HRO

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15 July 2015

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Technician Personnel

Technician Branch Staff:

Deputy HRO	Maj Nicole Nuss	x8144
Supv Human Resource Spec	Mrs. Deb Burling	x8187
Classification/Manpower	2LT Jessica Pan	x8182
Recruitment, Staffing & Pay	Mrs. Denise Anderson	x8177
Benefits & Services	MSgt Jody Kouma	x8190
	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

RETIREMENTS

Karen Hall-ARNG-3 July
Kevin Sheets-ANG-16 July

TECHNICIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS

On behalf of The Adjutant General, please congratulate the following employees on their Technician Award.

Sustained Superior Performance Awards:

Matthew A. Field
Michael G. Hayes
Brian Hefling
Alicia S. Kelly
Wade O. Kopetzky
Mark J. Makovicka
Kimberly A. Lamb
Mary A. McGahan
Nathaniel R. Menagh
Kecia K. Spofford
Nicole D. Mihm
John R. Rasmussen
Mark A. Voichoski
Ricky R. Tague
Michael A. Smith
Jason L. Schroeder
Adam R. Worden
Jeffrey A. Horne

Quality Step Increases:

David S. Rasmussen
Diane S. Voichoski
Georgia K. Kroese

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD AND CHI CONTRACT

On July 15th, all CHI hospitals and professional providers will be recognized as preferred/in-network providers. Blue Cross Blue Shield advocated for an agreement that was fair and beneficial to our members and addressed CHI Health's higher costs in Omaha. We are satisfied with the new agreements and welcome CHI Health facilities and physicians back into our NEtwork BLUE network.

USERRA TRAINING-MANDATORY FOR SUPERVISORS

Friendly reminder, Supervisors/Manager email send on June 15th, 2015. Public Law (P.L.) 110-389, October 10, 2008, requires all Federal agencies to provide Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) training to HR Specialists, Supervisors, Managers or Team Leads of civilians who serve in the Military. If you received this email you are considered to be in one of those categories.

The attachment gives two options for satisfying the annual requirement:

Human Resources University (HRU) online course - "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)"

Or

Review of the USERRA Training Slides

Please send your HRU completion certificate OR an email stating you reviewed the USERRA Training Slides to diane.s.voichoski.civ@mail.mil by 31 July 2015.

LEAVE RECIPIENTS

The following Nebraska National Guard employees are approved to become a leave recipient under the Voluntary Leave Transfer (VLT) program.

1. Kyle D. Mostrom, Army National Guard, GS-7, AASF#1, Lincoln, NE, received open heart surgery in September 2014 and continual adjustment to the mechanical heart valve requires weekly doctor's appointments, in addition, experiencing an array of side effects.

2. Brittani N. Cain, Air National Guard, GS-7, 155th LRS, early delivery and care of newborn child.

3. Michael A. Smith, Air National Guard, GS-7, 155th LRS, 2 year old daughter who has patent foramen ovale (PFO) at birth and scheduled for open heart surgery on 17 July. Will have numerous follow-up appointments afterwards.

Technicians who would like to voluntarily donate "ANNUAL" leave may scan OPM donor forms to jody.l.kouma.mil@mail.mil, or distro to JFHQ, HRO-Tech Svcs. Upon receipt of the form, block # 10 will be filled out by HR.

An OPM OF 630-A would be used by technicians who are donating to an employee and within the same agency (Air Tech to Air Tech). An OF 630-B would be used for technicians who choose to donate to an employee of a different agency (Army Tech donate to an Air Tech or vice versa). If interested in donating, contact HR at X8190 to retrieve the required form.

ELIGIBILITY VERSUS QUALIFICATION.

ONLY ELIGIBILE APPLICANTS ARE REVIEWED BY HRO FOR QUALIFICATION PURPOSES.

The questionnaire is the key to eligibility. The following 5 category questions are used for eligibility. They are: (1) Area of Consideration, (2) Military Rank, (3) General Experience, (4) Specialized Experience and (5) Verifying Answers. Only eligible applicant(s) are reviewed for qualification purposes.
For example, if the advertisements states, “THIS POSITION IS OPEN TO AREA 1 ONLY” and a person answers (B) AREA 2: All Drill Status/M-Day members and temporary technicians of the Nebraska Air or Army National Guard.”, she/he is not eligible.

If an individual answers the 5 categories: (1) I am in the area of consideration as advertised (2) I am currently in the rank as advertised (3) Yes, I have the general experience as advertised, (4) Yes, I have the XX months of specialized experience as advertised and (5) Yes, I verify my answers are correct, then and only then are they are considered eligible. Individuals who answer NO to any of these questions will receive an e-mail from HRO explaining why. HRO cannot change applicant's answers to make them eligible once the announcement is closed.

The HRO Specialists prints the occupational questionnaire for eligible candidates and validates their answers to the occupational questionnaire are accurate. If HRO finds an applicant falsified an answer to one of the five category questions, they are automatically considered ineligible and will receive an e-mail explaining why.

If an individual feels they have received an e-mail for eligibility in error, they can call HRO with questions but HRO is unable to change their answers once the announcement closes. If an applicant feels it was in error, they will need to go through the USAJOBS helpdesk for resolution.
If the questionnaire and screening shows the applicant is eligible, then and only then will the HR Specialist print out the all documentation and work qualifications for the announcement. All documentation is reviewed for qualification purposes by three different HR Specialists validating individuals meet the general and specialized experience for the announcement.

Individuals that qualify for the announcement are referred to the selecting official in the order of the Area(s) of Consideration. Individuals who do not qualify for the announcement will receive an e-mail stating they did not meeting the qualifications for the position.

If an individual feels they have received an e-mail showing they did not qualifying for an announcement in error, they can call the Human Resource Office. We will explain why they did not qualify and give advice on what to do different next time.

Filling out a resume and application for a position is the applicant's responsibility HR cannot give information out about potential employee's application to anyone but the applicant. Supervisor's need to refer qualification and eligibility questions to the HR office.

Points of contact are Mrs. Denise Anderson at 402-309-8177 or 2LT Jessica Pan at 402-309-8182.

WHAT DOES LOWEST GRADE FOR CONSIDERATION MEAN?

This is the least amount of pay a person is willing to change jobs. When choosing the lowest grade be aware you make not qualify at the grade you choose. If in the case below you choose GS-6 as you lowest grade and you qualify as a GS-08 your name goes forward as a GS-08. However if you qualify as a GS-6 and you determine you cannot live on GS-6 pay you can decline an interview.

Some positions are advertised with multiple grades to help the supervisor attract more applicants or the position has been advertised multiple time and considered hard to fill. For example, a Financial Management Technician is normally announced as a GS-0503-8/7/6. This means an applicant must indicate the lowest grade for which they want to be considered for the position.

After an applicant applies for the position through USAJOBS and the announcement is closed, the HRO Specialist will validate eligibility and validate qualifications.

To qualify as a Financial Management Technician an applicant must show the general experience and specialized experience. For specialized experience an individual's resume and supporting documentation must shows XX months of specialized experience. GS-8 must show at least 18 months of specialized experience, a GS-7 must show at least 12 months of specialized experience and a GS-6 must show at least 9 months of specialized experience.

SCENERIO 1: An applicant's lowest grade considered is a GS-8 and on the Occupational Questionnaire they answer YES for GS-8, YES for GS-7 and YES for GS-6. The HR Specialist would review of their documentation for GS-8, GS-7 and GS-6. Upon review, they qualify as a Trainee GS-7. The applicant is considered not qualified and receives an e-mail because they qualified as a GS-7 and would only accept a GS-8.

SCENERIO 2: An applicant's lowest grade considered is a GS-6 and on the Occupational Questionnaire they answer NO for GS-8, YES for GS-7 and YES for GS-6. The HR Specialist would review of their documentation for GS-7 and GS-6. Upon review, they qualify as a GS-7. The applicant is considered qualified at the GS-7 and their name goes forward to the supervisor as a Trainee GS-7.

SCENERIO 3: An applicant's lowest grade considered is a GS-6 and on the Occupational Questionnaire they answer NO for GS-8, NO for GS-7 and YES for GS-6. The HR Specialist would review their documentation for GS-6. The applicant is considered qualified as a GS-6 and their name goes forward to the supervisor as a Trainee GS-6.

If you have questions regarding lowest grade or want to know what each grade makes, the points of contact are Mrs. Denise Anderson at 402-309-8177 or 2LT Jessica Pan at 402-309-8182.

Technician Travel & Training

Human Resource Development Staff

Mrs. Diane Voichoski – HRDS – x8184

What to expect when "completion of an individual development plan (IDP)" is listed on a Technician Vacancy Announcement.

When a technician is hired at a lower grade level with promotion potential to a higher grade level he/she needs to be on an IDP. The IDP is developed by the technician supervisor with possible input from the technician. The plan outlines what formal training courses and/or on-the-job training must happen in order to prepare the technician for promotion.

Once the technician is hired, the HRO Human Resource Development Specialist (HRDS), currently Mrs. Voichoski, will send a reminder email to the supervisor regarding the requirement for the IDP.
The supervisor is required to review the technician's progress on the IDP with the technician on a periodic basis, usually quarterly. These review dates are listed on the IDP and the reviews are the responsibility of the supervisor. The review is documented on an IDP progress report which is signed by both the technician and supervisor and forwarded to the HRDS.

The supervisor is responsible for scheduling any formal training courses noted on the IDP.

Once the minimum time required in the lower-graded position is over, the supervisor may request a promotion for the technician on an SF-52. When the HRO classification specialist gets the SF-52 requesting promotion, she will arrange a date and time for a position review which is also known as a desk audit. The classification specialist will review all of the documentation in the IDP folder kept by the HRDS before the desk audit.

If the information gathered in the position review/desk audit shows that the technician is performing the higher-graded duties at an acceptable level, the technician will be promoted and the IDP ends.

For questions regarding the IDP program the POC is Diane Voichoski ext 8184, for questions on the desk audit process the POC is Deb Burling ext 8187 or Jessica Pan ext 8182.

FAQs:
Q: If the technician I supervise has completed the formal training listed on the IDP, can we promote the technician before the minimum amount of time required in the position?

A: No. The employee must spend the minimum amount of time in the grade, which is the date of appointment to the position whether it is a new appointment, promotion, etc.

Q: If the date for the minimum amount of time required in the position has passed, may we back date the promotion to the date when the technician became eligible?

A: Back dating promotions is a prohibited personnel practice and cannot be done.

Q: May I as the employee request my promotion/desk audit?

A: No. The supervisor is responsible for assigning and ensuring the work is being accomplished at the full performance level and must recommend you for promotion as stated on the vacancy announcement.

Q: How do I fill out an IDP to ensure they will qualify and meet the guidelines for promotion?

A: The IDP requirements for each position will vary. Contact the HRDS for specific questions on formal training and OJT requirements and refer to the Position Description (PD).

Q: What is the maximum amount of time I can be on an IDP?

A: The vacancy announcement only reflects the minimum amount of time an employee must be on an IDP. The Supervisor determines through the IDP process the length of time it will take you to become fully qualified. The length of time may be increased during the quarterly reviews (i. e. a mandatory school you need is not available, a piece of equipment you need trained on is out for repair, etc).

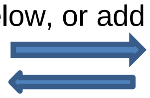
Q: If I am currently on an IDP for a trainee position WG-5801-08/10(Surface Maintenance Mechanic) and a WG-5801-10 comes open, can I apply and qualify for the position?

A: Yes you can apply, however you will not be qualified as you have not completed your IDP.

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. When you log into your MyBiz+ account via DCPDS, you can change what views appear on your screen. Just click on Manage My Views to edit your main screen. Only 6 out of the possible 9 items can be displayed on the main screen, but you can Reposition, Exchange or Hide these views. To see what other views that are not currently listed on your screen, you can either Exchange a view by clicking on the double arrow as shown below, or add a view, if your main screen doesn't currently have 6 items listed.



This will bring up the list of views not currently on your main screen. You can just choose the view you want to exchange or add and select close and done when finished. A guide titled Manage My Views User Guide is available by selecting the Help drop down menu at the top of the screen. This will show you how to navigate through the different views on your MyBiz+ main screen. Here is the link to access MyBiz+:
https://potteremp.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/dcpdsportal-reg15/profile.jsf

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

PAY INCREASES

On July 1, 2015, all eligible state employees, including temporary staff, covered by the Classified Personnel System, received a (2.25%) increase to their base pay. Pay ranges have been adjusted accordingly. Employees who are at or above the maximum rate of their class pay range also received this increase. An employee in a non-pay status is entitled to the increase upon return to a pay status, provided he/she does not fall into one of the exception categories. The July 22nd pay check will reflect the 2.25% increase for hours worked between July 1 - July 12. Hours worked on June 29th and 30th will still be paid at the old pay rate.

Pay Stub Review - July 1st Insurance Elections

The new plan year for insurance coverages began July 1, 2015. Employees should review their check stubs to ensure all elections made in Open Enrollment have started or have continued as expected.

The check stub on July 8, 2015 showed the first deduction for all plans for the new plan year. By going to www.link.nebraska.gov, you should be able to review your check stub and look at your deductions in the Payroll and Financial Center (PFC). Once logged in click on Navigator at the top left part of the screen. Then click on State of Nebraska > Self Service > Pay Stub Review and Print.

You can also review your elections in the Employee Work Center (EWC) by clicking on the circle to the right of your name and employee number (upper right corner) then clicking on “All About Me” menu item. Click on the Benefits icon and then click on Benefit Elections under the word View.

Insurance elections are deducted out of employees’ checks 24 times a year. There are usually 26 pay periods (pay dates) during the year. If there are three pay periods in a month, insurance deductions will only come out on the first two (2) pay dates. September will be the next month this year that there are three (3) pay dates in a month.

Charitable Giving Campaign

The Nebraska State Employee Charitable Giving Campaign is a way that State employees in the Military Department can help those in need. This year’s State campaign will run from August 3rd through August 28th (2015). In the near future you should receive a pledge sheet and a brochure listing all the organizations that receive funding through the State’s Charitable Giving Campaign. If you choose, you may designate one or more specific organizations to receive your contribution or you can contribute to one of the three umbrella agencies.

Information will be communicated to employees about where pledge sheets should be submitted once completed.

If you choose to take payroll deductions for the charitable contributions they will be deducted with the first check in the 2016 calendar year. The total payroll campaign contribution for the year (2016) should be divisible by 24, since the deductions will be taken in 24 pay periods in the calendar year. You can also contribute by check or cash.

BENEFITS

Health ID Cards – Employees should be receiving their new ID cards for health coverage. If you have not received an identification card, and, you have an upcoming appointment, employees may log into the www.myUHC.com and print their own medical ID card. If you have a Flexible Spending Account for Health Care Reimbursement, you will NOT receive a new "BENNY" card, unless this is the first time you have enrolled for that benefit.

NEW WELLNESS PARTICIPANTS

For NEW Wellness participants, On-line Health Assessments must be completed by July 31, 2015!! If you do not complete the health assessment by the designated timeframe, your coverage will be changed to "regular" coverage (higher premium) effective July 1, 2015. The difference between the premiums for the Wellness Health Plan and the Regular Health Plan will be made up in the next available pay period after Human Resources receives notice of participants not completing the On-line Health Assessment.

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AGR Personnel

CW3 Jeff Thomas, AGR Branch Manager, (402) 309-8171

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

SFC Jenna Schneider, Personnel Sergeant, (402) 309-8183

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

SSG Rosalba Amezcua, 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

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Occupational Health

1LT Josiah Unger, Occupational Health Nurse, (402) 309-1832

"Drowning Doesn’t Look Like Drowning"
By USCG Rescue Swimmer Mario Vittone

"The new captain jumped from the cockpit, fully dressed, and sprinted through the water. A former lifeguard, he kept his eyes on his victim as he headed straight for the owners who were swimming between their anchored sport fisher and the beach. “I think he thinks you’re drowning,” the husband said to his wife. They had been splashing each other and she had screamed but now they were just standing, neck-deep on the sand bar. “We’re fine, what is he doing?” she asked, a little annoyed. “We’re fine!” the husband yelled, waving him off, but his captain kept swimming hard. “Move!” he barked as he sprinted between the stunned owners. Directly behind them, not ten feet away, their nine-year-old daughter was drowning. Safely above the surface in the arms of the captain, she burst into tears, “Daddy!”

"How did this captain know, from fifty feet away, what the father couldn’t recognize from just ten? Drowning is not the violent, splashing, call for help that most people expect. The captain was trained to recognize drowning by experts and years of experience. The father, on the other hand, had learned what drowning looks like by watching television. If you spend time on or near the water (hint: that’s all of us) then you should make sure that you and your crew knows what to look for whenever people enter the water. Until she cried a tearful, “Daddy,” she hadn’t made a sound. As a former Coast Guard rescue swimmer, I wasn’t surprised at all by this story. Drowning is almost always a deceptively quiet event. The waving, splashing, and yelling that dramatic conditioning (television) prepares us to look for, is rarely seen in real life.

"The Instinctive Drowning Response – so named by Francesco A. Pia, Ph.D., is what people do to avoid actual or perceived suffocation in the water. And it does not look like most people expect. There is very little splashing, no waving, and no yelling or calls for help of any kind. To get an idea of just how quiet and undramatic from the surface drowning can be, consider this: It is the number two cause of accidental death in children, age 15 and under (just behind vehicle accidents) – of the approximately 750 children who will drown next year, about 375 of them will do so within 25 yards of a parent or other adult. In ten percent of those drownings, the adult will actually watch them do it, having no idea it is happening (source: CDC). Drowning does not look like drowning – Dr. Pia, in an article in the Coast Guard’s On Scene Magazine, described the instinctive drowning response like this:

1. Except in rare circumstances, drowning people are physiologically unable to call out for help. The respiratory system was designed for breathing. Speech is the secondary or overlaid function. Breathing must be fulfilled, before speech occurs.

2. Drowning people’s mouths alternately sink below and reappear above the surface of the water. The mouths of drowning people are not above the surface of the water long enough for them to exhale, inhale, and call out for help. When the drowning people’s mouths are above the surface, they exhale and inhale quickly as their mouths start to sink below the surface of the water.

3. Drowning people cannot wave for help. Nature instinctively forces them to extend their arms laterally and press down on the water’s surface. Pressing down on the surface of the water, permits drowning people to leverage their bodies so they can lift their mouths out of the water to breathe.

4. Throughout the Instinctive Drowning Response, drowning people cannot voluntarily control their arm movements. Physiologically, drowning people who are struggling on the surface of the water cannot stop drowning and perform voluntary movements such as waving for help, moving toward a rescuer, or reaching out for a piece of rescue equipment.

5. From beginning to end of the Instinctive Drowning Response people’s bodies remain upright in the water, with no evidence of a supporting kick. Unless rescued by a trained lifeguard, these

drowning people can only struggle on the surface of the water from 20 to 60 seconds before submersion occurs. (Source: On Scene Magazine: Fall 2006)

6. This doesn't mean that a person that is yelling for help and thrashing isn't in real trouble – they are experiencing aquatic distress. Not always present before the instinctive drowning response, aquatic distress doesn't last long – but unlike true drowning, these victims can still assist in their own rescue. They can grab lifelines, throw rings, etc.

Look for these other signs of drowning when persons are in the water:

- Head low in the water, mouth at water level
- Head tilted back with mouth open
- Eyes glassy and empty, unable to focus
- Eyes closed
- Hair over forehead or eyes
- Not using legs – Vertical
- Hyperventilating or gasping
- Trying to swim in a particular direction but not making headway
- Trying to roll over on the back
- "Ladder climb" leg motions, rarely out of the water
-

"So if a crew member falls overboard and every looks O.K. – don't be too sure. Sometimes the most common indication that someone is drowning is that they don't look like they're drowning. They may just look like they are treading water and looking up at the deck. One way to be sure? Ask them: "Are you alright?" If they can answer at all – they probably are. If they return a blank stare – you may have less than 30 seconds to get to them. And parents: children playing in the water make noise. When they get quiet, you get to them and find out why."

Source - http://gcaptain.com/drowning/

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Equal Employment Office/Diversity/Organizational Development

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

Agencies Release Guide on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender) Discrimination Protections for Federal Workers

On 3 June 2015, a press release was disseminated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announcing that "four Federal Government agencies with roles in ensuring fairness in the federal workplace released a guide on the rights and processes available to applicants and employees who allege sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination. The guide is being reissued after more than a decade and has been substantially revised to reflect major developments in the law."

Agencies collaborating on the guide are the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the U.S. EEOC, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), and the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). The guide is entitled, "Addressing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in Federal Civilian Employment: A Guide to the Employment Rights, Protections, and Responsibilities." It can be found at:

http://www.opm.gov/LGBTGuide

The guide provides federal workers with a description of employee rights and agency responsibilities under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, and other agency and union procedures. It also offers a comparison table showing differences between procedures available at the EEOC and OSC. The goal of the publication is to assist LGBT employees in making more informed choices about how best to pursue their individual claims when they believe they have suffered from discrimination.

The full press release includes remarks from each agency's director, and describes their organization's role in the guide's revision.

To view the full press release, see http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/6-3-15.cfm. Please direct any questions to Ms. Rosenthal at 402-309-8111.

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