



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, February 13, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: Kay Coles James, Director

Subject: Human Capital Planning for Emergency Situations

As you know, in response to the Department of Homeland Security recent high risk terrorist attack advisory, agencies have been taking a variety of preventive measures. Here at the Office of Personnel Management, we are available to work with you to meet any human resource management needs that may arise under an emergency situation.

An essential part of emergency contingency planning is to have a sound workforce communications strategy to allay employee concerns. I know that you recognize the importance of keeping employees informed of emergency procedures developed for your agency. We have been pleased to work with your Human Resource Management offices in the past to assist with outreach to employees in response to the September 11th attacks, anthrax contaminations, and to address other sensitive employee concerns. I recognize that agencies are once again taking steps to ensure the health and safety of employees ? our most valuable asset. Sharing such information at all levels in a coordinated manner within your agencies will help employees understand how your agency will operate during emergencies, while at the same time providing a level of confidence that is important to employee safety, welfare and morale.

As your employee communications plans continue to evolve, I want to make you aware of a number of resources that are available and may be referred to.

- An OPM publication, *Handling Traumatic Events: A Manager's Handbook*, is available on our web site at opm.gov/ehs/pdf/trauma.pdf to support employees who may be experiencing fear or anxiety.
- The web site developed by the Department of Homeland Security at dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme_home2.jsp on emergency response and readiness is an outstanding source of information for employees.
- Another excellent reference for personal and family preparedness is the recently updated FEMA publication, *Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness* which is also available online at fema.gov/areyouready.

In addition to your efforts that are already underway, I encourage you to work with and share information on your agency's emergency preparedness efforts with your applicable employee organizations and unions. At the national level, OPM will be hosting a meeting next week with Federal labor union leaders and employee associations, and representatives of the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the General Services

Administration to discuss relevant employee safety issues. In addition, we will continue our work with the 28 Federal Executive Boards to ensure that efforts are underway throughout the country to communicate with Federal employees on issues affecting their health and safety.

Specific guidance regarding policies and procedures for excused absence, overtime, premium pay, waivers for reemployed annuitants, emergency temporary appointments and other flexibilities appropriate for use during emergencies can be obtained through the OPM web site at <http://www.opm.gov>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of any assistance to you in developing your employee communications strategies or with your human resource management requirements.

cc: Human Resources Management Council