

WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD
HRO NEWSLETTER



1st Quarter 2011

FROM THE DESK OF COL CRANE - HRO

I wanted to use my space in the newsletter this month to make sure everyone understands the importance of performance appraisals. The Human Resource Office receives numerous requests for desk audits for personnel to be upgraded in the position based on the work they are doing. The need for the Performance Appraisals is not a West Virginia Human Resources Office requirement; it is the law as outlined IAW 5 USC 4302 "this law requires that each agency shall develop one or more performance appraisal systems which provide for periodic appraisals of job performance of employees". 5 CFR 430.203 defines performance to mean "accomplishment of work assignments or responsibilities." Additionally, in order to validate position review, performance standards are an intricate part of what a Classification Specialist must accomplish. This step can't be bypassed as it is one of the requirements in making the determination that higher graded work is being performed. Classification of a job is based on the level of work being performed and documented; it is not based on the volume of work but on the difficulty and level. In order to justify adjustments to a positions grade level, the performance standards must reflect the higher level of work.

Furthermore, NGB/DFAS sends the head of an agency in our case the TAG and the HRO a report on those individuals that are five years overdue a performance standard/appraisal and if those are not accomplished the memorandum indicates that the cost of living increase for those individuals will be postponed until the performance appraisal is accomplished. It is a very important part of technician management from many different perspectives. So, again, it is incumbent upon the supervisors to get the performance appraisals completed on their personnel so they are properly evaluated on their performance and can be given the compensation they deserve for the job they are doing. It is especially important right now as we transition to the web based Performance Appraisal Application as it will be easy for department heads and supervisors to determine who are doing their appraisals on their employees and who are not. Plus, this system will feed directly into the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System and will block awards, step increases, etc. of the employee and supervisor if the performance appraisal is not complete. So, let's do the right thing and ensure we are properly managing our workforce by doing the counseling as we should and by completing the performance appraisals.

LABOR RELATIONS

A new Labor-Management Agreement was signed on 12 Oct 10 and has been forwarded to the DoD-Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS) for Agency Head Review. This is a legal review taken by the head of an agency within the 30 day period of an agreement being reached between representatives of the agency and union to determine whether any provisions of the agreement reached conflict with law or government-wide rules and regulations. We should get our final determination very soon and then the new contract will be posted to the WVHRO Website.

EEO

Native American Heritage Month

November is designated Native American Heritage Month. We celebrate the contributions and heritage of our indigenous ancestors to this land and great nation. Programs throughout the month should honor the native sons and daughters and recognize their legacy.

Happy Holidays! Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and New Year's

The Fall/Winter holiday season is just around the corner. From my family to your family, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Martin L. King, Jr. Holiday, 17 January 2010

Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr. was the national leader of the modern Civil Rights Movement. He gained prominence as the head of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956 and led numerous subsequent campaigns against segregation and discrimination in America. He was one of the founders and the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The protest demonstrations he led were instrumental in pressuring Congress to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In his final years, he voiced opposition to the war in Vietnam and sought to organize a Poor People's March on Washington to combat poverty and inadequate housing. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968.

Special Emphasis Program Planning:

Planning for next year's Special Emphasis programs has already begun. If you would like to serve as a volunteer, please contact Lt Col Hale, ext 6430. The more the merrier.



WVNG Human Resource Office Newsletter

TECHNICIAN BENEFITS

Federal Employee's Benefits Open Season

1. This year's Federal Employee's Open Season begins on Monday, November 8, 2010 and runs through Monday, December 13, 2010. This is the time for Federal employees to think about their health, dental, vision, and tax-saving needs and to make changes to or enroll in one of the available programs.
2. During Open Season, employees can take the actions listed below for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program, Federal Employee Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP), and Flexible Spending Account (FSA) allow you to make the following changes:
 - Enroll in, change, or cancel an existing enrollment in a health plan under the FEHB Program.
 - Enroll in, change, or cancel an existing enrollment in a Dental or Vision plan under the FEDVIP Program.
 - Enroll in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA): a health care and/ or dependent care account under the FSAFEDS Program. Unlike with other programs, employees MUST reenroll in FSAFEDS each year to participate. Enrollments DO NOT carry over year to year.
3. All open Season enrollment changes are prospective and, therefore, will take effect 2 January 2011. Changes and/or enrollments beyond the 13 December 2010 cutoff date will require a Qualifying Life Event (QLE) such as birth of a child, marriage, or divorce.
4. The official Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program withholdings and contribution rates for 2011 are available in a PDF file format on the HRO website at <http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/jobs/Employee%20Benefits/Technician%20Benefits/default.html>. Please take a moment to review the new rates that become effective 1 January 2011. If you would like to change your plan due to cost increases, Open Season is the time to make your election.
5. In order to make open season changes for FEHB, all WV National Guard Federal Technicians will need to utilize either the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) available at www.abc.army.mil or the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) at 1-877-276-9287.
6. Please see HRO Bulletin 10-05 for more information regarding the Army Benefits Center. You can also find out more information regarding specific benefits plans by visiting the following link: http://www.opm.gov/insure/federal_employ/index.asp.

Significant Changes to Tech Benefits

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, (ACA), Public Law 111-148. Several provisions of the ACA will affect eligibility and benefits under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS) beginning January 1, 2011.

A major change to the FEHB program expands dependent eligibility rules. The new law:

- Allows married children to be covered;
- Removes residency requirements;
- Removes dependency requirements; and
- Does not require children to be students or have prior or current insurance coverage to be placed on their parent's Self and Family enrollment.

Please click on the link below to learn more about the changes to your Federal benefits and to find out how to add a newly eligible dependent to your coverage:

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pubs/bals/2010/10-201attachment.pdf>.

The new law also expands coverage for your child's eligible health care expenses under FSAFEDS. An employee enrolled in FSAFEDS may request reimbursement for eligible health care expenses incurred by a natural child, stepchild, adopted child, eligible foster child, or a child who is placed with the employee for legal adoption. The child does not need to reside with the employee or qualify as the employee's tax dependent. Prior to January 1, 2011, eligible children were limited to those who you could claim as dependent(s) on your Federal Tax return.

Performance Appraisal Application (PAA)

1 October 2010 marked the beginning of the new National Guard Technician Performance Appraisal Program under TPR 430 dated 5 November 2009 for the WV National Guard.

Technician supervisors should now be completing close-out appraisals on their employees for their individual performance from the beginning of the 2010 rating period through 30 September 2010 (unless your employee is currently serving under a trial probationary period). Performance plans beginning on 1 October 2010 through 30 September 2011 are to be completed through the MyBiz/MyWorkplace database.

For more information on the new Performance Appraisal Application (PAA), please visit our Performance Appraisal section of the HRO website at

<http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/jobs/Employee%20Benefits/Perf%20Mgt/Default.html>.



STAFFING

Recently we have had some administrative errors regarding technician applications that may seem small, but end up being big and sometimes leading to a non-certified application. We encourage everyone to pay close attention to the job announcement, especially the last page of the announcement on "How to Apply." There is a lot of helpful information about what to include in your application such as transcripts, KSAs, etc. Please note that it is not necessary to include diplomas, certificates, awards, photographs, etc. These items are not considered in the certification process; however, if you feel the need to make the interview board aware of these items we encourage you to take them with you to the interview.

Another very important thing to consider when applying for a technician position is the minimum and maximum military grade. If you do not meet the minimum military grade you must provide documentation with your application from your Military Personnel Office to prove that you are eligible to obtain the minimum grade required upon being appointed to the position. Failure to provide documentation will result in a non-certified application.

Recently the Human Resources Office (HRO) has been experiencing problems with the NGWVHROSTAFFING e-mail address. If you submit a job application to the HRO through e-mail and you do not receive an e-mail confirmation of receipt by the next business day, please assume that the HRO did not receive your application. If this happens, feel free to contact the HRO for further guidance. We are diligently working on resolving this issue.

Please take advantage of all helpful and useful information on our website at <http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/jobs/>. If you need further assistance please contact our office!

Classification

A desk audit is a tool that the Classification Specialist uses to help determine the proper classification of an employee's position. The supervisor may request a desk audit when he/she feels the employee is performing duties outside the bounds of their position description. The following outlines the proper procedure for requesting a desk audit:

- Submit a memo to the Classification Specialist from the employee's supervisor with justification as to the necessity of the desk audit.
- The Classification Specialist will then send the employee a questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire is the employee's opportunity to explain his/her day-to-day duties and responsibilities to the Classifier. Be specific!
- Upon completion of the questionnaire the classifier will review it. A determination will be made as to the appropriate grade for the position or the possible need for further review.
- If further review is needed the Classifier will coordinate with the supervisor to make a site visit and conduct an interview with the employee.
- Upon completion of the employee interview the Classifier will take the available information and make a determination as to the proper classification of the position.
- The supervisor and employee will be notified via a memorandum of the results and the corresponding actions to follow.

As a supervisor it is paramount that you make sure the performance standards are accurate and up to date for your employees. These performance standards will be used in helping determine the proper classification for your employee's position and should be updated as your employee's position changes. Please keep in mind that the results of a desk audit may increase *or* decrease the grade of an employee. Supervisors should contact the Classification Specialist if they have any questions as to the proper classification of an employee's position.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Supervisors Training

Charleston - January 24 - 28

130th AW – February 15 - 18

167th AW – April 11 - 15

Camp Dawson – May 16 - 20

AGR Management Branch

We would like to take this opportunity to emphasize all of the great information that can be found on the HRO website pertaining to AGR's at <http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/jobs/AGR/Army/default.html> much of which is applicable to all Service Members of the West Virginia National Guard. The site is proving to be a viable resource for a myriad of issues that are most common to our Soldiers and Airmen. Here you will find four main categories pertaining to Soldier/Airman Self Help, Supervisor Self Help, AGR Reassignment, and Mobilization/Demobilization. There is also a new, updated version of the "Request to Resign" posted. The "Helpful Websites" link offers information on TRICARE and TRICARE DENTAL, the AGR Leave Web program, TSP, and PCS moves. Under "Transition Point" there are links to FTNGD (ADOS) packets and policies, a request for a DD 214 worksheet, a link to all kinds of leave and retirement information. As always we welcome your questions and anything that you would like to see added to the website just drop us a line.



November 25th

**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING!**

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SSG Anthony Barton- Transition Point NCO: 561-6789
SGT Sara Stonoff- Transition Point NCO: 561-6682
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SSgt Freda Harmon- Staffing Specialist: 561-6437
CMSgt Scott Miller- HR Info Systems Chief 561-6427
SGT Jennifer Campbell-Employee Relations Specialist: 561-6431
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SGT Brooke Goldsberry – Retirements/OWCP Specialist: 561-6429
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