



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 01-02 (575)

APR 13 2001

SUBJECT: Departmental Policy on Recruitment and Relocation Bonuses and Retention Allowances.

1. This bulletin establishes the Department of the Interior's policy on the use of recruitment and relocation bonuses and retention allowances. It supersedes previous guidance issued under Personnel Management Letter No. 91-5 (575), dated July 15, 1991.
2. Authorities. Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) sections 5753 and 5754 and title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 575.
3. Policy. The Department of the Interior hereby establishes a policy for the payment of recruitment bonuses and relocation bonuses and retention allowances in accordance with the regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in 5 CFR Part 575. Heads of bureaus and equivalent organizations will be responsible for administering this policy.
 - a. Approving Officials.
 - (1) The Executive Resources Board (ERB) approves recruitment bonuses and relocation bonuses and retention allowances for employees occupying positions in the Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, and Scientific and Professional categories. Requests for payment of a bonus or allowance for employees at this level must be submitted to the Chairperson of the ERS through the appropriate Assistant Secretary or equivalent official.
 - (2) Decisions to approve or disapprove payment of recruitment bonuses, relocation bonuses and retention allowances for employees in the Immediate Office of the Secretary and in the Office of the Secretary will be made by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget (PMB). Requests will be submitted through the appropriate assistant secretary or equivalent official to the Assistant Secretary - PMB.
 - (3) Except for positions covered by paragraph, 3a(1) and (2), above, decisions to approve or disapprove payment of recruitment bonuses, relocation bonuses and retention allowances

will be made no lower than the heads of bureaus or equivalent organizations.

b. Criteria for Payment. The following criteria must be met or considered in authorizing these payments.

(1) Recruitment Bonuses and Relocation Bonuses - Individual and Group. Each bonus paid will be based on a written determination that, in the absence of a bonus, the bureau or organization would encounter difficulty in filling the position with a high quality candidate. Group relocation bonuses may be approved as provided for in 5 CFR 575.204(d). In determining whether a recruitment bonus or relocation bonus should be paid and in determining the amount of such a payment, including group bonuses, the following factors will be considered.

- (a) The success of recent efforts to recruit high quality candidates for similar positions;
- (b) Recent turnover in similar positions;
- (c) Labor market factors that may affect the ability of the bureau or organization to recruit high quality candidates for similar positions now or in the future;
- (d) Special qualifications needed for the position; and
- (e) In the case of recruitment bonuses, the practicality of using the superior qualifications appointment authority alone or in combination with a bonus.

(2) Retention Allowances - Individual and Group. Each retention allowance paid will be based on a written determination that the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the bureau or equivalent organization for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee and that, in the absence of such an allowance, the employee would be likely to leave federal service. This determination will be based on a written description of the extent to which the employee's departure would affect the bureau's or organization's ability to carry out an activity or perform a function essential to its mission. For group retention allowances the same written determination must be made. The targeted group will be narrowly defined using factors such as occupational series, grade level, distinctive job duties, unique qualifications, assignment to a special project, organization or team designation, geographic location and performance level. Performance level may not be the

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sole or primary basis for authorizing a group retention allowance. In determining whether a retention allowance, including group retention allowances, should be paid and the amount of such payment, the following factors should be considered:

(a) The success of recent efforts to recruit candidates and retain employees with qualifications similar to those of the employee for positions similar to the employee's position:

(b) The availability in the labor market of candidates for employment who could perform the full range of duties and responsibilities assigned to the position held by the employee.

c. Payment of Bonuses and Allowances - Individual and Group.

(1) Payment of recruitment bonuses and relocation bonuses are calculated as a percentage of the employee's rate of base pay and are paid as a lump sum. The maximum bonus will not exceed 25 percent of the employee's rate of basic pay. The amount of a relocation bonus for a law enforcement officer (as defined in 5 CFR 575.205(b)) may not exceed the greater of \$15,000 or 25 percent of the officer's basic pay.

(2). The following requirements apply to payment of retention allowances:

(a) A retention allowance is calculated as a percentage of the employee's rate of basic pay and paid in the same manner and at the same time as basic pay. The maximum individual retention allowance will not exceed 25 percent of basic pay. The maximum retention allowance for a group or category of employees will not exceed 10 percent of basic pay (or 25 percent with Office of Personnel Management approval).

(b) A retention allowance may not be authorized for an employee to the extent that such an allowance, when added to the annual rate of all other continuing payments to which the employee is entitled, would cause the annual rate of all continuing payments to exceed the rate then payable for level I of the Executive Schedule.

(c) An employee receiving a recruitment bonus or relocation bonus must complete the period of service requirement

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before a retention allowance may be paid. However, a relocation bonus may be paid to an employee already receiving a retention allowance.

(d) A retention allowance may be continued as long as the conditions giving rise to the original determination to pay the allowance still exist. Designated approving officials will review each allowance determination at least annually to determine if payment is still warranted. This determination will be certified in writing by the approving official.

(e) Retention allowances will be reduced or terminated when the conditions in 5 CFR 575.307 are met.

(3) The payment of a bonus or allowance in one instance will not require a similar decision in other instances.

(4) Determinations on the payment or nonpayment (or discontinuance of) bonuses or allowances are final. Employees will have no right to appeal or grieve such determinations.

d. Requirement for Service Agreements.

(1) Before a recruitment bonus is paid, the employee will sign a written agreement to complete a specified period of employment. The minimum period of service is 6 months. However, where appropriate, for reasons established by the approving official, an approving official is encouraged to seek agreements requiring a period of service beyond 6 months.

(2) Before a relocation bonus is paid, the employee must sign a written agreement to complete a specified period of employment. The minimum period of service requirement should be 6 months. However, where appropriate, for reasons established by the approving official, an approving official is encouraged to seek agreements requiring a period of service beyond 6 months.

(3) If the employee fails to complete the length of service required in paragraphs 1 or 2, above, he or she will be required to reimburse the Department for the amount of the bonus on a pro rata basis. The repayment will be accomplished in accordance with the Department's regulations for collections by offset from an indebted Government employee under 5 U.S.C. 5514 and 5 CFR 550, subpart K.

(4) The above repayment requirements do not apply when an employee is involuntarily separated, or in the case of a relocation bonus, is provided with a written determination by the

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head of the bureau or equivalent organization (or a designated representative) that it is necessary to relocate the employee to a position in a different commuting area. The repayment may be waived in whole or in part as prescribed by the Department's debt collection rules when recovery would be against equity and good conscience or against the public interest.

e. Documentation and Records. The Department's Human Resource (HR) Strategic Plan has a focus area dedicated to "enhancing a quality workplace and competitive benefits." Use of recruitment and retention incentives is a positive indicator of program performance in that area. Bureaus should track authority usage in their HR accountability systems and encourage their use. Further, each designated approving official is responsible for ensuring that the basis for any recruitment bonus and relocation bonus and retention allowance is documented in accordance with 5 CFR Part 575. Documentation shall be available for review and submission upon request. In addition, on a fiscal year basis, each designated approving official shall compile and maintain the following information:

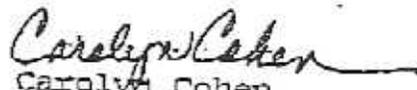
(1) The number of recruitment bonuses and relocation bonuses and retention allowances offered and the number accepted (individual and group);

(2) The percentage of salary offered and accepted in each individual case; and

(3) A summary statement assessing the effect of the bonus/allowance authority on the ability to fill positions with qualified candidates in a timely manner or in the case of retention allowance, to retain the services of employees.

f. Program Oversight and Evaluation. Bureaus and equivalent organizations will review the use of these authorities at least annually. The results of such reviews will be made available upon request.

4. The Department point of contact on this policy is Jim Tingwald, (202) 208-6755, mail stop; 5221 MIB, email: Jim.Tingwald@ios.doi.gov.


Carolyn Cohen
Director, Personnel Policy

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

MAR 30 2001

Memorandum

To: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation Policy
Bureau of Land ManagementFrom: Carolyn Cohen *Carolyn Cohen*
Director, Office of Personnel PolicySubject: Transmission of Secretarial Order No. 3227, Delegation of Authority to Waive
Dual Compensation Limits

In anticipation of another severe fire season this year, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) has been delegated authority to waive certain dual compensation limitations through December 31, 2004.

Secretarial Order No. 3227 delegates this waiver authority to you to expedite the process of employment. Attachment 1 is a copy of the waiver authority from the Office of Personnel Management. Our notice to the Department's Personnel Officers about the delegated authority and how they should request your approval of waivers is at Attachment 2.

This waiver authority will allow former employees to retain their annuity and receive regular pay. It applies throughout the Department in the following situations:

- Where individuals are reemployed to fight fires or immediately support fire-fighting operations during a period of Preparedness Level 4 or 5 (Fire Emergency). If needed, up to 80 hours of training time is allowed prior to Preparedness Level 4 or 5.
- Where individuals are reemployed to lead special crews that include members of the armed forces or National Guard during periods of Preparedness Level 5 (Fire Emergency).
- Where individuals are reemployed at any time to train other employees in these fire-fighting efforts. A waiver for training purposes is limited to 500 hours per year.
- Where individuals in any occupation are reemployed to fill in for a current employee in a mission critical position who is pulled for more than two weeks during a period of Preparedness Level 4 or 5 (Fire Emergency). If this type of situation is foreseen, the annuitant may be offered a waiver in order to return to receive up to 80 hours of refresher training.

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This authority may not be used for administrative support or other positions that do not directly and immediately support mission critical wildland fire suppression activities, such as work involving land rehabilitation. Waiver requests for positions that are not covered by this delegation authority may be directed to the DOI Office of Personnel Policy. The Office of Personnel Management is prepared to expedite individual requests that meet the criteria in 5CFR 553.201 (c), (d), and/or (e).

The OPM delegation requires that certain records and certifications are made and retained each time a waiver is granted. We developed a form to assist with obtaining this documentation. Any DOI personnel office that wishes to exercise this waiver authority must obtain prior written approval from you (the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation) using the forms and procedures described in the notice to Bureau and Office Personnel Officers.

For further information or questions, our point of contact is John Combs at (202) 208-6754.

2 Attachments.