



**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 111**

May 2009

Mother's Day

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

**Sunday
May 10th**

NSPS INFORMATION UPDATE

Forced Distribution Is Prohibited Under NSPS

Employees have asked a number of questions about the forced distribution of performance ratings under NSPS. The NSPS regulations (5 CFR §9901.412(a)) expressly prohibit the use of forced or pre-determined distribution of ratings.

What is forced distribution?

Forced distribution occurs when managers assign performance ratings based on a pre-determined ratings distribution by percent of the population or number of employees. In forced distribution rating systems, employees are ranked relative to one another, rather than through the evaluation of individual employee job performance assessed against rating criteria. An example of forced distribution is grouping employees into multiple segments, e.g., the top 20 percent, the middle 70 percent,

and the bottom 10 percent, and assigning ratings based on those relative groupings.

Why is forced distribution prohibited?

The NSPS regulations (5 CFR §9901.412(a)) expressly prohibit the use of forced or pre-determined ratings distribution. Instead, NSPS links pay to individual performance by recognizing the accomplishments of employees through an assessment of their performance (of assigned job objectives) against standard rating criteria. Under NSPS, distinctions are made among employees based on individual performance and contributions.

How do standard performance indicators minimize the potential for individual bias or favoritism from entering the ratings process?

Standardized performance indicators for each pay schedule and pay band provide a common frame of reference for assessing performance, and promoting consistency and equity across the organization. By using standard criteria, NSPS ensures that employees performing similar types of work are evaluated consistently using the same tools of measurement.

Under NSPS, ratings are often lower than those received under previous performance evaluation systems. Is this the result of forced distribution?

No. While many NSPS organizations have experienced a change in their ratings distribution from the previous rating system, it is not a result of forced distribution. The change is the result of rigorous and standardized performance criteria that:

- Challenge employees;

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- Set a higher bar for higher performance ratings; and
- Require a strict application of the criteria.

Under the NSPS 5-level rating pattern, level 3 performance does not represent “mediocre” performance. Level 3 performance recognizes employees who performed their work in a “valued” manner and successfully achieved performance expectations.

Below is the level 3 performance indicator for the professional/analytical pay schedule, pay band 2. This example demonstrates that the standards upon which an employee’s accomplishments are assessed are both rigorous and challenging.

**Performance Indicator for Professional/Analytic
Pay Schedules
Band 2**

Level 3 – Valued Performer

Effectively achieved the stated objective, anticipating and overcoming significant obstacles. Adapts established methods and procedures when needed.

Results were technically sound, accurate, thorough, documented, and met applicable authorities, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines.

Planned, organized, prioritized, and scheduled own work activities to deliver the objective in a timely and effective manner, making adjustments to respond to changing situations and anticipating and overcoming difficult obstacles as necessary.

Demonstrated high standards of personal and professional conduct and represented the organization or work unit effectively.

If most employees are rated as level 3, how does that create meaningful distinctions among employees?

Statistics on rating distribution for the last three performance payout cycles indicate that between 50 and 60 percent of NSPS employees received a rating of level 3, with the remaining 40 to 50 percent of employees receiving ratings both above and below this level. The range of rating distribution illustrates that meaningful distinctions in performance are made. Additional distinctions are made through the assignment of shares within each rating level.

Is it possible for everyone in an organization to earn a Level 5 rating?

It is possible, although not probable, that every employee in an organization could earn a level 5 rating. Assignment of a level 5 rating requires that employees meet the criteria of level 5 performance as described in the appropriate performance indicator. Although possible for all employees to perform well beyond identified expectations, it is unlikely that there would be no variation in individual accomplishments and results in the organization.

Are pay pool managers required to achieve a “bell curve” in rating distribution to keep the share value high?

No. Pay pool managers are not required to assign ratings to achieve a bell curve or produce a particular share value. The value of a pay pool share is influenced by the number of shares distributed (the more shares awarded, the lower the share value), but maintaining a “high” share value is not the goal of the NSPS pay-for-performance system. Rather, the goal is to assess employee performance of job objectives against the standard criteria in a consistent, equitable manner across the organization. The role of the pay pool panel, with oversight by the pay pool manager, is to ensure that the ratings process is fair, equitable, consistent and rigorous. This responsibility includes ensuring that employees rated at the highest levels are truly delivering exceptional results. Pay pool panel members may question rating officials regarding their recommended ratings to ensure that the rating criteria are being applied appropriately.

How can organizations best apply this information and reinforce the process for rating and rewarding performance?

Interim reviews and mock pay pools are excellent opportunities to remind rating officials, higher level reviewers, pay pool panel members, and employees that ratings under NSPS are based on assessment of performance against standard performance indicators. These processes also reinforce that changing performance ratings to fit a pre-determined distribution pattern or to achieve a certain share value is not permitted. In addition, rating officials, higher level reviewers, and pay pool panel members should engage in ongoing dialogue about performance and must properly apply NSPS performance criteria to ensure meaningful performance distinctions among employees.

It is important for higher level reviewers to carefully examine the recommended ratings assigned by rating

officials to ensure that rating officials apply criteria consistently and rigorously. When questioning the recommended rating during the pay pool panel process, pay pool managers must ensure that rating officials have an opportunity to justify the recommended ratings and inform the rating official of the rationale for changes to recommended ratings, share assignments or payout distribution. Having this communication is important to ensure all information is appropriately considered and employees are given appropriate feedback on their performance.

What recourse does an employee have if he or she thinks that the assigned rating doesn't reflect actual work performance?

Under NSPS, the employee has the right to request a reconsideration of the rating of record or the rating assigned to individual job objectives. The reconsideration request is adjudicated by the pay pool manager with final determinations made by the performance review authorities (PRAs).

Training

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 09 are as follows:

17-21 August 2009

Supervisors who are interested in attending or those who may desire additional information should call their servicing HR Specialist at the CPAC, 531-4020/4207.



Mandatory Birth Month Training for 2009 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, Room 223.

The training dates are:

19 & 20 May
 23 & 24 June
 14 & 15 July
 25 & 26 August
 15 & 16 September
 20 & 21 October
 17 & 18 November
 09 & 10 December

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 contact Larry Moore at 531-4118.



*Heaven forbid if something should happen to you while you are at work! What if you were to fall down the stairs becoming unconscious, get hit by a car, or, maybe, have a heart attack? Who would we get in touch with? To assist us in contacting your next of kin as soon as possible, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you register and complete all information in our Emergency Contact Database...your life may depend on it!*

The Army developed an automated emergency contact data base system as a result of the lessons learned from the September 11th terrorist attacks. All Appropriated and Non-Appropriated fund civilian employees are reminded and strongly encouraged to enter their emergency contact information.

The emergency data you provide will be stored and made available to only those authorized individuals who will be directly involved in the actual process of notifying your emergency contact(s) and processing or assisting with the necessary documents in the event of injury or death of an employee.

You can now enter this information through MyBiz. Access MyBiz by clicking the link **MyBiz (CAC required)** .

After you've logged into My Biz, click on Update My Information, Emergency Contact Information Tab and follow instruction to Update, Remove or Add data.

If you have previously entered your information through this Emergency Contact link, your data will have been transferred into your My Biz record.

If you have any questions, contact your servicing CPAC Human Resources Specialist.

As a practical tip, if the primary emergency contact listed is not an immediate relative, it is important for you to inform your emergency contacts in advance about how to locate your next of kin and/or dependents.

Your cooperation is needed to enable us to promptly notify the emergency contact of your choosing. Failure to provide this information could result in delay in the notification to your next of kin in the event of an emergency or death. You'll be asked to review your emergency contact data on an annual basis and help keep the information current.

If you do not have access to a personal computer or the internet, you should contact your first line supervisor.

You should also consider updating designation of beneficiary forms if you believe the information is out of date.



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>



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

~Thomas William Parsons~



**MEMORIAL DAY
MAY 25th**

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: 3.125% for annuities purchased in May 2009 and 3.125% for April 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 May 1, 2009

(Figures in parenthesis indicate a negative return)

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
Apr 2009	0.21%	0.49%	9.58%	15.00%	12.13%
Last 12 Months	3.45%	3.93%	(35.26%)	(33.35%)	(43.06%)

(05/01/2008-04/30/2009)

*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
Apr 2009	9.38%	8.20%	6.49%	3.20%	2.37%
Last 12 Months	(29.88%)	(25.91%)	(21.42%)	(9.62%)	(4.71%)

(05/01/2008-04/30/2009)

*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

Take advantage of before-tax savings.

The money you contribute to the TSP is taken out of your pay before taxes are calculated, reducing the amount of your taxable pay. The taxes that you don't pay now help to finance your contributions to the TSP.

Grow now, pay later. The money you contribute to your TSP account grows tax deferred. Any investment earnings also accumulate tax deferred over time. You don't pay tax

on your earnings (and contributions) until you withdraw your money. If you anticipate being in a lower tax bracket in retirement, this deferral is even more valuable.

Never leave free money on the table that could be yours. If you are a FERS employee, you know that your agency automatically contributes 1% of your basic pay to your account — and matches the first 5% of your pay that you contribute to your account. Make it a goal to contribute at least enough to get the full match if you are not already doing so.

Diversify your investments — a good thing in any market. Financial assets often behave differently from one another depending on prevailing market conditions. The TSP gives you the opportunity to spread your money around, or diversify, rather than try to guess which fund is going to have the highest return at any particular time — something that even “experts” have trouble doing. And while diversification does not offer a guarantee against loss, most investment professionals agree that it is the most important component of long-term financial success. The TSP’s index funds track large and small U.S. companies, international companies, bonds, and Government securities. To make diversifying easier, the TSP has created the Lifecycle Funds (L Funds) — five fully diversified, professionally managed funds targeted to when you’ll need your money in retirement.

Don’t cash out early. If you’ve done the right thing and saved consistently for your retirement, resist the temptation to cash out early. In addition to taxes on the amount you withdraw, you may also pay the Internal Revenue Service 10% early withdrawal penalty.

A simple plan, simply executed. On the road to financial literacy, it’s important to know where you are investing, what you are investing in, and how much it is costing you. The TSP offers you a wide variety of investment choices — with just 10 funds. In 2008, total TSP expenses cost you only 19¢ for every \$1,000 you had invested — a negligible amount by any standard. You will never have to worry that TSP employees are travelling around in private jets or getting rich on million-dollar bonuses at your expense. The TSP is managed by Federal employees for Federal employees. It is too good to ignore.

BRAIN TEASER

What is round on both ends and HI in the middle?

Answer on page 10



Benefits Corner

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](#).

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.

Did You Know?

If you are already enrolled in self and family coverage, you do not have to contact the ABC-C to add family members to your FEHB plan. Just call the telephone number on the back of your FEHB plan identification card. You will need to have



the following information available for each family member you need to add: full name, Social Security Number, and date of birth. Your carrier may require you to provide a copy of a marriage license, birth certificate, or other documentation for the new family members.

Who Are My Eligible Family Members?

Eligible family members include your spouse and unmarried dependent children under age 22, or if age 22 or older, are incapable of self support. You may cover a common-law spouse, **if the state in which you reside recognizes common-law marriages**. Currently, same-sex partners are not eligible for coverage under FEHB.

Verify Your Service!

In the future, when the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) implements an on-line retirement process, your annuity will be computed based on your **verified** service. This is why it is so important that you make sure all of your service is documented in your Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

Military Service: If you have military service, ensure **all** of your DD 214s are in your OPF. For example, if you have two periods of active duty military service, but only one DD 214 in your OPF, your annuity may be computed using only the one period of military service. If you are missing a DD 214, it can be requested from the National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) (NPRC-MPR). The information can be requested on-line using "eVetRecs" at:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html>.

You may also submit your request in writing using the **SF-180 Request Pertaining to Military Records** and mailing the form to the following address:

**National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100**

Peace Corps Service: If you have prior service as a Peace Corps volunteer, you may request verification of the dates of your service and the stipend you received from:

**Peace Corps Headquarters
ATTN: Certifying Officer
1111 20th Street NW
Washington, DC 20526
FAX: 202-692-1422**

Deposit and/or Redeposit Service: You may owe a deposit for civilian service where you were not contributing to retirement (just Social Security), or a redeposit if you took a refund of your retirement contributions. If you have paid the deposit and/or redeposit, you should have received a statement from OPM showing that it has been paid in full. A copy of this final statement should be in your OPF. If you do not have a copy of the statement, you can obtain one from OPM by calling them toll-free at 1-888-767-6738.

**HOLIDAY/LIBERAL LEAVE
SCHEDULE FOR FY 2009**

Holiday	Date Designated	Training/ Liberal Leave
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	13 Feb 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.

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."
~ Thomas A. Edison ~



Walk This Way

Whether you're testing out a great urban trail or walking in your own neighborhood, you can boost your calorie burn, walk faster, and stay injury-free by having good form.

Here's what to do, courtesy of Contributing Editor Mark Fenton, co-author of *Pedometer Walking: Stepping Your Way to Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness*.

Tips for Increased Calorie Burning

You'll burn 170 calories per hour walking at a leisurely pace (2 mph), 238 calories per hour at a moderate pace (3 mph), and 272 calories per hour at a brisk pace (4 mph). All counts are based on a 150-pound person.

If you like listening to music, choose fast-paced songs and step to the rhythm; it'll help quicken your pace and burn more calories. For safety, wear earphones only when walking in a familiar area

Pointers on Body Positioning

Your head: Look straight ahead, not down at the ground.

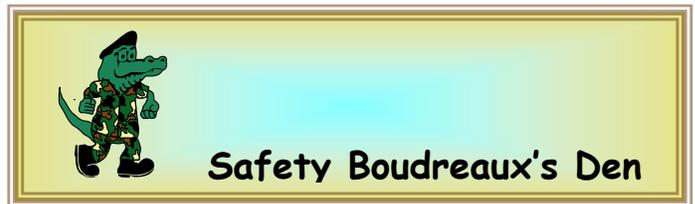
Your arms: Relax your arms by your sides and swing them front to back, not out to the sides; your hands shouldn't come up higher than your breastbone. On hills, bend your arms to 90 degrees for more pumping power.

Your hips and waist: Stand tall and keep your hips positioned directly above your feet. Don't lean forward or back from the waist, even when going up hills (although it's OK to sit back slightly when heading downhill, as long as you keep your weight over your feet).

Your legs: Stick with your natural stride length to help avoid shin pain, the most common complaint among walkers. To increase your speed, focus on taking quicker steps, not longer ones.

Your feet: Land on your heel first, then roll through to the ball of your foot.

Your shoes: Choose a walking shoe with a rugged tread and rounded heel. It should bend easily at the ball (not the arch) of your foot.



Electrical Safety At Home

The following tips will help you stay safe at home around electricity.

Watch nearby power lines when you use a ladder, prune trees, clean a pool, work on the roof, carry long tools or

pipes or dig in the yard. Underground lines can be damaged by a yard tool causing an electric shock.

Overhead power lines are located high above the ground for your safety. They can carry more than 500,000 volts.

Never touch a fallen line or anything in contact with it. Keep others away and call Cleco or the local police.

Never attempt to climb transmission towers, utility poles or substation fences. Substations are fenced because they contain dangerous, high voltage parts.

Teach children to recognize "Danger-High Voltage" signs and to stay away from power lines, substations and pad-mounted transformers. (Pad-mounted transformers are encased in metal on slabs of concrete in areas where there is underground electrical wiring.)

Do not let children climb trees near power lines.

Electricity can travel down the strings of kites or balloons that become tangled in power lines and cause shock or fire. These toys should be used in open areas, away from overhead power lines. If a toy becomes tangled in power lines or inside a substation, call the local electric company. Do not try to retrieve it.

Keep metallic balloons inside. They are highly conductive.

Water and electricity do not mix. Make sure that you keep appliances and anything with electrical current away from water.

Do not use electric power tools in wet conditions.

Keep electrical cords away from children; cover outlets with protectors when you're not using them. Unplug small appliances when you are not using them. And don't leave cords dangling from the counter.

If you use extension cords, use those that are moisture proof and have good insulation. Your extension cord must be able to handle the current required by your household appliances or tools. If your cord feels hot, stop using it immediately.

Extension cords should not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring.

To reduce the risks of electric shock, make sure that Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protection is provided for outlets at kitchen counters, in bathrooms and at outdoor receptacles. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working properly.

Don't run cords under rugs or furniture or attach them to walls or baseboards with nails or staples.

Never overload an outlet or extension cord.

Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures and lamps to make sure they are the correct wattage. Replace bulbs

that have a higher wattage than recommended to prevent overheating that could lead to a fire.

Check to see that fuses are the correct size for the circuit. Replacing a correct size fuse with a larger size fuse can present a serious fire hazard.

When using an electric blanket, use caution. Tucking the blanket in or placing additional covering on top of it can cause excessive heat buildup and start a fire.

Sleeping with the heating pad on is also dangerous, as it can cause serious burns, even at relatively low settings.

Portable electric heaters should be kept at least three feet away from flammable materials such as bedding clothing, rugs and draperies.

Did you Know?

$$111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$$

There are 293 ways to make change for a dollar.

WD-40 stands for Water Displacement, 40th attempt. Name was coined by the chemist, Norm Larsen, while he was attempting to concoct a formula to prevent corrosion by displacing water. Norm's persistence paid off when he perfected the formula on his 40th try.

Accdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are witren, the only iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

May 2009 On Cyber Patrol Best Practices Make Perfection

(The Lost, the Misguided and the *Sintras*.)



Information Assurance requires the practical combination of approved technology, adequate and appropriate training, understanding of all relevant rules and regulations and the common sense use of Best Business Practices (BBPs). “Best practices” is a common term used throughout the military, government and private sector that simply means the best way to do something. Army OIA&C adopted the use of this concept as an innovative approach to enforce standing policy while adjusting to the rapidly changing and emerging technologies. Unfortunately, there is one very common activity that makes BBPs all but useless. Some people do not follow them.

BBPs are developed collaboratively by the Army’s subject matter experts working with other leading organizations and subject matter experts. These experts ensure that published BBPs are the best way of performing a task using current knowledge, policy, and technology. Even then, there is no guarantee that a BBP will work when a new widget is invented or a better technique is discovered or if a situation is “unique”. That is why BBPs are living documents, adapting to emerging technologies, better processes, or enhanced standards. BBP sources should be checked on a regular basis to avoid falling behind the knowledge curve.

Yet, all the hard work that goes into BBPs and the valuable guidance they provide are lost if they are not used. The people who don’t use BBPs generally fall into one of three categories: the Lost, the Misguided and the *Sintras*.

The Lost are often new to a position with IA responsibilities and are not aware of the existence of the BBPs (See website above, top of left navigation bar.) Their jobs and their success in those jobs will be greatly improved by using these BBPs.

The Misguided are those that fall under the influence of the old timer in the office or unit that has “always done it

like this.” Unfortunately, what worked yesterday make not work today in the fast paced IT world. New personnel look to seasoned coworkers and soldiers for advice. If you give advice, make sure it’s correct. Consult the published BBPs on a regular basis.

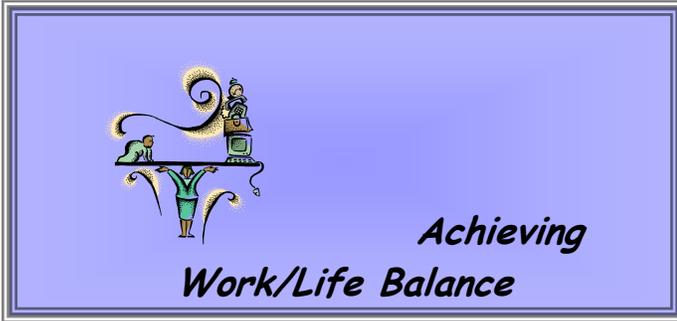
Finally, there’s the *Sintras*. Those are the people that always do things, as Frank sang it, “My Way.” These individuals present the greatest risk potential because they are so convinced their way is best that they won’t be swayed even in the face of a BBP’s proven effectiveness. Or if their way truly is better, they won’t share it with the Army community. Being individualistic is great. Causing, or not preventing, military data compromise via stubbornness or selfishness isn’t.

Avoid falling into one of these categories. BBPs are there for a reason. Highly qualified subject matter experts put a lot of effort into making sure that these valuable tools will help you get your IA job done right and often more easily.

The Army’s Office of Information Assurance and Compliance has an extensive list of IA BBPs that are available on the IA website: (<https://informationassurance.army.mil>). This is a regularly updated resource for all Army personnel whose responsibilities at either the tactical or strategic level include IA functions. This can range from Data at Rest practices when they are on the road or Wireless Security Standards BBP. These BBPs act as the practical work day policies for IA. They are the best way to perform the covered IA functions and are not just a list of suggestions. They are the best methods known to work within the Army’s IT infrastructure. The BBP process is founded on leveraging the knowledge and expertise within the Army, and your expertise, standard, or best ideas can be submitted. Great ideas and standards are often implemented and institutionalized at the lowest levels first and greatly enhance mission effectiveness and security. Without the ability to leverage lessons-learned and best practices in an active framework, then it all fails. As any IA person will tell you, any system not properly secured is a risk to all of the Army and DOD. Any compromise jeopardizes millions of users and systems, often with just one click of a mouse.

BRAIN TEASER ANSWER

Ohio



Friends. Family. Coworkers. Pets. Social clubs. Professional organizations. Military. The list of demands on our time can seem endless. Many of us today are struggling to balance full-time jobs with full-time responsibilities at home. Meeting the demands of an increasingly complex world means developing strategies for maintaining balance in our lives. The following takes a look at balancing home and work responsibilities - how to tell if you're striking a good balance, consequences of an out-of-balance lifestyle, and practical tips for getting the most out of time spent at work and at home.

Is Your Life Out-of-Balance?

How can you tell if your life is out-of-balance? You may find yourself having a hard time concentrating or feeling less creative than you could be. You may feel overwhelmed and experience a range of emotions including anger, sadness, guilt, fear, frustration, resentment, hurt and loneliness.

In addition, you may experience trouble sleeping, social alienation, or conflict with others around you. Finally, you may find yourself feeling powerless, and suffer from low self-esteem or self-confidence.

What Is a Good Balance for Me?

Achieving balance means dedicating the most time and energy possible to the aspects of your life that are important to you. There is no set formula for living a balanced life. For example, some people find a 60-hour work week fulfilling, while others want to spend less time at work and more time with family or friends.

Your priorities may vary quite a bit based on what phase of life you're in. If you recently finished college, you may be content working long hours. If you're 35 and have young children, spending time at home likely is a bigger priority for you. It's important to stand back and assess your situation before determining whether you need or want to change the balance in your life. You can start out by asking yourself these questions:

- Is my life right now the way I want it to be?

- If not, what is wrong with it?

- Is my current situation temporary?

- What can I change to make my life more fulfilling and enjoyable?

- Are the rewards of making these changes worth the sacrifices?

Depending on how you answer, you may decide that the benefits of your current circumstances outweigh the costs, or you may determine that you need to make some changes to achieve the balance you seek. The most important thing to do is realize when your priorities have shifted too far in one direction or another, and then to do something about it.

How Do I Get Back on Track?

If you've determined that you need to make some changes in the balance of your life, the following guidelines can help you get on the right track.

- **Set Realistic Expectations.** You may not be able to have everything you want, at least not all at one time. Establish realistic expectations and ease up on yourself when possible. Instead of vowing to keep your house or apartment spotless, simply try to keep it neat and orderly.
- **Prioritize.** Determine what tasks you need to accomplish, then rank them according to importance. Keep in mind your own needs, as well as those of loved ones. If you must work on a Saturday, for example, you might plan a recreational activity with your family or friends for Sunday.
- **Set Realistic Goals.** Be flexible and realistic in planning your schedule. Focus on things you know you can accomplish. At the same time, learn to expect the unexpected. Have a plan for dealing with those surprise visits from relatives and unannounced meetings at work. By taking steps like these, you'll be better prepared to handle life's curve balls.
- **Modify Responsibilities.** Sharing responsibilities is a good strategy to try at home. Start by determining what tasks need to be accomplished in your household. Next, decide who is most skilled at the various tasks, who likes or dislikes particular tasks, and the availability of everyone in the household. Distribute tasks fairly, making sure that responsibility is shared for unpopular chores. If others in the household are unwilling to participate or you live alone, determine what is reasonable for you to accomplish and stick to doing just that.
- **Be Efficient.** Develop ways to work smarter at home and at work. Combining or consolidating

tasks may be more effective than trying to squeeze as many tasks as possible into the least amount of time. Encourage others in your household to save time as well. Involve others, including children, in the planning and decision-making processes. Get input from others on how goals can be reached, and offer them the opportunity to participate in achieving these goals.

- **Think Positively.** Try to recognize that changes in your routine may be difficult at first. Don't blame yourself or others for limitations. Solving problems, not blaming others, produces positive change. Most importantly, have a sense of humor. While everyone feels sad, angry or frustrated sometimes, laughing can really help ease difficult situations.



All Federal Employees renewing or replacing lost, damaged or expired Common Access Cards (CAC) will need an approved DD Form 1172-2, Application for DOD Common Access Card/DEERS Enrollment. To obtain this form report to the CPAC, at 2271 Louisiana Ave, Bldg. 3304 before proceeding to Consolidated In/Out Processing, ID Cards section for your new CAC. If you have any questions or concerns please call Anita Jordan at (337) 531-4020/4207.



The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk commemorate the accomplishments and contributions of our Asian Pacific American community during Asian Pacific American Month during the month of May. The 2009 theme is "Leadership to Meet the Challenges of a Changing World." During this period, we recognize and honor our soldiers and civilians with roots in the Asian culture. The history of Asian in the U.S. is the history of dreams, hard work, persistence, and triumph.

Asian Pacific American Heritage month was first established in 1977 when Representatives Frank Horton and Norman Mineta and Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark

Matsunaga introduced resolutions asking the President to declare the first ten days of May (the month when the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the U.S. in 1843) as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. In 1978, President Carter made it an annual event and in 1990, President George H.W. Bush proclaimed the entire month to be Asian Pacific American Month.

The "Asian/Pacific American" designation encompasses over 50 ethnic or language groups including Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. There are now more Asian and Pacific groups than in the past – with 28 Asian and 19 Pacific Island subgroups representing a vast array of languages and culture. These groups include Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese American, Asian Indians American, Laotian American, Cambodian American, Hmong American, Thai American, Pakistani, Samoan, Guamanian and many other language groups.

"Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" refer to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who consider their race or races as "Native Hawaiian," "Guamanian or Chamorro," "Samoan", or "Other Pacific Islander such as Tahitian, Mariana Islander, or Chuukese". Many Asians and Pacific Islanders have ancestry in a number of different cultures.

We encourage all employees to continue to support the commitment to take positive steps to assist in creating a Federal workforce that is reflective of our Nation's Diversity.



The **Interactive Customer Evaluation** (ICE) system is a **cool** way for you to use this web-based tool to help us collect feedback on services provided by various organizations on Fort Polk.

The **ICE** system allows you to submit online comment cards to rate our service providers -- good or not so good, whatever **you** think. That way, we can improve our customer service by giving our managers crucial information regarding the level of satisfaction of services provided through these reports and your comments. **ICE** provides us -- and you -- the following benefits:

- Allows you to quickly and easily provide important feedback to our service provider managers;
- Gives our leadership timely data on service quality;
- Customers can make submissions anonymously or can include contact information

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ICE is our number one performance measure for Customer Satisfaction. The **ICE** system is the primary means of gauging how well Fort Polk does in satisfying the requirements of its internal and external customers and provides the means for managers to follow-up on customer comments in near real time.

Thank you for helping us serve you better throughout

Fort Polk.



Break the ICE...tell us about your experience

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//
DONALD R. MALLET
 Director, Civilian Personnel
 Advisory Center