



HRO News

Maine National Guard

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Message from the HRO

Hopefully, you will find this month's edition of the "HRO News" helpful in career planning. Our staff has put together articles ranging from applying for technician jobs to technician retirements. It is important for our technician workforce to plan for and have the opportunity to retire as a federal civil servant. Additionally, we have also begun the planning for a pre-retirement seminar in the near future. Our intent is to have one session in Augusta and one in Bangor, so stay tuned for that announcement.

I would like to thank everyone for doing their part with the Administrative Furlough this past summer and with the recent Government Shutdown. Bottom line – none of it was pleasant. While our technicians were fortunate to have the required number of days/hours reduced from the original 22 days, they still ended up losing 6 days pay – that's significant! And the shutdown....what more needs to be said! Hopefully, we have seen the last of Administrative Furloughs and Shutdowns, while knowing that the Sequester covers a 10 year period of time.

There are several events on the horizon involving HRO staff and you. These include Vigilant Guard 14 taking place during the week of 3 November (most of our staff is committed to some level of involvement), Federal Benefits open season which runs 11 November thru 9 December, Pre-Retirement Seminar (December), and the Basic Supervisor Course in the early part of 2014.

Till next time!

COL McLaughlin

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 and Development
207-430-6019

Mrs. Leet
Equal Employment
207-430-6014

CPT Snow
Staffing Specialist
207-430-6013

Vacant
Staffing Assistant
207-430-6011

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

Technician Retirement

Part one of a three part series to provide information for Maine National Guard Dual Status Technicians on Federal Civil Service Retirements. Currently the Maine National Guard only has employees covered under Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). In general FERS is a three-tiered retirement plan. The three components are: social security benefits, basic benefit plan and thrift savings plan. Another important milestone is the FERS Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) see table.

Eligibility for **voluntary** retirement has the following requirements for an unreduced annuity and if under age 62 payment of the FERS annuity supplement:

- MRA with 30 years of service
- Age 60 with 20 years of service
- Age 62 with 5 years of service

Maintaining military membership to meet the top two criteria is possible however there are laws in place that allow dual status technician to attain an unreduced annuity based upon **involuntary** loss of military membership.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines involuntary as the following: against the will and without the consent of the employee. Selective retention boards, mandatory removal/separation dates for officers and a commanders' non retention at ETS meet this criteria.

Discontinued service and early retirement are possible scenarios for technicians to qualify for an immediate unreduced FERS annuity.

A discontinued service retirement has the following age and service requirements:

- Age 50 with 20 years of service
- Any age with 25 years of service

HOWEVER individuals meeting the above criteria will NOT receive the annuity supplement until they reach their MRA.

Early retirement under special provisions for military reserve technicians provides for an immediate unreduced annuity AND annuity supplement. There were changes in the law and date of hire is important. Technicians hired on or before 10 February 1996 have one set of criteria and those hired after 10 February 1996 have a different set.

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

MRA Table

If you were born:	Your MRA is:
In 1950	55 & 6 months
In 1951	55 & 8 months
In 1952	55 & 10 months
In 1953 through 1964	56
In 1965	56 & 2 months
In 1966	56 & 4 months
In 1967	56 & 6 months
In 1968	56 & 8 months
In 1969	56 & 10 months
In 1970 and after	57





Formal Meetings– Part II

This is a continuing series of articles designed to clarify when contact with the Labor Organization representing Federal Technicians should occur.

In our last newsletter, the article titled “Formal Meetings - Part I” covered the basic elements of a “*formal meeting*”. In this article we’ll cover one of the situations, specifically a grievance, that brings the elements of a formal meeting in to play, and subsequently, contact to the Labor Organization.

If you’re a supervisor or manager and the recipient of a grievance, the first thing you should do is get a good understanding of the problem and what the Technician or group of Technicians’ desire for an outcome. Once these points are clear, STOP! An immediate response to the Technician/s’ is not required. Discuss the grievance with other levels of supervision, the Labor Relations Specialists, and other specialists as necessary based on the topic. Afterward, a response will be prepared according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) or Administrative Grievance Procedure, as appropriate. If a CBA is involved, the elements of a formal meeting will materialize and the supervisor should:

- Coordinate which Agency representatives will assist in delivery of the response, if necessary.
- Establish the meeting date, time, and location.
- Notify the appropriate Technician/Technicians’ of the date, time, and location of the meeting and that their attendance is mandatory.

It’s at this point contact with the Labor Organization should occur, but most supervisors fail to do so. They believe the fact that a steward works in the shop where the grievance materialized and is sitting in at the meeting satisfies the requirement. It does not. Others think it’s the responsibility of the Technician to indicate a desire for representation from labor. This applies only to situations where an investigation of the conduct of the employee is concerned. Although you won’t find this in the CBA, contact by the supervisor should be with the president so s/he can assign the steward/person. Other representatives may be contacted, but always consider starting as high in the labor chain-of-command as possible and working down through the list of recognized representatives.

There are other complaint type situations that may ripen to the point a formal meeting is required. Those include an appeal of a performance rating, disciplinary action or EEO complaint. Contact CMSgt Jeff Guesman, Labor Relations Specialist, HRO, DSN 626-6015, commercial 430-6015, or e-mail: jeffrey.a.guesman.mil@mail.mil, if questions arise.

Staffing– Job Applications

1. Have the job announcement number easily visible on all documents: Regardless of the document you submit for a TPVA, be it an OF 612 or resume, make sure that the TPVA number is on each document. Ensuring this makes your application easier to review and move through to the qualification processes.
2. List KSA’s when applying for all jobs: The KSA’s are simple 1 sentence qualifications for each job. If you list your experience in each KSA on any/all documents, your application will be clear and simple to review. The ability to list your experience in each KSA is an easy identifier for your qualifications for a vacancy.
3. Ensure that you have provided ALL documentation: College transcripts, training certificates, certifications and other documents can have great impact on your application. Not only can college credits help you qualify for higher grade jobs, but something as simple as a college transcript can be the difference between a GS-05 and a GS-06.



Staffing–

Military vs Technician Grades

The Technician Act of 1968(PL 90-486), 32 United States Code, 709(b) authorizes the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary of the Air Force to employ federal employee’s as Military Technicians. Under this law, a military technician (Dual Status), must be a member of the appropriate services National Guard, hold the military grade specified for that position and wear the uniform appropriate for the members’ grade.

Military grade takes precedence over Technician grades. Grade Inversion is strictly prohibited! A supervisor, a person who writes Standards, work performance Appraisals and approves Time and Attendance, must be superior in military grade to those they are a supervisor over. Very few exceptions are allowed and the Adjutant General is responsible for any waivers. All Military Technicians must be aware of the provision of the law, abide by it and foster a professional military full-time workforce. Technicians of lower military grade may be vested with authority granted by the Position they occupy, but it is important for both superior and subordinate military members to be respectful and professional with each other.

Technician Retirement, cont....

Early Retirement (On/before 10 February 1996)

Age 50 and 25 years of service

Prior federal service and prior title 10 military service with payment of a deposit can be used to meet the years of service

Early Retirement (After 10 February 1996)

Age 50 and 20 years as a *military reserve technician*

Any age and 20 years as a *military reserve technician*

Prior federal service or T10 service with payment of a military deposit **CANNOT** be used to meet the years of service but is used in the annuity computation

Open Season
Monday, November
11
Thru
Monday, December 09

The second part in the next newsletter will focus on deferred and reduced retirement options if one of the above criteria is not met for an immediate unreduced annuity.