



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 109

March 2009

THERE IS SPRING

Where there are love and generosity, there is joy.
Where there are sincerity and sacrifice, there is friendship.
Where there are harmony and simplicity, there is beauty.
Where there are prayer and forgiveness, there is peace.
Where there are moderation and patience, there is wisdom.
Where there are conflicts and crises, there is opportunity.
Where there are wonder and adventure, there is growth.
Where there are adoration and confession, there is worship.
Where there are compassion and concern, there is God.
Where there are faith and hope, there is spring.

~~By William A. Ward.~~



*First day of Spring
Friday, March 20th*

NSPS INFORMATION UPDATE

Sunsetting of PAA Version 2.0

On March 29, 2009, PAA v2.0 disappears. Appraisals completed under PAA v2.0 appear in

PAA v3.0 under the Completed Plans/Appraisals area on the PAA Main Page.

IMPORTANT: After March 29, 2009, you will not have access to your incomplete FY2008 records. Please complete the 1-JAN-2009 appraisals now!

**New PAA v3.0 Features
Coming March 29, 2009!**

New features are available to assist employees, rating officials, reviewing officials, pay pool administrators, and pay pool managers with their important work.

The new features include:

- A **My Journal** tab that allows employees (regardless of who has ownership of their plan/appraisal) to keep track of their accomplishments throughout the year. The tab is located in the upper right corner of the My Biz Performance Appraisal Application Main Page.
- Ability for rating officials to invite **Guest Participants** to provide assessment (**Guest Rater**) or feedback (**Guest Reviewer**) for consideration when completing an employee’s appraisal.
- Ability to complete a **Special Purpose Rating** for an employee with a Level 1 rating of record who exhibits significant and sustained improvement for at least 90 days in his or her performance that equates to Level 2 performance or higher.
- A **Mock Pay Pool Info** tab that facilitates mock pay pool deliberations. Employees and rating officials may add mock information such as assessments, recommended ratings, number of shares, and payout distributions. Pay pool administrators and managers can download the mock data and import it into a mock CWB spreadsheet.

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- **Transfer of Performance Appraisal Application (PAA) Record between Regional Databases** -

As employees move from one DoD Component/ Agency to another, their appraisal records will transfer with them.

Women's History Month

The History of Women's History

Before 1970, women's history was rarely the subject of serious study. As historian Mary Beth Norton recalls, "only one or two scholars would have identified themselves as women's historians, and no formal doctoral training in the subject was available anywhere in the country." Since then, however, the field has undergone a metamorphosis. Today almost every college offers women's history courses and most major graduate programs offer doctoral degrees in the field.

The Women's Movement ... Two significant factors contributed to the emergence of women's history. The women's movement of the sixties caused women to question their invisibility in traditional American history texts. The movement also raised the aspirations as well as the opportunities of women, and produced a growing number of female historians. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, one of the early women's historians, has remarked that "without question, our first inspiration was political. Aroused by feminist charges of economic and political discrimination . . . we turned to our history to trace the origins of women's second-class status."

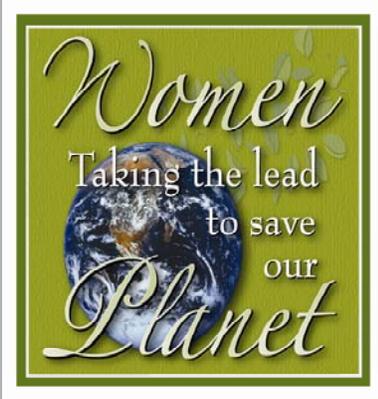
New Social History ... Women's history was also part of a larger movement that transformed the study of history in the United States. "History" had traditionally meant political history—a chronicle of the key political events and of the leaders, primarily men, who influenced them. But by the 1970s "the new social history" began replacing the older style. Emphasis shifted to a broader spectrum of American life, including such topics as the history of urban life, public health, ethnicity, the media, and poverty.

The Personal Is Political ... Since women rarely held leadership positions and until recently had only a marginal influence on politics, the new history, with its emphasis on the sociological and the ordinary, was an ideal vehicle for presenting women's history. It has covered such subjects as the history of women's education, birth control, housework, marriage, sexuality, and child rearing. As the field has grown, women's historians realized that their definition of history needed to expand as well—it focused

primarily on white middle-class experience and neglected the full racial and socio-economic spectrum of women.

Women's History Month ... The public celebration of women's history in this country began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" in Sonoma County, California. The week including March 8, [International Women's Day](#), was selected. In 1981, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) co-sponsored a joint Congressional resolution proclaiming a national Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the celebration to a month, and March was declared Women's History Month.

JRTC and Fort Polk Presents
Women's History Month



19 March 2009
Warrior Community Center
1130-1230
Keynote Speaker: BG (Ret) Sherian Cadoria

\$\$ PAY CORNER \$\$



Control Your Pay With myPay!

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

Or

Type into your browser:

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

TSP CORNER

WHAT'S NEW?

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 2009 is \$16,500. The limit for 2008 was \$15,500. See the Fact Sheet "[Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals](#)."

I.R.C. Section 415(c) Limit — The limit for 2009 is \$49,000. The limit for 2008 was \$46,000.

Catch-up Contributions — The limit on catch-up contributions for 2009 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 employee contributions for the calendar year (e.g., \$16,500 in 2009), 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: 2.750% for annuities purchased in March 2009 and 2.625% for February 2009. [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 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 March 2, 2009

(Figures in parenthesis indicate a negative return)

| | G Fund | F Fund | C Fund | S Fund | I Fund |
|----------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| Feb 2009 | 0.21% | (0.39%) | (10.64%) | (10.22%) | (10.23%) |
| Last 12 Months | 3.57% | 2.17% | (43.29%) | (44.62%) | (49.91%) |

(03/01/2008-02/28/2009)

*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.

| | L 2040 | L 2030 | L 2020 | L 2010 | L Income |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Feb 2009 | (8.52%) | (7.47%) | (6.22%) | (2.95%) | (1.98%) |
| Last 12 Months | (37.77%) | (33.30%) | (27.94%) | (13.13%) | (7.49%) |

(02/01/2008-01/31/2009)

*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.

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



TSP Hardship Withdrawal - Consider the Cost

In these uncertain times, more employees than ever before are experiencing financial difficulties and are applying for hardship withdrawals from their TSP accounts. When you receive the hardship withdrawal, your TSP contributions

will be stopped and you will not be able to contribute to TSP for 6 months. Once the 6 months is up, your TSP contributions do NOT automatically resume. You must process a new TSP contribution election [through the ABC-C](#). You may process the change through the telephone system at 1-877-276-9287, or by using the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS).

Before applying for a TSP hardship withdrawal, it is important to take a look at what it will cost you to take this withdrawal. First, the amount of the withdrawal is permanently removed from your TSP account and cannot be paid back. Next, your withdrawal is subject to Federal income tax withholding of 10%. Also, if you are under age 59 ½, you may be subject to an early withdrawal penalty of 10%. You are not able to contribute to TSP for 6 months after receiving the hardship withdrawal, so you will miss out on those contributions to your TSP account, in addition to the loss of the agency matching contributions.

Let's look at an example. Fred Fed, age 50, makes \$40,000 and contributes 5% to TSP. That works out to \$77 per pay period. He decides to take a financial hardship withdrawal of \$5,000. The cost of his hardship withdrawal is \$7,801. How was that amount determined?

The amount of the withdrawal is \$5,000, remembering that this is a permanent reduction to Fred's TSP account and can't be repaid. He will pay 10% of the amount of the withdrawal in Federal income taxes, which would be \$500. He also has to pay 10% for the early withdrawal penalty, which is another \$500. He can't contribute to TSP for 6 months, which is \$1,001 that will not be put into his TSP account. Fred also loses the agency matching of 4% or \$800 for those 6 months. If you get out your calculator and add \$5,000 + \$500 + \$500 + \$1,001 + \$800 you will get \$7,801. And don't forget to take into consideration the potential lost earnings on the \$7,801 for the next 10 years, until Fred retires. If you assumed a 5% rate of return for Fred's TSP investment, he could have \$5,000 of potential lost earnings. This gives Fred a total cost for that \$5,000 hardship withdrawal of approximately \$12,800!

For more information on in-service withdrawals, see the booklet, "TSP In-Service Withdrawals" in the Forms and Publications section of the TSP website, <http://www.tsp.gov>.

Bogus Web Story about the I Fund

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB) has become aware of an e-mail and Internet hoax

purporting illegal activity on the part of an individual said to manage the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) I Fund. The TSP is actively investigating the origins of the bogus web site.

The individual named (Samuel Hoeffler) and his connection to the TSP investment funds are completely fictitious. Be assured that the TSP's I Fund has not suffered from accounting irregularities and is not insolvent.

All of the TSP funds, with the exception of the Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund), are passive investments. In other words, they are invested in index funds; they are not managed by an individual actively selecting securities in an effort to outperform the market. The investment objective of each fund is to achieve approximately the same return as the particular market index that it tracks. The I Fund, for example, is invested in a stock index fund that tracks the Morgan Stanley EAFE Index. The TSP's C, S, I, and F Funds are managed by Barclays Global Investors, one of the largest and most respected investment managers in the world.

Participants should always exercise caution if they receive unusual or suspect e-mails.

Information provided by TSP



Try this win-win solution to resolving conflicts ...

Even the most easygoing people occasionally have disagreements with co-workers. But to keep these situations from turning into long-term problems that interfere with your work, you need to take swift and effective action to defuse the tension and get things back to normal. Here are some suggestions:

- **Try to remain calm.** If you let your anger get the best of you, the conflict will only escalate. Take a couple of deep breaths and get control of your anger before you speak.
- **Listen to the other person's side of the story.** After all there are always two sides to every confrontation. Hear out your co-worker. Ask questions to clarify the real issues in dispute.

- **Tell your side clearly and completely.** Use “I” statements rather than blaming the other person. Take responsibility for your part in the conflict. After all, it always takes two to make a conflict.
- **Focus on issues and behavior.** Don’t get personal, and try to keep emotions in check. Focus on the facts and try to be objective.
- **Look for common ground.** No matter what the confrontation is about, there’s usually something you and your co-worker can agree about. If all else fails, agree to disagree.
- **Deal with the present and the future.** Don’t rake over past differences. Stick to the present situation and focus on how you can keep this kind of thing from happening again.



March 2009 Newsletter

Why Long Term Care must be discussed with your family!

Living a long life could well be in your future!!

Planning for it now is a necessity!!

We at Long Term Care Partners believe that reasonable people:

- Understand they could live a long life
- Believe that it’s possible they could become frail and need care as they age
- Are willing to consider taking action if they understand that needing care could have serious consequences to their family and retirement portfolio

Have you thought about the consequences to those you love if you did live a long life and needed care over a period of years?

Not that it will happen to you, but here’s what causes the need for extended care:

- Custodial care is usually a chronic, debilitating medical condition that can be managed, but not

cured, that compromises the ability to get through the most basic daily functions.

- It can be brought on by a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer’s or dementia, a condition that demonstrates a marked deterioration in one’s intellect that makes it difficult, if not impossible to safely interact within your environment.
- It may be the result of an accidental occurrence.
- Becoming old and frail.

If you should ever need care over a period of years, your life won’t end.....someone else’s life most likely will!!

The real impact to the family begins not when a placement to a facility occurs, but when the decision is made to keep the person at home. To remain in the community (at home) has a profound effect on the family in general and on the care provider specifically! We are willing to accept the responsibility and obligation to ourselves and allow our family to remain intact whatever the “cost”.

Long Term Care Insurance allows a spouse or family member to maintain the relationship as a person who **supervises** rather than provides care...and by doing so allows them to maintain their lives with the added benefit of keeping their loved ones close. It makes this possible by protecting assets and providing the stream of income which pays for care.

It’s time to start a plan of action with your family, to discuss the possibility of needing care in the future and how you may want to be cared for and how to pay for your care. It’s never too soon to start the process, but if too much time passes by, it may be too late.

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) is sponsored by the Federal Government and is intended to help enrollees and their loved ones defray the high costs of long term care. We encourage you to learn more about this important Federal program.

Please click the link below to get more information on the benefits of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program. <http://www.ltcfeds.com/dod>



The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program is sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, administered by Long Term Care Partners, LLC, and offered by: John Hancock Life Insurance Company, Boston, MA Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, NY



Do my premiums or benefits change now that I'm retired?

Health:

Answer:

As a Federal retiree you pay the same premiums and receive the same benefits as an active Federal employee. As a retiree, your premiums are paid on a monthly basis rather than bi-weekly. On an annual basis the retiree and employee pay the same amount. Please note some agencies (e.g. Postal Service, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.) contribute more toward their employees' health insurance premiums, and when those employees retire they no longer receive the higher agency contribution.

When you become eligible for Medicare, those benefits will generally be paid as the primary carrier and your Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program health plan will pay benefits as the secondary carrier. You can find more information at [Coordination of Medicare and FEHB Benefits](#).

You can find more information about the benefits and premiums in the chapter on [Annuitants and Survivors](#) in the FEHB Handbook.

Dental:

Answer:

No, your premiums or benefits will not change after retirement. Your premiums, however, will be post-tax and will be withheld from your monthly annuity. Pre-tax premiums are not available to annuitants, survivor annuitants or compensationers.

Vision:

Answer:

No, your premiums or benefits will not change after retirement. Your premiums, however, will be post-tax and will be withheld from your monthly annuity. Pre-tax premiums are not available to annuitants, survivor annuitants or compensationers.

Life:

If you are eligible, and choose to continue your insurance as an annuitant or compensationers, you must complete a Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage form ([SF 2818](#)). On this form, you elect if you want to continue your Basic life insurance into retirement or compensation and elect the amount of Basic insurance you want after age 65 (or retirement, if later). The choices are 75% Reduction, 50% Reduction, or No Reduction.

For *annuitants*, the Office of Personnel Management pays the Government contribution, and the retirement system makes withholdings from your annuity.

Cost for Annuitants for each \$1,000 of the Basic Insurance Amount in Effect at the Time of your Retirement

| | 75% Reduction | 50% Reduction | No Reduction |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Until the Month after your 65th Birthday | \$0.3250 monthly | \$0.9250 monthly | \$2.1550 monthly |
| Starting the Month after your 65th Birthday | Free | \$0.60 monthly* | \$1.83 monthly* |

* This amount will be withheld from your annuity for life (unless you cancel or subsequently elect 75% Reduction).

If you have Optional insurance and are eligible to continue it, you must choose how you would like to continue it in retirement (if you choose to keep Option A, it automatically reduces when you reach age 65 [or retire, if later]. There is no reduction election for Option A). For Options B and C, you can choose whether to have all or some of the multiples reduce or not reduce.

You pay 100% of the cost of Optional insurance. The premiums for the three Optional insurance coverages are based on your age and the number of Option B and/or Option C multiples (up to five) you elect. They may increase as you get older. Refer to the FEGLI [Handbook](#) for more information on the pricing of the three Optional insurances.

Flexible Spending Accounts:

Answer:

By law, annuitants (other than reemployed annuitants) cannot participate in Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). FSAs are a way of setting aside pre-tax salary for payment

of eligible expenses. Annuitants receive annuities, which are not salary.

Long Term Care:

Answer:

Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program premiums are based on the benefits you choose and your age at the time you apply. Your annual premium does not change just because you are retired. However, if you paid your premium through payroll deduction while employed, you will need to notify Long Term Care Partners that you are retiring.

They will let you know your options for paying premiums. There are three options for paying premiums: 1) Annuity Deduction, 2) Automatic Bank Withdrawal, and 3) Direct Bill. Your payments may change if you previously paid biweekly through payroll deduction, because individuals paying through annuity deduction, automatic bank withdrawals and direct bills pay premiums monthly.

Reprinted from the OPM website

HOLIDAY/LIBERAL LEAVE SCHEDULE FOR FY 2009

| <u>Holiday</u> | <u>Date Designated</u> | <u>Training/ Liberal Leave</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Columbus Day | 13 Oct 2008 | 10 Oct 2008** |
| Veterans' Day | 11 Nov 2008 | 10 Nov 2008 |
| Thanksgiving Day | 27 Nov 2008 | 28 Nov 2008** |
| Christmas Day | 25 Dec 2008 | 26 Dec 2008** |
| New Year's Day | 01 Jan 2009 | 02 Jan 2009** |
| MLK's B-Day | 19 Jan 2009 | 16 Jan 2009 |
| President's Birthday | 16 Feb 2009 | 13Feb 2009 |
| Memorial Day | 25 May 2009 | 22 May 2009 |
| Independence Day | 03 Jul 2009 | 06 Jul 2009** |
| Labor Day | 07 Sep 2009 | 04 Sep 2009 |

****Designates Training Day/Training Holidays for MEDDAC Employees.**

Parents can only give good advice or put them [children] on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.
 ~ Anne Frank (1929 – 1945) ~



Time changes March 8th at 2 AM ... clocks move forward one hour



Getting a Good Night's Sleep May Lower Your Diabetes Risk

Can poor sleep boost your risk of developing diabetes? Maybe. A number of studies have linked poor sleep with a higher risk of diabetes, but researchers are still sorting out if one can cause the other or they're linked for some other reason.

Either way, getting better sleep is probably a good idea if you're at risk for diabetes (or even if you're not).

"It's not proven, but basic science shows that lack of sleep can lead to high blood pressure and increased weight, and these alone are risk factors for diabetes development," said Ronald Kramer, MD, the medical director of the Colorado Neurological Institute's Sleep Disorders Center in Englewood, Colo.

Some studies have suggested that sleep-deprived people start eating more calories, "so there's also that linkage in terms of increased weight," he says.

Disturbed sleep may promote insulin resistance
 However, sleep disturbances may actually disrupt insulin regulation too. In a 2007 study, Esra Tasali, MD, of the University of Chicago, and colleagues prevented nine young men from entering a deep stage of sleep (known as slow-wave sleep), which is thought to be associated with hormonal changes that affect glucose.

For three nights the researchers used sounds, such as simulated knocks on a door, or body shakes to keep the

men from getting slow-wave sleep while still not waking them up.

The subjects had a 25% drop in their insulin sensitivity (a loss of insulin sensitivity is a hallmark of type 2 diabetes). The researchers note that slow-wave sleep tends to decline with age and in the obese—two factors that are also linked to a greater risk of type 2 diabetes.

Less sleep linked to higher type 2 diabetes risk

Another 2007 study suggested that short sleep duration is associated with type 2 diabetes. James Gangwisch, PhD, of Columbia University in New York City and colleagues analyzed data from almost 9,000 subjects who participated in a survey between 1982 and 1992.

People who slept five or fewer hours a night or nine or more hours a night were more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than those who said they slept seven or eight hours a night (this type of study can't definitively prove one caused the other, it only shows that they appear to be causally related).

The studies show a surprisingly consistent correlation between lack of sleep and diabetes risk, according to Dr. Kramer, a regional spokesperson for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, who was not involved in either study.

"In current medical science, it appears that chronic sleep deprivation is a pro-inflammatory state that may contribute to the hardening of the arteries, as evidenced by increased stress hormones and increased sugar levels in the body," he said.

Bedtime Behaviors That Work: 7 Habits That Will Prepare Your Body for Sleep

A consistent wind-down routine every day can help you fall asleep more quickly and reliably. Try any or all of the following relaxing behaviors for a restful night.

Take a hot bath

Your temperature naturally dips at night, starting two hours before sleep and bottoming out at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m., according to a 1997 study conducted by New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. When you soak in a hot tub, your temperature rises—and the rapid cool-down period immediately afterward relaxes you.

Two hours before bed, soak in the tub for 20 or 30 minutes, recommends Joyce Walsleben, PhD, associate professor at New York University School of Medicine. "If you raise your temperature a degree or two with a bath, the steeper drop at bedtime is more likely to put you in a deep sleep," she says. A shower is less effective but can work, as well.

Install a dimmer switch

Late in the evening, your body releases the chemical melatonin, which makes you sleepy—but only if it receives the right cues from your environment. "Melatonin is your hormone of darkness—it won't flow with the lights on," says Walsleben. "You want to transition to dark as early as 9 or 10 o'clock." Sitting in a dimly lit room before getting ready for bed can put you in the right mindset for sleep.

Lay out your clothes

You can help your body recognize that bedtime is imminent by setting routines and repeating them every night. "We suggest that people establish regular nightly routines before they get into bed, to help their brain shift into sleep mode," says Gary Zammit, PhD, director of the Sleep Disorders Institute in New York City. "Laying out your pajamas, brushing your hair or your teeth—these habits can be very sleep-conductive."

Shun p.m. stimulants

Skipping your normal cup of joe—even as early as lunchtime—should help you fall asleep quicker, since caffeine is a stimulant. "I don't like people having caffeine after noontime if they have poor sleep, because it can hang out in the system for a long time," says Walsleben.

BRAIN TEASER

What conflict was known as "The War to End All Wars"?

Answer on page 11



Safety Boudreaux's Den

Staying Safe During a Thunderstorm

While thunderstorms can put on a spectacular display of light and sound, they can also be extremely dangerous -- even deadly. Dangers associated with thunderstorms include lightning, hail, heavy rain, flooding, strong winds, and tornados. Knowing what to do before, during, and after Mother Nature strikes is key to protecting your family and home from this very real threat.

Know the difference between a "watch" and a "warning." Dark, low rolling clouds, lightning, and

thunder are the most common signs of an approaching thunderstorm. If these conditions exist, check your local news to see if a thunderstorm watch has been issued. In case of a watch, stay vigilant and start making preparations to take shelter. If an actual thunderstorm has been spotted or picked up on radar, a warning will be issued which means it's time to take shelter. Severe weather warnings are issued on a parish/county basis, so know your parish/county's name.

Calculate how far away the storm is from you. In case you do not have access to the news, a good way to determine if you're in danger is to count the seconds between seeing the lightening and hearing the thunder. If the time is 30 seconds or less, the lightening is close enough to be a threat and you should take shelter.

Take shelter. If a thunderstorm is approaching, stay inside. Don't take a bath or shower or run any water. Unplug all electrical appliances. Avoid using the telephone unless it's an emergency. Close the windows, window coverings, and doors. Wait for the storm to pass. Protect yourself outside. Stay in your car with the windows up. Avoid touching any metal in the car. If you're swimming or in a boat, get out of the water immediately. Avoid being under any trees, telephone poles, or tall isolated object that could get hit by lightening.

If you don't have a car, go to a low-lying open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Squat low to the ground, and make yourself as small as possible. Do not lie flat on the ground as you are more likely to get hit by lightening. In the woods, take shelter under shorter trees.

Stay put after the thunderstorm. Stay inside for at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightening. More than half of lightening deaths occur after the storm has passed. Stay tuned to your local forecast for further information. In case of any damage to your home, take pictures for filing an insurance claim.

Keep these items handy. During a thunderstorm, you may lose power. Be prepared by gathering these items and storing them in a place you can easily access in the dark.

- Portable radio
- Flashlight
- Candles and matches
- Fresh batteries
- Storm kit with fresh water, food, and first-aid kit
- Blankets



Disrespectful Language and Failure to Follow Instructions Leads to Removal

By Susan Smith, FEDSmith

A four-year employee at the VA's Fresno facility, fired by the agency following clashes with her supervisor, has lost her appeal before the federal court. (*Bruce v. Department of Veterans Affairs*, C.A.F.C. No. 2008-3266 (nonprecedential), 1/9/09)

Bruce was a medical technician at the Central California Health Care System. The agency based its removal case on incidents involving Bruce and her supervisor. Bruce failed to follow her supervisor's instructions not to take a patient into a workout room that was set aside for staff. Bruce then used "disrespectful language and made inappropriate statements" to her supervisor and made similar statements later to her co-workers about her supervisor. (Opinion p. 2) The agency wasted no time removing Bruce.

Bruce appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board. She challenged the three charges brought against her—failure to follow instructions, using disrespectful language, and making inappropriate statements. She also argued the penalty was unreasonable as well as raised the affirmative defenses of whistleblowing and harmful procedural error. (p. 2)

The Administrative Judge (AJ) held a hearing. Based on the evidence, the AJ concluded that the agency had met its burden and sustained all three charges against Bruce. The AJ ruled against Bruce on each of the affirmative defenses. Finally, the AJ found removal appropriate, noting the behavior was serious, there were no mitigating factors, and Bruce had a history of similar misconduct that had resulted in separate prior disciplinary actions for using disrespectful language and making inappropriate statements. (p. 3)

Bruce took her case to the Federal Circuit where she tossed out several arguments as to why the agency and the Board were wrong. None of them carried the day with the appeals court. The court was unimpressed by Bruce's generalized argument that her supervisor's testimony was false and that the AJ should have accepted Bruce's version of the facts.

(p. 5) As to her argument that it was wrong to consider the prior disciplinary actions, the court sided with the Board.

(p. 6)

In short, Bruce's removal stands.

Did you Know?

The water of Angel Falls in Venezuela drops 3,212 feet (979 meters).

Far and away, the coldest temperature ever measured on Earth was -129 Fahrenheit (-89 Celsius) at Vostok, Antarctica, on July 21, 1983.

The Nile River in Africa is 4,160 miles (6,695 kilometers) long.

Earth's atmosphere is actually about 80 percent nitrogen. Most of the rest is oxygen, with tiny amounts of other stuff thrown in.

About 97 percent of the world's water is in the oceans. Oceans make up about two-thirds of Earth's surface, which means that when the next asteroid hits the planet, odds are good it will splash down.

The Pacific Ocean covers 64 million square miles (165 million square kilometers). It is more than two times the size of the Atlantic. It has an average depth of 2.4 miles (3.9 kilometers).



March 2009 On Cyber Patrol

National Cyber Defense Requires Close Cooperation

ON CYBER PATROL



Once of the most distinguishing characteristics of cyber warfare is that it is not fought on land, at sea or in the air. Cyber space is not an operational theatre that any military branch or relevant agency can lay claim to dominating. The necessities and challenges of defending the nation in the Information Age require a team approach. They also demand the ongoing sharing of ideas, best business practices and lessons learned.

Knowledge is power. Obviously, keeping our military knowledge from those who seek to harm us is sound defensive strategy and reinforces the need for strong operations security and information assurance programs. However, zealously protecting knowledge can be a two-edged sword if defensive actions are turned inward. The internal hoarding of knowledge and information for the sake of "territory" runs the risk of weakening the united defense that is necessary for success. The same can be said for competing strategies that counteract each other or cause confusion that enables the enemy to slip past our digital picket lines.

Any effective cyber security/information assurance defensive strategy must cross organizational boundaries and incorporate the best elements of the collective military/civilian expertise, experience and resources. The lone wolf mentality, so popular in the movies, doesn't cut it in cyber space.

With this in mind, DoD has tapped commands like U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) and Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) to sponsor cooperative efforts among the Services and Agencies. One very impressive team stood up in 2003 to see the big picture and address strategic IA vulnerabilities is called the Information Assurance (IA) / Computer Network Defense (CND) Enterprise-wide Solutions Steering Group (ESSG). This group's mission is to provide IA/CND policy and

implementation oversight, leadership, and advocacy across DoD. The ESSG consists of all military branches and joint commands and staff, plus other relevant agencies and organizations. This multi-disciplinary team provides the organization, consistency and cooperation to identify and promote effective cyber capabilities now and in the future. The ESSG, harnessing the collective will of its members, was the driving force behind DoD's mandate to deploy the Host Based Security System (HBSS). HBSS, the ESSG's most notable current initiative, integrates an impressive array of protection, detection, and monitoring capabilities that benefits the entire military community.

Yet no matter what information, recommendations, advice and expertise is available from this team of experts, it can be rendered ineffective by the aforementioned lone wolf mentality. Remember, the key to success is always cooperation. In the world of the Global Information Grid it is absolutely necessary because weaknesses can be exposed and digital walls breached in the wink of an eye.



BRAIN TEASER ANSWER

World War I



ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

If you have any suggestions on topics or issues that you would like addressed in future bulletins, please submit them to one of the following:

1. Janette.Nolde@us.army.mil
2. Call 531-1847

Suggestions will be reviewed and addressed if at all possible.

//original signed//
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