



# CPMS Express

Get on the fast track



## NSPS Begins in Spiral 1.1 Organizations

NSPS Program Executive Office (PEO)

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon R. England signed a [memorandum](#) that approved the implementing issuances necessary to launch the first phase of the new National Security Personnel System (NSPS). “Today is a milestone event,” he said in a Pentagon ceremony. “After two and a half years of very hard work, the Department of Defense is initiating the Human Resources phase of the National Security Personnel System.”

Military forces are being reoriented in response to changing circumstances. “The civilian workforce also needs to become more agile, adaptable, and fully integrated with the efforts of our military forces,” he said. “People are our most valuable resource, and today we are improving the ability of the Department’s people to be successful,” the Deputy Secretary concluded.

Previously, NSPS Program Executive Officer Mary E. Lacey reported that preparations were complete for Spiral 1.1 organizations to enter the NSPS Human Resources (HR) system on April 30<sup>th</sup>. “Employees are trained, supervisors are trained, leaders are leaning forward, and we’re ready to go.”

Mike Causey, a journalist who covers Federal employment issues, recently interviewed NSPS Deputy Program Executive Officer and CPMS Director Brad Bunn about the new system. The CPMS Field Advisory Services (FAS) Division will provide [advice](#) to field activity HR specialists on NSPS issues (see related article, page 3).

Mr. Bunn explained that, by enacting the legislation that authorized NSPS, Congress intended the Department of Defense (DoD) to have “a tailored, mission-oriented personnel system for DoD civilians, recognizing our dynamic and changing national se-

*(Continued on page 2)*



Looking on as Mr. **ENGLAND** signs are: Mr. **BUNN**; Shirley B. **SCOTT**, NSPS Director of HR; Hon. Michael L. **DOMINGUEZ**, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA); Hon. William A. **NAVAS, Jr.**, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA); Mrs. **LACEY**; Mark E. **DOBOGA**, Deputy Associate Director, Center for Talent and Capacity Policy, OPM; Hon. David S. C. **CHU**, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Rear Admiral Donna L. **CRISP**, Director of Manpower and Personnel, Joint Staff; Dr. James A. **TEGNEIA**, Director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency; and Jan E. **THOMPSON**, Washington Headquarters Services Director of HR.

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## DoD Leads the Federal Government in Testing Pay Banding and Pay for Performance

*(Continued from page 1)*

curity environment” in which the Department currently operates. As such, the NSPS HR system makes significant changes in the way the Department recruits and retains employees, manages their performance, and pays them.

When Spiral 1.1 organizations implemented NSPS, approximately 11,000 employees were brought under new performance objectives that are mission-related, Mr. Bunn said. Next, these employees were converted to NSPS pay bands.

Salaries were converted with no loss of pay. In fact, Mr. Bunn pointed out, approximately 80 to 85 percent of NSPS Spiral 1.1 employees were eligible to

receive a salary increase upon conversion. The average amount was about \$962. This increment, called a within-grade increase (WGI) “buy-in,” represents a pro-rated salary increase based on the length of time employees had served toward their next WGI under the longevity-based General Schedule (GS) pay system.

Developers of the new system have addressed concerns about clear performance objectives and fair ratings under NSPS. “We have to ensure the performance system is robust, transparent, and fair,” Mr. Bunn said. Checks and balances have been built into the performance management system; a number of reviews occur before a performance appraisal is rendered.

“The bulk of our training resources were spent on that exact issue,” he noted. Spiral 1.1 supervisors have attended a two-day training course on performance management under NSPS, with practical workshops on several key elements:

- ◆ Developing performance objectives;
- ◆ Communicating expectations to employees;
- ◆ Providing feedback to employees;
- ◆ Writing appraisals; and
- ◆ Working with individuals who may not be performing up to expectations in order to help them improve.

Mr. Bunn said the Department is a Federal Govern-

ment leader in testing pay banding and pay-for-performance systems for large groups of employees, with more than two decades of experience at China Lake, CA, which he called “the flagship” in this area. The Department gained still more experience with several demonstration projects modeled on China Lake, which began in the 1990s and remain in effect now.

Based on these efforts, Mr. Bunn predicted that there might be “some rough patches initially” for NSPS. Extensive demonstration project evaluations have shown that, “It takes a few years to gain acceptance” of pay banding and pay for performance.

Over time, however, employees reported that, “They do like the system. They see that they do have an opportunity for greater rewards, based on their performance, that it’s generally a fair system—and more importantly for the Department, we also see an increase in mission effectiveness in these organizations,” Mr. Bunn said.

Results matter for America. “That’s really what NSPS is all about,” Mr. Bunn concluded. “It’s a tool for making the Department better overall, better at doing our mission.”

## NSPS Pay Schedules, Local Market Supplements Take Effect for Spiral 1.1 Organizations

### NSPS PEO

Deputy Secretary England approved NSPS pay tables on April 28<sup>th</sup>. NSPS pay schedules and local market supplements are now in effect for employees in Spiral 1.1 organizations.

NSPS consolidates the 22 GS occupational groups and 15 grade levels into four

career groups, each with three or four pay schedules. The new system uses the following career groups:

- ◆ Standard;
- ◆ Investigative and Protective Services;
- ◆ Medical; and
- ◆ Scientific and Engineering.

Pay bands are established for entry/developmental, full performance, and expert level positions. Within each career group, supervisors and managers have a distinct pay schedule with higher minimum rates and, in some cases, higher maximum rates than those of their nonsupervisory counterparts.



## Probationary Period Is a Valuable Assessment Tool

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

The probationary period is an integral part of the selection process. It allows managers to observe the probationer in action and assess whether the individual will succeed on the job.

A 2005 [study](#) by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) showed that agencies often failed to use the probationary period effectively. Supervisors could boost employee satisfaction, improve productivity, and avoid difficulties for themselves by taking advantage of the probationary period, MSPB indicated.

Managers should seize the opportunity to monitor conduct and performance. Supervisors should provide timely feedback on an ongoing basis and not take a wait-and-see attitude toward deficiencies.

MSPB's study dealt with the HR system under title 5 of the United States Code, but the Board's findings are also of interest for DoD organizations covered by NSPS.

Probationary periods under NSPS are governed by the DoD Civilian Personnel Manual 1400.25-M, specifically, Subchapter (SC) 1950, Staffing and Employment, paragraph SC [1950.5.2](#).

NSPS provides that new career employees serve a probationary period, as well as current career employees who move into positions that require markedly different skills (this is called an "in-service probationary period"). However, upon initial implementation of NSPS, supervisory probationary periods are the only type of in-service probationary periods.

NSPS probationary period requirements apply to both competitive and excepted service positions. The duration is at least one year, and two-year probationary periods are required for certain excepted service positions. Additionally, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness may establish longer probationary periods for select occupations.

As is the case today, NSPS new hires who fail to complete the applicable probationary period successfully may be separated and in most cases have only limited appeal rights to the MSPB. Current employees who do not satisfactorily meet performance objectives during their in-service probationary period are entitled to be returned to a comparable position (i.e., grade or pay band no lower than that held before the in-

service probationary period) and will have their pay set at the base salary they previously held, with appropriate adjustments for any pay increases that may have occurred during that time.

Of course, successful completion of the probationary period is the preferred result under the title 5 system and NSPS alike. Positive outcomes become more likely when managers:

- ♦ Communicate clear expectations to the employee early in the probationary period, and regularly thereafter;
- ♦ Counsel the employee about performance concerns promptly, invite questions, and document the performance discussion; and
- ♦ If performance deficiencies persist over time, decide whether to take a personnel action.

## FAS Answers Questions About NSPS

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

FAS has been asked:

**Q:** We have an employee who was on a temporary promotion from a GS-560-11 (paid at the step 4 rate, \$50,809 annually) to a GS-560-12 (with pay set at step 1, \$55,360 annually). What happens when this employee converts into NSPS (both the GS-11 and GS-12 positions are in organizations being converted)?

**A:** During the conversion process, the employee is

converted to YA-560-2, and the employee's permanent base salary under NSPS will be determined, based on the permanent position of record. Assuming that the employee is entitled to a WGI buy-in of \$1,000, the NSPS base salary would be \$51,809 (the sum of \$50,809 and \$1,000).

After conversion, both the permanent position of record and the position to which the employee was temporarily assigned are in the same pay band, YA-2.

Under the NSPS pay setting rules, a pay increase upon reassignment to another position in the same pay band is limited to five percent. However, Subchapter 1911, Conversion into NSPS, paragraph SC [1911.4.6](#), provides that immediately after conversion, management may temporarily reassign the employee in cases such as this, with a temporary increase in pay up to the rate the employee was receiving during the temporary promotion (\$55,360 in this case).

Busy managers might be tempted to wait until the probationary period is nearly over before addressing conduct and performance issues. Resist the temptation! Without feedback, the probationer will be deprived of a chance to get on the right track.

In short, using the probationary period as a management tool can improve productivity and workplace morale. By establishing expectations upfront and providing timely, ongoing feedback, managers can also increase the likelihood that the individual will succeed.



## Efforts Get Underway to Tap Today's Talent Pool

Recruitment Assistance [E-mail us](#)

The Army Corps of Engineers' Chief Counsel shares his passion to restore the Everglades in one of four television ads designed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and now appearing in selected markets. As OPM Director Linda M. Springer said in a May 1<sup>st</sup> address to the National Press Club, about 40 percent of the Government workforce is projected to retire over the next ten years. Now is the time to "raise the awareness" of potential applicants about the important, interesting work they can do for America, she added.

The Department faces the same awareness issues as other agencies, plus the challenge of differentiating its civilian careers from the uniformed services. DOD

civilian recruiters have noticed that many potential job applicants avoid them at career fairs and other events, thinking they would have to enlist in order to work in the Department.

To counter this misconception, the Recruitment Assistance Division recently developed 15- and 30-second public service ads, which are expected to air on national television this fall.

Raising awareness is only a start. Today's jobseekers do not limit themselves to traditional career patterns, Director Springer noted. They are less inclined to remain in civil service for decades. Individuals now entering the workforce are likely to weave Government, industry, and nonprofit experience into a single career. "The Federal Government must become an inviting

employer who can accommodate interests of individuals that span the range of career patterns," she said.

In this regard, MSPB recently analyzed selected data from its Merit Principles Survey 2000. Responses from Generation X and Y employees (i.e., those born after 1960) were compared against older employees' responses for various items. MSPB found that almost three times as many Generation X and Y employees expected to leave Government before becoming retirement eligible. Approximately one-third of Generation X and Y employees said this was likely.

Other nontraditional features also attracted them. In particular, MSPB said that Generation X and Y employees rated childcare (both referrals and on-site care), telework, part-time work, and elder care referrals as more important than their older colleagues did.

All generations were interested in serving the public and making a difference. The desire for advancement opportunities, good benefits, and job security was also universal. In conclusion, MSPB found that good management practices remain such across all age groups. MSPB cautioned against pursuing "the management flavor of the month," because generational expectations were not as distinct as some researchers had thought.

Finally, the Partnership for Public Service released a report on May 2<sup>nd</sup> titled, *Back to School: Rethinking Federal Recruiting on College Campuses*. Based on a survey of more than 3,000 juniors and seniors from six universities, students are "eager" for information about Federal employment opportunities, according to Max Stier, the Partnership's president and chief executive officer.

"Only three percent of the Federal workforce is currently under 25," he said. "We need to reestablish the Federal Government as an employer of choice for our country's talented young college graduates." The report recommended that agencies take these steps:

- ◆ Commit to on-campus recruitment and cultivate relationships with academic and career advisors, plus faculty;
- ◆ Teach them the fundamentals about Federal service, so they can become partners in recruitment;
- ◆ Tell students what Federal employment has to offer: interesting work, good benefits, and a unique chance to make a difference;
- ◆ Cooperate with other agencies to market employment opportunities by profession; and
- ◆ Personalize public service, so students can see that people with interests and talents like their own are working in Government.

## Premium Pay Limitation Increases for Some

Classification & Pay [E-mail us](#)

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [issued](#) policy and procedures to increase the annual premium pay limitation for certain employees during calendar year (CY) 2006. Employees eligible for the higher limitation are those who work in direct support of (or directly related to) a military operation, including a contingency operation, while assigned to an overseas area of responsibility of the Commander, United States Central Command.

These employees are paid under an annual limitation of \$200,000 during CY06. The lower limitation in section 5547 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) will not apply to them this year.

Section 1105 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 (Public Law 109-163), January 6, 2006, authorizes the Secretary of Defense to waive the CY06 annual premium pay limitation of 5 U.S.C. 5547 for eligible employees, up to \$200,000.



## My Biz and My Workplace Provide Self-Service Access to HR Information

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

The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy), Patricia S. Bradshaw, has announced the latest Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) innovation: *My Biz* and *My Workplace*. These modules within the DCPDS self-service HR application give employees secure, real-time, online access to personnel information from their workstations. Components launched the modules in June, with employees gaining access throughout 2006.

*My Biz* lets employees view and verify the accuracy of their own employment-

related information in the following categories:

- ◆ Appointment;
- ◆ Position;
- ◆ Personal (e.g., e-mail address);
- ◆ Salary;
- ◆ Benefits;
- ◆ Awards and bonuses; and
- ◆ Performance.

Employees may also use *My Biz* to update their work telephone number and e-mail address, disability codes, race and national origin information, and foreign language proficiency. Future system enhancements will provide additional functionality.

*My Workplace* brings key information about employees together in one place for managers and supervisors, streamlining their HR decision-making process and helping them to balance managerial tasks with day-to-day demands more easily. *My Workplace* keeps managers and supervisors informed about their employees' personnel actions. With quick and easy access to employees' personnel information, managers are better able to make budget decisions, staffing plans, and workload distributions.

*My Biz* and *My Workplace* have undergone rigorous testing with the help of vari-

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## Commemorating Constitution Day

Defense Leadership & Management Program [E-mail us](#)

A 2004 [statute](#) requires Federal agencies to educate employees on the Constitution as part of new employee orientation and annually on September 17<sup>th</sup>. This year Constitution Day and Citizenship Day will be observed on September 15<sup>th</sup>, since the 17<sup>th</sup> is a Sunday. In preparation, we will post new material monthly on the related DoD Web [site](#), including a series of informative essays and a sampling of best practices for commemorative events. We recommend highlighting the Web site in your publicity for events planned in your Component.

## Proud-to-Be III

### HR Management Competencies Are Confirmed for Use in Selection

Strategic Integration [E-mail us](#)

Early this year, Federal HR experts were surveyed in order to collect data necessary to confirm the HR management competencies appropriate for selection on a Government-wide basis for 0201 HR Specialist positions. CPMS strongly [supported](#) this and related efforts.

Survey results have been analyzed and OPM has now [confirmed](#) the HR management competencies for use in selection at grades GS-13 or equivalent and above. A subset of competencies was also confirmed for use at

each grade below GS-13 or equivalent. During the Proud-to-Be III cycle, agencies are using the competencies to establish targets and develop strategies for closing competency gaps in the HR Specialist workforce.

The Proud-to-Be initiative was created in FY03 to provide Federal agencies with metrics that must be reached in order to meet the President's Management Agenda (PMA) reform plan. A scorecard with red, yellow, and green ratings is used to track each agency's status in implementing the PMA. OPM is the lead agency for the PMA's Human Capital Management component,

one of five directives.

Since July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 is the third year of the initiative, it is called Proud-to-Be III. Like other lead agencies under the PMA, OPM uses Proud-to-Be III milestones to assess progress toward implementing the Human Capital Management objectives outlined in the PMA. Agencies are expected to achieve compliance by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The OPM Proud-to-Be III Human Capital requirements state that agencies will accomplish the following objectives:

- ◆ Hold supervisors, managers, and executives

accountable for managing employee performance;

- ◆ Close competency gaps for HR management and mission-critical occupations;
- ◆ Close competency gaps for information technology (IT) project management, IT security, and IT architecture;
- ◆ Improve applicant satisfaction with the hiring system;
- ◆ Implement OPM-approved accountability systems (all green agencies); and
- ◆ Use the leadership succession model to close competency gaps.



## CPMS Personnel-ity Profile “Triple Threat” Dean Boswell Has Been Investigator, Case Writer, Mediator

“My wife and I run a small ranch in the valley just southeast of Sacramento,” Office of Complaint Investigations (OCI) mediator Dean Boswell says. “We have a herd of between 30 and 50 registered Black Angus cows at any one time, and we raise bulls for commercial cattlemen. My wife’s help is invaluable, since I travel for work so much.

“As seed stock-producers,” Dean explains, “we buy the best genetic breeding material from all over the world.

That way, we have access to excellent breeding stock without having to care for the adult bulls, which can be temperamental animals.” Local youths hired through California state agricultural programs help the Boswells tend their livestock.

Dean enjoys ranch living: “You couldn’t blow me out of here with a stick of dynamite! We have four grown children and seven grandchildren—five boys and two girls who range in age from 15 to barely more than one month. They all love the ranch. The kids pet our goats and cats, and every chance they get, they ride our three horses—one Arabian, one quarter horse, and even a mustang from the Nevada mountains that we adopted through the Bureau of Land Management.”

A Missouri native, Dean began his career at Long Beach Naval Shipyard, CA, as a welder. “The war in Vietnam was going on hot and heavy in 1967, so we were working a lot of overtime. Then I got involved with the union, and the civilian personnel officer thought I had some potential in the human resources field.”

In 1969, Dean accepted a developmental position in labor and employee relations at the shipyard. His subsequent HR experience includes positions with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the Department

of the Army. “Each time I made a PCS [permanent change of station] move, it was at the same grade level, and after I demonstrated the requisite performance, I was promoted.

“In 1985 I went to work in Germany for the old USA-CARA—the U.S. Army Civilian Appellate Review Agency. That’s where I began to mediate and investigate discrimination complaints.” After returning to the continental United States to work for the Army Corps of Engineers and then for DLA, in 1998 Dean joined OCI.

“Of all the jobs I’ve held, this one is by far the best,” he says. “OCI gives you the flexibility to establish your own schedule and set your own pace of work. It’s all up to you; you have the chance to excel.

“I’ve been a full-scope investigator and written investigative reports, and now I’m a mediator. Many times, the complaint itself is a symptom of difficulties in working relationships. We in OCI do not go into mediation with any predetermined notions of who’s right or wrong. Instead, we try to help the parties focus on their relationship and get them working together,” Dean says.

One notable success occurred recently after a class action suit was decertified. With Dean’s assistance, the

parties settled 49 of the 50 individual complaints that had resulted from the decertification. “It’s so fulfilling as a mediator to handle workplace disputes, and when you are fortunate enough to settle a case, to see the parties get a fresh start and look ahead to their future.”

### CAREER BRIEF

HR EXPERIENCE. 1969-71: Labor/Employee Relations Specialist, GS-7/9, Long Beach Naval Shipyard, CA. 1971-2: Position Classification Specialist, GS-11, Defense Depot, Memphis, TN (DLA). 1972-3: Position Classification Specialist, GS-12, Battle Creek, MI (DLA). 1973-85: Labor Relations Specialist, Stockton, CA (DLA). 1985-8: HR Specialist, GS-13, Heidelberg, Germany (USA-CARA). 1988-90: Deputy Civilian Personnel Officer, Sacramento, CA (Army Corps of Engineers). 1990-8: Labor Relations Officer, Lathrop, CA (DLA). 1998-Date: Mediator and investigator with OCI, Sacramento, CA.

### Self-Service

(Continued from page 5)  
ous Component test users. The Navy conducted performance testing with 9,000 accounts; the Army, with 35,000; and the Air Force, with 13,000. This comprehensive testing provided valuable feedback about clarity and ease-of-use information that was integrated into the final release. From planning, to performance testing, to ongoing feedback and system enhancement, users were instrumental in shaping these innovative applications.

The CPMS Web site contains self-service [tutorials](#) on how to navigate through these modules. For more information about access to *My Biz* and *My Workplace*, visit your Component’s Web site or that of your servicing HR office.

### CPMS Employment

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

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