



HRO-04-14
15 April 2014

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[Technician Branch Staff:](#)

**Technician Branch Manager
Classification/Manpower**

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| MAJ Edwin Davis | x8414 |
| Deb Burling | x8187 |
| 2LT Jessica Pan | x8182 |
| Ms. Denise Anderson | x8177 |
| MSgt Jody Kouma | x8190 |
| SPC Amanda Almanza | x8197 |
| SGT John Winterfeld | x8173 |

**Recruitment, Staffing & Pay
Benefits & Services**

Technician Training /Travel

Ms. Diane Voichoski x8184
Vacant x8185

HRO website: <http://ne.ng.mil/ArmyGuard/Pages/TechnicianBranch.aspx>

Federal Length of Service Awards (Feb):

Technicians become eligible for recognition when they complete ten (10) years of creditable Federal service. Creditable service includes all service used in establishing the technician's leave service computation date which includes active duty military and temporary federal employment. This award is presented in five (5) year increments.

- 10 Years: Steven M. Smith Jr. (ANG)
Schyler W. Foos (ARNG)
Matthew J. Powell (ARNG)
- 15 Years: David Godoy (ARNG)
Gabriel H. Kelly (ARNG)
Joshua J. Michaelson (ARNG)
- 20 Years: Gregory J. Clement (ARNG)
Deborah A. Burling (ANG)
- 25 Years: Denise L. Anderson (ARNG)
- 30 Years: Dennis J. Holm (ARNG)

Federal Employee Retirements:

David Hayes (ARNG)

Qualifying Life Events:

For benefit purposes you may want to contact us when certain life events occur.

Marriage - Is there a name change that needs to be submitted on an SF-52?

FEHB, FEGLI, and FEDVIP insurances should be reviewed. Changes input on EBIS. Tax Withholding input on MyPay.

Beneficiary changes for FEGLI, TSP, Unpaid Compensation or FERS?

Divorce - Same items as Marriage. Also, if the divorce decree grants part of your civilian retirement to the ex-spouse the decree needs to be sent to OPM for review and determination. The spouse may be eligible for FEHB or FEHB temporary continuation of coverage (TCC) under the Spouse Equity Act.

Birth/Adoption of a child - Changes to FEHB and FEGLI?

Child turns 26 and no longer covered under FEHB - They are eligible for FEHB TCC.

www.opm.gov/insure

Loss of Insurance Coverage thru Spouse

Change in FERS Retirement Deductions

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 made another change to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Beginning January 1st, 2014, new employees will pay the higher contributions, which is 4.4%. Section 8401 of Title 5, USC, has been amended to add the new definition of those who are covered

under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) as Further Revised Annuity Employees (FRAE), FERS-FRAE.

As a reminder, it was only last year, the Federal Employees Retirement System implemented the Revised Annuity Employees (RAE), with deductions being 3.1%.

Employees hired after January 1st, 2014 fall under the FERS-FRAE. However, agency systems such as payroll and retirement coding have not been updated. Until agency systems are updated, the employees are having 3.1% deducted and will have a “debt” to pay. Adjustments to the retirement deductions will be made retroactive to their date of appointment. HR will notify the employees affected along with their supervisors.

Moved Lately?

Everyone needs to review their correspondence address in MyPay. The address in MyPay is critical as it is used for mailing documents pertaining to civilian employment such as proof of military deposits. In addition, TSP uses the address you have indicated to send correspondence regarding various items such as matching and annual reports.

AFSC/MOS & Civilian Descriptions

When applying for a position DoD has a good tool to use it is called Verification of Military Experience (VMET) and Training, This will help in translating your military experience into the civilian workforce i.e. technician employment. You could upload the VMET under other documents however you will still need to submit a resume as it is a required document for all federal positions. VMET can be found at <https://pki.dmdc.osd.mil/tgps/pages/home.xhtml>

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Technician Travel & Training

Human Resource Development Staff

Mrs. Diane Voichoski – HRDS – x8184
Vacant- x8185 – Info Systems & HR Development Assistant

SF 182 - Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training

The SF 182 is the request for training for all technicians. Here is the link:

<https://states.gkoportal.ng.mil/states/NE/Directorates/J1/Tech/Documents/SF182.xfd1>

We only need the 1st two pages of the SF182 and only ONE supervisor signature on page #2.

DTS Substantiating Records - ARNG

NGB-Approved Training & Travel events: An event announced on NGB letterhead means the EVENT has been approved by NGB. The TRAVEL to that event requires approval by the JAG and Chief of Staff. Attach JAG/CofS written approval as a substantiating Record before routing the authorization for approval. Note that the event Letter of Instruction (LOI) also needs to be attached.

See the “Travel Approval” folder (last item) at the link below for additional information.

<https://states.gkoportal.ng.mil/states/NE/Command-Group/SJ-AG/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

PEC Course DTS Authorizations:

Remember to note the course number (examples: ITTC-XXX, LTC-XXX, HRR-XXX) in the trip description block. This is a PEC requirement.

[Human Resources Information Systems \(HRIS\)](#)

HRIS Staff

SMSgt Mike Courtney – HRIS Manager – x8189
Vacant – x8185

My Workplace and PAA

If you are a new Supervisor of Technicians and don't see a My Workplace link on the DCPDS Portal page, please contact SMSgt Courtney. I will check to ensure you are coded correctly in the system. This new responsibility takes a couple of days to appear once you are coded as a supervisor in DCPDS, so your patience is appreciated.

PAA – (Performance Appraisal Application): if you are a new supervisor of Technicians, please check to ensure you can see all of the Technician employees you supervise within My Workplace. If you don't see those you need or see other Technicians, please contact me and I will help sort it out for you.

DCPDS Employee - Manager (EM) Portal

This new EM Portal is currently on hold as testing is being accomplished. Stay tuned for future developments.

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[State Personnel](#)

HRO-SP Staff

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| HR Manager | Ms. Polly Putney | x8172 |
| HR Assistant/Benefits | Mr. Tim Diedrichsen | x8180 |
| HR Assistant/Payroll | Ms. Bonnie Shipley | x8178 |

HEALTH FITNESS - HEALTH ASSESSMENTS – BIOMETRIC SCREENINGS

As of April 1, 2014 participants are able to complete their Health Assessment (HA). If employees and spouses complete their HA and then later complete a biometric screening, the results from the screening will be loaded into the participant's HA within a few days of being processed by Health Fitness, the company that administrates the State's wellness program. This year, employees and spouses will have the option of completing their HA during the on-site biometric screening events. **Employees (and spouses, if applicable) need to complete Health Assessments and Biometric Screenings by May 31, 2014** to qualify for the Wellness plan for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 plan years.

If you will not be able to attend the Military Department's on-site screening event, on the morning of May 5, 2014, there are two other options besides scheduling a screening at another site. First there is the Home Kit. It must be ordered by April 20th and mailed in envelope provided no later than April 30, 2014. There is also an Alternative Means Screening form that you can take to your doctor to be completed. It must be mailed or faxed by April 30, 2014. If you fax, be sure to save your "successful fax confirmation receipt" for your records.

For further information how to participate in each biometric screening option and to complete your HA, visit www.wellnessoptions.nebraska.gov. After you log in you can click on various links to learn about the screening options, view the screening locations, schedule screening appointments and complete your health assessment. **The Alternative Means Screening form** is available on the wellNEssoptions website by clicking on 'screenings' at the bottom of the page (scroll down).

For more information on the WellnessOptions programs and to learn about resources available to employees and spouses (covered by any of the State's medical plans) visit the website above or call 866-956-4285.

The following items are allowed for participation on company time: Open Enrollment, Health Assessment, onsite biometric screenings, sending and receiving e-mails to/from HealthFitness to/from your work e-mail. Submitting activities are allowed on a State computer, but is to be done on personal time (lunch time or break). Participation is in no way to be considered part of or arising out of employment for the purposes of workers' compensation or for any other purpose.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open Enrollment will start on May 13, 2014 and end on May 27, 2014. We should have information about all the plans and options by April 21st for employees to review. Human resources will send out emails with information on what's new and where employees can look at plan information. Open enrollment will be completed in the Employee Work Center (EWC) on the LINK site – link.nebraska.gov . Employees need to read and review all the information in the enrollment process. **Scroll down to the bottom of each page** to make sure you have seen everything. **Review and print the conformation page** at the end of the enrollment process. Make sure that all of the plans that you wish to have in effect for the new plan year are listed on the confirmation page.

ADDRESSES - KEEP THEM CURRENT

All employees should ensure their address is kept up-to-date. Employees can make changes directly in the Employee Work Center (EWC). It's important to enter address changes as soon as possible so you receive all mail from insurance vendors, the retirement office and Human Resources. It also helps ensure that the State does not incur extra costs related to incorrect addresses. After you log in to the EWC, click on the 'All About Me' link at the top of the screen then click on the Personal Information icon. Underneath the word 'change' you will be able to go to 'Contact Information'. In the next screen you will use the Edit button, that's just under your name, to make changes.

RETIREMENT NEWSLETTERS / BENEFICIARIES

The Nebraska Public Employee Retirement System newsletters are no longer printed and sent to employees. Please visit the Retirement website npers.ne.gov to view the newsletters. Once in the site you can click on Publications/Videos under the Member Info along the left side of the screen. Then scroll down to Newsletters and look in the right-hand column under State – County – DCP.

Keep all **your** retirement beneficiaries up-to-date. **Your retirement beneficiaries are updated separately from your life insurance beneficiaries.** If you have major life events you'll want to get the proper forms, if needed, and fill them out. The retirement beneficiary forms are available on the retirement website. Retirement beneficiary forms are returned to the retirement office, using the address toward the top of the form, **after being notarized.**

BENEFICIARIES FOR INSURANCE PLANS

Beneficiary changes related to your insurance coverage can be made in the Employee Work Center. After you log in, click on the 'All About Me' link at the top of the screen then click on the Benefits icon. Underneath the word 'change' you will be able to go to Benefits. On the next screen there will be a Benefit Change Type box. Click on the triangle to get a list, click on 'Beneficiary Change' and then enter the Benefit Event Date (this can be the current date). Click on Submit at the bottom of the screen and follow the process to make changes. Make sure to print out any confirmation of the change for your records.

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AGR Personnel

Army and Air:

The AGR Office Staff:

MAJ Ed Davis, AGR Manager (402) 309-8171

SFC Jacob Widhalm, Human Resources Assistant, (402) 309-8186

- Army Staffing- vacancy announcements, SF 52
- Mob Aug/ADOS packet review
- Initial Tour Continuation Boards
- Air Vacancy Announcements, SF 52
- FTSMCS Leave Administrator

SFC Roger Ramos, Personnel Sergeant, (402) 309-8183

- Army Separations and Retirements
- AGR Travel (DTS)
- AGR Mobilizations
- AGR PCS Manager
- Career Status Bonus Manager

SSG Amber Engelman, Personnel Services Sergeant, (402) 309-8181

- Air staffing and AROWS Orders
- FTE Orders and Tracking
- Army Appointment and Reassignments
- AGR Pay and Entitlement Issues
- Air AGR Appointments and Reassignments
- Good Conduct Medals
- Air Occasional AGRs

UnitedHealthcare: Effective 1 April 2013, health coverage switched from Triwest to UnitedHealthcare. To see a list of available PCM's, go to <https://www.uhcmilitarywest.com/>. To qualify for Tricare benefits, service members must ensure DEERS is up to date (dependents and active duty tours). Maintaining current CAC keeps DEERS enrollment and ensures medical and dental benefits are not interrupted. POC is SSG Garrett, (402) 309-1541.

Active Duty Dental Program: Effective 1 August 2009, the Active Duty Dental Program insurance is United Concordia. United Concordia was awarded the contract to oversee ALL Active Duty Dental Services. Your care no longer goes through MMSO, but rather, DIRECTLY through UCCI Dental. The website: www.addp-ucci.com further explains how to utilize the program. POC is SSG Garrett, (402) 309-1541.

TriCare Dental Program: MetLife's contract to administer the TDP began 1 May 2012. Until that time claims should be processed through United Concordia as they have in the past. Providers should be sent information, by MetLife, as to what will they will need to do to file claims during the transition. As with United Concordia, the filing of claims is the network provider's responsibility, not the SMs.

The transition to MetLife will only affect Traditional SMs, family members and AGR family members enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program. SMs (AGRs) in the Active Duty Dental Program (ADDP) will not be affected as United Concordia will continue to administer the ADDP.

The State Medical Benefits Officer is SSG Travis Garrett and can be reached at 402-309-1541 or travis.s.garrett.mil@mail.mil for further questions and information.

Transition Assistance Advisor: If you are planning to retire or resign from the AGR program, contact Bonnie Bessler at (402) 309-1543, bonnie.bessler@us.army.mil. Bonnie serves as our Transition Assistance Advisor and provides vital assistance and guidance on future VA benefits, programs and

medical claims you may qualify for. This service is open to ALL military personnel regardless of branch of service, active or reserve.

Leave Carryover: The 75 Day Leave Carryover is extended to 30 September 2015. Visit the following web site for more information: https://ngnec2-moss1/Directorates/J1/AGR%20Branch/Leave/ALARACT_022_2013_ANNOUNCEMENT%20OF%20EXTENSION%20OF%20THE%2075%20DAY%20LEAVE%20CARRY%20OVER%20THROUGH%2030%20SEPTEMBER%202015.pdf

Paternity Leave: The policy concerning Paternity Leave is: <http://ngne-j6noc-nma7/Directorates/J1/AGR%20Branch/Leave/Paternity%20Leave%20Policy.pdf>

Child Care Fee Assistance: The Childcare Subsidy Benefit Program: Used to assist any active duty personnel with childcare costs by providing payments directly to federal childcare centers located throughout the United States. Direct questions on eligibility and application for the subsidy should be addressed to the GSA Heartland Finance Center at (816) 823-4578 or via email: army.childcare@gsa.gov. Childcare providers should contact GSA's External Services Division for a complete application package and information regarding participation in The Air Childcare Subsidy Benefit Program.

Extending Benefits to Same-Sex Spouses: On 13 August 2013, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel made the announcement of extending benefits to same-sex spouses of military members. Entitlements such as TRICARE enrollment, basic allowance for housing (BAH) and family separation allowance are retroactive to the date of the Supreme Court's decision. Any claims to entitlements before that date will not be granted. For those members married after June 26, 2013, entitlements begin at the date of marriage. Commanders may grant non-chargeable leave to Service members who are in same-sex relationships and are assigned to duty stations located more than 100 miles from a U.S. state that allows same-sex couples to marry, for travel to a state jurisdiction that allows same-sex couples to be married. Eligible Service members assigned CONUS may be granted non-chargeable leave for a period of up to 7 days; eligible Service members assigned OCONUS may be granted non-chargeable leave for a period of up to 10 days. Marriage leave may be granted only once during the career of a Service member. For additional information, please see the Nebraska's HRO page on GKO.

Army:

Leave Tracking System – When you move duty positions to another organization, please log into the leave tracking system and go to my account. Once there, scroll down and select the drop down next to change user group to update your organization. This will change your approving officials for your leave requests.

Reassignments: - AGR's need to complete DA 5960's when reassigned to a new duty location. This will and does affect BAH Rates and Soldiers will incur debts from BAH changes.

DTS – All Soldiers need to upload the MOI/LOI into their DTS Authorization request. This includes in-state conferences and training events. Also AGR's need to submit travel requests in a timely manner. Do not wait until the last minute to submit when there are multiple levels of review/approval to include CTO. It is the Soldiers responsibility to make contact with Carlson Travel and ensure their flights/entitlements are reserved and contracted. Battalions and MSC's need to ensure GSA/NTV's are utilized.

Pay and Entitlement Documents – The following documents are required to be sent thru HRO for processing on all AGRs: Promotion orders, special pay orders, allotments, CSB Redux, DA Form 5960 (BAH), SF 1199, W4, DA 4187 (Selling leave, meal collection, confinement and sick-in-hospital for more than one day), DA Form 4836 Extensions.

ADOS/Mob Augmentee – All Soldiers coming on ADOS tours greater than 30 days need to in-process with SSG Engelman. Call to set up an appointment. Females need to have a pregnancy test completed with Med Det no sooner than 15 days prior to the start date of orders.

Meal collection via 4187 – If you are attending a School or Annual Training where meals are available, you need to complete a DD 1475 collecting your BAS for the period that meals were available. The DD 1475 needs to be sent to HRO and we will send to pay for processing.

OCONUS – If you are going OCONUS, please let HRO know ASAP so we complete the OCONUS orders process. We need to know about your travel OCONUS NLT two weeks before traveling.

PCS – If you are completing a PCS move, you will need to coordinate with HRO and the Offutt TMO to complete this process.

DD 214 – These need to be electronically signed. You must coordinate with HRO to complete this with SFC Ramos.

BAH for Deployed Soldiers: Effective 3 April 2013, when an AGR is mobilized for active duty other than AGR duty without a break in service, the member's BAH/OHA is based on the PDS and rate protected. The change requires Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to remain at the Permanent Duty Station (PDS) rate when a Soldier transitions from Active Guard Reserve (AGR) to active duty, without a break in service. AGR Soldiers mobilized prior to 3 April 2013 and receiving BAH/OHA based on primary residence will continue to receive this rate until they transition back to AGR duty.

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[Equal Employment Office/Diversity/Organizational Development](#)

(Point of contact for the following information is LaVonne Rosenthal, 309-8111.)

Dealing With Stress

The following information is from Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Employee Assistance Program.

Stress

Have a Plan for Managing Stress

Sure, it would be nice to take a month off at the beach to relax. But for most of us that's not possible. Stress is a part of everyday modern life. So what do we do when the pressures of work, family life and finances begin to add up?

First, it's important to learn how to identify the signs of stress. When in a stressful situation, you may show signs of physical symptoms. These can include headaches, rapid heartbeat or muscle tension. You may also notice emotional effects like irritability, restlessness or depression. Over time these can seriously affect your health.

Cut Stress as a Family

About three-fourths of parents say that family responsibilities are a major source of their stress. At the same time, only a small percentage of youth say their parents' stress does *not* bother them. Children often learn the behaviors they see in their parents. So, it helps to respond to stress in a healthy way.

- ***Keep the dialogue open.*** Take time each day to ask your children what's going on in their lives. Show your understanding, and help solve problems.
- ***Cool off after work.*** Instead of unloading on your family when you get home, take a few minutes alone to unwind and release the stress of the workday.
- ***Have family meals together whenever possible.*** It's a great time to catch up on each other's experiences.
- ***Treat everyone with respect.*** Take a few minutes to step back and calm down if there's a crisis. Be patient—not unnecessarily critical—and offer support to each family member.
- ***Preserve small moments of togetherness.*** Simple moments together—cooking, chores, outdoor activities, shopping or bedtime story reading—can help your family stay connected and resilient.

Handling Stress in a Relationship

No relationship is immune from the effects of stress. Job strain, money concerns and busy schedules can all take their toll. However, couples can learn to work together to respond to stress in healthier ways.

When Stress Sneaks In

Stress is a common part of life and sometimes we don't recognize its effects on us. Perhaps you observe mood changes in your partner, or you see your partner turning to food, alcohol or drugs to deal with current pressures. Regardless of its origin, stress can cause people to have misdirected anger, resulting in arguments or becoming withdrawn from one another. Unchecked, stress can harm every aspect of our health and well-being.

Communication is Key

One of the best antidotes to stress is communication. Take time to ask questions and truly listen to your partner. Good communication shows each partner that they are understood and cared for. Allowing your partner to share the burdens he or she may be carrying can help defuse tension. Your fresh perspective on things may help your partner find solutions. If your partner can trust you as a source of comfort and problem solving, you'll be ready to jointly handle challenging situations when they arise.

Encourage Each Other

When times are tough, one of the best things you can do is to express confidence in your partner. This can help uplift and enable him or her to feel strong enough to face the current challenges. A positive word and attitude can be contagious!

Seek Help if Needed

If the symptoms of stress are interfering with your relationships, it is important to seek diagnosis and treatment through your doctor or a mental health professional. Your program offers resources to help you deal with life's challenges.

Tips for Good Stress Management

Keep your diet healthy and well-balanced. Try not to fall back on "comfort" eating with junk food (high in fat, sugar and salt) to ease your stress.

Make sure to get enough sleep. Make a plan to get in bed earlier if fatigue is adding to your stress.

Work out of the grip of stress. Follow a regular exercise routine that you can enjoy and sustain.

Don't lean on substances. Find ways to deal with stress other than using alcohol, nicotine or recreational drugs.

Learn an easy relaxation technique. This could be deep breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, tai chi, or meditation.

Pursue an interesting hobby. Direct some of your free time to an active hobby such as playing music, gardening, dancing or crafting.

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