



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

Employee Services

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: DENNIS DEAN KIRK, ESQ., EMPLOYEE SERVICES, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

MARK W. LAMBERT, MERIT SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Subject: Appointments and Awards During the 2020 Presidential Election Period

During this Presidential election year, we would like to remind agency heads of the need to ensure all personnel actions remain free of political influence or other improprieties and meet all relevant civil service laws, rules, and regulations. All official personnel records should clearly document continued adherence to Federal merit principles and remain free of any prohibited personnel practices. In particular, any appointments of political appointees, Schedule C employees, and Noncareer Senior Executive Service (SES) members to competitive or non-political excepted service positions or to career SES positions require careful attention to ensure they comply with merit principles regarding fair and open competition.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) current policy requires the pre-appointment review of all competitive and non-political excepted service appointment actions that involve the appointment or conversion of a current or former political appointee, Schedule C employee, or Noncareer SES member. OPM will continue to conduct merit staffing reviews of proposed career SES selections of political, Schedule C, and Noncareer SES appointees before those selections are presented to a Qualifications Review Board (QRB) for certification of executive qualifications. As it has in the past, OPM will suspend the processing of QRB cases during agency head transitions.

We have attached additional guidance concerning these appointments, incentive awards, and other employment matters, as well as instructions for submitting requests for pre-appointment review. If you have questions or need further information regarding pre-appointment reviews, contact Ana A. Mazzi, Principal Deputy Associate Director for Merit System Accountability and Compliance, at (202) 606-4309 or PoliticalConversions@opm.gov. For questions concerning executive resources management or incentive awards, contact David LaCerte, Senior Advisor, at (202) 606-8046 or Performance-Management@opm.gov.

Attachments (see 508-conformant PDF below):

1. Guidelines on Processing Certain Appointments and Awards during the 2020 Election Period, including OPM's Memo on Political Appointees and Career Civil Service Positions, Pre-Appointment Review Checklists, and Q&As

2. Merit System Principles, Prohibited Personnel Practices, and Civil Service Rules
3. Do's and Don'ts for Converting Schedule C and Noncareer SES Employees to the Competitive Service

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, and Human Resources Directors