



HR NEWSLETTER

BLM/BIA/NPS-NIFC

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BLM OF&A

Fitness Reimbursement Program

In an effort to promote and maintain employee physical fitness, the program reimburses employees up to 50 percent of an individual membership fee for a commercial, non-federally sponsored fitness center, (not to exceed \$275.00 annually). Prior to participation, the employee must complete and sign an Informed Consent and Waiver Form and obtain their supervisor's approval.

OF&A will not reimburse initiation fees. However, if an employee has a family membership, the employee must provide documentation of the cost for an individual membership, which may be reimbursed. Information can be found on our HR Website.

Participation is voluntary for permanent full and part-time employees and those employees on a one year or more appointment. To be eligible for reimbursement, cost-shared participation must be in an off-site commercial physical fitness and employees must self certify participation in fitness activities at their facility for an average of two times per week for at least 1/2 hour per visit as further discussed in the Fitness Center Membership Fee Reimbursement Program Instruction Memorandum which can be found on the HR intranet.

Employees participating in the Fitness Reimbursement program and who are seeking reim-

bursement for 2006 must provide the following completed documents to HR between January 1-31, 2007:

An **Informed Consent and Waiver Form** must be on file with HR. If an Informed Consent and Waiver Form is not already on file with HR, employees must submit a completed Informed Consent and Waiver Form to HR.

Fitness Center Membership Fee Reimbursement Program Self-Certification of Usage.

Paid invoice(s) or other proof of payment for individual membership for the time period reimbursement is requested. *Proof of payment for membership fees must be provided before employees can receive reimbursement. As well as, a copy of fitness contract or other documentation that provides information on the cost of an individual, annual membership at the fitness facility.*

FAQ's:

Q: When do I submit 2006 membership for reimbursement?

A: Between January 1-31, 2007. Refer back to the IM for more guidance.

Q: I started at BLM October 1, 2006, what por-

tion of 2006 can I be reimbursed for?

A: BLM will pay for 2006 membership beginning the effective date of your appointment to the agency, not the beginning of 2006.

Q: Who will submit the required documents for reimbursement?

A: Employees will submit required documents to HR and HR will submit the Report of Taxable Fringe Benefit with the copy of the proof of payment submitted by employees.

Q: When should I expect to see the funds in my pay?

A: We expect reimbursements to take at least 4 pay periods after mid February submission. Therefore, you should expect to see a Fringe Benefits amount about mid April.

For questions regarding this program, contact the Fitness Program Coordinator, Nanette Cambron at X5518.

• *Don't Forget, December 25th is a Federal Holiday, all timesheets must be submitted by COB December 22nd*



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Health Benefits Open Season

The 2007 Health Benefits Open Season will end December 11, 2006. Employees are reminded to make their elections before the Open Season Period ends.

Employees interested in changing their FEHB can complete a SF-2809 form and returning it to HR. Information on the FEHB plans can be found at

<http://www.opm.gov/insure/07/>

Employees interested in enrolling in the new FEDVIP program MUST enroll on-line <https://www.benefeds.com/>

Information on the Dental and Vision plans can be found at the benefeds website. Employees may elect to enroll in Dental, Vision or both.

The Flexible Spending Account Program's Open Season also ends December 11. Employees who participated last year MUST re-enroll again this year. Elections do on carry over from year to year. For information of the FSA program, visit

<https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>

For questions regarding open season, contact HR at X5523.



Requesting Restoration of Annual Leave Procedure

Employees who had approved annual leave canceled by the Acting Deputy Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation Directorate (Boise) due to an approved exigency, meet the requirements to have their leave restored and wish to request to have their leave restored, must submit the following:

1. A completed copy of the enclosed Request for Restoration of Forfeited Annual Leave (P-82);
2. A copy of the employee's approved request for leave (OPM 71);
3. A copy of the supervisor's cancella-

tion of that leave;

4. A copy of the Acting Deputy Assistant Director's, Fire and Aviation Directorate (Boise) approval of the exigency; and,
5. A supervisor's statement supporting the employee's request for restoration. The statement should include an explanation why other alternatives could not have been implemented and why the excess leave could not have been scheduled prior to end of the leave year.

Approved requests for leave restoration must be submitted to the HR Office (FA-202) for review and submission to the Payroll Operations Division for processing. All approved restored leave will be credited to the employee in a separate leave account.

Please refer to Information Bulletin FA IB-2007-002 for additional information and guidance.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to Karin Nichols, x5320.

FY 2007 and 27 pay periods

The FY2007 will have 27 pay periods rather than the usual 26. Below is information regarding how this impacts certain areas.

Thrift Savings Plan Contributions

Thrift savings plan contributions will be deducted at the rate or dollar amount specified by the employee

for 27 pay periods in the tax year. The limit is currently \$15,000 and will be \$15,500 for 2007. Employees should consider the IRS-established maximum in determining their contribution amounts. It is especially important for FERS employees wishing to obtain the maximum government matching contribution each pay period to have a contri-

buton rate of at least 5% for each of the 27 pay periods. Employees who reach the IRS cap before the end of the year will not be able to have further employee contributions and will therefore lose any government matching contributions for the rest of the year.



Thrift Catch-up Contributions

Thrift catch-up contributions are also subject to the annual limit established by IRS. The limit is \$5,000 for 2006 and will be subject to an increase to reflect inflation after 2006. Employees wishing to allocate the maximum amount evenly over the pay periods in 2007 should divide the maximum contribution by 27 pay periods, rather than 26.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Even though there will be 27 pay periods in the year, SHPS, Inc., the manager of the Flexible Spending Program, will still divide the annual authorized deduction amount by 26 when feeding deduction data to FPPS. For employees who reach their annual authorized deduction in pay period 26 in 2007, this will result in no deduction for their Flexible Spending Accounts in pay period 27 in 2007.

Taxes and Wages

Your Wage and Tax Statement, FormW-2, for 2007 will include wages paid and taxes withheld for 27 pay periods. Employees may question why their wages for 2007 exceed their annual salary. The salary defines the rate at which an employee earns pay, but the wages represent actual payments to the employee during the tax year, net of pre-tax or deferred tax items. 5 USC 5504 dictates the manner in which an annual salary is converted to an hourly rate for calculating pay.

Aggregate Pay Limitation

The statutory limit (Level 1 of Executive Schedule—for 2006 the rate was \$183,500) on pay which applies to most employees exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (see 5 USC 5307) is still applicable in a year with 27 pay periods. More employees will reach that limit in a year with 27 pay periods than in one with only 26 pay periods. Retention, recruitment, or relocation incentives authorized under 5 USC 5753 and 5754 which would cause the employee to exceed the aggregate limitation on pay may also

be reduced or suspended.

Annual Premium Pay Limitation

The annual premium pay limits (greater of annualized rate payable for GS-15, step 10, OR level V of Executive Schedule—the rate for 2006 for the rest of US was \$133,850 and Level V was \$133,900) defined in 5 USC 5547(b)(2) still apply in a year with 27 pay periods. For employees exempt from the FLSA, if regular pay projected for the year plus Title 5 overtime, night differential, standby pay, availability pay, administratively uncontrollable overtime (AUO), Sunday premium, or holiday worked reach the limits, no additional premium pay may be paid. Compensatory time may not be substituted for overtime that is not payable.

Leave

There is no impact on leave accruals. The 2007 leave year runs from pay period 02 in 2007 through pay period 01 in 2008 (26 pay periods).

Employees in the 6 hour leave category will get their extra 4 hours in pay period 27 of 2007, the last full pay period of the calendar year. The pay period calendar for 2007 is available for review and printing at the NBC website

<http://www.nbc.gov>.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact us at X5523. For questions regarding the Aggregate Pay Limitation and/or the Annual Premium Pay Limitation, contact Jim Knox at X5514.





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Guidance Resources On-line (EAP)

Guidance Resources On-line is a free employee assistance resource. On this website, employees are able to find information on

- Health and Wellness
- Family and Relationships
- Work and Education
- Money and Investments
- Law and Regulations
- Consumer and leisure

Employees also can email or call a Guidance Expert with questions they may have.

To check out the articles and news on the Guidance Resources website, log on to:

www.guidanceresources.com

Click on "First Time User" and create your userid and password

(Company/Organization ID is: FEDSOURCE)

New Hire

Pamela Douglas BLM

Training Calendar

Retirement Seminar

January 24 & 25

Pathways

February 12-16

1st Forty Supervisory Training

March 12-16

