enrolled in Basic and you may elect Option A or Option B. You may NOT elect Option C through a physical.

Cost of the Basic Life Insurance is based on the total amount of your coverage \$.165 per \$1,000. The cost of the options is based on your age, increasing in 5 years increments (40, 45, 50 etc). The effective date of the increase in cost is always January following your birthday.

For More Information:

- Contact the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287 or www.abc.army.mil
- Access information from the internet at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/index.htm>



THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP):

Who Can Participate: You can participate in the Thrift Savings Plan if you are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement Plan (CSRS).

Contributions: TSP offers participants tax deferral on contributions of up to 11% (FERS) or up to 6% (CSRS) of your basic pay each pay period. If you are a FERS employee, you also get automatic agency contributions (1%) whether or not you contribute your own funds **and** matching agency funds on up to 5% of your basic pay. Contributions will increase 1% per year for both CSRS and FERS through 2005 to max out at 15% for FERS and 10% for CSRS. However, you are limited per year to the annual IRS elective deferral limit.

How and When Do I Sign Up? To elect TSP you must contact The Army Benefits Center during the TSP Open Seasons (new employees can enroll 60 days from date of appointment, or wait until the next open season) to elect your dollar amount or percentage. You must then contact the Thrift Savings Plan to allocate your funds.

Investment Options:

G Fund: The Government Securities Investment Fund which is invested in short-term U. S. Treasury securities. It is very secure.

C Fund: The Common Stock Index Investment Fund which consists of common stocks represented in the S&P stock index. There is some risk involved.

F Fund: The Fixed Income Index Investment Fund which is a bond index fund that tracks the Lehman Brother Aggregate (LBA) bond index. There are risks involved.

S Fund: The Small Capitalization Index Investment Fund is a stock index fund that tracks medium and small companies included in the Wilshire 4500 stock index. There are risks involved.

I Fund: The International Stock Index Investment Fund tracks the 21 countries included in the Morgan Stanley Capital International EAFE stock index. There are risks involved.

For More Information:

- Call the TSP Inquiry Line at (504) 255-8777.
- Access the TSP Web Site at www.tsp.gov
- Contact the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287 or www.abc.army.mil

DEATH BENEFITS:

The benefits available to survivors of employees who become deceased while employed at APG will depend on varying factors. Most survivors will be entitled to continuation of any Federal health plan the employee may have had. If the employee elected to have Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), coverage will be payable in the amount of the gross annual salary at the time of death plus \$2000 and any additional coverage the employee may have elected. Benefits as a result of the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employees Retirement System will depend on the rate of pay and the total service at the time of death. Benefits will also be payable if the employee had any unused amount of annual leave.

For More Information:

- Contact the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287 or www.abc.army.mil



WORKERS' COMPENSATION:

As an employee of Aberdeen Proving Ground you are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act which provides compensation under certain conditions for injuries or diseases that are sustained as a direct result of performing your job.

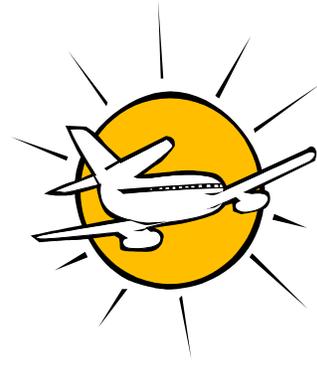
Every job-related injury should be reported immediately to your supervisor who will authorize medical care. An injured person is entitled to first aid and medical or hospital care, if needed.

Worker's Compensation forms may be obtained from the Worker's Compensation Office in Bldg 4304.

For further information or forms please contact the Worker's Compensation Office at (410) 306-1091 (on post dial 4-1091).



Leave Leave



Your Leave Service Comp Date (SCD), block 31 on your SF 50, determines the amount of leave that you accrue. If you have military service—not retired, or retired military service with certain expeditions or campaigns, your SCD will reflect creditable service. A full-time employee earns the following amount of leave each year:

<u>Length of Federal Employment</u>	<u>Annual Leave Earned</u>	<u>Sick Leave Earned</u>
Up to 3 years	4 hours per pay period	4 hours per pay period
3-15 years	6 hours per pay period	regardless of number of
15 years +	8 hours per pay period	years worked

The leave year ends the beginning of the first full pay period in January. A civilian employee may accumulate up to 240 hours in any one leave year. Any annual leave over that amount will be forfeited when the leave year ends.

Only employees with regularly prescribed tours of duty earn Annual and Sick Leave. Employees with an intermittent tour of duty, regardless of appointment type, do not earn annual or sick leave.

Part-time employees earn annual and sick leave on a prorated basis as follows:

<u>Length of Federal Employment</u>	<u>Annual Leave Earned</u>	<u>Sick Leave Earned</u>	Up
to 3 years	1 hr for each 20 hrs worked	1 hr for each 20 hrs worked	
3-15 years	1 hr for each 13 hrs worked	regardless of length of service	
15 years +	1 hr for each 10 hrs worked		

Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) and Firefighters (FF) who work uncommon tours of duty accrue leave directly proportionate to the rates for employees who accrue and use leave on the basis of an 80-hour biweekly schedule. For example, if an LEO or FF’s leave is accrued and used on the basis of a 144-hour biweekly pay period, then the maximum annual leave accrual rate would be 14 hours 24 minutes per biweekly pay period, instead of the standard rate of 8 hours per biweekly pay period.

SICK LEAVE USEAGE: When an employee is sick and is unable to come to work, they must call their supervisor within 2 hours of the start of the working day to request sick leave. Calling a co-worker is not appropriate since only the supervisor is authorized to grant sick leave.

The Family and Medical Leave Act 1993 (FMLA):

The Family and Medical Leave Act provides covered Federal employees with entitlement to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the following purposes:

- The birth of a son or daughter of the employee and the care of such son or daughter;
- The placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- The care of spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition; **or**
- A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her position.

Under certain conditions, FMLA leave may be taken intermittently, or the employee may work under a work schedule that is reduced by the number of hours of leave taken as family and medical leave. An employee may elect to substitute annual leave and/or sick leave, consistent with current laws and regulations, for any unpaid leave under the FMLA. FMLA leave is in addition to other paid time off available to an employee.

Sick Leave to Care for a Family Member with a “Serious Health Condition:”

An employee may use a total of up to 12 weeks of sick leave each year to care for a family member with a “serious health condition.” Under this policy, employees must maintain a sick leave balance of 80 hours in order to use the full 12 weeks of sick leave. The definition of “family member” includes the following relatives of the employee: (a) spouse and parents; (b) children, including adopted children, and spouses; (c) parents; (d) brothers and sisters, and spouses; and (e) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship. “Serious health condition” is defined in Title 5 United States Code 630.1202.

The Family Friendly Leave Act of 1994 (FFLA):

The Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act permits covered full-time employees to use a total of up to 40 hours (5 workdays) of sick leave each year to:

- Care for a family member who is incapacitated as a result of physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth;
- Assist a family member who receives medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment;
- Make arrangements for or attend the funeral of a family member.

In addition, the regulations allow a covered full-time employee who maintains a balance of at least 80 hours of sick leave to use an additional 64 hours (8 workdays) of sick leave per year for these purposes, bringing the total amount of sick leave available for family care or bereavement purposes to a maximum of 104 hours (13 workdays) per year.

NOTE: Any employee may use an initial 40 hours of sick leave for family/care bereavement purposes. To use more than 40 hours, an employee must maintain a sick leave balance of 80 hours at all times.

VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM:

The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP) is a means for the unused accrued annual leave of one Federal employee to be transferred (donated) for use by another Federal employee who needs the leave because of a medical emergency. The medical emergency may be for the employee or their family member which is likely to require their absence from duty for a prolonged period of time resulting in a substantial loss of income because of the unavailability of paid leave. In order to be eligible for donations, a Federal employee must have exhausted both their annual and sick leave accruals in accordance with regulatory guidance. Each week a list of eligible Leave Donation recipients is published in the APG News.

By law, annual leave is the only leave category allowable for transfer/donation (Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 630). Leave donations are **not** tax deductible.

In a leave year, a leave donor may donate no more than a total of one-half of the amount of annual leave he/she would be entitled to accrue during the leave year in which the donation is made (see chart below). The limitations on donating leave, as cited above, can be waived if the donor is a family member of the recipient.

Accrual Rate Maximum Hours Donated

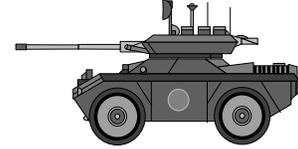
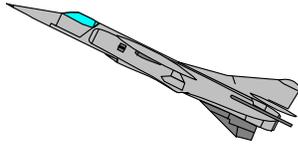
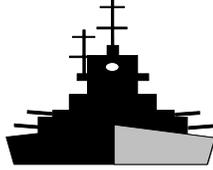
8 hour category 104 hours

6 hour category 78 hours

4 hour category 52 hours

To apply for the VLTP or to donate annual leave, the forms are available in the Leave Administration Regulation, APGR 690-9, and on the CPAC Web Site

(<http://www.apg.army.mil/garrison/cpoc/cpac/cpacnew.htm>), or you may contact Dave Mial, VLTP Coordinator at (410) 278-1524.



MILITARY LEAVE:

Military leave is absence from duty in the employee's civilian position without loss of pay to perform military duty. Employees entitled to military leave must be:

- A member of a Reserve or National Guard component
- On a full-time or part-time work schedule, or an indefinite employee who does not have an intermittent work schedule
- Be serving in an appointment that is not limited to one year or less

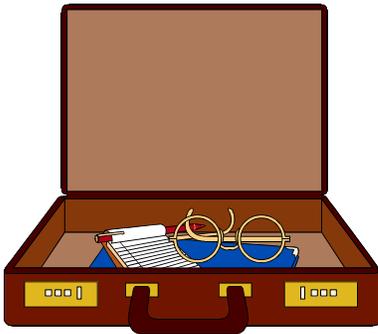
Eligible employees must, upon request, be granted military leave to which entitled for performance of active duty, such as Annual Training (AT), Active Duty for Special Work (ADSW), etc., as well as for Inactive Duty Training (IDT). Requests for active duty situations must be accompanied by a copy of the orders which is forwarded to the payroll office with the Time and Attendance Report. Also, the employee is required to submit certification by the appropriate military officer as evidence that the military active duty was performed. In the case of IDT, orders are not generally issued, therefore the employee must submit a form, e.g. Record of Individual Performance of Reserve Duty Training, DD Form 1380 (NAVRES 1570/22), which differs by Service in association with IDT. Upon completion of the covered IDT, this completed form certifies, in essence, that the IDT was actually performed and should be submitted to the employee's supervisor. A supervisor may also accept an SF-71, Request for Leave, with military leave annotated in the remarks section; a memorandum from the Commanding Officer, or any other form deemed acceptable by the supervisor.

Fifteen days of military leave is credited to an eligible employee's account (pro-rated for part-time employees) on 1 October of each fiscal year or upon appointment. Unused military leave remaining from the prior fiscal year, not to exceed 15 days, is also credited.

In addition to the military leave already available above, additional military leave of 22 and 44 days may also be available in certain situations.

NEW: Military leave should be credited to a full-time employee on the basis of an 8-hour workday. The minimum charge to leave is 1 hour. An employee may be charged military leave only for hours that the employee would otherwise have worked and received pay.

Employees who request military leave for inactive duty training (which generally is 2,4, or 6 hours in length) will now be charged only the amount of military leave necessary to cover the period of training and necessary travel. Members of the Reserves and or National Guard will no longer be charged military leave for weekends and holidays that occur within the period of military service. A full-time employee working a 40-hour workweek will accrue 120 hours (15 days x 8 hours) of military leave in a fiscal year, or the equivalent of three 40-hour workweeks. Military leave for part-time employees will be prorated.



RESUMIX

How to Apply for Vacancies

What is Resumix?

Resumix is an automated system which the CPOC uses to fill vacancies at Aberdeen Proving Ground. This automated system uses state-of-the-art optical character recognition and a patented computer programming system to read resumes and extract applicant skills.

How do I apply for a vacancy?

If you wish to apply for a position at APG you must have your resume on file at the NECPOC. Once you have your resume on file at the CPOC, if you see a vacancy announcement you are interested in, you merely self-nominate yourself for the position. Detailed instructions on how to prepare and submit your resume and how to self-nominate are located in the *Resumix Job Application Kit* which is available on the Internet at: <http://www.cpol.army.mil/ner/resumix> or from your admin representative in your organization.

Retirement



CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM (CSRS):

Generally, all permanent appropriated employees hired before 1 January 1984, who did not switch to FERS when given an open season opportunity to do so, are covered under the CSRS. Employees under CSRS pay retirement deductions. They may contribute up to 5% of their pay to the Thrift Savings Plan but do not receive any government contributions. Employees hired during the period 1 Jan 1984 to 31 Dec 1986 are covered under the CSRS and Social Security. These employees are called CSRS Offset employees. Employees employed on 1 Jan 1987 or later are covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM (FERS):

If you were first hired after 1/1/84 in a non-temporary appointment, you are a FERS employee. FERS is a three-tiered program consisting of the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Social Security, and a FERS annuity. The platform for FERS is TSP. The FERS annuity is based on 1% of your average high three years salary, times the number of years worked. The intent in the establishment of FERS was to have a flexible, portable retirement system that the employee is accountable for. Other FERS facts:

- Any non-covered position (temporary) on or after 1/1/89 is not creditable for retirement.
- If you separate and request a refund of your retirement contributions from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), you lose all credit for the service covered by the refund and it can never be used for any retirement benefit.
- You are the manager of your retirement. You must invest in TSP and make sound savings and investments throughout your working career, to have a comfortable retirement.

RETIREMENT ELIGIBILITY: Employees under either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) are eligible for optional retirement if they are at least 55 with at least 30 years of service; age 60 with 20 years of service; or age 62 with 5 years of service. An employee under FERS is also eligible for an immediate annuity if he/she has at least 10 years of service and has reached the minimum retirement age (55 if born before 1948, and gradually increasing to age 57).

PRIOR MILITARY SERVICE:

Post-1956 Military Service: Employees who have post-1956 military service are reminded of the following rules governing this military service. Forms and instructions for making the deposit may be obtained from the Army Benefits Center (1-877-276-9287 or www.abc.army.mil).

Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS): Employees hired in positions subject to CSRS before 1 Oct 82, can receive credit for post-1956 military service without making a deposit, but will be subject to elimination of this service credit if they become eligible (or would become eligible upon proper application) for Social Security benefits at age 62. An employee first hired in a position under the CSRS on or after 1 Oct 82 will receive credit for post-1956 military service at the time of retirement only if a deposit has been made for the service, whether or not they become eligible for Social Security benefits. The amount of the deposit is 7% of basic military pay received. Interest begins to accrue 1 Oct 84 or two years after the employee is first hired in a position subject to CSRS, whichever is later. Since OPM's method of computing the deposit calls for adding interest only at the end of the year after it begins, no interest will actually be charged if the deposit is completed before the end of the year that the interest begins. Interest will be charged at a variable rate that will be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury. This determination will be made each calendar year on the basis of the average yield of new investments purchased by the retirement fund during the previous fiscal year. The deposit must be made directly to the employing agency before retirement.

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS): Military service that would be creditable under CSRS is creditable under FERS, except that all military service after 1956 must be covered by a deposit to receive credit at retirement. Even if an employee covered by FERS was first hired before 1 Oct 82, military service after 1956 cannot be credited under FERS rules unless the required deposit is completed. The amount of the deposit is 3% of the military basic pay for the period. Interest is computed at the same variable rate as applicable to CSRS deposits. Interest begins on 1 Jan 89 or two years after first becoming subject to FERS, whichever is later. (Since OPM's method of computing the deposit calls for adding interest only at the end of the year after it begins, no interest will actually be charged if the deposit is completed before the end of the year that the interest begins.) The deposit must be made directly to the employing agency before retirement. If you transferred to FERS, whether your military service is credited under CSRS rules or FERS rules will depend on how much civilian service you had as of the effective date of your transfer to FERS. If you elected FERS coverage after 30 Jun 87 and had less than five years of civilian service (not counting any civilian service covered simultaneously by both Social Security and CSRS after 31 Dec 83) before the effective date of the election, your military deposit would be subject to FERS rules. Employees who convert to FERS and have more than five years of civilian service remain subject to the CSRS rules concerning this military deposit. For those employees, the deposit is 7% and the interest-free period is unchanged.

VERA/VSIP:

The first thing to understand is that these are two completely separate programs. While both have the same goal--assisting with and lessening the impact of downsizing actions--they are not tied together. Each has its own rules and eligibility requirements. You may be eligible for one, but not the other. The fact that you are not eligible for one will not necessarily keep you from getting the benefits of the other.

The philosophy of the Federal government is that as the government downsizes it is better for employees to voluntarily separate from Federal service rather than taking actions that involuntarily separate employees, such as reduction-in-force (RIF). Both of these programs, Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), help the government with this philosophy.

VERA (Voluntary Early Retirement Authority):

An installation can allow employees to retire early only if it has requested Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and OPM has granted its use. VERA allows eligible employees to retire prior to meeting the age and service requirements for regular retirement. The installation's request for VERA and OPM's approval must designate the geographic area in which early retirement will be offered and show that the installation is undergoing a major Reduction-in-Force (RIF), reorganization, or transfer of function that will result in a significant percent of the employees being separated or downgraded.

To be eligible for voluntary early retirement (VERA), an employee must be at least 50 with 20 or more years of service or have 25 years of service at any age. For employees under CSRS, annuities will be reduced by 2% a year for each year they are under age 55. There is no age reduction for employees covered by FERS.

VSIP (Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay):

VSIP is not a retirement program. It is a special program that allows Department of Defense (DOD) activities to pay separation incentives to employees who quit or take regular or early retirement.

Employees who wish to retire must meet regular age and length of service requirements. While the law does not impose age or length of service requirements, it does allow agencies to target VSIP to specific types of positions in organizations and/or specific occupations (including grade levels). This means that agencies may choose not to offer VSIP to scarce-skill or hard -to-fill occupations. There are restrictions on reemployment with the Federal government if an employee accepts payment of a VSIP.

Incentive pay is the amount an employee would receive using the standard severance pay formula or \$25,000, whichever is less. The amount of each employee's incentive pay will vary, but the maximum amount will never exceed \$25,000. In addition, the amount determined by the formula will be reduced by deductions such as Medicare, Federal income taxes, etc.

For More Information:

- Access the Internet at <http://www.opm.gov/retire>



Web Sites & Information

Web Sites:

CPAC Homepage: <http://www.apg.army.mil/garrison/cpoc/cpac/cpacnew.htm>

Civilian Personnel on Line (CPOL): <http://www.cpol.army.mil>

NECPOC Homepage: <http://www.cpol.army.mil/ner>

APG Homepage: <http://www.apg.army.mil>

Resumix Job Application Kit: <http://www.cpol.army.mil/ner/resumix/resumix.htm>

The Army Benefits Center – Civilian: <http://www.abc.army.mil>

CPAC Information Phone Line: *Dial: 4-CPAC*