



MSC HRO NEWSFLASH

October
2017

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NewsFlash Archive:

Recent and archived NewsFlash publications are available on the MSC HRO Portal at:

About Us

The goal for the Military Sealift Command (MSC) Human Resources Office (HRO) Newsflash publication is to provide relevant Human Resources information for the benefit of employees, supervisors and managers.

Labor Employee Relations & Services

Federal Benefits Open Season. Benefits open season will be held 13 November 2017 through 11 December 2017. During the open season, you can take the actions listed below for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS):

- Enroll, change or cancel an existing enrollment in a health plan under FEHB
- Enroll, change or cancel an existing enrollment in a vision and/or dental plan under FEDVIP
- Enroll in a flexible spending account under FSAFEDS

To be ready for the open season, you should review the information on the Office of Civilian Human Resources portal at https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Benefits/Pages/Benefits_Open_Season.aspx. As additional information is received about the open season, it will be posted on the portal.

If you are going to make a change to your health insurance, now is the time to ensure you can access the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS). EBIS allows you to independently make your election without the assistance of the Benefits Line with no waiting.

To access the portal, you must use a government computer; have a ".mil, edu or .gov" email address and a Department of Defense Common Access Card. When prompted, select your email certificate. If this is your first time accessing the website, you will be required to complete a simple registration.

Your EBIS password expires every 60 days, so you may need to reset it before the start of the open season. Information about how to establish your EBIS account is available at <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Benefits/Pages/EBIS.aspx>. If you need assistance, please call the Benefits Line at (888) 320-2917 from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday - Friday, except on Federal holidays, or by email to navybenefits@navy.mil. Your email must include your full name, pay plan, grade, contact telephone number and the best time to call. Please do not include Privacy Act Information such as Social Security number or birth date.

<https://msc.port.al.navy.mil/Intranet/HRO/HRO/Forms/NewsFlash.aspx>

In addition to the above, EBIS also provides employees the opportunity to:

- Make life insurance and Thrift Savings Plan contribution elections;
- Review general information and personal benefits information;
- Calculate retirement annuity estimates; and
- Access the Personal Statement of Benefits.

Open Season and Hurricane Affected Employees. (Published by Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service Newsflash of 17-07.)

Because of the recent hurricanes, some Federal employees in the southern United States, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories may be experiencing difficulties during this time of crisis.

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) - BENEFEDS is committed to working with any Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) enrollee who lives or is stationed in the areas affected by the recent hurricanes, including making accommodations for missed premium payments.

If you have question, contact the BENEFEDS Customer Service Center at 1-877-888-FEDS (1-877-888-3337), TTY 1-877-889-5680, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (ET).

Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) - Long Term Care Partners, LLC, the administrator of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP), is prepared to work with any enrollee who lives or is stationed in the areas affected by the recent hurricanes and misses premium payments. They will make arrangements with each affected enrollee to bring the employee's account up-to-date. FLTCIP coverage will not be canceled.

New and newly eligible employees - who live in the affected areas and are unable to apply for the FLTCIP within 60 days of becoming eligible will receive an extended opportunity to apply using abbreviated underwriting.

If you have any questions, please contact the LTC Partners, LLC Customer Service Center at 1-800-LTC FEDS, (1-800-582-3337), TTY 1-800-843-3557 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (ET).

Review of Beneficiary Forms. There are four separate beneficiary forms for your Federal benefits:

- Lump Sum Retirement Contributions (SF 2808/CSRS or SF 3102/FERS);
- Unpaid Compensation (SF 1152);
- Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (SF 2823); and
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP 3).

The beneficiary forms will be valid in retirement (except the SF 1152, which will no longer be applicable once you retire because you will be paid that prior to retirement). Make sure all forms are up-to-date with the name and current address of your designate beneficiaries.

If you need assistance, please call the Benefits Line at (888) 320-2917 from 7:30 a.m. to

7:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday - Friday, except on Federal holidays, or by email to navybenefits@navy.mil. Your email must include your full name, pay plan, grade, contact telephone number and the best time to call. Please do not include Privacy Act Information such as Social Security number or birth date.

Classification/Staffing/Systems

OPM Releases Veteran Employment Data (September 12, 2017). The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has released the Employment of Veterans in the Federal Executive Branch report for FY 2016, and the Government-wide data continues to be positive. In FY16, more than 71,000 veterans entered civil service, increasing the total number of veterans to 635,266 in the Federal Government. That number adds up to 11,000+ more veterans employed by the Executive Branch agencies compared to the previous year.

Data on veteran employment has been published by OPM every year since Executive Order 13518 Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government and the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) was established in 2009. Federal agencies have used the VEI to meet many of their mission critical staffing needs, while benefitting from the skills, training, and dedication veterans, transitioning service members and their families bring to Federal service.

Veterans now represent approximately one-third (31.1 percent) of the total U.S. Federal workforce, marking a five percentage point rise since the initiative was implemented in 2009. The retention rates for veterans are encouraging as well, with many agencies retaining newly hired veterans at rates near those of their non-veteran employees.

The VEI is governed by an Interagency Council on Veterans Employment, comprised of the Federal Government's 24 largest departments and agencies that provide the VEI with overall vision and strategic direction. The Council is co-chaired by the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs, with the Director of OPM serving as Vice-Chair.

There are several noncompetitive hiring authorities available to hire veterans without the time and steps required by the competitive process. Should you have any questions concerning veteran hiring programs, please contact Ms. Teresa Keithley at teresa.keithley@navy.mil or 757-341-6480

Human Capital Management & Workforce Development

Career Management. Over the next three months we will feature a series of articles related to Strategic Workforce Planning. Part 1 of 3 is taking a look at Career Management.

Career Management can be defined as a disciplined investment in an employee's knowledge and skills. This in turn contributes to the enhanced mastery of workplace skills contributing to the overall success of the organization. It is important to be proactive in your career management by exploring different growth opportunities to enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities.

Some items to assist in the management of your career are: 1. pursuing on-the-job training, 2. obtaining a mentor or coach, 3. requesting shadowing opportunities and last but not least,

ensuring your Individual Development Plan is current and your goals and development opportunities listed within are routinely communicated with your first line supervisor, who is your primary resource in managing your career. If you have questions about the career management programs listed or other questions related to this article; please contact Ms. Caron Lijana at caron.oxley@navy.mil or at 757-341-6504.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Hurtful and Dismissive Remarks: How to Change the Tone.

Not my problem.

Aren't you clever.

Here we go again.

Yeah, I heard that yesterday.

Get over it.

You hear dismissive phrases every day. You see them on t-shirts, bumper stickers and social media. You may be at the giving or receiving end of a remark that hurts, intentionally or unintentionally.

When does an occasional sarcastic remark or playful putdown become a real problem? How can you tell when you are coming across as dismissive? And what can you do if remarks directed at you get in the way of effective work relationships?

Team Efforts Can Suffer. Organizational expert and consultant Rick Brenner, Chaco Canyon Consulting, helps dynamic organizations improve their effectiveness, especially in environments where success depends on high performance. "Dismissive speech impairs communication and it doesn't," says Brenner. "If your intention is to communicate disdain, contempt and disregard, it is an effective tool of communication. It works. If you want a harmonious workplace, though, dismissive comments are very destructive." When hurtful and dismissive speech is tolerated in any work environment, teamwork can suffer, Brenner says. "If someone important on the team repeatedly degrades the efforts of others to the point that it upsets them emotionally, the team will not be able to do its job well. That can be injurious to employees and the organization."

Recognize Words and Tone. Organizational expert, consultant and author Rick Brenner catalogs phrases that can convey a dismissive attitude. Almost everyone uses some of them, without realizing their negative effect.

- Never mind.
- Don't worry about it.
- Talk to me later (or sometime).
- Sorry, gotta go.
- Stay focused.
- Ask me later.
- Let's not.
- Send me an email on that.
- It's complicated.
- You're overreacting.
- Could be.

- Who knows? Or cares?
- Oh, that. Let's move on.
- I hear you. (repeatedly)
- Take a number.
- I don't think it's quite that bad.
- That's life.
- Why does that matter?
- Don't be so sensitive.
- Chill.
- Yeah, about that.
- Relax.
- Side-bar conversations.
- The 1,000 yard stare.
- And!?
- Get a grip.
- Whatever.

Be Aware of Dismissive Behavior and Speech. “Because many of the words and phrases do have legitimate uses, the context and delivery style determine whether they're being used offensively,” he says. “Since some messages can be read both ways, the sender can often get away with it. The phrase ‘forget it,’ in response to an apology can mean ‘apology accepted.’ But in response to a request for an explanation, it can be a dismissive rejection.” Another example is when someone comes in late to a meeting and the leader says “so glad you could join us, Mr./Ms./Dr. So-and-So.” “It's even more ‘zingy’ as a dismissive remark when that formal address is used,” Brenner notes.

Small Slights Can Build Up. The study of micro-behavior looks at the small, often unconscious messages people send out and receive when they interact. “No matter what you think you are saying, your tone, facial expressions and hand gestures can communicate something different,” states Ron Beckwith, Ph.D. in a 2009 white paper “Micro-behavior in Organizations: Sweating the Small Stuff,” published by The Millennium Group International. Micro-messages can be both positive and negative, and because they are small, can be difficult to recognize and address.

When subtle, dismissive micro-messages are repeatedly directed at people who are perceived as different, they may fall into the category of “micro-inequities.” A term coined in the 1970s. Micro-inequity is a theory that refers to hypothesized ways in which individuals are either singled out, overlooked, ignored, or otherwise discounted based on an unchangeable characteristic such as race or gender. Micro-inequities are subtle, often unconscious, messages that devalue, discourage and impair workplace performance. Research by MIT Professor Mary P. Rowe found that even unintentional micro-inequities in the workplace can undermine the confidence of individuals, including women and minorities.

Counteract Dismissive Speech by Reframing. “Targets of dismissiveness usually cannot control the behavior of offenders, but they can learn to remain centered,” Brenner says. Reframing is intentionally changing your perspective, he explains. “When you observe a dismissive remark directed at you, your initial reaction may be to feel hurt or angry, even if you don't show it. In reframing, you tell yourself ‘I am not going to experience it that way.’”

It takes will, and it seems unnatural at first, but it does work. Instead of sitting there wallowing in hurt, you say to yourself, ‘Hmm; seems like this person has a problem. This isn’t about me.’”

Brenner continues, “You might repeat to yourself, ‘Well, thank you for announcing that you’ve got a problem.’ Try to tell yourself something funny. Instead of showing anger, you’re reacting with a smile or a laugh. You’re taking responsibility for your own emotional state, and making a conscious choice to do something other than to feel hurt.”

Editor

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“Micro-messaging: Why Great Leadership is Beyond Words” by Stephen Young, McGraw-Hill (2006)

Top Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities by The Chicago Lighthouse. October is National Disability and Employment Awareness Month. During the entire month, numerous organizations and advocacy groups throughout the United States hold events to promote and educate employers about hiring of people with disabilities. Below are what many consider to be some of the many reasons and benefits of hiring and including people with vision loss or other disabilities in the workforce.

1. People with disabilities are reliable employees and have an overall higher job retention rate. Many studies have shown that people with disabilities take less absent days, and that they are more likely to stay on the job longer than non-disabled workers. Recently, The Chicago Lighthouse studied the retention rate of employees in its Illinois Tollway Customer Care Center, which employs people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled, and Veterans (as well as people without disabilities). On average, the employees with vision loss or other disabilities and Veterans had a retention rate of 1.7 years. In contrast, the retention rate for employees without disabilities or those who were not Veterans was only 0.9 years.
2. Employees with disabilities are less likely to get into work related accidents. Two studies, one from the Department of Labor Statistics during the 1940s and a more recent one from the DuPont company concluded that workers with disabilities had a significantly higher performance in the area of safety than their counterparts without disabilities. In other words, employees with disabilities are more aware and conscientious of safety in the workplace. Both studies looked at different types of jobs, including labor, operational, managerial, clerical and service areas.
3. Workers with disabilities will increase diversity in the workplace. Both workers with and without disabilities benefit equally from a diverse work setting. By working alongside employees with disabilities, individuals who are not disabled will become more aware about how to make the workplace and other settings more inclusive and accessible to everyone. They might consider things they had never thought of before, such as the

accessibility challenges faced by people with disabilities. Employees with disabilities can also teach their coworkers about creativity and other ways to solve problems or accomplish different tasks.

4. People with disabilities are as capable as anyone else! This is the most simple, but difficult reason for employers to understand about hiring workers with disabilities. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities has constantly hovered at or above 70 percent, even 26 years after the passage of the ADA. Unfortunately, employers often refuse to hire individuals with disabilities, simply because they believe we are not capable of doing the job, or because they are unaware about the many adaptive techniques and devices that are available and allow us to work. Like anyone else, we apply to jobs we believe we are qualified for and capable of doing. If employers have doubts about if or how we will do a particular task, chances are that we have already thought about it and found a solution

Myths and Facts About People with Disabilities. Myths are roadblocks that interfere with the ability of people with disabilities to have equality in employment. These roadblocks usually result from a lack of experience and interaction with persons with disabilities. This lack of familiarity has nourished negative attitudes concerning employment of persons with disabilities.

MYTH

Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.

FACT

Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations, and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

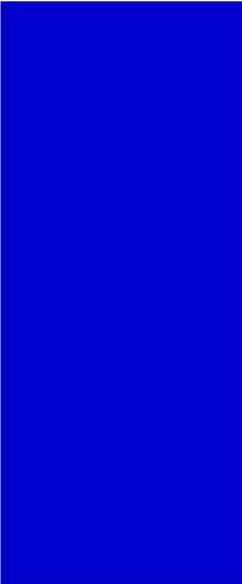
MYTH

People with disabilities have problems getting to work.

FACT

People with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation by choosing to walk, use a car pool, drive, take public transportation, or a cab. Their modes of transportation to work are as varied as those of other employees.





Have a great day!
Ed Kervin for

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