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Technician Personnel

Technician Branch Staff:

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Supv Human Resource Spec	Mrs. Deb Burling	x8187
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	OC Amanda Almanza	x8197
	SSG John Winterfeld	x8173
Technician Training /Travel	Mrs. Diane Voichoski	x8184
Labor Relations	Mr. Jason Grams	x8185

Website: <https://states.gkoportal.ng.mil/states/NE/Directorates/J1/Technician-Branch/Pages/default.aspx>

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Supervisors and Federal Employees, as a reminder, the appraisal rating period ends 1 October. Annual Assessments must be accomplished NLT 30 November.

FEDERAL HOLIDAYS-2015

Federal law establishes the following public holidays for Federal employees.

Holidays on OPM: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/#url=Overview>

2015

11 Nov – Veterans Day

26 Nov – Thanksgiving Day

25 Dec – Christmas

1 Jan 16 - New Years Day

When a holiday falls on a non-workday for an employee covered by a compressed work schedule and the actual holiday date is not a Sunday, the last regularly scheduled workday preceding (before) the holiday is the employee's in lieu of holiday.

If an actual holiday date falls on Sunday: Actual date holidays are 4 Jul, 11 Nov, 25 Dec and 1 Jan each year. Employees whose basic workweek is Monday through Friday the Monday immediately after is the legal holiday. For employees covered by a compressed work schedule (i.e. Tuesday – Friday) the holiday is the first regularly scheduled workday following the Sunday holiday as the in lieu of holiday off.

27 PAY DATES-AIR FORCE ONLY

Periodically, the pay year will be comprised of 27 paydays instead of the more common 26 paydays. This is the case for 2015 (Air Force payroll only) which will affect some of your deductions and withholding amounts as well. Deductions that are affected is Federal and State Taxes, Social Security, Medicare, TSP Contributions and TSP Catch-up Contributions. For example, employees who put the maximum TSP Contributions into their account per the example below:

TSP Maximum Employee Contribution for 2015: 18,000

$\$18,000/26 = \692.31 per payday over 26 paydays

$\$18,000/27 = \666.67 per paydays over 27 paydays

If the employee elected the \$692.31 amount ($\$692.31 \times 27 = \$18,692.37$), Employee exceeds the TSP Maximum and reaches the maximum contribution in payday 26. This results in no employee contribution, no agency matching, and employee only receives the automatic 1% government contribution for the 27th pay period.

TRICARE DENTAL

Friendly reminder, Technician personnel may enroll in the TRICARE Dental program (TDP) anytime and do not need a qualifying life event to do so. Technicians are eligible to purchase and enroll into the TRICARE Dental program via online and/or by calling 1-855-638-8371. To be eligible to enroll in the TDP, the sponsor (technician) must have at least 12 months remaining on his or her military service commitment at the time of enrollment.

2015 FEHB OPEN SEASON

The 2015 Federal Benefits Open Season for Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program will begin Monday, November 9th, 2015 through Monday, December 14th, 2015. This open season will implement the Self Plus One enrollment. Self Plus One is a new enrollment type in the FEHB program that allows employees to cover themselves and one eligible family member they designate to be covered. Specific information regarding cost, plans, and coverage may be found at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/>

Open Season changes for FEHB plans must be accomplished via EBIS (Employee Benefit Information System) online at www.ebis.army.mil OR by phone at 1-877-276-9287, Option #3. Dental and/or Vision enrollments, changes or cancellations are accomplished at www.benefeds.com or by calling 1-877-888-3337.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) enrollment is completed via www.fsafeds.com or by phone 1-877-372-3337.

Contact MSgt Jody Kouma at 402-309-8190, OC Amanda Almanza at 402-309-8197 or SSG John Winterfeld at (402) 309-8173 for any benefits questions.

USE OR LOSE ANNUAL LEAVE

For 2015 the leave year began 11 Jan 15 and will end 9 Jan 16. Technicians may carry over into the next leave year a maximum of 240 hours of accrued annual leave. Employees must “use” their excess annual leave by the end of a leave year or they will “lose” (forfeit) it.

As required in the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) regulations, an employee must schedule his or her annual leave by **29 November 2015**, the third pay period prior to the end of the leave year to avoid forfeiture of annual leave. However, HR highly recommends scheduling and utilization of use or lose leave prior to the potential of lapse in appropriations after 11 December 2015.

An agency may consider restoring annual leave that was forfeited if the reason is under one of the following conditions: (1) Exigency of public business. The exigency, or mission demand, must be of such importance as to preclude the use of schedule leave. The exigency must be approved, normally in advance, through supervisory channels. (2) Sickness, injury or other medical condition for which sick leave is appropriate. (3) Administrative error through no fault of the technician. Regulatory rules require “use or lose” annual leave to be scheduled in writing before the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year. Military duty is not considered a condition of exigency due to annual leave could be used.

Documentation required to request restoration or forfeited annual leave is the OPM 71 with scheduled dates of leave, official approval, statement of reasons for canceling the use of leave, documentation for the beginning and ending dates of the exigency, and calendar dates the canceled leave was rescheduled for use.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIFFERENTIAL PAY (EDP) AND HAZARDOUS DUTY PAY (HDP)

SUPERVISORS: The Environmental Differential Pay (EDP) and Hazardous Duty Pay (HDP) Committee will be conducting a meeting.

Request supervisors submit the annual TAG-NE Form 550-1 in accordance with NE TPR 550 for certification or re-certification no later than 31 October 2015.

Contact Ms. Denise Anderson at 402-309-8177 for questions.

DO I HAVE VETERAN’S PREFERENCE?

Employees within the National Guard in a Dual and Non-Dual Status are employed as excepted service Title 32 USC 709.

Due to the unique nature of the National Guard technician program, veteran’s preference is not granted to anyone applying for a National Guard Title 32 position.

You may receive veteran's preference for other federal agencies depending on dates of active duty service, receipt of a campaign badge, Purple Heart, or a service-connected disability. See <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx> for more information.

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[Technician Travel & Training](#)

Human Resource Development Staff

Mrs. Diane Voichoski – HRDS – x8184

FY 2016 ARNG Technician Travel and Training:

Now is the time to enter your FY2016 first quarter travel requests in Defense Travel System (DTS). Be sure to attach documentation such as registration procedures and Letters of Instruction to explain/justify why this is high priority travel for you and what happens if you do not attend.

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

HRSIS Staff

CMSgt Mike Courtney – HRSIS Manager – x8189



MyBiz+ for all Technicians, has many new features and I want to explain just one of them to you.

MyBiz+ Fundamentals; Views, Detail Pages, Colors and Icons

The icons and associated colors are distinct throughout the MyBiz+ pages for users to quickly identify and move about with one mouse click.

Views

The Views are located in the center of the homepage and are customizable. The homepage accommodates one (1) to six (6) Views, and each View contains specific information from within the [Detail Pages](#). Use the link on the title bar to access the corresponding detail page. For example with the screenshot below, the Leave, Pay and Insurance Views below (green tabs) are sections of information within the Pay, Leave and Benefits Detail Page (green tile with \$ icon).

Some users such as Managers, Supervisors and HR will have the View *Other Responsibilities/Applications* (not shown here) in place of the Professional Development View.

The screenshot displays the MyBiz+ homepage interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a 'Home' button and a 'Provide Feedback' link. Below this, the main content area is divided into several sections:

- Key Services:** A list of links including 'MyPerformance', 'Request Employment Verification', 'Civilian Career Report', 'Update Contact Information', 'Update Professional Development', 'Retrieve SF50', 'Update My Supervisor', and 'Hiring Manager's Toolkit'.
- Pay:** A green tabbed view showing 'Gross Pay: 691.22', 'Net Pay: 414.72', and 'Pay Period End Date: 10-Jan-2015'. Below it is a 'Last Personnel Action' section with 'Type of Action: Gen Adj' and 'Effective Date: 30-Jan-2015'.
- Professional Development:** A yellow tabbed view showing 'Education: Information Technology, Project Management (111005) Post-first professional - (2015)', 'Training: INTRO TO MARKETING (14-Jul-2014 - 10-Jul-2014)', and 'Certification/Licenses: Human Capital Strategist'.
- Performance Information:** An orange tabbed view showing performance ratings for '07-Apr-2015' (3) 3 - Valued Perf, Acceptable, '01-May-2014' (3) 3 - Valued Perf, Acceptable, and '23-Nov-2009' (1) 5 - Rate Model, Exceptional.
- Leave:** A green tabbed view showing 'Annual Leave Balance: 70.00', 'Sick Leave Balance: 202.00', and 'Annual Leave Forfeit Balance (Use or Less): 153.00'.

At the bottom, there is a 'Detail Pages' section with a grid of icons representing different views: Personal, Pay, Leave and Benefits, Professional Development, Position, Performance, and Reports. A red arrow points from the 'Pay' view icon to the 'Pay' view content area.

Manage My Views Link

Customize the Views by using the interactive tool link, *Manage My Views* located on the right side. Click on the orange *Tip* for a quick reference. For more information about managing the views, see the Manage My Views user guide and simulation under Help.

Below is the link to MyBiz+.

<https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/>

Please let me know if you have any questions with this or any other MyBiz+ features.

POC: CMSgt Mike Courtney

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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

End of Year Vacation Balances:

Many State employees could lose vacation leave this year if they do not take action now to schedule and use leave prior to December 31. It is important to note that accrued leave in excess of 35 work days (280 hours) cannot be carried over into the new calendar year. According to the Classified System Personnel Rules and the NAPE/AFSCME Labor Contract states that employees who have accumulated vacation in excess of thirty-five days shall forfeit the excess amount on December 31 of each calendar year.

State Service Awards (October):

The Governor of the State of Nebraska traditionally proclaims October as Employee Recognition Month. This month provides us the opportunity to recognize our State employees for their loyalty, hard work and dedicated service to the citizens of the State of Nebraska. Congratulations to those who are receiving a Service Award this year!!

October 2014

10 Years:

Alan Bretting, Facilities Construction Coordinator II, CFMO
Michael Loftis, Civil Defense Radiological Systems Manager, NEMA
Phyllis McCown, Accountant I, NEMA
Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez, Artist II, Command & Joint Staff
Nicole (Nikki) Weber, Emergency Management Section Manager, NEMA

15 Years:

Brent Curtis, Emergency Management Program Specialist I, NEMA
Dennis Parker, Facility Maintenance Specialist, Civil Engineering
Tracy Ross, Military Security Specialist, Military Security
Deanna Verzal, Business Manager I, SSSD
Lonald Beach, Facility Maintenance Tech II, CFMO

20 Years:

Timothy Majerus, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
Robert Mayer, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
Gary Reynolds, Airport Fire Fighter, Fire
C Mark Wid, Airport Fire Station Captain, Fire
Dale Cotton, Custodian, McCook AFRC

25 Years:

Craig Behrend, Airport Fire Fighter, Fire
Bruce Craig, Airport Fire Station Captain, Fire
Michael Cullighan, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
James Jackson, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
Scott Loos, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
James Urbauer, Airport Fire Fighter Crew Chief, Fire
Monte Clark, Custodian, Broken Bow RC
Craig LaFontsee, Custodian, Chadron RC
Kevin Petersen, Custodian, Beatrice AFRC

30 Years:

Susan Krogman, IT Infrastructures Support Analyst/Senior, NEMA
David Reisen, Emergency Management Unit Supervisor, NEMA
Dale Wallman, Facilities Construction Coordinator II, CFMO

Changing Insurance Elections – Spouse Has Open Enrollment

Employees are able to make changes to their insurance elections if their spouse has an open enrollment at their work place. Employees can drop the State's insurance plans or start insurance coverages with the State. Employees initiate the changes in Employee Work Center (EWC) by going to <http://link.nebraska.gov> to begin the process.

The employee will need to provide a copy of the proper pages in the spouse's open enrollment booklet or other documentation that shows the company name, that there is an open enrollment occurring, **and the date that any coverages elected in that open enrollment would be effective**. Documentation could include a letter, on company letterhead, from the spouse's human resources office with all the above information. Employees will need to attach documentation to the last page in the 'Change Benefits' process before leaving that page.

If an employee is going to drop coverage (Medical, Dental or Vision) with the State of Nebraska because of a spouse's open enrollment changes they will need to enter the (event) date the coverage ends with the State. As an *example*, if a spouse has their open enrollment in November 2014 and any new elections made are effective January 1, 2015, the employee will enter 12-31-2014 as the event date in the 'Change Benefits' process. On the confirmation page, toward the end of the process, employees should see January 1st as the effective date of the elections - the first day without coverage. If an employee was going to add themselves plus dependents (includes spouse) to the State's medical, dental or vision plans, using this same open enrollment example, the event date would be the same – 12-31-2014.

If an employee is dropping dependents (includes spouses) in the example above and wants to have coverage *and premiums* stop on December 31st, **the employee must start and complete** the process in EWC on or before December 31st. If the change process is initiated and completed in January the premiums will continue through the month of January.

Employees have thirty (30) days, from the date when coverages would be effective under the spouse's open enrollment, to complete the 'Change Benefits' process. Please obtain the proper documentation as soon you can once you know you will want to make a change to your insurance coverages. Make sure the documentation is detailed enough so the change can be approved. When an employee is adding dependents (including spouses) using a spouses open enrollment as a qualified status change, the dependents must be losing that specific type of coverage (medical, dental and/or Vision) to be eligible to be added to the State's coverage.

If you have any questions please call Tim Diedrichsen at 402-309-8180.

DEADLINE APPROACHING - Wellness Health Plan Requirements Reminder

You must enroll in a Wellness Program by November 20, 2015 to continue to qualify for the 2016-2017 Wellness Health Plan

If you have questions on whether or not you've completed the three steps that will allow you to qualify for the Wellness Health Plan for the next enrollment period you will need to access your individual wellnessoptions website account at: <https://stateofnebraska.biovia.healthfitness.com>. You can also call Customer Service at 866-956-4285 to ask questions about the steps you need to complete. Step 3, choosing a program, is the final step that employees, and spouses (if applicable) need to complete on an annual basis. Choose at least one program to complete. You must complete the program by March 31, 2016.

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

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

Choose Respect: Dealing With Bullying in the Workplace

The following information is from Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Employee Assistance Program. Bullying doesn't just happen on the playground; it can occur in the workplace, too. Any type of bullying is unacceptable, so zero tolerance should be expected—even among adults.

Recognizing Bullying

School bullying is an unwelcome pattern of conduct which includes repeated aggressive behavior where there's a perceived imbalance of power, according to StopBullying.gov, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' bullying prevention site.

Workplace bullying is much the same as typical playground bullying, but the harassing behavior often takes more subtle forms:

- Intimidation can often be via email, using harsh tone or language to control or humiliate
- Demeaning behavior could include name calling in the form of an unwanted "nickname" directed at some aspect of someone's identity, including sex, race, or ethnicity
- Inappropriate and unwelcome jokes directed to someone's perceived area of sensitivity
- Exclusion from the peer group may include not inviting someone to lunch or other all-department social functions
- Humiliation may be openly dismissive of others ideas or the work they produce
- Spreading rumors about someone seems to be a classic form of bullying, on the playground and in the office
- Physical aggression or violence is an extreme example of bullying and is luckily a rare occurrence in the workplace

The previous behaviors might occur one-on-one, in a group setting, or via email and other electronic media. Look for repeated behavior that has elements of asserting power over someone. Don't allow bullying to continue just because the person engaging in the behavior claims that wasn't his or her intent, or that he or she was "just joking." Make clear that whether intended or not, the behavior won't be tolerated.

Dealing with Bullying

Evaluate your situation

Here are some questions to consider:

- Are you being singled out, or does this person treat everyone unprofessionally? (Even if it's not just you, the behavior should be addressed.)
- Did you feel disrespected, intimidated, threatened, humiliated, or excluded?

- Is this repeated behavior, or could it be a one-time misunderstanding?
- Overall, does this person seem reasonable, or is his or her inappropriate behavior the dominant factor in the workplace?

If you feel you're being bullied, you should address the behavior as soon as possible.

Document your experience

If an incident of bullying occurs, be sure to document details such as:

- Dates and times the bullying occurred
- Where it happened
- The behavior that felt intimidating, humiliating, or threatening
- Whether anyone witnessed the bullying

Working it out

Stand up to a bully using the following steps:

- Tell the person how the behavior negatively impacts you
- Set boundaries – tell the person which behaviors will no longer be tolerated
- Warn the person that you will take further steps if the inappropriate behavior continues

Taking it to the next level

If you feel that you need assistance dealing with bullying, contact your immediate supervisor or your human resources department for help. Provide the following information:

- Describe what is happening in detail, and provide any evidence, if possible
- Explain how the situation affects your ability to work
- Explain that you want to find a constructive way to address the situation

Seeking professional help

Remember, bullying is not your fault. If you are being bullied, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Help is available at any time.

Creating a Safe Workplace

Maintaining an environment of mutual respect and understanding is a responsibility we all share, and a crucial step in creating an atmosphere where bullying will neither occur nor be tolerated.

Choosing respect

The office is a place where professionalism and good manners are always expected. Let politeness and civility guide you in all you do. Also, follow the Golden Rule and treat others the way you'd like to be treated.

Choosing understanding

Be a compassionate listener and serve as a sounding board for your coworkers. This can create a supportive environment where people feel free to open up and share their concerns.

Choosing collaboration

Build collaborative—rather than competitive—relationships and think of your coworkers as team members. Share best practices and creative solutions, and compliment your team members for doing the same. This will inspire them to continue sharing their original ideas.

Choosing praise

Even when you need to give a constructive evaluation, start with appreciation. This helps people feel valued, while realizing that there's room for improvement. Coworkers tend to work best when they feel respected and appreciated. And, a little bit of inspiration can bring out the best in people, so share it with your coworkers every chance you get.

Please contact Ms. Rosenthal at 402-309-8111 if you have any questions or need further assistance.

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