

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL
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ARMY BENEFITS CENTER - CIVILIAN (ABC-C) DEPLOYMENT
11 SEPTEMBER 2000

1. The Army's new innovative approach to providing program information for health and life insurance, TSP, retirement, and survivorship is the Army Benefits Center - Civilian (ABC-C), and it will be deployed at Fort Polk on 11 September 2000. The center can assist employees in obtaining up-to-date information and processing changes using state-of-the-art technology in the following program areas:

Retirement (Civil Service Retirement System and Federal Employees' Retirement System)
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)
Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Coverage (FEGLI)
Survivor Benefits (Death and Dismemberment)

2. There are several advantages to this new system that makes the ABC-C a good thing for employees.

The ABC-C is easily accessible. Automated services are operational 21 hours a day, 7 days a week and are but a computer or telephone call away.
Freedom from completing cumbersome and confusing forms.
Increase in accuracy and timeliness. Because employees make transactions, it removes the possibility of clerical error and increases data accuracy. Most actions are processed overnight.
Complete, current and consistent guidance. Trained benefit counselors deliver quality services.
Employees control their benefits and entitlements. They have all the necessary tools to make informed decisions. They can process transactions when and where it is convenient for them.

3. Employees can find out about their benefits, make changes, and keep up-to-date on legislative issues simply by using the web address of www.abc.army.mil or accessing the toll free number 1-877-ARMY CTR (1-877-276-9287) or 1-877 ARMY TDD (1-877-276-9833). Access to the system requires that employees enter their social security number (SSN) followed by a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Initially, the PIN will be the four-digit date of

birth (MMYY). On or after September 11, employees are to access the system and change their PIN numbers.

4. This new system was developed for employees, and the personnel of the ABC-C are committed to providing quality customer service, and in addition, empowering employees to have more control of their benefits and entitlements. Also, systems security is a high priority at the ABC-C. Employees can access the automated system 21 hours a day, 7 days a week via touch-tone telephone or the web. Benefits counselors are available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST.

5. Health benefits, life insurance, and Thrift Savings Plan services offered by the ABC-C require employees to:

- Access the system via the web site or toll free number.
- Select the appropriate prompt for desired information.
- Obtain general benefits information or personal information from your records.
- Speak with a benefits counselor, if additional information is required.
- Conduct benefits and entitlements changes (if eligible).
- Verify your personnel action on your Leave and Earnings Statement (LES)

6. All Thrift Savings Plan changes **cannot** be made with the ABC-C. The ABC-C will process future contributions and bi-weekly payroll contributions associated with open season changes and cancellations. The TSP THRIFTLINE, 1-504-255-877, processes changes to existing account(s), interfund transfers, and provides account balance(s). In addition, employees' ABC-C PIN numbers are used only with ABC-C transactions; employees must continue to use their TSP PIN numbers for TSP transactions on the TSP THRIFTLINE.

7. Retirement Planning Services offered by the ABC-C require employees to:

- Access the system via the web site or toll free number.
- Select the prompt for on-line estimates.
- Receive annuity estimates.
- Speak to a benefits counselor, if additional information is required.

8. Retirement Counseling and Processing Services offered by the ABC-C require employees to:

- Notify supervisor of intent to retire.
- Call the toll free number and receive retirement information from the automated system or from a benefits counselor.
- General retirement information may also be obtained from the web site.

Receive a personal voice-to-voice retirement counseling session.

Complete retirement forms downloaded from <http://www.opm.gov/forms/index.htm> or the CPAC.

Send retirement forms to the ABC-C for processing. The Center will then send the retirement package to the payroll office and also to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for final adjudication.

9. The ABC-C personnel also provide survivor advisory services and claims processing services. They personally contact survivors and are committed to providing expeditious, professional service. This includes counseling on benefit eligibility and how to apply for those benefits. They assist survivors as long as necessary to ensure receipt of entitled benefits.

10. The processing of beneficiary forms has not changed with deployment of the ABC-C. Employees will continue to obtain, complete, and submit: the FEGLI/FERS or Unpaid Compensation forms to the CPAC; TSP forms to the National Finance Center (NFC); and CSRS forms to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

11. The implementation of the ABC-C is a positive change which allows for an increase in accuracy and timeliness of transactions and a chance for employees to have control over their own benefits entitlements. If we all work together to educate ourselves, we can help ensure that the transition to the ABC-C goes smoothly. To aid in this endeavor, the CPAC will continue to provide information to the workforce. At this time, employees are encouraged to visit the ABC-C web site for valuable information regarding this new program; however, employees are reminded that no transactions can be processed on the system until the deployment date of 11 September 2000.

DONALD R. MALLETT
Director, Civilian Personnel
Advisory Center

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