



JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK  
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER  
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5341



“A Return to Prominence – One Satisfied Customer at a Time”

CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN  
NUMBER 135

May 2011

# Mother's Day

*Don't Forget That Special  
Mom This Mother's Day!*

*Sunday  
May 8th*



## FLTCIP Open Season April 4 - June 24, 2011

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) Open Season is from April 4, 2011 through June 24, 2011, and is the first abbreviated underwriting opportunity (applicants will answer fewer health questions) for non-enrolled applicants since 2002. Please

read the eligibility criteria below to see if you can apply with an abbreviated application.

### Eligibility

New applicants listed below are eligible to apply with abbreviated underwriting during the FLTCIP Open Season. All employees must be actively at work.

- Federal and U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employees in positions that convey eligibility for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (whether or not they are actually enrolled in FEHB)
- Active Members of the Uniformed Services who are on active duty or full-time National Guard duty for more than 30 days
- Active Members of the Selected Reserve
- Tennessee Valley Authority employees (even though they may not be eligible for FEHB coverage)
- D.C. Government employees first employed by the D.C. Government on or before October 1, 1987
- D.C. Courts employees
- Navy Personnel Command (BUPERS) NAF employees
- Spouses of employees listed above
- [Same-sex domestic partners](#) of civilian workforce members who have submitted (either directly or through their partner) a [form](#) affirming this status to the partner's employing agency

**Note:** Non-enrolled annuitants and other qualified relatives can apply for coverage at any time, but must complete a full underwriting application.

### Important

- Premiums are based on your age when we receive your application. If your birthday is between now

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and April 4, you may wish to apply for coverage now with full underwriting to take advantage of the rates at your current age.

- Certain medical conditions, or combinations of conditions, will prevent some people from being approved for coverage. You need to apply to find out if you qualify for coverage under this program.
- Premiums are set with the expectation that they will be sufficient, but they are not guaranteed. The premium for your group (for example, those with the same plan design or set of benefits) may only increase if it is determined to be inadequate. While the group policy is in effect, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management must approve an increase in premium.

**To apply now**, please go to the [Apply](#) section of our website to download an application or apply online.

**To apply during the FLTCIP Open Season**, please visit the [Apply](#) section of the FLTCIP website between April 4 and June 24, 2011 to download or complete an online FLTCIP Open Season application. Or, use the [online information request form](#) on or after March 1, 2011 to request that a FLTCIP Open Season application be mailed to you.

**For further information on the FLTCIP**, please call 1-800-582-3337 (TTY: 1-800-843-3557).

FLTCIP website:

[http://www.ltcfeds.com/FLTCIP\\_OpenSeason.html](http://www.ltcfeds.com/FLTCIP_OpenSeason.html)



### **HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) FOR SUPERVISORS COURSE**

The HR for Supervisors course was developed by the Civilian Human Resource Agency (CHRA) to train supervisors in their responsibilities for civilian human resources management. This course is offered on a quarterly basis by the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) Staff. Not only are new supervisors encouraged to attend, but this course is an excellent refresher for all supervisors. We encourage all supervisors “new” and “not so new” to attend this course. Remember “continuous learning” is the KEY to Success!

The course covers HR management legal and regulatory requirements, HR processes, HR services and HR

automated tools designed to assist supervisors in requesting and tracking personnel actions. HR for Supervisors is a 5 day course designed to teach civilian and military supervisors of appropriated fund civilian employees about their responsibilities for Civilian Human Resource (CHR) management. The course includes the following modules:

- **Overview of the Army CHR (includes coverage of Merit System Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices)**
- **Planning (NSPS, work planning, changes in mission and organizational goals impact on planning in HR)**
- **Structuring (NSPS, Position Classification, including an introduction to CHR automated tools such as CPOL, ART, Gatekeeper, FASCLASS)**
- **Acquiring (Staffing, NSPS)**
- **Developing (Human Resource Development)**
- **Sustaining (Management Employee Relations, NSPS, Appraisals)**
- **Sustaining (NSPS and Labor Relations)**
- **Federal Employees' Compensation Act**
- **Time and Attendance for Supervisors**
- **Staff Judge Advocate**
- **Safety**
- **Employee Assistance**
- **Equal Employee Opportunity**

The dates that we will be conducting the course in **FY 11** are as follows:

**June 13-17**

**August 15-19**

Supervisors who are interested in attending or those who may desire additional information should call their servicing HR Specialist at the CPAC, 531-4207/1840.



**Mandatory Birth Month Training for **FY 2011**** will be conducted on the dates below. Employees and their supervisors have the opportunity to choose between two dates to attend the training. Two training dates should help to alleviate the workload problems that we now face when scheduling our employees to attend this training. **Seats will be filled on a first come first serve basis.** The classroom fills up quickly. **My recommendation is that you have your employees arrive NLT 0750 to ensure that they get a seat.** Everyone is required to attend this training; mark your calendar and plan to attend. The location of the

training classes will be at the new Library/Education Center, Bldg. 660, Rooms 221/223.

**The training dates are:**

June 7 & 8  
 July 12 & 13  
 August 2 & 3  
 September 13 & 14

**Prior to your scheduled date, you may want to check with your Organization Training Coordinator to confirm that the dates above have not been changed.**

If you have any questions regarding the above training schedule, please call 531-6814.



**On thy grave the rain shall fall  
 from the eyes of a mighty nation!**

**~Thomas William Parsons~**



**MEMORIAL DAY  
 MAY 30th**



***Retirement***

**Frequently Asked Questions about  
 Continuing FEHB Coverage into  
 Retirement**

**Q. I am going to retire soon. What are the requirements to continue health benefits into retirement?**

**A.** To continue your health benefits enrollment into retirement, you must: (1) have retired on an immediate

annuity (that is, an annuity which begins to accrue no later than one month after the date of your final separation); and (2) have been continuously enrolled (or covered as a family member) in any FEHB Program plan (not necessarily the same plan) for the five years of service immediately preceding retirement, or if less than five years, for all service since your first opportunity to enroll.

**Q. How would I get a waiver of the 5-year coverage requirement to continue health benefits into retirement?**

**A.** You must request a waiver of the five-year requirement from OPM. The steps you must take are given in the FEHB Handbook at [Waiver of 5-Year Enrollment Requirement](#) - Waiver of 5-Year Enrollment Requirement.

If your agency has buyout authority, you may not need to write to the OPM. If you think you might qualify for a waiver of the 5-year coverage requirement, contact your Human Resources Office for information. If you meet the requirements, your agency will attach a memorandum to your retirement application stating that you meet the requirements for waiver by the OPM.

**Q. How will OPM verify that I am eligible to carry FEHB into retirement?**

**A.** Your Human Resources Office will compile your health benefits records and forward them to OPM along with your retirement application and other records. OPM will review your health benefits records to determine if you are eligible to continue your FEHB enrollment into retirement. If you are eligible, OPM will process a transfer-in action and forward you a copy of this action for your records.

**Q. I am currently in a health maintenance organization (HMO). I am retiring and will be moving to another state in the next few months. Will I be covered after I move?**

**A.** You will be covered only for emergency care. Unless your HMO has a "reciprocity" agreement with a plan in your new area that allows you to get routine care, you must travel back to your HMO for care, or change plans. You can change plans anytime after moving; contact your retirement system.

Q. Will my premiums increase once I retire?

A. No, you will pay the same premium as you paid while you were an employee. However, annuitants are paid on a monthly basis so you will pay them at the monthly rate. You may see an increase if you are employed by an agency, such as the Post Office, that contributes additional money towards the total premium. Retirees receive the same government contribution as most Federal employees.

Q. I am working a part-time schedule and therefore my Government contribution is prorated. When I retire, will I continue to get the prorated Government contribution?

A. When you retire, you are entitled to the full government contribution.

Q. After I retire, can I enroll in a family plan or do I have to be enrolled in a Self and Family plan for the five years before I retire in order to continue it into?

A. No, you do not have to be enrolled in a family plan for the five years before you retire to meet the five-year requirement. As a retiree, you can enroll in a family plan during the Open Season or when an event occurs that permits a change to the family plan.

Q. I recently retired but my spouse is a current Federal employee. I have carried our FEHB enrollment for the past several years and recently discovered that I can't take advantage of premium conversion as a retiree. If I cancel my FEHB enrollment to be covered by my spouse's FEHB enrollment, will I be able to enroll in a Self Only enrollment in the future?

A. Yes, you will be able to reenroll in the future because you are canceling your enrollment to be covered by another FEHB enrollment.

**Social Security Scoop**

Did you know that Social Security offers an online retirement application that you can complete in as little as 15 minutes? In most cases once your application is submitted electronically, you are done. Social Security will process your application and contact you if any further information is needed. You can find more information at <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/about.htm>.



Control Your Pay With myPay!

Click on MyPay Key above to be linked to the MyPay System

Or

Type into your browser:

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>



*Summary of Nonpay Status Rules*

(Applicable after the TSP has been informed of your nonpay status)

TOPIC	What you need to know	
	If you are in nonpay status for reasons other than military service	If you are in nonpay status to perform military service
<b>Effect of Length of Nonpay Status on TSP Loans</b>	You are allowed to miss loan payments for up to one year of nonpay status.	You are allowed to miss loan payments throughout the entire time you are in nonpay status.
<b>Accrual of Interest</b>	Interest continues to accrue on your loan during the nonpay period.	Interest continues to accrue on your loan during the nonpay period.
<b>Making Loan Payments</b>	Payments are not required during a nonpay period of one year or less. If you want to make loan payments, use a Loan Payment Coupon* and send payments directly to the TSP.	Payments are not required during a nonpay period. If you want to make loan payments, use a Loan Payment Coupon* and send payments directly to the TSP.
<b>Returning to Pay Status</b>	You or your agency or service must notify the TSP when you return to pay status and provide the ending date of your nonpay status.	You or your agency must notify the TSP when you return to pay status and provide documentation of the ending date of your nonpay status.

<b>Recalculating Your Loan (i.e., reamortizing your loan)</b>	If your loan is not up-to-date, the TSP will recalculate your loan when you return to pay status or at the end of your one-year time limit, whichever comes first.	If your loan is not up-to-date, the TSP will recalculate your loan when you return to pay status. The maximum time allowed to pay off your loan will be extended by your period of military nonpay status.
<b>Effect of Recalculation on Your Loan Payments</b>	If your current loan payments will not pay off your loan by the maximum repayment period, your loan payments will increase and you will be notified of the new payment amount.	If your current loan payments will not pay off your loan by the extended maximum repayment period, your loan payments will increase and you will be notified of the new payment amount.
<b>Resuming Loan Payments</b>	If loan payments do not resume through payroll deductions after your loan has been reamortized, you must submit payments yourself (along with Loan Payment Coupons*) to keep your loan from going into default.	If loan payments do not resume through payroll deductions after your loan has been reamortized, you must submit payments yourself (along with Loan Payment Coupons*) to keep your loan from going into default.
<b>Defaulting on a Loan</b>	If you miss payments after you return to pay status or your loan has been reamortized due to the one-year limit and you default on your loan, a taxable distribution will be declared and you will be subject to tax on the outstanding loan balance (including any accrued interest). You may also be subject to an early withdrawal penalty tax.	If you miss payments after you return to pay status and you default on your loan, a taxable distribution will be declared and you will be subject to tax on the outstanding loan balance (including any accrued interest). You may also be subject to an early withdrawal penalty tax.

employee contributions for the calendar year (e.g., \$16,500 in 2011), you may also make catch-up contributions to your TSP account. See the Fact Sheet "[Catch-up Contributions](#)."

Participant statements are on-line in [Account Access](#) on this Web site. Click on [Your TSP Participant Statement](#) for more information.

**Loan interest rate** for new loans is 2.875%.

**Annuity interest rate index:** 3.500% for annuities purchased in May 2011 and 3.625% for annuities purchased in April 2011. [Click here](#) for historical annuity interest rates.

**Your account balance** is updated each business day. To access your account balance on this Web site, you will need your TSP 13-character account number and your 8-character [Web Password](#). To obtain your account balance from the [ThriftLine](#), you will need your TSP account number and 4-digit TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN).

**Civilian TSP participants who are members of the Ready Reserve** — If you are a civilian TSP participant with an outstanding TSP loan and are placed in non-pay status to perform military service, make sure your agency provides the TSP with documentation to certify your status and suspend loan payments. The Internal Revenue Code allows the TSP to suspend loan payments for all participants placed in non-pay status for up to one year of non-pay. However, participants placed in non-pay status to perform military service for more than one year are authorized suspension of loan payments for the entire period of military service. For more information, see the Fact Sheet [Effect of Nonpay Status on TSP Participation](#).

**TSP RATES OF RETURN**

Rates of Return were updated on May 3, 2011

**(Figures in parenthesis indicate a negative return)**

\*\*\*\*\*

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
Apr 2011	0.25%	1.28%	2.96%	2.94%	6.03%
Last 12 Months	2.69%	5.49%	17.19%	24.53%	20.23%

(05/01/2010-04/30/2011)

\*The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.

**Employee Contributions** — There are no longer any percentage limits on employee contributions to the TSP. TSP contributions are limited only by the restrictions imposed by the [Internal Revenue Code](#).

**Elective Deferral Limit (I.R.C. Section 402(g))** — The elective deferral limit for 2011 and 2010 is \$16,500. See the Fact Sheet "[Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals](#)."

**I.R.C. Section 415(c) Limit** — The limit for 2011 and 2010 is \$49,000.

**Catch-up Contributions** — The limit on catch-up contributions for 2011 is \$5,500. If you are at least age 50 (or will become age 50 during the calendar year) and if you have made or will make the maximum amount of

	L Income	L 2020	L 2030	L 2040	L 2050
Apr 2011	1.01%	2.37%	2.83%	3.20%	3.57%
Last 12 Months	6.26%	12.59%	14.88%	16.68%	

(05/01/2010-04/30/2011)

\*The monthly G, F, C, S, and I fund returns represent the change in their respective share prices for the month. The changes in share prices reflect net earnings after accrued TSP administrative expenses have been deducted. The F, C, S, and I fund share prices also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

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The TSP is a retirement savings plan for civilian federal employees. The monthly G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns represent the actual total rates used to allocate monthly earnings to participant accounts. Allocations are usually completed by the fourth business day of the month. The returns are shown after deduction of accrued TSP administrative expenses. The F, C, S, and I Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The TSP performance history for the past 12 months can be accessed through the following link:

[http://www.tsp.gov/curinfo/annuity\\_history.html](http://www.tsp.gov/curinfo/annuity_history.html)

**HOLIDAY/LIBERAL LEAVE SCHEDULE FOR FY 2011**

DAY/DATE	HOLIDAY	Training/Liberal Leave Day
Monday, 11 October 10	Columbus Day	Friday, 8 Oct *
Thursday, 11 November 10	Veterans Day	Friday, 12 Nov*
Thursday, 25 November 10	Thanksgiving Day	Friday, 26 Nov *
Friday, 24 December 10	Christmas	Monday, 27 Dec*
Friday, 31 December 10	New Year's Day	Monday, 3 Jan*
Monday, 17 January 11	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	Friday, 14 Jan*
Monday, 21 February 11	Washington's Birthday	Friday, 18 Feb*
Monday, 30 May 11	Memorial Day	Friday, 27 May*
Monday, 4 July 11	Independence Day	Friday, 1 Jul*
Monday, 5 September 11	Labor Day	Friday, 2 Sep*
*DESIGNATES TRAINING HOLIDAY FOR MEDDAC		



**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. Who can be covered by my FEHB enrollment?**

**A.** FEHB Program coverage is available for the employee's current spouse and children under age 26, including legally adopted children, stepchildren and recognized natural children born out of wedlock. Foster children (including grandchildren, if they qualify as foster children) are included if they live with the employee in a regular parent-child relationship. Also, a child age 26 or over who is incapable of self support because of a mental or physical incapacity which existed before age 26 may qualify for coverage under certain conditions. *You cannot cover other relatives, such as your mother, even if they are otherwise considered your dependents.*

An employee's agency makes enrollment eligibility decisions in accordance with the law and regulations. Ask your Human Resources Office for help in deciding whether your circumstances meet the requirements.

**Q. I just had a baby. My coworker just adopted a child. Do either of us need to complete another SF 2809, Health Benefits Registration Form, to have our children covered?**

**A.** How you acquire a child (e.g., birth or adoption) does not matter. If you have Self Only enrollment, you each need to complete an enrollment form to change to a Self and Family enrollment within 60 days of the event. The Self and Family enrollment will be effective the first day of the pay period in which the child was born or adopted. **If you already have a Self and Family enrollment, you do not need to complete a new form; in this case, contact your plan to let them know about the new family member.**

**Q. My child is in college. How long can my child stay covered under my enrollment?**

**A.** Your child can be covered under your Self and Family enrollment until he or she turns age 26. It does not matter whether he or she attends college.

**Q. My child will be 26 years old this year but she is disabled and incapable of self support. Can I continue to cover her under my FEHB enrollment?**

**A.** Your child age 26 or over who is incapable of self-support because of a disability that existed before age 26 may be eligible for coverage under your FEHB enrollment. For more information, please see the [FEHB Handbook for Enrollees and Employing Offices](#).

**Q. Can I cover my common-law spouse under my Self and Family enrollment?**

**A.** If the State in which you reside recognizes common-law marriages, yes.

**Q. Can my grandchild be covered by my plan?**

**A.** Your grandchild may be eligible for FEHB coverage if he or she meets the eligibility requirements for foster children. These requirements are:

- ◆ the child must be under age 26 (if the child is over age 26, he/she must be incapable of self support);
- ◆ the child must live currently with you;
- ◆ the parent-child relationship must be with you, not the child's biological parent;
- ◆ you must currently be the primary source of financial support for the child; and
- ◆ you must expect to raise the child to adulthood.

For your grandchild to be covered under your FEHB enrollment, you must sign a certification stating that your grandchild meets all the requirements and that you will notify your employing office if the child moves out of the home, or stops being financially dependent on you. You submit this certification to your employing office for their determination that your grandchild meets these requirements. Your employing office will then notify your FEHB plan that your grandchild should be added to your enrollment.



**DO YOU KNOW YOUR RISKS FOR HYPERTENSION?**

DEPARTMENT OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE  
BAYNE-JONES ARMY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

A blood pressure reading between 120/80 and 139/89 before 2003 was considered to be within the normal range. Today, if your readings are between these two ranges, you'd be told that you are pre-hypertensive and would more than likely develop hypertension (high blood

pressure) later in life. Blood pressure is determined by the amount of blood your heart pumps and the amount of resistance to blood flow in your arteries. In other words, the harder your heart has to pump and the narrower the blood vessels which the blood goes through, the higher your blood pressure. It is important to know your risks for high blood pressure and how to reduce them if you have been told that you're pre-hypertensive.

**WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and "Healthwise" author Robin Parks, have outlined risk factors for high blood pressure.

- A family history of high blood pressure
- Aging (men over 45 and women over 55)
- Eating a lot of sodium (salt)
- Drinking more than 2 alcohol drinks a day for men or more than 1 alcohol drink a day for women
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of exercise or physical activity
- High Cholesterol
- Race. African Americans are more at risk than any other race
- Gender (more men than women)
- Cigarette Smoking
- Low intake of potassium, magnesium and calcium
- Sleep apnea and sleep-disordered breathing
- Long-term use of pain medicines like NSAIDS (Naproxen or Ibuprofen), or COX-2 inhibitors such as celecoxib (Celebrex)
- Stress

**HOW CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

According to the NHLBI, "If you don't have high blood pressure, you can take steps to prevent it. Lifestyle measures can help you maintain normal blood pressure." Below are some measures provided by "Healthwise" and the NHLBI that can be taken to help lower your risks.

- Stay at a healthy weight
- Get regular exercise
- Avoid using too much sodium
- Get enough potassium, calcium and magnesium in your diet
- Limit alcohol use
- Stop smoking

- Use anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS) medicines wisely
- Learn to check your blood pressure at home
- Reduce stress
- Follow the nutrition guidelines for hypertension (including the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension or DASH diet).

**In recognition of National High Blood Pressure Education Awareness Month, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, Department of Preventive Medicine will be providing Health Awareness at the Hospital on 6 May & at the Post Exchange on 20 May 2011 from 10 AM to 1 PM. For more information contact us at 531-6880.**

### BRAIN TEASER

What has only two backbones and thousands of ribs.

Answer on page 11



**Safety Boudreaux's Den**

## Home Safety and Pools

Pools can add value to any home or property. Above-ground pools and in-ground pools, hot tubs, and spas all can be places of escape and comfort for their owners. They are also dangerous areas for untended children and can cause liabilities for homeowners. Homeowners should be very cautious when it comes to pool safety.

Children are the most vulnerable members of the family when it comes to pools. They should never be left unattended by the side of the pool. If there is a pressing matter like a phone call that needs to be taken, take the children out of the pool and bring them inside. Your pool is also a danger to neighborhood children and animals. A fence should surround your pool area to give you control over who and what enters the pool. You should also consider covering your pool or spa when it is not in use.

Children who are strong swimmers are safer around pools than those who are not. Teach your children to swim. Send them for swimming classes. You should also consider learning CPR for a worst-case scenario.

When you are buying a home with a pool, along with other formalities like buying title insurance and going through escrow, you will want to have the pool inspected by a licensed professional. All pool systems should be functioning and well protected. Pool drains create tremendous suction and should be caged in to prevent children or even adults from getting stuck.

If you drain your pool for maintenance or cleaning, be sure to demarcate the area clearly. Use bright-colored markers to signal that the open pool should be avoided. Take responsibility for making your pool a safe place for everyone.

### Did You Know?

The Slave-Maker ant is so named because it raids the nest of other ants and steals their pupae. Once the pupae hatch, they are made to work as slaves.

Workers in an ant colony only live for about 45-60 days, but a colony's queen can live up to 20 years.

Ants make up 1/10 of the total world animal tissue. The total biomass of all the ants on Earth is about equal to the total biomass of all the people.

By combining force of numbers with organized aggression, ants have become the greatest insect killers on Earth -- even of their own kind.

Ants began farming about 50 million years before humans thought to raise their own crops.

The animal with the largest brain in proportion to its size is the ant. They are the smartest species of insects with about 250,000 brain cells.



Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

~ John F. Kennedy ~

## 2011 Employee Viewpoint Survey

Every year, the United State Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers the current version of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. This survey, which measures organizational climate, culture and engagement, is sent to a random sample of full time permanent employees government-wide. You may have received an invitation to participate in this survey.

While DoD now requires all email that includes a link or attachment to be digitally signed, that requirement does not apply to non-DoD federal agencies. Thus, the invitations from OPM may have included a link that was not digitally signed. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is a government-wide initiative and is distributed to all federal agencies from the OPM.gov site. OPM has not yet implemented a process for digitally signing its email. Subsequently, some email systems may be disabling the link included in the survey invitation. If you are unable to click on this URL, simply copy the link and paste it into your internet browser.

Reminder emails with the survey link will be sent out on May 4, May 11, May 18, and May 25. If you have not yet taken the survey, please look for the reminder and take a few minutes to participate. I want to assure you that Army

has reviewed the mailings and the network and has cleared the survey for government employee use.

For additional information about the survey, OPM's press release on the 2011 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is found at:

<http://www.opm.gov/news/opm-launches-2011-federal-employee-viewpoint-survey,1659.aspx>. Again, if you are unable to click on this URL, copy and paste it into your browser.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may direct them to the EVS mailbox at [EVAR@OPM.GOV](mailto:EVAR@OPM.GOV) or call the helpdesk at 1-877-OPM-EVS1.



## Reasonable Accommodation

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (the "ADA") and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, unless to do so would cause undue hardship. In general, an accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. There are three categories of "reasonable accommodations":

- (i) modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position such qualified applicant desires; or
- (ii) modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position; or
- (iii) modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

The duty to provide reasonable accommodation is a fundamental statutory requirement because of the nature of discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities.

Although many individuals with disabilities can apply for and perform jobs without any reasonable accommodations, there are workplace barriers that keep others from performing jobs which they could do with some form of accommodation. These barriers may be physical obstacles (such as inaccessible facilities or equipment), or they may be procedures or rules (such as rules concerning when work is performed, when breaks are taken, or how essential or marginal functions are performed). Reasonable accommodation removes workplace barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodation is available to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations must be provided to qualified employees regardless of whether they work part-time or full-time, or are considered "probationary." Generally, the individual with a disability must inform the employer that an accommodation is needed.

There are a number of possible reasonable accommodations that an employer may have to provide in connection with modifications to the work environment or adjustments in how and when a job is performed. These include:

- making existing facilities accessible;
- job restructuring;
- part-time or modified work schedules;
- acquiring or modifying equipment;
- changing tests, training materials, or policies;
- providing qualified readers or interpreters; and
- reassignment to a *vacant* position (accommodation of last resort).

A modification or adjustment is "reasonable" if it "seems reasonable on its face, i.e., ordinarily or in the run of cases;" This means it is "reasonable" if it appears to be "feasible" or "plausible." An accommodation also must be effective in meeting the needs of the individual. In the context of job performance, this means that a reasonable accommodation enables the individual to perform the essential functions of the position. Similarly, a reasonable accommodation enables an applicant with a disability to have an equal opportunity to participate in the application process and to be considered for a job. Finally, a reasonable accommodation allows an employee with a disability an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment that employees without disabilities enjoy.

Example A: An employee with a hearing disability must be able to contact the public by telephone. The employee proposes that he use a TTY to call a relay service operator who can then place the telephone call and relay the conversation between the parties. This is "reasonable" because a TTY is a common device used to facilitate communication between hearing and hearing-impaired individuals. Moreover, it would be effective in enabling the employee to perform his job.

Example B: A cashier easily becomes fatigued because of lupus and, as a result, has difficulty making it through her shift. The employee requests a stool because sitting greatly reduces the fatigue. This accommodation is reasonable because it is a common-sense solution to remove a workplace barrier being required to stand when the job can be effectively performed sitting down. This "reasonable" accommodation is effective because it addresses the employee's fatigue and enables her to perform her job.

Example C: A cleaning company rotates its staff to different floors on a monthly basis. One crew member has a psychiatric disability. While his mental illness does not affect his ability to perform the various cleaning functions, it does make it difficult to adjust to alterations in his daily routine. The employee has had significant difficulty adjusting to the monthly changes in floor assignments. He asks for a reasonable accommodation and proposes three options: staying on one floor permanently, staying on one floor for two months and then rotating, or allowing a transition period to adjust to a change in floor assignments. These accommodations are reasonable because they appear to be feasible solutions to this employee's problems dealing with changes to his routine. They also appear to be effective because they would enable him to perform his cleaning duties.

There are several modifications or adjustments that are not considered forms of reasonable accommodation. An employer does not have to eliminate an essential function, i.e., a fundamental duty of the position. This is because a person with a disability who is unable to perform the essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, is not a "qualified" individual with a disability within the meaning of the ADA. Nor is an employer required to lower production standards -- whether qualitative or quantitative -- that are applied uniformly to employees with and without disabilities. However, an employer may have to provide reasonable accommodation to enable an employee with a disability to meet the production standard. While an employer is not required to eliminate an essential function or lower a production standard, it may do so if it wishes.

An employer does not have to provide as reasonable accommodations personal use items needed in accomplishing daily activities both on and off the job. Thus, an employer is not required to provide an employee with a prosthetic limb, a wheelchair, eyeglasses, hearing aids, or similar devices if they are also needed off the job. Furthermore, an employer is not required to provide personal use amenities, such as a hot pot or refrigerator, if those items are not provided to employees without disabilities. However, items that might otherwise be considered personal may be required as reasonable accommodations where they are specifically designed or required to meet job-related rather than personal needs.

This article was taken from the EEOC's website at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). For more information, visit the website or call the EEO office at 337-531-1802.



## Fort Polk Has a Program to Assist Civilians

**The program is designed to provide free, confidential services, to include; screening to identify the employee's problem, short-term counseling and, a referral for additional services if needed.**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an administrative program that provides services to Department of the Army Civilians, and Family Members, Military Family Members, and Retired Military Personnel. The Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (EAPC) is **LINDA TAULBEE**. Call **531-1964** to get help with stress, emotional problems, family issues, or alcohol and drug abuse and treatment. Help is here to address all personal concerns that might affect job performance.

### DID YOU KNOW ???

Most abused prescription drugs come from family and friends. We could be drug dealers and not even know it. Even though these medications are meant for injuries, diseases and pain, experimentation does occur frequently.

According to a study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, the abuse of pharmaceutical

controlled substances grew at two times the rate of marijuana, five times the rate of cocaine and 60 times the rate of heroin between 1992 and 2003. These drugs are readily available and thought to be safe. Therefore, they are often taken in higher doses and combinations than prescribed. Keep medications out of reach of children. Use a lock-box for storage.

Proper disposal of unused prescription drugs can save lives. Take-back programs are the best way to dispose of drugs. If a program is not available, take the medications out of the bottles. Wet them and mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds. Seal them in a bag and throw them away. (Information courtesy of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. [www.deamuseum.org](http://www.deamuseum.org)).

### BRAIN TEASER ANSWER

A railroad.

### *"The Man in the Glass"*

≈ Dale Wimbrow ≈

When you get what you want in your struggle for self  
And the world makes you king for a day,  
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself,  
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife,  
Whose judgment upon you must pass;  
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the one staring back from the glass.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest.  
For he's with you clear up to the end,  
And you've passed the most dangerous, difficult test  
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,  
And think you're a wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years.  
And get pats on the back as you pass,  
But your final reward will be the heartaches and tears  
If you've cheated the man in the glass.



**ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN**

If you have any suggestions on topics or issues that you would like addressed in future bulletins, please call **531-1847**.

Suggestions will be reviewed and addressed if at all possible.

*// original signed //*  
**DONALD R. MALLETT**  
**Director, Civilian Personnel**  
**Advisory Center**