

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Introduction

This Handbook is designed to help you learn about many of your benefits and responsibilities as an Oak Ridge Operations Office employee. It can answer many questions pertaining to employment, but does not address every detail of the subjects covered. Many of the items include a link to other internet sites that provide more detailed information.

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Your Official Personnel Folder and Other Records

The Personnel and Management Analysis Branch maintains a copy of all personnel actions and other important records concerning your Federal employment. The file is called an Official Personnel Folder (OPF). You are encouraged to maintain your own file copies of records you are given. Your copies may be needed if there is ever a discrepancy or problem with the information in your OPF. You may review your OPF by making an appointment with the Personnel and Management Analysis Branch.

Employee Self Service Website

The DOE Employee Self Service Website is an automated web-based system that enables DOE Federal employees to use the Internet to view and/or update personal, payroll and training information. This service saves time and allows the employee to access the information directly without having to wait on other offices to provide this information.

Accessing the DOE Employee Self Service website is done through the following steps:

Step 1: Using Netscape or Internet Explorer browser, type the following address:

<http://chris.inel.gov/>

Step 2: At the CHRIS homepage, click on the "ESS" button.

Step 3: Click on "ESS homepage".

Step 4: At the ESS Homepage, click on "Get/Forgot password".

Step 5: At the "Request a password" screen, type your last name and social security number(or CHRIS Employee ID).

Step 6: Follow the instructions provided on the next screens and select/accept the

"destination delivery" when displayed.

After you receive your password either by e-mail or by mail to your official address, you're ready to go!

Change of Address

It is important to keep your current address up-to-date in official records for personnel and payroll purposes. To record a change of address, go to the Employee Self Service website (see below) and follow instructions for updating your address. You may also access this website from the [PMAB home page](#) and follow the links for CHRIS and then ESS.

Benefits

Federal employees enjoy a very comprehensive benefits package. Benefits include, but are not limited to: Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Annual Leave, Sick Leave, and Retirement Coverage. For links to further information on these and other benefits, visit our [Benefits web page](#).

Business Travel

An overview of the regulations, practices, and procedures for DOE employees who travel is provided on the [Oak Ridge Financial Service Center \(ORFSC\)](#) web site. The site also includes other travel related resources such as the Federal Travel Regulations, DOE and ORO travel orders, current per diem rates, and ORFSC's 24-hour customer assistance service where travelers can check the status of their travel reimbursement vouchers. For additional travel information, employees can contact the ORFSC travel coordinator at 865-576-0780.

Sunday Travel

Generally, travel on Sunday is not considered to be overtime and cannot be compensated through credit hours or other means. This includes travel to training, conferences, and other scheduled business activities. If an uncontrollable emergency (e.g., immediate response to an accident) is the cause for the travel overtime or other compensation may be appropriate.

Conduct

Good Manners and Courtesy

For the purposes of this statement, "good Manners" has an informal, common-sense meaning. It is behavior that is polite and considerate of others. Courtesy means the practice, day in and day out, of good manners. Courtesy must be reflected in the direct dealings between

employees, between Federal employees and the public, and in indirect communications such as correspondence and publications.

DOE policy requires that employees of the Department practice courtesy in all of their dealings with the public, members of Congress, other employees of DOE, and employees of other agencies. Discourteous behavior and other forms of incivility constitute unprofessional behavior. Unprofessional, rude, and/or offensive behavior by employees, in whatever form it may take, is an unnecessary obstacle to the Department in achieving its missions and will not be tolerated.

Violence in the Workplace

It is the mission of ORO management to provide a workplace to Federal employees which is free from violent conduct and behavior. Examples of behavior for which there is zero tolerance include, but are not limited to the following:

- Physical acts; such as hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing objects, stalking
- Verbal threats; such as abuse, harassment, intimidation
- Nonverbal - gestures, intimidation, written threats
- Sexual - harmful or offensive touching or assault
- Workplace - arson, sabotage, vandalism, robbery

Incidents involving a threat or act of violence, aggression, or intimidation which appear to involve an imminent risk to the physical safety of an individual should be immediately reported to the Federal Building Complex Security Manager (241-2782) or the Oak Ridge Operations Center (576-1005) and immediate supervisor.

Any incident involving inappropriate behavior (e.g., apparent intoxication, a threat of violence, aggression, intimidation, or harassment) should be reported by telephone to the Federal Building Complex Security Manager (241-2782), the Director of Personnel (576-0928), or the EAP Coordinator (576-0682) or, after duty hours, to the Oak Ridge Operations Center (576-1005) within 8 hours of the incident. These personnel will notify other action agencies as appropriate.

Discipline

Violations of work rules or standards of conduct may lead to disciplinary actions. Rules and

procedures concerning Work Force Discipline are contained in the DOE Order [DOE 3750.1, change 6, Work Force Discipline](#). Additional information is contained in the Oak Ridge Directive [ORO O 330, Chapter III, Work Force Discipline](#), and, for bargaining unit member, in the [negotiated agreement](#).

Ethical Standards

Ethical conduct is expected of all ORO employees. Certain aspects of ethical conduct of Federal employees are governed by law. Some parts of these standards amount to common sense, but some of them might not be so obvious to new employees. Because of ORO's extensive dealings with contractor organizations and other commercial enterprises seeking to do business with ORO, it is recommended that each employee become familiar with the provisions governing ethical standards. These may be viewed at [U.S. Office of Government Ethics](#) web page.

Credit Union

As an employee of Oak Ridge Operations office, you are eligible to become a member of the [Oak Ridge Federal Credit Union](#). This Credit Union is located at 112 Administration Road in Oak Ridge, across the street from the Federal Building.

Directives

A variety of directives and orders govern many aspects of work and employment at Oak Ridge Operations Office. ORO are located online at the [Directives Management Group](#) web site. This site also contains a link to DOE Orders and directives.

Drug-free Workplace Program

DOE has established a program to assure a drug-free workplace. The program is designed to offer users of illegal drugs a helping hand, while at the same time stating clearly that use, sale, or possession of illegal drugs, whether on- or off-duty, will not be tolerated. The program is described in detail in the DOE Order [DOE 3792.3, Drug-Free Federal Workplace Testing Implementation Program](#).

Rehabilitation of drug users.

If you are a user of illegal drugs, you may seek counseling or referral through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). To the extent practical, employees obtaining first-time rehabilitation through the EAP will be kept in a duty status through reassignment or realignment of work, or may be granted leave to obtain rehabilitation.

Drug testing of employees.

DOE may require urinalysis of employees under certain circumstances described in Order [DOE 3792.3](#). These circumstances may include any of the following: accident/incident testing; reasonable suspicion testing; prior drug use testing; Random testing of employees in certain sensitive positions; and applicant testing.

Emergency Operations

For information related to emergency operations and procedures, follow the links below.

FBC Occupant Emergency Instructions: <http://www-internal.oro.doe.gov/einst/>
Bomb Threat Checklist: <http://oro.doe.gov/TelephoneChecklist.htm>

Grievances

From time to time, management may take an action that affects your employment or working conditions with which you disagree. Most of these situations can be resolved informally by discussing the matter with your supervisor or the other person involved. However, if you are dissatisfied with the explanation or final course of action, you may file a grievance. There are two grievance procedures. Managers, supervisors, and other employees excluded from the bargaining unit may file a grievance under the Departmental Administrative Grievance Procedures outlined in DOE Order [DOE 3771.1, Grievance Policy and Procedures](#). Employees covered by the bargaining unit may file a grievance under the [negotiated grievance procedure](#).

Medical And Employee Assistance Programs

Medical Program

Health Unit: An employee health unit is located in Room 1207 of the Federal Office Building and is staffed by an occupational health nurse during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday -Friday, and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday. The health unit provides minor medical services such as treatment of minor injuries (cuts, burns, sprains, etc.) and administration of medications for minor illnesses. It also provides blood pressure readings and other similar examination or screening services.

Medical Examinations: Complete and partial physical examinations are available and scheduled in accordance with an employee's job duties, age, and length of service with ORO. Treatment and payment for treatment of non-occupational illnesses or injuries revealed by the examination

are the responsibility of the employee.

Medical emergencies: Should a medical emergency arise, dial 911 to request emergency services. If located in the Federal Building, notify the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) after calling 911. The EOC will handle details such as notifying the DOE nurse and arranging for a security escort, if necessary. CPR-trained individuals are located throughout the DOE office complexes and are identified by a CPR sticker on their office door. All Security Guards are trained in CPR. CPR-trained personnel will assist with the emergency until outside medical assistance arrives.

Medical Records: Medical records are kept by the DOE nurse. All information exchanged during treatment or counseling is released only on a strict need-to-know basis.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Medical conditions, personal crises, mental health disorders, alcoholism, and drug abuse all can have a serious impact on an employee's well-being and job performance. The EAP exists to provide advice, counseling, and referral services for employees and supervisors on all such matters, and for family members on matters related to drug and alcohol abuse.

The DOE nurse is the EAP Coordinator. If you are concerned about a personal condition or a family member you should feel free to contact the nurse for advice and assistance. Confidentiality of information is strictly maintained. Referrals are accepted from supervisors and managers. Self-referrals are especially encouraged.

Blood Drives

Blood drives are held periodically at ORO. Further information is available through the ORO Health Station or its we [Health Station](#) web site.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

CPR classes are taught each year. The CPR class includes CPR for the adult, child, and infant, as well as the heimlich maneuver used to relieve an obstruction from the airway of a victim who is choking. A list of CPR Certified Employees is posted on all medicine cabinets and first aid kits in Oak Ridge facilities.

Merit Promotion

Several methods can be used to fill positions. One is the Merit Promotion Program. This program provides a structured competitive approach for locating and referring candidates

based on merit and fitness. All merit staffing actions are taken without regard to political, religious, or union affiliation; marital status, race; color; national origin; gender; age; or a non-disqualifying physical handicap. Details on the process and procedures used in the Merit Promotion Program may be reviewed in the [Merit Promotion Directive](#).

Open vacancy announcements are listed online at the [PMAB web page](#). The complete announcements may be seen at the [DOE Jobs Online](#) web page.

Military Service and deposit time

Honorable active service in the uniformed services (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) is potentially creditable service for CSRS and FERS retirement purposes. If the military service was performed after December 31, 1956, some employees will have to make a deposit for the military service to receive credit initially or -- for other employees -- to retain credit after age 62. A deposit is defined as a sum of money paid into the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund or FERS by an employee or survivor to cover a period of service during which deductions were not withheld from pay. Employees covered under CSRS will pay a sum equal to 7 percent of the military basic pay he or she earned during the period of military service, plus interest. Employees covered under FERS will pay a sum equal to 3 percent, plus interest.

Pay, Leave, and Work Schedules

The following information provides only brief summaries of a selected number of points pertaining to Pay, Leave, and Work Schedules. For further details, see the links at the bottom of this section.

Paydays

DOE employees are paid every two weeks. Paydays fall on the second Thursday following the end of the pay period. All employees are required to receive their pay through direct deposit to their bank account.

Payroll Deductions

In addition to mandatory deductions (income tax, medicare, and retirement and/or social security), deductions may also be made from pay for voluntary programs. These include health insurance, life insurance, the Thrift Savings Plan, Savings Bonds, and the Combined Federal Campaign (an annual charity drive). Employees may also have deductions from their pay made

directly to financial institutions (e.g., credit union or bank accounts). Employees may make arrangements for such deductions directly on the Employee Self Service website. It may be necessary to contact your financial institution for specific instructions or information necessary to complete the deduction process. In addition, union members may have union dues deducted directly from pay.

Within-Grade Increases

Permanent General Schedule employees who are not already at the top step of their pay grade are eligible for within-grade increases, based on a current acceptable performance level and length of time in their current step. The waiting periods to move from one step to the next are as follows:

Steps 1 through 4	52 weeks
Steps 5 through 7	104 weeks
Steps 8 through 10	156 weeks

Cost of Living Adjustments

Called comparability adjustments, every year about the beginning of January ([link](#))

Work Schedules

Within certain limitations, most employees are allowed to select a work schedule that best fits their personal and family needs. The normal scheduling periods consists of the times from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, when non-shift workers will normally complete their basic work requirements. The Variable Work Schedule permits employees to condense the usual ten work days in a pay period to nine, thus giving them one additional non-work day each pay period.

Credit Hours

Credit hours allow you to take a limited number of hours off work without charge to annual or sick leave by working that same number of hours outside your regular work schedule. Most full-time employees may earn up to two credit hours each day and carry over a balance not to exceed 24 credit hours to a succeeding pay period. A part-time employee cannot carry over a balance of more than one-fourth of the hours in that employee's biweekly work requirement to a succeeding pay period.

Holidays

The Federal government observes 10 paid holidays each year: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Further information on these holidays may be found at the [OPM Federal Holidays](#) web page.

Overtime and Compensatory Time-Off

Overtime pay will be paid only for overtime hours that are ordered and approved in advance. Employees may request compensatory time off in lieu of premium pay.

Leave and Absences

DOE employees earn annual and sick leave. Annual leave is used for vacations and other personal business. It is earned for each full pay period worked. It may be saved up; however, only a maximum of 240 hours may be carried over from one leave year to the next. Sick leave is also earned for each full pay period worked and may also be saved. There is no limit on the amount of sick leave that can be saved and carried over from one leave year to the next.

In addition, there are several other leave provisions available to be used for specific purposes and under specific circumstances. These include the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, Family and Medical Leave Act Provisions, Military Leave, Court Leave, Excused Absence, Leave without Pay, and Emergency Closings/Delayed Opening. For further information on these provisions, see the links below.

Additional Information Pertaining to Pay, Leave, and Work Schedules

For additional information pertaining to Pay, Leave, and Work Schedules, see the following links:

[Department of Energy's Human Resources](#) web page.

[Oak Ridge Order ORO O 320, Chapter IV, Pay Administration and Hours of Duty](#)

[Oak Ridge Order ORO O 340, Chapter I, Alternative Work Schedule Program.](#)

[The Office of Personnel Management's Compensation Administration](#) web page.

[The Office of Personnel Management Leave Administration](#) web page.

Performance Management and Employee Recognition

Oak Ridge Operations has formal programs for evaluating employee performance and recognizing and rewarding significant contributions to Oak Ridge Operations' mission. Information on the performance management system is located at [Oak Ridge Order ORO O 330, Chapter I, Employee Performance Management System](#). Employee recognition can take several forms such as monetary awards, time-off awards, length of service recognitions, and other non-monetary awards. For information on incentive awards, see the [Oak Ridge Order ORO O 330, Chapter II, Incentive Awards](#).

Political Activities

The Hatch Act, which restricts the political activity of executive branch employees of the federal government, the District of Columbia government and certain state and local agencies, was amended in 1993, allowing most federal and D.C. employees to engage in many types of political activity. However, there are specific "Federal Hatch Act Don'ts" that employees should be aware of:

Federal employees may not-

- use official authority or influence to interfere with an election
- solicit or discourage political activity of anyone with business before their agency
- solicit or receive political contributions (may be done in certain limited situations by federal labor or other employee organizations)
- be candidates for public office in partisan elections
- engage in political activity while:
 - on duty
 - in a government office
 - wearing an official uniform
 - using a government vehicle
- wear partisan political buttons on duty

For more information on the Hatch Act, you may visit the Office of Special Counsel website at: <http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm>

Probationary Periods

Federal employees are subject to a one-year probationary period during the first year of employment in a career or career-conditional competitive service appointment. The probationary period is used to determine the fitness of the employee and shall be used to terminate the employee during this period if he/she fails to demonstrate fully his/her qualifications

for continued employment. Supervisors and managers are also subject to a one-year probationary period upon being appointed to a supervisory or managerial position. If the supervisor or manager does not satisfactorily complete this probationary period, they will be returned to a position of no lower grade and pay than the position from which they were transferred, assigned, or promoted.

Retirement

Retirement Systems

All employees serving in permanent positions are covered by one of two retirement systems. Most new employees are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Some longer-term employees are still covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). For information on FERS and CSRS, go to the [U.S. Office of Personnel Management](#) home page and follow the links for retirement.

Thrift Savings Plan

Most permanent employees are eligible to participate in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). This plan is similar to private industry 401k plans. For information on the TSP, go to the [Thrift Savings Plan](#) home page.

Separation And Clearance

Employees separating from the rolls must complete an Employee Separation Clearance form located on the PMAB website at: <http://www.oro.doe.gov/pmab/Forms/sepclear.pdf>. This form must be completed and returned to the Human Resources Specialist.

A voluntary Exit Survey is also located on the PMAB website at: <http://www.oro.doe.gov/pmab/Forms/Exit%20Survey.pdf>. This survey serves to gather confidential feedback on your work experience at ORO.

Training and Employee Development

ORO offers many opportunities for employees to receive training and further develop their skills and knowledge. For further information, see the [Training Online web page](#) of the ORO Training and Development Group.