



CPMS Express

Get on the fast track



Spiral 1.2 Organizations Will Begin Conversion to NSPS This Fall

NSPS Program Executive Office

The Department of Defense (DoD) will implement Spiral 1.2 of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) between October 2006 and January 2007. Approximately 66,000 employees in Spiral 1.2 will be converted to the new civilian Human Resources (HR) system, which includes classification, compensation, performance management, staffing, and workforce shaping elements. The Department will continue to implement NSPS to the DoD civilian workforce in phases.

Click [here](#) for a complete list of organizations included in Spiral 1.2.

“NSPS is critical to the Department’s transformation to a results-oriented, mission-

focused culture,” said Michael L. Dominguez, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. “The performance-based system will create an environment where our employees will be focused on outcomes that support our national security mission, and they will be rewarded for the results.”

“Organizations have the discretion to convert their workforce at any time during the four-month period,” said NSPS Program Executive Officer Mary E. Lacey. “Training is critical to the successful transition to NSPS. We want to give organizations sufficient time to train employees, do it right, and implement when they are ready.”

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A Message from Patricia S. Bradshaw

Tax Laws — Aim to Comply

As Federal employees, we have a special obligation to help foster public confidence in our Government by serving as model taxpayers. As public servants and stewards of taxpayer dollars, we should have a keen appreciation for the importance of complying with tax laws and rules.

In a recent memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Mark W. Everson, Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), reported that while the rate of compliance among Federal employees continues to be better than the general public, the delinquency rate for DoD civilian employees was higher than the rest of the Federal Government, and that number has increased from a year ago.

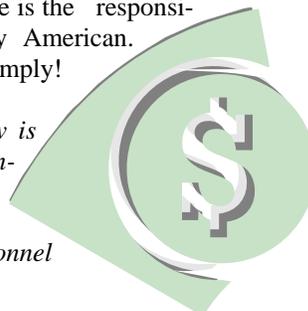
I strongly encourage you to personally file your tax returns and comply with all applicable tax laws.

For employees who need assistance in meeting their tax obligations, the IRS stands ready to help:

- ◆ Employees can visit their local IRS office or call toll-free at 1-800-829-1040 for assistance with filing a return or resolving a balance owed.
- ◆ Additional information, forms, and publications are available at www.irs.gov.

Tax compliance is the responsibility of every American. Let’s aim to comply!

Mrs. Bradshaw is the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy).



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NSPS Questions? Just Ask FAS!

Field Advisory Services [E-mail us](#)

These and additional questions are posted on the CPMS Web [site](#).

Q: How do I process a “conversion from temporary to career” action?

A: The nature of action code is 500, the legal authority code is Z5D, and the authority is 9901.511(d)(2). See Chapter 9 of the *NSPS Guide to Processing Personnel Actions Supplement*, [Rule 1](#) of Table 9-F, for additional information.

Q: Does accelerated compensation apply only to pay band 1 employees?

A: Yes. Accelerated compensation for developmental positions (ACDP; see [SC1930.9.10.](#)) only applies to employees in pay band 1 of the professional and analytical pay schedules (pay bands YA-1, YD-1, YH-1, and YK-1).

Q: Do any other provisions allow for a similar type of accelerated compensation?

A: Yes. [SC1911.4.8.](#) allows for a one-time, in-band pay adjustment during the first 12 months following conversion. Employees who are not eligible for ACDP *are* eligible to receive pay increases for noncompetitive promotion-equivalents when the grade level of the promotion is encompassed within the same pay band, the employee’s performance warrants the pay increase, and the promotion would otherwise have occurred during that period.

New DCPDS Feature Supports NSPS Performance Management Process

Regionalization & Systems Modernization [E-mail us](#)

Managers, supervisors, and employees who are covered by NSPS recently began taking advantage of the Performance Management Tool (PMT). The PMT, launched on June 19th, is a new feature within the enterprise Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS), the Department’s HR information and transaction processing system that supports more than 800,000 civilian employees.

NSPS reflects industry’s most sophisticated business practices for managing employee performance. The PMT makes the process more robust with performance plans at your fingertips, not in a file drawer.

Accessible through the secure, online self-service application that currently exists within DCPDS, the PMT allows managers to see only those employee records for which they are directly responsible. Each manager’s name is electronically linked to the names of his or her direct reports, a design element built to ensure maximum security.

Specifically designed to meet the needs of the NSPS workforce, the PMT enables managers to identify the organization’s mission and goals and to develop employee job objectives that

are strategically aligned with those goals. Managers are now able to define individual employee job objectives, describe expectations, note achievements, identify areas for improvement, and assess performance at the end of the performance cycle. From the planning of yearly expectations to the final appraisal of the employee, supervisors and staff members may collaborate online while continuing to participate in critical, face-to-face discussions.

During the performance planning cycle and the appraisal cycle, the employee has the opportunity to participate in the process with the supervisor by annotating periodic accomplishments, suggesting new job objectives, providing online comments, and most impor-

tantly, by providing input on the performance process *before* the job objectives and work plans are finalized.

This shared tool facilitates ongoing discussions throughout the appraisal period and keeps both parties focused on the successful accomplishment of performance expectations. Managers will spend less time on paper-intensive HR processes and more time mentoring, coaching, and providing feedback on performance.

The automated PMT is just one more way to support the goals of NSPS by ensuring that the performance management process is accessible, efficient, and focused.

NSPS Spiral 1.2 Employees

(Continued from page 1)

Employees will be given new performance plans that are clearly linked to their organization’s mission and strategic goals. They will also be converted to pay bands that replace the General Schedule. Employees will not lose pay upon conversion to NSPS. Most will receive an initial adjustment in pay to account for time already earned toward their next within-grade increase.

The performance appraisal cycle for Spiral 1.2 employ-

ees begins on their actual day of conversion and ends September 30, 2007. These employees will receive their first performance pay increase in January 2008.

Mrs. Lacey has met with Spiral 1.1 senior leaders to identify what worked well during the conversion of the first 11,000 employees to NSPS and what improvements need to be made. She will meet with Spiral 1.2 leaders and employees throughout the coming months.



Employees Report a Smooth Transition to Self-Service

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Just one month after the launch of *My Biz* and *My Workplace*, employees are reporting a smooth transition to the enhanced enterprise system. It really comes as no surprise to those who were involved in the intensive planning and testing programs, since *My Biz* and *My Workplace* were fine-tuned specifically to meet the needs of employees.

These modules are the latest in the evolution of self-service HR management: transitioning personnel processing and information management from solely an HR function to a responsibility that is shared by all employees, managers, and supervisors. With an Oracle commercial-off-the-shelf product as its base, the self-service platform was customized with the input of a planning and test group composed of DoD and Component representatives, who tailored the proven applications with data fields appropriate to the HR environment.

“The group evaluated what the Oracle product allowed employees and managers to see, compared that to what information they wanted access to, and determined how the product needed to change to allow that to happen,” said Cindy Beeson, Self-Service Program Manager, Regionalization and

Systems Modernization Division. “The result is a system that is easy to use, even for those employees who are not at a work station all day, every day.”

My Biz and *My Workplace* were rigorously tested prior to their launch, with the help of various Component test users. According to Beeson, the Navy conducted performance testing over a one-week period with 9,000 accounts, the Army tested over a two-week period with 35,000 user accounts, and the Air Force tested over a two-week period with 13,000 users. This

comprehensive testing provided valuable feedback about clarity and ease of use—information that was integrated into the final release.

After the launch, all users now have the opportunity to report errors or recommend enhancements through their HR offices. Army users, however, can also take advantage of a unique feature: a modified Help Desk application that runs concurrently with *My Biz*, allowing employees to report feedback and problems.

From planning, to performance testing, to ongoing

feedback and system enhancement, users were instrumental in shaping these innovative applications. “Now, like never before, employees have control over the information that’s maintained in their file, all through a system that was designed with their specific interests in mind,” said Carla Barnes, the Army’s Project Manager for DCPDS.

For more information about access to *My Biz* and *My Workplace*, visit your Component’s Web site or that of your servicing HR office.

MSPB Credits Injured Appellant with Full-Time Service

Benefits & Entitlements [E-mail us](#)

A recent Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) [decision](#), *Hatch v. Office of Personnel Management*, 100 MSPR 204, may affect some current employees whose retirements are pending, as well as some retirees.

Appellant David Hatch spent three years on leave without pay (LWOP) due to an on-the-job injury. He received payments from the Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) during this time. He returned to work in October 1993 on a limited duty assignment. Although officially assigned to a full-time position, he was able to work only four hours a day

due to his ongoing medical disability. He received OWCP payments for the remaining four hours of each day, for which period the agency placed him in an LWOP status. This situation continued for a period of almost nine years, until he retired in 2002. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determined that this period was part-time service for purposes of retirement credit. Mr. Hatch appealed the determination, and in late 2004 an MSPB Administrative Judge made an initial decision in his favor.

OPM petitioned MSPB for review of the initial decision and then for reconsideration of the Board’s final decision, but without success. The Board ordered OPM to

re-compute the annuity, crediting as full-time service the appellant’s employment from October 13, 1993, until the time of his retirement on September 3, 2002.

OPM did not pursue judicial review in this case. Thus, the Board’s final decision stands as precedent for cases with similar facts under both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Agencies may be asked to identify such cases, so that the decision can be applied to those in which the annuity has already begun, as well as to current and future applications for retirement benefits. If this occurs, we will keep you posted.



Students Explore DoD Work Environment in CPMS Initiative

Recruitment Assistance [E-mail us](#)

When college students Richard Reedy and Gordon McDowell toured the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Dahlgren Division laboratories and interviewed civilian scientists and engineers, their perceptions of what it would be like to work for the Department quickly changed.

“I can easily see myself working here,” they said simultaneously after their recent visit sponsored by the

CPMS Supports NAD Conference

Recruitment Assistance [E-mail us](#)

The CPMS Recruitment Assistance Division participated in the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) biennial conference, held June 29-July 3 in Palm Desert, CA. The Conference provided professional development and related events for more than 2,500 deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and deaf-blind people, as well as hearing individuals.



At the NAD Conference, CPMS' Deborah Broadus-Muskowski marketed DoD as “Employer of Choice.”

Recruitment Assistance Division (RAD). McDowell and Reedy are now encouraging their peers who are graduating from colleges and universities across the nation to investigate DoD career opportunities.

RAD has identified emerging recruiting problems within the scientific, engineering, linguistics, and information technology professions. As a result, DoD civilian recruiters are listening to the students' new-found opinions about what they believe it would be like to work for the Federal Government.

CPMS hired a contractor, Mullen and ForsMarsh Group, to work with scores of students who are visiting DoD facilities around the country. The students are now sharing their perceptions of the cutting-edge work and technology available in DoD civilian careers.

“You really have to come out to the Warfare Centers and see it for yourself,” said Reedy, a University of Texas computer science major, after his tour in Dahlgren, VA. “This is a research and development center that operates a lot like the private sector and a university campus.”

The tour of NSWC Dahlgren's fire control, combat systems, and human performance laboratories focused on showing Reedy and McDowell the work environment they could expect if they decided to be

employed by the Federal Government.

“I had a pre-conceived notion of a military atmosphere but found that it's not like that at all,” said McDowell, who is graduating this year from Howard University with a bachelor's degree in computer science. “This was a chance to see it for myself, and that made all the difference. I don't look at civilian DoD jobs in the same way any more.”

The collective input of students involved in the program will help RAD develop a communication strategy that will create a broader awareness and develop a competitive advantage for civilian DoD careers. This will be particularly important with the collegiate market in the fields of natural sciences, computer science, medicine, engineering, information technology, and linguistics.

Use Appropriate Method to Calculate FERS Annuity Supplement

Benefits & Entitlements [E-mail us](#)

Upon retirement, some employees covered by FERS may be eligible for the FERS annuity supplement, an additional retirement benefit. The *CSRS and FERS Handbook for Personnel and Payroll Offices*, Chapter 51.A1.1-3, explains in detail who is eligible to receive a FERS annuity supplement.

This supplement approximates the value of the portion of the employee's Social Security benefit that is attributed to FERS service. It is calculated as if the employee were eligible on the date of retirement to receive Social Security benefits. To obtain the most precise estimate of the supplemental benefit, HR specialists should use one of the commercially available annuity-estimate calculators or the manual computation method

outlined in Chapter 51 of the *Handbook*. Estimates that are based instead on the annual Social Security statement may vary up or down from the actual amount of the annuity supplement by as much as 50 percent.

Here is why using the annual statement is inappropriate for estimate purposes. OPM computes the supplement using the employee's Federal civilian service earnings only. The earnings history begins in the year the employee reached age 22 and ends with the year before the employee is entitled to receive the annuity supplement. OPM does not obtain Social Security earnings from the Social Security Administration to compute this benefit. Instead, OPM constructs an earnings history consisting of actual and deemed earnings, as follows:

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CPMS Supports Troops Deployed West of Baghdad

In May, CPMS adopted a military unit in Iraq: the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, Lima Company, 3rd Platoon. Based at Camp Lejeune, NC, this unit is now deployed on its second tour in Iraq. Its mission is to support local security forces in Ramadi and the surrounding area.

Just before Memorial Day, CPMS mailed the troops 15 boxes full of “goodies” on their wish list. The shipment included everyday amenities like cereal, snack bars, shaving cream, and reading material.

The unit Chaplain, Father Eugene Wozniak, responded graciously with a handwritten note: “On behalf of our Commander and all of our Marines and Sailors, I would like to thank you for your kindness.

“Ramadi can be a challenging city in Iraq,” Father Wozniak added, “but rest assured that morale remains high and we continue steadfast in our purpose.”

The city of Ramadi and the immediate vicinity are definitely challenging territory.

CPMS Employment

CPMS vacancies are posted on USAJOBS. To access employment opportunities for status candidates, click [here](#).

For other CPMS vacancies, click [here](#).

According to a recent report aired on the *CBS Evening News*, “[D]owntown Ramadi...is enemy territory

for U.S. forces. The Marine Commander in charge calls it ‘the toughest piece of dirt in Iraq.’”



Marines in Lima Company search for insurgent propaganda. (Right) At Camp Lejeune, where Lima Company is based.

During July, CPMS followed up by sending the troops additional packages. This shipment had a dual theme of patriotism and children:

- ◆ Patriotic items to wish the troops a fine Fourth of July; and
- ◆ School supplies and toys to lift the spirits of Iraqi children.



Deemed Earnings Are the Key to Calculating Estimates

(Continued from page 4)

- ◆ The actual earnings are amounts the employee earned while employed in a civilian position covered by FERS, beginning with the first full calendar year of FERS service.
- ◆ Deemed earnings are used for years in which the employee did not have creditable civilian FERS service for a full calendar year. The deemed earnings are based on an employee’s salary at the time he or she became subject to FERS.

The earnings (deemed and actual) history is used to compute an estimated Social Security benefit. This bene-

fit is then adjusted to reflect the portion of the Social Security benefit earned under FERS.

In preparing annuity estimates, some personnelists have used the monthly Social Security amount from the employee’s annual Social Security statement. They may have done so because it was easier for them than computing the benefit manually or entering years of earnings into an estimate calculator. However, using the annual statement results in a less accurate estimate than one obtained using the annuity estimate calculators to compute the benefit. As explained above, while the Social Security estimates use *actual* earnings from

periods of non-Federal service, the supplement computation uses *deemed* earnings, which may be significantly higher or lower than an employee’s actual Social Security earnings.

In short, using the Social Security benefit amount from the employee’s annual Social Security statement to compute the supplement may significantly increase or decrease an employee’s estimated supplemental benefit amount. For that reason, we cannot endorse this inexact methodology. Any HR practitioner using it should warn employees that the resulting amount is a very rough estimate and the actual amount may be as much as 50 percent higher or lower.



CPMS Personnel-ity Profile

Gwen Folsom Knows the Value of CARE Programs

“I’m a Navy brat,” says Gwen Folsom of the Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment (CARE) Division. “When I was born, Dad was assigned to a jet fighter training base, Naval Air Station Meridian, where he maintained the planes’ air conditioning and ventilation systems. Dad was often deployed on aircraft carriers for six months or more, so Mom stayed home to care for my brother and me. We moved all over the South, but I consider my hometown to be Albany, GA. That’s where my parents retired in the mid-’70s, after Dad had served in the Navy for 23 years.

“Now I’m the one with 23 years of service, although mine is as a DoD civilian. My husband Eric is also a DoD civilian, a Logistics Management Specialist at the Marine Corps base in Albany. Last year he retired from the Marine Corps as a limited duty officer—or LDO—major. He rose through the enlisted ranks as an ordnance maintenance officer and then was commissioned through the LDO program.

“We had some great assignments during Eric’s military career! A highlight was spending six years in Okinawa, where I enjoyed collecting Kokeshi dolls, a folk toy carved from a single piece of wood. Each prefecture developed a unique,

traditional carving style, so it’s easy to tell where in Japan a particular doll was crafted. We also traveled to Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, and ‘mainland’ Japan. Our son Zachary studied the Japanese language in grammar school, and I even learned a few phrases!

“Zachary will turn 16 this September. He plays lead guitar in an alternative rock band that just had its first show at a local club, and we’re proud of him for being a self-taught musician. We named our two-year-old Hannah, which means ‘grace of God,’ because we feel she was heaven-sent. Recently, we built our dream house on a 61-acre pine tree farm in Fort Valley, near Warner Robins, GA. This area has a wonderful, small-town atmosphere: ‘Mayberry’ has its charms!

“When I joined CARE here in 2005, I was welcomed and made to feel at home. Everyone in my office is super-helpful and very knowledgeable of CARE programs, plus all the different HR elements the programs touch upon.

“In Japanese culture, whatever job a person does is valued, whether they’re a gas station attendant or the company president. I’ve certainly held a variety of jobs as a military spouse and found employment

through the DoD Priority Placement Program, which CARE administers. Now it’s my turn to support CARE stability-of-employment programs and learn as much as I can about them. I want DoD employees to continue receiving the kind of assistance that has benefited me.”

CAREER BRIEF

EXPERIENCE. 1980-1990: Clerk-Typist, Secretary, GS-3/4/5/6, Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA. 1990-1992: Break in service to care for young child, Camp Lejeune, NC. 1992-1994: Writer-Editor, GS-4/5/7 (transferred six months before reaching target grade), Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany GA. 1994-1998: Medical Clerk, GS-3, Naval Medical Clinic; Secretary, GS-6; both jobs with Marine Corps Systems Command, Quantico, VA. 1998-2004: Administrative Support Assistant, GS-6, Kadena Air Base; Logistics Assistant, GS-6, Marine Corps Base, Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan. 2004-2005: Program Assistant, GS-6; Management Services Assistant, GS-7; both jobs with Marine Corps Logistics Command, Albany, GA. 2005-Present: Administrative Support Assistant, GS-7, CARE Operations Branch, Robins AFB, GA.

ICUC Announces Course Offering

Injury & Unemployment Compensation [E-mail us](#)

The Basic Injury Compensation training course will take place in Southbridge, MA, on August 22-24 (dates exclude travel time). A maximum of 40 students may attend, and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis (click [here](#) to register).

This course gives entry-level Injury Compensation Program Administrators the tools and resources they need to manage their programs. Covered topics include completing claim forms; answering questions about the claims process; counseling injured workers and returning them to duty; managing long-term cases; researching Federal Employees’ Compensation Act regulations, procedures, and case law; and using automated systems. Team exercises will focus on performance of duty, continuation of pay, job offers, and situational role-playing.

Other training offered during August and September—a pay-setting seminar, a course on the Federal Employees Retirement Coverage Correction Act, and an applied benefits workshop—were previously [announced](#). Future issues of *CPMS Express* will publicize fiscal year 2007 course offerings.