HRO News

Maine National Guard

Issue 3 **July 2013**

COL McLaughlin
Human Resources Officer
207-430-6010

LtCol Dawson
Deputy HR Officer
207-430-6012

MSG Craig Bailey
Classification
207-430-6017

LTC Jordan
Employee Benefits
207-430-6016

Mrs. Varney
Employee Benefits
207-430-6020

Chief Guesman
Labor / Conduct Mgt
207-430-6015

MSG Bailey
Classification
207-430-6017

SGT McIntire
Classification Assistant
207-430-6024

SGT MacVane
Training
207-430-6019

Mrs. Leet
Equal Employment
207-430-6014

CPT Snow
Staffing Specialist
207-430-6013

MSG Tarrio
Program Analyst
207-430-6355

MSgt Hunter
Information Systems
207-671-6021

Ms. Smith
Information Sys Assistant
207-430-6022

CW3 Perry
AGR Manager
207-430-6023

SFC Richardson
AGR NCOIC
207-430-6025

SGT Stacy
AGR NCO
207-430-6026

Message from the HRO

As you are all aware, the administrative furlough is about to begin. There has been a bunch of work in preparation for the furlough not only from the Human Resources Office, but by everyone impacted by the furlough. I first would like to thank everyone for their hard work leading up to the furlough. There is also work remaining to be done as we make our way through the furlough and each of our technicians are saddled with 11 days of no pay. Eleven days….88 hours….20% reduction in technician pay! For some people, the 11 days will mean one day per week for eleven weeks. However, for those people who will be in other forms of leave without pay or absent uniformed service during the administrative furlough period, "furlough" credit will be earned while in those statuses and will be applied towards the required 11 days/88 hours.

The Human Resources Office continues to operate at a fast pace while we experience significant personnel position changes within the office. Our Human Resources Specialist for Staffing, CPT Lisa Snow is now on pre-mobilization orders and will be missing from our office until this time next year. Good Luck to CPT Snow! We have hired a new Staffing Assistant, SGT Katherine Small, who will be joining our team in mid July. Welcome SGT Small!

The furlough may present different and significant challenges to many. We do have the Employee Assistance Program that is available to you should it be needed. Don't forget: "It's voluntary, It's Free and It's Confidential." You may reach the EAP at 1-800-869-0276 and more information is also available on the HRO web page.

Email and Distribution List Updates

All Maine National Guard Technicians and their supervisors need to access My Biz/My Workplace and review/update their "work" email address. It is critical to use your WORK (.mil) email address. This email address is used to notify supervisors to complete the Probationary/Trial Period certification on their employees. It is also used for mass email notifications regarding benefits news, etc. and in the not too distant future, it will be used to notify employees of new documents added to their Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).

To update your work email address in My Biz/ My Workplace, navigate to the DCPDS Portal https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil After logging in, select "Update My Information" – under the Profile tab (Work Email Address area), update your work email address, then click "Update". You are also encouraged to update your work phone number, work address, etc.

Any questions can be directed to MSgt Stephen Hunter at (207) 430-6021 or DSN 626-6021. Email address is stephen.c.hunter3.mil@mail.mil

HRO Email Distribution Lists

Please use the following distribution lists when contacting HRO. Our old Distribution list has been disabled. In order to process transactions and applications in a timely manner please update your contacts.

AGR Branch

ng.me.mearng.list.hro-agr-br@mail.mil

Technician Branch

ng.me.mearng.list.hro-technician-br@mail.mil

Job Applications

ng.me.mearng.list.hro-applications@mail.mil

Military Deposits Don't Wait..

A recent change in the procedures involving payment of military service deposits requires your prompt attention. In the past, employees who were retiring were allowed to make payment for military service even after the date of separation, up to the date that their retirement was finalized. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently directed that payment of military service deposits after the date of separation may only be made in cases of administrative error. The deposit must now be paid in full **prior** to the date of separation or retirement. Payment of deposits is a lengthy process. DO NOT WAIT to the last minute. HRO recommends that Technicians forward copies of DD214s for the eOPF immediately upon receipt. Once your earnings are received from DFAS (This process can take six months) sign the application prepared by HRO. Start paying immediately on your deposit. There are two methods available: payroll deduction or lump sum payment. Once a "paid in full" letter is received by DFAS also forward copies of that letter for the eOPF.

Formal Meetings ...Part I

At all levels of supervision, there are times when the Federal Labor-Relations Statute requires you to contact the Labor Organization. This is the second in a series of articles designed to clarify when that happens and who initiates the call.

In our first article we discussed *"Weingarten rights",* or the right of the Technician to request representation during investigative interviews, and the requirement of supervisors to contact labor if such a request is made. In this article, we are going to cover *"formal meeting"* as it relates to Federal labor relations.

In any given day, a supervisor has many scheduled meetings to attend. They could be for current or pending shop work, future manning to do the job, training, deployments, etc. They have a low degree of formality but have key components to include a scheduled time, location, and agenda. When a supervisor summons us to their office, a slightly more formal or official tone takes place beyond timing and location of the meeting. With respect to labor relations, a *"formal meeting"* exists when three key elements are present, which are:

One or more Agency representatives and one or more Technicians in the bargaining unit

Attendance of the Technician is mandatory

Supervisor establishes a meeting date, time, location

Concerning the first bullet above, all wage grade (WG), wage leader (WL) and most general schedule (GS) employees are part of the bargaining unit. Exceptions can be clarified by contacting CMSgt Jeff Guesman, Labor Relations Specialist, HRO, DSN 626-6015, commercial 430-6015, or e-mail: jeffrey.a.guesman.mil@mail.mil.

In the next HRO Newsletter we'll outline some situations, when combined with the elements of a *"formal meeting"*, require notice to the Labor Organization.

Benefits of Federal Employment

Many DOD employees chose the Government for its stability and for the opportunity to serve their country. Nevertheless, employee benefits play an important role in many individuals' decision to serve, so naturally, employees want to ensure the continuation of their benefits coverage during the furlough.

The employee benefits programs includes: the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), Federal Employee Retirement Sys-tem (FERS), Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Spending Account (FSAFEDS), Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), Federal Employee Dental Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP), Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), as well as, Annual and Sick Leave Accrual.

In general, retirement annuity benefits for CSRS and FERS will not be affected during an administrative furlough. Your annuity computation is based on the amount of creditable service an employee performs and the employee's high 3 average salary. Since CSRS and FERS allow for credit of up to 6 months or more of nonpay status in a calendar year, the days you are furloughed will generally count toward the total amount of creditable ser-vice for both CSRS and FERS. (An exception would be if you accumulate a total of 6 months of nonpay status in a single calendar year due to other reasons and your furlough time causes you to exceed **6** months in a nonpay status.) Your benefits coverage will continue under FEHB, FEGLI, FSAFEDS, FEDVIP and FLTCIP if your salary is sufficient to pay premium amounts.

Last, is your leave accrual. When you are furloughed for part of a biweekly period, your leave accrual is usually not affected for that pay period. However, once you accumulate 80 hours of nonpay in a leave year, whether in one pay period or over the course of several pay periods, you will not accrual annual or sick leave for that pay period. Once you reach 80 hours of non-pay, the accumulation of nonpay hours will begin again, but is zeroed out for the start of the next leave year.