



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Monday, June 25, 2012
CPM 2012-04

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief Human Capital Officers

FROM: John Berry, Director

Subject: Preparing for the 2012 Hurricane Season

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts a “near-normal” hurricane season this year (i.e., June 1 through November 30) across the Atlantic basin. NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center forecasts a 70 percent chance of 9 to 15 named storms, of which 4 to 8 could become hurricanes (i.e., with winds of 74 miles per hour or higher). NOAA predicts that one to three of these hurricanes will be major (reaching Category 3 or above) with winds exceeding 110 miles per hour. For more information on NOAA’s 2012 hurricane season outlook, please see noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2012/20120524_atlantic_hurricane_season.html.

With these NOAA predictions in mind, it is important for agencies to be familiar with the wide range of human resources (HR) policies and flexibilities that are currently available to assist Federal employees affected by hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Pay and Leave Benefits

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a Handbook on Pay and Leave Benefits for Federal Employees Affected by Severe Weather Conditions or Other Emergency Situations that provides a general summary of the pay and leave benefits available to Federal employees prevented from working, or required to work, in an area affected by emergency situations. The Handbook is available at [http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2008/HandbookForEmergencies\(PayAndLeave\).pdf](http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2008/HandbookForEmergencies(PayAndLeave).pdf).

Employee and Family Support Benefits

Benefits for Federal employees and eligible family members remain unchanged during emergency situations. Information about employee and family support benefits and policies is available at www.opm.gov/pandemic/employees/benefits/index.aspx.

Telework

One of the major benefits of telework is its ability to help maintain the continuity of Government operations during emergency situations, while ensuring the safety of our employees. Assuming it is covered in employees’ telework agreements with the agency, an agency may require teleworkers to continue working at their alternative worksites, if they are able to do so, on their

telework day or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays during emergency situations when the agency is closed. Agencies do not have to designate teleworkers as emergency employees in order to require them to work during closure; however, OPM recommends that each agency anticipate this possibility in its emergency preparedness planning and discuss this with each telework employee in advance. All expectations should be included in each employee's telework agreement. For additional information on telework, please see A Guide to Telework in the Federal Government at telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/.

Emergency Critical Hiring

Under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(2), an agency may make 30-day appointments in the excepted service to fill a critical hiring need. An agency may extend these appointments for an additional 30 days. This authority may be used to fill Senior Level (SL) positions as well as positions at lower grades; the agency determines what qualifications are required. Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Reemployment Priority List (RPL), and Interagency CTAP (ICTAP) requirements under 5 CFR part 330 do not apply to these appointments.

Direct-Hire Authority

Agencies are reminded of current OPM-authorized Governmentwide direct hire authorities. These authorities allow agencies to appoint candidates directly for:

GS-0602 Medical Officers, GS-0610 and GS-0620 Nurses, GS-0647 Diagnostic Radiologic Technicians, and GS-0660 Pharmacists at all grade levels and all locations.

Information Technology Management (Information Security), GS-2210, GS-9 and above at all locations.

Veterinary Medical Officer positions at the GS-11 through GS-15 grade levels (or equivalent) nationwide to include overseas territories and commonwealths (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) may be used indefinitely or until OPM terminates this authority.

Positions involved in Iraqi Reconstruction Efforts that require fluency in Arabic or other related Middle Eastern languages at all WG levels, single-grade interval occupations in the General Schedule (GS), and two-grade interval GS occupations at GS-9 and above. Agencies may appoint U.S. citizens to positions at all locations.

Agencies may give individuals in the categories, occupations and specialties, and grades listed above competitive service career, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, an agency must adhere to the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and all ICTAP requirements. Additional information on these authorities is available at opm.gov/employ/html/sroa2.asp#directhire.

An agency should contact its OPM Human Capital Officer if it believes it has one or more occupations for which an agency-specific direct-hire authority may be appropriate in support of relief and recovery efforts.

Reemploying Annuitants

Under specified circumstances (which include responding to an emergency), agencies may bring back retirees without applying the dual compensation salary offset and without OPM approval as provided at 5 U.S.C. 8344(l) and 8468(i), which require that:

Appointments are limited to 1 year or less;

Hours worked by any annuitant reemployed under these provisions are limited to 520 during the first 6 months of retirement, 1,040 during any 12-month period, and 3,120 for total hours worked during any period; and

Reemployment may not exceed 2.5 percent of the full-time workforce at any time, and if 1 percent is exceeded, agencies are required to provide an explanation and justification to the Congress and OPM.

Agencies should contact OPM for reemployment that may be needed for longer time periods than allowable under this authority.

Agencies must contact OPM before reemploying retirees who left the Federal Government with a buyout. Depending upon the specific statute under which they received the buyout, agencies may request a buyout repayment waiver from OPM.

Other Hiring Flexibilities

SES limited appointments - Agencies have the authority to make Senior Executive Service (SES) Limited Term or Limited Emergency appointments for career employees, provided the appointment is within the space allocations limit previously authorized by OPM. Agencies may seek a temporary allocation from OPM if space is not currently available. Agencies may also seek authority from OPM to make Limited Term or Limited Emergency appointments of non-career employees using an automated form generated through the Executive and Schedule C System.

Use of private sector temporary employment firms - An agency may contract with private-sector temporary employment firms for services to meet emergency staffing needs. These contracts may be for 120 days and may be extended for an additional 120 days, subject to displaced employee procedures.

Temporary appointments less than 120 days - An agency may make competitive service appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP or ICTAP. However, these programs may help identify one or more well-qualified displaced Federal employees who are available for immediate employment.

Reemployment priority lists - Current and former employees on agency RPLs are another immediate source of qualified individuals available for temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments. Conversely, in some cases, an agency may apply an exception under 5 CFR 330.211 of the RPL provisions to appoint someone else.

Special Solicitations for Charitable Contributions during Emergency Situations

The Director of OPM may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, outside of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), in support of victims in emergency situations. The request must be in writing and include information on where the special solicitations will be conducted (i.e., agency name(s) and location(s); date(s) on which the special solicitation will be conducted; and information on the charitable organization(s) that will be the recipient of special solicitation funds). For information on the CFC, please visit www.opm.gov/cfc.

What Employees Can Do to Be Prepared

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urges residents to be prepared for their personal safety and survival in case of a hurricane. FEMA, along with NOAA, is helping to raise awareness of steps that can be taken to help protect citizens, their communities, and property. For additional information, see FEMA's hurricane preparedness page at fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtm.

Ready.gov (www.ready.gov) FEMA's Emergency Preparedness website, advises to take the following four steps toward preparedness at work and at home:

Be informed: Visit FEMA's website at www.ready.gov/be-informed to learn about the potential emergencies that can happen where you live and the appropriate ways to respond to them. Sign up for local area alerts. In the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, employees can use www.capitalert.gov. Employees in the Washington, DC, area can also sign up for OPM Operating Status alerts by visiting http://www.opm.gov/Operating_Status_Schedules/, and scrolling to the bottom of the page. Finally, employees can download the latest Governmentwide emergency pay and leave policies by visiting opm.gov/oca/compmemo/emerg.asp. Similarly, employees can consult their own agency's website for more tailored guidance and instructions.

Make-A-Plan: Visit FEMA's website at www.ready.gov/make-a-plan to create a Family or Personal Emergency Plan, in case you and your loved ones have to evacuate or become separated during a hurricane or severe weather. Employees should consult their own agency's website for workplace guidance on evacuations and sheltering-in-place.

Build-A-Kit: Visit FEMA's website at www.ready.gov/build-a-kit for information on shelter-in-place kits and ideas for personalizing kits with required medications, an emergency medical contact card, first aid kit, extra food and water, etc. The Build-A-Kit link contains a checklist of items to consider.

Get Involved: Visit FEMA's website at <http://www.ready.gov/get-involved> for opportunities to get involved in emergency assistance at work and at home. Employees may also check with their own agencies to find out how they can volunteer to help out others, including officemates with disabilities during evacuations and sheltering-in-place.

A booklet by FEMA with emergency preparedness information, guidance, and resources specific to Federal employees in the National Capital Region is also available at fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=6018.

For more information on hurricane preparedness, please visit: www.ready.gov/hurricanes.

Additional Information

For general information on Federal pay, leave, and work scheduling policies, please visit www.opm.gov/oca/index.asp. Employees should contact their agency human resources office for further information on flexibilities available in the event of a hurricane and agency field offices should contact their appropriate headquarters-level agency human resources office. Agency headquarters-level may contact Pay and Leave at OPM at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov. Requests from individual employees will be returned or forwarded to the appropriate agency human resources office.

cc: HR Directors