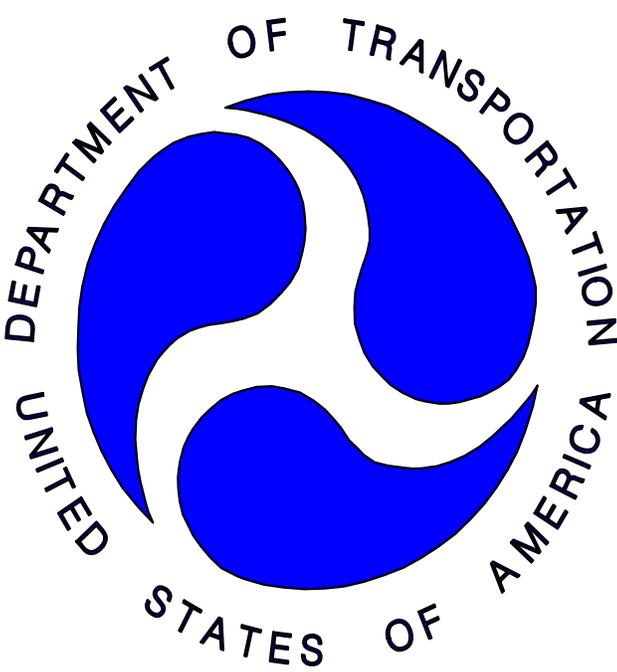




# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
AND  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## **Welcome to the U.S. Department of Transportation Office of the Secretary**

The Office of Human Resources is pleased to present you with this personal Employee Handbook. This Handbook answers many personnel and administrative questions. Of course, this Handbook cannot cover every eventuality that may arise, its purpose is to summarize or highlight current policies and practices. If you have questions or would like more information, your supervisor is your most immediate source. We hope that you will find the Handbook helpful in providing you with the tools you need for a smooth transition to the Department of Transportation (DOT). We also encourage you to feel free to contact our office for assistance and consultation as needed. In addition, you may visit our website at [http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/HR\\_Operations/hr\\_operations.html](http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/HR_Operations/hr_operations.html). Please feel free to share with us your questions and thoughts about this Handbook.

As your human resource provider, we are pleased to have a highly committed team of dedicated human resource professionals that enables us to offer outstanding services to you. Our commitment to you is to provide high quality, quick turnaround, and customized human resource services. Extraordinary customer service isn't just a slogan to us – it's the reason we exist.

Please feel free to call upon any member of the Human Resources office to assist you in any matter that concerns you. We look forward to working with you.

Once again, welcome!

Sincerely,

Deborah Mason  
Associate Director  
Human Resources Operations

# Employee Handbook Intro

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# Chapter I

## The Department of Transportation

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### History

The Department of Transportation was established by an act of Congress on October 15, 1966. The Department's first official day of operation was April 1, 1967. The Department brought under one umbrella air, maritime and surface transportation mission. The U.S. transportation system includes 3.9 million miles of public roads and 2 million miles of oil and natural gas pipelines. There are networks consisting of 120,000 miles of major railroads, more than 25,000 miles of commercially navigable waterways and more than 5,000 public-use airports. The transportation system also includes more than 500 major urban public transit operators and more than 300 ports on the coasts, Great Lakes and inland waterways.

### Organization

The Nation's transportation system is comprised of a vast and intricate network of highways, airways, railways, rivers and roads. Nothing is more essential to the well-being of the U.S. citizens and commerce than the efficient operations of this network that touches the lives of everyone. DOT employs almost 60,000 people across the country, in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) and through ten operating administrations, each with its own management and organizational structure:

- ◆ Office of the Secretary
- ◆ Office of the Inspector General
- ◆ Federal Aviation Administration
- ◆ Federal Highway Administration
- ◆ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- ◆ Federal Railroad Administration
- ◆ Federal Transit Administration
- ◆ Maritime Administration
- ◆ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- ◆ St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
- ◆ Surface Transportation Board
- ◆ Research and Innovative Technologies Administration
- ◆ Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Leadership of the DOT is provided by the Secretary of Transportation who is the principal adviser to the President in all matters relating to Federal transportation programs. The Secretary is assisted by the Deputy Secretary in this role. An organization chart of the Department and frequently used office symbols are at the end of this chapter.

## **DOT STRATEGIC PLAN – FISCAL YEARS 2003-2008**

### **Vision**

“Safer, Simpler, Smarter Transportation Solutions”

### **Mission**

To develop and administer policies and programs that contribute to providing fast, safe, efficient, and convenient transportation at the lowest cost consistent with the national objectives of general welfare, economic growth and stability, the security of the United States and the efficient use and conservation of the resources of the United States

### **Strategic Objectives**

#### **Safety**

Enhance public health and safety by working toward the elimination of transportation related deaths and injuries

#### **Mobility**

Advance accessible, efficient, intermodal transportation for the movement of people and goods.

#### **Global Connectivity**

Facilitate a more efficient domestic and global transportation system that enables economic growth and development

#### **Environmental Stewardship**

Promote transportation solutions that enhance communities and protect the natural and built environment.

#### **Security**

Balance homeland and national security transportation requirements with the mobility needs of the Nation for personal travel and commerce.

#### **Organizational Excellence**

Advance the Department’s ability to manage for results and achieve the goals of the Presidents’ Management Agenda.

## **Our Employees at Work**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) occupies a leadership role in the global transportation network. The people of DOT are approximately 59,700 strong, dedicated to improving transportation in the U.S. and around the world by making it safer, simpler and smarter. Safer - because we will place a greater emphasis than ever before on saving lives and reducing accidents. Simpler - because we will consolidate and streamline our programs. And smarter - because we will focus on efficiency, achieving results and increasing accountability.

## **Values Statement**

### ***Professionalism***

*As accountable public servants, we exemplify the highest standards of excellence, integrity, courtesy and respect in the work environment.*

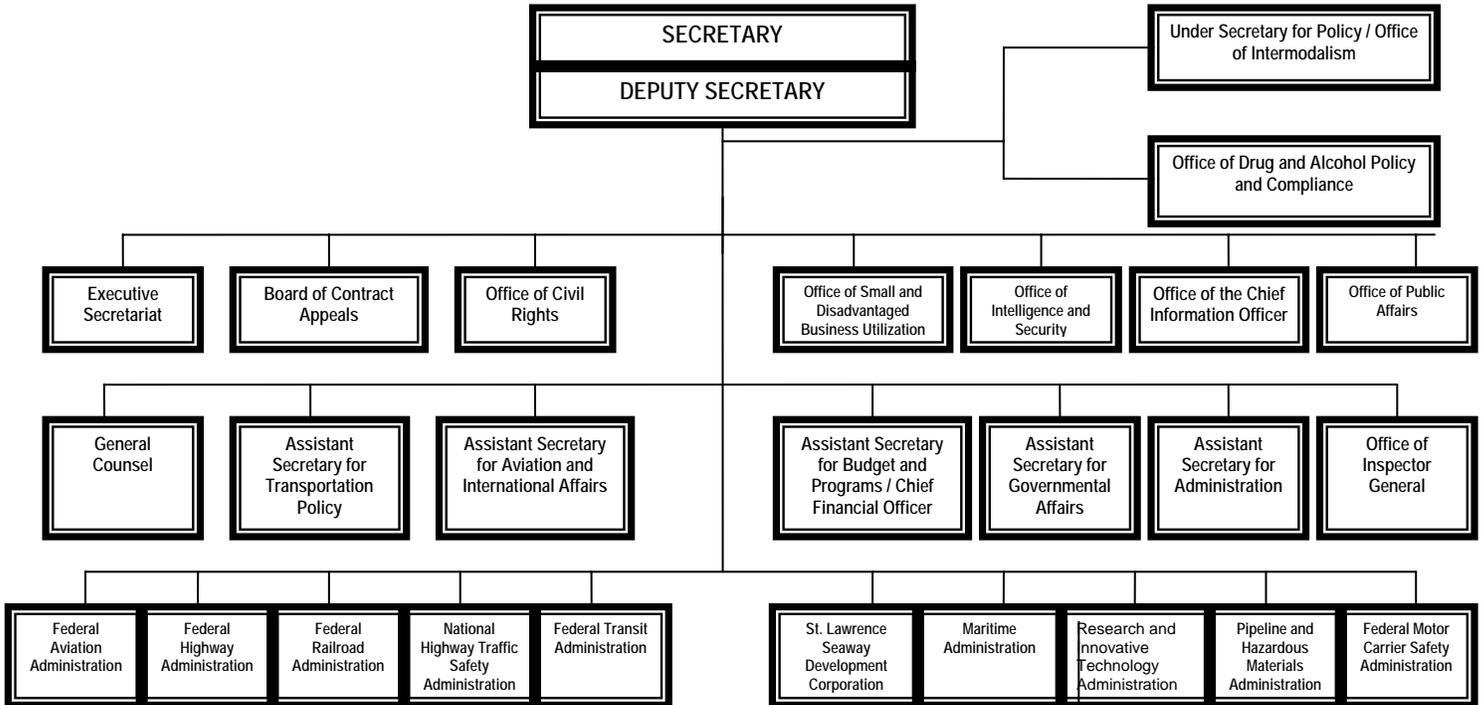
### ***Teamwork***

*We support each other, respect differences in people and ideas, and work together in ONE DOT fashion.*

### ***Customer Focus***

*We strive to understand and meet the needs of our customers through service, innovation and creativity. We are dedicated to delivering results that matter to the American people.*

# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



**OFFICE ROUTING SYMBOLS FOR  
THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
AND  
THE RESEARCH INNOVATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION**

S-1	Immediate Office of the Secretary
S-2	Office of the Deputy Secretary
S-3	Office of Intermodalism
S-10	Executive Secretariat
S-20	Board of Contract Appeals
S-30	Departmental Office of Civil Rights
S-40	Office of Small & Disadvantage Business Utilization
S-60	Office of Intelligence & Security
S-80	Office of the Chief Information Officer
M-1	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration
M-2 & M-3	Deputy, Assistant Secretary for Administration
M-10	Departmental Office of Human Resource Management
M-20	Office of Hearings
M-30	Information Services
M-40	Office of Security
M-50	Transportation & Facilities
M-60	Office of the Senior Procurement Executive
M-70	Financial Management
M-90	New Headquarters Project
A	Office of Public Affairs
B	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Budget & Programs
C	Office of the General Counsel
I	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Governmental Affairs
P	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Aviation & International Affairs
X	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy
RTA	Office of the Administrator
RTC	Office of Chief Counsel
RTG	Office of Governmental, International and Public Affairs
RTAD	Office of Administration/CFO/CIO
RDT	Office of Research, Development and Technology
RTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics

## Chapter II

# COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND LEAVE

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### Types of Appointments

The majority of appointments made by OST are:

- ◆ Competitive Service Appointments
- ◆ Excepted Service Appointments
- ◆ Senior Executive Service Appointments
- ◆ Political Appointments

Competitive Appointments are appointments based on selection from a competitive examination register of eligibles or under direct hire authority under civil service rules and regulations. The majority of Federal positions are in the competitive service. Appointment types are Career-conditional, Career, Term and Temporary.

Excepted Appointments include positions in the Federal civil service not subject to the appointment requirements of the competitive service. Law, executive order, or regulations authorize exceptions to normal, competitive requirements. The Excepted Service includes attorneys, students on work-study programs, certain appointment authorities for veterans, individuals with disabilities, Presidential Management Fellowships, Presidential Appointees and Schedule C employees.

The Senior Executive Service (SES) was established as a unique executive personnel system that is separate from the competitive and excepted service. The SES includes most managerial, supervisory, and policy positions classified above General Schedule (GS) grade 15 or equivalent positions in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. Members of the SES serve in the key positions just below the top Presidential appointees. SES members are the major link between these appointees and the rest of the Federal work force. They operate and oversee nearly every government activity in approximately 75 Federal agencies.

**Tenure Groups within the Federal Government** - A Federal employee's tenure indicates the time an employee may reasonably expect to serve under a current appointment. The type of appointment, without regard to whether the employee has competitive status, governs tenure.

## Probationary Period

If you are a new employee on a career-conditional appointment, you must serve a one-year probationary period. The exceptions to this are new employees who are appointed under the excepted service. Employees in the excepted service may be subject to a one or two year trial period depending on the legal authority under which the new employee is appointed. The trial period is the last and most important step in the hiring process. It is intended to give the Agency an opportunity for on-the-job assessment of your overall fitness and qualifications for continual employment and to permit the removal of an employee whose performance or conduct does not meet acceptable standards. If your performance or conduct is deficient during the probationary period, you may be removed from Federal service.

## Pay Systems

There are several pay systems within the Federal government. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) develops and maintains government-wide regulations and policies governing pay administration, including basic pay setting, locality pay, special salary rates, back pay, pay limitations, premium pay, grade and pay retention, severance pay, recruitment and relocation bonuses, retention allowances, and cost of living allowances (COLA). However, each Federal agency is responsible for administering these pay policies and programs for its employees. Below, is a brief description of some of the more common pay systems found within DOT:

**Executive Schedule (EX)** - Five levels of pay to which top executives are assigned (e.g., members of the President's Cabinet, deputy secretaries, under secretaries, etc.)

**Senior Executive Service (SES)** - Includes most managerial, supervisory, and policy positions classified above the General Schedule GS-15 or equivalent positions in the Executive Branch of the Federal government. The agency head determines the level of pay for each SES position based on qualifications, performance, responsibilities of the position, and private sector pay.

**General Schedule (GS)** - Based on equal pay for substantially equal work within each local pay area. The majority of the Department's Civil Service employees are compensated under the General Schedule. There are fifteen grades and ten steps within each grade that determine pay. On an initial appointment into the Civil Service, pay is usually set at step one of the grade of the position for which the employee is selected, although it may be set higher based on superior qualifications, or a special need of the agency when certain requirements are met.

**Wage Grade (WG)** - Wage Grade is referred to as “blue collar” or “prevailing rate” and is based on the prevailing rates in a given local wage area. This system covers trade, craft, labor, and other blue-collar jobs. Each wage area pay scale is divided into three classes: WG (worker), WL (leader), and WS (supervisor).

**Pay Bands** - A pay band defines the range of potential pay for a position. The pay band has a minimum rate of pay and a maximum rate of pay. Locality pay is not included in the rate of pay used for pay bands. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is currently under a Core Compensation Plan (Pay Banding System).

Each Pay Band has:

- ◆ Minimum: The lowest base pay rate for a position within that band.
- ◆ Midpoint: The median of the pay band. The midpoint of each pay band is computed using market survey data to ensure competitiveness.
- ◆ Maximum: The highest base pay rate for a position within that band.

The FAA has established a website about the Core Compensation Plan. For the latest information and tools, you should access the Core Compensation website at <http://www.faa.gov/corecomp>.

## Adjustments to Pay

**Locality Pay Area** - Employees working in certain areas (e.g., Washington, D.C. metropolitan area) designated by the President under title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 5304(d)(1) may receive an adjustment in pay to reduce pay disparities with non-Federal workers within each locality. For information on locality pay areas and rates, see Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 531, Subpart F.

**Overtime and Compensatory Time** - Employees identified as “nonexempt” are eligible to receive overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Agencies must compensate these employees for work in excess of 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in an administrative work week, that was officially ordered or that was suffered and permitted – this means that management knew the work was being performed and took no steps to prevent it. Non-exempt employees may request to receive compensatory time in lieu of overtime payment. Employees who are identified, as “exempt” are not covered by the FLSA but can receive overtime pay under Title 5 of the U.S.C. if it is ordered and approved in advance. In certain instances, exempt employees may be required to receive compensatory time off rather than overtime pay. Again, the supervisor or authorizing official must approve all overtime and compensatory time off before it is worked.

**Pay Adjustments** - Each year the President determines whether to authorize an adjustment in the basic pay of certain categories of Federal employees. This adjustment is usually made annually and is usually implemented at the beginning of the first full pay period of January.

**Special Salary Rates** - These rates are higher rates of basic pay that are established for a group or category of General Schedule (GS) positions in one or more geographic areas. Special rates are established to address existing or likely significant handicaps in recruiting or retaining well-qualified employees. These rates may be established for nearly any category of employee based on criteria such as occupational series, specialty, grade level, and geographic area.

**Within-Grade Increase (WIGI)** - Within-grade increases are increases to the next pay step on the pay schedule without change in duties, title, or grade. General Schedule (GS) employees (non-temporary) who are serving at "an acceptable level of competence" are eligible for a within-grade increase after serving the following waiting periods without an equivalent increase in compensation. Your supervisor will determine whether your work is of an "acceptable level of competence." The following are the waiting periods and the affects on waiting periods for General Schedule and Federal Wage System employees (full-time employees).

Waiting Period for General Schedule (GS)	Waiting Period for Federal Wage System (WG/WS)
For advancement to steps 2, 3, and 4 - 52 calendar weeks	For advancement to step 2 - 26 calendar weeks in step 1
For advancement to steps 5, 6, and 7 - 104 calendar weeks	For advancement to step 3 - 78 calendar weeks in step 2 -
For advancement to steps 8, 9, and 10 - 156 calendar weeks	For advancement to steps 4 and 5 - 104 calendar weeks in steps 3 and 4, respectively

## General Pay Information

**Basic Workweek in the Federal Government** - A basic workweek for a full-time employee is defined as a 40-hour non-overtime work schedule within an administrative workweek. In most cases, the basic workweek consists of five 8 hour days, plus a lunch period, Monday through Friday. The basic workweek for an employee on an Alternative Work Schedules may vary. Alternative Work Schedules such as a compressed workweek and maxi-flex are at the discretion of the employee’s assigned organization.

**Pay Day** – Employees are paid in bi-weekly intervals. The first pay is normally received approximately three weeks after starting work. On payday employees receive a “Statement of Earnings and Leave” at their home address that itemizes their pay and

specific deductions. Generally, an employees pay consists of an hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours worked during the biweekly pay period, reduced by deductions for withholdings.

**Direct Deposit** - Federal employees are required to have their pay directly deposited or transferred into a bank or financial institution account of their choice. Funds transferred in this manner are deposited to your account on payday. To establish a Direct Deposit, employees must submit a Direct Deposit Form to their HR Office. This form should be submitted within the first week of your entrance on duty. Failure to submit this form in a timely manner may delay receipt of your pay.

**Pay Deductions** - Below is a list of some of the standard deductions from permanent employees' biweekly paycheck. Taxes are withheld for Federal and state income tax based on the number of allowances (dependents) you claim on your Federal Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Exemption Certificate and on your state Withholding Employee Exemption Certificate.

- ◆ Social Security (See benefits section)
- ◆ Medicare (See benefits section)
- ◆ Health Insurance (FEHB) – only if you elected to enroll
- ◆ Basic Life Insurance (FEGLI – automatically deducted until employee cancels
- ◆ Retirement contributions – Either the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)
- ◆ Federal and State income tax

**Miscellaneous Pay Deductions** - In addition to the above, you may authorize the Payroll Office to make deductions for U.S. Savings Bonds, to financial institutions, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Federal Credit Unions and for charitable contributions under the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

## **Leave and Earnings Statement**

You will receive a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) for each pay period. You should review your LES to ensure leave earned and used is properly reflected, and report any discrepancies to your supervisor. You should also ensure that proper deductions are being made for health and life insurance, charitable donations, union dues, and/or savings allotments. Your LES will be mailed to the address that is on your W-2. You may also review your LES through Employee Express which is a Federal-wide automated system that puts employees in control of processing their own discretionary personnel and payroll actions.

## Leave and Absences

It is the Department's policy to be fair and consistent in its application of the laws regarding the administration of leave. Employees are expected, in return, to consider the interests of the Department in requesting leave and to avoid any abuse of leave privileges. The accrual of leave is an employee benefit. The use of leave is subject to the specific requirements contained in applicable laws, regulations, agency policies, and applicable negotiated agreements. Both the needs of the employee and the need to accomplish the work of the Department will be considered in arriving at decisions to approve or disapprove leave requests. The abuse of leave rights and privileges may lead to disciplinary action. For the complete leave policy of the Department, see the DOT Absence and Leave Handbook at <http://www.ost.dot.gov/HR>.

**Earning Leave** - Annual leave is provided by law and accrues automatically to permanent employees and temporary employees who are serving under appointments that exceed 90 days. Four (4) hours of sick leave is earned per pay period. Annual leave is earned based on the employee's length of service. Part-time employees with a regular tour of duty earn leave on a pro-rated basis. Temporary employees with a regular tour of duty (i.e., full-time or part-time) earn leave on the same basis as non-temporary employees. Intermittent employees (with no regular tour of duty) do not earn leave. See 5 United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapter 63 (Section 6307-6312) and Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 630.

Members of the Senior Executive Service (SES), employees in senior level (SL) and scientific or professional (ST) positions accrue annual leave at the rate of 1 day (8 hours) for each full biweekly pay period.

### ANNUAL LEAVE ACCRUAL RATE

Employee Type	<i>Less than 3 years of service*</i>	<i>3 years but less than 15 years of service*</i>	<i>15 or more years of service*</i>
Full-time employees	½ day (4 hours) for each pay period	¾ day (6 hours) for each pay period, except 1¼ day (10 hours) in last pay period	1 day (8 hours) for each pay period
Part-time employees**	1 hour of annual leave for each 20 hours in a pay status	1 hour of annual leave for each 13 hours in a pay status	1 hour of annual leave for each 10 hours in a pay status
Uncommon tours of duty**	(4 hours) <b>times</b> (average # of hours per biweekly pay period) <b>divided by</b> 80 = biweekly accrual rate.***	(6 hours) <b>times</b> (average # of hours per biweekly pay period) <b>divided by</b> 80 = biweekly accrual rate.***	(8 hours) <b>times</b> (average # of hours per biweekly pay period) <b>divided by</b> 80 = biweekly accrual rate.***

\*\* Leave is prorated for part-time employees and employees on uncommon tours of duty.

\*\*\* In computing leave accrual for uncommon tours of duty, the accrual rate for the last full pay period in a calendar year must be adjusted to ensure the correct amount of leave is accrued.

## SICK LEAVE ACCRUAL RATE

Full Time Employee	Part-time Employees
4 hours for each biweekly pay period	1 hour for each 20 hours in a pay status

*Note: There are no time limits on the amount of sick leave accumulated by an employee.*

**Approval of Leave** - If you wish to take leave, you are required to request leave from your supervisor in advance. If you are unable to report for duty, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible at the beginning of the workday. Your request for leave should include the day(s), what type of leave, the number of hours, and the specific hours (from-to) that you are requesting. To request leave, an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Form OPM-71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence should be completed and signed in advance of taking the leave by both the employee and the supervisor.

The following offers a brief overview of some of the leave categories available to Department of Transportation, OST employees. Additional information on leave programs may be found in The Department of Transportation Absence and Leave Handbook, and Title 5, Part 630 of the CFR.

### **Paid Leave**

**Annual Leave** - Annual Leave is for an employee's personal use. However, it must be requested by the employee and approved in advance by the supervisor using form OPM-71. Employees accrue annual leave based on their length of Federal service. In certain instances, prior service may be creditable toward annual leave accrual.

The maximum amount of annual leave that most employees may accrue is 240 hours a year. Annual leave in excess of 240 hours is forfeited at the end of the leave year unless it is used, or donated to another Federal employee under provisions of the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program.

Employees who work abroad may accumulate a maximum of 45 days of annual leave and employees with special tours of duty may be allowed to accumulate a higher amount of annual leave. If an employee transfers from an agency that allows him/her to maintain an annual leave balance higher than 240-hours, the employee retains the higher balance as his/her personal leave upon transferring to the Department. The employee's leave balance will be reviewed each year to determine the leave ceiling for the next year. This will continue until the employee separates, or the leave balance falls to 240 hours.

It is understandable that sometimes, due to emergencies, you may be unable to request annual leave in advance. If this happens, you are expected to inform your

supervisor as soon as possible, normally within the first two hours of the duty day. You must advise your supervisor of the nature of the emergency and indicate the expected length of absence. (please check with your supervisor for specific leave requesting procedures). Annual leave taken for emergencies is also subject to supervisory approval.

**Sick Leave** - Sick leave should generally be approved in advance by the supervisor using the OPM-71 form or any other authorized format. Employees earn sick leave at a rate of four hours per pay period or 13 days per year. There is no maximum limit on sick leave accumulation and carryover. Sick leave may be used under the following conditions:

- ◆ **Personal Medical Needs** – An employee may use sick leave when he or she:
  - Is incapacitated for the performance of duty because of sickness, injury, pregnancy, childbirth and/or confinement;
  - Receives medical, dental and optical examination or treatment; or
  - Would jeopardize the health of others because of exposure to a communicable disease
  
- ◆ **Care of a Family Member** – Most full-time Federal employees may use a total of up to 104 hours (13 workdays) each leave year to:
  - Provide care for a family member who is incapacitated as a result of sickness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth;
  - Provide care for a family member as a result of medical, dental and optical examination or treatment;
  - Make arrangement necessitated by the death of a family member or to attend the funeral of a family member
  
- ◆ **Care of a Family Member with a Serious Health Condition** – Most full-time employees can use up to 12 workweeks (480 hours) of sick leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Examples of serious health conditions include cancer, heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, pregnancy and childbirth
  
- ◆ **Adoption Related Purposes** – Examples of adoption related purposes include:
  - Appointments with adoption agencies, social worker, and attorneys;
  - Court proceedings
  - Required travel; and
  - Court-ordered time off from work to care for the child

*Regulations governing the use of sick leave are complex. We encourage you to consult your Human Resources Office (HRO) if you have questions.*

**Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** -The FMLA entitles employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave without pay in a 12-month period for four purposes: (1) the birth of a child of an employee; (2) the placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care; (3) the care of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee if the family member has a serious health condition; or (4) a serious health condition of the employee that makes him/her unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of his/her position. Applicable leave may be substituted for leave without pay at the employee's option. An employee must provide notice of his or her intent to take family and medical leave not less than 30 days before leave is to begin or, in emergencies, as soon as practicable. Appropriate documentation of the serious health condition, adoption, or foster care requirement is also required.

**Military Leave** - A full-time Federal civilian employee whose appointment is not limited to one year is entitled to military leave up to 120 hours (equal to 15 8-hour days) in a fiscal year (Oct-Sept) to perform active duty, active duty training, or inactive duty training as a member of a Reserve component or the National Guard. Part-time employees are entitled to military leave pro-rated according to the tour of duty (e.g., part-time employee who works 40 hours a pay period 60 hours of military leave).

An additional 22 days of military leave per calendar year may be used by employees called to emergency duty as ordered by the President, Secretary of Defense, or a State Governor. This leave is provided for employees who perform military duties in support of civil authorities in the protection of life and property or who perform full-time military service as a result of a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation as defined in section 101(a) (13) of title 10, U.S.C.

**Holiday Leave** - If you are on a compressed work schedule (5/4-9 or 4/10), you are entitled to pay for the number of hours (8, 9, or 10) you would have normally worked on any day that the Department or Federal government is closed for a legal public holiday. *For example, you work a 5/4-9 schedule and a holiday falls on a Monday. If you normally work nine (9) hours on that day, you are entitled to nine hours of pay for that holiday*

If you are full-time employee on a flexible work schedule such as maxi-flex or other non-compressed work schedule, including a traditional 8-hour workday, you are entitled to maximum of 8 hours pay for any day on which the Department or Federal government is closed for a legal public holiday. You are responsible for scheduling yourself the remaining number of hours of work in a pay period in which a holiday occurs to fulfill your regular work schedule. *For example, if you normally work 80 hours in a pay period you must schedule yourself for 72 hours of work when there is a holiday.*

If your regular day off (RDO or AWS day) falls on a holiday, you are entitled to an in lieu of holiday or your supervisor may approve a change in days. *For example, an employee with a Monday RDO would normally take the following Tuesday as the in lieu of holiday.*

If a holiday occurs on a day within a part-time employee's scheduled tour of duty (including those days on which flexible hours are scheduled) the employee is entitled to basic pay for the number of hours which the employee is scheduled to work for that day. If a part-time employee does not have a typical schedule, the employee may be paid the average of the number of hours worked in prior weeks on days corresponding to the holiday.

**Other Paid Leave or Absences** – Employees may be granted excused absence (also referred to as administrative leave) from duty. This type of absence is not charged to an employee's personal leave. Excused Absence may be granted due to inclement weather, emergency dismissals, other emergency situations, voting related purposes or other events that generally impact a large number of employees.

**Court Leave** - Court leave is the authorized absence, without charge to leave or loss of pay, of an employee from official duty for jury duty or when summoned to appear as a witness in a nonofficial capacity or as a juror in a judicial proceeding in which the US, the District of Columbia, or a state or local government is a party. The term "judicial proceeding" contemplates any action, suit, or other proceeding of a judicial nature (including any condemnation, preliminary, informational, or other proceeding), but does not include an administrative proceeding. When employees are called for court services, either as witnesses or as jurors, they must present the court order, subpoena, or summons, if one was issued, as far in advance as possible. Upon return to duty, written evidence of attendance at court is required showing the dates (and hours if possible) of the service. The supervisor will maintain such statement. Court leave will be granted to both permanent and temporary employees on a full-time or part-time work schedule; however, part-time employees are entitled to court leave only for those hours that correspond to their scheduled duty hours.

Employees on a substitute, when-actually-employed or intermittent work schedule are not entitled to court leave. Employees on LWOP will not be granted court leave since court leave is available only to employees who would otherwise be on duty or on leave with pay.

*Note: If you are called as a witness in a judicial proceeding involving only private parties, you must take annual leave or leave without pay for the time you need to be absent.*

**Accommodation of Religious Exercise** - Federal law requires agencies to accommodate employees' exercise of their religion unless such accommodation would impose undue hardship on operations of the Department or operating administration. You may request and be granted accrued or advance annual leave (if other requirements on the advancement of leave are met) to accommodate an absence for a religious observance. Other options include alternative work schedules used within your operating administration or compensatory time off for religious observances as covered in 5 CFR 550.1002.

**Voluntary Leave Transfer Program** -The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program allows employees to donate accrued annual leave to other employees who are experiencing a personal medical emergency or are required to provide care for a family member with a medical emergency. Certification of the medical emergency is required from a physician or other appropriate medical expert to document the nature and duration of the emergency. To be eligible to receive leave under the Leave Transfer Program, the employee must have used all available leave and be anticipated to be in an unpaid status for at least 24 hours. If the medical emergency is one that affects the employee, available leave would be all accrued sick and annual leave. If the medical emergency is one which affects an employee's family member, available leave would be all accrued annual leave as well as sick leave allowed for the care of a family member as provided in 5 CFR, Part 630.405.

## Unpaid Leave or Absences

**Leave Without Pay (LWOP)** - LWOP is an approved absence from duty for which the employee is placed in a non-pay status. LWOP may be granted upon the employee's request for any reasonable purpose. LWOP is temporary, and must be approved in advance by your supervisor. LWOP in excess of 30 calendar days may be granted for specific reasons and for definite periods of time and must be documented with an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.

**Absence Without Official Leave (AWOL)** - When an employee is absent from duty without advance authorization or other excused absence, the absence will be charged as AWOL by the supervisor. Pay will be forfeited for the entire period of such absence. If the employee can offer a satisfactory explanation, the approving official may alter the charge to annual or sick leave or leave without pay as appropriate. However, if the employee is unable to justify the absence, the charge of AWOL will remain. If circumstances warrant, disciplinary action may be taken.

## Benefits

The Federal government provides an array of benefits, financial incentives, and family-friendly programs to its employees. Below are some of the benefits that are offered.

**Health Insurance** - The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program allows eligible employees the opportunity to enroll in a group health insurance plan, regardless of age or medical condition. Nationally about 200 health plan options are offered to Federal employees. The government pays a significant part of the cost of the health benefits and the employee's cost is deducted biweekly from his/her pay. New employees have 60 days from the date of appointment to enroll in a participating FEHB plan. To enroll, employees must complete and submit an Employee Health Benefits Election Form, SF-2809, to their HRO. Failure to enroll within the 60 day period will result in no coverage. The employee must wait until the next opportunity to enroll, which is generally, during the annual open season held from mid November through mid December or when a qualifying life event occurs (e.g., marriage, birth of a child).

**Premium Conversion** - Premium conversion is a tax benefit that allows you to pay your health benefits on a pre-tax basis, which means that the money is not subject to Federal income tax, Medicare, or Social Security taxes. The allotment reduces your taxable income, so less tax is withheld, and your paycheck will be larger. Participation in premium conversion is automatic. You can choose not to participate by filing a waiver with your HRO. To determine the amount of money you will save yearly and for answers to additional questions that you may have, please visit the OPM website at [www.opm.gov/insure/pretaxfehb](http://www.opm.gov/insure/pretaxfehb).

**Life Insurance** -The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program provides term insurance and builds no cash value. FEGLI consists of basic life insurance coverage and three options which are: Option A Standard, Option B Additional, and Option C Family. All new employees are automatically covered under basic, unless waived. Employees must have the basic insurance in order to elect any of the optional coverage. Employees who wish to elect coverage under one of the three options have 31 days from the date of the appointment to do so. To waive basic life coverage or to elect additional coverage, complete an SF-2817 Life Insurance Election form.

Employees are also encouraged to designate beneficiaries to receive life insurance proceeds and to assure that benefits will be paid as desired. If beneficiaries are not designated, proceeds will be paid in accordance with the legal order of precedence of the state in which the employee resides at time of death.

Unlike health insurance, FEGLI does not have an annual open enrollment. Therefore, if you fail to enroll during the eligibility period, you must meet certain requirements and satisfy evidence of insurability in order to enroll. For more information visit OPM's website at [www.opm.gov/insure/life](http://www.opm.gov/insure/life).

**Federal Long Term Care Insurance** - The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) is an important addition to the package of benefits available to Federal employees and retirees. The employee, however, pays the full cost for this insurance. Long-term care insurance, under the Federal program, provides you reimbursement for costs of care when you are unable to perform at least two activities of daily living, (e.g., eating, bathing, dressing) for an expected period of at least 90 days or when you need constant supervision due to a severe cognitive impairment. If you are eligible to enroll in the health benefits program, you are eligible to enroll in the long term care program. As a new employee, you can use the abbreviated underwriting application (fewer health-related questions) if you enroll within 60 days of your entry on duty. Additional information, questions and answers and other helpful information are available on OPM's website [www.opm.gov/insure/ltc](http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc).

**Flexible Spending Accounts** - The flexible spending account (FSA) program allows you to set funds aside before taxes to pay for a wide range of health and dependent care expenses. Employees who are eligible to enroll in the health benefits program can take advantage of the FSA program. There are two types of FSAs available:

- ◆ The Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA) can be used to pay for health care expenses not covered by FEHB or any other insurance. An HCFSA covers eligible health care expenses (including over-the-counter medications) for you, your spouse, and your dependents.
- ◆ The Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) can be used to apply for dependent care expenses that allow you – and your spouse, if you're married to work, look for work, or attend school full-time. A DCFSA covers eligible expenses for care of:
  - Dependent children under age 13; and/or
  - A person of any age whom you claim as a dependent on your Federal income tax return, and who is mentally or physically incapable of caring for himself or herself.

New employees can sign up for FSAs for the current year within 60 days from their entry on duty. You also have an opportunity to enroll each year during open season. For more information and to sign up for an FSA, go to [www.FSAFEDS.com](http://www.FSAFEDS.com).

**One word of caution:** The amount you choose to contribute to an FSA cannot be changed during the year. Any money in your FSA that is not used at the end of each calendar year will be forfeited.

**Retirement** -There are three retirement plans for Civil Service employees. Generally, the type of appointment determines whether an employee is covered by a retirement plan. Employees hired before December 31, 1983 are generally covered under the Civil Service Retirement Plan System (CSRS). Those hired after January 1, 1984 are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Employees who had a break in service that exceeded one year, ended after 1983, and have five years of creditable civilian service on January 1, 1987 may be covered under the CSRS Offset system. It is important to fully understand your retirement system so that you can take the steps necessary to ensure a comfortable retirement. To learn more about retirement go to [www.opm.gov/retire/html/library](http://www.opm.gov/retire/html/library) or make an appointment to meet with your benefits counselor in your HRO.

**Social Security** - Employees under the FERS and CSRS Offset are covered by Social Security. Social Security benefits are provided to workers and their qualified dependents under the Old-Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASD) programs of the Social Security Act. It replaces a portion of earnings lost as a result of retirement, disability, or death.

Employees are also covered under Social Security's Medicare Hospital Insurance program, which pays a portion of hospital expenses incurred while you are receiving Social Security disability benefits or retirement benefits at age 65 or older. For more information on Social Security benefits and Medicare, visit the Social Security Administration website at <http://www.ssa.gov>.

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)** -The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees and contributions are tax deferred. The purpose of the TSP is to provide supplemental retirement income. TSP offers Federal employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under the 401(k) plans. By participating in the Thrift Savings Plan an employee has the opportunity to save part of his/her earnings before they are taxed. Contributions are made to your account through payroll deductions.

Employees covered by FERS or CSRS can enhance retirement income by participating in TSP. However, there are different rules for each group. FERS employees can contribute a percentage of their basic pay each pay period and receive matching agency contributions. CSRS employees can also contribute a specific percentage of their basic pay each pay period but do not receive matching agency contributions. Starting in 2006, employees will be free to contribute any amount up to the IRS deferred compensation limit.

The TSP is an integral part of the FERS retirement system; therefore, it is essential that employees covered by FERS begin their contributions as soon as possible.

**There are five TSP funds to choose from**

- ◆ Government Securities Investment (G) Fund
- ◆ Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund
- ◆ Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund
- ◆ Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund
- ◆ Internal Stock Index Investment (I) Fund

In addition, TSP offers the Life Cycle (L) Fund – professionally managed funds that combine the five existing TSP funds into various asset allocations. Allocations will be tailored to different groups of participants according to their time horizons. As the target time horizon approaches, the investment mix becomes more conservative. That means you won't need to periodically reallocate the account; the lifecycle fund will do that for you. For more information on TSP, visit the Thrift Savings Plan website at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)

**Workers' Compensation Program** -The Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA) is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) of the US Department of Labor. It provides compensation benefits to civilian employees for disabilities due to personal injury sustained while in the performance of duty or to an employment-related disease. The Act also provides for the payment of benefits to dependents if the injury or disease causes the employee's death. Benefits cannot be paid if the injury or death is caused by the willful misconduct of the employee, the employee intends to bring about their injury or death or that of another employee, or if intoxication is the proximate cause of the injury or death.

If you are injured on duty, you must immediately notify your supervisor. Your supervisor will provide you with a CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation, CA-2, Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation, and/or CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment, as appropriate, and the employee checklist. You have up to three (3) years to submit a claim. For traumatic injuries, you or someone acting on your behalf must complete a Form CA-1; for a disability resulting from an occupational disease, you complete a Form CA-2. All forms go to your supervisor.

If you are disabled due to a traumatic injury, you may use leave or request continuation of pay for up to 45 days if needed. However, your CA-1 must be submitted to your supervisor within 30 days of the injury. Any absence after 45 days must be claimed on Form CA-7, Claim for Compensation On Account of Traumatic Injury or Occupational Disease. If you are disabled due to occupational disease, you may use leave or claim compensation on Form CA-7.

For more information about workers compensation, visit the OST HR website at <http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/> or OWCP website at <http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/owcp/fecacont.htm>.

**Death Benefits** - In the event of the death of a current employee or covered family member, the survivor should immediately contact the Human Resources Office for assistance. If the deceased employee elected Basic Life Insurance, it is payable in the amount of the gross annual salary at the time of death round up to the nearest \$1,000 plus \$2,000. Any additional optional insurance that had been elected is also payable. Any unpaid salary or lump sum annual leave is also payable to the survivor(s). If there is no beneficiary form on file, these payments are made according to the legal order of precedence. Be sure to keep your beneficiary forms up-to-date so that your benefits are paid to the person(s) you want.

The surviving spouse of an employee covered by CSRS or FERS retirement is generally eligible for a monthly annuity based on the employee's retirement eligibility. Dependent children under 18 (or under 22 and a full-time student) may also receive survivor annuities. If there are no survivors who qualify for a survivor annuity (spouse or child), a lump-sum payment may be payable to the survivor(s). Survivors are eligible to receive the TSP account of a deceased employee after the employing agency notifies the TSP Service Office of the death. TSP funds will be dispersed to the person(s) named on your beneficiary form or, if none, according to the legal order of precedence.

In most cases, the spouse is eligible to continue any health benefits enrollment under the Federal Employees Health Benefits program.

Survivors *may be* eligible for a one-time benefit of up to \$10,000 if the deceased employee's death was a result of an on-the-job injury or disease. To receive this benefit, an approved Workers' Compensation claim for the injury or disease that resulted in the employee's death must be on file at the US Department of Labor. Survivors of employees who are fatally injury while on duty should complete a CA-1 to begin the claims process.

## Chapter III WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

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### Hours of Work

Full-time employees normally work a regular tour of duty of 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week, Monday through Friday. Unless you are on an irregular tour of duty or on an alternative work schedule as discussed below, you will work a set schedule each day (as agreed to by your supervisor) with a 30 minute allowance for lunch. If you are a part-time employee, your tour of duty is not less than 16 hours and no more than 32 hours per week. Your work schedule is established prior to the time you are appointed or converted from full-time to part-time.

All employees are expected to be at their work sites, ready to work, by their scheduled times. Employees who arrive late can be granted leave. Tardiness, or other failures to adhere to established work hours, may form the basis for disciplinary actions. The following business hours are in effect for the respective organizational components of the Department:

Organization	Hours of Duty
Federal Aviation Administration	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Federal Highway Administration	7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Federal Railroad Administration	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Federal Transit Administration	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Maritime Administration	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Office of the Inspector General	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Office of the Secretary	9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Research and Innovative Materials Safety Administration	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## **Alternative Work Schedules (AWS)**

As part of the Department's effort to offer a family-friendly work environment, we offer our employees the opportunity to choose from a variety of alternative work schedules. Each manager has the flexibility to implement all, some or none of the flexible or compressed work schedules and instead follows a more traditional fixed work schedule (e.g., eight hours per day, 40 hours per week). A manager's decision to do so depends on the responsibilities and activities of the office and the ability to ensure that communications, productivity, and customer service do not suffer. AWS can enable or help employees balance work and family responsibilities. There are two categories of alternative work schedules:

**Compressed Work Schedules (CWS)** - A fixed work schedule that enables full-time employees to complete the basic 80-hour bi-weekly work requirement in less than ten working days. The four-day workweek and the 5/4/9 plan are the two most commonly used. A CWS schedule is available within the Department.

**Flexible Work Schedule (FWS)** – A schedule that allows employees to establish their arrival and departure times within flexible bands and hours worked each day, and/or hours worked in a given week within established limits. FWS schedules available within the Department include: Gliding Schedule, Variable Day, Variable Week, Flexi-tour and Maxi-flex.

**Core Hours** – Core hours are those work hours that an employee must be on duty or on approved leave. These hours may vary by OST component. You should check with your supervisor to determine the core hours for your office.

## **Telework/Telecommuting**

The Secretary of Transportation has determined that DOT will serve as the leader for the Federal community in the implementation of programs that reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of life for employees. Telecommuting is one such program that has the potential to provide significant transportation-related public benefits in this decade and to fundamentally change the way we do business in DOT. Traffic congestion places large costs upon the community, its environment, its commerce, and its workers.

Telework/Telecommuting is an arrangement in which the employee works at a place other than the traditional work site. Typically, the employee covered under a telecommuting agreement works one or two days in the workweek at an alternative work site away from the main work site. This work site can be at the employee's home or at a "telecenter" geographically convenient to the employee's home.

Telework/Telecommuting requires jobs to be portable. Employees must have strong time-management skills and must demonstrate that they are consistently good performers who can work with little direction. The supervisor, in consultation with the employee, decides whether there are specific tasks that are adaptable to telecommuting and the mission of the Department is the primary consideration in approving such an arrangement. The supervisor also has the right to end the employee's telecommuting agreement if performance declines or the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs.

The OST/HRO is responsible for providing advice and assistance to organizations on the Telework/telecommuting program. Periodically, operating modes will be required to report to OST/HRO on the status and success of their Telework/telecommuting programs. As a minimum, organizations will be expected to furnish data on the number of employees eligible to participate in Telework/telecommuting and the number actually participating.

## Chapter IV

# WORK/LIFE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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### Transit Benefits Program

The Department administers a Transit Benefits Program which encourages employees to use public transportation for commuting to and from work on a regular and ongoing basis. Thus, occasional or sporadic use of public transportation does not qualify an employee for enrollment in this program. This program is intended to supplement employees' commuting costs; therefore, the Department can only reimburse these costs up to the maximum allowable amount.

To participate in the Transit Benefits Program, employees must complete the Transit Benefits Program Application, and certify that they will comply with the rules and procedures of the program. Anyone making false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may be subject to criminal prosecution under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, or agency disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the Federal service.

### Disability Resource Center Services

The Department of Transportation's Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides job accommodations and related services to DOT employees and job applicants who are qualified individuals with disabilities. The DOT Office of Human Resource Management operates the DRC. The Departmental office of Civil Rights and the OST Office of General Counsel provide policy and legal guidance on disability related matters. Services are provided to all DOT operating administrations nationwide. DRC also has service agreements with the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Disability Resource Center supports the Department of Transportation in the employment, advancement, and retention of people with disabilities through the use of state-of-the-art technology and proactive customer services. *What we do:*

### Reasonable Accommodations

- ◆ Identifying your needs
- ◆ Providing solutions
- ◆ Identifying resources
- ◆ Purchasing appropriate technologies and services
- ◆ Providing training and support

## **Information, Consultation and Referral**

- ◆ Understanding roles, rights and responsibilities
- ◆ Learning about the Reasonable Accommodation process
- ◆ Disability-specific information
- ◆ Etiquette and cultural issues
- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Facility accessibility and emergency procedures
- ◆ Resource library

## **Disability Awareness, Training, and Education Programs**

- ◆ Training in the use of assistive technologies
- ◆ Reasonable accommodations policies and practices
- ◆ Disability etiquette and cultural awareness
- ◆ Find out what trainings we offer
- ◆ Customized training to meet your needs

## **Section 508 Resources and Information**

Section 508 establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public.

An accessible information technology system is one that can be operated in a variety of ways and does not rely on a single sense or ability of the user. For example, a system that provides information only in visual format may not be accessible to people with visual impairments and a system that provides information only in audio format may not be accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some individuals with disabilities may need accessibility-related software or peripheral devices in order to use systems. Section 508 requires systems to work with the accessibility-related solutions.

Section 508 applies to a broad variety of electronic and information technology (E&IT) including:

- ◆ Personal computers
- ◆ Web pages and internet or intranet based services and applications
- ◆ Software and applications (off-the-shelf and custom developed)
- ◆ Telecommunications including telephone systems, telephones, voice mail and interactive voice response systems, and fax machines
- ◆ Duplication, printing and copying equipment
- ◆ Stand-alone stations (or information kiosks)

- ◆ Multimedia presentations including video conferencing, television broadcasts, training media
- ◆ Information Technology support services, and documentation

## Blood Donor Program

The Department participates in the American Red Cross Blood Program in the Washington, D.C. area. Onsite blood drives are announced throughout the year. Employees are permitted to participate in the program during duty hours with no loss of pay or use of leave.

## The Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

The SLRP is for both recruitment and retention purposes and certain criteria must be met, including a service agreement for a specified number of years. The following are eligible for student loan repayment assistance:

Permanent Employees	Employees serving a term appointment with at least 3 years remaining on their appointment	Employees serving in excepted appointments with non-competitive conversion to term, a career, or career-conditional appointments (e.g., Presidential Management Fellows, VRAs, and employees in the Federal Career Intern Program)	Temporary employees who are serving in appointments leading to conversion to term or permanent appointments
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Employees serving in confidential, policy determining, policymaking, or policy advocating positions (i.e., Schedule C employees) are not eligible for SRLP.

The loan repayments must be based on a written determination that, in the absence of offering loan repayment benefits, it would be difficult to either fill the position with a highly qualified candidate (if a recruitment action), or retain a highly qualified employee in the position (if a retention action). This determination must include a description of the extent to which the candidate's declination of a job offer, or the departure of a current employee, would affect the operating administration's or OST's ability to carry out an activity, perform an essential function, or otherwise meet an essential mission need.

It is important to remember that the determination whether to repay a student loan is at the discretion of management, and the official(s) delegated authority to make such a determination. Applicants/ employees have no entitlement to loan repayment. Each determination for recruitment purposes (including the amount to be paid) must be made, and a written service agreement signed, before the candidate actually **enters on duty** in the position for which he or she was recruited. For additional information on SRLP, please refer to the Departmental Personnel Manual 537, Repayment of Student Loans. You can obtain a copy of this manual at <http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/HRPolicy/537>.

## **Drug and Alcohol Program**

The program provides department wide drug and alcohol program services. The following services are included: random selection, scheduling, laboratory testing, specimen collection, alcohol testing, medical review officer, reports, policy consultation and education.

The primary role of the Departmental Drug Office is to develop policy, procedures, and practices for workplace testing, manage the random selection process, and maintain contractual services to accomplish this work. The Departmental Drug Office implemented civilian employee drug testing under the Executive Order 12564 in September 1987 and alcohol testing in 1995.

## Chapter V

# FEDERAL CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

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### Emergency Closing/Early Release

Periodically there may be certain circumstances that prevent significant numbers of employees from reporting to work on time, or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities. These circumstances include adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes), air pollution, disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, and other emergency situations.

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will consult with appropriate private municipal and regional officials before a decision on closure, dismissal, or special leave treatment is made for Federal employees. If an emergency occurs before normal working hours, OPM will make every effort to notify the media by 6:00 a.m. If the emergency occurs during the work hours, OPM will notify agency personnel directors by telephone of a decision to close the Federal government or to invoke an “unscheduled leave” or “adjusted home departure” policy

**Federal Holidays** - Federal law (title 5, United States code chapter 6103) establishes the following public holidays for Federal employees. Employees are excused from work with pay, to observe the holidays listed below. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, employees who work Monday – Friday, observe it on the previous Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday. Part-time employees are compensated only for the holidays that fall on scheduled workdays.

Holiday	Date
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Birthday	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday in January
Washington's Birthday	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4 <sup>th</sup>
Labor Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday in September
Columbus Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday in October
Veteran's Day	November 11 <sup>th</sup>
Thanksgiving Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25 <sup>th</sup>

**Evacuation and/or Emergency Procedures** – The building may need to be evacuated when hazards exist and it is important for personnel to be removed to assure their safety. Should you become aware of an emergency situation in your work area, it is urgent that you immediately report it. Circumstances such as smoke, fire, suspicious packages, or medical emergency should be reported promptly to activate the building's emergency response system.

**Important Telephone Numbers**

All Emergency Situations – Security Office.....	X60333
Facility Emergency.....	X62458
Minor First Aid.....	X60555
Fire Emergency.....	X911
Medical Emergency .....	X911

When an emergency exists, the following actions should be taken:

- ◆ Do not panic
- ◆ Do not delay leaving the building
- ◆ Secure any classified materials
- ◆ Move away from the threatened area, closing all doors in the office
- ◆ Go to the nearest safe stairwell
- ◆ Obey the emergency wardens
- ◆ Descend the stairways to the ground floor; get out of the building and go to the designated area. Your office will let you know the area that has been designated as a meeting point
- ◆ Do not reenter the building until an all-clear has been given

**Shelter-in-Place**

Shelter-in-Place is a protective action taken inside the building, with doors and windows closed, to minimize your chance of injury when one of the following emergencies occurs: Fire; Explosion; Bomb Threat; Utility Failure; Hazardous Materials Release.

Immediately upon notification to Shelter-in-Place, Security will direct personnel outside the building to come back inside the building. Once all personnel in the immediate area are inside the building, Security will lock all exterior doors, parking garage entrances, and loading dock doors. The specific action you are told to take when Sheltering-in-Place will depend on the emergency.

For additional information on emergency preparedness, please visit:  
[http://dotnet.dot.gov/feature/emergency\\_brochure.htm](http://dotnet.dot.gov/feature/emergency_brochure.htm)

## Chapter VI WORK ENVIRONMENT

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### Operational Security Practices

#### Entering the Building

Pedestrians entering DOT Headquarters Buildings must display and wear DOT, government, or visitor identification at all times. Federal employees with agencies other than DOT will be issued a "Government Personnel" building pass, and visitors will be issued a "Visitor" building pass by security personnel.

Drivers entering the DOT Headquarters buildings by vehicle must present DOT identification to security posted at garage ramps or report to the parking management booth for clearance and be escorted to the visitor's center. An issued parking permit must be displayed in the vehicle while parked in the building.

Visitors must report to the visitor's desk of each Headquarters Building and will be required to walk through a magnetometer and have hand held articles screened by a fluoroscope machine. Escorts are required for visitors who are not Federal employees.

#### Visitor's Desk Locations

Nassif Building	SW Lobby	202 366-2816
Orville Wright Building FAA	Main Lobby	202 267-8829
Wilber Wright Building FAA	Main Lobby	202 385-8017

**Security Services** – Security Officers are on duty 24 hours a day in all three Headquarters buildings to protect employees, property and facilities. Property removal forms (available from your Administrative Officer) are required to remove property from the buildings. The form (Property Removal Record) is also available on the DOT Intranet.

**Employee Building Passes** - Upon entrance on duty each DOT employee is issued a photo employee identification (ID) card (building pass). The ID must be shown to the guard when entering the building and must be displayed at all times while in the building. Uniformed officers are directed to enforce the escort policy for visitors and ensure all persons are wearing a building pass. On occasion, building passes may be inspected to identify employees. Uniformed security is to be notified immediately of any suspicious people or occurrences, and persons observed without a building pass. Report lost ID cards immediately to Security.

**Passwords** - All employees must take precautions to ensure that passwords are protected. Never give a password to anyone. If you believe a password has been compromised, change it immediately.

**Suspicious Mail and Packages** - Do identify suspect parcels. Employees are expected to pay attention to the appearance, wrapping, addressing, postage, or any other irregularities of parcels received and to consider the following: Was the parcel expected? Do you know the sender? If not, and you feel the item is “suspect”, contact your supervisor and appropriate security personnel for further action.

**Personal Use of Government Equipment** - The Department permits employees some limited personal use of government-owned equipment such as telephones, copiers, fax and Internet if it involves negligible additional cost to the government, and it does not adversely impact work performance or systems. The personal use of government equipment is a privilege, not a right, and may be restricted or revoked whenever appropriate in the interest of the government.

## **DOT Monitoring of Workplace Technology Use**

**Equipment and information resources used by DOT employees in the workplace** - To complete their job functions are the property of DOT and may be monitored. Employee activities using the following resources may be monitored for inappropriate or excessive personal use at any time:

- ◆ Email
- ◆ Internet
- ◆ Telephones
- ◆ Voicemail

Inappropriate use includes any communications that are illegal, harassing, discriminatory or obscene. While limited use of DOT resources is acceptable under Departmental policy, employees should refrain from communicating private personal information, due to possible monitoring of activities.

Monitoring may occur randomly or if a use violation is suspected. Employees found to be using Departmental resources for inappropriate or excessive personal use will face disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter VII of this manual.

**Protection of DOT Information Assets** - DOT collects and uses a variety of personal information to achieve its mission and provide employment services to personnel. Employees who have access to personal information to complete their job function are required to protect and maintain the confidentiality of that information at all times. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter VII of this manual. In addition, violations of the Privacy Act, which applies to both citizens and Federal government employee personal information records may result in both civil and criminal penalties.

## **Sexual Harassment**

The Department maintains a work environment intended to promote the respect and dignity of each individual. Sexual harassment is against the law and will not be tolerated. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- ◆ Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- ◆ Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- ◆ Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or environment.

An employee who feels sexually harassed or intimidated should consult with a supervisor or the Office of Civil Rights. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination including harassment or inappropriate conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Federal service.

## **Workplace Violence**

The Department promotes a safe environment for its employees. It is a continuing responsibility of every employee to maintain a work environment free from violence and threats of violence. It would be tragic if a violent situation were to arise in your work area and you were not prepared to handle it appropriately. Yet, recent history shows incidents are becoming more common place in today's working environment. While violence in the workplace is a problem of major concern, it cannot be viewed in social isolation. Though most violent acts are limited to threats, the Department must be prepared to react to the worst-case scenario. In many cases, acts of violence may be prevented.

All DOT employees are obligated to provide a safe and healthy working environment for our work force under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).

## **Conflicts in the Workplace**

When a person feels a need for assistance in order to attempt to reach a constructive solution, the Federal Government and the Department of Transportation (DOT) offer a variety of kinds of assistance. A summary of the available avenues in DOT for resolving workplace disputes can be found in the DOT guide: *Managing Workplace Conflict: Understanding the Options*. This can be viewed at [http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/HR\\_Programs/Employee\\_Relations/employee\\_relations.html](http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/HR_Programs/Employee_Relations/employee_relations.html)

Employees are encouraged to review this Guide. Should you face a workplace conflict, a call to the referenced contacts or a visit to the listed websites may provide you with some critical information. Protections against reprisal exist for employees who elect to pursue these options. Please note that this Guide is informational only and does not replace or take precedence over any laws, regulations or policies that govern the listed processes.

In most instances of conflict, doing nothing is the least advisable course of action. By seeking to address concerns early and choosing an appropriate avenue, you can increase the chances of resolving your situation in the most timely and effective manner.

### **Smoke-Free Workplace**

It is the policy of the Department to provide a safe and healthy workplace, and to control smoking in the space that it occupies. Smoking is prohibited in all of the Department's enclosed areas including official government vehicles.

### **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

It is the policy of the Federal government to ensure a drug-free workplace. One element of this policy is to offer, as appropriate, prevention and treatment programs and services for substance abuse among Federal employees. A second element is to test for drug use consistent with applicable law and regulation and the rights of the Federal government and Federal employees. Employees in certain sensitive positions may be required to undergo random drug testing. Some occupational categories require applicant testing. Additionally, reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use may require testing of an employee. Employees whose jobs require a commercial driver's license are also subject to alcohol testing.

DOT has an established drug-free Federal workplace that includes an Employee Assistance Program. The EAP is an essential element in achieving a drug free workforce. Employees who have drug and/or alcohol problems are given an opportunity, as appropriate, to seek rehabilitation, resolve their problems, and become fully productive members of the workforce. All employees found to be using illegal drugs are referred to the EAP for assessment, counseling, and referral for treatment or rehabilitation, as appropriate. These drug and alcohol abuse programs may be made available to the families of employees and to employees who have family members who are drug or alcohol abusers.

## **Chapter VII**

# **POSITION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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It is important that you and your supervisor have a clear and mutual understanding of the performance requirements of your job. This includes understanding the specific duties for which you are responsible for as well as the critical elements of your job and the standards for successful performance.

### **Position Classification**

Positions are classified in order to provide fair and consistent treatment of employees in levels of responsibility and in pay. Classification also helps in projecting budgets, designing organizational structures, recruiting, and other management tasks. In this respect, the public and private sectors are very similar. Where they differ is in the basis for classification. In the Federal government, the Congress has established the basic laws governing classification and the Office of Personnel Management have provided implementing regulations. Individual positions are classified and the results of the classification, the determination of title, series, and grade become the basis for paying an employee in that position.

### **Position Descriptions**

A position description is a statement of the major duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationship of a position. It should be kept up-to-date, and include information about the job, which is significant to its classification. It should clearly define the major duties assigned and the nature and extent of responsibility in carrying out those duties.

All supervisors or rating officials should provide employees with a written description of regular work responsibilities in the form of an official position description. If you are not given a copy, you may obtain one from your HRO. Your position description is not intended to be a complete listing of every task you will be called upon to do. You will be expected to carry out assignments given by your supervisor even if they are not specifically mentioned in the job description. You should notify your supervisor of any continuing differences between your work assignments and your position description so that any needed changes can be considered.

## **Performance Plan**

All employees are to receive approved written or performance plans based on work assignments and responsibilities the employee will be held accountable for within a specific period of time from the date of appointment into a new position or at the beginning of the annual appraisal period. At a minimum, employees must receive a progress review at the mid-point of the appraisal period. At the end of the appraisal period, an employee will receive a written appraisal of his/her performance.

Job Element – The performance plan must contain from one to five job elements upon which the employee will be evaluated. These are major work assignments and responsibilities assigned to employees that are directed toward a specific goal or objective. The elements are derived from duties contained in the position description. A critical job element measures individual performance and is a work assignment or responsibility so vital that unacceptable performance on the element will result in a determination that your overall performance is unacceptable. At least one of your job elements must be designated critical. A non-critical element is an aspect of individual, group and/or team or organization performance which does not meet the definition of a critical job element, but is of sufficient importance to be included in the performance plan.

## **Performance Standards**

The performance plan will contain performance standards for each job element. Performance standards are those base levels of performance by the employee which are acceptable to the organization. Performance standards should be expressed as quality, quantity, and timeliness, whenever possible and standards should be as specific as possible -- so specific that both the rating official and the employee can easily determine when a performance standard is met. Each performance standard is written at the “Proficient” level of performance to clearly define what is needed to fully meet the performance requirements.

The absence of written performance standards at other given rating levels will not preclude the assignment of a rating at that level. Ratings at levels other than “Proficient” require a written narrative describing the performance that resulted in the assignment of a rating at the higher or lower rating level. Performance standards should clearly relate to the outcome or organizational goal to which the employee is expected to contribute.

## **Performance Appraisals**

A performance appraisal is the result of a supervisor's continuous process of observation and evaluation of an employee's performance and the results achieved. It should reveal how well the employee actually performs in comparison to the requirements of the job. It may indicate that the employee so exceeds the job requirements as to deserve special recognition or it may disclose that a portion of the employee's work needs improvement. Within 30 days of the employee's assignment, the supervisor should discuss performance expectations with the employee. You may be asked to provide input on performance expectations, but development and documentation of performance expectations remains a supervisory responsibility.

Informal discussions between the employee and supervisor are considered a normal part of supervision. They should be frequent enough to ensure mutual understanding of expectations, accomplishments, and any changing job requirements that may occur. They also offer an opportunity for employees to discuss any problems they may have encountered in work assignments.

## **Unacceptable Performance**

Employees performing at an unacceptable level in one or more critical element(s) at any time during the performance appraisal period are notified of the critical element(s) for which performance is unacceptable and afforded an opportunity period to improve. Notification of unacceptable performance can occur at any time during the appraisal cycle, including the end of the performance appraisal period. At the conclusion of the opportunity period, if the employee's performance continues to be unacceptable, action may be initiated to reduce in grade or remove the employee from the job.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Maintaining discipline usually is not a problem within a work environment where reasonable rules and standards of conduct and performance are clearly communicated and consistently and equitably enforced. There are situations of misconduct or delinquency, however, where there is no alternative but to impose disciplinary actions.

Penalties should not be disproportionate to offenses and should be applied as consistently as possible, considering the particular circumstances of the cause(s) for disciplinary action.

There are many possible causes for an employee's performance and/or conduct problem, for example, illness, disability, drug or alcohol abuse, personality conflict, family problems, lack of training, low job morale, etc. The nature of the problem will

determine the course of action to be taken. Maybe the employee should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program for substance abuse counseling, or a fitness-for-duty medical examination (to be linked) may be needed to determine physical or mental capability to do the job. The Disciplinary Actions in DOT are:

- ◆ Oral and Written Admonishments
- ◆ Reprimands
- ◆ Suspensions
- ◆ Reductions in grade
- ◆ Removals

If it is misconduct or delinquency, such as tardiness, failure to properly request leave, insubordination, theft, etc., then an option could be to take disciplinary action. There are varieties of ways to deal with these, depending on the severity of the misconduct: lesser disciplinary actions, such as admonishments and reprimands, to more severe penalties, such as suspensions and removals.

There may be instances where the problems are both performance and conduct. In these cases action may be taken under either program or both simultaneously

## **Awards**

There are varieties of awards that may be used to recognize employee accomplishments that exceed expectations or performance requirements. Some of the most frequently used awards are:

**Time Off Award (TOA)** - Employees may be granted time-off from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay. Time-off awards serve as an incentive and may be granted to individual groups, and teams for specific act or special contribution, or to recognize sustained high-level performance. A full-time employee (or team) may be granted up to 40 hours of time-off from duty as an incentive award for a single contribution. The total amount of time-off an employee may be granted during any 52-week period is 80 hours.

**On-the-Spot Cash Award** – This monetary award (up to \$300) is designed to grant “immediate” recognition to individuals or groups of employees for their day-to-day extra efforts and contributions. It requires minimum documentation and may be granted by a supervisor or manager.

**Special Act or Service Award** – Are cash award recognitions granted to an individual, employee or group or team of employees in recognition of a contribution, act, service, or achievement that benefits DOT because it either achieves results or contributes toward the achievement of results, or for overall sustained results-based

performance beyond normal job requirements. The amount of the award will be based on the value of the contribution to the organization.

**Quality Step Increase (QSI)** – A quality step increase (QSI) is an increase to an employee's rate of basic pay from his/her current step of the grade to the next step that is granted in recognition of excellence in performance during the last appraisal cycle. The purpose of such an increase is to recognize consistently high achievers by granting faster than normal step increases. To qualify for a QSI, an employee's most recent performance appraisal must be "Outstanding". No more than one QSI may be granted within any 52 week period.

Awards should be granted as a motivational tool to recognize the accomplishments of a particular employee or group of employees, and to motivate others to achieve the same level of excellence. Supervisors have discretion in deciding when an award is appropriate and the level and/or amount that should be recommended.

## CHAPTER VIII

# PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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One of management's most important functions is to provide learning and development activities which assist in achieving an agency's mission and performance goals by enhancing employee and organizational performance. Each Operating Administration (OA) shall include mission-related learning and development activities/initiatives in their strategic planning to ensure that learning strategies and activities contribute to mission accomplishment and organizational performance goals are met.

DOT recognizes the importance of developmental efforts of its employees and declares such efforts to be necessary, desirable, and in the public interest. Education, performance improvement, and career development should be supplemented and extended by DOT funded programs. DOT further recognizes the importance of providing learning strategies that *improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals.*

### Career Development and Training



**DOT's electronic Learning Management System (eLMS)** - is a state-of-the-art web-based system that meets the needs of training administrators, students, and managers and facilitates fulfilling the requirements of the e-Gov Act of 2002. It is the official system of records for DOT employees' training. eLMS provide online courses, instructor-led-training, and future capabilities for Individual Development Plans (IDP's) and competency management. DOT's Office of Human Resource Management is the sponsor for the eLMS. Program management resides in the Office of the Secretary (OST), Office of Strategic Initiatives. All employees have access to eLMS as either a learner or a training administrator. All employees, i. e., learners, can create learning plans and enroll in courses. Managers approve training requests. Training administrators manage the training programs for their organizations.

**The DOT "Leaders for Tomorrow" mentoring program** - is a mid-level program that provides workforce development for emerging leaders. The program adds value to the organization by enhancing professional leadership skills within the organization, increasing employee job satisfaction and transferring institutional knowledge and corporate expertise, thus establishing a pipeline of trained professionals who are prepared to handle organizational challenges and equipped to meet future goals of the U.S. Department of Transportation

The program is designed to engage and propel its participants into heightened levels of learning and organizational development. Program objectives will include skills and management development training, developing a career plan and networking opportunities. The DOT program manager will pair a GS 15 manager, supervisor or executive (mentor), with an employee at the GS 13 or 14 grade level (protégé) for the primary purpose of knowledge management through hands-on experiences and classroom training. On-going communication between pairs will take place to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes. In this partnership, both individuals share in the growth and professional career development of one another.

The 10-month program has been designed to provide the framework for institutionalizing a structured program for developing mentors and protégés within DOT. This program is aimed toward fulfilling workforce development gaps by building new leaders and securing a superior dedicated staff, with a minimum level of cost and time investment. The “Leaders for Tomorrow” program will benefit those directly involved in the program as well as other Department employees.

Participants must commit to meeting with their mentor/protégé a minimum of two hours per month. It is during this time when mentor/protégé pairs discuss reading materials, share outcomes and concerns as well as other developmental issues. In addition to this, there will be interactive workshops and roundtables designed for mentor/protégé participation. Various networking activities will be hosted for both mentors and protégés to exchange thoughts, experiences and ideas, and to become more acquainted with one another. The Department will host a mentor/protégé kick-off orientation activity at the beginning of each new session as well as separate orientations for each group.

All mentors and protégés must complete an application to become a participant in the “Leaders for Tomorrow” program. For more information on this program go to <http://www.dothr.ost.gov> HR programs/mentoring.

**So You Want to Be A Leader** – The "So You Want To Be A Leader" course is a nine week pre-supervisory training course. It is designed to prepare GS-11 and 12 employees interested in supervisory and managerial positions an opportunity to learn about leadership and their roles and expectations as supervisors or managers. The course identifies the skills and competencies needed to climb the ladder and provides interactive role-playing and group discussions involving real workplace scenarios. The course allows participants to engage in group activities and homework assignments that enable them to honestly assess if they are really interested in becoming supervisors.

In addition to classroom learning and career planning strategies, participants engage in assessments to increase their awareness of prevalent personality traits and characteristics that affect their interactions with and responses from others. From a development perspective, participants take a learning styles assessment to gain an

understanding of how they learn as well as the different ways that people learn and assimilate information.

## Opportunities for Advancement

**Promotion within Career Ladder** - Some of you may be in a position that has promotion potential beyond the grade level at which you were hired. If this is the case, when your supervisor feels that you have demonstrated the ability to perform successfully at the next higher grade level, he/she may recommend that you be promoted when certain requirements are met (e.g., time-in-grade, general and/or specialized experience requirements).

If you're not serving in a position that has promotion potential, you must compete for a promotion through either the Department's Merit Promotion and Internal Placement Program or the Department's competitive examining process.

**Merit Promotion Program** - The Department's Merit Promotion Program is designed to provide an open, systematic, and equitable procedure for the identification, consideration, and selection of employees for promotion on the basis of merit.

The intent of the Merit Promotion Program is to give Civil Service employees every possible opportunity to develop and advance, to make the most effective use of skills, knowledge and ability and achieve a satisfying career with the Department. Management has the right to determine the method by which vacant or newly established positions may be filled. The Merit Promotion Program is just one method available to management, and may be used in conjunction with other hiring methods.

**Competitive Examining** - The competitive examining process is used to hire individuals who are "outside" as well as "within" the Federal government, hence the term "all sources" announcements. This process affords individuals in the private and public sector as well as Federal employees who do not have civil service status to compete for positions in the competitive service. Veterans, with preference, who apply through the competitive examining process, have five to ten points added to their score, in recognition of their service to our country.

**Job Announcements** - Job opportunity announcements are posted on the following sites:

- ◆ Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) website ([www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov))
- ◆ Department of Transportation Human Resources website ([dothr.ost.dot.gov/Employment\\_Opportunities/employment\\_opportunities.html](http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/Employment_Opportunities/employment_opportunities.html))
- ◆ Department of Transportation website ([www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov))

## CHAPTER IX

# HUMAN RESOURCES – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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### Delivery of Human Resource Services

The Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) provides Departmental policy, strategic planning, and consulting services for managers and employees, providing leadership, developing policies, and directing programs in all aspects of human resources management and administration. This includes:

- ◆ development and implementation of Department-wide Strategic Management of Human Capital, employee development, succession planning, and supervisory and executive development programs, policies and procedures;
- ◆ development and use of executive resources;
- ◆ administration of pay, bonuses, and incentives;
- ◆ administration of leave and hours of work;
- ◆ administration of payroll support and time-and-attendance controls;
- ◆ workforce planning, recruitment, and employment;
- ◆ training and career development;
- ◆ employee recognition and performance appraisal;
- ◆ employee relations, benefits, and services;
- ◆ labor management relations; workers' compensation;
- ◆ unemployment compensation;
- ◆ delivery, maintenance and approval of Department-wide automated human resources systems;
- ◆ evaluation of human resources management activities;
- ◆ examination of adherence to merit principles;
- ◆ prevention of prohibited personnel practices;
- ◆ planning, development, and coordination of Department-wide policies, programs, and activities for executive resources management (Presidential, career, and non-career, including Schedule Cs); and
- ◆ the promotion of effective human resources management.

**Employee Personnel Records** – The OST/RITA Human Resource Operations Division is responsible for administering the personnel records management program, and maintains your Official Personnel File (OPF) and your Employee Performance File (EPF). These records are covered under the Privacy Act of 1974. For additional information about your rights under the Privacy Act of 1974, visit <http://www.dot.gov/privacy.htm>.

Your OPF should contain a record of personnel transactions taken from the time you first enter the Federal government until you retire (e.g., appointments, promotions, and beneficiary designations). Your EPF contains information such as copies of

performance appraisals, and other documentation regarding performance. Your OPF transfers with you should you leave DOT to work for another Federal agency.

We recommend that you retain the employee copy of each of your SF-50s, Notification of Personnel Action, and report to your human resource specialist any corrections or changes needed to your personnel records such as: incorrect information, additional education acquired, name changes or other personal information. You should occasionally review your OPF to ensure that the information contained in it is current and accurate.

## Voluntary and Involuntary Separations

**Military Service** - A Department employee permanent or temporary, who enters active military duty (voluntary or involuntary) from any position, has full job protection if the employee:

- ◆ Gives the agency advance notice of departure except where prevented by military circumstances;
- ◆ Is released from uniformed under honorable conditions;
- ◆ Serves no more than a cumulative total of five years (exceptions are allowed for training and involuntary active duty extensions, and to complete an initial service obligation of more than five years); and
- ◆ Applies for reemployment within the appropriate time limits.

**Reduction-in-Force (RIF)** - When an agency finds it necessary to reduce its staff because of lack of funds, transfer of functions, or reorganization, a reduction-in-force (RIF) could occur. The Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary will exhaust all avenues to avoid a RIF. Such reductions in force are made under the rules and regulations prescribed by the OPM, 5 CFR 351 and are designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. The Department's policies governing a RIF are at [www.dothr.ost.dot.gov/HRPolicy/Subject/351-04.pdf](http://www.dothr.ost.dot.gov/HRPolicy/Subject/351-04.pdf).

**Resignation** - Employees who decide to leave the Department are required to notify their supervisor. Your resignation should be submitted via your supervisor to your Human Resources Operations Division in writing. As a courtesy to your employer, you are requested to give at least two weeks' advance notice before your last day of work. If you are absent and it becomes necessary for you to resign without returning to work, your resignation may be submitted electronically. Regardless of the reason for your resignation, you must turn in your building pass, other government property, and make reimbursement of any indebtedness to the government (e.g., recruitment bonuses, outstanding travel or leave advances).

## CHAPTER X SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

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### Background

The 1978 Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) established the Senior Executive Service (SES) on July 13, 1979. It was set up as a "third" service, completely separate from the existing competitive and excepted services. The purpose of the SES is to ensure that the executive management of the Government is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the nation and otherwise of the highest quality. SES members also serve as the major link between top Presidential appointees and the rest of the Federal work force.

The SES includes positions classified above GS-15 of the General Schedule or equivalent positions which do not require appointment by the President with Senate confirmation. These positions are generally responsible for managerial, supervisory, and/or policy functions. In general, SES members are subject to the normal provisions of law that govern other Government employees. This chapter provides basic information on topics where there are separate provisions for SES members.

### Position and Appointment Types

The SES contains two types of positions -- Career Reserved and General. Career Reserved positions are those which must be filled only by career appointees to ensure impartiality, or the public's confidence in impartiality of the Government. The General positions may be filled by a career, non-career, or limited appointee.

**Career appointments** are made without time limitation. Initial career appointments must meet competitive merit staffing provisions, and an individual's executive qualifications must be certified by the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Qualifications Review Board.

**Non-career appointments** are made without time limitation, but the appointee serves at the pleasure of the Secretary.

**Limited appointments** are used to meet urgent needs and the appointment is not one of a continuing nature. Limited appointments are usually made without competition and serve at the pleasure of the Secretary.

**Limited term appointments** can only be made to a position where the duties will expire at the end of a specified period and may not exceed 3 years.

**Limited emergency appointments** can only be made to meet a bona fide, unanticipated, urgent need for a period not to exceed to 18 months.

## **Qualifications**

In recognition of the leadership nature of the SES, candidates must be qualified in five OPM-mandated executive core qualifications: leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions/communication. In addition, each SES position requires job-specific technical qualification requirements.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

The area of consideration for SES recruitment generally includes both the Federal and private sectors. SES vacancy announcement information is available through OPM's website USAJOBS: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.

DOT conducts merit staffing for initial career appointments under the direction of the Executive Resources Review Committee (ERRC). Currently, all SES vacancies must be open for 30 days in order to recruit a broad, diverse, balanced pool of candidates.

Veteran's preference does not apply to the SES. There is a one-year probationary period following initial career appointment to the SES.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

The SES pay range has a minimum rate of base pay equal to 120 percent of the GS-15, step 1, and the maximum rate is equal to the rate for Executive Level III. With a certified SES Performance Management system, the maximum rate is equal to the rate for Executive Level II.

SES members are subject to the same sick and annual leave systems as other employees, with the following exceptions:

- Senior executives earn 8 hours of annual leave per bi-weekly pay period.
- There is a 720 hour (90 day) limit on the amount of annual leave an SES member may carry over from one leave year to the next. Leave earned in excess of this ceiling will be forfeited if not used by the end of the leave year. Additional leave accumulated prior to October 1994 is protected under a personal leave ceiling. When an employee moves from a non-SES appointment to the SES, annual leave accumulated at that time in excess of 240 hours must be used by the end of the leave year of SES appointment, or it will be forfeited. Annual leave not in excess of the 240-hour limit, and any leave then accrued while serving in the SES, is carried forward and subject to the 720 hour annual leave limitation. A retiring executive who has accumulated leave above the 720-hour ceiling will receive payment for the

- entire amount in the leave account provided s/he retires before the end of the leave year.
- Senior executives are excluded from premium pay (for overtime and Sunday or holiday work), compensatory time, and credit hours. DOT does not allow SES members to participate in the Alternative Work Schedule Program in order to ensure appropriate executive oversight.
- Recruitment and relocation bonuses as well as retention allowances may be used as incentives to recruit or retain executive personnel.

## **Performance Management**

The SES performance management system integrates performance, pay and awards systems to cultivate and enhance employee and organizational effectiveness. The supervisor establishes performance elements and standards in consultation with the executive. All employees of the DOT are on a five-tier rating system and are subject to the Performance Review Board (PRB) process. The supervisor proposes an annual rating, which is discussed with the executive before it is forwarded to an agency Performance Review Board. PRBs are required by law to ensure reasonable consistency, objectivity, and equity in the appraisal and performance process. PRBs make recommendations to the Appointing Authority regarding performance ratings, awards, and pay adjustments.

## **Awards and Recognitions**

In addition to performance awards, executives are eligible for awards that are monetary, honorary or time-off in nature.

The most prestigious recognition for a career SES member is the Presidential Rank Award. Executives who sustain exceptional accomplishments/performance over an extended period of time may be nominated for one of two Presidential ranks – Distinguished Executive or Meritorious Executive. The Distinguished Executive Award may be granted to career SES members (up to 1% annually) and carries a lump-sum payment of 35% of basic pay. The Meritorious Executive Award may be granted to career SES members (up to 5% annually) and carries a lump sum payment of 20% of basic pay.

Basic pay and other compensation (e.g., awards and allowances) during a calendar year cannot exceed the pay for Executive Level I. Except for retention allowances, any excess amount is carried over and paid as a lump sum paid at the beginning of the next calendar year.

## **Retirement Systems**

Senior executives are subject to one of two retirement systems: The Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Career SES members appointed after December 31, 1986, *having no prior creditable civilian government service*, are covered by FERS. Newly appointed SES members *having career status* and appointed after this date should consult the Human Resource Management Office to determine coverage and entitlements.

## **Financial Disclosure**

All new SES members must file an Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report (SF-278) within 30 days of appointment to the SES.

All current SES members must annually file an Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report (SF-278). All SES members leaving the SES must also file an Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report (SF-278) no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after leaving the SES. A late filing fee of \$200 may be levied if the report is not filed on time.

This financial interest report provides a mechanism for determining actual or potential conflicts between an executive's public responsibilities and private interests. Questions concerning statutory or regulatory provisions regarding conflicts of interest or prohibited activities should be brought to the attention of the General Counsel.

## **Reduction-in-Force**

If the Department must conduct a reduction-in-force in the SES, Specific procedures will be followed to try to place the SES member in another position. An SES member is eligible for OPM's Placement Assistance. This post-probationary placement assistance will begin when the OPM acknowledges the Departments certification and will continue for 45 days unless the SES member is appointed to another SES position, declines a reasonable offer of placement, leaves the Government, or fails to request assistance. If there is no placement, the SES member must be placed in a continuing position at the GS-15 level with saved pay. If eligible, the executive may take a discontinued service retirement in lieu of placement at grade 15.

## **Last Move Home**

Under 5 U.S.C. 5724(a)(3), a career SES appointee is entitled to payment of travel, transportation, and household goods moving expenses upon separation from Government service for retirement in relocating to the place where the individual will reside if the individual: 1) Retires on or after September 22, 1988; 2) Had been moved geographically as a career appointee in the SES; and 3) At the time of the geographic move, was eligible for optional retirement or was within 5 years of optional retirement, or was eligible for discontinued service retirement.

## **CHAPTER XI AMENITIES AND SERVICES**

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The Department of Transportation offers a variety of amenities and services to its employees

### **DOT Shuttle Bus**

A DOT shuttle bus (white school buses) runs between the Federal Aviation Administration Building, the Nassif Building, and the Coast Guard Headquarters Building (Tans Point), Monday through Friday. The buses run from 6:00 a.m., starting at the FAA building and stop at 6:28 p.m., with the last stop at FOB-10A. The bus schedule is printed on the inside back of the DOT telephone directory. A Federal ID card is required to use the bus.

### **Cafeteria and Snack Bars**

The Nassif building cafeteria is on the P1 level, wing 3, 6<sup>th</sup> street entrance. It is open Monday through Friday during the following hours:

6:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Breakfast
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Snacks

There are also cafeterias in other nearby Federal office buildings as well as many private restaurants within walking distance of the Nassif Building.

- ◆ HUD cafeteria -across 7<sup>th</sup> street
- ◆ L'Enfant Plaza Promenade
- ◆ GSA cafeteria – corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and D
- ◆ FAA cafeteria – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 7<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue
- ◆ Waterside Mall

The Snack Bar is in room 2105, and is open from 7:00 a. m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Vending machines are located in Rms 3207 and 3405; Rm 4403; Rms 6203 and 6403; Rms 7103 and 7303; Rms 81023 and 8393; Rm 9403; and Rm 10307.

## **Department of Transportation Federal Credit Union**

The Transportation Federal Credit Union is a member-owned financial service cooperative. Department employees are eligible to join and members are offered a complete choice of low-cost financial services. The TFCU is located at in the following areas:

### **NASSIF Branch**

400 Seventh Street, SW Plaza #100  
Washington, D.C. 20590

### **FAA Branch**

800 Independence Avenue, SW, #128  
Washington, D.C. 20591

### **Kendall Square Branch**

55 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02142

For more information on the TFCU, visit the Credit Union Office on the Plaza Level (P-100, Northwest Corner) or access the website at [www.transfcu.com/membership/aboutus.html](http://www.transfcu.com/membership/aboutus.html)

## **Employee Express**

Employee Express is an automated system that puts Federal employees in control of processing their own discretionary personnel and payroll actions. Employee Express eliminates the need for obtaining, filling out and submitting paper forms, replacing them with user friendly technology. Currently, the following actions can be processed using Employee Express: Federal and state tax withholdings, direct deposit of net pay, residence and check mailing addresses, Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) during open season), and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Actions processed through Employee Express become effective no later than the next pay period.

State of the art technology makes Employee Express accessible to virtually all employees. With its Internet availability, Employee Express is easier than ever to access. To access Employee Express, an employee will need to know his or her social security number and Employee Express personal identification number (PIN). Depending on the transaction an employee wishes to process, he or she will also need additional information such as the name of his or her financial institution or health benefits provider. PINs are mailed to new employees by the Office of Personnel Management.

Employee Express is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Employee Express can be accessed via a touch-tone phone, or the Internet via Netscape or Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

### Public Transportation

OST encourages its employees to commute to work by public transportation and carpools. The metrorails and metabuses are both accessible from various locations at or near the Nassif Building. The L'Enfant Plaza station is accessible from the North (D Street) side of the DOT headquarters courtyard. There is a transfer station in the Metrorail system for the Blue Line, the Orange Line, the Yellow Line, and the Green Line. Additional information about the Metro System may be obtained by contacting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) at (202) 637-7000.

### Transit Benefits and Parking Sales Office

The DOT TRANServe Transit Benefit and Parking Sales Office windows in the Nassif Building are open every business day from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Employees must fill out an application form to receive transit benefits and present it, along with a DOT ID, at the location listed below. Fare cards may be picked up at this location the first two full weeks of each month, Monday through Friday.

NASSIF BUILDING	FAA HQ BUILDING
<p>400 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW Room 206 PL SW 202-366-1398</p> <p><b>Daily:</b> 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Note: FAA Employees Only</b></p> <p>800 Independence Ave, SW Room 531 A 202-267-9260</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> 3 days of the month:</b> 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> days of the month:</b> 10:30 to 1:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Every Wednesday and Thursday of every week:</b> 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.</p>

Please note:

- ◆ Transit Benefits are distributed quarterly. To receive the FULL quarterly benefit (three months), you must pick up your Transit Benefits during the first month of each quarter (January, April, July, and October).
- ◆ Transit Benefits are not retroactive. Benefits that have not been picked up by the last business day of the month will be forfeited. If you are not able to pick up your Benefits on time, please contact the DOT TRANServe office at (202) 366-1398. We are here to assist you.
- ◆ Parking permits are available up to four months prior to the month in which they will be used. Permit holders are encouraged to pick up multiple months whenever possible.

Long lines are common during the first couple of days each quarter (January, April, July and October). Avoid delays by coming in the middle or the end of the week.

## Parking Permits

Listed below are the types of permits issued by Parking Management, along with a brief description and any specific requirements. If you have questions or would like personal assistance, please contact the Parking Management Office at (202) 366-0064, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Carpool (CP)** – Carpool permits sell for \$15.00 a month. Carpool permits require a minimum of 3 riders, the holder plus two other riders. Each person in the carpool must ride at least 6 one-way trips each week to meet the minimum requirements for this permit. The holder of a carpool permit must be a DOT government employee. (Note: there are exceptions made concerning the holder, which will be covered in the next section.) Members riding in the carpool are not required to be DOT employees; however, they must ride with the carpool to within three-mile proximity of the DOT, FAA or USCG HQ Building(s).

**Outside Agency Carpool (OAC)** – Outside Agency Carpool permits sell for \$47.00 a month. These permits are available to non-DOT and non-government individuals on a limited basis. Each request for these, as with other permits, must be submitted through Parking Management for review. The holders for these permits are usually employees of other government agencies or contractors who work for the U. S. Department of Transportation. All other requirements are identical to those of a regular carpool.

**Vanpool (VP)** – Vanpool permits sell for \$15.00 per month. (As with carpool permits, government employees from other agencies and DOT contractors are eligible to apply for vanpool permits at the \$47.00 fee). Vanpool permits require a minimum of six riders, up to eight, the holder plus seven other riders. Other criteria are identical to that of a carpool.

**Job Requirement (JR)** – Job Requirement permits sell for \$47.00 a month. These permits are limited in availability and are approved by the designated modal representative. To determine the representative for your specific mode, contact the Parking Management Office. Job Requirement permits are issued to individuals that have work schedules or responsibilities that make it impractical to be part of a carpool or vanpool. No additional riders are required for this type of permit.

**Shift Worker (SW)** – Shift Worker permits sell for \$15.00 a month. Like the Job Requirement permits, these are available on a limited basis and require additional approval from a supervisor and from Parking Management. These permits are available to individuals, whose documented work hours extend beyond 6:00 p.m. or start before 6:00 a.m., thus making it impractical to be part of a carpool. No additional riders are required for this type of permit.

**Tenant (TN)** – Tenant permits sell for \$47.00 a month. These permits are issued when it is in the best interest of the government and are intended for government or building contractors who work at DOT. Individuals requesting these permits should have their manager or government representative submit a written request to the Parking Management Office, which is the approving authority for these permits. No additional riders are required for this type of permit.

**Physical Disability (PD)** – Physical Disability permits sell for \$15.00 a month. These permits are intended for DOT Employees with severe mobility issues, and require a State-issued disability permit. Please contact the Parking Management Office at (202) 366-0064 for specific requirements or for assistance in obtaining this type of permit. No additional riders are required for this type of permit.

**Outside Physical Disability (OPD)** – Outside Physical Disability permits sell for \$47.00 a month. These permits are intended for individuals not employed by DOT with severe mobility issues, and require a State-issued disability permit. Please contact the Parking Management Office at (202) 366-0064 for specific requirements or for assistance in obtaining this type of permit. No additional riders are required for this type of permit.

**Motorcycle (MC)** – Motorcycle permits sell for \$6.00 a month and must be purchased for at least three months at a time. All Motorcycle permits are issued at the Parking Management Office in the Nassif Building, room P2-0327. The Parking Management Office requests that you call prior to coming over to pick up a Motorcycle permit.

## **Rules of the Garage**

Security and safety issues have become an increasing concern to Parking Management. Due to these concerns and to other administrative issues, we have recently made a number of changes that we believe will help us to address these matters. A concerted effort will be made to ensure that only authorized vehicles gain access to the garages. All vehicles parked in the garages must clearly display a valid U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) parking permit in the lower left side of the vehicle dashboard at all times. Any vehicle not clearly displaying a valid DOT permit will be considered illegally parked and will be ticketed by the Federal Protective Service. When the ticket is issued, a DMV check will be run to determine the owner of the vehicle. If the owner cannot be verified or concerns persist, the vehicle will be towed from the garage at the owner's expense.

DOT places a high priority on carpools and vanpools when allocating parking permits. As a result, permit application and review procedures have been strengthened. Greater emphasis has been placed on enforcing parking violations and issuing penalties to employees not adhering to DOT parking procedures. Random traffic surveys of vehicles will be made to better ensure that employee parking is both equitable and supportive of the ridesharing program.

DOT also strongly encourages its employees and other Federal employees to commute to and from work using mass transportation. Direct subsidies in the form of transit vouchers (current maximum of up to \$105 per month) are available to all Federal employees who enroll in the program. It is important to note, however, that any Federal employee that is enrolled in the transit benefit program may not be named on a Federally subsidized work place parking permit.

As we strengthen safety and administrative procedures, we also desire to provide effective, professional customer service to each individual. Although it is not possible to meet every need, we are committed to providing our customers with the best services and support. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding and look forward to working with you in the future.

The guidelines contained within this publication are the most current available and govern parking in the U.S. DOT HQ Building (Nassif Building), The FAA HQ Building (FB-10A and FB-10B) and the USCG HQ Building. This publication supersedes DOT Orders 1750.1 and 1700.19D. It is the responsibility of each individual that parks in any

of the DOT garages to read, understand and fully comply with all guidelines contained within this publication. Copies are available at the OST TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES TRANServe Parking Management Office and on the DOT Parking Management website.

## **Fitness Center**

All DOT Federal employees, non-DOT Federal employees of other local agencies, and DOT contractors are eligible for membership. Contractors and private citizens are not eligible for membership. The cost is only \$6 per pay period and DOT Federal employees pay by payroll deduction; non-DOT Federal employees and DOT support contractors must pay by check. Joining is easy. Contact the Fitness Center at (202)366-9729 or 9731 to register for membership and screening evaluation.

**Alternative Screening Options** - A Physician's Consent Form, provided by the fitness center staff, signed by your personal physician can be submitted in place of the membership screening evaluation.

**Consultation and Exercise Program** – An individual exercise program will be provided once the membership process is completed.

**Access Card** – Upon completion of the membership and screening process, you will be issued an access card for entry into the Fitness Center. The access cards are programmed to allow access into the Fitness Center during hours of operation from 6:15 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

**Location** – The Fitness Center facility is located on the rooftop of the U.S. Department of Transportation Nassif Building, located at 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. The elevator on the Southwest quadrant of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor will lead you to the rooftop penthouse level for access and entrance.

## **Fitness Center Hours of Operations**

Gym Hours: 6:15 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Locker Rooms close at 8:00 p.m.

## SCHEDULED CLASSES

Class	Day	Time
Intermediate Fitness	Monday - Friday	12 to 12:30 p.m.
Cardio Strength/Conditioning	Monday - Friday	1:00 to 1:30 p.m.
Abs/Back	Tuesday – Friday	1:30 to 2:00 p.m.
Body Core Strength	Tuesday & Thursday	5:30 to 6:00 p.m.

### **Other Services Available**

Fitness and Health Education Program  
 Stress Management  
 Individual Fitness Counseling  
 Exercise Tolerance Test (appointment required)  
 Blood Pressure Evaluation  
 Nutritional Evaluation and Referral Counseling

### **DOT Child Development Center**

The Department of Transportation Day Care Center, in the Federal Aviation Administration Building (FAA, 800 Independence Avenue, S.W.), is operated by a private non-profit corporation.

Hours: 7:15 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. Monday through Friday

Infants from 3 months to 2 years, (1<sup>st</sup> floor)

Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years (second floor)

Summer Program - 6 to 10 year olds from the second week of June through the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August

Phone number for all age group: (202) 267-7872

### **On-Site Medical Clinics**

Medical Clinics are located in the Nassif building (operated by the U.S. Coast Guard) and the Orville Wright FAA Building (operated by FAA employees by the Office of Aviation Medicine). Clinic staff members provide limited emergency medical treatment, dispense allergy and flu shots, provide medical screening services, dispense over-the-counter medication, and provide literature on general health topics

Nassif Health Clinic (Room 6227)  
FAA Health Unit (Room 328, Orville Wright Bldg)

202 366-0892  
202 366-3405

### **Employee Recreation Association (ERA) Store**

Located in room 2100 of the Nassif building (North West entrance). ERA provides DOT employees with Honey baked Ham certificates; discount movie tickets, discount Colonial Williamsburg coupons; discount National Aquarium in Baltimore admissions; Paramount Kings Dominion Fun Club Membership cards; long distance calling cards; business cards; access to Western Union services and sponsors the following events as well:

- ◆ Tennis Team
- ◆ Mix Bowling Team
- ◆ Ski Trips
- ◆ Cruises
- ◆ Golf Tournament

For further information on EARA services and EARA membership fees, please contact Marv Stephens at (202) 366-5368, Carolyn Felder (202) 366-0444 or Bill Gossard (202) 314-6182. ERA Store Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. PHONE: 202-366-9819. E-MAIL: [ftaminfo@recgov.org](mailto:ftaminfo@recgov.org)

### **Library Services**

The technical library in the Nassif Building maintains information about the transportation field, emphasizing surface transportation. The law library maintains legal periodicals and newspapers, Federal and state codes, transportation-related legislative histories, and other law publications. The library is equipped with an on-line computer system, capable of accessing hundreds of databases. Other services include literature searches, loans of DOT library materials, interlibrary loans, reference and research assistance, education in the use of the library and its collections, and routing of periodicals. The library is located in the Nassif Building, Rm 2200.

The hours of operations are from 9:00 a.m.-4:00p.m., Monday through Friday

Circulation Desk.....	366-0745
Periodicals Unit.....	366-6078
Reference and Research.....	366-0746

### **The Work Number for Everyone**

The Work Number for Everyone is an automated service that will provide you with fast and accurate employment verification when you apply for items such as apartment leases, car loans, mortgages and other major loans. In order for a company (verifier) to receive your salary information, you must provide them with an authorization code.

What you need to do:

- ◆ Call 1-800-367-2884. When the system prompts you, enter:
  - The DOT company code – 10302
  - Your social security number
  - Your personal PIN – this is your service computation date (SCD)
  
- ◆ Provide the verifier with the DOT code, your social security pin number, and the 6 digit authorization code. DO NOT give anyone your PIN
  
- ◆ The verifier will then call 1-900-555-WORK for employment verification

The Work Number Client Service Center is available Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. To receive instructions for a free demonstration of the system, visit the web site at [www.theworknumber.com](http://www.theworknumber.com). If you have questions call Customer Service at 1-800-996-7566.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

DOT organizations are authorized to establish an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for the purpose of promoting and maintaining the overall wellness and efficiency of their employees. EAPs are required for employees with drug or alcohol abuse problems. EAPs are designed to provide such things as free and confidential assessment, short term counseling, referral, and follow-up services to employees. They are intended to help employees who have personal and/or work-related problems that affect their work performance or conduct. EAPs may include training on handling work-related problems, and orientation and educational programs related to EAP matters.

EAPs may include coverage of such matters as personal finance, health and wellness, legal assistance, family matters, dependent care, and drug and alcohol abuse. With respect to drug and alcohol abuse, DOT organizations are required to have appropriate prevention and treatment programs and services for employees with drug and alcohol abuse problems. Organizations must refer all employees found to be using illegal drugs to the EAP for assessment, counseling, and referral for treatment or rehabilitation, as appropriate. These drug and alcohol abuse programs may be made available to the families of employees and to employees who have family members who are drug or alcohol abusers. For more information on EAP visit [www.foh4you.com](http://www.foh4you.com). To contact an EAP counselor call: 1-800-222-0364 or 1-888-262-7848 (TTY).

## **Telecommunications Relay Service**

A telecommunications relay service allows hearing impaired persons to communicate by telephone. A text telephone user can talk with virtually anyone by calling the relay service. A communications assistant will read the message to the hearing person at the other end of the line. The hearing person's spoken reply is typed back to the text telephone user. This service is confidential.

### Federal Relay Service

Access for TTY User.....1 800-877-8339

Access number for voice users.....1 800-377-8642

New technology has opened up many communication options for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Information on additional services may be found at <http://www.fts.gov/frs/frs.main.htm>.

## **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**

Once a year, Federal employees have the chance to contribute to the many charitable organizations that depend upon voluntary giving to help those who are most in need. During the annual campaign, you will receive a brochure describing the organizations to which you may contribute. This is the only on-the-job charitable solicitation that is authorized in the Federal government and your participation is entirely voluntary. Contributions can be made through payroll deductions or by a one-time donation.

## **CHAPTER XII**

# **GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

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### **Prohibited Personnel Practices**

The 12 Prohibited Personnel Practices at Appendix B are the specific actions that must be avoided by managers and all others who make or influence personnel decisions. They are defined by law and enable Federal employees to avoid conduct that undermines the Merit System Principles and the integrity of the merit system.

### **Merit Systems Principles**

The nine Merit System Principles at Appendix A are the fundamental precepts that guide the conduct of Federal human resource management. Managers, supervisors, or anyone who is in a position to take or influence personnel actions must ensure that their decisions and actions are consistent with these Principles. The Principles reflect the public's expectation that the Federal personnel systems are effective, efficient, and fair; open to every citizen; free of political coercion; and served by persons who are honest, competent and dedicated to the public service. They can also be described as the core values for the human resource management decisions that we make.

### **Ethics Standards**

Public service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen has complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of the ethical conduct set forth in the "Standards of Ethical conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch". Violations of these standards can lead to criminal penalties or administrative disciplines. These standards are provided to each employee when he/she enters on duty.

### **Whistleblower Protection Act**

The Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989 provides the right for every employee to make whistle blowing disclosures and ensures protection from reprisal. Any Federal employee who has reason to believe that there has been misconduct, fraud, waste or abuse is encouraged to report these matters. Although each employee is encouraged to bring such matters to the attention of his/her management officials, other sources are available to receive such disclosures. An employee can confidentially report these matters to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, or depending on the circumstances, to other Federal oversight authorities.

## **Financial Obligations**

Government employees are required to pay their just financial obligations in a proper and timely manner. The government-issued travel card is to be used according to the employee's cardholder agreement for official travel expenses only, such as payment of lodging and meal expenses. Any violation of the Cardholder Agreement, whether for misuse (e.g., personal charges, ATM withdrawals for personnel purposes) or delinquency (60 days or more past due) will subject the cardholder to disciplinary action and/or suspension or cancellation of the travel card. Disciplinary actions may range from official reprimands to removal from Federal service depending on the specific circumstances involved.

## **Employment of Relatives**

The Department promotes a family-friendly workplace employing family members to the extent consistent with the law and good management. In doing so, we must ensure compliance with the law by avoiding nepotism and the appearance of nepotism in all employment matters. An employee may not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment any individual who is a household member of that employee. This policy applies to all employees regardless of position or type of employment method.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**

The Department of Transportation is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. In addition, the Department prohibits discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation.

The Office of Civil Rights advises and assists the Office of the Secretary and other principal officers of the Department in carrying out their responsibilities under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other laws, executive orders, and regulations.

OCR is responsible for establishing and maintaining continuing programs designed to promote equal opportunity in every aspect of the Department's personnel policies and practices. An employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against based on the grounds listed above may contact an EEO counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act.

## Diversity

Diversity management at DOT is defined as creating and maintaining a work environment that:

- ◆ Provides opportunity for all employees to maximize their potential and fully contribute to accomplishing the organization's mission.
- ◆ Does not advantage or disadvantage any group and it ensures all team members treat each other with dignity and respect

Diversity management is a separate and distinct initiative that coordinates and enhances other programs that impact employment to create and maintain a positive work environment such as those related to hiring, equal opportunity, and work and family life.

Diversity management at DOT will ensure a work environment where every employee's unique talents and perspectives are valued and used to further DOT's mission. This is both a matter of principle and a strategic business choice, because we simply cannot meet the challenges before us if we overlook or underutilize any population group. Supervisors and managers in particular have a critical role to play as we develop and implement the strategies to promote and leverage diversity in our day-to-day business decisions.

DOT welcomes everyone with the talents, desires and determination to take on the toughest challenges and dream the biggest dreams. Diversity is about bringing out the best in each of us, so that we can achieve great things together. It's about finding a way to support the infinite characteristics that make each of us unique individuals with important contributions to make.

**MERIT SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES**  
**PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES**  
**The HATCH ACT**

## MERIT SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

The Merit Systems Principles listed below are adapted from the statutory language that appears in section 2301 (b) of Title 5, of the United States Code.

- ◆ Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition.
- ◆ Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicapping condition, political affiliation or marital status. In addition, the Department prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- ◆ Provide equal pay for equal work and reward excellent performance.
- ◆ Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
- ◆ Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
- ◆ Retain or separate employees on the basis of their performance.
- ◆ Educate and train employees when it will result in better organized or individual performance.
- ◆ Protect employees from improper political influence.
- ◆ Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in “whistleblower” situations (e.g., protect people who report things such as illegal and/or wasteful activities).



## **Prohibited Personnel Practices**

By law, Federal employees **may not:**

- Discriminate
- Solicit or consider employment recommendations based on factors other than personal knowledge or records of job related abilities or characteristics
- Coerce the political activity of any person
- Deceive or willfully obstruct any person from competing for employment
- Influence any person to withdraw from job competition
- Give an unauthorized preference or advantage to improve or injure the prospects of any particular person for employment
- Engage in nepotism
- Take or threaten to take a personnel action because of whistleblowing
- Take or threaten to take a personnel action because of the exercise of a lawful appeal, complaint, or grievance right
- Discriminate based on personal conduct which does not adversely affect the performance of the employee or other employees
- Knowingly take or fail to take a personnel action in the violation of veteran's preference laws
- Violate any law, rule or regulation implementing or directly concerning merit system principles

**More information may be obtained from:**

U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL, 1730 M STREET, N.W., SUITE 218 WASHINGTON, DC 20036-4505 (WWW.OSC.GOV)

PHONE: (202) 254-3670\*

TOLL FREE: 1-800-872-9855\*

\*Hearing and Speech Disabled: Federal Relay Service 1-800-877-8339



## THE HATCH ACT AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

### Permitted and Prohibited Activities for Employees Who May Engage in Partisan Activity

- **May** be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections
- **May** register and vote as they choose
- **May** assist in voter registration drives
- **May** express opinions about candidates and issues
- **May** contribute money to political organizations
- **May** attend political fundraising functions
- **May** attend and be active at political rallies and meetings
- **May** join and be an active member of a political party or club
- **May** sign nominating petitions
- **May** campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances
- **May** campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections
- **May** make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections
- **May** distribute campaign literature in partisan elections
- **May** hold office in political clubs or parties including serving as a delegate to a convention
- **May not** use their official authority or influence to interfere with an election
- **May not** solicit, accept or receive political contributions unless both individuals are members of the same federal labor organization or employee organization and the one solicited is not a subordinate employee
- **May not** knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency
- **May not** engage in political activity while on duty
- **May not** engage in political activity in any government office
- **May not** engage in political activity while wearing an official uniform
- **May not** engage in political activity while using a government vehicle
- **May not** be candidates for public office in partisan elections
- **May not** wear political buttons on duty

For additional questions, contact:

U.S. Office of Special Counsel  
1730 M Street N.W., Suite 21 8· Washington DC 20036-4505  
Phone: 1-800-85-HATCH · Web Site: [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov)