Glossary of Terms Used in Processing Personnel Actions

(Citations in parentheses refer to laws, regulations, or publications where more information can be found.)

ABANDONMENT OF POSITION—When an employee fails to report for duty and does not submit a resignation.

ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE (AWOL)—Absence without prior approval, a nonpay status resulting from an Agency determination that it will not grant any type of leave (not even leave without pay) for a period of absence for which the employee did not obtain advance authorization or for which a request for leave has been denied.

ACCESSION—A personnel action that results in the addition of an employee to the rolls (staff) of an agency. (See APPOINTMENT)

ACTIVE DUTY OR ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY (Creditable Service for Leave Accrual and Reduction in Force Purposes Only)—Means full-time duty with military pay and allowances in the Armed Forces. Active duty does include "annual" active duty for training, but excludes weekend Reserve meetings.

ADJUSTED BASIC PAY is the rate of basic pay and any basic pay supplement, after applying any applicable pay cap. A basic pay supplement is defined as a regular, fixed supplemental payment (paid in conjunction with base pay) for non-overtime hours of work that is creditable as basic pay for retirement purposes, excluding any type of premium payment or differential that is triggered for working certain hours of the day or week or for being subjected to certain working conditions. A basic pay supplement includes, for example, any applicable locality payment under 5 CFR part 531, subpart F, and any special rate supplement under 5 CFR part 530, subpart C.

ADVERSE ACTION—A personnel action considered unfavorable to an employee, e.g., removal, suspension, furlough, or reduction in grade or pay. (5 U.S.C. chapter 75 and 5 CFR part 752)

AGENCY [as used in this Guide]—Any department or independent establishment of the Federal Government, including a Government-owned or controlled corporation, that has the authority to hire employees in the competitive, excepted, and senior executive service. Examples: Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration, Federal Trade Commission. Note: The Departments of Army, Navy, and Air Force are considered to be individual agencies for the purposes of this Guide; all organizations within the Department of Defense which have agency codes that begin with "DD" (e.g., DD04) are considered as one agency.

ANNUITANT—[As used in this Guide] a person who receives an annuity.

ANNUITY—The annual sum payable to a former employee who has retired.

APPLICANT—A person who has asked to be considered for a job with an agency. An applicant may be a current employee of the agency, an employee of another agency, or a person who is not currently employed by any agency.

APPLICATION FORMS—Forms and resumes that show an applicant's qualifications for employment in a Federal position.

APPOINTEE—A person being hired for a position in an agency.

APPOINTING OFFICER—A person having power by law, or by duly delegated authority, to make appointments.

APPOINTMENT—Any personnel action that brings an individual onto the rolls (staff) of an agency. (See ACCESSION.)

ARMED FORCES—The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

AUO —(Administratively Uncontrolled Overtime) is an increment of up to 25 percent of basic pay paid on an annual basis for substantial amounts of overtime work that cannot be controlled administratively and that required on an irregular basis. (5 CFR 550.151)

AUTHORITY SUFFIX—See LEGAL AUTHORITY SUFFIX

AVAILABILITY PAY—A special form of premium pay fixed at 25 percent of basic pay (including >any locality payment or special rate supplement<) that applies to criminal investigators who are required to work, or be available to work, substantial amounts of unscheduled overtime duty based on the needs of the employing agency. Criminal investigators receiving availability pay are exempt from the minimum wage and overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and may not receive administratively uncontrollable overtime pay.

BREAK IN SERVICE—The time when an employee is no longer on the payroll of an agency. (In computing creditable service for benefits, e.g., leave accrual and reduction in force retention, a separation of 1, 2, or 3 calendar days is not considered to be a break in service; a separation of 4 or more calendar days is considered to be a break in service and the days of separation are subtracted from the employee's total creditable service.)

"CA" APPOINTMENTS—Canal Area appointments that are made under the Panama Canal Employment System. (35 CFR part 253)

CAO (CHANGE OF APPOINTING OFFICE)—Movement of an employee from the jurisdiction of one appointing officer in an agency to that of another appointing officer in the same agency. This usually involves a move from a position for which one personnel office provides service and maintains records to a position for which another personnel office in the same agency provides service and maintains records. Prior to 1/1/82, such moves were sometimes identified on personnel actions with the abbreviation "CAO" following the nature of action.

CAREER APPOINTMENT—Competitive service permanent appointment given to an employee who has completed 3 substantially continuous, creditable years of Federal service. In special cases (such as Administrative Law Judges), career appointment may be given to a person at the time he or she is hired from a civil service register. (See "SUBSTANTIALLY CONTINUOUS SERVICE" and "CREDITABLE SERVICE.") (5 CFR part 315)

CERTIFICATE—A list of eligibles taken from a register and submitted to an appointing officer for employment consideration. (5 CFR part 332)

CERTIFICATION—The process by which the OPM, or an agency office with delegated examining authority, submits certificates to appointing officers.

CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE (also called "Demotion" and "Reduction in Grade")—Personnel action that moves an employee, while serving continuously in the same agency, to (1) a position at a lower grade when both the old and new positions are under the General Schedule or under the same type graded wage schedule, or (2) to a position with a lower rate of basic pay when both the old and the new positions are under the same type ungraded wage schedule or in a different pay-method category.

CIVILIAN POSITION—A civilian office or position (including a temporary or part-time or intermittent position), appointive or elective, in the legislative, executive, or judicial branch of the Federal Government (including each corporation owned or controlled by the Federal Government and including nonappropriated fund instrumentalities under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces) or in the Government of the District of Columbia.

CIVILIAN RETIREE—A person who has retired from Federal Government civilian employment under any Federal Government-administered retirement system. The social security system (FICA) is not a retirement system for purposes of this definition.

CIVIL SERVICE RETIREE—A person retired under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

CLASS OR CLASS OF POSITIONS—All positions that are sufficiently similar in (1) kind or subject matter of work, (2) the level of difficulty and responsibility, and (3) the qualification requirements for the work, to warrant similar treatment in personnel and pay administration. (5 U.S.C. chapter 51)

CLASSIFY—To evaluate the duties and responsibilities of a position and assign a title, occupation series and grade.

COMMISSION (Abbreviated as CSC)—The U.S. Civil Service Commission – now the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

COMPENSATION—money paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs for service-connected disability of 10 percent or more.

COMPETITIVE AREA—For reduction in force, that part of an agency within which employees are in competition for retention. Generally it is restricted by what is considered a "local commuting area." (5 CFR 351.402)

COMPETITIVE LEVEL—A competitive level for reduction in force consists of all jobs in a competitive area which are so similar in all important respects that the agency can readily move an employee from one to another without significant training and without loss of productivity. (5 CFR 351.403)

COMPETITIVE POSITION—A position in the competitive service.

COMPETITIVE SERVICE—All civilian positions in the Federal Government that are not specifically excepted from the civil service laws by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by the OPM under Rule VI, and that are not in the Senior Executive Service.

COMPETITIVE STATUS—Basic eligibility for noncompetitive assignment to a competitive position. A person on a career or career-conditional appointment acquires competitive status upon satisfactory completion of a probationary period. It may also be granted by statute, Executive order, or the civil service rules without competitive examination. A person with competitive status may be promoted, transferred, reassigned, reinstated, or demoted without taking an open competitive examination, subject to the conditions prescribed by the Civil Service rules and regulations.
(5 CFR 212.301)

CONSULTANT—One who serves in an advisory capacity to an officer or instrumentality of the government. (5 U.S.C. 3109)

CONSULTANT POSITION—A position requiring the performance of purely advisory or consultant services, not including the performance of operating functions.

CONTINUANCE—The personnel action used to document that an employee has received a waiver from mandatory retirement or the extension of the not-to-exceed date of a previous waiver.

CONTINUED RATE OF PAY—The rate of pay first established in January 1994 for an employee who previously received an interim geographic adjustment on top of a worldwide or nationwide special rate authorized under 5 U.S.C. 5305.

CONVERSION—The changing of an employee from one appointment to another appointment (under either the same or a different authority) in the same agency with no break in service or with a break of 3 days or less. The change may be in one or more of the following: the type of appointment under which the employee is serving, the authority for the appointment, the position on which the employee is serving, or the not-to-exceed date of a temporary appointment (e.g., from Excepted Appt NTE in a GS-3 position in organization A to an Excepted Appt NTE in a GS-4 position in organization B.)

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (CO-OP PROGRAM OR WORK STUDY PROGRAM)—Program under which a student alternates periods of education and Federal employment under terms of an agreement between his or her school and a government agency. Agreements may provide for the student's permanent employment in the agency upon satisfactory completion of the education and work assignments required by the agreement. [The CO-OP Program was eliminated in December 1994 with the establishment of the Student Educational Employment Program, 5 CFR 213.3202(a)]

CREDITABLE MILITARY SERVICE—The total number of years and months of military service that is creditable for annual leave accrual purposes.

CREDITABLE SERVICE—Federal Government employment (civilian or uniformed service) that meets requirements for a particular type of appointment or benefit, such as leave accrual or reduction in force retention.

CZMS—Canal Zone Merit System. This system was replaced by the Panama Canal Employment System, established by the Panama Canal Act of 1979.

DEMOTION—See CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE

DENIAL OF WITHIN-GRADE INCREASE—The decision to withhold (not grant) a within-grade increase to a General Schedule employee because of a determination that the employee's performance is not at an acceptable level of competence. (5 CFR 531.409)

DETAIL—A temporary assignment of an employee to a different position for a specified period, with the employee returning to his or her regular duties at the end of the detail. (5 U.S.C. chapter 33, subchapter III)

DIRECT HIRING AUTHORITY—OPM-approved agency recruiting plans which expedite recruitment of persons for appointment to positions in shortage occupations.

DISABILITY RETIREMENT PAY (from a uniformed service)—money paid by a uniformed service for disability incurred in or the proximate result of performance of active duty.

DISABLED VETERAN—Means a person who was separated under honorable conditions from active duty in the Armed Forces performed at any time and who has established the present existence of a service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension because of a public statute administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or a military department.

DISCHARGE—A nature of action used for an agency-initiated separation (for work performance and/or misconduct or delinquency) of an employee who was serving on an appointment that did not afford appeal rights. [Discharge was deleted as a nature of action and is no longer used.]

DISCHARGE DURING PROB/TRIAL PERIOD—An agency-initiated separation (for preappointment conditions or for postappointment work performance and/or misconduct or delinquency) of an employee who was serving an initial appointment probation or was serving on a trial period required by civil service or agency regulations. [This nature of action is no longer used.]

DISCHARGE UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS—Means either an honorable or a general discharge from the Armed Forces. The term does not apply to the honorable discharge given an enlisted person to allow commissioning as an officer without a break in service. In this situation the officer's discharge must be under honorable conditions.

DISCONTINUED SERVICE RETIREMENT—See RETIREMENT, DISCONTINUED SERVICE.

DUAL COMPENSATION—Payment for more than one civilian office involving a total of more than 40 hours a week.

DUTY STATION—The city/town, county, and State in which the employee works. For most employees, this will be the location of the employee's work site.

EFFECTIVE DATE—The date on which a personnel action takes place and on which the employee's official assignment begins.

EOD (ENTRY ON DUTY)—The process by which a person completes the necessary paperwork and is sworn in as an employee.

EOD (ENTRY ON DUTY) DATE—The date on which a person completes the necessary paperwork and is sworn in as an employee.

EX-SERVICE PERSON—A person who was separated from active duty performed in peacetime or wartime. (A person on active duty may be an ex-serviceperson because of separation from previous active duty.)

EXCEPTED POSITION—A position in the excepted service (5 U.S.C. 2103 and 5 CFR part 213).

EXCEPTED SERVICE—Unclassified service, unclassified Civil Service or positions outside the competitive service and the senior executive service. Excepted service positions have been excepted from the requirements of the competitive service by law, Executive order, or OPM regulation. (5 U.S.C. 2103 and 5 CFR part 213)

EXECUTIVE ORDER—A directive issued by the President.

EXPERT—A person with excellent qualifications and a high degree of attainment in professional, scientific, technical, or other field. An expert's attainment is such that he or she usually is regarded as an authority or as a practitioner of

unusual competence and skill by other persons in the profession, occupation, or activity. (5 U.S.C. 3109)

EXPERT POSITION—A position that cannot be satisfactorily performed by someone who is not an expert in that field.

EXTENSION—The continuation of a time-limited appointment (one with an NTE date) up to the maximum time allowed by the authority under which it was effected.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE—The total of all periods of military and civilian Federal service considered for retirement, reduction in force, and leave purposes.

FEDERAL MERIT SYSTEM—A complete system of personnel selection and management based on an integrated set of personnel policies, procedures and practices designed to accomplish three basic objectives: (1) to recruit a competent work force; (2) to insure a stable work force; and (3) to provide equal opportunity for employment.

FEDERAL PERSONNEL MANUAL (FPM) SYSTEM—An Office of Personnel Management (OPM) system for publishing personnel regulations, policy, and issuing instructions to Federal agencies. The FPM system, which was abolished effective 12/31/93, included:

FPM BULLETINS which contained temporary instructions or notices;

FPM LETTERS which contained continuing instructions that, because of urgency, could not be put in the FPM or its supplements at the time of issuance; and

FPM SUPPLEMENTS which amplified or explained in detail various subjects covered in the basic FPM chapters.

FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM—The job-grading and pay system that applies to most trade, craft, and labor positions in agencies subject to 5 U.S.C. 5342. Under this system, pay is adjusted according to the rates paid by private industry for similar jobs in the same area. Included are Federal employees in recognized trade or craft or skilled mechanical crafts, in unskilled, semiskilled or skilled manual labor occupations, and other persons, including foremen or supervisors, in positions where trade, craft, or labor experience or knowledge is the main requirement. (5 U.S.C. chapter 53, subchapter IV, and 5 CFR part 532)

FEGLI—Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance.
(5 U.S.C. chapter 87, 5 CFR parts 870-874, and The Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Handbook)

FEHBP—Federal Employee's Health Benefits Program. (5 U.S.C. chapter 89, 5 CFR part 890, and The Federal Employees Health Benefits Handbook)

FERS RETIREE—A person retired under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

FROZEN SERVICE is the total number of years and months of civilian and military service that is creditable in a CSRS component of a FERS employee.

FULL-TIME WORK SCHEDULE—A full-time work schedule requires most employees to work 40 hours during the work week.

FURLOUGH—The placement of an employee in a temporary nonpay status and nonduty status (or absence from duty) because of lack of work or funds, or for other nondisciplinary reasons.

GENERAL DISCHARGE—A discharge granted from the Armed Forces under honorable conditions.

GENERAL SCHEDULE—The GS graded pay system established under the Classification Act of 1949, as amended. (5 U.S.C. chapter 53, subchapter III, and
5 CFR part 531)

GM WITHIN-GRADE INCREASE—is an agency-awarded increase in basic rate of pay, with no change in grade, to an employee who is covered under the Performance Management and Recognition System termination provisions of Public Law 103-89.

GRADE—A level of work or range of difficulty, responsibility and qualification requirements. (5 U.S.C. 5102)

GRADE RESTORATION ACTION—An action taken to restore to an employee the grade held prior to a grade reduction that was effective during the retroactive period of title VIII of the Civil Service Reform Act. The grade restoration action recorded the employee's retained grade in the OPM's data system.

GRADE RETENTION ACTION—An action to retain the grade held by an employee prior to a grade reduction that was effective during the retroactive period of title VIII of the Civil Service Reform Act. The grade retention action documented the employee's step in the retained grade and the rate of basic pay to which he or she was entitled.

GRADE RETENTION ENTITLEMENT—The right of an employee to retain for 2 years, for pay and benefits purposes, the grade of the position from which he or she was reduced. (5 U.S.C. 5362 and 5 CFR part 536)

HEALTH BENEFITS—The health service and insurance programs established for Federal employees under 5 U.S.C. 7901 and 8901-8914.

HEARING—The presentation of such oral and written evidence concerning an appeal or equal employment opportunity complaint that the appeal authority or complaints examiner deems pertinent to the consideration of the appeal or complaint on its merits.

IGA CONTINUED RATE OF PAY means a rate of pay first established in January 1994 for an employee who previously received an interim geographic adjustment (IGA) on top of a worldwide or nationwide special rate authorized under 5 U.S.C. 5305. >[This term was deleted from this Guide in Update 46, dated January 7, 2007.]<

ILIA—An acronym that stands for "in lieu of involuntary action" and is used with certain natures of action.

INDEFINITE APPOINTMENT—One given a nonpermanent employee who is hired for an unlimited period of time.

INDUCTION—See EOD.

INJURY COMPENSATION—The compensation and medical care provided to civilian Federal employees for disability due to personal injuries sustained while in performance of duty and due to diseases relating to this employment. (5 U.S.C 8101-8151)

INTERIM GEOGRAPHIC ADJUSTMENT is an additional payment made to a General Schedule, Foreign Service, or Veterans Health Administration employee, or an officer of the U.S. Park Police whose official duty station is in an area where the President has determined that significant pay disparities and recruitment or retention problems exist. (Note: An interim geographic adjustment also may be authorized for other groups of employees upon request of the head of an agency.) [This term was deleted from this Guide in Update 23 (2/97)]

INTERMITTENT SERVICE OR INTERMITTENT EMPLOYMENT—Service when employee works on less than a full-time basis with no prescheduled tour of duty. In the past, "WAE" was used on personnel documents to identify intermittent service.

INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION—A separation against the will of and without the consent of the employee, other than separation for cause on charges of misconduct or delinquency. Examples include separation based on reduction in force, abolishment of position, expiration of term of office, lack of funds, and unacceptable performance (unless due to the employee's misconduct). (The CSRS and FERS Handbook, Chapter 44)

JOB DESCRIPTION—See POSITION DESCRIPTION.

JOB SHEET—See POSITION DESCRIPTION

LEAD AGENCY—Under the Federal Wage System, an agency designated by the OPM to plan and conduct wage surveys, analyze the survey data and determine and issue required wage schedules for a wage area. (5 U.S.C. chapter 53, subchapter IV, and 5 CFR part 532)

LEGAL AUTHORITY—The legal authority is the law, Executive Order, regulation, agency directive, or the instruction under which the personnel action is taken.

LEAVE, ANNUAL—Leave of absence with pay allowed for personal, emergency, and other purposes. With certain exceptions, employees earn or accrue leave at the rate of 13 to 26 working days a ear, depending on length of service. (5 U.S.C. 6303 and 5 CFR part 630, subpart C)

LEAVE, MILITARY—Paid leave provided to Reservists and members of the National Guard under 5 U.S.C. 6323 who serve on active duty. (Military Leave is not available for inactive duty or drills.)

LEAVE, SICK—Leave of absence with pay allowed for employees when the employee is physically incapacitated for the performance of duties; receives medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment; or is required to give care and attendance to a member of his or her immediate family who is afflicted with a contagious disease. With certain exceptions, all civilian employees of the Federal Government earn sick leave at the rate of 13 working days a year. (5 U.S.C. 6307 and 5 CFR part 630, subpart D)

LEAVE WITH PAY (LWP)—An absence from duty with pay (in sick leave status) granted at the employee's request following the approval of a disability retirement application, or after application for optional retirement due to disability.

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)—A temporary nonpay status and nonduty status (or absence from a prescheduled tour of duty) granted at the employee's request. LWOP-US (formerly called LWOP-MIL) is a nature of action specifically used to document a leave of absence to perform duty with the uniformed services.

LEGAL AUTHORITY SUFFIX—A word or phase added to the legal authority to more precisely identify the circumstances under which the authority is being used or the action is being taken. These suffixes are generally abbreviated as shown below:

CAA = Action proposed under civil service adverse action procedures

CLG = Change to Lower Grade

Comp = Competitive

Decl = Declined

Disp = Displacement

EAA = Action proposed under agency procedures which are equivalent to civil service adverse action procedures

Eq = Equivalent

Exc = Excepted Service

Inj = Injury

Mil = Military

Mix = For mixed reasons, (for both conduct and performance reasons)

MFD = More than 14 days

NARS = No Appeal Rights

Nonsupv = Nonsupervisory

Nondisp = Nondisciplinary

OAA = Action proposed under other adverse action procedures

OTD = Over 30 days

Perf = Performance

Preappt = Preappointment

Prom = Promotion

Prob = Probationary

Reas = Reassignment

Recert = Recertification

Reclass = Reclassification

Relo = Relocation

RIF = Reduction in force

T/F = Transfer of Function

WTO = Worker Trainee Opportunity Program

LIFE INSURANCE—The group life, death and accidental dismemberment insurance available to Federal employees. (5 U.S.C. chapter 87 and 5 CFR parts 870-874)

LOCALITY PAYMENT means a locality-based comparability payment under 5 U.S.C. 5304 or equivalent payment under another authority.

LOCALITY-BASED COMPARABILITY PAYMENT means a payment under 5 U.S.C. 5304. [This term was deleted from this Guide in Update 46, dated January 7, 2007.]

LWOP—See LEAVE WITHOUT PAY.

LWP—See LEAVE WITH PAY.

MASS TRANSFER—The movement of an employee with his or her position to a different agency when (1) a transfer of function or an organization change takes place and (2) there is no change in the employee's position, grade, or pay. (Note: for purposes of this definition, a change in the amount of any locality payment to which the employee is entitled is not a change in pay.)

MERGED RECORDS PERSONNEL FOLDER (MRPF), Standard Form 66-C is a file containing personnel records established both within and outside the scope of OPM's recordkeeping authority.

MERIT PAY SYSTEM—The pay system established, under 5 U.S.C. chapter 54, for General Schedule employees in grades 13 through 15 who were in supervisory, managerial, or management official positions. The Merit Pay System was replaced by the Performance Management and Recognition System, which was terminated on 11-01-93.

MERIT PROMOTION PROGRAM—See MERIT STAFFING PROGRAM.

MERIT STAFFING PROGRAM—The system under which agencies consider an employee for vacant positions on the basis of personal merit. Vacant positions are usually filled through competition with applicants being evaluated and ranked for the position on the basis of their experience, education, skills and performance record. (5 CFR part 335)

MILITARY RETIREE—A person who has retired from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.

MSPB—Merit Systems Protection Board.

MOBILIZATION—Readiness provisions for operating the Federal Personnel System in time of national emergency. (5 CFR part 230, subpart D)

NATURE OF ACTION—The nature of action is a phrase that explains the action that is occurring (such as "appointment" or "promotion") when a personnel action is documented by a Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action.

NONAPPROPRIATED FUNDS INSTRUMENTALITY (NAFI) means the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Army and Air Force Motion Picture Service, Navy Ship's Stores Ashore, Navy exchanges, Marine Corps exchanges, Coast Guard exchanges, and other instrumentalities of the United States under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces conducted for the comfort, pleasure, contentment, and mental and physical improvement of personnel of the Armed Forces. Employees of these organizations are not paid from funds appropriated by the Congress and, for most purposes, are not considered to be Federal employees. (5 U.S.C. 2105(c))

NONCOMPETITIVE ACTION means a promotion, demotion, reassignment, transfer, reinstatement, or an appointment based on prior service. (5 CFR 210.102)

OCCUPATIONAL CODE—See definition of series.

OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOLDER (OPF) >[INCLUSIVE OF AN APPROVED ELECTRONIC EQUIVALENT OF THE SAME (i.e., eOPF)]< - Standard Form 66 is a file containing records and documents related to civilian employment under title 5, U.S. Code.

ON-CALL EMPLOYEE—one who worked when needed during periods of heavy workload with expected cumulative service of at least 6 months in pay status each year. [On-call employment was deleted from this Guide in Update 15, 3/15/95.]

OPM—The Office of Personnel Management.

OPERATING MANUALS—OPM issuances that contain procedural guidance applicable to all agencies.

PART-TIME SERVICE or PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT—Employment on less than a full-time basis under a prescheduled regular tour of duty.

PART-TIME WORK SCHEDULE—A schedule that requires an employee to work less than full-time, but

for a specific number of hours (usually 16-32 hours per administrative work week) on a prearranged scheduled tour of duty.

PAY ADJUSTMENT—[as used in this Guide] Any increase or decrease in an employee's rate of basic pay when there is no change in the duties or responsibilities of the employee's position. >For example, a pay adjustment would< include a change in the step at which the employee is paid. A change in the pay system under which the employee is paid is also >considered< a pay adjustment.

PAY PLAN—The pay system or pay schedule under which the employee's rate of basic pay is determined, e.g., General Schedule (GS), Executive Schedule (EX), and Leader under the Federal Wage System (WL).

PAY RETENTION ENTITLEMENT—The right of an employee to retain, under certain circumstances, a rate of basic pay higher than the maximum rate of the grade for the position occupied. (5 U.S.C. 5363 and 5 CFR part 536)

PENSION—money paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs for disability that is not necessarily service-connected.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION SYSTEM (PMRS)—The pay system established under Public Law 98-615 to replace the Merit Pay System for General Schedule employees in grades GS-13 through GS-15 in supervisory, managerial, or management official positions. PMRS was terminated on 11-01-93 by Public Law 103-89.

PERSONNEL ACTION—The process necessary to appoint, separate, or make other personnel changes.

PERSONNEL OFFICE IDENTIFIER (POI)—Identifies the Federal civilian personnel office authorized to appoint and separate the employee, and, to the extent such functions have been delegated, to prepare personnel actions, maintain official personnel records, and administer programs for staff compensation, training and development, benefits and awards, and employee and labor relations.

PLACEMENT—Putting employees into jobs. This may be done by appointment of someone new to government; by promotion, change to lower grade, reassignment, or transfer within an agency or from other agencies of a current employee; and by reinstatement of a former employee.

PMRS MERIT INCREASE—An agency-awarded increase in rate of basic pay with no change in grade to an employee who was under the Performance Management and Recognition system.

POSITION means the work, consisting of the duties and responsibilities assigned by competent authority for performance by an employee. (5 U.S.C. 5102 and 5 CFR 511.101)

POSITION CHANGE—A move by an employee from one position to another position during his or her continuous service within the same agency. When the move establishes the employee's eligibility for grade retention (under 5 U.S.C. 5362), the nature of action for the move is also called "Position Change." It is also called a "Position Change" when an employee who is already entitled to grade retention moves to another position at or below his or her retained grade. Moves when the employee is not entitled to grade retention are called promotions, changes to lower grade, or reassignments.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION means the analysis and identification of a position and placing it under the position classification plan established by OPM under chapter 51 of title 5, U.S. Code.

POSITION DESCRIPTION—A statement of duties and responsibilities comprising the work assigned to a civilian employee.

POSITION (or JOB) TITLE—The name of a position, such as "Secretary," or "Civil Engineer," or "Personnel Staffing Specialist."

PRD (PAY RATE DETERMINANT)—A designation of any special factors that help determine an employee's rate of basic pay or adjusted basic pay.

PREFERENCE (VETERANS' PREFERENCE) is an employee's category of entitlement to preference in the Federal service based on active military service that was terminated honorably:

— 5-point preference is the preference granted to a preference-eligible veteran who does not meet the criteria for one of the types of 10-point preferences listed above.

— 10-point (disability) preference is the preference to which a disabled veteran is entitled.

— 10-point (compensable disability) preference is the preference to which a disabled veteran is entitled if he or she has a compensable service-connected disability rating of 10-percent or more.

— 10-point (30% compensable disability) preference is the preference to which a disabled veteran is entitled if he or she is entitled to a 10-point preference due to a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more.

—10-point (other) preference is the preference granted to the widow/widower or mother of a deceased veteran or to the spouse or mother of a disabled veteran. It is called "derived preference" because it is derived from the military service of someone else - a veteran who is not using it for preference. When the disabled veteran does use the service for preference, then the spouse or mother is no longer entitled to preference.

PREFERENCE ELIGIBLE means veterans, spouses, widows, or mothers who meet the definition of "preference eligible" in 5 U.S.C. 2108. Preference eligibles are entitled to have 5 or 10 points added to their earned score on a civil service examination (see 5 U.S.C. 3309). They are also accorded a higher retention standing in the event of a reduction in force (see 5 U.S.C. 3502). Preference does not apply, however, to inservice placement actions such as promotions.

PREMIUM PAY—Additional pay for overtime, night, holiday, or Sunday work and standby duty or administratively uncontrollable work. (5 CFR part 550, subpart A)

PREVAILING RATE SYSTEM—See FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM.

PREVIOUS RETIREMENT COVERAGE—An indicator of whether the employee has, at the time of most recent appointment to the Federal service, previously been covered by the Civil Service Retirement System or Federal Employees Retirement System.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD is the first year of service of employee who is given a career or career-conditional appointment under 5 CFR part 315. During this period, the agency determines the fitness of the employee, and the employee has no appeal rights. (5 CFR part 315, subpart H)

PROMOTION—A nature of action used to document personnel actions that change an employee (1) to a position at a higher grade level within the same job classification system and pay schedule or (2) to position with a higher rate of basic pay in a different job classification system and pay schedule.

PROVISIONAL APPOINTMENT—A temporary appointment to a continuing position when the agency intends later to convert the employee to a nontemporary appointment and has current authority for such conversion.

QUALITY (STEP) INCREASE (QSI OR QI)—An increase in employee's rate of basic pay through an additional within-grade increase granted under 5 U.S.C. 5336 for sustained high quality performance.

QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS FOR THE GENERAL SCHEDULE (formerly Handbook X-118)—Qualification standards manual. The manual contains specific standards for General Schedule positions.

"RARE BIRD" POSITION—One where the OPM has determined that the pay or duties of the position are such, or that the qualified persons are so few, it would not be in the interest of good civil service administration to fill the position through open-competitive examination. (5 CFR 316.601)

RATE OF BASIC PAY—The rate of pay fixed by law or administrative action for the position held by an employee before any deductions (such as taxes) and exclusive of additional pay of any kind (such as overtime pay). >For GS employees, a rate of basic pay is a GS base rate, a law enforcement officer special base rate (GL), or a retained rate – excluding any locality payment or special rate supplement. A rate of basic pay is expressed consistent with applicable pay basis (e.g., annual rate for GS employees or hourly rate for wage system employees).<

REALIGNMENT—The movement of an employee and his or her position when (1) a transfer of function or an organization change occurs, and (2) the employee stays in the same agency, and (3) there is no change in the employee's position, grade or pay (including locality pay).

REASSIGNMENT—The change of an employee from one position to another without promotion or change to lower grade. Reassignment includes: (1) movement to a position in a new occupational series, or to another position in the same series; (2) assignment to a position that has been redescribed due to the introduction of a new or revised classification or job grading standard; (3) assignment to a position that has been redescribed as a result of position review; and (4) movement to a different position at the same grade but with a change in salary that is the result of different local prevailing wage rates or a different locality payment.

RECRUITMENT BONUS—A one-time payment of up to 25 percent of basic pay to an employee who is newly appointed to a hard-to-fill position. (5 U.S.C. 5753) [The term "Recruitment Bonus" was deleted from this guide in Update 45, dated August 6, 2006.]

RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES — are payments made to newly-appointed employees when an agency determines that the position is likely to be difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive. (5 U.S.C. 5753)

RELOCATION INCENTIVES —are payments made to current employees who must relocate to accept a position in a different geographic area when an agency determines that the position is likely to difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive. (5 U.S.C. 5753)

RETENTION INCENTIVES —are payments made to employees when an agency determines that the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the agency for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee and that the employee would be likely to leave the Federal service in the absence of a retention incentive. (5 U.S.C. 5754)

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF)—Separation of an employee from his or her competitive level, required by the agency because of lack of work or funds, abolition of position or agency, or cuts in personnel authorizations. (5 U.S.C. chapter 35, subchapter I, and 5 CFR part 351)

REDUCTION IN GRADE, See CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE

REEMPLOYED ANNUITANT—A person retired under the Civil Service or Federal Employees Retirement System whose annuity continues after he or she is reemployed by the Federal Government.

REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY LIST—A list of career and career-conditional employees an agency has separated because of (1) reduction in force or (2) compensable injury or disability where recovery takes more than one year from the time the employee began receiving compensation.

REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS—The entitlement of an employee to return to nontemporary employment after assignment to other civilian employment. This other employment may be with the Foreign Service, public international organizations, or other agencies in the executive branch or overseas. (5 CFR part 352)

REGISTER—A list of qualified applicants compiled in order of relative standing for certification.

REINSTATEMENT—Noncompetitive reemployment in the competitive service as a career or career-conditional employee of a person formerly employed in the competitive service who had a competitive status or was serving probation when separated. (5 CFR part 315, subpart D)

RELOCATION BONUS—A one-time payment of up to 25 percent of basic pay to a current employee who relocates to take a hard-to-fill position. (5 U.S.C. 5753) [The term "Relocation Bonus" was deleted from this guide in Update 45, dated August 6, 2006.]

REMOVAL—A separation from Federal service initiated by the agency, Office of Personnel Management, or Merit Systems Protection Board, under 5 CFR parts 359, 432, 731, or 752; section 1201 of title 5, U.S. Code; or comparable agency statutes or regulations.

RESERVIST—A member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard reserves.

RESIGNATION—A separation action initiated by the employee to leave Federal civil service.

RESIGNATION-ILIA—A nature of action used to document the resignation initiated by employee under circumstances that meet the definition of "involuntary separation" in Chapter 44 of The

CSRS and FERS Handbook.

RESTORATION RIGHTS—The entitlement of employees who leave their civilian positions for military duty to return to those positions after termination of that duty and the entitlement of an employee to return to his or her position after recovery from compensable injury. (5 CFR part 353)

RETAINED RATE—A rate of pay above the maximum rate of the employee's grade which an employee is allowed to keep in special situations rather than having his or her rate of basic pay reduced.

RETENTION ALLOWANCE is the annual total dollar amount (up to 25 percent of basic pay) paid to an essential employee with unusually high qualifications or special skills in those cases where the agency determines that the employee would be likely to leave Federal employment if no allowance were paid. (5 U.S.C. 5754) [The term "Retention Allowance" was deleted from this guide in Update 45, dated August 6, 2006.]

RETENTION PREFERENCE—The relative right of an employee to be retained in a position when similar positions are being abolished and employees in them are being separated or furloughed. (5 CFR part 351)

RETENTION REGISTER—A written or printed record of all employees occupying positions in a competitive level arranged by tenure groups and subgroups, and by service dates within the subgroup. It is used in a reduction in force to determine which employees are retained and which are separated or moved to other positions. (5 CFR part 351)

RETIREMENT—Separation from the service when employee is eligible to obtain an immediate annuity.

RETIREMENT, DEFERRED—Retirement of a person age 62 or older with at least 5 years of civilian service who was formerly employed under the Civil Service Retirement System and then left Federal service or moved to a position not under the retirement system. An employee covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System who separates after completing 10 years of service can also receive a deferred retirement upon reaching the Federal Employees Retirement System "Minimum Retirement Age" (55 to 57, depending on birth date). (The CSRS and FERS Handbook)

RETIREMENT, DISCONTINUED SERVICE—Retirement based on involuntary separation against the will and without the consent of the employee, other than on charges of misconduct or delinquency. An employee who does not meet the age and service requirements for optional retirement at the time of separation may retire on discontinued service if he or she is age 50 with 20 years of creditable service or at any age with 25 years of creditable service including 5 years of civilian service. (The CSRS and FERS Handbook)

RETIREMENT, OPTIONAL means voluntary retirement, without reduction in annuity, of an employee who meets minimum age and service requirements. Under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), an employee qualifies at age 55 with 30 years of creditable service; under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), an employee qualifies at the minimum retirement age (55-57, depending on birth date) with 30 years of creditable service. Under both CSRS and FERS, an employee also qualifies at age 60 with 20 years of creditable service and at age 62 with 5 years of creditable service. (The CSRS and FERS Handbook)

RETURN TO DUTY—Placement of an employee back in pay and duty status after absence for Furlough, Suspension, or Leave Without Pay.

SABBATICAL—An absence from duty, without charge to pay or leave, that an agency may grant to a Senior Executive Service career appointee to engage in study or uncompensated work experience. (5 U.S.C. 3396(c)(1))

SEASONAL EMPLOYEE—An employee who works on an annual recurring basis for periods of less than 12 months (2087 hours) each year.

SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL (ST) POSITIONS are positions established under 5 U.S.C. 3104 to carry out research and development functions that require the services of specially

qualified personnel. ST positions are in the competitive service, but are not filled through competitive examinations. Recruitment is carried out by the agencies concerned. ST positions are ungraded. (5 CFR part 319)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE—Positions that are classified above GS-15 of the General Schedule or in level IV or V or the Executive Schedule or equivalent positions, which are not required to be filled by an appointment by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and in which employees direct, monitor and manage the work of an organizational unit or exercise other executive functions.

SENIOR LEVEL (SL) POSITIONS are positions established under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-509) to replace positions at grades GS-16, GS-17, and GS-18 of the General Schedule. SL positions are classified above GS-15 of the General Schedule and are ungraded. (5 CFR part 319)

SEPARATED UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS means either an honorable or general discharge from the Armed Forces. The Department of Defense is responsible for administering and defining military discharges.

SEPARATION-APPT IN (name of entity) is a separation when an employee leaves a Federal agency to accept employment with a non-Federal Government entity that takes over his or her Federal functions AND the employee will continue to receive Federal benefits.

SEPARATION-US (uniformed services) (formerly called Separation–MIL) is a separation action initiated by an agency when the employee enters on duty with the uniformed services and provides written notice of intent not to return to a position of employment with the agency or elects to be separated in lieu of placement in a leave without pay status.

SEPARATION-RIF is a separation from an agency's rolls under 5 CFR parts 351 or 359, or as a consequence of a reduction in force.

SERIES—Classes of positions similar in specialized line of work but differing in difficulty or responsibility of work, or qualifications requirements and, therefore, differing in grade and pay range.

SERVICE COMPUTATION DATE (SCD)—The date, either actual or constructed by crediting service, used to determine benefits that are based on how long the person has been in the Federal Service.

For an employee with no prior creditable civilian or military service, the service computation date is the effective date of the employee's first Federal civilian appointment. For an employee with prior creditable service, the service computation date is constructed by totaling the days, months and years of the employee's creditable civilian and military service and subtracting that total from the effective date of the employee's most recent appointment. For example, if an employee is appointed on 10-12-1998 and has 4 years, 3 months and 3 days of prior service that is creditable, the service computation date will be constructed as follows:

When service credit of 4 years, 3 months, and 3 days, is subtracted from the date, 1998-10-12, the result is 1994-07-09. Thus, the service computation date will then be 07-09-1994.

SEVERANCE PAY—Sum of money (based on last salary, length of service, and age) which an employee may be paid when separated involuntarily from an agency, such as during a reduction in force. An employee is ineligible for severance pay if the separation results from misconduct or if the employee is eligible for an immediate (retirement) annuity. (5 CFR part 550, subpart G)

SON (SUBMITTING OFFICE NUMBER)—A number that was assigned by OPM to identify an office that submitted personnel action data to the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF). The SON was replaced by the POI (Personnel Office Identifier.)

SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE—An employee who is appointed to work for a period not to exceed 130 days during any period of 365 days. The standards of employee conduct to which a special government employee is subject differ from those to which other employees are subject. (18 U.S.C. 202)

SPECIAL PAY ADJUSTMENT for LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS is an additional payment made to a law enforcement officer whose official duty station is in one of eight special pay areas defined in section 404 of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990. (5 CFR part 531, subpart C) [This term was deleted from this guide in Update 46, dated January 7, 2007.]

SPECIAL *** RATES—>Are higher than rates under the regular pay schedule. For example, OPM

may establish higher pay rates under 5 U.S.C. 5305< for occupations in which private enterprise is paying substantially more than the regular Government schedule and this salary gap significantly handicaps the Government's recruitment or retention of well-qualified persons. >A special rate may consist of a base rate and a special rate supplement.< (5 U.S.C. 5305 and 5 CFR part 530, subpart C)

STANDARD FORM 50 (also called "50")—Notification of Personnel Action. The Standard Form 50 is completed by the personnel or administrative office to which appointing authority has been delegated, and is used to notify the employee and the payroll office, and to record the action in the employee's Official Personnel Folder.

STANDARD FORM 52 (also called a "52")—Request for Personnel Action. Is used by operating officials or supervisors to request personnel actions and to secure internal agency clearance of requests for personnel action. Employees use the Standard Form 52 to request leave without pay or a name change and to notify the agency of their intent to resign or retire. (Chapter 4 of this Guide)

STATUS EMPLOYEE—One who has completed the probationary period under the career-conditional employment system. Also known as an employee with competitive status. (5 CFR 315.503)

STATUS QUO EMPLOYEE—An employee who failed to acquire competitive status when the position in which he or she was serving was placed in the competitive service by a statute, Executive Order, or Civil Service Rule which permitted his or her retention without acquisition of status. (5 CFR part 316, subpart G).

STEP—The step of the pay plan under which an employee is paid. For example, step 2 of GS 7; step 1 of WG 5.

STEP ADJUSTMENT—A change in the step of the grade at which the employee is serving without a change in the employee's rate of basic pay. >For example, a special rate employee may become entitled to a retained rate (step 00 equal to the employee's former step rate.<

SUBSTANTIALLY CONTINUOUS SERVICE—Federal civilian service which continued without break or interruption; a period of service from which time off the agency's rolls was not deducted or subtracted from employee's total period of service.

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT—Placement of a person in a hard-to-recruit-for position at a pay rate above the minimum based on the applicant's unique or unusually high qualifications, a special government need for applicants' services and the fact applicants' present salary or salary offerings are higher than the minimum rate of the grade level to which the applicant can be appointed. (5 CFR 531.203(b))

SUPERVISORY DIFFERENTIAL The annual total dollar amount paid, over and above basic pay, to a General Schedule supervisor who otherwise would be paid less than one or more of the civilian employees supervised. (5 U.S.C. 5755)

SUSPENSION—Placement of an employee in a temporary nonpay and nonduty status (or absence from duty) for disciplinary reasons or other reasons pending an inquiry. (5 CFR part 752)

TEMP APPT-PER—(Sometimes referred to as "TAPER" appointment) A nature of action that documents a temporary appointment authorized by the Office of Personnel Management in the absence of eligibles who can be considered for permanent employment from a civil service register. The appointment is temporary, pending the establishment of a register from which permanent employees can be selected. (5 CFR part 316, subpart B). [The term "TAPER" was deleted from this Guide in Update 43, dated July 25, 2004].

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT—An appointment made for a limited period of time and with a specific not-to-exceed (NTE) date determined by the authority under which the appointment is made.

TENURE—The period of time an employee may reasonably expect to serve under his or her current appointment. Tenure is governed by the type of appointment under which an employee is currently serving, without regard to whether the employee has competitive status or whether the employee's appointment is to a competitive service position or an excepted service position.

TENURE GROUPS—Categories of employees ranked in priority order for retention during reduction in force.

TENURE SUBGROUPS—Within each tenure group, employees are divided into three subgroups. Subgroup AD includes each preference eligible employee who has a compensable service-

connected disability of 30 percent or more. Subgroup A consists of employees with veterans' preference who are not in subgroup AD. Subgroup B consists of employees who have no veterans' preference.

TERM APPOINTMENT—Appointment to a position that will last more than one year but not more than four years and that is of a project nature where the job will terminate upon completion of the project. (5 CFR part 316, subpart C)

TERMINATION-APPT IN (agency)—A separation action initiated by either the employee or the agency when the employee (or a group of employees) moves from one agency to another agency.

TERMINATION DURING PROB/TRIAL PERIOD —An agency-initiated separation of an employee who is serving an initial appointment probation or a trial period required by civil service or agency regulations.

TERMINATION-EXP OF APPT—A separation action initiated by the agency to end employment on the not-to-exceed date of a temporary appointment or when the employee has worked the number of days or hours to which the appointment was limited.

TERMINATION-SPONSOR RELOCATING—An action to document the separation of a Department of Defense employee who submits a resignation to accompany a military or civilian sponsor to a new duty station.

TIME–AFTER–COMPETITIVE–APPOINTMENT RESTRICTION—The provision that 3 months must elapse after an employee's latest nontemporary competitive appointment before he or she may be (1) promoted or reassigned, or transferred to a different line of work or to a different geographical area, or (2) transferred to or reinstated to a higher grade or different line of work in the competitive service. (5 CFR part 330.501)

TOUR OF DUTY—The hours of a day (daily tour of duty) and the days of an administrative workweek (weekly tour of duty) that are scheduled in advance and during which an employee is required to perform work on a regularly recurring basis.

TRANSFER—A change of an employee, without a break in service of one full workday, from a position in one agency to a position in another agency that can be filled under the same appointing authority: 5 CFR 315.501 authorizes the transfer of competitive service career and career-conditional appointees to competitive service career or career-conditional appointments in other agencies; 5 CFR 307.103 authorizes transfer of excepted service veterans' readjustment appointees to excepted service veterans' readjustment appointment positions in other agencies; and 5 U.S.C. 3395 authorizes transfer of career and noncareer appointees in the Senior Executive Service to career and noncareer appointments in other agencies.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTION—The movement of the work of one or more employees from one competitive area to another. (5 CFR part 351, subpart C)

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION—An unemployment insurance for Federal employees. (5 U.S.C. chapter 85)

UNIFORMED SERVICES—The Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) plus the commissioned officer corps of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

VETERAN—Means a person who was separated with an honorable discharge or under honorable conditions from active duty in the Armed Forces performed during one of the periods described in 5 U.S.C. 2108.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE is an employee's category of entitlement to preference in the Federal service based on active military service that terminated honorably.

WAE (when actually employed)—See INTERMITTENT SERVICE.

WAGE AREA—A geographical area within which a single set of regular wage schedules is applied uniformly by Federal installations to the covered occupations under the Federal Wage System. (5 U.S.C. chapter 53, Subchapter IV, and 5 CFR part 532)

WAGE EMPLOYEES—Also called Federal wage employees or prevailing rate employees. These employees are in trades, crafts, or labor occupations covered by the Federal Wage System and their pay is fixed and adjusted from time-to-time in accordance with prevailing rates.

WC (Without Compensation)—Under certain circumstances, an agency may be authorized to appoint an employee to provide services to the government without pay.

WITHIN-GRADE INCREASE (WGI)—Is an increase in employee's rate of basic pay by advancement from one step of his or her grade to the next after meeting requirements for length of service and performance.

WITHIN-RANGE INCREASE (WRI) – Is an increase in an employee's rate of basic pay >within the pay range for his grade, band, or level (excluding an increase granted automatically to keep pace with an adjustment in pay structure). For pay systems with scheduled steps within a pay range, a within-range increase is an advancement from one step to a higher step (e.g., after meeting requirements for length-of-service and performance).< A GS within-grade increase (WGI) is one type of within-range increase.

WORK SCHEDULE—The time basis on which an employee is paid. A work schedule may be full-time, part-time, or intermittent.

WORK SITE of the employee is the place where he or she works, or at which the employee's activities are based, as determined by the employing agency