Update Notice

Employment and Placement
September 2001

Handbook EL 312, *Employment and Placement,* was printed in September 2001. To inform you of changes since that time, we periodically update this online edition of EL-312. We use vertical bars (revision bars) in the margin to indicate text changed since September 2001.

How to Use This Update Notice

- Use the table in this update notice to find out about updates to the handbook, which were published in the *Postal Bulletin*.
- In the first column, find the chapter, subchapter, part, or section and read across the other columns to find specific information about that revision.

This online version of Handbook EL 312 is updated with the following *Postal Bulletin* articles:

This chapter, subchapter, part, or section…	**titled…**	**was updated to…**	**in *Postal Bulletin* issue number…**	**with a revision date of…**
Chapter 2 Recruitment				
222.1	Nationally Developed Tools	add items a through e	22093	1-9-03
233.32	Reinstatement	revise item a	22093	1-9-03
Chapter 3 Examinations				
322.715	Casual Employees	revise title and add information about competitive entrance examinations for casuals	22093	1-9-03
322.16	Additional Delayed Applications	add information on delayed applications policy	22093	1-9-03
324	Scheduling Process	provide time frame for scheduling process	22093	1-9-03
Chapter 4 Registers				
485	Adjudicating Claims for 5-Point Preference	replace Exhibit 485 with new campaign and expedition information published by the Office of Personnel Management in November 2002	22100	4-17-03
Chapter 5 Medical Suitability				
573.3	Obtaining Medical Records	provide policy on obtaining medical records	22093	1-9-03
Chapter 7 Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion				
743.14a(2)	Determining Eligibility	add information about determining eligibility for postmaster/relief/leave replacements	22093	1-9-03
Exhibit 743.23	External Recruitment, Postmasters A-E	revise item f	22093	1-9-03
743.23	Conditions For Not Announcing	add new section	22093	1-9-03
743.523	Restrictions on Setting Up Review Committee	add item c	22093	1-9-03
754.1	Notifying Labor Relations Policy Administration	revise heading and specify Labor Relations Policy Administration	22093	1-9-03

This chapter, subchapter, part, or section…	**titled…**	**was updated to…**	**in *Postal Bulletin* issue number…**	**with a revision date of…**
763.24	Examination Requirements	add a new paragraph about Battery Configuration I and Batter Configuration II	22093	1-9-03
778	Employment of Activated Employees—Guard or Reserve	add new section on employees serving on active military duty	22093	1-9-03

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Employment and Placement

Handbook EL-312

September 2001
Transmittal Letter

A. Explanation. Issue 2 of the Employment and Placement Handbook incorporates EL-312 published December 1999. This EL-312 obsoletes Chapter 1, remainder of Chapter 2, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Handbook EL-311, *Personnel Operations.* Handbook EL-311 is now obsolete in its entirety.

B. Availability

1. **Online copy.** The EL-312 is located on the Postal Service Intranet *(http://blue.usps.gov)* and Internet *(http://www.usps.com).* On the Intranet, find Information, click on either Policies and Procedures, or References, then look for the EL-312 under Handbooks. On the Internet, click on info, Postal Periodicals and Publications, then look for the EL-312 under Handbooks. The online EL-312 is updated immediately following published EL-312 changes in the *Postal Bulletin.* Online incremental updates of EL-312 will be designated as EL-312 2.1, 2.2, etc.

2. **Hard Copy.** The hard copy of EL-312 may be obtained within the Postal Service by submitting Form 7380, *MDC Supply Requisition,* to this address:

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   All others should call MDC Customer Service at 1-800-332-0317 for information on price and ordering instructions.

   The hard copy will be updated and reissued annually to incorporate changes published in the *Postal Bulletin* and already included in the online EL-312.

   Users of the EL-312 in hard copy need to ensure that it is maintained to include the changes published in the *Postal Bulletin.* The *Postal Bulletin* is distributed internally to postal facilities, available online on the Intranet Policies and Procedures homepage, and may be ordered by the public from the U.S. Government Printing Office by calling 202-512-1800.

C. Comments and Questions. Send comments and questions to:

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Handbook EL-312
Summary of Changes

Background

Handbook EL-312, *Employment and Placement*, is a full revision of Handbook EL-311, *Personnel Operations*. The previous edition of EL-312 has been incorporated into this EL-312.

Overall Revisions

Language has been added, changed, and/or rearranged to promote clarity in some instances, and in others, has been deleted as not applicable to the specific subject. Revisions made strictly to correct grammatical and reference errors or changes are not listed in this summary, except where deemed necessary for clarification. Substantive changes are listed in the tables below.

Specific Revisions

Specific revisions for each chapter are shown in a table that compares each new EL-312 section with the corresponding EL-311 section or other source document. The following symbols are found at the end of the section number in the EL-311 column to indicate the exact source document:

P	Handbook EL-312 published in the 12-16-99 Postal Bulletin.
s	ELM 16
q	Bqnet material for Bargaining Qualification Standards
[ ]	Portion of the section as indicated.

Note: Where symbols are not used in the EL-311 column, the section number refers to a section in the April 1990 Handbook EL-311.

Chapter 1

All organizational references and job titles have been changed to conform with the 1992 restructure, i.e., regions and divisions to areas and districts, and Field Division General Manager/Postmaster to district manager. Associate office and management sectional center references have been deleted. References to *examination specialist* have been changed to *examiner.*

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Chapter 5

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512.1 Personal Qualifications	–
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512.13 Cooperation	–
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512.224 Reviewing the Employment Application Expands upon the importance of Form 2591, *Application for Employment*, as the foundation of the suitability screening process.	311.21[b]
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514.332 Use of Sample Letter of Inquiry	–
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516.3 Driving Abstracts	–
516.4 Table of Disqualifications Updated Table of Disqualifications, Exhibit 516.4.	–
516.5 Ineligibility Factors	–
516.51 General Disqualifying Factors	–
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531 Questionable Suitability Cases	317
532 Other Suitability Questions	313.1
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541 Training and Preparation of Interviewers	–
542 Conducting the Interview	–
543 Assessing English Competence	265.122
544 Selection and Extension of Job Offer New. Provides referral to 626 Selection Decision, for selection and extension of job offer.	–
545 Right to Review for CPS Veterans	–
55 Eligibility to Work in the Postal Service Incorporates and supersedes memoranda, Form 2591—Citizenship Verification issued January 26, 1999, and May 25, 1999, by Manager, Selection, Evaluation and Recognition.	–
551 Determining Eligibility	–
552 Using the OMB Form I-9	312.22
56 Special Agency Check	–
561 Elements	311.64 and 311.65
562 Processing OPM-IS Form 86C Incorporates and supersedes Memorandum of Policy, Implementation Procedures for Office of Personnel Management's Expanded Agency Checks, issued November 9, 1995, by Vice President Gail G. Sonnenberg.	–
563 OPM Results	–
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572 Purpose Only the portion of medical suitability determination that rests with the appointing official is included.	322.11
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574.4 OPM Decision	327.241 and 327.242
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575 Disposition of Records	326.13 and 327.16
58 Post Hire Suitability	–
581 Appointment Affidavit	–
581.1 Completing Form 61	–
581.2 Administering the Oath of Office New material clarifies proper completion of the appointment affidavit and administration of the oath of office. Supersedes memorandum, Oath of Office, issued July 24, 1999, by Manager, Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition.	–
582 Review of Official Personnel Folders Discussion of official documents pertaining to prior postal or federal employment. Supersedes memorandum, Prior Postal Employment Verification, issued May 1, 1991, by Assistant Postmaster General Joel Trosch.	–
583 Security Investigations	–
583.1 Nonsensitive Positions	316.21
583.2 Inspection Service Screening Process Supersedes memorandum, Nonsensitive Security Clearances for Newly Hired Postal Employees, issued January 26, 1993, by Manager, Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition.	–
583.3 Sensitive Positions Rewritten just to include basics.	316.1
584 Employee Evaluation	–
584.1 Significance of Probationary Period	–
584.2 Outlining Expectations Incorporates and supersedes memorandum, Employee Evaluation and/or Probationary Report, issued August 24, 1994, by Vice President Suzanne J. Henry.	–
584.3 Length of Probationary Periods	377.1s
584.31 Career Appointment to Bargaining Position	377.1as
584.32 Career Appointment to Nonbargaining Position	377.1bs
584.33 Position Change During Probationary Period	377.1cs
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584.4 Counting Probationary Service	377.2s
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584.44 Reassignment During Probation	377.24s
584.45 Position Changes During Probation	377.25s
584.5 Bargaining Employees	378s
584.51 Performance Evaluation Intervals	378.11s and 378.12s
584.52 Formal Evaluations at Other Intervals	378.13s
584.53 Evaluation After the Probationary Period	378.2s
584.6 Nonbargaining Employees	–
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Obsolete – 5 USC 3319 repealed by Civil Service Reform Act of 1978	312.35
Obsolete	312.523, 313.4, 313.7, 313.61 and 313.62, 313.91 and 313.92, 313.931 and 313.932, 313.94, 313.951–313.953, 313.96–313.98, 314.2, 315.4, 316.22 and 316.23, 321.1, 321.211–321.215, 321.221–321.224, 321.231–321.233, 321.24, 322.14, 322.31 and 322.32, 322.42, 323.12 and 323.13, 323.2 and 323.3, 324.11 and 324.12, 324.321–324.323, 324.33 and 324.34, 325.1, 325.21 and 325.22, 325.3, 325.5, 326.21 and 326.22, 327.13–327.15, 33, 332.1 and 332.2, 332.31–332.33, 332.4 and 332.5, 333.1–333.4, 333.51 and 333.52, 334, 341, 341.1 and 341.2, 342, 342.1–342.4, 342.51 and 342.52, 343, 343.1 and 343.2, 343.31, 343.321 and 343.322, 343.33 and 343.34, 343.41 and 343.42, 343.51–343.53, 344, 312.334c, 314.1a and 314.1b, 378.1s

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614.1 Vacancies	264.41
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615.2 Validity	264.52
615.3 Processing Requests for Hiring Worksheets	255.72
615.4 When a Register Is Used for More Than One Position	264.54
615.5 Special Order of Certification of Applicants Includes new material from Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, A Guide for Federal Agency Examining Offices, dated October 1999.	–
615.6 Issuing Hiring Worksheets	255.71
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627.13 Reasons for Objection or Pass Over	265.713
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628.21 Applicants to Be Inactivated EL-311 reference is 265.831, which is also used for EL-312, 622.11.	–
628.22 Other Inactivation Rule	265.832
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63 Auditing Selection Actions	266
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632 Worksheet Audits	255.74 and 266.2
633 Return of Hiring Worksheets Without Selection	255.73
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Chapter 7

The following represents a more detailed explanation of the changes to chapter 7 than for other chapters of Handbook EL-312. This allows readers to understand how the changes relate to the policies and procedures authorizing them, such as articles in *Postal Bulletin,* memorandums of policy, and handbooks other than the Handbook EL-311.

a. Text is changed throughout to delete the word *unit* when referring to bargaining and nonbargaining positions. Rewriting does not change the meaning or intent of the previous 510 and 520 document (now 71 and 72), as published in *Postal Bulletin* 21770 dated August 23, 1990.

b. Text has been updated, where appropriate, to reflect organizational changes, i.e., division field directors, Human Resources, are changed to district managers of Human Resources, et.al.

c. 717.32 contains new material from *Interim Guidelines for the Employment Restoration of Individuals Who Served in the Uniformed Services* issued by Manager, Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition, memorandum on February 17, 1998. New part 77 reflects permanent policy.

d. 73, Initial Level Supervisor Positions, incorporates and supersedes Part VII, Page 7, *EAS Selection Policies* transmitted by memorandum, *EAS Selection Policies Update,* issued January 20, 1995, by the Deputy Postmaster General.

e. Initial Level Supervisor Selection*, Postal Bulletin* 21808 dated February 6, 1992, and Form 5945-A, *Application for Initial Level Supervisor, Postal Bulletin* 21812 dated April 2, 1992, are obsolete.

f. The document is rearranged to put noncompetitive procedures ahead of competitive procedures, consistent with the arrangement of the other parts of Chapter 5, and in conformance with postal policy to provide first opportunity to current supervisors.

g. Chapter 54, Nonbargaining Unit Positions, contained in Handbook EL-311 dated April 1990, is retitled 74, EAS Selection Policies and Procedures, and is rewritten in its entirety. It incorporates and supersedes the following material:

   (1) Memorandum *Interim EAS Selection Procedures* issued July 27, 1993, by Vice President William J. Henderson.

   (2) Memorandum *EAS Selection Policies Update* issued January 20, 1995, by Deputy Postmaster General Michael S. Coughlin, transmitting document dated January 19, 1995, entitled *EAS Selection Policies.*

   (3) Memorandum *EAS Selection Policy Change* issued May 11, 1995, by Vice President Gail Sonnenberg.

   (4) Memorandum *EAS Selection Policies* issued September 14, 1995, by Vice President Gail Sonnenberg.

   (5) *Announcements and EAS Applicant Notification* issued March 18, 1997, by Vice President Yvonne Maguire.

   (6) Memorandum *EAS Selection Review Committees* issued November 20, 1998, by Vice President Yvonne Maguire.

   (7) *Change and Clarification, Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Section 353.344* issued June 1, 2000, by manager Susan M. LaChance.

h. The document described in Item 6b above, *EAS Selection Policies Update* dated January 19, 1995, has been renumbered to conform to EL-312 format. Secondary headings and subparagraphs have been numbered as well to provide for easy reference.

i. 75 contains new material that discusses the Associate Supervisor Program, that is used in place of the Initial Level Supervisor Program (73). This material is based on Part 5, Selection Guidelines, Program Coordinator's Guide TD-41A, *Associate Supervisor Program,* August 1998.

j. 76 contains material not formerly included in EL-311. It replaces Chapters 1 and 2, EL-303, *Bargaining Unit Qualification Standards*, through Transmittal Letter 3 dated December 31, 1990, with all subsequent updates. The remainder of EL-303 (qualification standards, appendixes, and indexes) is available only in electronic form on Bqnet.

k. All references to Handbook EL-303, *Qualification Standards — Bargaining Unit,* have been corrected to show that Chapters 1 and 2 of this handbook are now contained in 76, and the remainder of the handbook (indexes, appendixes, and the qualifications standards themselves) is available in electronic form on Bqnet, *Bargaining Qualifications on the Net*,

l. 77 contains Postal Service policy on USERRA. Interim policy contained in memo issued February 17, 1998 and as an exhibit in ELM 16 is obsolete with the publication of the permanent policy in this handbook.

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7 Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion	–
71 Introduction	–
711 Organization Reformatted to include new 75, 76, and 77.	511.1
712 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy Rewritten to combine EL-311 511.21 and 511.22 in one narrative.	511.21 and 511.22
713 Exclusions and Limitations Revised to highlight types of positions that are not covered by the provisions of Chapter 7.	511.32 and 511.33
714 Selection Definitions and Philosophy	–
714.1 Definitions Applicable to Selection	511.4 and 511.41–511.48
714.2 Selection Philosophy	511.5 and 511.6
715 Use of Penalty Mail for Applications From *Postal Bulletin* article Nonbusiness Use of Penalty Mail Prohibited dated 10-17-85.	–
716 Positions Filled Temporarily	511.81 and 511.82
716.1 Temporary Assignments	513.1
716.11 Temporary Bargaining Assignments	513.2
716.12 Temporary Assignments to Nonbargaining Positions	513.311, 513.312, 513.314, 513.321, and 513.322
716.13 Temporary Assignment to Higher Level — Bargaining	–
716.14 Temporary Assignment to Higher Level — Nonbargaining	–
716.141 Necessity	513.331
716.142 Higher Management Level Approval for Assignments of 30 Calendar Days	513.332
716.143 Higher Level Assignments Limited to 90 Calendar Days Unless Extended	513.333
716.144 120-Day Time Limit	513.334
716.2 Temporary Promotion	514.41
716.21 Selection Procedures	514.42
716.22 Appointment Duration	514.43[a], 514.44, and 514.45
716.23 Preappointment Statement	514.43[b]

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717 Positions Filled Permanently	–
717.1 Reassignment	512.1
717.1a. Reassignment to Bargaining Positions	512.2
717.1b. Reassignment to Nonbargaining Positions	512.31 and 512.32
717.1c. Mutual Exchanges	512.4
717.2 Unassigned Employees	512.33
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717.3b. Promotion to Nonbargaining Positions	514.31
717.31 Competitive Procedures	514.36
717.32 Exceptions to Competitive Procedures	514.37
717.4 Absent Employees	–
717.41 Not on Active Military Duty	514.33
717.42 On Active Military Duty	–
717.421 Bidding on Positions	–
717.422 EAS Positions	–
718 Vacancy File	514.5
72 Bargaining Positions	–
721 Filling Positions	521.1 and 521.2
722 Conversion to Full-Time Status	522
723 Area of Consideration Rewritten as narrative.	523
724 Position Requirements Updated to include reference to Bqnet.	524
725 Special Requirements	–
725.1 Identification, Justification, and Documentation	525.1
725.2 Appropriate Special Requirements	525.21
725.3 Inappropriate Special Requirements	525.22
726 Posting Requirements	526.1
726.1 Entry Positions in PS-5 and Below	526.2
726.2 Senior Qualified Positions	526.3
726.3 Best Qualified Positions	526.4
727 Bargaining Selection Procedures	527.11
727.1 Qualification Standards Contains new references to Bqnet and 76.	527.121
727.2 No Qualification Standards	527.122
727.3 When to Evaluate Qualifications	527.13
727.3a. Bidding for a Change in Schedule	527.13c
727.3b. Bidding to Return to a Position Previously Held	527.13d
727.4 Timing and Sequence of Evaluation	527.14
727.5 Evaluating Qualifications	527.15
727.6 Pertinent Information	527.16
728 Selection Procedures	–
728.1 Placement Principles	–

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728.1a. Senior Qualified Positions	527.171
728.1b. Best Qualified Positions	527.172
728.2 Senior Qualified Positions	527.21
728.21 Documentation of Qualifications	527.22
728.22 Bidding and Qualifications	527.23 and 527.241–527.243
728.23 Evaluating Qualifications	527.251–527.253
728.24 Using Form 1796-A	527.261–527.265
728.25 Selecting the Senior Bidder	527.27[a]
728.26 Vacancy File	527.27[b]
728.3 Best Qualified Positions	527.31
728.31 Selecting Official	527.33
728.32 Documentation of Qualifications	527.32[a]
728.321 Applications and Qualifications	527.341[a] and 527.342
728.322 Evaluating Qualifications	527.341[b] and 527.343[a]
728.33 Review Committees	527.344 and 527.343[b]
728.331 Review Committee Structure	527.345
728.332 Review Committee Procedures	527.346
728.34 Conducting Interviews	527.35
728.35 Using Form 1796-B	527.361–527.367
728.36 Selection of Best Qualified Applicant	527.38[a]
728.37 Selection Oversight	527.4
728.38 Vacancy File	527.38[b] and 527.32[b]
73 Initial Level Supervisor Positions	–
731 Purpose Specifies the positions that are covered by ILS, and references the use of the Associate Supervisor Program described in part 75.	531.1, 531.21 and 531.22
732 Noncompetitive Procedures	–
732.1 Reassignment and Voluntary Reduction	536.2
732.2 Noncompetitive Selection for Announced Vacancies	536.31 and 536.321–536.323
733 Competitive Process	532.1–532.4
734 Announcement Procedures	–
734.1 Vacancy Announcement	534.2
734.2 Application Procedures	534.3
734.3 Advisory Panel Role	534.41
734.31 Advisory Panel Composition	533.52
734.32 Advisory Panel Rating Procedures	533.545 and 534.42–534.44
735 Selection Process	537.1 and 537.21–537.23
736 Vacancy File	538.31
736.1 Vacancy File Contents	538.32 and 538.34
736.2 Vacancy File Retention	538.33
74 EAS Positions	–
741 Purpose of Subchapter 74	541.1

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742 Selection Principles From EAS Selection Policies, II. Retitled Principles and adds words ”ensure the following principles are observed” to introductory sentence. Third bullet renamed c and rewritten to add record-keeping requirement.	–
743 Selection Process	–
743.1 Internal Recruitment	–
743.11 When to Consider Noncompetitive Applications Second paragraph in III.A. not incorporated.	543.2
743.12 Competitive Selection	544.111
743.13 Defining the Area of Consideration From III.B.1. In paragraph one, district wide is changed to within the district.	544.21
743.14 Determining Eligibility From III.B.2. First sentence not incorporated. In second sentence, postmasters who have met the one-year service requirement changed to postmasters who have served in their current assignment for one continuous year.	544.13
743.15 120-Day Time Limit on Higher-Level Temporary Assignment	544.822
Updated to reflect change in policy effective June 2, 2000.	–
743.16 Exceptions to the 120-Day Limit	544.83
Updated to reflect change in policy effective June 2, 2000.	–
743.17 Posting a Vacancy Announcement First sentence was formerly first sentence of part IV. Second sentence was first sentence of III.B.2. Subparagraph a. was formerly second sentence of part IV, plus additional text. Subparagraph b. was formerly the fifth paragraph of III.B.3, and subparagraph c. was formerly fourth paragraph of III.B.3.	544.23
743.2 External Recruitment	–
743.21 Recruiting for Additional Applicants From part V, paragraphs one and two. Exhibit 743.21, External Recruitment — EAS Vacancies from Attachment A.	542.31 and 542.311
743.22 Recruiting for A Through E Postmaster Positions From part V, paragraph 3. Exhibit 743.22 External Recruitment, Postmasters A E from Attachment B.	542.331
743.3 Internal Applications From part IV, paragraph 2.	–
743.4 Assessing Applications	–
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1 General

11 Overview

111 Scope

This handbook provides recruitment, examination, and selection policy and procedures for the United States Postal Service. These instructions apply to employment, placement, and assignment of career and noncareer field employees and promotion of career employees in districts and areas. This handbook has limited application to Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) and Headquarters employees.

112 Review and Approval

The establishment of recruitment, examination, and selection policy and procedures is under the authority of the vice president of Employee Resource Management. Approval authority for actions described in this handbook rests with area and district Human Resources managers. The exceptions are that districts must have the approval of the National Test Administration Center (NTAC) in order to:

a. Establish or change an area eligibility register or mega register.

b. Make other changes to registers according to published instructions.

c. Allow for newly selected examiners to give examinations. NTAC provides certificates for this purpose.

113 Conditions on Use of Policy

The *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* (ELM) and appropriate collective bargaining agreements also provide policy and guidance in employment and placement. District and area employees should not follow procedures described in this handbook if they conflict with the provisions of current or future collective bargaining agreements.

114 Prohibition of Political Recommendations

The law (39 U.S.C. 1002) prohibits political and certain other recommendations for appointments, promotions, assignments, transfers, or designations of persons in the Postal Service.

114.1 Exceptions

Statements relating solely to character and residence are permitted, but every other kind of statement or recommendation is prohibited unless it is:

a. Requested by the Postal Service and consists solely of an evaluation of the work performance, ability, aptitude, and general qualifications of an individual.

b. Requested by a government representative investigating the individual's loyalty, suitability, or character.

114.2 Penalties

Anyone who requests or solicits a prohibited statement or recommendation is subject to disqualification from the Postal Service and anyone in the Postal Service who accepts such a statement may be suspended or removed from employment.

12 Responsibility

121 Vice President, Employee Resource Management

121.1 Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition

This Headquarters unit develops policies and procedures for recruitment, examination, selection, appointment, and promotion of employees. Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition is also responsible for the following activities:

a. Developing instructions to guide the selection and designation of examiners to administer examinations, and to operate NTAC.

b. Developing and validating examinations and other selection instruments, including qualification standards and their applications.

c. Disseminating instructions, assistance, and technical guidance to area and district human resources personnel to administer policies and programs related to employment and placement.

121.2 Manager, National Test Administration Center

The manager of NTAC is responsible for the following activities:

a. Stocking examination materials and distributing examination supplies to districts.

b. Scoring examinations and generating results.

c. Maintaining electronic files and other appropriate records of examination results.

d. Reporting possible loss or compromise of examination materials to the manager of Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition, or designated representative.

e. Certifying examiners and providing functional instruction to examiners.

122 Diversity Development

To help ensure that recruitment, retention, and promotion practices draw upon and support the communities served by the Postal Service, Diversity Development implements special emphasis programs and other affirmative employment plans to capture the unique contributions that applicants and employees have to offer. To enhance and improve workforce management, Diversity Development is responsible for the following activities:

a. Developing and implementing recruitment and hiring strategies for increasing the employability of underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, and people with disabilities.

b. Establishing retention initiatives to reduce diverse workforce turnover.

c. Establishing methods to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in development and promotion activities.

d. Identifying and eradicating employment barriers for minority and female applicants.

123 District Managers

District managers implement national policy and procedures within their districts. They may withdraw or restrict for cause the appointing authority of postmasters and other installation heads. As required, district managers assist managers within their jurisdictions to develop specialized recruitment and selection methods and institute necessary corrective action based on evidence of discrepancy. The district manager approves expansion of the area of consideration for EAS positions involving the payment of relocation benefits, if the district manager is in the next level of management above the vacancy. District managers ensure that special emphasis employment programs are administered appropriately.

124 District Manager, Human Resources

The district manager of Human Resources is responsible for:

a. Assisting selecting officials in determining appropriate areas of consideration and setting up review committees for providing meaningful promotional opportunities.

b. Ensuring that appointments and promotions comply with requirements and restrictions, both statutory and regulatory.

c. Planning and conducting appropriate ongoing recruitment efforts to meet local needs.

d. Planning, opening, announcing, and publicizing examinations for recruitment to meet staffing needs of the district.

e. Providing facilities and personnel required for administration of examinations.

f. Providing resources for fair and reasonable evaluations of applicants to ensure that they are personally and medically suitable for employment.

125 District Examination Administrators

Examination administrators are responsible for the following activities:

a. Furnishing information, accepting applications, and scheduling applicants to take examinations.

b. Administering examinations according to the directions provided by NTAC.

c. Ordering and storing adequate supplies of examination materials and providing for their security.

d. Reporting irregularities, loss of examination materials, and possible compromises of examinations to the district manager and to NTAC.

e. Ensuring that any employee placed in charge of an examination as an examiner is qualified, properly trained, and certified by NTAC.

f. Making provisions for special scoring of entrance examinations, when directed by NTAC.

g. Replying to inquiries concerning the functions of the examination center, and preparing and submitting reports as required.

h. Maintaining registers and issuing *Hiring Worksheet*s, as required.

126 Postal Inspection Service

Postal inspectors may investigate any area related to recruitment, examinations, and selections including, but not limited to:

a. Alleged or suspected cheating during examinations.

b. Falsification of information pertaining to employment.

c. Lost or stolen examination material, unsecured material, and other breaches of security.

13 Multicomponent Employment and Placement Process

Employment and placement in the Postal Service is a multicomponent process. Each of the following components provides employing officials with opportunities to identify individuals who meet eligibility requirements and possess necessary skills, abilities, and personal qualities to successfully fill specific career and noncareer positions in the Postal Service.

Component	Covered in:
Recruitment process	Chapter 2
Examinations process	Chapter 3
Registers	Chapter 4
Determination of eligibility/qualification requirements	Chapter 5
Application review	Chapter 5
Realistic job preview	Chapter 5

Component	Covered in:
Drug Screening	Chapter 5
Interview	Chapter 6
Selection	Chapter 6
Job offer	Chapter 6
Special Agency Checks	Chapter 5
Medical suitability assessment	Chapter 5
Reasonable accommodation, if applicable	Chapter 5 and Handbook EL-307
New Employee Orientation	Chapter 5
Probationary Period	Chapter 5
Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion	Chapter 7

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2 Recruitment

21 Planning and Coordination

211 Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment is the development and maintenance of sufficient human resources. Recruitment involves attracting a diverse pool of qualified persons for potential Postal Service employment.

Effective recruitment strategies are the foundation of the hiring process. This process involves establishing hiring goals in advance of recruiting efforts. Interaction with Operations and review of hiring plans must be completed before a recruitment strategy can be developed. Local management must also fully evaluate its need to hire before implementing recruitment efforts. This process involves, but is not limited to, coordinating recruiting strategies with diversity development specialists, forecasting future hiring needs, assessing existing applicant pools, considering other hiring options, and reviewing upcoming organizational changes and complement reports.

How, when, and where recruitment activities take place are also important decisions in the planning process. The methods and techniques that are used help determine how successful the recruitment effort will be in attracting sufficient numbers of qualified applicants.

211.1 Forecasting

The installation head is responsible for forecasting the recruitment requirements in the installation in sufficient time to assure that there are qualified persons available for appointment. In so doing, consideration must be given to the:

a. Number of anticipated vacancies.

b. Special and/or technical skills requirements and pay.

c. Inclusiveness and representation of all groups of the prospective applicant pool.

d. Available internal labor market (internal advancement options).

e. Recruitment budget and projected costs.

f. Available external labor market (size, age, and applicant response rate of existing hiring register).

g. Suitability determinations of existing applicants.

h. Organizational and/or operational changes.

i. Projected loss of current employees.

While the installation head is responsible for forecasting recruitment needs, local management from all organizational functions must work together in assessing how changing operational needs will affect recruitment needs.

Proper use of the installation hiring plan is essential to quality decisions about bringing new employees into the workforce. If an insufficient number of qualified eligibles exists, arrangements must be made to open the examination. When making arrangements to open an entrance examination, diversity development personnel must be alerted to provide lead time for affirmative employment efforts. Whenever possible, this notification should be made at least 60 days in advance of the examination opening.

211.2 EEO and Affirmative Action Considerations

Recruitment efforts must reflect the Postal Service's commitment to affirmative recruitment and to fair and equitable examination and hiring procedures, and they must respond to changing demographics (population characteristics). These efforts must also be tailored to the policies, procedures, and needs of the Postal Service. All executives, managers, and supervisors share in responsibility for the successful implementation and management of an equal employment opportunity program that includes affirmative action recruitment, selection, and placement. Upon notification of a request to open an entrance examination, appropriate steps must be taken to employ strategies that promote fairness and opportunities to maintain an inclusive workforce.

211.3 Evaluating Vacancies

When a vacancy is anticipated, the installation head must determine if a continuing need exists for the position. Consideration must be given to whether the personnel complement can be adjusted downward by one vacant position through the elimination of the position. If a decision is made to eliminate a position, action is taken to revert the position according to the appropriate provision of the National Agreement.

212 Recruitment Options

212.1 Noncompetitive Hiring Options

Noncompetitive hiring options may include reassignment, a change to lower level, or a promotion from a lower level, the reinstatement of eligible former postal or federal employees (see 233.32), or the transfer of career or career-conditional employees from other federal agencies (see 233.33).

Additionally, the options exist for the noncompetitive appointment of veterans with 30 percent or more disabilities, or noncompetitive appointment of Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) eligibles (see 233.35 and 233.36). Regardless of the choice of action, the appointee must meet the

qualification standards of the position, including the examination requirement, if any. See Chapter 3, Examinations, for information about noncompetitive examinations.

Noncompetitive hiring options also include the Postal Service's program for employment of persons with severe disabilities. For more information, see 235.4, Noncompetitive Career Hiring of Persons with Severe Disabilities, and Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process*.

212.11 Employee Participation

Postal career employees and substitute rural carriers (designations 72 and 73 only) may apply to take a postal entrance examination noncompetitively at their installation and/or examination center. Noncompetitive examinations are scheduled consistent with operational needs, but must be scheduled no later than 6 months following the date applications are received.

212.12 Noncompetitive Selection

Qualified postal career employees and substitute rural carriers (designations 72 and 73 only) may be selected noncompetitively for entrance-level positions at the option of the installation head.

212.13 Promotion to Entrance Level Positions

The preferred action for filling vacancies in entrance-level positions is the noncompetitive promotion of lower-level career postal employees or substitute rural carriers (designations 72 and 73 only) who meet the position qualification requirements (including any required tests), and who are performing satisfactorily.

212.2 Competitive Hiring Options

212.21 Selections From Inservice Registers

Selections are made from an inservice register resulting when one or more applicants from within the career Postal Service have applied to compete for promotions or reassignment and have been rated by the NTAC on the basis of a written or rated application examination. See Chapter 3, Examinations, for information about competitive and qualifying examinations.

212.22 Selections From Entrance Registers

Entrance examinations are announced when necessary to meet the staffing needs of the Postal Service. During the period the examination is open, persons who meet the qualifications stated in the examination announcement may apply. For age and citizenship eligibility, applicants do not have to meet these requirements at the time of application if they will become eligible during the time their ratings are on the register (a list of qualified applicants arranged in descending numerical order) (see 322.5, Eligibility for Examinations). When the examination announcement is closed, applications are no longer accepted unless the applications are covered by one of the exceptions (see 322.7, Delayed and Reopened Examinations). Opening and closing examination announcements is a responsibility of the human resources office where the register is maintained.

Selections are made from a register of eligibles comprised of scores generated by the NTAC on the basis of a written examination or a rated application examination. If veterans' preference is claimed, the basic scores are increased by 5 or 10 points (see 328.12, NTAC Ratings).

22 Conducting Recruitment Activities

221 Labor Market Analysis

Postal hiring officials must play an aggressive and strategic role in successfully attracting qualified applicants for employment consideration in a competitive and ever changing labor market. This role includes leveraging the Postal Service's competitiveness in the labor market, evaluating demographics, determining the best recruitment approaches, and showcasing the Postal Service as *A Great Place to Work!*

Before recruitment efforts are initiated, hiring officials in partnership with diversity development personnel must analyze labor-market data to determine the best approaches for implementing a successful recruitment campaign. To formulate a profile of the community, its demographics, its unemployment rate, and to identify the major employers whose salaries and benefits would be considered in competition with the recruiting the Postal Service conducts, hiring officials should access the Internet to obtain information from:

a. Chamber of Commerce.

b. Department of Labor.

c. Economic Security Commission.

d. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

e. State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.

f. Web sites of major employers.

g. City government information.

h. Library.

i. Local visitors center.

j. Mayor's office.

k. Individual employers.

l. Local newspaper business information (e.g., company closings, layoffs, etc.).

222 Recruitment Materials

222.1 Nationally Developed Tools

The career recruitment brochure, Publication 60, *A Great Place to Work,* and Kit 15, *A Great Place to Work* (used with local inserts), a generic pocket folder that can be used for any type of recruitment, are available at the Material Distribution Center (MDC). Locally developed materials can be

included in the kit for recruitment and preemployment sessions. Also available at the MDC are recruitment materials for skilled maintenance employees (Kit 15-A, *A Great Place to Work for Skilled Maintenance Workers*) and city carriers (Publication 60-B and Kit 15-B, both entitled *A Great Place to Work for City Carriers*). As additional tools and products in the recruitment series are developed, field offices will be notified of availability.

Recruitment materials are also available at the MDC including the following publications:

a. Major Entry-Level Jobs (Publication 60-A, *Test Orientation Guide for Major Entry-Level Jobs).* This publication is designed for individuals interested in employment in the Postal Service's major entry-level positions and in learning about key features of the testing process. Human Resources personnel use the guide during recruitment activities. Diversity Development personnel use the guide in supporting community outreach events in recruitment. See 315.9c for restrictions on examiners' use of the guide.

   Applicants are permitted to read and to copy the paper and online versions of the guide and to print or download the online version for personal, noncommercial, or nonprofit use. All other uses are not permitted. Copies of the guide may not be sold or distributed as part of any service or product for which a fee is charged or in connection with such products or services. Except for authorized Postal Service personnel, any person or organization claiming to help people (1) prepare for or score well on Postal Service tests, (2) get hired by the Postal Service, and/or (3) find Postal Service job openings, *may not* distribute the guide.

b. Skilled Maintenance Employees (Kit 15-A, *A Great Place to Work for Skilled Maintenance Workers,* and Publication 60-D, *Skilled Maintenance Workers* brochure).

c. City Carriers (Kit 15-B and Publication 60-B, both entitled *A Great Place to Work for City Carriers).*

d. Automotive Maintenance Workers (Publication 60-C, *Automotive Maintenance Workers).*

e. Associate Supervisor Program (ASP) recruitment material Kit 39, *Associate Supervisor Program Applicant Folder,* and Publication 560, *Associate Supervisor Program Applicant Brochure.*

222.2 Locally Developed Tools

Local hiring officials may seek the assistance of district authorities to develop recruitment tools, approaches, and techniques suitable for attracting qualified applicants in their specific geographic areas. Recruitment material developers must be sensitive to attracting applicants from groups that are not adequately represented in numbers of applicants. For information about examination materials, see 317.1, Obtaining Materials.

223 Publicizing Job Opportunities

223.1 Advertising Techniques

Installation heads and diversity development personnel must assist with generating widespread publicity for the job opportunities in the geographic area where applicants will be recruited. The recruitment area must reflect the Postal Service's commitment to diversity, equal employment opportunities, and to affirmative recruitment of women, minorities, people with disabilities, and disabled veterans. Advertising plans must communicate internally and externally that the Postal Service is a leader in diversity and an equal employment opportunity employer.

In addition to posting the standard examination announcement, a description of the work to be performed and a list of any required special knowledge, skills, or abilities (KSAs) should supplement the examination announcement.

223.11 Internal Advertising

The following suggestions are for internal advertising:

a. Post examination announcements and other recruitment materials in the lobbies and on employee bulletin boards in postal facilities in the recruitment area.

b. Place notices in local postal publications.

c. Place ads on the Postal Service Intranet.

223.12 External Advertising

In most cases, authorization must be obtained from appropriate officials before posting recruitment ads in areas outside postal facilities. The following suggestions are for external advertising:

a. Post announcements in federal, state, and municipal buildings open to the public.

b. Send press releases to newspapers and other periodicals, including those directed toward women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities.

c. Supply information to public and nonprofit employment services and to other social service agencies, veterans' organizations, state employment agencies, and organizations that represent special emphasis groups (see 223.12b).

d. Use public service advertisements or spots on radio or television to reach the members of the community.

e. Advertise on the Internet.

f. Partner with appropriate State Employment and Job Service Offices to promote maximum publicity of recruitment efforts and to increase the pool of qualified applicants through the employment service network.

g. Conduct and participate in job fairs, open houses, or other recruitment activities to reach the community.

223.2 Paid Advertisements

The cost of communicating job availability will vary in different labor markets. Depending on the methods used in recruitment, these costs may range from the cost of a classified advertisement in a local newspaper to fees for participation at job fairs. Some recruitment costs may be defrayed by partnering with federally funded state employment service agencies.

The manager of Human Resources may approve the use of paid advertisements when:

a. Insufficient numbers of qualified applicants have been recruited using nonfunded recruitment methods.

b. Insufficient numbers of qualified applicants have been recruited from special emphasis groups.

23 Sources of Recruitment

231 Applicability of These Instructions

These instructions apply to internal and external recruitment for the Postal Service but not to contracts for services such as job cleaning, community post offices, or highway contract routes.

232 Policy

232.1 Nondiscrimination in Hiring

It is the policy of the Postal Service not to discriminate in personnel decisions on the basis of (1) race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability as provided by law, or (2) other nonmeritorious factors such as political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

232.2 Management Responsibility for Filling Vacancies

Forecasting short-term and long-term recruitment requirements is one of management's most important responsibilities. Within budgetary restrictions, a determination must be made as to which vacancies are operationally essential. Adequate lead time must be provided for internal job postings and for external recruitment when internal sources do not identify a sufficient number of eligible, qualified applicants.

232.3 Definitions Applicable to Recruitment

The following definitions apply to the subject of recruitment:

a. *Recruitment* — the process of attracting suitable applicants for employment consideration.

b. *Selection* — the identification of those applicants who best meet the requirements of the position by reviewing their suitability and qualifications.

c. *Qualification standards* — official statements of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). These standards establish the minimum requirements that all applicants for Postal Service positions must meet.

d. *Register of eligibles* — a list of qualified applicants arranged in descending order for employment consideration, based on numerical scores determined by examination ratings, the evaluation of KSAs, or both, with veterans' preference points added to the scores of those who claim them. The scores of those veterans' preference applicants who receive compensation for service-connected disabilities of 10 percent or greater resulting from active military duty are considered ahead of those for all other eligibles.

e. *Appointing official* — the postmaster or other executive and administrative schedule (EAS) employee who is authorized to make appointments in the Postal Service.

f. *Career appointment* — the selection for one of the career positions, including full-time, part-time regular, and part-time flexible positions — both FLSA-exempt and nonexempt. Such appointments are without time limitation. Career employees are eligible for annual and sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits (see 233, Career Recruitment).

g. *Noncareer appointment* — the selection for one of the noncareer positions, including, but not limited to, casual, temporary relief carrier (TRC), and rural carrier associate (RCA) positions. Noncareer employees supplement the regular workforce and their appointments and reappointments are often subject to time limitations and restrictions defined in the appropriate collective bargaining agreements. Noncareer employees are not eligible for life insurance or retirement benefits; however, they are subject to the provisions of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) (see 234, Noncareer Recruitment).

h. *Satisfactory discharge* — a separation from active duty in the Armed Forces where the character of service is *honorable, under honorable conditions,* or *general*. Though an *under honorable conditions* or *general* discharge is acceptable for veterans' preference or Veterans' Readjustment Appointment, it indicates that there was a derogatory reason for the discharge that requires investigation during suitability screening. Discharges that are *other than honorable, undesirable, bad conduct,* and *dishonorable* do not meet the satisfactory discharge requirement.

232.4 Internal Recruitment and Placement

232.41 General Provisions

Most career vacancies within a postal installation are filled internally by reassignment, promotion, or a change to lower level of qualified career employees who are designated the successful bidders or applicants. When positions cannot be filled by employees who are on the rolls of the installation with the vacancy, secondary consideration must be given to qualified career

applicants from other installations within an expanded geographic area subject to appropriate collective bargaining agreement provisions.

232.42 Bargaining Vacancies

The internal placement sequence for bargaining vacancies is governed by the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. Reassignments from other installations are also governed by the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

The primary method for filling residual assignments (as defined by relevant collective bargaining agreements) is through the reassignment of unassigned regulars. Those bargaining vacancies that remain after applying the provisions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement may be filled by one or more of the methods (see 233.3, External Recruitment Sources).

232.43 Initial Level and Other Nonbargaining Vacancies

Placement procedures are outlined for initial level supervisor and other nonbargaining vacancies in Chapter 7, Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion.

232.5 External Recruitment

232.51 Use of External Recruitment

External recruitment is required when essential residual bargaining vacancies are anticipated. External recruitment is also used to fill certain nonbargaining positions, particularly those that require degrees in specialties such as engineering or medicine. Nonbargaining positions may be recruited simultaneously inside and outside the Postal Service, at the discretion of the appointing official, when it has been determined that no adequate internal applicant pool exists.

232.52 Positions Restricted to Applicants Eligible for Veterans' Preference

Certain positions, whether career or noncareer, are restricted to applicants eligible for veterans' preference under the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944. This rule applies only to appointments from external recruitment sources (whether competitive or noncompetitive). The following are restricted positions in the Postal Service:

a. Building maintenance custodian.

b. Custodian laborer.

c. Custodian.

d. Elevator operator.

e. Laborer custodial.

f. Window cleaner.

Applicants who are not entitled to veterans' preference may be considered for positions restricted to preference eligibles *only* when preference eligibles are not available for appointment. In these instances, evidence of the following

must be filed on the permanent side of official personnel folders of appointed individuals not eligible for veterans' preference:

a. Recruiting of preference eligibles was attempted.

b. Resulting register of preference eligible candidates was exhausted.

Districts have two options when recruiting externally to fill restricted positions:

a. They may restrict competition to preference eligibles only.

b. They may accept applications from both preference eligibles and nonpreference eligibles, but refer nonpreference eligibles for employment consideration *only* in the absence of preference eligibles.

Option 1 may be the best choice if past experience has shown that normal public notice will generate an ample supply of preference eligible candidates. Option 2 is preferable if there is a chance that the supply of preference eligibles may be exhausted before all vacancies are filled. Public notice for a restricted position must contain a statement explaining whether applications will be accepted from nonpreference eligibles, and if so, that they will not be considered if preference eligibles are available.

Exception: The rule of restricting positions for applicants eligible for veterans' preference does not apply when restricted positions are filled through internal career placements such as promotion, reassignment, or change to lower level. The rule does apply, however, when such positions are filled through reinstatement and transfer from another agency.

232.6 Reimbursement of Travel and Relocation Expenses

When it is considered to be in the best interest of the Postal Service, employees and prospective employees may be authorized reimbursement for travel and relocation expenses, consistent with the provisions of Handbook F-15, *Travel and Relocation.*

233 Career Recruitment

233.1 Internal Placement of Bargaining Employees

Bargaining vacancies within an installation are filled by promotion, reassignment, or change to lower level of the successful bidder or applicant. The appropriate collective bargaining agreements must be observed when filling bargaining positions. For further information see Chapter 7, Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion.

233.11 Examination Requirements

Employees bidding on or applying for a bargaining position must meet the current entrance examination requirements. Substitution rules that are in effect with regard to qualifying examinations include the following:

a. *Obsolete examinations.* Examinations 400, 440, 450, and 710 (Markup Clerk, Automated only) were replaced by the test Battery 470 effective August 18, 1994. However, a career employee who qualified on an old examination is permanently qualified for the *position* covered by that

examination, provided the employee has remained on the rolls in a career position continuously since August 18, 1994. Career employees hired after that date must establish their qualifications under test Battery 470.

b. *Clerk craft interlevel bidding.* See current Memorandum of Understanding in American Postal Workers Union National Agreement for bidding without regard to entrance examination of position being bid. Bidders or voluntary transferees must meet all other provisions of the relevant qualification standard.

233.12 Senior Qualified and Best Qualified Position Requirements

Senior qualified positions are those awarded to the senior qualified, eligible bidder. Best qualified positions are those awarded to the applicant whose total qualifications, rated against the job requirements, best meets the qualifications for the position as determined by management. Bargaining qualification standards are available on the Postal Service Intranet.

233.13 Medical Qualifications

A medical assessment for internal bidders and applicants is administered only when the physical requirements for the new position are more demanding than the physical requirements for the old position. However, no such assessment is required if an employee is being reassigned from another installation to the identical position in the new installation.

233.14 Maintenance Selection System Requirements

The Maintenance Selection System (MSS), which is described in Handbook EL-304, *Maintenance Selection System,* is designed to ensure the selection and promotion of maintenance personnel through a uniform application of position qualification requirements.

233.2 Internal Placement of Nonbargaining Employees

Reserved.

233.3 External Recruitment Sources

When vacancies cannot be filled through the internal placement of employees, appointing officials recruit to establish a register of eligibles. The register is the primary external recruitment source and is described in 233.31. Appointing officials may also use the other sources listed in 233.32-233.38, as appropriate.

233.31 Competitive Appointment From a Register of Eligibles

Selection from a register of eligibles is described in Chapter 6. Current career postal employees, regardless of position or location, are ineligible for selection from any register of eligibles except Maintenance Selection System registers (see 233.14, Maintenance Selection System Requirements, and Handbook EL-304, *Maintenance Selection System*).

233.32 Reinstatement

A former career postal employee or former career or career-conditional employee of a competitive service executive branch agency (see Exhibit 233.32), including a separated displaced federal employee (DFE), may be reinstated to a Postal Service career position. Temporary, casual, and excepted appointment service does not confer career status. The applicant must meet the qualification requirements for the position, including any currently required examinations. Appointing officials may, but are not obligated to, administer examinations noncompetitively to applicants who have not met the examination requirement, if they determine that these applicants are otherwise viable candidates. Reinstatement requires completion of a new probationary period. Eligibility rules are as follows:

a. 3-*Year Limit.* An applicant who is not entitled to veterans' preference and has not completed 3 years substantially continuous (no break greater than 3 days) career service may be reinstated only within 3 years following the date of his or her separation.

b. *No Limit.* An applicant who is entitled to veterans' preference or has completed 3 years substantially continuous career service may be reinstated without time limitation.

233.33 Transfer From Another Federal Agency

An employee serving a career or career-conditional appointment in a competitive service executive branch agency (see Exhibit 233.32), including an employee who has received a notice of reduction in force (RIF), may be considered for noncompetitive transfer to a career position in the Postal Service, provided the employee meets the qualification requirements for the postal position, including any required examinations. Appointing officials may, but are not obligated to, administer examinations noncompetitively to applicants who have not met the examination requirement if they determine that these applicants are otherwise viable candidates. Such an appointment requires completion of a probationary period.

Note: Employees of agencies designated as *excepted* from the list of competitive service executive branch agencies (see Exhibit 233.32) may not be noncompetitively transferred to the Postal Service.

233.34 Dual Employment

Under certain circumstances, an employee may be appointed to more than one position in the Postal Service. This is known as a dual appointment. Only one of the appointments may be to a position in the career workforce. The primary purpose of dual appointments is to improve the opportunity of part-time employees (career) and employees who provide relief or leave replacement service on rural routes and postmaster relief/leave replacements (noncareer) to gain further employment and to minimize unemployment compensation expense. Dual appointments also enable the Postal Service to utilize available experienced employees instead of new hires.

Exhibit 233.32
Competitive Service and Excepted Service Organizations

Competitive Service and Excepted Service Organizations

Individuals employed by executive branch organizations designated as **competitive service organizations may be eligible for noncompetitive transfer** into the Postal Service, provided they were hired competitively into a career or career-conditional position and are currently serving satisfactorily in such a position. Individuals employed by executive branch organizations designated as **excepted service organizations** by Executive Order, by the Office of Personnel Management, and by statute **are not eligible for noncompetitive transfer to the Postal Service.**

An applicant may *not* be eligible for transfer even though he or she *is* employed by an agency listed under competitive service organizations below. For agencies not listed, contact them to determine their status. **The hiring authority information on an applicant's Form 50 will aid employing offices in determining transfer eligibility.**

Examples of Competitive Service Organizations

Note: This is a partial listing of *competitive* service organizations:

Department of Agriculture	Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of the Air Force	Department of the Interior
Department of the Army	Department of Justice
Department of Commerce	Department of Labor
Department of Defense	Department of the Navy
Department of Education	Department of State
Department of Energy	Department of Transportation
Department of Health and Human Services	

Examples of Excepted Service Organizations

Note: This is a partial listing of *excepted* service organizations:

Central Intelligence Agency	Merit Systems Protection Board
Department of the Treasury	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs	National Labor Relations Board
Environmental Protection Agency	National Science Foundation
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
Farm Credit Administration	Office of Government Ethics
Federal Communications Commission	Office of Personnel Management
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	Office of Special Counsel
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Peace Corps
Federal Labor Relations Authority	Postal Rate Commission
Federal Reserve System	Securities and Exchange Commission
Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board	Selective Service Commission
Federal Trade Commission	Small Business Administration
General Accounting Office	Social Security Administration
General Services Administration	Tennessee Valley Authority

233.341 Between the Postal Service and the Private Sector

An applicant working in the private sector may be dually employed as a career Postal Service employee, provided that the private sector job does not adversely impact postal operations or represent a conflict of interest. See *ELM* section 661.42, Conflicts of Interest — Employment.

233.342 Between the Postal Service and Other Federal Organizations

A career employee of another federal agency may be employed as a career Postal Service employee, provided that the employee is available to work the hours of the postal position and meets one of the following conditions:

a. Selected competitively from a register (see 233.31).

b. Eligible for noncompetitive appointment (see 233.32, 233.33, 233.35, 233.36 or 233.38).

Similarly, an applicant serving in the uniformed services on active military duty may be hired into a career position, but only if the applicant is on terminal or transitional leave and if an *unofficial or uncertified* copy of DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,* has been provided and reviewed. All three military branches provide a separating service person with an unofficial or uncertified copy of the DD Form 214 when they depart on terminal leave. This form reflects the character of service. After the separation date, the veteran receives the final certified copy of the DD Form 214.

Note: The Army refers to terminal leave as transitional leave, and issues DA 31, *Request and Authority for Leave,* to the veteran, that indicates that the individual is on official leave. The Air Force and Navy do not provide leave orders for individuals going on terminal leave. See 234.23 for restrictions on hiring employees of other federal agencies to noncareer positions in the Postal Service.

233.35 Noncompetitive Appointment of Veteran With 30 Percent or More Disability

A veteran, who has a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more and who is currently working as a casual or temporary employee, may be considered for noncompetitive conversion to a career vacancy. The veteran must have worked in the temporary appointment for at least 60 days and must meet the qualification requirements of the position, including any currently required examinations. Appointing officials may, but are not obligated to, administer examinations noncompetitively, if it is determined that applicants are otherwise viable candidates. A prior rating on the appropriate examination is acceptable.

If necessary, a veteran with 30 percent or more disability can be given a direct career appointment. This appointment authority is entirely discretionary. There are no time limits for these appointments.

Note: Veteran and disability status must be verified before appointment or conversion.

233.36 Noncompetitive Appointment of Veterans' Readjustment Appointment Eligibles

A Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) eligible who is currently working as a casual or temporary employee may be considered for noncompetitive conversion to a career vacancy. The VRA eligible must have worked in the temporary appointment for at least 60 days and must meet the qualification requirements of the position, including any currently required examinations. Appointing officials may, but are not obligated to, administer examinations noncompetitively, if it is determined that applicants are otherwise viable candidates. A prior rating on the appropriate examination is acceptable.

If necessary, a VRA eligible can be given a direct career appointment. This VRA authority applies to post-Vietnam and Vietnam Era veterans who received a satisfactory discharge from the Armed Forces and whose eligibility is defined as follows:

a. Post-Vietnam Era veterans are divided into two categories:

(1) Veterans who first entered active duty (full-time duty in the Armed Forces other than active duty for training) after May 7, 1975, are VRA eligible if they have served for a period of more than 180 days' active duty.

(2) The 180-day service requirement does not apply to veterans:

(a) Separated from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

(b) Ordered to active duty as Reserve and guard members under 10 United States Code (U.S.C.) 12301(a), (d), or (g), 12302, or 12304 for service during a *period of war* as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(11). Item 18 of DD Form 214 should cite one of these sections as the basis for the active duty.

(c) Served in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized.

(3) "Period of war" includes World War II, the Korean conflict, Vietnam Era, the Persian Gulf War, or the period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by the Congress and ending on the date prescribed by presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of the Congress.

Eligible post-Vietnam Era veterans qualify for noncompetitive appointment 10 years after the date of their last discharge or release from active duty or until December 31, 1999, whichever is later.

b. Vietnam Era veterans are those who served on active duty any time during the period from August 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975. They must have served for a period of more than 180 days of active duty and have a satisfactory discharge to be VRA eligible.

c. Eligible Vietnam Era veterans qualify for noncompetitive appointment 10 years after their last discharge or release from active duty, or until December 31, 1995, whichever is later.

Note: Use of the VRA authority is entirely discretionary and no one is entitled to a VRA appointment. While all VRA eligibles have served in the Armed Forces, they do not necessarily meet the eligibility requirements for veterans' preference.

233.37 Reemployment of Annuitants

Before a retired postal or other federal agency employee receiving an annuity from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) under the Civil Service Retirement System or Federal Employees' Retirement System may be reemployed, approval must be obtained from the district Human Resources manager for a district position, the area Human Resources manager for an area office position, or the vice president of Employee Resource Management for headquarters and headquarters-related units.

When an annuitant is reemployed, if the annuity continues, the amount applicable to the period of reemployment is offset, or reduced, from the reemployed annuitant's salary. The full implications of this mandatory offset should be discussed in detail with the applicant before effecting reemployment. See 234.73 for restrictions on placing reemployed annuitants into temporary noncareer positions.

233.38 Employment of People With Disabilities

See 235.

234 Noncareer Recruitment

234.1 General Provisions

All applicants for casual, temporary, and noncareer indefinite positions are subject to the usual terms and conditions of employment, including personal and medical suitability screening. In addition, restricting certain positions to applicants entitled to veteran preference must be observed, as well as appropriate collective bargaining agreement limitations.

234.2 Specific Rules

234.21 Veterans' Preference Rules

Veterans' preference must be recognized in the rating, ranking, and selecting of applicants not only for career employment, but also for casual and temporary employment. Applicants for temporary appointment to skilled positions may be hired from appropriate entrance registers where veterans' preference has already been observed (see 234.4, Skilled and Technical Positions). However, when no examination ranking is used for selection, all applicants for casual or temporary employment must be considered in priority group order, as follows:

a. *Group 1*. Persons entitled to 10-point preference who have a compensable service-connected disability of 10 percent or more.

b. *Group 2*. All other persons entitled to preference.

c. *Group 3.* All other applicants.

234.22 Collective Bargaining Agreement Limitations

Casuals and temporary relief carriers (TRCs) may be hired only within the limitations outlined in Article 7 of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. TRCs are limited to terms not to exceed 359 calendar days and must have a break in service of at least 6 calendar days between appointments. Annuitants hired as TRCs have the same terms as nonannuitant TRCs, except that they may not work more than 180 days within each calendar year. In addition, there are limitations on the number of casuals and TRCs who may be employed at the same time.

TRCs may be hired without using or exhausting the rural carrier associate (RCA) register. However, when the number of bargaining leave replacements in the district is less than 80 percent, RCAs are the only leave replacement employees who may be hired. There is no limit on the number of TRCs who may be employed, providing the number of bargaining leave replacements (substitute rural carriers, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier reliefs) in the district equals or is more than 80 percent of the number of regular rural routes in the district.

234.23 Dual Employment

The following types of dual employment are valid or invalid in the Postal Service as indicated.

234.231 Between the Postal Service and Other Federal Agencies

An applicant who works for another federal agency and is under either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) may not be hired by the Postal Service for a temporary or noncareer position unless the applicant is willing to relinquish the other agency position and have at least a 4-calendar-day break in service before appointment to the postal position. Applicants who participate in CSRS or FERS who are unwilling to relinquish the position that entitles them to participate in one of these retirement systems are ineligible for noncareer postal employment. This ineligibility includes federal employees under CSRS or FERS on leave without pay or in a furlough status. An applicant who works for another federal agency and who is not under CSRS or FERS may be considered for a temporary or noncareer position, provided that the applicant is available to work the hours required by the Postal Service.

234.232 During Applicant's Terminal or Transitional Leave From Military

An applicant who is on active military duty while on terminal or transitional leave can be hired for a noncareer position as long as an *unofficial* or *uncertified* copy of the DD Form 214 has been provided and reviewed. All three military branches provide a separating service person with an unofficial or uncertified copy of the DD Form 214 when they depart on terminal leave. This form reflects the character of service. After the separation date, the veteran receives the final certified copy of the DD Form 214.

Note: The Army refers to *terminal leave as transitional leave,* and issues DA 31, *Request and Authority for Leave,* to the veteran, which indicates that the individual is on official leave. The Air Force and Navy do not provide leave orders for those individuals going on terminal leave.

234.233 Between Different Postal Installations

Dual appointments within the same postal installation or among different postal installations provide increased local coverage in addition to expanded work opportunities for noncareer postal employees. For example, a postmaster relief/leave replacement may hold the same assignment at more than one post office. A casual, a rural carrier associate or a temporary relief carrier may be dually employed as a PMR/LR.

234.3 Noncareer Employee Recruitment Sources

Casual and temporary positions may be filled as described in 234 within the limitations noted. Where multiple sources are listed, appointing officials should rely on current local conditions and past recruitment experience in determining which methods will produce the required results.

234.4 Skilled and Technical Positions

When offices are recruiting temporary employees for skilled and technical positions such as automotive mechanic, tractor-trailer operator, motor vehicle operator, electronics technician, and maintenance mechanic, they must consider applicants eligible for reinstatement who are examination-qualified or query the appropriate entrance register. This is to ensure that applicants meet the appropriate qualification and screening requirements associated with the skills needed.

234.5 Rural Carrier Associate

A rural carrier associate is the only noncareer employee who may be reassigned to another installation. A RCA who has completed the probationary period and then submits a written request for reassignment, may be reassigned to RCA vacancies at other offices. A regular rural carrier who wants to relocate because of a spouse's relocation or because of personal hardship may be reassigned as a rural carrier associate, provided there is a leave replacement vacancy in the office where the regular carrier seeks relocation. The regular carrier must resign the career position and take at least a 6-calendar-day break in service before appointment as RCA (see Memorandum of Understanding .10, Appointment of Regular Carrier to RCA Upon Relocation, National USPS-NRLCA Agreement). Otherwise, RCAs must be hired from an entrance register.

234.6 Casual Positions

234.61 Former Postal or Federal Employees With Reinstatement Eligibility

Under this authority, applicants eligible for career reinstatement can also be considered for casual positions. For rules, see 233.32, Reinstatement.

234.62 Former Casual Special Recruitment Authority

For this recruitment authority, a former casual is one who at the time of application had a casual appointment within the current calendar year or either of the 2 preceding calendar years, had a satisfactory work performance

during the last period of casual employment, and was initially appointed as the result of a competitive recruitment effort. For example, applications solicited from the general public or an approved noncompetitive recruitment referral such as Student Program or State Employment Service that recognized veterans' preference requirements are *competitive* efforts. Applicants who meet this definition may be considered for casual vacancies ahead of applicants in the general application file. Former casuals who do not meet these requirements must be considered along with other general application file applicants (see 234.63 and 234.64). Veterans' preference groupings must be observed (see 234.21).

234.63 Casual General Application File System

This system is designed for use in a centralized hiring environment where large numbers of casuals and other nonskilled temporary workers (100 or more) are needed during peak periods (seasonal, summer, and special needs) to supplement the regular clerk, mail handler, and city carrier workforce. Detailed instructions for implementing this system are contained in *Casual Hiring Administrative Procedures, Casual General Application System (CGAFS),* which is available at district human resources offices.

234.64 General Application File

Applications for casual and temporary positions that do not have an examination requirement may be accepted at any time from current and former postal employees, as well as from the general public. Usually, such applications are submitted to express an interest in any type of postal employment. Applicants in this category include former casuals who do *not* meet the special recruitment authority (see 234.62). When appointments are made from the general application file, veterans' preference groupings must be observed (see 234.21).

234.65 Student Program

Students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment on a full-time basis during the regular school year in an accredited institution of higher learning — including universities, colleges, vocational schools, and technical schools — can be considered for appointment as casual and temporary employees. Student applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

a. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

b. Applicants must provide documentation certifying enrollment, or acceptance for enrollment, in an institution of higher learning on a full-time basis during the regular school year.

Students employed under this authority are terminated if they drop out of school for any reason, or if they are unable to furnish satisfactory evidence of enrollment for the next scheduled term. Veterans' preference groupings must be observed (see 234.21).

234.66 State Employment Service

Persons currently unemployed and listed on the rolls of the state unemployment compensation office as actively seeking employment may be considered for employment in casual and temporary positions when referred to the Postal Service by the state. Persons referred under this authority must meet the following eligibility requirements:

a. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, or they must be high school graduates who are no less than 16 years of age.

b. Applicants must be appropriately referred by the state unemployment compensation office.

Prior approval to use this hiring authority must be obtained from the district Human Resources manager. When approval is obtained, a postal representative should file a written notice of intent to use this authority with the state unemployment office, using Sample Letter C-1, Appendix C. Certification letters (see Sample Letter C-2, Appendix C) must be filed on the right side of the official personnel folder of each individual hired under this authority. When selections are made under this authority, veterans' preference groupings must be observed (see 234.21).

234.67 Register of Eligibles

Appointing officials may query their registers to determine whether eligibles are interested in noncareer employment. In addition, the registers of nearby installations may be queried in accordance with procedure (see 442, Canvass Procedure).

234.68 Employment of People With Disabilities

The noncompetitive process of employment of people with severe disabilities can be used to hire for casual and other temporary positions. See 235.4 for procedures.

234.7 Temporary Relief Carrier and Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacement

234.71 Temporary Relief Carrier General Application File

Applications for temporary relief carrier are placed in a general application file. Veterans' preference groupings must be observed (see 234.21). Applicants for TRC may be recruited through postmasters, rural carrier employees, the local NRLCA, and any civic organizations or associations that might yield suitable and available individuals. Other traditional recruitment sources listed above may be used when it is anticipated that they will yield suitable, qualified applicants. See 234.73 for special authority for hiring annuitants as TRCs.

234.72 Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacement

Postmasters accept applications for this category of noncareer worker, which is authorized only at post offices that do not have a career clerk position. These workers sign a contract to provide relief services without time limitation, and their selection for A–E offices is not subject to veterans'

preference application groupings or to restrictions on the hiring of relatives. These workers are not subject to medical suitability screening, but must meet all other eligibility and suitability requirements. When practical, postmasters may coordinate their coverage needs and provide relief work for one PMR/LR at as many as four different installations. See 234.73 for special authority to hire annuitants as PMR/LRs.

234.73 Reemployment of Postal Service Annuitants as Temporary Relief Carrier and Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacement

When normal recruitment efforts for TRC or PMR/LR positions fail to attract qualified individuals, appointing officials may request authorization from the district Human Resources manager to recruit postal retirees to serve as TRCs or PMR/LRs without an offset to their annuities. A retired Postal Service applicant can work in these positions for a period limited to 180 days in a calendar year without an offset to his or her annuity under a dual compensation waiver granted by the Office of Personnel Management. *The waiver applies to these two positions only, and it may be used only when normal recruitment sources fail to identify qualified applicants. No assignment can be made to any career position, or to any other temporary position under this authority.*

Key points of this recruitment alternative are:

a. This hiring authority can be used only with the approval of the district Human Resources manager, and only when normal recruitment does not yield qualified applicants for TRCs or PMR/LRs.

b. Recruiting efforts for TRC and PMR/LR positions occupied by annuitants with a dual compensation waiver must continue.

c. Employment under this authority is limited to appointments of no more than 359 calendar days. Within this period, an annuitant may work no more than 180 days. Any days worked beyond 180 are subject to an offset of salary or annuity. Therefore, postmasters must carefully monitor work schedules of annuitants to be sure their appointments are terminated at the end of 180 days of actual work, or the end of 365 calendar days, whichever comes first. If it is necessary to employ the services of an annuitant for more than one 359-calendar-day appointment, then a 6-calendar-day break in service is required between appointments.

d. Special administrative and reporting requirements must be used when employing annuitants to fill TRC and PMR/LR positions (see Appendix D, *Dual Compensation Tracking Procedures and Sample Letters for Use With Dual Compensation Issues*).

235 Employment of People With Disabilities

235.1 Policy

It is Postal Service policy to provide employment opportunities to qualified applicants with disabilities. This is accomplished through competitive and noncompetitive processes. A qualified individual with a disability is one who,

with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question without posing a direct threat of harm to the individual or others.

235.2 Reasonable Accommodation

235.21 General

The Postal Service is required to make reasonable accommodation to known physical and mental limitations of qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on postal operations. Factors to consider in determining whether an undue financial hardship exists include the following:

a. The nature and cost of the accommodation.

b. The overall financial resources of the facility.

c. The number and composition of the workforce at the facility.

d. The effect on expenses and resources.

An accommodation can impose an undue hardship when it alters the fundamental nature of the business or operations. Factors to consider in this context include the following:

a. Type of operations conducted.

b. Composition and functions of the workforce.

c. Geographic separateness and administrative or fiscal relationship of the facility to the Postal Service.

d. Impact upon the operations of the facility, specifically compliance with safety rules and policies.

e. Impact on other employees' abilities to perform their jobs.

f. Impact on the facility's ability to conduct business.

Refer to Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodations, An Interactive Process,* for additional information to assist in the case-by-case decision making process.

235.22 Performance, Attendance, and Conduct Standards

The Postal Service requires the same performance and standards of conduct from employees with disabilities as it does from other employees after all barriers have been removed.

235.23 Deaf or Hard of Hearing Applicants and Employees

Management has an obligation to reasonably accommodate deaf and hard of hearing employees and applicants who request assistance in communicating with or understanding others in work-related situations. See Handbook EL-307, Section 5-7, for examples of accommodation.

235.3 Competitive Hiring of Persons With Severe Disabilities

235.31 Recruitment

It is the responsibility of installation heads to actively recruit individuals with targeted disabilities into the workforce in order to meet the Postal Service's goals in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Office of Personnel Management guidelines. Specific information on these goals and those persons responsible for action items necessary to meet statutory and legal requirements can be found in the *Affirmative Employment Program Plan for Individuals with Disabilities* and the *Disabled Veterans Affirmative Employment Plan,* which are updated yearly.

Targeted disabilities are those identified by the EEOC for emphasis in affirmative employment program planning. The disabilities targeted for emphasis and corresponding codes are:

Blindness	23 and 25
Complete Paralysis	71 through 78
Convulsive Disorders	82
Deafness	16 and 17
Distortion of Limbs and/or Spine	92
Mental Illness	91
Mental Retardation	90
Missing Extremities	28 and 32 through 38
Partial Paralysis	64 through 68

235.32 Outside Organizations

Recruitment should include outreach to individuals, organizations, independent living centers, and associations representing individuals with disabilities. Recruitment at universities, colleges, and schools should include outreach to students with disabilities. Recruitment may include, but is not limited to, state Divisions or Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), associations for the deaf, Goodwill Industries, outreach programs for veterans with disabilities, and educational institutions that have a significant number of students who have disabilities.

Installation heads are to provide advance notice of upcoming examinations to these organizations so they can identify qualified persons with disabilities to participate in the competitive process.

235.33 Reasonable Accommodation in Testing

See Chapter 3, Reasonable Accommodation in the Examination Process, in Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process*.

235.4 Noncompetitive Career Hiring of Persons With Severe Disabilities

235.41 Other Agencies

Most employees with disabilities are appointed from a competitive hiring register. However, if the competitive process itself is a barrier to employment for qualified individuals with severe disabilities, and these individuals would be able to perform at the normal standards of job performance, then noncompetitive authority may be used.

Under this authority, persons with severe disabilities may be appointed directly into the following career or temporary positions:

a. City Carrier.

b. Data Conversion Operator.

c. Distribution Clerk.

d. Mail Handler.

e. Mail Processor.

f. Markup Clerk, Automated.

To participate in the referral of applicants for noncompetitive hiring consideration, the VA and/or state DVR must have the services and programs they offer certified by the Postal Service. The certification process requires state DVR and VA organizations that wish to participate in this hiring process to submit a certification package to the district manager of Human Resources who forwards the package to the vice president of Employee Resource Management to review and approve. The package must include a description of the following:

a. Services and programs to be offered.

b. Screening methods used to identify potential postal applicants.

235.42 Potential Applicants

When the state DVR or VA certification package has been approved, vocational rehabilitation agencies can begin to identify and screen potential postal applicants. The services and programs that vocational rehabilitation agencies and units provide to the Postal Service are essentially an alternative means of assessing applicant qualifications. Therefore, it is critical that all referred applicants receive the most appropriate method of assessment and evaluation to determine that they meet Postal Service selection standards and have the ability to satisfactorily perform as employees. Applicants will be considered to have successfully met the Postal Service's selection requirements as a result of this certification process.

235.43 Job Information for Rehabilitation Counselors

The recruitment of individuals with severe disabilities requires partnership with the VA and state DVR offices. Vocational rehabilitation counselors must make a site visit and tour the postal facility. Direct observation of postal operations will provide counselors with a better understanding of our work environment and job requirements. A demonstration of the functional and

physical requirements for each eligible entry-level job will assist the counselor to further screen potential applicants and to identify those individuals who are likely to be successful in available postal jobs. Counselors should also be provided with the following:

a. A standard position description.

b. A list of the essential functions of the job.

c. A job preview video (if available).

d. A list of the work behaviors associated with the job (movements such as lifting, walking, standing, etc.).

e. A list of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) an individual must possess to adequately perform the work.

f. Information on probationary timelines and performance requirements.

235.44 Initiating the Hiring Process

The following steps must be taken when a hiring need exists:

a. The postal manager requests the state DVR to certify three names for consideration and one additional name for each additional vacancy. This certification must be consistent with the process outlined by the state DVR or VA in its certification package and include completed Forms 2591, *Application for Employment,* and 3666, *Certification for Postal Service Employment of Individuals with Severe Disabilities*. See Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process,* Exhibit 4-1, for a sample of Form 3666.

b. Certified applicants are then given a tour of the postal facility during a preemployment orientation. The visit should provide sufficient information to assist the applicants in making an informed decision about whether they are interested in postal employment.

c. Interviewers then engage in an interactive process (see Handbook EL-307, 2-2) to confirm the essential functions of the job and the abilities and limitations of the applicant. Otherwise, the interview process for an individual with a disability is essentially the same as an interview conducted with an applicant who does not have a disability (see 54, Preemployment Interview, and 621, Preemployment Interview).

d. The referred applicants are screened using eligibility and suitability guidelines outlined in Chapter 5, considered, and a selection is made in accordance with Chapter 6. A list of those applicants not selected for the job is then returned to the state DVR or VA, as appropriate.

e. The selecting official or designee after making a bona fide job offer, schedules the selected applicant for a medical assessment and provides a copy of Form 3666 and any other supporting documentation concerning the applicant's medical history.

f. Following the selecting official's determination that the applicant is medically suitable for employment, the selecting official schedules a meeting with the applicant, rehabilitation counselor, and immediate supervisor or designated operations manager to discuss requirements (e.g. checklist, reasonable accommodation issues, and essential job

functions) outlined in Handbook EL-307. Documentation of the results of this meeting *must* be attached to the reasonable accommodation checklist and retained for 5 years by the employing office.

235.45 Probationary Period

If at any point during the probationary period it becomes reasonably clear that an employee with a severe disability hired under the noncompetitive process is having difficulty demonstrating the requisite abilities for the job, the immediate supervisor must request that the appropriate VA or state DVR counselor assist in overcoming problems and deficiencies in performance.

The selecting official should schedule a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity between the interested parties to attempt to correct the performance deficiency. Often an early dialogue can result in a quick solution to the performance problem. A simple job modification or a different method of communication may be the only change necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job more efficiently.

If the employee is still unable to demonstrate the requisite skills and abilities for the job, with or without reasonable accommodation, separation should be initiated during the probationary period. The postal installation head or designee must notify the VA or state DVR when a decision is made that the person's employment is to be terminated. This will enable the VA or state DVR to make other arrangements for rehabilitation, employment, or other assistance.

3 Examinations

31 General

The Postal Service uses a variety of different examination types when establishing an applicant's eligibility for employment, including written (paper and pencil), computer-based, rated application, web-based, and performance tests. Examination personnel secure the confidential supplies needed for the examination process.

311 Entrance Examinations

The Postal Service administers entrance examinations to establish an applicant's eligibility for employment consideration for entry-level positions.

311.1 Written Examinations

Written examinations are those examinations in which applicants must appear (assemble) at a designated location, in the presence of an examiner, to respond in writing to test items.

311.2 Rated Application

Rated application examinations are those examinations in which applicants are not required to appear or to take a written examination. Applicants must complete an application form for the announced position, detailing their experience, education, and training. The National Test Administration Center (NTAC) then determines the applicant's eligibility by utilizing a rating guide to evaluate the application forms to generate scores.

311.3 Performance Test

In a performance test, applicants must carry out certain work activities related to the position for which they are applying. An examiner observes their performance while engaged in the activity and records the applicant's performance according to predetermined standards.

311.4 Noncompetitive Entrance Examination

Appointing officials may request the administration of a noncompetitive examination for current career federal employees (those eligible to transfer to the Postal Service), or former career postal or federal employees, if suitable

for postal employment, in order to establish eligibility for reinstatement or transfer. See 233.32, Reinstatement and 233.33, Transfer From Another Federal Agency, for eligibility rules applicable to former postal or federal employees. The applicants must meet examination and all other requirements for the positions for which they applied.

312 Inservice Examinations

The Postal Service administers inservice examinations exclusively to current career postal employees and substitute rural carriers (designations 72 and 73 only) as a way of identifying qualified applicants for potential advancement or reassignment. The 3 types of inservice examinations are qualifying, competitive, and noncompetitive inservice examinations.

312.1 Qualifying Examinations

The Postal Service administers qualifying examinations to career employees who apply for a position and who meet the criteria for taking the required examination. To be considered for the position, employees must earn an eligible rating on the examination. Ranking for selection is not determined by the order of the scores.

312.2 Competitive Examinations

The Postal Service administers competitive examinations to career employees who apply for a position and meet the criteria for taking the required examination. Registers are composed of eligible ratings attained by employees and are listed in descending score order. An applicant's ranking on the register becomes part of the selection requirement for the position concerned. Registers are established and maintained for all competitive exams.

312.3 Noncompetitive Inservice Examinations

The Postal Service uses a noncompetitive examination to determine whether an employee who is being considered for a noncompetitive placement action meets the test requirement for the position.

313 Duration of Results

Eligible entrance ratings (either written examination or rated application) are valid for a minimum period of 2 years and may be extended by applicants for a third year and for additional years by hiring officials. Eligible inservice examination results (either written examination or rated application) are valid indefinitely, unless the examination or rating guide specification is changed. Eligible inservice performance test results, including dictation, are valid for a maximum period of 2 years, unless the following occurs:

a. The examination specification is changed.

b. The employee holds a position requiring regular use of the skill or ability tested (e.g., typing), in which case the results are valid as long as the employee holds the job.

Eligible entrance ratings (either written examination or rated application) can be used in place of the equivalent inservice examination, even if the ratings have expired on the register, as long as the examination or rating guide specification has not changed. See 233.11, Examination Requirements, for situations where examination substitution is permitted.

314 Examination Locations

The following locations form the Postal Service's examination network: examination centers, examination installations, and examination sites.

314.1 Examination Center

An *examination center* is an installation where a certified examiner is assigned the complete set of responsibilities of examination administration. Such postal employees are known as examination administrators (EAs). Examination administrators provide examination services for the center and, in addition, may provide services for 1 or more examination installations. Among the responsibilities, examination administrators recommend the reopening of examinations, coordinate distribution of examination announcements, order examination materials, and maintain examination results generated by NTAC. Where authorized by NTAC, the administrator stocks materials for inservice, delayed, and reopened testing.

314.2 Examination Installation

An *examination installation* is a location where a certified examiner has been assigned the responsibilities of receiving examination materials from NTAC and for giving tests. Examination installations are designated at the request of the responsible examination center with the concurrence of NTAC. Examination installations receive materials directly from NTAC to administer a scheduled test. The responsible examination center administrator must place the order for the materials needed for a scheduled examination. Examination installations do not stock test materials.

314.3 Examination Site

An *examination site* is a location where a certified examiner has been assigned the responsibilities of receiving and giving examinations. Postal examination sites are designated at the request of the responsible examination center with the concurrence of NTAC. Examination sites receive test materials directly from an examination center's stock to administer certain scheduled, inservice examinations. Examination results are generated for the responsible examination center. Examination sites do not stock test materials.

315 Examination Personnel

Examination administrators and examiners, either full-time or ad hoc, are referred to as examiners.

315.1 Examination Administrator

The *examination administrator* (EA) is the individual responsible for administering all examinations at an examination center. Examination administrators are the primary examiners for conducting tests and are certified by NTAC. Examination administrators are accountable for all restricted test material charged to the examination center. Additionally, the administrator ensures that any employee placed in charge of an examination as an examiner is qualified, properly trained, and certified by NTAC.

315.2 Examiners

The *examiner* serves in the absence of the administrator or provides assistance to the administrator during high-volume testing and at other times. Examiners administer and monitor exams and are accountable for restricted materials charged to them for a specific test session. These employees must successfully complete examiner training (see 315.61, Examiner Training). Before examiners can conduct examinations, NTAC must certify and issue them an examiner's certificate.

315.3 Monitors

Monitors assist examiners before, during, and after the administration of an examination. Monitors do not administer examinations. Monitors are used solely to help set up the examination room, admit applicants, check gridding, hand out test materials during the examination, etc. These employees must successfully complete examination procedures training given by examination administrators (see 315.62, Monitor Training) before serving as a monitor. Since NTAC does not certify monitors, examination administrators should maintain a current listing of trained monitors to assist in examinations as necessary.

315.4 Reporting Relationships

Examiners report functionally to NTAC, from which they receive technical directions and guidance for Postal Service examining processes. Examiners are administratively responsible to their respective installation head or designee. This includes proper execution of directives issued by NTAC.

315.5 Number of Examiners and Monitors

At least one examiner must be present at all times during test administration. It is advisable to have another examiner readily available and on call for any emergency that may arise. In most instances, the following ratio of examiner to monitors should be observed to minimize the possibility of test compromise.

Applicants Admitted to Examination Room	Examiner	Monitors
1 to 30	1	0
More than 30	1	1 for each group of 30 applicants, or fraction thereof, after the initial 30 applicants

There may be times when, due to the facilities used or other unusual circumstances, this ratio may not be practical. Examiners must use their own judgment as to the number of monitors needed during testing. There must always be enough monitors to constantly observe all applicants.

315.6 Training

Examiners, monitors, and Automotive Mechanic Performance Test examiners must meet the following training requirements.

315.61 Examiner Training

Examiners must meet the following training requirements:

a. Examiners are required to be thoroughly familiar with the instructions in this chapter and must complete *Examinations Self-Instructional Guide,* course #21560-02, available from NTAC.

b. Inexperienced examiners must serve as assistants (monitors) until the examiner is satisfied that they are ready to assume the full range of examination duties. Examiners should rotate personnel in conducting exams so that all personnel will be fully knowledgeable.

315.62 Monitor Training

Monitors must meet the following requirements:

a. Monitors are required to be thoroughly familiar with sections 325, Admission to Examination Room, and 326, Test Administration Process, of this chapter, and should complete portions of course #21560-02 according to instructions from the examination administrator.

b. The examination administrator is responsible for ensuring that monitors are thoroughly trained.

315.63 Automotive Mechanic Performance Test Examiner Training

Only those examiners with the requisite automotive mechanical background and who have been trained and certified to conduct this particular performance test may administer the Automotive Mechanic Performance Test.

315.7 Selection and Certification

Bargaining examiner positions are filled on the basis of *senior qualified* as specified in the National Agreement. Examination administrators are selected in accordance with procedures (see 74, EAS Positions). Districts nominate

successful examiner applicants to NTAC for certification. NTAC only issues certificates to those employees who meet the requirements. Only those examiners certified by NTAC may administer an examination.

315.8 Availability of Examiners and Monitors

The examination center's manager must ensure that a sufficient number of trained examiners and monitors are available to meet testing needs. The primary examiner must consult with the human resources manager before an examination is scheduled to allow time to properly plan and coordinate preliminary arrangements. If applicable, the examination center manager must make arrangements for examination personnel replacements or for rearranging work assignments.

315.9 Restrictions on Use of Examinations Personnel

The following restrictions on the use of examination personnel apply:

a. No examiner or monitor may take part in any examination in which a relative is scheduled to take the examination. To avoid any criticism, the examination administrator must carefully check with the other personnel assigned to examine or monitor an examination to ensure that this rule is observed.

b. Examiners or monitors can administer inservice as well as entrance examinations, as long as they are not and will not become eligible or have need to take the examination (see 33, Inservice Examination Process).

c. Examiners must not participate in workshops that familiarize applicants with taking a postal examination.

316 Examination Administrator Responsibilities

316.1 Accepting Applications

Examination administrators participate in the outreach efforts during the recruitment campaign and examination announcement period. They perform such tasks as furnishing information to the public about the Postal Service and accepting applications.

316.2 Maintaining Supplies

Examination administrators must maintain adequate supplies of examination materials and provide security for these materials at their locations. Examination administrators request test materials from NTAC using Form 2487, *Requisition for Test Materials*. Examination administrators report irregular circumstances, loss of examination materials, and possible compromises of examinations to their manager, NTAC, and to others (see 318.5, Loss of Restricted Test Materials).

316.3 Before Scheduling Applicants for Examinations

Before scheduling applicants for an examination, examination administrators train other examiners and monitors, if needed. The administrator verifies that adequate space is available to administer the examinations and that sufficient test materials are available for the examination.

316.4 Administering Examinations

Using the directions for conducting (DFC) provided by NTAC, examination administrators conduct examinations or oversee other examiners giving examinations. Administrators ensure that the examiner and monitors (1) properly admit the applicants to the examination room and (2) observe applicants following the examiner's instructions to ensure that applicant's grid their answer sheets properly. Examiners must constantly be alert to prevent applicants from engaging in unfair practices such as:

a. Observing each other's work.

b. Making use of notes.

c. Copying examination questions.

d. Starting a test part before the examiner gives the signal.

e. Taking examination questions from the room.

If the examiner needs to caution an applicant about unacceptable behavior, he or she must do so without disturbing the group.

317 Examination Materials

317.1 Obtaining Materials

Examination administrators must make certain that the required examination materials outlined in the DFC have been received from NTAC before scheduling examinations.

317.2 Ordering Materials

Examination administrators must use Form 2487, *Requisition for Test Materials,* to order test materials from NTAC when the approximate number of applications received is determined.

317.3 Verifying Materials

When examiners receive test materials from NTAC, they immediately verify the contents and inform NTAC of any discrepancies.

317.4 Stocking Materials

Examination centers located at districts may stock and store a 12-month supply of selected materials for inservice, delayed, and reopened testing. Examination administrators use local records to determine the amount of inservice, delayed, and reopened testing materials needed for a 12-month period.

317.5 Test Series

Test series are different versions of a particular examination.

317.51 Rotating Test Series

To minimize compromising the validity of a test, the examiner must use a different series (set of test materials) at each session. Once all of the available series have been used, the examiner repeats the use of the series.

317.52 Administering Multiple Test Series

Normally, only one series of a test is used for each session. Instructions that are read by the examiner as part of the examination may be different for each series. Therefore, the NTAC must give approval to the examiner before multiple series are administered simultaneously in one session. For sessions where prior approval from NTAC is obtained, the applicants must be separated by group for each series administered. Examiners and monitors must make certain that applicants have the correct materials and grid the series number that matches their materials on their answer sheets. The examiner for the session prepares a Form 2523, *Time Record Sheet,* for each series used.

318 Security

318.1 Restricted Materials

The examination administrator is responsible for storing and safeguarding test materials. All test materials are restricted and must be handled only by authorized persons.

318.2 Securing Restricted Materials

The examination administrator must store and secure all restricted test materials in a separate room or in cabinets with double locks. Some examination centers may have a safe large enough to store these materials. In such locations, the examination administrator places restricted test materials in a separate, locked container within the safe. The administrator must keep the main key to storage rooms, storage cabinets, and containers in a safe located in his or her sole possession.

318.3 Maintaining and Using Duplicate Keys

The examination administrator places duplicate keys to storage rooms, storage cabinets, or containers inside a safe containing restricted test materials in a sealed envelope and places the envelope in the installation head's safe. These keys in the envelope are to be used only in an emergency and only by authorized personnel. Whenever it becomes necessary to use duplicate keys, the personnel services manager (or designee) will open the safe and hand the envelope to the authorized person who requires access to the restricted test material. This person opens the installation head's safe, breaks the seal, removes the key, and signs and dates the envelope. Upon returning the key, the user places the key in the envelope, reseals the

envelope, and, in the presence of the personnel services manager (or designee), returns the envelope to the safe.

Whenever a duplicate key is used by anyone other than the examiner, the examiner must review the inventory of restricted test material upon return. If a discrepancy is found, the examination administrator must report the incident to NTAC (see 318.4).

318.4 Maintaining Local Inventory Control

Examination administrators must maintain inventory control of all restricted test materials. Administrators must maintain test booklets by series and are subject to inventory reviews conducted by authorized postal officials. Administrators must use the following inventory control methods:

a. Maintain orderly test materials.

b. Separate used and unused test booklets by series and test numbers.

c. Inventory restricted test materials periodically (especially before and after extended leave).

d. Advise examiners of their inventory accountability.

e. Report immediately any discrepancies of inventory to NTAC.

318.5 Loss of Restricted Test Materials

In the event of the loss of restricted test materials (under any circumstances), the administrator must take the following actions:

a. Notify his or her manager.

b. Notify the local postal inspector, giving all details surrounding the incident.

c. Notify NTAC and obtain any additional instructions.

d. Have examination personnel involved in the loss independently prepare a written statement identifying the circumstances surrounding the loss and submit these statements to NTAC.

e. Discontinue use of the lost test series.

318.6 Emergency Conditions

If emergency conditions occur during the administration of an examination, the examiner must use the following guidelines.

318.61 Handling an Emergency Evacuation

If, during an examination, it is necessary to evacuate a building, the test examiner must use the following guidelines:

a. In an actual emergency situation, the safety of applicants must be given priority.

b. During emergency exercises or practice alerts, applicants and the security of test materials must be given priority.

318.62 Securing Test Materials

In any emergency that requires applicants to leave the examination room, the examiner must instruct applicants to leave all examination materials on their desks. The examiner must then either lock the examination room or, if that is not possible, collect the examination materials prior to departure if collection can be accomplished without posing any danger to the safety of the examiner or any other person.

318.63 Returning to Examination Room and Rescheduling Applicants

When applicants return to the examination room, the examiner must collect all examination materials (if not done prior to evacuating the examination room) and advise the applicants that the examination has been canceled and that it will be rescheduled at the earliest possible date. The examiner must return the partially used answer sheets to NTAC with an explanation in the comment section of the Form 2523, *Time Record Sheet*.

It may be necessary for the examiner to reschedule the examination on more than one date to accommodate the applicants who have been inconvenienced. The examiner in consultation with the EA must give reasonable consideration to scheduling on alternate dates if it is not possible for all applicants to attend on the rescheduled date. The examiner must explain these details on the *Time Record Sheet* for the rescheduled examination. The EA must ensure that a different series of the examination is used for the rescheduled examination.

32 Entrance Examination Process

321 Advanced Planning

Examination centers must conduct advanced planning for examinations required as a result of a test announcement. For recruitment efforts to yield the best suited applicants for employment consideration, the application and examination experience should be seamless. Therefore, EAs must coordinate with personnel directly involved with recruitment to devise a timetable to acquire appropriate facilities and to identify and train necessary examination staff.

322 Announcement and Application Process

322.1 Competitive Nature of Entrance Examinations

Postal Service entrance examinations are competitive examinations. Registers of eligibles are established in descending order of entrance examination scores attained by the applicants with additional points added for claimed veterans' preference. Such examinations may be a written or rated application or a combination of both types. Entrance examinations may also be associated with a performance test.

322.2 Procedure for Opening Examinations

The following are guidelines for opening examinations.

322.21 Announcing Examinations

Postal entrance examinations are announced when necessary to meet Postal Service staffing needs. After the Human Resources manager approves the reopening of an examination, the examination center obtains the necessary announcement materials from NTAC. The manager of Human Resources or designee must alert appropriate Diversity staff to give them a lead time for affirmative employment efforts. Whenever possible, this notification should be made at least 60 days in advance of the examination opening.

322.22 Announcement Period

The EA is responsible for ensuring that announcements are posted in appropriate locations and that a recruitment campaign is launched to attract qualified candidates. Examination announcements must be open for a minimum of 5 working days. Opening and closing dates must not fall on a federal holiday.

Examination center personnel must fill out the required information on the announcement. The examination center then duplicates and posts the announcement in postal installations for recruiting applicants and in nonpostal locations.

The announcements must be strategically placed for generating widespread publicity where recruitment will be conducted. Announcements should be posted in the following places:

a. On public and employee bulletin boards in Post Offices and in installations covered by the announcement.

b. On public bulletin boards in Post Offices accepting applications.

c. On public bulletin boards in local, federal, state, and municipal buildings, as appropriate.

d. At a federal job information center in the local area or in the state employment office.

e. On public bulletin boards in areas where announcements would attract attention from potential qualified applicants.

Examination personnel must provide notice to the following groups:

a. Community service organizations.

b. Veterans' organizations.

c. Colleges and universities.

d. Community newspapers.

e. Women's and minority associations.

Persons may apply during the period the examination is open, if they meet the qualifications stated in the examination announcement. For age and citizenship eligibility, applicants do not have to meet these requirements at

the time of application if they will become eligible during the time their ratings are on the register (see 322.5, Eligibility for Examinations).

322.3 Authorization to Administer Examinations

Human Resources managers who are responsible for maintaining registers are also responsible for announcing or reopening examinations in time to permit replenishment of registers to meet hiring needs.

322.4 Processing Applications

The following guidelines are for processing applications in response to an open announcement.

322.41 Where to Apply

Individuals interested in taking the examination must apply according to the instructions provided on the examination announcement.

322.42 Accepting Applications

Examination announcement instructions include a contact telephone number and location (usually the examination center) for referring people with other-than-routine questions.

Applications are not accepted before the opening date or after the closing date of an examination announcement.

322.43 Canceling Multiple Applications

An applicant may submit only 1 application during the open announcement period. The examination administrator must cancel any additional applications submitted or ratings received as a result of multiple applications.

322.5 Eligibility for Examinations

Entrance employment examinations are the primary method for citizens and noncitizens having permanent resident alien status to be considered for Postal Service employment. The following examination eligibility information concerns applicants not yet age 18 or who are *temporary* resident aliens.

322.51 Applicants Not Yet Age 18

Applicants who are less than 18 years of age, who are not high school graduates, and who have not terminated formal education, may participate in the examination if they will reach age 18 during the time their eligibility is active on the register.

322.52 Applicants Likely to Gain Permanent Resident Status During the Period of Eligibility

Applicants who are temporary resident aliens may compete in an examination if they are likely to gain permanent status within their eligibility period.

322.6 Participation of Career Postal Employees

Career postal employees may apply for open entrance examinations. Employees take entrance exams at the location specified by the examination center that serves the installations for which the examination is opened.

322.7 Delayed and Reopened Examinations

Several exceptions apply to the general rule (see 322.42, Accepting Applications) prohibiting acceptance of late applications in response to entrance examination announcements. The following exceptions to the prohibition of late applications are allowed even though examinations are closed:

a. Valid delayed applications.

b. Applications from individuals entitled to 10-point veterans' preference.

322.71 Delayed Application

The following special conditions affect the acceptance of applications on a delayed basis due to military service and other situations.

322.711 Persons Unable to Apply During an Open Examination Because of Military Service

Persons who were unable to file while an examination was open because of active military service or because of hospitalization continuing for not more than 1 year following discharge from military service, may file a *delayed* application if:

a. The application is filed within 120 days after discharge from the military or the hospital.

b. Active applicants still exist from the missed examination.

c. The applicant was discharged under honorable conditions.

322.712 Persons Filing Early Applications Before Military Discharge

A person who is currently serving in the Armed Forces may file an application prior to discharge from active duty for any examination that was open while he or she was in the military. Such a person may file within 120 days prior to discharge under honorable conditions. The application will be accepted provided active applicants are still active.

322.713 Reservists Filing Applications While on Active Duty

An application will be accepted from a member of a reserve unit of the Armed Forces who was unable to file an application or appear for the written test because of active duty (even if designated for training purposes). Acceptance of the application is subject to the following conditions:

a. The active duty must have been for a period of more than 15 days.

b. The examination for which the applicant wishes to file must have been open to the public anytime during the period of active duty.

c. The examination ratings that resulted from the examination are still active.

d. The applicant may file the application while on active duty, but must file no later than 120 days after release from such duty.

322.714 Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacement

Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacements (PMR/LRs) may take two competitive entrance examinations on a delayed basis for registers within the district in which they work as a PMR/LR. To be eligible, PMR/LRs must be currently employed and have been a PMR/LR continuously for at least 1 year in their present period of employment. Service as a temporary postmaster or officer in charge (OIC) is counted the same as PMR/LR employment for the purpose of eligibility for the two competitive entrance examination opportunities. PMR/LR employees are limited to a maximum of two opportunities regardless of any separate employment periods they may have had in past or will have in the future. Once PMR/LRs use their two examination opportunities, they cannot request additional administrations under this authority.

322.715 Casual Employees

Casuals may take two competitive entrance examinations on a delayed basis for registers within the district in which they work as a casual. To be eligible, casuals must have completed a minimum of 180 days of employment as a casual and continue to be actively employed as a casual on the date of application. The 180-day minimum service requirement does not have to be continuous service and must have occurred during the 2-year period prior to the date of application. Casual employees are limited to a maximum of two entrance examination opportunities. Once casuals use their two examination opportunities, they cannot request additional administrations under this authority.

322.716 Additional Delayed Applications

Other applications are accepted and processed according to instructions issued by Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition.

322.72 Reopened Application

Persons entitled to 10-point veteran preference (XP, CP, or CPS) may file at any time to *reopen* any entrance examination, provided that at least one of the following conditions is met:

a. There are active applicants on the register for which the application is submitted.

b. A career appointment from the register has been made within the 3-year period preceding the date the application is filed.

322.73 Verifying Entitlement

Examination personnel verify the entitlement documents, determine the limitations on filing, and schedule the examinations.

322.731 Accepting and Determining Eligibility

The human resources office issues application instructions and the applicant must apply according to these instructions. When a designated official receives the application, he or she determines whether or not the applicant is eligible for delayed and reopened filing.

322.732 **Presenting Proof of Entitlement**

The applicant must present proof of entitlement to the official designated by the district before the applicant is scheduled for the examination. Entitlement to veterans' preference is not a requirement for eligibility to file a *delayed* application.

322.74 Limitations on Filing

A 10-point veteran may *reopen* (file a reopened application) an examination only once for any examination register. A CPS, CP, or XP preference eligible qualifying under both *reopened* and *delayed* may take the examination for the same register only once (i.e., the individual may not use a *reopened* filing in concert with a *delayed* filing to take the same examination twice). Where an area eligibility register (AER) or mega register is in use, the examination may be *reopened* only once, not once for each installation served by the register.

322.75 Scheduling for Examination

Examination personnel must test applicants who are taking delayed and reopened examinations no later than the end of the calendar quarter following the quarter in which the application was received. For example, for a qualified delayed application received on February 24, which is in the first calendar quarter (January 1–March 31), the applicant must be tested by June 30, which is the end of the second calendar quarter.

323 Final Preparation for Examination

323.1 Condition of Facilities

An examination facility should provide an adequate environment for applicants to take the examination. The examiner should pay attention to lighting, heating, ventilation, temperature, and seating arrangements. Restroom facilities should be available. Examination rooms must be equipped with a wall clock that is visible to participants.

323.2 Additional Site Considerations

If the regularly used examining facility cannot accommodate a large number of applicants, then the examination administrator secures another facility, considering the following before making a final commitment:

a. Layout of facility to ensure safety and security.

b. Condition and availability of tables and chairs.

c. Parking facilities.

d. Access to public transportation.

e. Other activities scheduled in the building on the same date of the examination that might disturb applicants or cause difficulty in traffic management.

323.3 Before Scheduling Applicants

Examination administrators must secure the facilities, materials, and trained personnel before scheduling applicants for the examination. Examination administrators must ensure that examiners and monitors are properly trained before participating in an examination (see 315.8, Availability of Examiners and Monitors).

324 Scheduling Process

Examiners should refer to the instructions issued by the National Test Administration Center regarding the scheduling process. Applicants should be scheduled no later than 6 months from the date of application.

324.1 Overscheduling Applicants

To control costs, examiners must schedule more applicants than can be accommodated during the examination. To determine the number of applicants to overschedule, examiners must review previous records to determine what percentage of applicants attended past examinations. Notices to appear for the examination are mailed to applicants at least 7 days prior to the date of the examination and more time is allowed where substantial applicant preparation is required.

Examiners schedule applicants according to instructions from NTAC. When scheduling a test, the examiner must not schedule the examination on religious or federal holidays.

324.2 Examination Center or Location

Examination personnel schedule applicants to take entrance examinations at the examination center or location to which they applied.

324.3 Telling Applicants What to Expect

The examiner arranges to send to each applicant an admission packet with the date, time, and place for the examination, and the following:

a. Test familiarization material.

b. Information on what to expect on test day such as accessibility, directions, and location of the test site.

324.4 Applicants With Disabilities

See Chapter 3, Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process,* for making accommodations for applicants with disabilities.

325 Admission to Examination Room

325.1 Verbal Notice to Applicants — What to Expect

The examiner should announce the following before admitting applicants to the examination room:

a. How long the examination will last.

b. Smoking is not permitted in the examination room.

c. Restroom visits must be made before admission to the examination room.

In order to minimize the number of requests to leave the examination room during the examination, rest periods and lunch breaks are not allowed. The only exceptions must be specifically described in the DFC.

325.2 Authority for Admission

The admission document that is sent to applicants scheduling the examination is the authority for admission to an examination.

325.3 Items Required for Admission

Applicants are expected to bring the following items to the examination room:

a. Admission document.

b. Positive identification (e.g., driver's license or credit card, with picture) to assure that the applicant is, in fact, the person named on the admission document.

c. Other documents as instructed in the scheduling packet.

325.4 Applicant Identification Procedures

325.41 Checking Identification

Examiners and monitors should use the following methods to prevent unauthorized persons from taking the examination:

a. Check the applicant's identification.

b. Compare the picture on the ID with the applicant's face, and the name on the ID with the name on the admission document.

325.42 Deterring Impersonation

To deter impersonation of applicants, examiners must inform applicants of the ID requirement in their scheduling packets.

325.5 Applicants Without Proper Authorization

325.51 Admitting Applicants by Available Space

The examiner and monitors must admit all applicants scheduled for the examination by date and time first. After seating these applicants, examiners may seat other applicants as described below.

325.52 Admitting Applicants Scheduled for a Different Day or Time

The examiner may admit an applicant who has an admission document to the examination, but who was scheduled to report for a different day or time, provided there is sufficient space and materials.

325.53 Misplaced Admission Document

If the examination announcement is still open (i.e., the close date has not passed), the examiner and monitors may admit individuals who claim to have lost their admission documents. If the announcement is closed, the examiner and monitors may also admit individuals, but must inform the applicants that their ratings will be cancelled if it is determined that they were not entitled to admission. Before an individual is admitted, the examiner must obtain from the individual a signed statement explaining his or her inability to present an admission document. Whenever possible, the examiner and monitors must check these statements against appropriate records before admission is granted.

325.6 Late Reporting Applicants

325.61 Conditions for Admission

The examiner and monitors may admit applicants scheduled for the date and time of an examination who report late under the following conditions:

a. It is within a reasonable period of time after the session has started.

b. A satisfactory explanation is given.

c. Space and examination materials are available.

d. The applicant's late entry will not disturb the other applicants.

e. The group has not finished the first practice part of the test.

325.62 Considerations and Instructions

The examiner or monitors conducting the examination decide whether or not an applicant is too late to be admitted. If, in an exceptional case, admission is contemplated under such circumstances, the examiner or monitor must use good judgment in deciding to issue test papers to the late applicant. The examiner or monitors must consider the possible distraction and extra time that possibly could be required of the examiner or monitor to bring the applicant to the same point as the other applicants.

326 Test Administration Process

326.1 Using Directions for Conducting

Before administering any examination, the examiner must study the *Directions for Conducting* (DFC) in order to ensure that all necessary supplies are on hand to conduct the test, to be acquainted with procedures, and to ensure that the examination is conducted professionally.

When ready to start, the examiner calls the group to order and reads applicants appropriate instructions in the DFC. The examiner must stand at

the front of the room and read the instructions. Examiners must read with *no* deviations from the written instructions.

326.2 Uniform and Courteous Administration

Examiners and monitors must administer examinations uniformly in a courteous and business-like manner.

326.3 Items Allowed in the Examination Room

326.31 Authorized Items

Examiners must allow only items relating to the examination and equipment authorized for applicants' use as noted in the DFC to be used during the examination.

326.32 Items and Behaviors Not Permitted

No unauthorized items are allowed on the applicants' desks. Unauthorized items include reference books, logarithmic tables, calculators, or other items that are not described as acceptable in the DFC. Applicants are forbidden to communicate with, give help to, or receive help from other applicants. Examiners should consider the exchange of papers or notes, attempts to make such exchanges, or conversation with any other applicant during the examination as evidence of collusion. Evidence of collusion or copying information between or among applicants may result in the cancellation of applicants' ratings. Examiners should refer to the DFC for handling these situations.

326.4 Starting on Schedule

Examiners must start examinations promptly at the time specified on the admission documents.

326.5 Handling Examination Materials

Examiners should refer to the following guidance in handling examination materials.

326.51 Handling Answer Sheets

Answer sheets are printed on specialized equipment within very precise tolerances and must be protected from exposure to environmental elements. Long-term exposure to humidity can degrade the quality of these documents thereby causing delays in scanning and processing at NTAC. When answer sheets are cellophane-wrapped, the examiner must open only a sufficient number of packages required for the number of applicants for a session. Examiners must use answer sheets out of the cellophane as soon as possible.

326.52 Incorrect Gridding of Answer Sheets

NTAC uses a high-speed scanner to process all answer sheets; therefore, it is important that applicants mark the answer sheets properly. The scanner reads only what applicants grid. If the gridding is incorrect, processing errors

will require NTAC to take corrective action. Incorrect gridding delays the processing of tests.

326.53 Collecting Forms

Prior to starting the test, after applicants provide personal information on the answer sheets, the examiner collects the forms from the applicants as specified by the DFC.

326.54 Distributing Test Booklets

As described in the DFC, examiners distribute test booklets to applicants. Examiners must use the following procedures before distributing test booklets:

a. Count the number of test booklets on hand before passing them out.

b. Count the number of applicants in the examination room.

c. Count the number of test booklets to be passed out (same as number of applicants).

d. Count the number of test booklets remaining and verify the total count obtained in procedure *a.*

e. Place the remaining test booklets in the examiner's desk drawer or other receptacle, out of sight and reach of the applicants. In sessions requiring more than one monitor, the examiner divides the booklets among the monitors. The examiner makes monitors responsible for distribution of the test material, and accountable for test booklets of applicants assigned to them.

Note: Examiners must keep the supply of test materials, used and unused, away from the applicants at all times.

326.55 Distributing One Test Booklet per Applicant

Examiners or monitors give applicants only one test booklet of each kind, unless the test booklet is defective or damaged, in which case the monitor or examiner picks up the defective booklet and replaces it with an undamaged one.

326.56 Discovering Insufficient Test Materials

If the examiner discovers that not enough examination materials are on hand for an examination, he or she must inform applicants who will be prevented from taking the examination that (1) a special examination will be scheduled for them as soon as possible, and (2) they will be notified of the date and time.

When deciding which applicants must be scheduled for a special examination, examiners must consider the immediate situation. Examiners normally admit persons with proper authorization on a first-come, first-serve basis. If too many applicants are already in the examination room when the shortage is discovered, examiners may call for volunteers, select from those who last entered the examination room, draw lots, or use whatever method appears most practical to resolve the situation. The examiner must mark the admission documents of those applicants to be rescheduled, and keep their

documents for rescheduling, and must make every reasonable effort to accommodate their personal schedules.

326.57 Discovering Errors in Test Materials

When the examiner detects an error in the test materials, he or she must, nevertheless, complete the examination in full. The examiner instructs applicants to answer the item involving the error in whatever manner they think best, but allows no discussion of the matter among applicants. The examiner informs applicants that their comments about the error will be included in the examiner's report. The examiner must report an error in test material under Remarks on the *Time Record Sheet*.

326.6 Timing Examinations

Examiners should refer to the following guidelines regarding timing examinations.

326.61 Timing Accuracy

Accurate timing of examinations is extremely important. Examiners must accurately time all parts of the examination, whether the actual test items or sample questions, and monitors must verify the timing for the examiner. NTAC may cancel examinations where examiners allow too much or too little time and examiners may need to reschedule the applicants when examinations are cancelled. Incorrect timing by examiners may lead to the following consequences:

a. Applicants are inconvenienced in order to retake the examination.

b. New ratings cannot be added to a register.

c. An additional workload is created for the examiner and NTAC.

d. An unnecessary expense is created and could lead to an unfavorable image of the Postal Service.

326.62 Timing Procedures

Examiners must use the following procedures when administering examinations:

a. The examiner, in accordance with the DFC, tells the applicants the time allowed for each part of the examination. For each part, the examiner enters on the *Time Record Sheet* the time started, then immediately enters on the same sheet when the time signal must be given for applicants to stop.

b. When the calculated stop time is reached, the examiner announces that the applicants should stop. The examiner then enters the actual time the test was stopped. This procedure is followed for each test part precisely. Examiners and monitors must ensure that all applicants stop work immediately.

c. If all applicants finish the last part of the test before time is called, the examiner will note the time the last applicant finished in the Time Stopped column and explain in Remarks why the examination was stopped early.

326.63 Completing Time Record Sheets

Examiners must correctly complete the *Time Record Sheet* in duplicate for each examination using instructions in the DFC. The examiner sends the original *Time Record Sheet* to NTAC with the answer sheets. The examiner retains the duplicate copy and attaches to it the registry receipt for the answer sheet package after mailing it by registered mail.

326.7 Providing Correct Assistance to Applicants

Examiners must not make suggestions or remarks that might assist applicants in answering questions, explain the meaning of a question, or comment on the correctness of an applicant's answer. Examiners must refer applicants requesting explanations to the test booklet instructions to the guidance that is provided to applicants for completing the test.

326.8 Correct Gridding of Answers

Examiners should refer to the following guidance regarding the correct gridding of answers:

a. Examiners must not allow applicants extra time to grid their answers under any circumstances.

b. Examiners must instruct applicants to grid their answers on the answer sheet, not in the test booklet.

Note: Examiners must not allow applicants who incorrectly mark their answers in the test booklet any additional time to transfer answers to the answer sheet. Examiners must report the incident on the *Time Record Sheet*.

326.9 Handling Exceptional Situations

Examiners should refer to the following guidance regarding the handling of exceptional situations.

326.91 When Applicants Abandon Examinations

According to instructions in the DFC, when an applicant abandons an examination, the examiner documents whether the applicant left for reasons not under his or her control.

326.92 Applicants Who Leave the Examination Room

Examiners do not normally permit applicants to leave the room during the examination, unless specifically permitted in the DFC. In unusual circumstances where absences cannot be avoided, examiners must use the following procedures:

a. The examiner or monitor collects all test materials from the applicant at the applicant's desk.

b. Whenever possible, a monitor must accompany the applicant.

c. The examiner or monitor returns test materials to the applicant when he or she returns to the examination room.

d. Examiners must not allow applicants additional time to make up time that elapsed during their absence from the examination room under any circumstances. Examiners must consider any time spent out of the room by the applicant as part of the time allowed for the examination.

327 Ending Examinations

327.1 Ending the Examination

Examiners should refer to the following guidance on ending the examination:

a. Examiners may excuse applicants who complete the last part of an examination before the time limit is reached; however, not 10 minutes or less from the end of the examination.

b. Applicants must exit the examination room through one door only that is specified for that purpose by the examiner.

c. Examiners must not allow applicants to bring examination materials to the examiner's desk while the examination is in progress.

d. Examiners must not collect examination material from applicants at the applicants' desks.

e. After the last test part starts and just prior to applicants leaving the examination room, the examiner or monitor takes a position behind a desk or table at the exit door. The examiner or monitor collects examination materials from each applicant before allowing the applicant to exit. If an applicant does not have all the required examination materials in his or her possession, no collection of partial materials is made. The examiner or monitor instructs the applicant to return to his or her desk for the missing items.

327.2 Collecting Test Material From Applicants

Examiners and monitors must collect test materials in accordance with the DFC. They must check carefully to ensure that all materials issued to applicants are returned. If materials are missing, examiners must identify the applicants who failed to return the required materials and must determine which materials are missing. Examiners must obtain these materials from the applicants, if possible.

327.3 Prohibiting Applicant Review of Completed Tests

Examiners must not allow applicants to review or handle their examination papers after they have been completed and turned in to the examiner.

327.4 Reviewing Answer Sheets After Examination

At the conclusion of the examination and before the answer sheets are shipped to NTAC for scoring, the examiner and monitors review the personal data grids on each answer sheet and correct all circles that may have been darkened incorrectly. Careful monitoring while the gridding instructions are being given can minimize corrections.

327.5 Verifying Inventory After Examination Has Concluded

Upon completion of the examination, the examiner and monitors must immediately count the used test booklets, answer sheets, and unused booklets. The examiners then return all materials to NTAC using the directions in the DFC.

327.6 Returning Materials to NTAC

After reviewing the answer sheets, the examiner and monitors must return all used and unused materials (i.e., answer sheets, test booklets, etc.) to NTAC. For examination centers authorized to stock materials, only the used answer sheets are returned. The examiner must ship examination materials to NTAC no later than 4 calendar days from the day of the examination. The DFC contains details on procedures to follow in returning materials.

327.7 Disposition of Materials at Examination Center

Examiners should refer to the following guidance regarding the disposition of materials at the examination center.

327.71 Returning Unused and Reusable Test Materials

Examiners must retain all unused and reusable restricted and nonrestricted test materials at the examination center, if it normally maintains supplies of such materials.

327.72 Destroying Job or Office Choice Sheets

Examiners must destroy job or office choice sheets after a session has concluded.

328 Processing Examination Results

328.1 Scoring Answer Sheets

Examiners should refer to the following guidance regarding the NTAC scoring of answer sheets.

328.11 NTAC Scoring

The National Test Administration Center scores examination answer sheets and retains these records for 6 months. NTAC retains computer records indefinitely.

328.12 NTAC Ratings

NTAC converts the scores to ratings on a scale of 100. NTAC does not convert applicants' scores that are lower than passing to numerical ratings; instead, applicants are given ratings of *ineligible*. NTAC adds claimed veterans' preference points to *eligible* ratings only.

328.13 Data for the Hiring and Testing Subsystem

NTAC generates the data to produce notices of rating and electronic records for the Hiring and Testing Subsystem (H&T).

328.2 Transmittal of Register Records and Notices of Rating

Examiners should refer to the following guidance regarding the transmittal of records and notices of rating.

328.21 Arranging Ratings on Registers

NTAC separates entrance register records for applicants by register office (or by lead office under AER or mega register) and arranges register records in descending numerical order of final rating (including veterans' preference points).

328.22 Arranging Notices of Rating and Alphabetical Records

For entrance registers not on H&T or for inservice results, NTAC prints and mails notices of rating to applicants. For entrance registers on H&T, NTAC provides H&T with electronic records that H&T uses to generate notices of rating and to load applicants on electronic registers. NTAC makes numeric register records available to the examination center for non-H&T registers.

33 Inservice Examination Process

331 Announcement and Application Process

331.1 Authorization to Administer Inservice Examinations

Examiners should refer to the following guidance on the authorization to administer inservice examinations.

331.11 National Examinations

The authority to administer nationwide examinations is specified in a *Postal Bulletin* or policy memorandum.

331.12 Local Examinations

Installation heads are authorized to open or reopen examinations in accordance with local needs.

331.2 Announcement and Closing Dates

Installation heads will announce the opening or reopening of an examination. A reasonable period of time should be provided to employees in the form of notification and preparation materials to help them prepare for the examination.

331.3 Examination Opened at Two or More Installations

When an examination is administered for two or more installations at a single location, the examiners and monitors must exercise care to ensure that employee's grid the finance number of their own installation on their answer sheet.

331.4 Examiner Requirements

Examiners should identify examiners and determine the number of personnel required for an inservice examination according to the following guidance.

331.41 Identifying Examiners

Examination administrators must schedule examiners. Examiners must not be eligible to participate in the examination at the time it is given, or if it is reopened in the future.

331.42 Number of Required Examination Personnel

There must be one examiner or monitor for each thirty employees expected to participate (see 315.5, Number of Examiners and Monitors).

332 Examination Scheduling Process

When setting the examination date, examination administrators should avoid conflicts with holidays, religious observances, and periods of peak workload.

332.1 Scheduling Applicants

Examination administrators must ensure that appropriate examination facilities are available and sufficient test materials are on hand before scheduling employees. Once these arrangements have been finalized, admission documents indicating when and where the examination will be held are mailed to the employees.

332.2 Scheduling Makeup Dates

Examination personnel must schedule makeup dates if evidence is submitted that adequately supports the reasons described in 342, Acceptable Reasons for Scheduling Special Examinations.

333 Examination Facility Requirements

Human resources make arrangements to conduct the examination. When there is insufficient space in the installation, they must obtain space in public facilities. Payment for using the facility, for cleaning the space used, or for other utilities must be made locally (see 323.1, Condition of Facilities).

334 Examination Admission Process

334.1 Preparing for Examinations

The examiner must have the proper number of test booklets, answer sheets, and other required materials for conducting the examination. He or she reviews the DFC including the specifications of the material needed by the examiner and each applicant and the general layout of the examination.

334.2 Admitting Applicants

The examiner must check each applicant's admission document and identification before admitting the applicant to the test room. The examiner does not collect admission documents until the personal data grids on the answer sheet have been completed. The applicants can use their admission documents to refer to their Social Security numbers for gridding on the answer sheets.

335 Conducting Examinations Properly

The examiner must conduct the examination in a manner that is fair. When explaining how to fill in the grids, the examiner must be as patient and helpful as possible. The directions for conducting the examination must be read in a clear voice and there must be no deviations from the instructions. The examiner must not offer any assistance in responding to test items or give any interpretation to examination questions. Examiners must use the following additional administrative guidelines:

a. The examiner must open all packages of sealed booklets in the presence of the applicants.

b. Examiners must report in the Remarks section of the *Time Record Sheet* any problems that surface about the test material or administration.

c. In the case of noncompetitive examinations, there may be only one applicant. In no case will the examiner modify the fairness and equity in the administration and handling of the examination and materials.

336 Examination Submission Process

The examiner must handle all examination materials according to the instructions in the DFC. The examiner returns all completed answer sheets and examination booklets to NTAC by registered mail.

337 Examination Results Processing

337.1 Scoring Answer Sheets

NTAC scores answer sheets and processes the results into notices of rating and register records.

337.2 Transmittal of Register Records and Notices of Rating

NTAC sends the notices of rating to the applicants and makes the register records available to the examination center.

34 Special Examinations

341 Scheduling Special Examinations

Examination personnel must schedule special examinations for those applicants who were unable to report on the date of the examination. If the Postal Service caused the applicant to be unable to report, every effort must be made to examine those applicants and add their scores to registers by the date screening or hiring consideration is to begin. In other cases, examination personnel schedule the examination within 30 days of the original scheduled date.

342 Acceptable Reasons for Scheduling Special Examinations

Examiners accept the following reasons as justification for scheduling special examinations if adequately supported by evidence of the following:

a. Acts of God.

b. Quarantine.

c. Epidemic.

d. Jury duty or service as a witness.

e. Postal Service admits that it caused the applicant not to be able to report or there are circumstances that substantiate the applicant's claim.

f. Federal and postal employees unable to attend because of official business.

g. Personal illness or injury, or illness, injury, or death of a family member.

h. Members of religious denominations that observe a religious holiday on a day on which the examination is scheduled.

i. Active duty with a reserve unit of the Armed Forces or National Guard.

343 Unacceptable Reasons for Scheduling Special Examinations

Examination personnel reject requests for special examinations based on reasons other than those listed above, except when rejection would result in unfair treatment. This authority includes cases where applicants reported and attempted the examination, but were forced to abandon it because of conditions beyond their control. Examination personnel do not grant special examinations to persons who are unable to attend because of inability to secure leave from employment.

344 Time Limit

Examination personnel must receive requests for special examinations within 30 days of the end of the condition that prevented participation on the

designated date, and within 90 days of the date the applicant was scheduled for the examination.

35 Rated Applications

351 Description

For some examinations, NTAC does not use a written test to evaluate the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). NTAC's evaluation of the applicant's KSAs constitutes a rated application examination.

352 Purpose

NTAC rates the applicant's experience and training in terms of expected job performance. The rating objective is to make a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of an applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities against a standard of required experience and training.

353 Administering Rated Application Examinations

Human resources is responsible for opening or reopening examinations, including rated application examinations, in time to replenish registers.

353.1 Procedures

Examination personnel must refer to these procedures for administering rated application examinations.

353.11 Requesting Examination Announcements

The installation head requests announcement materials from NTAC. NTAC will furnish announcements, supplemental experience forms, and detailed instructions for collecting research questionnaire data from applicants.

353.12 Providing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Information

Examination personnel must provide all required knowledge, skills, and abilities information to accompany the examination announcement.

353.13 Accepting and Forwarding Applications

The installation head accepts applications and related forms until the closing date. The installation head ensures that adequate time is allowed for each applicant to accurately complete the application and related forms. Examination personnel check forms for completeness and forward them to NTAC. NTAC rates blank, vague, or incomplete forms as *ineligible* with no recourse for rerating. After NTAC rates an application, additional qualifications are not considered. Installation heads must forward applications and related forms for examinations opened indefinitely to NTAC weekly.

353.14 Scoring Applications

NTAC reviews and scores the applications and any related forms by evaluation against the job standards. NTAC then computes a rating for each applicant and eligibles are given numerical scores. Claimed veterans' preference points are then added to the passing numerical scores of eligible entrance examination applicants.

353.15 Returning Material to Examination Center

NTAC returns applications and related forms to the examination center for those applicants rated eligible.

353.2 Mailing Notices of Rating

NTAC mails the notices of rating to the applicants.

353.3 Registers

Districts maintain registers in accordance with register procedures (see Chapter 4, Registers).

36 Performance Tests

361 Authorization

Performance tests requirements are specified in the qualification standards found in *Bargaining Qualification Standards on the Net,* on the Postal Service Intranet. See general information about qualification standards is found in 76, Bargaining Position Qualification Standards.

362 Administering Performance Tests

362.1 Time of Administration

Human resources gives most performance tests after the examinee's qualifications have been evaluated by some other method, such as written examination or rated application, and when the examinee is likely to be considered for employment. Human resources gives some performance tests, such as the typing test, to small groups of examinees depending on equipment that is available.

362.2 Administering the Tests

362.21 Personnel Administering the Test

For some performance tests, postal employees are trained to give particular tests and are designated as examiners for this purpose. The Postal Service prepares unique directions for these examiners to follow. For other performance tests, authorized NTAC-certified examiners administer the tests.

362.22 Rating Examinees

The performance test is self-scoring or scored at NTAC.

When NTAC rates the examinee, *eligible* or *ineligible* is given on the basis of performance on the tasks presented in the test.

362.3 General Instructions for Examiners

Examiners should refer to the following general instructions.

362.31 Reading Instructions Before Giving Performance Tests

Before giving a performance test, examiners review the instructions that come with the performance tests. Examiners should practice reading aloud any instructions to be given before reading them to examinees, to be familiar with text and use proper emphasis.

362.32 Prior Preparation

Examiners provide the examinees the necessary equipment and supplies as listed in the DFC for the particular test. Examiners arrange to have the materials available beforehand.

362.33 Recording Time

Examiners record the time that he or she tells the examinee to start each task of the test. Examiners add to the start time the time the examinee is allowed for the task, and record that time as well. The examiners then record the time the examinee finishes.

362.4 Examination Results

Examiners should refer to the following notification and processing guidelines.

362.41 Notifying Examinees of Performance Test Results

Examiners inform the examinees of their performance test results (if self-scoring), and whether they are *eligible* or *ineligible*.

362.42 Processing Test Results

The Postal Service records of the performance test results as a part of the examinee's preemployment investigation file. The appointing official may request an additional eligible from the register, if necessary, to have the choice of 3 eligibles. Examination personnel annotate the register record to show pass or failure on the performance test and the date.

362.5 Stenography Tests

Examiners should refer to the following guidelines for instruction regarding stenography tests.

362.51 Test Administration

Examiners must follow instructions in the DFC for administering the examination.

362.52 Dictation Materials and Equipment

362.521 Taking Dictation Notes

Examinees may use a pen for taking dictation notes. However, *all gridding on the answer sheet must be done with a number two pencil*. If a shorthand-writing machine is used, the notes should be attached to Form 5922, *Stenographic Notepaper,* and the spaces at the top of the form completed.

362.522 Using Cassette Tapes

Examiners must use cassette tapes for administration of Dictation Test 711.

362.53 Additional Procedural Guidance

362.531 Cassette Tapes Procedures

Examiners must read and practice the cassette tape procedures described in the DFC before conducting the examination. Examiners check the cassette player before the actual examination begins to ensure that it is functioning properly and can be heard by everyone in the examination room.

362.532 Interruptions During Tests

NTAC provides examiners with a transcript of the dictation test to follow during the dictation exercise. If there is an interruption during the actual test that cannot be avoided, the examiner stops the tape, starts with the last word that was dictated before the interruption, goes back 4 words, and begins again playing the tape at that point. Examiners advise the examinees so that they know the exact place to start taking dictation again.

362.533 Cassette Player Malfunctions

Any mechanical malfunction during the actual test that renders the player inoperable cancels the examination. Examiners advise the examinees that the dictation test will be rescheduled at a later date. The examiner collects all dictation materials and returns them to NTAC along with an explanation in the Comments section of the *Time Record Sheet.*

363 Computer-Based Tests

Examiners administer computer-based tests in the same manner as written and performance tests in keeping with the DFC. As with test booklets and other restricted items, examiners must safeguard at all times the software used in giving these tests.

37 Review of Rating Requests

371 Right of Review

If applicants question the accuracy of their examination ratings, they may request a rating review by submitting the following information to the examination center:

a. Reason for requesting review.

b. Copy of Notice of Rating or the following identifying data:

(1) Name.

(2) Mailing address.

(3) Social security number.

(4) Title of examination.

(5) Date of examination.

(6) Examination center (city and state).

(7) Postal installation applied for (city and state).

(8) Final rating.

372 Forwarding Requests to NTAC

The examination center forwards the request to NTAC. NTAC rescores the test and notifies the applicant and examination center of its findings.

373 Review of Rating — Time Limitation

NTAC cannot process requests received after 6 months, as answer sheets are destroyed 6 months from the notice of rating date. Therefore, examination centers must return to applicants requests for review of examinations older than 6 months and give an appropriate explanation.

374 Review of Rating — Not Accepted From Applicants

NTAC does not accept requests for review of ratings directly from applicants.

375 Review of Rating — Additional Qualifications

After NTAC scores an examination, additional qualifications are not considered for review purposes. For a rated application, the review is restricted to the experience and training indicated on the original application.

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4 Registers

41 Introduction

411 Definition

Registers are a system of records that contain applicant examination ratings, the results of an evaluation process, or both. The Postal Service uses registers as a source of qualified candidates from which to select and appoint new employees. This chapter is about the entrance registers that are the primary method of filling entry-level positions externally. There is a separate register for each examination.

412 Responsibility

The district human resources office is responsible for the maintenance of registers for positions to be filled in installations in the district.

413 Restricted Records

The Postal Service restricts access to registers, *Hiring Worksheets,* and preemployment investigation files. Postal employees must protect these records from unauthorized persons and the records should not be in view of applicants. Authorized persons (e.g., hiring practices review team members, higher-level managers, or EEO counselors and investigators) may review registers and *Hiring Worksheets* on a need-to-know basis.

Except for management review of hiring practices, postal employees may not make copies of register records or *Hiring Worksheets*, unless they depersonalize the copies by obliterating applicant names, addresses, and Social Security numbers.

414 Arrangement of Applicants

414.1 General

The district human resources office maintains applicant records arranged by veterans' preference and final numerical rating, which includes veterans' preference points when claimed by applicants with eligible ratings.

414.2 Basic Order for Organizing a Register

The basic order is the primary method for organizing a register. There are two groups, Group 1 and Group 2. Eligibles are arranged by computer or other method in the following order.

414.21 Group 1, Compensable Disability Eligibles

Applicants who claim 10-point preference based on a compensable military service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are arranged at the top of the register in descending order of final numerical rating in this group. The applicant's final scores are identified by the designation CP (service-connected disability that is at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent compensable) or CPS service-connected disability that is 30 percent or more compensable).

414.22 Group 2, All Other Eligibles in Order

Other eligibles are in the following order:

a. Eligibles claiming other 10-point preference (scores are identified by XP) and eligibles claiming 5-point preference (scores are identified by TP) are placed ahead of nonpreference eligibles with the same final (total) numerical rating.

b. XP eligibles are placed ahead of TP eligibles with the same final rating.

414.3 Order for Registers Established for Jobs Restricted to Preference Eligibles

District human resources uses the following order when registers are established for positions restricted to preference eligibles (those eligibles entitled to veteran's preference):

a. Final scores with CP or CPS arranged in order of numerical rating.

b. All remaining scores for applicants who claim veterans' preference marked XP or TP in order of numerical rating.

c. All remaining scores in order of numerical rating (if nonveterans were allowed to compete).

414.4 Breaking Ties

When two or more eligibles within the group have the same final numerical rating, the tie is broken by:

a. Placing XP preference eligibles ahead of TP preference eligibles.

b. Placing TP preference eligibles ahead of nonpreference eligibles.

c. Using the last 3 or more numbers of the eligible's Social Security number, from lowest to highest utilizing only enough numbers to break the tie, but not fewer than 3 numbers.

414.5 Order for EAS Positions Level 17 and Higher

Applicants for EAS positions Level 17 and higher are arranged by final numerical ratings, including claimed veterans' preference points, in

descending order. To break ties where the final scores are the same, applicants with CP or CPS preference are placed ahead of XP applicants who appear ahead of TP applicants.

415 Information Given to Applicants

415.1 Specific Information Given to Applicants

In response to a written inquiry, human resources gives applicants or their authorized representatives the following information:

a. The number of jobs (clerk, carrier, mail handler, etc.) to be filled during a specific time period (e.g., within the next 3–6 months).

b. Whether the eligible's prospects for appointment are good, fair, or unfavorable.

415.2 Information About Future Job and Examination Opportunities

Human resources gives information to applicants based on the past or current hiring needs of the installation and the number of anticipated vacancies to be filled in the near future. If the examination is open or scheduled for opening when inquiries are made, human resources should tell potential applicants when applications will be accepted. Human resources should also advise eligibles that although their names may be reached on the register for employment consideration, this is not a guarantee that they will be selected for employment.

42 Merging New Scores With Existing Ratings

421 Time Sensitivity

Each eligible has 24 months of basic eligibility for employment consideration, beginning with the date the eligible's name is entered on the register. Because the eligibility time clock cannot start until the rating is added to the register, it is critical that HR merge the new test results with an existing register carefully and promptly. Human resources should add new ratings to the register within 3 working days of receipt.

422 Merge Process

The merge process involves combining scores from recent examination sessions with scores already on the register. Human resources should use the following procedural guidance for situations encountered during the merge process.

422.1 Validating Questionable Data

When the validity of data is questionable, human resources contacts the applicant and asks him or her to provide verification of critical components

such as Social Security number, name, and date of birth. Only after positive verification of these components should the data be updated in register records.

422.2 Recompeting in a New Open Examination

When an applicant recompetes in an examination for the register on which an existing eligibility is located, the following actions take place:

a. *New passing rating.* Applicant begins a new period of eligibility beginning on the date the new rating is entered on the register. The old choices (job and/or office) are replaced by the new choices.

b. *Old rating*. Applicant rating is terminated effective the date the new passing rating is added to the register. Should the new rating be ineligible, the existing eligibility remains on the register until it expires. The old choices (job and/or office) remain in effect.

422.3 Resolving Duplicate Ratings

An applicant is allowed to file only one application for each examination announcement. If the applicant is examined more than once, the examination score for the earliest test date should stand. Subsequent eligibilities are canceled, even if the first rating was ineligible.

Duplicate ratings can result if an applicant already has an active eligibility on the register from an open announcement application and competes for the same register as a delayed or reopened applicant (see 322.7, Delayed and Reopened Examinations). If the new rating was *delayed* and there was no lost opportunity to justify filing, the rating is canceled. If the new rating is a result of a *reopened* filing, and the applicant was entitled to file, his or her open announcement eligibility is terminated.

423 Delayed and Reopened Process

The requirements for eligibility to file a delayed or reopened application are covered in 322.7, Delayed and Reopened Examinations. Applicants must provide proof of entitlement to file for delayed or reopened before the applicants are scheduled for an examination.

423.1 Explanation of Benefits of Process

Individuals filing a delayed or reopened application take a particular examination one time for registers maintained by an individual administrative office. If the participant earns an eligible rating, it is then duplicated to additional registers for which the applicant wished to be included and was entitled to file. This allows those entitled to delayed or reopened filing the opportunity to be considered immediately for the same positions at multiple locations.

423.2 Designation of Primary Register for Processing

Delayed and reopened applicants are scheduled for one register known as the primary register even though their scores could be placed on multiple

registers. In the examination room, they grid on their answer sheets the finance number for the primary register. This is the register that will be printed on the notice of rating and identifies the record as belonging to that register.

423.3 Processing of Eligible Ratings

When new eligible ratings for the delayed and reopened examination are generated by NTAC, the ratings are processed first for the primary register by combining the ratings with scores from previous administrations of the examination. Next, human resources personnel place the eligible ratings on additional registers for which the delayed and reopened applicants filed.

43 Usage and Duration

Registers are used to fill bargaining as well as nonbargaining positions.

431 Duration of Applicant Eligibility

431.1 Basic Eligibility and Extension

Each eligible applicant has 24 months of eligibility, beginning with the date the eligible's name is entered on the register. Applicants may request in writing to the administrative office to extend their eligibility for a third year after the 18th month of eligibility (i.e., during the last 6 months of the initial 24-month eligibility).

431.2 Impact of Unsuitability Reversal or Pending Criminal Conviction

Applicants who successfully had an unsuitability determination reversed will have their eligibility extended for the period of temporary unsuitability, not to exceed 24 months of basic eligibility.

The scores of applicants with pending criminal charges, who if convicted would be disqualified, are valid for the life of the applicants' eligibility on the registers.

431.3 Impact on Eligibility of Active Military Duty

The eligibility of an applicant who enters active military service will be restored to the register and/or extended for the balance of the eligibility period that would have remained had the eligibility not been suspended for active military service. This includes the third year extension between the 18th and 24th month of eligibility if that period is involved in the restoration.

431.4 Extension of Eligibility for Register Applicants

Automatic extension of eligibility for all active applicants may be made for a period of 3, 4, 5, and 6 years by the approval of the district manager of Human Resources.

Exception: Applicants on registers for rural carrier positions cannot be extended automatically for any period of time. They individually may request an extension for a third year.

432 Retention of Registers

432.1 Retention of Inactive Register Schedule

Human resources maintains applicant register records for 10 years from the last day of the calendar year (December 31) in which the applicants' eligibility expired.

432.2 Annual Purging of Inactive Register

Human resources purge inactive applicant records annually. Human resources removes from the inactive register records for applicants whose eligibility has expired for more than 10 years (using December 31 of the previous year as the cutoff date).

433 When Registers Are Terminated

Human resources may terminate registers as more exacting examination requirements are developed. Once eligibilities have been generated from the new examination, all eligibilities on the terminated register become inactive and cannot be reactivated.

44 Transfer of Eligibility and Canvassing

An applicant may request in writing to transfer his or her score from one register to another only when the examination is open to the public for a comparable register to which the transfer is desired. However, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Postal Service, district Human Resources managers may authorize the HR office to transfer applicant eligibility between registers by canvassing using the procedure in 441.2. Human resources managers may prefer to canvass to supplement an inadequate register or to establish an adjunct register for entrance positions when only a few appointments are planned, rather than reopening the examination.

441 Definitions

441.1 Transfer of Eligibility

Transfer of eligibility is when an applicant initiates a request during an open examination announcement to transfer his or her eligibility from one register to another. Both registers must be established for the same positions.

441.2 Canvass

The manager of Human Resources may authorize the canvassing of applicants on entrance registers to determine their interest to transfer their eligibility to another register. *Canvass* means to contact eligibles on existing registers for the same entrance positions in order of their examination scores, starting with the highest score and continuing until sufficient eligibles are obtained to meet the need.

442 Canvass Procedure

The manager of Human Resources may authorize a canvass to facilitate the hiring of casual, temporary, or career employees. Eligibles must be advised of the category of employment anticipated and that any transfer of eligibility will result in the eligible not remaining on the original register. Eligibles who transfer may elect to transfer their eligibility back to their original register within 180 days of the effective date of transfer and must be advised of the opportunity to so elect. For canvassing with Area Eligibility Registers (AERs) or mega registers (see 462.53, Canvassing).

443 Procedure — Applicant Initiated

443.1 Application for Transfer

The applicant desiring to transfer eligibility sends a copy of the *Notice of Rating* to the administrative office or takes the original rating to the administrative office that maintains the register where employment is desired and requests that the eligibility be transferred.

443.2 Accepting the Application

If the administrative office has a comparable register for which consideration is desired, and an examination is open for that register, the administrative office accepts the request. The receiving administrative office then requests the office that maintains the register where the applicant has eligibility to transfer the rating and preemployment investigation file (if one exists) for the applicant.

443.3 Action by Losing Office

The losing administrative office transmits the eligible's active register records and preemployment investigation records to the requesting administrative office. The losing office includes all register records for scores that resulted from the same examination effort by the applicant. The losing office inactivates the applicant on the register from which the applicant is being transferred and keeps a copy of the letter used to transmit the material to the new administrative office. If the applicant's eligibility has expired, no records are transmitted to the gaining administrative office and the requesting administrative office is notified that the transfer cannot take place.

443.4 Action by Receiving Office

The receiving administrative office takes the following actions:

a. For an AER or mega register, gives the applicant an opportunity to designate 3 office choices and job choices for positions for which there are active applicants.

b. Places records in appropriate position on the register, within 5 days of receipt.

c. Returns request for transfer to eligible with notation that the applicant is now on the new register.

443.5 Impact on Current Eligibility

Eligibility may be transferred even if the applicant's name is already on the register at the gaining office. Human resources must advise applicants of this possibility before transferring their scores to a register where they already have eligibility. Since a new announcement must exist for the request to transfer to be accepted, the same rules apply (see 422.2, Recompeting in a New Open Examination).

45 Other Applicant Processes

451 Change in Name, Address, or Availability

As requests for change in name, address, or availability are received, human resources makes appropriate notations or changes to register records. Human resources may destroy the correspondence as soon as the information has been recorded. If a change of name occurs for an eligible who has been granted preference as spouse, widow, widower, or mother, human resources readjudicates preference and corrects the eligible's standing on the register accordingly.

452 Change in Job or Office Choice

Once applicants choose the jobs or offices when these choices are available, the choices cannot be changed. Applicants can opt out of these choices by declaring unavailability, but they cannot substitute new for old choices or add choices.

453 Failure to Respond

If there is no response from an eligible to a letter of inquiry or other official correspondence that has *not* been returned as unclaimed, human resources inactivates the eligible's name on registers maintained by the administrative office for failure to respond to official correspondence using status code FTR. If the inquiry or other correspondence is returned unclaimed, the eligible is inactivated with status code CRU.

Applicants who fail to provide information requested in order for hiring officials to render an eligibility or suitability decision are inactivated and will receive no further consideration for employment.

454 Restoration of Eligibility Following Return From Military Service

454.1 Inactivation and Restoration

When human resources learns that an eligible is on active duty in the Armed Forces and is not available for consideration, his or her eligibility is inactivated on the register. The eligible is entitled to have eligibility restored to that register or a successor register upon request of the eligible, when he or she meets the following conditions.

454.11 Request Within 90 Days After Discharge

The eligible's request must be made within 90 days after discharge from active duty, or from hospitalization continuing after discharge for not more than one year.

454.12 Service Must Not Exceed 4 Years

The 4-year limit begins with the first day of active duty under the first enlistment (or reenlistment). Any voluntary continuation of service beyond the 4 years results in loss of rights to restoration.

454.13 Honorable Separation From the Armed Forces

Human resources must establish an eligible's honorable separation from the Armed Forces in the same manner as establishing entitlement to veterans' preference. Persons whose service does not entitle them to preference are still required to furnish proof of honorable discharge. The applicant requesting the restoration should be queried about what kind of veterans' preference, if any, he or she wants to claim.

454.2 Term of Eligibility After Restoration

See 431.3, Impact on Eligibility of Active Military Duty.

454.3 Eligible Selected for Career Employment With a Lower Score

If an eligible who was ranked *lower* on the register on which the eligible formerly appeared, was selected for a career position during the period of military service, then the eligible is also entitled to *lost consideration*.

455 Lost Consideration

Lost consideration is a special status given to an applicant who was not given appropriate employment consideration. This status serves as an administrative remedy to replace what the applicant did not receive. Lost

consideration is also used for applicants who missed consideration because of active duty in the Armed Forces.

When human resources determines that an error has been made and because of the error the applicant was not considered for employment, lost consideration status is given to the applicant. This status moves the applicant from his or her regular place on the register to a position above the CP/CPS Group 1. The applicant is then placed at the top of future hiring worksheets for considerations missed.

When a situation is discovered for which lost consideration may be appropriate, the human resources office uses the following procedures to determine whether the applicant is entitled to lost consideration status:

a. Determine when the error was made. This error date is used as a starting point to search records.

b. Review the hiring worksheet log to see if any hiring worksheets were issued from the error date to the present. If no hiring worksheets were issued, there is no possibility of lost consideration.

c. Review the lowest score certified for hiring worksheets issued from the error date to the present. Compare the lowest score certified for hiring worksheets with the applicant's score. Use appropriate tiebreakers as necessary. If the applicant's score would not have been certified, then there is no lost consideration.

d. Review considerations for each hiring worksheet issued for which the applicant would have been certified. Use appropriate tiebreakers as necessary. If the applicant's score is lower than the lowest score considered, there is no lost consideration. However, if the applicant's score is higher than the lowest score considered, then the applicant should be granted lost consideration.

455.1 Procedure

Upon discovery of lost consideration, human resources places the eligible's name at the top of the register. The eligible is entitled to consideration from the *top of the register* position as many times, but no more than three, for the position for which consideration was lost. *Lost consideration* does not mean a guaranteed appointment; it means consideration before all other eligibles.

455.2 Terminated Register

If the register on which the eligible's name appears is terminated before the correct number of lost considerations is given, the eligible's name is entered at the top of the successor register, even if the requirements are different, until the same number of considerations as were lost are received. Once the considerations have been provided, then the eligibility is terminated. If the candidate qualified on the new examination, the new name remains in the usual position on the register.

455.3 Existing Hiring Worksheet

455.31 Consideration While a Hiring Worksheet Is Still Open

If lost consideration is discovered while a hiring worksheet is still open for which the applicant should have been certified, the appointing official must consider the applicant with lost consideration according to the position of his or her score inserted among the other applicants as if the applicant had been certified originally.

455.32 Not Disturbing Selections of Other Applicants

Human resources or appointing officials should not disturb appointments or accepted job offers made before discovery of lost consideration, but additional lost consideration may be necessary. If the eligible is not selected after having received the correct number of lost considerations, annotate the register and move the record to the regular position.

456 Request for Reactivation

456.1 Applicants Who Are Separated Former Career Postal Employees

Applicants who did not meet a job requirement during their probationary period as a career postal employee may request to be restored to job registers from which they were not originally selected. The administrative office then reactivates the score if it has not expired.

456.2 Applicants Who Are Now Eligible and Suitable for Employment

Human resources must honor requests for reactivation from applicants determined ineligible or unsuitable or found to have pending criminal charges, which if convicted upon would be disqualifying, as long as the score has not expired and the applicant now meets eligibility and suitability requirements (see 525, Applicant Request for Reactivation).

456.3 Applicants Who Were Unavailable to Be Contacted for Employment

Human resources must reactivate applicants who were inactivated because of communication returned unclaimed or failure to respond to an official notice, if the applicant satisfactorily explains the reason for the inactivation, and the score has not expired.

456.4 Applicants Who Previously Declined Consideration

Applicants who previously declined consideration and instructed the administrative office in writing of this status, but who now desire consideration, may request reactivation. Human resources should reactivate the score if not expired.

46 Change to Register Configuration

461 Definitions

An *Area Eligibility Register* (AER) is a register that serves 2 or more installations, up to a maximum of 50; however, NTAC may authorize combining AERs to serve up to 99 installations. Offices that are not within commuting distance are usually not included in an AER. If commuting distances are not practical, the AER concept may not work effectively. AERs are not used for Battery 470 examination ratings.

A *mega register* is similar to an AER. It serves up to 99 installations that are not necessarily within commuting distance of each other. Mega registers can only be used with Battery 470 examination results.

A *conventional register* is a one-list register that may serve more than one installation.

462 Considerations

462.1 Dividing Territory Into Multiple Registers

A district that spans a large geographical area may establish several registers of different types to serve installations when the area is too large to cover with one register.

462.2 Other Factors in Constructing Registers

Other factors that human resources personnel must consider when identifying post offices to be served by an AER, mega register, or conventional register include: the size, the number of positions, availability of work hours, special recruitment needs, and the anticipated attrition rate for each installation.

462.3 Establishment

462.31 Current Registers

Human resources establishes new or changed AERs, mega registers, or conventional registers by merging active register records of existing registers into a consolidated AER or mega register. Human resources may create multiple conventional registers by dividing an existing conventional register or compressing an AER or mega register. Current eligibles are given a new 2-year period of eligibility (with the option to request an additional year), beginning with the date the new register is established.

462.32 Announcements

It may be necessary or desirable for human resources to announce the appropriate postal examination in conjunction with a new register configuration. Human resources must coordinate the examination announcement and publicity in the communities that will be served by the

new or changed AER, mega register, or conventional register. Examination centers are responsible for ordering examination material and the distribution of examination announcements that must include:

a. A list of all the offices covered by the new or changed AER, mega register, or conventional register.

b. For AER or mega registers, an explanation that eligibles will designate up to 3 installations where they wish to be considered for employment. These designations may not be changed (other than reduced) during the eligibility period.

462.33 Notifying Current Eligibles

462.331 Communicating Change and Options to Applicants

When registers are changed into AERs or mega registers, or conventional registers, the administrative office must send a form letter to applicants on the active register notifying them that:

a. They may designate office or job choices (for AER or mega register).

b. If applicable, they have the opportunity to compete in the new examination to try to improve their score.

c. If they do recompete, their latest designation of choices will be controlling.

d. Failure to respond will result in the removal of that eligible's name from the active register.

When dividing a conventional register, the administrative office must notify applicants that they must choose on which register they desire their eligibility to be placed.

462.332 Documenting Applicant Notification

Human resources must document the date that form letters are sent to eligibles. Human resources must also send eligibles who were temporarily placed on the inactive register (such as for ineligibility, unsuitability, and unavailability) a form letter when their eligibility is reactivated (see the sample letter that appears in Exhibit 462.332).

Exhibit 462.332
Sample Letter — Letter to Current Eligibles When Existing Registers Are Being Merged

The Postal Service is updating the hiring register setup to provide you with improved employment opportunities.

Our records indicate that you now have eligibility on the register for: (position) at this post office: (installation name).

Use Only for AER or Mega Register

If you are still interested in postal employment, you may designate 3 post offices at which you want to be considered from the following list of offices.

- Circle the number of each office you select. If you circle more than 3, we will record your choices as being the lowest 3 numbers.

It is extremely important that you be very selective in your choices, since once they are made, these choices may NOT be changed later in any way during your current eligibility.

Use Only for Conventional Register

- You may designate a new register on which your eligibility will be placed or elect to remain on the current register for employment opportunity for the offices shown. Circle the register.

Use this paragraph only if examination is going to be reopened. In addition, the examination for (position) will be reopened for applications from (date) to (date). During this period you may recompete in this examination in order to improve your present score.

Use Only for AER or Mega Register:

Office	Number
_____	_____
_____	_____

Use Only for Conventional Register:

Office
_____
_____

Please indicate whether you want your name retained or removed from the register. Should you indicate a desire to have your name retained on the register, you will begin a new 2-year period of eligibility.

Check one:

_____ I am no longer interested in postal employment. Please remove my name from the register.

_____ Retain my name on the register for the above offices.

_____ _____

(Signature of eligible) (Date)

You must complete and sign this form and return it to this office no later than (date). Enclosed is a preaddressed envelope for your convenience.

Failure to do so will result in your name being removed from the active register for employment consideration.

Sincerely,

[Name of HR Official]

462.4 Approval

462.41 Submitting Request

All requests to establish or change an AER or mega register or divide a conventional register must be submitted through the district manager of Human Resources, to the manager of NTAC, for approval. Each request must include the following:

a. Proposed type of register.

b. A list of the installations that will be served by their names, installation IDs, and for each AER or mega register, assigned office identity numbers as referred to in 462.61, Identity Numbers.

c. Distance (mileage) between the two most distant offices.

d. Name, finance number, and installation ID of the proposed administrative office. Districts are the only allowable administrative office.

Human resources must designate the lead office for each AER or mega register. The lead office must be one of the larger installations served by the AER or mega register and identified by name, finance number, and installation ID.

462.42 Notification of Approval

The NTAC notifies the district manager of Human Resources, of the approval.

462.5 Changes to AER or Mega Registers

462.51 Authority

Once an AER or mega register is established, offices served may not be removed without the concurrence of the district manager of Human Resources, and the approval of the manager of NTAC.

462.52 When Offices Should Be Removed

If the AER or mega register does not have an adequate number of eligibles available for a particular office, human resources arranges announcement and publicity in all of the communities served by the AER or mega register for the appropriate examination to be reannounced. In some situations, especially in the very small offices where work hours are limited, it may be more feasible for human resources to remove those offices from the AER or mega register and establish an individual conventional register to limit the announcement to the community where the vacancy exists.

462.53 Canvassing

If a small number of applicants remain on the AER (including rural carrier registers) or mega register for a particular office, the register may be canvassed to identify additional eligibles who wish to be considered at that office. Human resources begins at the top of the register, and contacts the eligibles in order of their standing on the register. Human resources continues until a sufficient number of eligibles have been identified to permit selection.

An eligible's earlier choices of 3 offices are not disturbed. For applicants who accept the canvass, the new office is reflected as an additional office choice.

462.6 Selection of Three Office Choices

462.61 Identity Numbers

Each installation that belongs to an AER or mega register is assigned an identity number by the district. For example:

1	Alhambra, CA
2	Arcadia, CA
3	Montebello, CA
4	Monterey Park, CA
5	Pasadena, CA
6	San Gabriel, CA
7	South Pasadena, CA
8	Temple City, CA

Once an identity number has been assigned to an office within an AER or mega register, it cannot be changed or assigned to another office in that AER or mega register without prior approval from NTAC, even if the original office to which the number was assigned is deleted from the register.

462.62 Designation of Choices

Applicants may designate a maximum of 3 post offices where they wish to be considered for employment.

Example:

2. Arcadia, CA

5. Pasadena, CA

7. South Pasadena, CA

462.63 Changing Choices

See 452, Change in Job or Office Choice.

462.7 Restored or Extended Eligibility Following Active Military Service

Eligibles entitled to have their eligibility restored or extended because of active military service (see 431.3, Impact on Eligibility of Active Military Duty) are allowed to select up to 3 offices for employment consideration, if the office shown on the Notice of Rating is now part of an AER or mega register.

47 General Application File

When the employment application file is used to fill casual or temporary vacancies, the appointing official may accept applications from candidates

not on a register for the casual vacancies or temporary appointments. If the employment application file is inadequate, the appointing official should obtain free local publicity by contacting veterans organizations, colleges, high schools, civic organizations, women's and minority associations, and other organizational groups.

See 234.21, Veterans' Preference Rules, for groupings that must be observed when organizing the general application file.

48 Veterans' Preference

481 Requirement

The Postal Service grants veterans' preference for certain employment purposes, including appointment. NTAC adds the claimed preference points to eligible examination ratings. If the answers concerning veteran preference on the *Application for Employment* do not support the veterans' preference claimed on the answer sheet and reflected on the register, human resources notifies the eligible of the discrepancy. However, if the eligible has submitted a Standard Form 15, *Claim for 10-Point Veteran Preference,* information given on that form is used to resolve the question, if possible. If the eligible's answer indicates that the preference claimed on the answer sheet was a mistake or has changed, human resources corrects or updates the register record and adjusts the eligible's position on the register.

482 Authority of Appointing Official

Appointing officials make the decision on claims for most types of preference. Human resources confirm these determinations as a part of their audit of *Hiring Worksheets*. Cases involving spouse or mother preference must be referred to the nearest area Office of Personnel Management for adjudication.

483 Kinds of Veterans' Preference

483.1 5-Point Preference

For 5-point preference purposes, an individual must have served on active duty, been separated under honorable conditions (see 232.3h for explanation of *under honorable conditions*) from active duty in the Armed Forces, and served in one of the following:

a. During a war.

b. During the period April 28, 1952 through July 1, 1955.

c. For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976.

d. During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992.

e. In a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized.

A campaign medal holder or Gulf War veteran who originally enlisted after September 7, 1980, (or began active duty on or after October 14, 1982, and has not previously completed 24 months of continuous active duty) must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty. The 24-month service requirement does not apply to 10-point preference eligibles separated for disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, or to veterans separated for hardship or other reasons under 10 U.S.C. 1171 or 1173.

Note: Effective October 1, 1980, the term *preference eligible* does not include, for most employment purposes, retired members of the Armed Forces, unless (1) they are disabled veterans, or (2) they retired below the rank of major or its equivalent. However, these veterans are still preference eligibles for adverse action purposes.

Active duty for training or inactive duty by National Guard or Reserve soldiers does not qualify as *active duty* for preference.

483.2 10-Point Preference

483.21 Disabled Veterans

An honorably separated veteran who served on active duty in the Armed Forces at any time may be assigned 10-point preference provided the veteran meets the criteria defined in one of the following categories:

a. *Disability preference* (XP) — *a* former member of the Armed Forces who separated with an honorable discharge (or under honorable conditions) and (1) was awarded the Purple Heart, (2) receives compensation or pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs or disability retired pay from the Armed Forces, or (3) has a service-connected disability that is not compensable or that is less than 10 percent compensable.

   Note: 10-point (other) preference (XP) is granted to the widow, widower, 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 (see 483.22, 483.23, and 483.24).

b. *Compensable disability preference* (CP) — a former member of the Armed Forces who was separated with an honorable discharge (or under honorable conditions) and has a service-connected disability that is at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent compensable.

c. *Compensable 30 percent preference* (CPS) — a former member of the Armed Forces who was separated with an honorable discharge (or under honorable conditions) and has a service-connected disability that is 30 percent or more compensable.

483.22 Spouses of Disabled Veterans

The spouse of an Armed Forces' veteran on whose service a claim is based, may be assigned 10-point veterans' preference provided both of the following criteria are met:

a. The veteran was separated under honorable conditions from active duty performed at any time.

b. The veteran has a service-connected disability that disqualifies the veteran for any appointment to positions in the federal government or the District of Columbia government along the lines of his or her usual occupation.

483.23 Widows or Widowers of Veterans

Until remarried, the widow or widower of an honorably separated veteran, or the widow or widower of a veteran who died under honorable conditions while on active duty, may be entitled to 10-point preference based on the veteran's service, provided the veteran served on active duty during one of the following:

a. A war.

b. A campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized.

c. The period beginning April 28, 1952, and ending on July 1, 1955.

If the widow or widower remarries and the remarriage is annulled, the former widow or widower may apply for restoration of preference. Evidence of divorce of the widow or widower is not a basis to restore widow or widower preference, since the act of remarriage, rather than a remarried state, terminates eligibility for preference. Thus, widow or widower preference can only be restored if the act of marriage is annulled.

483.24 Mothers of Veterans

A veteran's natural mother who is widowed, divorced, or separated from the veteran's father; has remarried but is widowed, divorced, or separated from the husband of the remarriage when she claims preference; or whose husband (either the veteran's father or husband through remarriage) with whom she is currently living is totally and permanently disabled may be entitled to preference based on the veteran's service if one of the following criteria are met:

a. The veteran (the mother's son or daughter) died under honorable conditions while on active duty and served on active duty during one of the following:

   (1) A war.

   (2) A campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized.

   (3) The period beginning April 28, 1952 and ending on July 1, 1955.

b. The veteran was separated under honorable conditions and has a service-connected disability that is total and permanent.

484 Proof of Preference Claimed

The applicant is responsible for providing the necessary proof. Veterans claiming 5-point preference provide proof of required service and satisfactory discharge when their scores are reached for employment consideration. Eligibles claiming 10-point preference provide proof described on the SF 15, *Claim For 10-Point Veterans' Preference,* when they come within reach for consideration.

485 Adjudicating Claims for 5-Point Preference

Human resources offices verify entitlement from the DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty*. A veteran's DD Form 214 showing the award of an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is acceptable proof. The DD Form 214 does not have to show the name of the theater or country of service for which that medal was awarded. However, the Armed Forces *Service* Medal is *not* qualifying for veterans' preference. A complete list of campaigns and expeditions is in Exhibit 485 from the Office of Personnel Management web page in their *VetGuide*. Applicants claiming veterans' preference who are still on active duty will be granted 5-point preference if their applications show that they have the required military service, such as service in a war, campaign, or expedition. All applicants who have been separated from active duty in the Armed Forces should be able to produce a DD Form 214 to document claimed preference.

Exhibit 485
Wars, Campaigns, and Expeditions of the Armed Forces That Qualify for Veterans' Preference

War Service Creditable for Veterans' Preference. In the absence of statutory definition for *war* and *campaign* or *expedition,* OPM considers to be *wars* only those armed conflicts for which a declaration of war was issued by Congress. The title 38, U.S.C., definition of *period of war,* which is used in determining benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, includes the Vietnam Era and other armed conflicts. That title 38 definition is *not* applicable for civil service purposes.

Thus the last *war* for which active duty is qualifying for veterans' preference is World War II. The inclusive dates for World War II service are December 7, 1941, through April 28, 1952.

Noncombat operations that are not qualifying for veterans' preference. Many medals are awarded for noncombat operations. These medals are not a basis for preference and include the following:

- The Medal of Merit for meritorious service in World War II.
- The Medal of Freedom for meritorious achievements or meritorious service to the United States on or after December 7, 1941, in the war against an enemy outside the continental limits of the United States.
- The Antarctica Service Medal for participating in a scientific, direct support, or exploratory operation on the Antarctic Continent.
- The National Defense Service Medal for honorable service between June 27, 1950, and July 27, 1954, or January 1, 1961, and August 14, 1974; or for the period between August 2, 1990, and November 30, 1995.
- The Armed Forces Service Medal for participation in a United States military operation deemed to be a significant activity for which there was no threat of encounter of foreign armed opposition or imminent threat of hostile action.
- The Armed Forces Reserve Medal for 10 years of honorable service in a Reserve component; or active duty service in a Reserve component on or after August 1, 1990; or volunteer service for active duty on or after August 1, 1990.

Military Operations Since 1937 for Which a Campaign or Expeditionary Medal Has Been Awarded, Except for Operations Occurring During a Declared War

Military personnel receive many awards and decorations. To help agencies make decisions concerning entitlement to veterans' preference and other benefits, the following list identifies those awards that are campaign and expeditionary medals. **Any Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, whether listed here or not, is qualifying for veterans' preference.** The Department of Defense, not OPM, determines who is entitled to receive a medal, and under what circumstances. The list below is derived from DOD 1348.33-M, *Manual of Military Decorations and Awards.* Either a veteran's DD Form 214, *Certificate of Discharge or Separation from Active Duty,* or other official documents issued by the branch of service are required as verification of eligibility for veterans' preference.

Campaigns and Expeditions Which Qualify For Veterans' Preference

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) A veteran's DD Form 214 showing the award of any Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is acceptable proof. The DD Form 214 does not have to show the name of the theater or country of service for which that medal was awarded.	N/A
Berlin	August 14, 1961, to June 1, 1963
Bosnia (Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, and Joint Forge)	November 20, 1995, to December 20, 1996; December 20, 1996, to June 20, 1998; June 21, 1998 to present
Cambodia	March 29, 1973, to August 15, 1973
Cambodia Evacuation (Operation Eagle Pull)	April 11, 1975, to April 13, 1975
Congo	July 14, 1960, to September 1, 1962, and November 23, 1964 to November 27, 1964
Cuba	October 24, 1962, to June 1, 1963
Dominican Republic	April 28, 1965, to September 21, 1966
El Salvador	January 1, 1981, to February 1, 1992
Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury)	October 23, 1983, to November 21, 1983
Haiti (Operation Uphold Democracy)	September 16, 1994, to March 31, 1995
Iraq (Operations Northern Watch and Desert Spring)	January 1, 1997, to present; December 31, 1998, to December 31, 2002 (projected)
Korea	October 1, 1966, to June 30, 1974
Kosovo	March 24, 1999, to present
Laos	April 19, 1961, to October 7, 1962
Lebanon	July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, and June 1, 1983, to December 1, 1987
Mayaguez Operation	May 15, 1975, to May 15, 1975
Operations in the Libyan Area (Operation Eldorado Canyon)	April 12, 1986, to April 17, 1986
Panama (Operation Just Cause)	December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Earnest Will)	July 24, 1987, to August 1, 1990
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Southern Watch)	December 1, 1995, to present
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Vigilant Sentinel)	December 1, 1995, to February 1, 1997
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Desert Thunder)	November 11, 1998, to December 22, 1998
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Desert Fox)	December 16, 1998 to December 22, 1998
Persian Gulf Intercept Operation	December 1, 1995, to present
Quemoy and Matsu Islands	August 23, 1958, to June 1, 1963
Somalia (Operations Restore Hope and United Shield)	December 5, 1992, to March 31, 1995
Taiwan Straits	August 23, 1958, to January 1, 1959
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962
Vietnam Evacuation (Operation Frequent Wind)	April 29, 1975, to April 30, 1975
Vietnam (including Thailand)	July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965

Note: Section 572 of Subtitle G of the Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105–85), signed into law on November 18, 1997, allows the secretary of the military department concerned to determine whether individual members who participated in Operation Joint Endeavor or Operation Joint Guard in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in such other areas in the region as the secretary of defense considers appropriate, meet the individual service requirements for award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM). Generally, service members will be considered eligible if they:

- Were deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina (or other area that the secretary of defense considers appropriate) in direct support of one or both of the operations;
- Served on board a ship in the Adriatic in direct support of one or both of the operations; or
- Operated in airspace above Bosnia, Herzegovina (or other area that the secretary of defense considers appropriate) while the operations were in effect.

Navy Expeditionary Medal and Marine Corps Medal for These Operations

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Cuba	January 3, 1961, to October 23, 1962
Indian Ocean/Iran	November 21, 1979, to October 20, 1981
Iranian/Yemen/Indian Ocean	December 8, 1978, to June 6, 1979
Lebanon	August 20, 1982, to May 31, 1983
Liberia (Operation Sharp Edge)	August 5, 1990, to February 21, 1991
Libyan Area	January 20, 1986, to June 27, 1986
Panama	April 1, 1980, to December 19, 1986, and February 1, 1990, to June 13, 1990
Persian Gulf	February 1, 1987, to July 23, 1987
Rwanda (Operation Distant runner)	April 7, 1994, to April 18, 1994
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962

Other Campaign and Service Medals Qualifying for Preference

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Army Occupation of Austria	May 9, 1945, to July 27, 1955
Army Occupation of Berlin	May 9, 1945, to October 2, 1990
Army Occupation of Germany (exclusive of Berlin)	May 9, 1945, to May 5, 1955
Army Occupation of Japan	September 3, 1945, to April 27, 1952
Chinese Service Medal (Extended)	September 2, 1945, to April 1, 1957
Korean Service	June 27, 1950, to July 27, 1954
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Allied Force	March 24, 1999, to June 10, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Joint Guardian	June 11, 1999, to (date to be determined)
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Allied Harbor	April 4, 1999, to September 1, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Sustain Hope/ Shining Hope	April 4, 1999, to July 10, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Noble Anvil	March 24, 1999, to July 20, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Hawk	April 5, 1999, to June 24, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Saber	March 31, 1999, to July 8, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Falcon	June 11, 1999, to (date to be determined)
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Hunter	April 1, 1999, to November 1, 1999
Navy Occupation of Austria	May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954
Navy Occupation of Trieste	May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954
Southwest Asia Service Medal (SWASM) (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm)	August 2, 1990, to November 30, 1995
Units of the Sixth Fleet (Navy)	May 9, 1945, to October 25, 1955
Vietnam Service Medal (VSM)	July 4, 1965 to March 28, 1973
Rwanda (Operation Distant runner)	April 7, 1994, to April 18, 1994
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962

486 Adjudicating Claims for 10-Point Preference

486.1 Nature of Discharge

Human resources or the interviewer must verify the applicant's honorable character of service. An award of compensation or a pension does not establish that a separation was under honorable conditions. Human resources or the interviewer may accept a statement from the records of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs showing that the veteran was discharged under honorable conditions as meeting this requirement. See 232.3h for a description of under honorable conditions discharges.

486.2 Documentation

Human resources cannot adjudicate widow or widower preference without a current, fully executed SF 15, *Claim for 10-Point Veteran Preference.* OPM cannot adjudicate spouse or mother preference without SF 15. Such claims are dependent on the marital status of the claimant, which may change at any time.

486.3 Claims for Spouse or Mother Preference

Human resources submits claims for spouse or mother preference to the nearest area office of the OPM for adjudication. Human resources ensures that the SF 15, particularly part 4, is fully executed. Under the law, nonservice-connected disabilities cannot be considered in the allowance of spouse preference, even though the nonservice-connected disability is total and/or permanent.

486.4 Claims for Widow and Widower Preference

Human resources has the responsibility for adjudicating claims for widow or widower preference that meet the criteria listed in 483.23, Widows or Widowers of Veterans (XP – 10-Point Other), and have proof described on SF 15.

487 Noting Adjudicated Preference on Application and Register

487.1 Claimed Preference Proven and Allowed

If claimed preference is proved:

a. Interviewer or human resources completes Preference section on Form 2591, *Application for Employment,* to document adjudication.

b. Interviewer or human resources makes appropriate notations on the register to show the preference claimed has been adjudicated.

487.2 Claimed Preference Adjustments

The interviewer or human resources credits the preference points to which the veteran is entitled. If this is different from the veteran's claim at the time of

the examination or application, human resources adjusts the score based on the proof presented by the eligible.

487.3 Changes on Hiring Worksheet When Veterans' Preference Is Adjusted

See 622.14.

487.4 Notification to Applicant When Preference Claimed Is Not Allowed

In any instance where claimed preference is not proven and allowed, HR informs the eligible in writing. If the final examination rating was adjusted, notification to the eligible must also include the new rating.

487.5 Return of Documents Presented for Proof

Human resources or the interviewer usually request applicants to submit *copies* of documents required for proof of the preference claimed. After the preference has been adjudicated, any *original* documents submitted by the applicant as proof are returned to the applicant.

488 Appointment at Lesser Preference Level

The hiring official can select and appoint an applicant if, while the applicant's claim for preference is being adjudicated, the applicant is within reach for appointment as ranked with a lesser preference for which the applicant is entitled.

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5 Suitability

51 Employment Eligibility and Suitability

511 Policy and Applicability

The Postal Service's multiple component screening process must be applied consistently to applicants who are likely to be selected for all positions regardless of type of appointment.

511.1 Policy

The following policies apply to the suitability screening of applicants for employment including those components that take place after appointment.

511.11 Rights to Workplace Safety and Mail Security

The Postal Service is obligated to maintain the security of the mail and public trust and assure confidence in the reliability and integrity of its employees. Employees have the right to expect a safe work environment, and the public has a right to expect the Postal Service to maintain the privacy of the mail. Federal law makes it clear that protection of mail, postal funds, and property is the responsibility of every postal employee. The Postal Service must therefore make certain that individuals selected for employment have been carefully screened, evaluated, and determined suitable for postal employment so that the conduct of individuals selected for employment will reflect favorably on the organization.

511.12 Nondiscrimination in Hiring

It is the policy of the Postal Service not to discriminate in personnel decisions on the basis of (1) race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability as provided by law, or (2) other nonmeritorious factors such as political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

511.13 Policy for Residence Requirements

Unless specified in an examination announcement or a selection program, applications for positions in the Postal Service are accepted without regard to a residency requirement.

511.2 Applicability of These Instructions

Suitability screening is an essential component of the hiring process for all applicants for employment, career, or noncareer positions. These instructions apply to applicants from all recruitment sources, including former employees whether from registers, application files, noncompetitive reinstatement, or transfer to the Postal Service.

512 Screening Process Philosophy

Suitability screening identifies applicants who possess the necessary skills, abilities, and qualifications to perform specific jobs in the Postal Service. Conversely, the screening process is designed to disqualify ineligible or unsuitable applicants.

Proper execution of the screening process will identify applicants who meet suitability requirements, and give officials valuable information for use in considering applicants for employment.

512.1 Personal Qualifications

In addition to possessing the required skills and abilities, potential employees must have personal qualifications consistent with the characteristics in sections 512.11 through 512.14.

512.11 Conscientiousness

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

a. Consistently follow attendance rules, regulations, and procedures.

b. Demonstrate personal discipline.

c. Complete work assignments with appropriate levels of supervision.

d. Perform the essential duties of their positions competently and effectively.

e. Behave ethically, honestly, and openly with supervisors and coworkers.

f. Admit work-related mistakes without blaming others.

g. Be trustworthy with mail, money, and organizational property.

512.12 Adaptability

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

a. Adapt well to technological, supervisory, and organizational changes.

b. Respond and react constructively to stress, setbacks, or frustrations related to change.

c. Accept and complete new or changed assignments.

512.13 Cooperation

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

a. Cooperate and work well with others in the organization.

b. Contribute to positive work relations and avoid unnecessary conflict.

c. Assist coworkers and customers courteously and without complaint.

512.14 Communication

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

a. Receive and transmit information effectively as required by the job.

b. Understand instructions adequately for safe and effective job performance.

512.2 Sequence of Screening Activities

Overall suitability must be determined prior to consideration and selection. The sequence of suitability activities in 512.21 and 512.22 is designed to conserve time and hasten the process of screening. An overview of the rest of suitability screening is in 512.23 through 512.26.

512.21 Preemployment Orientation

The objective of preemployment orientation is to provide those applicants whose standing on the register is such that they will be considered for employment within a reasonable period of time, an opportunity to become more familiar with the jobs for which they could receive future consideration. At the end of the session, applicants who remain interested in employment will be asked to turn in a completed Form 2591, *Application for Employment,* and possibly other documents so that screening (prescreening) can begin. Applicants are scheduled for a preemployment orientation session consisting of, but not limited to, the following activities:

a. Tour of the job site.

b. Explanation of salary, benefits, terms of employment, and job expectations.

c. Overview of screening requirements.

d. Explanation of corporate values.

e. Showing of realistic job preview videos, as appropriate, to enhance applicants' understanding of the positions to be filled externally.

f. Collecting Form 2591, *Application for Employment,* and SF 15, *Claim for 10-Point Veteran Preference.*

g. Collecting copies of DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,* letters or certificates from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and statements or retirement orders issued by branches of the Armed Forces.

512.22 Prescreening

Establish a preemployment investigation file for each applicant who attended preemployment orientation, remains interested in postal jobs, and is likely to be considered. This file is the repository for all documents collected at the preemployment orientation, information obtained during suitability screening, and investigative results recorded on the Interview Sheet and Checklist (Exhibit 512.22, page 1 only) that remains with the file. Initial this checklist at each stage of the screening process. Records that are kept in the

preemployment investigation files are described below and are retained for 5 years and then sent to the Federal Records Center for another 5 years (see ASM, Privacy Act System of Records, USPS 120.110 for details):

a. Form 2591, *Application for Employment,* including supplemental application forms and any statements from applicants adding to original applications.

b. Form 2181-A, *Preemployment Screening — Authorization and Release.*

c. Certificates from local school authorities stating that applicants under age 18 who desire employment consideration have terminated their formal education for adequate reasons.

d. Correspondence and statements relating to applicants having postal relatives.

e. Documents relating to claims for veterans' preference including SF 15, *Claim for 10-Point Veteran Preference,* letters or certificates from the Department of Veterans Affairs and statements or retirement orders issued by service branches.

f. Copies of DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,* and other military records used in adjudicating veteran's preference and determining applicants' suitability for military service history.

g. Police records (state, county, and local) and correspondence to and from police departments.

h. Driving abstracts from state departments of motor vehicles.

i. Form 2480, *Driving Record — For Positions That Require Driving, and Review of Driver's License.*

j. Results of automotive mechanic bench test, qualification review panel evaluation, typing test, or other requirement.

k. Drug Screening — Personnel Notification Form.

l. Form 61, *Appointment Affidavit.*

m. Form 2485, *Medical Examination & Assessment,* (or equivalent), Form 2488, *Authorization for Medical Report,* and Form 5902, *Request for VA Medical Survey.*

n. Interview Checklist and Manager Certification.

o. Form 86C, *Update Special Agreement Checks,* with inquiries and results provided by Office of Personnel Management (see 574, Special Agency Check).

Exhibit 512.22
Interview Sheet and Checklist (page 1 only)

Restricted Information
Authorized Personnel Only

Interview Certification

Name: _____ Applicant ID: _____

Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Form 61 Interview/Job Offer	Interview Certification
		Sections 9–13 Given to applicant to read and attest by signature and date	This applicant was interviewed by: _____ on _____ (Print Name) (Date)
		Verified that applicant signed and dated section 13	_____ (Signature) (Title)

Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	INS Form I-9	Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Form 61 Orientation	Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Special Agency Check (SAC)
		Completed and indicates requirement met			Completed sections 14–17 at orientation or first work day			Initiated _____ (Date)
					Were any changes and/or derogatory information identified			Successfully completed.

Reason(s) for decision to rate as suitable when derogatory information exists: _____

_____

_____

_____

I certify that this applicant meets personal suitability and eligibility requirements for employment.

(Check √ box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature/Title of Manager and Date Signed:

_____

Exhibit 512.221
Pre-Employment Screening — Authorization and Release

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE.

Pre-Employment Screening — Authorization and Release

Applicant: Carefully read the following information before you complete and sign this form.

Privacy Act Statement: The collection of this information is authorized by 39 USC 410(b) and 1001; it may be used to obtain information from organizations and individuals pertaining to your character and current or prior employment as may be relevant and necessary to determine your fitness and suitability for employment in the United States Postal Service. As a routine use, the information may be disclosed to an appropriate government agency, domestic or foreign, for law enforcement purposes; where pertinent, in a legal proceeding in which the USPS is a party or has an interest; to a government agency in order to obtain information relevant to a USPS decision concerning employment, security clearances, contracts, licenses, grants, permits or other benefits; to a government agency upon its request when relevant to its decision concerning employment, security clearances, security or suitability investigations, contracts, licenses, grants or other benefits; to a congressional office at your request; to an expert, consultant, or other person under contract with the USPS to fulfill an agency function; to the Federal Records Center for storage; to the Office of Management and Budget for review of private relief legislation; to an independent certified public accountant during an official audit of USPS finances; to an investigator, administrative judge or complaints examiner appointed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for investigation of a formal EEO complaint under 29 CFR 1614; to the Merit Systems Protection Board or Office of Special Counsel for proceedings or investigations involving personnel practices and other matters within their jurisdiction; and to a labor organization as required by the National Labor Relations Act.

Completion of this form is voluntary; however, if consent to obtain this information is not given, it may have an adverse effect on your employment opportunities with the USPS.

Applicant's Name *(Last, First, Middle)*		Mailing Address
Date of Birth *(Month, Day, Year)*	Home Phone Number ( )	

This constitutes my consent and authorization to the disclosure or furnishing of any relevant and necessary information or records to any duly authorized employment official of the USPS by any person, corporation, agency, or association concerning my character, employment, or military service as may be relevant and necessary for a determination of my suitability for employment with the USPS.

This authorization is executed with full knowledge and understanding that the USPS will take measures to protect the aforementioned information against unauthorized disclosure to any parties not having a legitimate need for it in the discharge of official business of the United States, or its agencies and instrumentalities.

I hereby RELEASE the aforementioned persons, corporators, agencies, associations and their employees, agents and representatives from any and all liability for damages resulting from a decision by the USPS not to employ me on account of compliance, or any attempts at compliance with this authorization, except for any damages resulting from knowingly providing false or misleading information or records about me.

A copy of this authorization shall be as effective and valid as the original. This authorization shall be valid for 12 months from the date it is signed.

Date Signed	Signature of Applicant

PS Form **2181-A**, March 1996

512.221 **Authorization and Release**

Make no inquiry regarding the applicant without having a completed copy of Form 2181-A, *Preemployment Screening — Authorization and Release* (see Exhibit 512.221). Failure of an applicant to complete Form 2181-A may result in the appointing official being unable to make a suitability determination.

512.222 **Applicant Identification**

An applicant who reports to an entrance examination without positive ID must provide a signature on the admission document for comparison with the signature on Form 2591 and on Form 61, *Appointment Affidavit*. If the signatures are obviously different, the selecting official or designee must report this to the district Human Resources manager, who notifies the Inspection Service.

512.223 **Adjudicating Veterans' Preference**

It is of the utmost importance to verify veterans' preference claims early in the process, to ensure that the claimants are entitled to potential consideration. Failure to verify claims could delay hiring, increase costs, and unnecessarily raise the expectations of applicants.

512.224 **Reviewing the Employment Application**

Applicants' Form 2591 and all other forms must be reviewed carefully for omissions, false statements, unaccounted periods, and poor employment records. Each application must bear the applicant's signature and must contain satisfactory answers to the items on the form. Human resources personnel or a certified interviewer notes the results of the review on the interview checklist.

512.225 **Initiating Inquiries**

Hiring officials obtain official personnel folders (OPFs) if an applicant has prior postal or other federal service. Human resources personnel perform local criminal record checks for all applicants. Human resources requests driving records and Department of Veterans Affairs records as appropriate. If an applicant who served on active duty in the Armed Forces received a *character of service* rating other than *honorable,* then the official at the preemployment session must obtain at the end of the session the applicant's statement about why the discharge was not *honorable*. Otherwise, human resources personnel contact the applicant in writing (see Sample Letter A-2 in Appendix A). Inquiries are then sent to the military for an explanation of why an honorable discharge was not given.

512.226 **Applicants for Positions That Require a Commercial Driver's License**

As a condition of postal employment, information must be obtained on these applicants' positive alcohol or drug tests and refusals to be tested within the prior two years. The local personnel office will issue a release of information form to the applicant for signature. This form is sent to the previous employer and returned to the medical review officer. Only applicants who have been determined as drug-free are eligible for selection consideration. If the applicant refuses to sign the release or the previous employers refuse to release the information, the hiring process should be aborted due to insufficient information. See Management Instruction PO-720-95-2, *Alcohol*

and Drug Testing of Employees With a Commercial Driver's License, September 29, 1995.

512.227 Reviewing Replies

Human resources personnel review responses to the above inquiries as they are received. The Department of Veterans Affairs forwards medical records directly to the medical unit.

512.228 Initiating Qualifying Tests

Applicants for jobs that have performance test requirements are scheduled for the performance examinations. Similarly, where a qualification review panel evaluation is required, applicants are sent appropriate supplemental forms for their completion to be evaluated by a review panel. Applicants who qualify on the performance test or other requirement are scheduled for the urinalysis drug test.

512.229 Evaluating and Determining Applicant Suitability

Selecting officials or designees evaluate applicants on their overall or personal suitability for postal employment by taking into account, but not limiting themselves to, the following factors:

a. Prior employment history.

b. Military service.

c. Criminal conviction history.

d. Driving history (if required).

Selecting officials also make determinations regarding eligibility factors such as the following:

a. Minimum age.

b. Selective Service System status (if required).

Applicants found ineligible or unsuitable for employment are made inactive. Human resources notifies these applicants in writing that they are either (1) ineligible because they did not register with the Selective Service System or (2) unsuitable and they may request reconsideration. Those applicants who are found unsuitable should also be told in writing that they may request reconsideration. If an ineligible or unsuitable decision is reversed after a review of a request for reconsideration, the applicant is reactivated.

512.23 Interview

The interview is an essential element in the screening process and its purpose is to:

a. Collect information to ensure the applicant is eligible and suitable for postal employment.

b. Predict the likely job performance of the applicant if hired.

c. Provide an applicant with the job and organizational information needed to make an informed decision about potential Postal Service employment and to make a good job placement.

512.24 Selection and Extension of Job Offer

The object of the selection process is to select the best qualified applicant for each vacancy and make a job offer. For selections from an entrance register, the *rule of three* requires that each vacancy be filled by selection of one of the three highest ranking applicants on the appropriate list, provided that a preference-eligible applicant is not passed over in order to select a lower ranking nonpreference eligible (see 61, Selection Preparations and 62, Selection Procedures).

If fewer than three applicants are on the list, a selection may still be made at the option of the appointing official, observing the same restriction on passing over a preference eligible. Applicants who have been disqualified are not included among applicants to be considered (see 522, Deciding Eligibility and Suitability). Prior to a medical assessment, a bona fide job offer must be given to the applicant. This is a requirement of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits a federal employer from asking orally or in writing about the applicant's physical fitness for the position before making the job offer (see Appendix E-d).

512.25 Post-Job Offer Activities

In addition to the medical assessment, post-job offer activities include the following tasks:

a. Verification of employment eligibility using OMB Form I-9, *Employment Eligibility Verification*.

b. Initiation of Special Agency Checks (SACs).

c. Review of Form 61, *Appointment Affidavit,* to ensure its completion.

d. Administration of the oath of office.

e. Review of official personnel folders (OPFs) from prior Postal Service or other agency employment, if they had not been available before appointment due to current employment.

f. Review of job expectations with the new employee (career or noncareer) using Form 1750, *Employee Evaluation and/or Probationary Report,* and the probationary period or first ninety days of employment (noncareer) evaluation process.

512.26 Components

Components of the suitability process listed below are covered in the sections indicated:

a.	Veterans' Preference Adjudication.		512.27
b.	Eligibility Requirements.		513
	(1)	Minimum Age.	513.2
	(2)	Relatives.	513.3
	(3)	Selective Service Registration.	513.4
c.	Application for Employment.		514
	(1)	Employment History.	514.1
	(2)	Military Service History.	514.2
	(3)	Criminal Conviction History.	514.3
	(4)	Drug Abuse History.	515
	(5)	Driving History (Driving Positions only).	516
	(6)	Qualifying Tests.	517
	(7)	Drug Screening.	518
d.	Determination of Eligibility and Suitability.		52
	(1)	Other Suitability Issues.	53
	(2)	Preemployment Interview.	54
e.	Selection and Extension of Job Offer.		544
f.	Eligibility to Work in the Postal Service.		513.5, 55
g.	Special Agency Check.		56
h.	Medical Suitability.		57
i.	Appointment Affidavit.		581
j.	Review of Official Personnel Folder.		582
k.	Security Investigation.		583
l.	Employee Evaluation.		584

512.27 Veterans' Preference Adjudication

512.271 Policy of Early Verification

To promote efficient processing of employment applications, veterans' preference is adjudicated at the very beginning of the screening process.

512.272 Documents Review

Adjudication of preference requires a review and comparison of forms collected at preemployment orientation, including the following:

a. Form 2591, *Application for Employment*.

b. DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.*

c. SF 15, *Claim for 10-Point Veteran Preference*.

d. Letters or certificates from the Department of Veterans Affairs and statements or retirement orders issued by a branch of the Armed Forces.

512.273 **Verification of Entitlement to Preference Claimed**

Veterans' preference claimed is added to ratings by NTAC, or locally. Entitlement to and proof of preference are outlined in 48, Veterans' Preference.

513 Eligibility Requirements

513.1 Application Review

A review of Form 2591 must occur no later than interview preparation in the hiring process, and must include careful attention to the eligibility requirements for applicants. These include age requirements, restrictions on employment of relatives, and a Selective Service System (SSS) requirement (for certain males). While the Postal Service's citizenship policy requirements are addressed on Form 2591, documents pertaining to this eligibility may not be reviewed until a bona fide job offer has been extended (see 544, Selection and Extension of Job Offer).

513.2 Minimum and Maximum Age Requirements

There is no maximum age limit for appointment to positions in the Postal Service, and the general minimum age requirement is 18 at the time of appointment. The following are exceptions:

a. *Postal inspector positions.* An applicant must be at least 21 years old, but not older than 35, to apply for postal inspector positions.

b. *Other positions.* For high school graduates or for persons certified by local school authorities as having terminated formal education for adequate reasons, the minimum age is 16.

Note: Area vice presidents have the authority to reduce the general minimum age limit to 17 for non-high school graduates for periods that are necessary in places where recruiting difficulties make employment of persons under 18 years essential. They may also authorize employing persons 16 years old or older during the holiday season. However, any such authorizations must be in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Persons under 18 years of age may not be assigned to any position that requires them to operate any of the following:

a. A motor vehicle.

b. A power-driven woodworking machine.

c. A power-driven hoisting apparatus.

d. A power-driven, circular saw, band saw, or guillotine shears, or metal forming, punching, and shearing machine.

513.3 Relatives

513.31 Policy

Postal managers and other nonbargaining employees may not be involved in or interfere in any way with the selection of their relatives to postal positions. They cannot recommend the hiring, employment, or promotion of a relative, or interfere with the selection process in any way that may benefit a relative, or show any expression of interest that may be construed as an impropriety. Postal managers may not hire, employ, assign, or promote to vacancies under their direct jurisdiction, a relative, or a relative of any nonbargaining employee, if the relative was improperly recommended to the manager in violation of these regulations.

The attempt by any postal manager or nonbargaining employee to recommend, influence, or express interest that may be construed as influence in the appointment or promotion of a relative, is prohibited. To protect public and employee confidence in the integrity of postal selection procedures, appointing and approving officials must contemplate whether the appointment or promotion of a relative is likely to create the appearance of impropriety in the eyes of the public and other postal employees. If so, an alternate selection should be made.

513.32 Applicable Definitions

The following definitions apply to the appointment of relatives to postal positions:

a. *Manager* — is an employee with the vested or delegated authority to hire, employ, or promote individuals, or effectively to recommend individuals for such actions.

b. *Nonbargaining employee* — is any employee permanently or temporarily employed in the executive and administrative schedule (EAS) salary schedule, or in the Postal Career Executive Service (PCES).

c. *Relative* — by Postal Service definition, broadly includes the following family members by blood, marriage, or adoption:

Aunt	Grandson	Son
Brother	Half brother	Son-in-law
Brother-in-law	Half sister	Stepbrother
Daughter	Husband	Stepdaughter
Daughter-in-law	Mother	Stepfather
Father	Mother-in-law	Stepmother
Father-in-law	Nephew	Stepsister
First cousin	Niece	Stepson
Granddaughter	Sister	Uncle
Grandfather	Sister-in-law	Wife
Grandmother		

Note: When applicable, a relationship is dissolved by death or divorce.

513.33 Conditions for Elevating Selection and Appointing Authority

When a manager's relative is within reach for consideration for (1) appointment, or (2) assignment or promotion to a vacancy within the organization where the nonbargaining manager or employee exercises any jurisdiction or control, the selection and appointing authority moves to the next higher management level. The complete file (i.e., *Hiring Worksheet,* promotion file, all related documents, and a full description of the family relationship) must be forwarded to the next higher authority above the postal manager, according to the following criteria:

a. If the policy (see 513.31, Policy) prohibits the appointment or promotion, the nonbargaining manager or employee forwards the complete file without a recommendation. The next higher level authority must determine whether to make the appointment or promotion.

b. If the appointment or promotion is not prohibited (see 513.31, Policy), and a relative of a postal manager is to be appointed or promoted, the appointing official forwards the complete file with a recommendation to the next higher-level authority for review and approval. The appointing official must include in the file a statement that no improper influence in violation of 513.31 has been exerted. The action may not go into effect until the recommendation has been approved in writing.

513.34 Where Selection Restrictions Do Not Apply

The following are exceptions where the selection restrictions on relatives do not apply:

a. *Competitive External Hiring*. Selection restrictions do not apply when a veterans' preference eligible relative standing is among the top three applicants on the ranked list, if the only alternate selection would cause the preference eligible to be passed over. The selection is not moved to the next higher management level, but that higher management level must be notified of the selection. This exception would apply *only* if the relative is the only preference eligible among the top three applicants.

b. *Senior Qualified*. Promotion or assignment of a relative to a bargaining position filled by the senior qualified bidder or applicant in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement is permissible. Higher level notification is required.

c. *Postmaster Relief/Leave Replacement.* Prohibitions regarding employment of relatives apply to noncareer postmaster relief/leave replacements at EAS-11, EAS-13, and EAS-15 post offices. This restriction does not apply to noncareer postmaster relief/leave replacements at EAS A-E offices.

d. *Emergencies.* An installation head may make a temporary appointment of a relative to urgent, noncareer staff duties necessitated by an emergency that poses an immediate threat to life, mail security, postal property, or the mission of the Postal Service. Higher-level notification is required immediately in such a circumstance.

513.35 Improper Recommendation From a Nonbargaining Employee

If a postal manager receives an improper recommendation from a nonbargaining employee concerning the nonbargaining employee's relative, the manager must forward the file to the next level of management without a recommendation from the postal manager. The next higher level manager determines whether to make the appointment or promotion.

513.36 Consequences of Violations

Any nonbargaining employee who violates these regulations, or fails to make proper disclosure, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal. Any personnel action brought about in violation of these regulations is subject to cancellation or other appropriate action.

513.4 Selective Service System Registration Requirements

513.41 Eligibility Requirements and Verification

To be eligible for appointment to a position in the Postal Service, males of the ages 18 through 25 who were born after December 31, 1959, including permanent resident aliens, must register with the Selective Service System (SSS), subject to certain exemptions in accordance with Section 3 of the Military Selective Service Act.

Males in this age group will be required to certify that they have registered or present proof of any exemption from the requirement to register. They are required to certify their registration status on Form 61, *Appointment Affidavit,* either during the interview or job offer stage. The Postal Service conducts the following types of verification:

a. *Verification.* Normally, human resources verifies SSS status for a random number of applicants as a quality-control measure to assess the accuracy of the screening process. If the applicant's certification or documentation is in conflict with other screening information, human resources call the SSS at 847-688-6888 to verify the applicant's status. Examples of situations that might prompt calls to the SSS are missing certification and applicant requests for exemption status.

b. *Tape files.* The Postal Service periodically provides the SSS with tape files of entrance applicants. The SSS uses the tapes to send applicants reminders telling them the SSS registration requirements and where and how to register.

513.42 Determination of Eligibility

Appointing officials must make a determination as to whether male applicants born after December 31, 1959 are registered with the Selective Service System or exempt from the registration requirement.

513.43 Eligibility Determinations for Unregistered Applicants

Policy for determining employment eligibility for unregistered applicants is divided into the following three categories:

a. *Applicants under 26 and not registered.* Postal Service appointing officials must advise applicants in this category that:

(1) They can register with the SSS at their local post office.

(2) They are ineligible for appointment because of their failure to register with the SSS.

(3) Their names will be inactivated if they do not register with the SSS.

(4) If they later provide proof of registration or exemption status, their names will be reactivated for postal appointments, if possible.

Note: Since registration is simple, often an applicant can provide proof of registration the same day so that the screening process is uninterrupted and can continue.

b. *Applicants of age 26 or over and not registered.* Postal Service appointing officials must advise applicants in writing that:

(1) They are ineligible for appointment because of their failure to register with the SSS, unless the appointing official determines that their failure to register was neither knowing nor willful.

(2) They can write to the hiring official for reconsideration within 15 days, explaining their failure to register and including any supporting documentation. Reconsideration requests are processed in accordance with 522, Deciding Eligibility and Suitability.

c. *Other unregistered applicants.* Upon release from military service, a male must register within 30 days if he is not yet 26 years of age and has not already registered. Often, unregistered individuals entered the military immediately after high school and were not discharged until after age 26, or were discharged before age 26 and did not realize that they were required to register. In these or similar situations, a statement from the applicant is required. Final determination rests with the appointing official as to whether the applicant knowingly and willingly failed to comply with the law.

513.44 Determination Whether to Reverse Ineligibility

The applicant bears the burden of proof to show by a preponderance of written evidence that failure to comply with SSS registration was neither knowing nor willful. The hiring official makes the final eligibility determination based on a review of the submitted written documentation. The Selective Service does not make these determinations. Examples of evidence to support a determination that failure to register before age 26 was neither knowing nor willful may include but not limited to the following:

a. Active military duty.

b. Long-term illness.

c. Disabling injury.

d. Hospitalization.

e. Physical or mental disability.

513.45 Processing Applicants Under Age 18

If an applicant is under age 18, but will become 18 during the period of appointment, establish a pending file to follow up on SSS requirements.

513.46 Persons Exempt From SSS Registration

By law, those who are exempt from Selective Service are women, lawfully admitted nonimmigrant aliens (such as males on visitor or student visas), and current members of the Armed Forces on full-time active duty.

513.5 Citizenship Policy

To be eligible for postal employment, an appointee must be either a U.S. citizen (including a citizen of American Samoa or any other territory owing allegiance to the United States), or a permanent resident alien. The requirement of permanent resident alien status applies to both career and noncareer appointees. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 makes it unlawful to hire unauthorized aliens, and requires employers to verify and document the employment eligibility of all appointees. Refer to 550, Eligibility to Work in the Postal Service, for determining eligibility after a job offer has been made.

Noncitizens of the United States who have been granted permanent resident alien status in the United States are eligible for appointment to all Postal Service positions, levels EAS-19 and below, except positions designated by the Postal Service as sensitive. Appointment of noncitizens to positions in levels EAS-20 and above, or to positions designated as sensitive, can be made only with the prior approval of the area vice president. Positions that are considered sensitive are listed in the Administrative Support Manual 272.22, Sensitive Clearance.

514 Application for Employment

The foundation of the suitability screening process is Form 2591, *Application for Employment*. Human resources personnel or a certified interviewer must check each application for legibility and completeness. The reviewer must note contradictions, omissions, false statements, and unaccounted periods of time.

514.1 Evaluating Employment History

An applicant's past job performance is one of the best indicators of ability. Therefore, attention must be given to the applicant's employment record. An applicant must provide evidence of work experience beginning with the current position and going back 10 years, or back to the applicant's 16th birthday, whichever is more recent.

An applicant's work experience offers valuable insight into job performance, work habits, and stability. A stable, continuous employment history generally indicates an applicant who will be a satisfactory and productive employee.

Human resources personnel or interviewer pays close attention to an applicant's reasons given for leaving a job, for being fired from a job, or for quitting in lieu of being fired.

Note: Job changes may be related to attempts to improve employment. Long periods of unemployment or frequent short periods of employment may call for further explanation or inquiry.

514.11 Handling Removals From Postal Service or Other Federal Employment

It is Postal Service policy to refuse employment — career or noncareer, competitive or noncompetitive — to persons who were removed, outside the probationary period, from the Postal Service or from other federal employment for cause, or who resigned after being notified that charges proposing removal would be, or had been, issued. See ELM 365.31, Removal, for definition of a removal. In exceptional cases where the Postal Service contemplates appointing such an individual, the district Human Resources manager must give prior approval. If the individual is subsequently appointed, his or her official personnel folder must include documentation of the approval. Approval is not required if the former employee was separated for scheme or other qualification failure, and if the job for which the applicant applies does not require similar abilities.

514.12 Consideration of Other Unsatisfactory Service

An applicant may be rejected for employment because of previous unsatisfactory service in the private sector, the Postal Service, or another agency, including debarment by the Office of Personnel Management. See 514.13, Debarment, for explanation of debarment. The unsatisfactory service must have been long enough to be considered a full and fair trial, and the character of the service must indicate that the applicant would be unlikely to perform satisfactorily in the new position. Situations that may warrant concern include but are not limited to the following:

a. Unsatisfactory service during a probationary period, or a temporary appointment, in the same or another installation, resulting in a termination.

b. Past failures to satisfy a qualification requirement (e.g., scheme qualification) when a similar ability will be required for the new position.

c. Misconduct on a job.

d. Unstable work record.

e. Excessive tardiness or absence, or poor conduct in previous postal employment, even though no disciplinary action was taken prior to the resignation, could justify rejecting an eligible from consideration if the service was recent and there is no indication that the applicant has improved his or her work habits.

514.13 Debarment

When the OPM finds a person unsuitable for a reason named in Exhibit 522, Suitability Factors — Partial List of Reasons for Disqualification, OPM, in its discretion, may deny that person examination for and appointment to a competitive position for a period of not more than 3 years from the date of determination of unsuitability. This 3-year period is known as debarment.

On expiration of debarment, a person who has been debarred may not be appointed to any position in the competitive service (including the Postal Service) until OPM has redetermined that person's suitability for appointment.

514.2 Assessing Military Service History

Military service claimed on the applicant's Form 2591 must be compared to the information contained on DD Form 214, and any discrepancies resolved. If the character of service on DD Form 214 reflects a discharge that is other than honorable, including clemency or general discharge, ascertain the reasons by taking the following steps:

a. Obtain a statement from the applicant as to why the discharge was other than honorable.

b. Contact military authorities to determine the reason why the discharge was not honorable. Use the name and mailing address in *station where separated* on the DD Form 214 to request information and write the appropriate branch of the military from the listing in ELM Exhibit 512.232b (p. 2). Make sure that a copy of Form 2181-A accompanies every request.

Note: If the Application for Employment or the applicant's discharge or other military separation papers indicate conviction of a military offense, contact the appropriate military authority to determine whether the offense would make the applicant unsuitable for postal employment.

514.3 Assessing Criminal Conviction History

514.31 Policy

In fairness to applicants and in consideration of the Postal Service's obligations to the public and the workforce, the Postal Service must individually evaluate the employability of each applicant with a criminal conviction or pending criminal charge. The Postal Service recognizes that many persons with criminal records have demonstrated successful rehabilitation and are capable of performing the duties of postal jobs. These applicants are entitled to compete for jobs on individual merits. It is Postal Service policy to do a local criminal records check during the suitability screening process. These policies apply to postal entrance positions but not to those designated as sensitive.

514.32 Restrictions on Inquiries

No inquiries may be made, either orally or in writing, of the applicant or of any other person, concerning arrest records, except where the arrest resulted in a criminal conviction, or where the charges are still pending. When inquiring

into the conviction record of an applicant from any person or agency, including law enforcement agencies, postal officials must state orally, or in writing, that:

> *It is not the policy of the U.S. Postal Service to inquire into the arrest records of applicants for employment, where the charges arising out of an arrest have been dismissed, there has been an acquittal, the proceedings have otherwise not resulted in a conviction, or where the record of such charges does not contain or reflect an actual criminal conviction of such charges. If possible, please exclude all such charges in the requested conviction record, except those still pending.*

514.33 Obtaining Police Records

The appropriate postal official must obtain a local criminal records check (e.g., city, town, or county). If fees are charged for furnishing copies of police records, use Account Number 52519, Postal Operations — Fees for Services, to record the amounts claimed. The Special Agency Check (SAC) performed by OPM for individuals who are hired involves additional criminal records checks (see 56, Special Agency Check).

514.331 Situations When Applicant Must Provide Criminal Records

Some law enforcement agencies provide criminal records to employers only after the individuals have been appointed. In states where Postal Service access to local police records for preemployment purposes is not provided, the applicant is required to obtain and provide the records for employment review and pay any fees charged.

514.332 Use of Sample Letter of Inquiry

A sample letter for requesting police records and notes pertaining to preparation are found in Appendix A-1.

514.34 Verifying Criminal Record Information

The appropriate postal official must compare the results of a local criminal records check (e.g., city, town, or county), along with employment and criminal history reflected on Form 2591, *and inquire into any convictions or pending charges*. Special care must be taken to ensure the accuracy of criminal record information received from law enforcement authorities or other agencies. If discrepancies exist, a letter of inquiry must be sent to the applicant (see 52, Determining Eligibility and Suitability). Appendix A-2 contains the appropriate statement to accompany a letter of inquiry regarding an applicant's criminal record.

If records are received that do not adequately reflect the disposition of a criminal charge or that indicate the charge is pending, the applicant is given an opportunity to explain the surrounding circumstances of the charges and whether the charges have been resolved in the applicant's favor.

514.35 Using Arrest Records

It is policy that the Postal Service may consider only those records in which an arrest resulted in a criminal conviction or in which charges are pending at

the time of the inquiry. Postal Service policy prohibits consideration of arrest records of applicants in the following situations:

a. Arrest charges were dismissed.

b. An acquittal occurred.

c. Proceedings did not otherwise result in a conviction.

d. Charges do not contain or reflect a criminal conviction.

In instances where a criminal conviction is set aside, vacated, or annulled, expunged, or sealed pursuant to state or court order, the conviction may not serve as a basis for the disqualification of the applicant. Further, no inquiry may be made, either oral or written, directly or indirectly, into that conviction.

Young persons arrested on criminal charges may be subject to adjudications in juvenile courts under juvenile offender statutes, which in many jurisdictions are not considered to be criminal convictions. When evaluating an applicant for employment, do not consider these adjudications.

Note: Pending criminal charges must not result in the automatic rejection of an applicant (see 514.38b).

514.36 Evaluating Conviction Records

In evaluating an applicant's conviction record, appointing officials may consider only the nature of the offense of which the applicant has actually been convicted, and not the nature of the offense with which the applicant may have been charged prior to conviction.

514.37 Evaluating Employability of Applicants With Criminal Convictions

It is Postal Service policy to evaluate the employability of each applicant with a criminal conviction record individually. The fact that an applicant has a criminal conviction record is not sufficient to disqualify that applicant from postal employment. Instead, an applicant should be rejected on the basis of a history of criminal conviction only after a specific finding that the history is directly related to the applicant's present capacity to perform as a Postal Service employee. To the extent available, such factors as the following must be considered during such an evaluation:

a. Applicant's age at the time of each offense.

b. Nature and underlying circumstances of the offense.

c. Length of time elapsed since the applicant's offense.

d. Evidence of efforts toward rehabilitation, including job training or educational programs the applicant may have participated in during incarceration.

e. Information supplied by penal authorities, parole and probation officers, social workers, or social agencies regarding the applicant's progress toward rehabilitation or employability.

f. Applicant's employment record, including participation in a job training program.

g. Dispensations that may have been granted by the authorities to evidence the applicant's rehabilitation such as certificates of relief from disabilities, certificates of good conduct, and certificates restoring civil rights.

h. Nature and location of the position sought by the applicant.

514.38 Additional Considerations

The following are additional considerations in assessing criminal conviction history:

a. *Probation or parole.* An applicant subject to probation or parole supervision as a result of criminal conviction may not be rejected for employment solely on the basis of such supervision. Such applicants are entitled to individual evaluation under 514.37, Evaluating Employability of Applicants with Criminal Convictions.

b. *Pending charges.* Appointing officials may inquire into criminal charges pending against any applicant *at the time the application is considered*. An applicant subject to pending criminal charges is eligible for employment. However, if conviction on the charges would make the applicant unsuitable under 514.37, Evaluating Employability of Applicants With Criminal Convictions, the applicant is not available until he or she presents evidence that the charge was resolved in his or her favor.

c. *Time since conviction.* An applicant's conviction record may not serve as the sole basis for disqualification if the applicant has neither received a criminal conviction during 10 years immediately preceding the application date, nor been incarcerated because of a criminal conviction during 5 years immediately preceding the application date.

514.39 Post-Hire Policy

Employees who had criminal records at the time of their appointment to the Postal Service may not be discharged or denied transfer, assignment, or promotion to any postal positions — except those designated sensitive — as a result of such records. This does not preclude disciplinary action, including removal, against an employee for falsification of any employment application form.

515 Drug Abuse History

515.1 Policy

The Postal Service is committed to providing a drug-free workplace. Applicants are asked on job applications whether they are currently dependent on or a user of any addictive or hallucinogenic drug other than drugs used for medical treatment under a physician's supervision. A *yes* answer makes the applicant ineligible for postal employment. A *no* answer allows the hiring process to proceed.

515.2 Inquiries

Before an actual job offer, hiring officials or certified interviewers may not inquire into drug abuse in the applicant's past. Inquiries can be made after the job offer (see 57, Medical Suitability).

516 Driving History

516.1 Policy

The Postal Service requires that appointing officials obtain state driving abstracts for all applicants considered for positions that require the operation of any motor vehicle as an official duty. Request driving records from all states in which the applicant has resided in the past 5 years. If an applicant has been driving less than 5 years, or has been a resident of the United States for less than 5 years, the only abstracts required are those that document the driving record to date or document the driving record in the United States.

Any person applying for a job as a commercial vehicle driver must inform the Postal Service of all previous employment as the driver of a commercial vehicle for the past 10 years. The applicant must complete a Form 4600, *Driver Notification and Compliance Certificate*. The local human resources office keeps the original Form 4600, and a copy is given to the driver.

Note: Personnel who operate rider-operated powered industrial equipment off-street are not required to be screened for safe driving.

516.2 Form 2480, Driving Record — For Positions That Require Driving

Form 2480, *Driving Record — For Positions That Require Driving,* requires the applicant to list the states where he or she was issued a driving permit within the past 5 years. If Form 2480 lists any information that is disqualifying (see 516.4, Table of Disqualifications), the applicant is ineligible for a position with driving duties and there is no need to request a driving abstract.

516.3 Driving Abstracts

Most states make abstracts available through the Internet or other types of computer access. Obtain a state driving abstract for all applicants who are being considered for positions that require driving.

516.4 Table of Disqualifications

The Table of Disqualifications in Exhibit 516.4 identifies and describes the type and number of driving-related factors that may disqualify an applicant from further consideration for a position requiring driving as an official duty. To establish time frames for disqualification, use the date of the actual violation (including suspensions). Compare the applicant's state driving abstract and Form 2480 with the disqualifying criteria, and if the driving record indicates that the applicant meets or exceeds any of the criteria, he or she is ineligible for a position with driving duties. A decision of ineligibility on driving history

disqualifies an applicant only for positions requiring driving, the applicant may be considered for nondriving positions.

a. *Dates of disqualifying incidents*. The date of a disqualifying incident may indicate that the applicant could become qualified before his or her eligibility expires. In this instance, advise the applicant that it is his or her responsibility to provide notification of potential eligibility (disqualifying incident is no longer a factor because of its age) for consideration at a later date.

b. *Pending convictions*. Inform applicants who have pending traffic violations or citations that they are ineligible for consideration for a driving job until the charges are resolved. Further, inform them that they must provide notification of a resolution of the charges, and proof of adjudication, in order to receive consideration at a later date.

c. *Period of disqualification*. The period of disqualification does not extend the applicant's normal term of eligibility on a register.

Exhibit 516.4
Table of Disqualifications

General disqualifying factors:

a. Applicant does not have at least 2 years of documented driving experience.

b. Applicant has had his or her driving permit suspended once or more in the past 3 years, *or* twice or more in the past 5 years.

c. Applicant has had his or her driving permit revoked once or more in the past 5 years.

Specific disqualifying violations

Type of violation	In past 3 years	In past 5 years
1. Reckless driving or other similar offenses (e.g., careless driving)	1 or more	2 or more
2. Any driving offense involving the use of drugs, alcohol, controlled substances, etc.	Any conviction	Any conviction
3. All other traffic offenses (but not parking violations)	3 or more (or more than 1 in last 12 months)	5 or more*
4. At-fault accidents	2 or more, or any at-fault accident resulting in a fatality	2 or more, or any at-fault accident resulting in a fatality
5. Hit-and-run offense	Any conviction	Any conviction

* *Three convictions for the same offense are disqualifying, because they indicate a pattern of inadequate responsibility and disregard for law and order that may affect safety.*

Note: *For purposes of determining disqualifying violations, consider only offenses resulting in a conviction (e.g., fined, jailed, or ordered to attend traffic school). For purposes of establishing time frames for disqualification, use the date of the actual violation. At-fault accident is defined if the applicant was fined or sued, and received adverse judgment; if the applicant's insurance company settled for damages to another party or applicant settled out of court; or the applicant is otherwise determined to be liable.*

516.5 Ineligibility Factors

516.51 General Disqualifying Factors

516.511 Less Than 2 Years Experience

An applicant or potential driving employee must have at least 2 years of documented, unsupervised driving experience. This time must be continuous and immediately precede consideration for employment or reassignment. The driving must have taken place in the United States or its possessions or territories, or in U. S. military installations worldwide.

516.512 License Suspension

If a state determines that an offense is serious enough to warrant suspension of the state driver's license for any reason, such suspension is disqualifying regardless of the nature of the offense. An applicant or potential driving employee with one or more suspensions of a state driver's license in the past 3 years, or two or more in the past 5 years, is disqualified for employment or reassignment to a driving position. Use the date of the actual violation that precipitated the suspension, rather than the beginning or ending date of the suspension, to establish time frames for disqualification. In addition, if by using the ending date of the suspension the applicant or potential driving employee does not have 2 years of continuous driving experience immediately before hire, as described in 516.511, Less Than 2 Years Experience, the individual is not eligible for consideration.

516.513 License Revocation

An applicant or potential driving employee with revocation of a state driver's license one or more times in the past 5 years is disqualified for employment to a driving position. The provisions described in 516.512, License Suspension, apply to license *revocations* with respect to reason for revocation, time frames, and 2 years of continuous driving.

516.52 Specific Disqualifying Factors

516.521 Violations

The applicant or potential driving employee who has one or more violations in the past 3 years, or two or more violations in the past 5 years, for offenses such as reckless driving, careless driving, negligent driving, and attempting to elude or evade a police officer, is disqualified. State driving abstracts usually specify reckless driving or careless driving as the violation. These specific terms must appear on the abstract. A reviewer may not make interpretations as to whether an offense such as excessive speeding should be considered reckless or careless.

516.522 Substance Abuse Driving Offenses

The applicant or potential driving employee with any conviction for a driving offense within the past 5 years involving the use of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances is disqualified.

a. *Driving offense*. Refers to a violation where the applicant or potential driving employee was the driver, not just a passenger.

b. *Use of alcohol*. Means actual consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol; therefore, an open container of alcohol in the back seat of a vehicle would not necessarily constitute use of alcohol, but would be considered under *all other traffic offenses.*

Note: It is the determination of the state that is controlling. Some states suspend the driving privileges of persons who are passengers in vehicles in cases involving the use of alcohol or drugs. In these instances, the individuals are disqualified under the general disqualifying factors of license suspension.

516.523 Other Traffic Violations

The applicant or potential driving employee with more than one violation in the past 12 months, three or more violations in the past 3 years, or five or more violations in the past 5 years for all other traffic offenses, excluding parking violations, is disqualified. All other traffic offenses includes, but is not limited to, moving and nonmoving violations such as unlawful speed, unlawful passing, unlawful turns, improper or defective equipment, lack of insurance (only when it is a license-suspending offense), or failure to appear in court, etc. Three convictions for the same offense within the past 5 years are disqualifying since there is a pattern of inadequate responsibility and disregard for law and order. Violations that are addressed in other categories must be dealt with separately and not added into this category. If an applicant is charged with multiple violations at one time and convicted of all charges, each violation is counted as a separate offense.

516.524 At-Fault Accidents

At-fault accident is any accident for which the driver was determined to be liable (i.e., the applicant was fined; or sued and received an adverse judgment; or the applicant's insurance company settled for damages to the other party or settled out of court; or the applicant was otherwise deemed to be liable). The applicant or potential driving employee with two or more at-fault accidents within the past 5 years, or any at-fault accident resulting in a fatality, is disqualified.

516.525 Hit-and-Run Offenses

The applicant or potential driving employee with any conviction within the past 5 years for a hit-and-run offense is disqualified.

516.526 Determining Disqualifying Violations

In determining disqualifying violations, consider only those offenses that were followed by a conviction. These offenses include admitted wrongdoing, forfeiting bond, being jailed, fined, released with a warning, or ordered to attend traffic school, etc.

516.53 Review of Driver's License

See 517.5, Driver's License Review.

517 Qualifying Tests

517.1 General

To be considered for employment, applicants must meet the full requirements of the position. Failure to meet the requirements results in disqualification. Certain positions require administration of performance examinations to ensure that applicants possess the minimum skills and abilities required for the position. As appropriate, these tests are administered to applicants who have passed the written examination, have not been disqualified under suitability categories, and who are within the score range for potential employment consideration. For maintenance craft positions, entrance applicants must meet the requirements for knowledge, skills, and abilities as determined by a qualification review panel. For positions that require driving, applicants are screened by a formal review of their state drivers' licenses to ensure that the licenses are valid. Qualifying test categories are detailed below.

517.2 Computerized Keyboard Tests

For positions involving typing, the Postal Service gives three typing tests to applicants to establish their qualifications. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to type the required minimum number of words per minute. Tests are administered by NTAC-certified examiners and scored by computer. The computer provides immediate test results. Guidelines for conducting these tests, along with the required software and related maintenance instructions, are provided by NTAC.

a. *Computer-based test (CBT) 712/713*. This test is administered to applicants for clerk-stenographer and other positions requiring typing eligibility for both the 45 net words per minute (712) and the 30 net words per minute (713) tests.

If the applicant is applying for…	**Then he or she must qualify on**…
Clerk stenographer	Test 712 (45 net words per minute).
Other typing positions	Test 713 (30 net words per minute).
If applicant scores…	**Then applicant qualifies on**…
45 net words per minute	Tests 712 and 713.
30–44 net words per minute	Test 713 only.
29 net words per minute	Neither Test 712 nor Test 713.

b. *Computer-based test (CBT) 714*. For positions involving data entry or typing on forms, there are two standards of success on CBT 714: a high standard and a low standard. The qualification standard that says CBT 714 is required also specifies whether the high or low standard is applicable. When this test is added locally for a vacant position, the low standard is always specified. The statement *applicants must demonstrate the ability to type 25 correct lines in 5 minutes by*

successfully completing CBT 714 at the low standard must appear in the vacancy announcement.

c. *Computer-based test (CBT) 715*. Applicants for markup clerk, automated, must take this CBT 715.

Note: Suitability screening should stop for applicants who either failed the test or did not report.

517.3 Automotive Mechanic Bench Test

Applicants for automotive mechanic positions who qualified on the written automotive mechanic test are scheduled according to their standing on the register to take the automotive mechanic bench test. The bench test is administered by an examiner knowledgeable in automotive maintenance and certified by NTAC. The bench test is scored by NTAC. Only those applicants who qualify on the written test and the bench test can be considered for employment as automotive mechanics.

Note: Suitability screening should stop for applicants who either failed the test or did not report.

517.4 Qualification Review — Candidate Supplemental Application

Before qualification review panels are scheduled, applicants who have received eligible entrance examination ratings for maintenance positions must complete the appropriate Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA). The CSA documents the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position. Subsequently, a qualification review panel convenes to rate applicants. The panel consists of two maintenance supervisors/managers and a human resources representative. Maintenance personnel must be familiar with the functional area involved.

517.5 Driver's License Review

To determine if an applicant for a position that requires driving practices safe driving habits, verify the driving record and review the actual driver's license to ensure validity. The license information is used to complete the Driver's License Review Checklist (Exhibit 517.5, Driver's License Review Checklist). An applicant who fails the checklist review is ineligible for positions that require driving. An ineligible applicant can request reactivation from the human resources office if the driving status that caused the ineligibility has been resolved and the applicant's examination ratings are still valid (see 525, Applicant Request for Reactivation).

Exhibit 517.5
Driver's License Review Checklist (Original to Preemployment Investigation File)

Name (First, Middle, Last)	Social Security Number	Birth Date

To Be Completed By Reviewer		
(Place a check mark in the box for each item)	**Yes**	**No**
License is for the state in which the applicant resides.		
Photograph on the license resembles the applicant.		
Name, date of birth, and Social Security number (if shown) match Forms 2480 and 2591.		
License number matches the one on the state abstract.		
Expiration date is in the future.		
This applicant has presented a valid current state driver's license.		

Reviewing Official Signature	Date Presented
Reviewing Official Title	Installation Name

518 Drug Screening

After an applicant passes the required qualifying examination, human resources personnel administers drug screen urinalysis. Only applicants determined to be drug-free as a result of the urinalysis are eligible for selection consideration. A drug screen test that results in a qualified status is good for 90 days from the date the specimen is collected. Applicant names entered on a *Hiring Worksheet* before expiration of the 90-day qualification period are eligible for employment consideration regardless of the date of appointment from that worksheet. Postal employees who apply for promotion, reassignment, or change to lower level are not considered applicants for drug screening purposes, except for positions in the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Note: No new test is required if the applicant is a former employee and has been selected for rehire, i.e., job offer within 90 days or less of their separation. See Exhibit 518, Processing Rules and Duration of Results, for summary of processing rules including necessary action required on the checklist.

518.1 Scheduling

Applicants are scheduled for the urinalysis in descending score order from the list, no sooner than 90 days before anticipated hiring and no later than an actual job offer. Applicant scheduling letters are sent to each applicant to be tested (see Appendix A-6, Drug Screen Applicant Scheduling Letter), with sufficient notice to ensure mail time and the applicant's ability to get off work, make child-care arrangements, etc. Failure to report as scheduled or to make advance arrangements for rescheduling, results in the inactivation of the applicant in the screening process handled by the administrative office.

518.2 Considering Ineligible Applicants in the Future

Applicants who are ineligible as a result of the drug screen urinalysis are not excluded from reapplying for future entrance examinations. Casual applicants found *not qualified* are disqualified from current consideration for employment. Redetermine the drug-free qualification when applicants reapply.

Exhibit 518
Processing Rules and Duration of Results

Status	Duration	Checklist Action
Found Qualified	Selection must be made within 90 days of specimen collection. Additional test *not* required as long as selection is made within 90 days of specimen collection or applicant is a former employee and is selected within 90 days of separation.	Initial *Yes* Box for not qualified.
Found Not Qualified	If from register, all ratings are inactivated. Applicant can reapply when examination is re-announced to the public.	Initial *No* box for not qualified.
Error Made in Collection	Applicant must be rescheduled and provided with another opportunity.	If applicant qualifies, initial the *Yes* box. If applicant fails to qualify, initial the *No* box.
Could Not Test	Provide applicant with another opportunity (see Suitability module). If an applicant is unable to test again, applicant is disqualified.	If applicant qualifies, initial the *Yes* box. If applicant fails to qualify, initial the *No* box.

52 Determining Eligibility and Suitability

521 Suitability Determination With Information Not From Application

Before applicants may be disqualified on the basis of derogatory information other than that in the application, they must be given an opportunity to comment on the information. This opportunity is provided by a letter of inquiry in which the facts are stated with enough specificity to enable the applicant to understand the details of the suitability concern. However, the letter must not reveal sources of information and must be worded in such a way that the eligible is unable to determine the identity of the source. Appendix A-2 contains a sample letter and statement to accompany a letter of inquiry.

Exceptions: Identity of sources may be disclosed when the information:

a. Is a matter of public record (i.e., records of federal, state, county, municipal, and other public jurisdictions)?

b. Comes from law enforcement records.

c. Comes from federal personnel records obtainable by the eligible.

When derogatory information comes from public records, the organization (not the person providing it) must be used in identifying the source.

The letter of inquiry must state that, if there is no reply within 10 days, the eligible's name will be inactivated for not replying to official correspondence. In all cases when a letter of inquiry is used, forward it as certified mail marked Deliver to Addressee Only. Otherwise, the appointing officer may contact the applicant for an interview to discuss the information.

522 Deciding Eligibility and Suitability

Favorable eligibility and suitability decisions make it possible for the applicant to advance in the hiring process. This means the applicant can be considered, and if selected, given a bona fide job offer followed by a medical assessment. However, a negative decision in any of the eligibility factors — age, Selective Service System registration, driving record, qualifying test, driver's license review, drug screening, or English competence — disqualifies an applicant from proceeding in the hiring process. Similarly, a negative decision in any of the *suitability* factors — employment history, military service, or criminal conviction history — disqualifies an applicant. See Exhibit 522, Suitability Factors — Partial List of Reasons for Disqualification, for a partial list of reasons for disqualification on the basis of suitability.

Exhibit 522
Suitability Factors — Partial List of Reasons for Disqualification

a. Dismissal from prior employment for cause.
b. Criminal or other conduct, which if engaged in by a postal employee, would undermine the efficiency of the Postal Service.
c. Intentionally false statements, deception, or fraud in application, examination, or information furnished incident to appointment by the Postal Service.
d. Refusal to furnish testimony or information to the Postal Service, that has been requested incident to appointment by the Postal Service.
e. Current habitual use of intoxicating beverages to excess.
f. Current abuse of narcotics or dangerous drugs.
g. Reasonable doubt as to the loyalty of the applicant to the Government of the United States.
h. Conviction for theft or embezzlement.
i. Conviction of crimes of violence including assault with a deadly weapon.
j. Discharge for illegal strike activity.
k. Any legal or other disqualification that makes the applicant unfit for postal employment.

523 Negative Eligibility or Suitability Decision

An applicant found ineligible in any one factor — age, Selective Service System registration, driving record, qualifying test, driver's license review, drug screening, or English competence — is notified in writing that he or she is ineligible. However, the Postal Service provides an opportunity for reconsideration of an ineligibility decision *only* for Selective Service System registration, not for the other factors. The human resources office notifies an ineligible applicant in writing of the decision, and in the case of Selective Service System registration only, is given 15 calendar days from the date of the letter to provide a written request for reconsideration. See the sample letter in A-5. The name of a disqualified applicant is inactivated for all applications handled by the administrative office.

Note: See Exhibit 523, Disqualification Processing, that contains detailed information for the handling of specific disqualification categories.

For unsuitability, human resources notifies the applicant in a letter of his or her unsuitability and the reasons for the decision. In the letter, specific derogatory information used in the determination is included. If an applicant has been contacted previously in writing for further information, he or she is notified in writing of a suitable or unsuitable determination. If derogatory information was previously furnished the applicant in a letter, this fact must be stated, and the prior letter identified by date. See Appendix A for sample letters.

If the applicant responds with compelling reasons for reversing the decision, the applicant's name and eligibility are restored to the appropriate list, and the eligibility period extended to make up for the period of temporary ineligibility.

524 Applicant Request for Reconsideration

All applicants found unsuitable are given 15 calendar days from the date of the notice of unsuitability to provide a written request for reconsideration (see sample letter A-5). If the applicant responds with compelling reasons for reversing the decision, the applicant's name and eligibility are restored to appropriate registers, and the eligibility period is extended to make up for the period of temporary unsuitability.

525 Applicant Request for Reactivation

Applicants inactivated for not meeting age, employment eligibility (citizenship), driver's license review, English competency, and driving record requirements, or who have a pending criminal charge should be advised in writing that they may request reactivation in writing when they meet the particular requirement. Requests for reactivation of an applicant's eligibility because of an ineligible determination should be granted when the circumstances by which the applicant was determined ineligible have changed and the eligibility has not expired. For example, reactivation should be provided to applicants whose status has changed on the basis of Selective Service System registration, employment eligibility (citizenship), age, etc.

526 Reversing Unfavorable Suitability Decision

If an unfavorable suitability decision is reversed, a human resources specialist or other official restores the applicant's name to the active register, according to score, and the eligibility is extended for the period of temporary unsuitability (see 431.2, Impact of Unsuitability, Reversal, or Criminal Conviction.

527 Certifying the Suitability Decision

The appointing official is responsible for making the preliminary decision on suitability and eligibility. The district Human Resources manager, who may delegate the responsibility, certifies the overall determination. The appointing official must make certain that the applicant meets Postal Service standards, with the following variations or exceptions:

a. Certain situations permit the hiring of relatives, if approved by the next level of management (see 513.3 Relatives).

b. If an applicant's history indicates unsuitability, but the appointing official believes that special consideration must be given, the rationale must be documented on the interview sheet, and the preemployment file and recommendation must be sent to the district Human Resources manager for concurrence.

Exhibit 523
Disqualification Processing

Disqualification category	If on Hiring Worksheet,* use close by admin — enter status, use code:	Change applicant — register status and enter:	Change applicant — prescreening use:	Also provide applicant with:
Age	MAG	MAG	–	Written notification that he or she can request for reactivation in writing to administrative office when requirement is met
Criminal conviction history**	OBJ	–	2 (not qualified) for criminal conviction history	Reconsideration of removal from all registers
Criminal conviction history — pending charge that would be disqualifying	NAP	NAP	–	Written notification that he or she can request for reactivation after charge is resolved stating how charge was resolved
Driving history	DRU	–	2 (not qualified) for driving history	Written notification that he or she can request for reactivation after a future date
Drug screen	OBJ	–	2 (not qualified) for drug screen	Written notification of removal from all registers
Eligibility to work	NAP	NAP	–	Written notification that he or she can request for reactivation in writing to administrative office when requirement is met
Employment history — all registers**	OBJ	–	2 (not qualified) for employment history	Reconsideration of removal from register(s)
Employment history — certain registers** ***	OBJ	OBJ only for disqualification from additional registers if needed or if applicant is on Transitional Hiring List or Casual Hiring List	–	Reconsideration of removal from register(s)
English competence	NAP	NAP	–	Written notification that he or she can request reactivation by writing to administrative office if fluency in English improves
Medical	–	MCS — only for the job and register office from which selected and after determination has been made and applicant notified	–	Applicants except those adjudicated with CPS are notified of final decision. Cases of CPS veterans are given right of review by Office of Personnel Management

Disqualification category	If on Hiring Worksheet,* use close by admin — enter status, use code:	Change applicant — register status and enter:	Change applicant — prescreening use:	Also provide applicant with:
Military service**	OBJ	–	2 (not qualified) for employment	Reconsideration of removal from all registers
Selective Service	OBJ	OBJ	–	Disqualification letter stating that applicant has been disqualified for failure to register with the Selective Service. Provide reconsideration.

Note: *MAG = does not meet minimum age requirement; OBJ = object; NAP = not available, pending resolution of suitability; DRU = driving record unsatisfactory; MCS = medical condition after selection.*

* *If applicant is on a THL or CHL, manually enter the appropriate status code on the office copy of the THL or CHL.*

** *See chart on next page on processing for disqualification of applicants who have adjudicated veterans' preference for handling of preference eligibles.*

*** *If applicant is a former postal employee who was terminated from a temporary appointment or during probation for not meeting a job requirement, policy is not to disqualify if the termination was due to a requirement that will not be needed. In such situations, a decision must be made whether the applicant should be disqualified for a certain job or all jobs.*

Advice on doubtful cases must be sought from the district Human Resources manager. For policy regarding persons removed from the Postal Service for cause, or who resigned while charges were pending See 514.11, Handling Removals From Postal Service or Other Federal Employment, for more information.

53 Other Suitability Issues

531 Questionable Suitability Cases

When a suitability determination is delayed pending an investigative response, the applicant cannot be appointed, but a vacancy is held pending resolution of the applicant's suitability for employment. When an applicant's suitability is undeterminable because of pending criminal charges, the individual is coded *not available pending resolution of suitability* on all applications maintained by the administrative office. No vacancy is held open in this instance.

532 Other Suitability Questions

Serious suitability questions about an applicant's fitness for appointment that are not covered in this handbook must be resolved prior to appointment. Refer all these questions to the manager of Human Resources.

54 Preemployment Interview

The one-on-one interview provides the last opportunity to resolve any questions regarding eligibility and suitability and to gauge the degree of fit between the applicant and the job. This determination should weigh such factors as work setting and job content, and performance dimensions such as communications skills, cooperation, adaptability, and dependability.

541 Training and Preparation of Interviewers

Prior to the interview, the interviewer should thoroughly review the preemployment investigation file containing all the information collected from and about the applicant, including the interview checklist See Exhibit 541, Interview Sheet and Checklist, Pages 1, 2, and 3.

Local trainers must certify that interviewers are familiar with the self-instructional modules for interviews and suitability. Interviewers must be familiar with 62, Selection Procedures and 512.23, Interview, and understand the process and general interviewing techniques, strategies, and applicable regulatory issues. Interviewers must prepare for each interview by (1) familiarizing themselves with the information that is known about the applicant, and (2) determining what questions to ask the applicant or what information to seek to determine the applicant's viability.

542 Conducting the Interview

The interview provides an opportunity to confirm or verify information previously provided on the employment application and other forms.

543 Assessing English Competence

Postal employees routinely receive and must respond to inquiries from supervisors and customers. Employees must therefore have a basic competence in speaking and understanding English. Competence in understanding and speaking English is assessed during the interview.

544 Selection and Extension of Job Offer

See 626, Selection Decision.

Exhibit 541
Interview Sheet and Checklist (pages 1, 2, & 3)

Restricted Information
Authorized Personnel Only

Interview Certification

Name: _____ Applicant ID: _____

Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Form 61 Interview/Job Offer	Interview Certification
		Sections 9–13 Given to applicant to read and attest by signature and date	This applicant was interviewed by: _____ on _____ (Print Name) (Date)
		Verified that applicant signed and dated section 13	_____ (Signature) (Title)

Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	INS Form I-9	Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Form 61 Orientation	Initial Column Yes	Initial Column No	Special Agency Check (SAC)
		Completed and indicates requirement met			Completed sections 14–17 at orientation or first work day			Initiated _____ (Date)
					Were any changes and/or derogatory information identified			Successfully completed.

Reason(s) for decision to rate as suitable when derogatory information exists: _____

_____

_____

_____

I certify that this applicant meets personal suitability and eligibility requirements for employment.

(Check √ box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature/Title of Manager and Date Signed:

_____

Exhibit 541 (continued)
Interview Sheet and Checklist (page 2)

Application Forms and Interview Checklist

Veteran Preference	**Initial Column**		***Employment History, Form 2591***	**Initial Column**		***Comments: Discuss or Confirm with Applicant During Interview***
	Yes	**No**		**Yes**	**No**	
Preference claimed			Question E4 or E5 answered **Yes**			
SF 15 obtained			F has unclear, missing, or derogatory information for E4 or E5			
Form 2488 authorization obtained and records requested, if required						
Military Service, Form 2591			Prior Postal or Federal Service, E8			
Service listed in D1 and D5			OPF Reviewed			
Questions D2 or E7b answered **Yes**			***Form 2591 – Section C***			
DD Form 214(s) show discharge other than **Honorable**			Work history not shown for 10 years or back to age 16 - history is missing from _____ to _____			
Military inquiry initiated			Gap(s) of over 1 month (list numbers) between _____ and _____			
Qualified for military service			Employment 1: Has unclear, missing, or derogatory information			
Age, Form 2591			Employment 2: Has unclear, missing, or derogatory information			
Question A5 reviewed			Employment 3: Has unclear, missing, or derogatory information			
Applicant meets requirement			Employment 4: Has unclear, missing, or derogatory information			
Selective Service, Form 61			Qualified for employment history			Review questions E4 and E5 with applicant and **Initial** _____
Applicant is a male born **after 12-31-59**			***Driving History (Driving Positions Only)***			
Form 61 indicates applicant is registered and meets requirements or exception			Abstracts(s) and Form 2480 reviewed and compared with Table of Disqualifications			
Postal Relative, Form 2591			Valid state drivers license verified			
Question E9 and F reviewed			Qualified for driving history			
Has nonbargaining relative			***Criminal History Convictions Form 2591***			
Drug Screen			Question E7a answered **Yes**			
Initiated			Criminal conviction on criminal record check(s)			
Qualified on drug screen			Qualified for criminal conviction history			Review question E7a with applicant and **Initial** _____

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Exhibit 541 (continued)
Interview Sheet and Checklist (page 3)

	Form 2591 Review	*Interview Results*
Work Setting and Job Content ■ Similar work content ■ Similar work environment ■ Similar level of supervision ■ Safety requirements ■ Applicant's expectations of job ■ Applicant's expectations of environment		
Conscientiousness ■ Time and attendance ■ Task and assignment completion ■ Admission of errors and mistakes ■ Responsibility for money or property ■ Performance of job in safe manner ■ Doing what it takes to get the job done		
Adaptability ■ Changes in work schedules ■ Changes in work load or priorities ■ Changes in supervision or staffing ■ Changes in working conditions		
Cooperation ■ Working with others in sequenced tasks (i.e., work proceeds from one person to another) ■ Working with others on shared tasks ■ Assisting customers or coworkers ■ Conflicts with coworkers, superiors, subordinates, or customers		
Communication ■ Taking direction from supervisors and others as required ■ Using instructions to perform work effectively ■ Transmitting information to supervisors, co-workers, and customers as necessary		
Customer Service ■ Responding to customer requests in-person or by telephone ■ Dealing with dissatisfied customers or inappropriate behavior ■ Directing customers to the appropriate source for their needs ■ Creating a positive impression of the organization		
Basic English Competence		

545 Right to Review for CPS Veterans

When an applicant designated CPS (one entitled to veterans' preference based on 30 percent or more service-connected disability) is tentatively disqualified, there are fewer than three other applicants with adjudicated veterans' preference on the Hiring Worksheet to select over the CPS applicant, and a nonpreference eligible is tentatively to be selected, the selecting official must first provide a right to review to the CPS applicant. In such an instance, follow the procedures outlined in 627.2, Veterans with 30 Percent or More Compensable Disability, to provide right to review with the Office of Personnel Management.

55 Eligibility to Work in the Postal Service

551 Determining Eligibility

The eligibility requirement for U.S. citizenship is addressed at the application screening stage by reviewing the applicant's answer to Item E.1, Form 2591; however, citizenship documents are not reviewed at this stage. Hiring officials conduct review of supporting documents, verification of the applicants' status, and completion of forms only after bona fide job offers are extended. The review of documents and determination of status must be the same process for both citizens and permanent resident aliens.

552 Using the OMB Form I-9

After receiving a commitment to hire, every postal appointee (whether career or noncareer) must complete an OMB Form I-9, *Employment Eligibility Verification,* used by all American employers in the federal and private sectors. Documents acceptable to establish employee identity and/or employment eligibility are listed on the reverse of Form I-9. An appointing official may not ask for specific documents from an employee, nor refuse employment on the basis of a future expiration date shown on a document. All individuals, whether U.S. citizens or permanent residents, may satisfy employment eligibility verification requirements by producing either one document from List A, or one document from List B and one from List C.

56 Special Agency Check

For all newly selected employees in nonsensitive positions, whether career or noncareer, an OPM Special Agency Check with Inquiries (SACI) must be requested.

561 Elements

The OPM SACI consists of checks of:

a. OPM's Security/Suitability Investigations Index (SII).

b. Defense Clearance and Investigations Index (DCII).

c. Federal Bureau of Investigation Fingerprint Classification (FBIF).

d. Employment history (except postal employment) for the last 5 years.

e. Criminal conviction history in locations where the employee resided, worked, and went to school.

As needed, OPM also performs checks of Military Personnel Records (MILR).

562 Processing OPM-IS Form 86C

OPM-IS Form 86C, *Special Agreement Check,* dated August 1995 or later, and SF 87, *Fingerprint Chart,* dated April 1984 or later, with OPM's originating identifier (ORI) USOPMOOOZ FIPC, Boyers, PA, must be completed for all newly hired postal employees. Special Agency Check with Inquiries (SACI) requests can be submitted to OPM once an individual has been given a bona fide job offer.

Note: If a SACI was completed for the initial appointment, a new SACI is not required when an individual is reappointed or reinstated as a career or noncareer employee, unless the individual had a break in service of more than 90 days.

To request a SACI, hiring officials submit an OPM-IS Form 86C, a copy of the employee's PS Form 2591 and SF 87 to:

OPM-IS
FEDERAL INVESTIGATIONS PROCESSING CENTER
BOYERS PA 16018-0618

Note: If fingerprints are returned unclassifiable, another set of fingerprints must be taken immediately and sent to OPM, along with the unclassifiable chart and a copy of the closing case transmittal (CCT).

563 OPM Results

If sending fingerprints electronically and the fingerprint submission is initiated first and the SACI submitted subsequently, two separate cases are set up in OPM's system. Therefore, human resources will receive a separate closing case transmittal for each. The fingerprint request will be closed out and forwarded to human resources as soon as the fingerprint results are received from the FBI. The SACI will be updated automatically to reflect the same fingerprint results and they will be included when the SACI is later closed out by OPM.

OPM-IS bills submitting offices monthly for services rendered during the previous month. OPM-IS will forward all results except those that have pertinent issues from the Security/Suitability Investigations Index (SII) and the Defense Clearance and Investigations Index (DCII) checks directly to the submitting human resources office in a single document within 45 calendar days. Human resources verifies the disposition of any arrest record and determines if additional investigation is necessary. OPM-IS will forward all results from the checks of the SII and DCII containing pertinent issues to the Inspection Service for follow up attention.

The Inspection Service should be notified in all instances where administrative action such as removal is taken, and the information becomes part of the disciplinary file. When information requires no action, it is placed in the employee's preemployment investigation file. A log of OPM results should be maintained and available to the Inspection Service at least semi-annually for review.

57 Medical Suitability

571 Policy

A medical assessment to determine medical suitability is mandatory for all career and noncareer appointments, and for all changes to jobs having more demanding physical requirements than the employee's present position.

572 Purpose

The purpose of the medical suitability process is to ensure that selected applicants are able to perform the duties of their positions without posing a direct threat of harm to themselves or others. This requirement contributes to the protection and preservation of human resources and the overall safety of the workforce, which are urgent and ongoing goals of the Postal Service. An integral component of the process is the medical assessment, which provides the hiring official with information needed for an informed hiring decision. The risk assessment identifies medical restrictions or limitations of the individual and the degree of risk for further illness or injury within the next six months. The medical assessment may suggest job modifications or accommodations that would reduce individual risk and allow performance of the essential functions of the job in a safe manner.

Note: While medical personnel are responsible for the medical assessment, the final medical suitability determination and hiring decision are the responsibility of the appointing official.

Other events that require a medical assessment include:

a. *Conversion/promotion/reassignment/transfer.* A new medical assessment is required when an employee changes to a position with more demanding physical requirements than those associated with the employee's present job. A new assessment is not required if an employee is going to a new job with similar duties.

b. *Reappointment*. An applicant who has had a break in postal service of more than one year must have a new medical assessment. If the break in service is less than one year, a new assessment is not required, provided all the following conditions are met:

   (1) A medical assessment and determination of medical suitability were obtained for the individual's previous employment.

(2) The duties of the new position for which the applicant was selected are not more physically demanding than those required in the last position.

(3) The new application and other suitability screening material does not indicate the need for a new medical assessment.

573 Process Overview

573.1 When to Initiate

The appointing official initiates the request for a medical assessment only after a bona fide job offer has been extended, but prior to effecting the appointment.

573.2 Required Documents

A request for a medical assessment must be accompanied by the following documents:

a. A copy of Form 2591, *Application for Employment*.

b. A copy of the position description of the job offered, and identification as to whether the job is career or noncareer.

c. Functional requirements and environmental factors of the position offered.

573.3 Obtaining Medical Records

Medical information must not be requested prior to a bona fide job offer being extended to the applicant. Medical records from private physicians or clinics may be required by medical personnel to conduct the medical assessment. Applicants must obtain such records without expense to the Postal Service. Where applicants have a medical disability recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs, medical information is obtained using PS Form 2488, *Authorization for Medical Report,* and PS Form 5902, *Request for VA Medical Survey.* Medical personnel coordinate obtaining this information. These forms are filed in the medical office.

574 Appointment Decisions

The appointing official ultimately determines whether the applicant will be appointed after careful consideration of the results from the medical assessment, and the applicants' ability to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation, for which the bona fide job offer was extended. When limitations or risks are identified, appointing officials must follow the interactive process described in Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process,* to make the appropriate medical suitability decision. When the appointing official determines the applicant is medically suitable, with or without reasonable accommodation, the applicant is notified and the appointment made. If the appointing official makes a determination not to appoint because of medical

unsuitability, the applicant is advised of this final decision in writing. See Appendix A-7.

574.1 Nonveterans and Veterans With Less Than 30 Percent Disability

All nonveterans and veterans with less than 30 percent service-connected disability who are denied employment based on medical unsuitability, are to be considered as ineligible for the position. Based on this final employment decision, the applicant must be advised in writing (see Appendix A-7). Postal Service medical suitability standards for applicants provide for full and fair opportunity to present all relevant medical documents. An applicant's involvement in the interactive process where applicable, or when limitations or risks are identified, provides additional opportunities to raise issues prior to the rendering of a final determination.

574.2 Veterans with 30 Percent or More Disability

The examining physician makes the tentative determination that a CPS veteran is unable to perform the duties of a specific position based on a physical or mental disability. The appointing official considers the physician's finding of limitations in reviewing any possible reasonable accommodations that might be contemplated. When a determination is made that a CPS veteran is not medically suitable, the veteran is afforded the right to an OPM review as described below. The appointing official must hold a position open until a final decision is supplied by OPM. The appointing official forwards to the district manager of Human Resources, a file containing the following documents:

a. Completed Side B, SF 62, *Agency Request to Pass Over a Preference Eligible,* in triplicate.

b. A copy of the applicant's Form 2591, *Application for Employment*.

c. A copy of all information relied on to support the adverse medical suitability determination.

Note: Detailed medical information must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *Restricted — Medical*.

d. A signed, undated, written notice to the applicant. This notice must:

(1) Advise the applicant that he or she does not possess the necessary medical qualifications for the position by relating the applicant's medical conditions to the work environment and physical demand factors.

(2) Include a copy of the position description.

(3) Advise the applicant of the right to respond in writing within 15 calendar days of the date of the notification to:

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
STAFFING AND REINVENTION OFFICE
ATTN: J C PHILLIP SPOTTSWOOD
1900 E STREET NW
WASHINGTON DC 20516

(4) State that OPM will notify the applicant directly of its decision.

574.3 District Human Resources Manager

The district Human Resources manager will review the file for completeness and adequacy of supporting documentation. If the district finds that the file does not adequately support the tentative rejection, it will advise the appointing official to appoint the applicant, or furnish the district Human Resources manager additional relevant and material information. If the district finds that the file does adequately support the tentative rejection, it will, within 10 calendar days of receipt of the file, take the following actions:

a. Date the notice to the veteran (which was previously prepared and signed by the appointing official), and send it to the veteran by certified mail, return receipt requested.

b. Send to OPM the SF 62, a copy of the written notice to the veteran, Form 2591, and all supporting documentation upon which the disqualification was based. Material must be double-enveloped, with the inside envelope marked *Restricted — Medical*. It is to be sent certified mail, return receipt requested, to the following address:

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
STAFFING AND REINVENTION OFFICE
ATTN: J C PHILLIP SPOTTSWOOD
1900 E STREET NW
WASHINGTON DC 20516

574.4 OPM Decision

If OPM sustains the reasons for the tentative rejection, the application and one copy of SF 62 are immediately returned to the district Human Resources manager. The appointing official may then select and appoint another applicant. OPM also sends the CPS veteran a written notification of the final determination and informs the applicant of the right to request further review of OPM's determination of eligibility for future Hiring Worksheets, if additional medical evidence supports the request. If OPM does not sustain the reasons for the rejection, appropriate notations on SF 62 are made and a copy of the form, with all attachments, is returned to the district. OPM also notifies the CPS veteran of its determination.

574.5 Final Action

Upon receipt of OPM's decision that the rejection is not sustained, the appointing official may submit more detailed or additional supporting documentation to the district Human Resources manager to further support disqualification. If the district Human Resources manager determines that circumstances warrant reconsideration by OPM, the same submission procedures are followed, again giving the CPS applicant 15 calendar days to respond to the more detailed or additional information. The appointing official must hold a position for the applicant until a final OPM determination has been received. If OPM does not sustain the appointing official's determination, the applicant must be processed for appointment.

575 Disposition of Records

Medical personnel retain restricted medical records. If an applicant is appointed, the nonconfidential portions of documents pertaining to the medical assessment and suitability decision are filed on the permanent side of the employee's official personnel folder. If an applicant is not appointed, the forms are retained in the preemployment investigation file with the applicant's Form 2591.

58 Post Hire Suitability

581 Appointment Affidavit

581.1 Completing Form 61

Items 1–13 of Form 61, *Appointment Affidavit,* must be completed at the interview or job offer stage of the screening process, and each item must be verified prior to administering the oath of office.

581.2 Administering the Oath of Office

The oath of office should be administered as part of new-employee orientation or on the employee's first workday, by a person specified in 39 CFR 222, which includes personnel professionals, level EAS-15 and above, and postmasters. The form should be reviewed for completeness and follow-up action taken, as appropriate, based on any revised answers to questions 1 through 13. The Interview Checklist should also be initialed based on the information provided on Form 61. The word *swear* should be struck when the appointee elects to affirm rather than swear to the affidavit. Only that word may be struck and only when the appointee elects to affirm the affidavits. If appointees have objections to taking the oath, or wish clarification regarding administration of the oath that cannot be handled locally, assistance should be obtained from the appropriate field legal services center.

582 Review of Official Personnel Folders

If a new employee is being transferred from another postal installation or another federal agency, the OPF must be obtained from the former employing office. If a new employee lists the Postal Service or another federal agency as a prior employer, and the separation took place less than 90 calendar days ago, the OPF must be obtained from the former employing office. If the separation took place more than 90 calendar days ago, the OPF must be obtained from the National Personnel Records Center.

Note: The prior postal employment verification feature of the CMS subsystem of Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) provides a computer comparison of the payroll records of new hires with payroll history records to determine if newly appointed employees were previously employed by the Postal Service. This review not only impacts

immediate benefits to which the former employee may be entitled, but also identifies any new hire who might have resigned or been dismissed under adverse conditions. In the latter instance, omission of this information from Form 2591 could be justification for separation from the Postal Service.

583 Security Investigations

583.1 Nonsensitive Positions

The Postal Service selects and retains only those qualified individuals whose employment is consistent with the security interests of the Postal Service and the national security interests of the United States. The majority of all new hires in the Postal Service are to positions classified by the Postal Inspection Service as nonsensitive. Positions that are considered sensitive are listed in the *Administrative Support Manual* (ASM), 272.22, Sensitive Clearance.

583.2 Inspection Service Screening Process

Nonsensitive security screening by the Inspection Service is an automated process that requires no action by the employing office. Each pay period, the Inspection Service electronically matches the payroll records of all newly hired employees, including noncareer employees, against their Investigative History Files (IHF) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) wanted files and warrant files. If any derogatory information turns up from the IHF match or if there are any NCIC wants and warrants matches on employees, the Inspection Service notifies the hiring official.

583.3 Sensitive Positions

The Inspection Service has established requirements for security investigations of applicants for sensitive positions. Procedures for initiating sensitive security requests are found in the ASM. Individuals required to have a sensitive clearance may not be entered on duty nor permitted to assume duties requiring sensitive clearance, until the Inspection Service has granted them either an interim or a final clearance.

584 Employee Evaluation

584.1 Significance of Probationary Period

The probationary period represents the final step in determining an employee's suitability, since only an actual trial on the job can be conclusive. Proper use of the probationary period is in the best interests of both the new employee and the Postal Service. During this period, the new employee receives orientation and whatever training is needed. Attentiveness to the new employee, both in training sessions and on the job, may ensure the satisfaction and efficiency of an employee who might otherwise be separated.

584.2 Outlining Expectations

At the time the oath of office is administered, or during the new employee orientation session, new hires should become familiar with the probationary period and its purpose. The supervisor is responsible for constant informal evaluation throughout the probationary period. This involves close observation and analysis of the new employee's performance to determine both proficiencies and deficiencies. The supervisor consistently attempts by guidance, counsel, and training to assist the new employee to correct any deficiencies in either conduct or performance.

584.3 Length of Probationary Periods

The following probationary periods are required for different kinds of employment:

584.31 Career Appointment to Bargaining Position

An applicant selected for career appointment to a bargaining position must serve a probationary period of 90 calendar days. This applies not only to the first appointment, but also to any subsequent career appointment, reinstatement, or transfer to the Postal Service from another agency, regardless of whether the appointee had previously completed a probationary period.

584.32 Career Appointment to Nonbargaining Position

An applicant selected for career appointment to a nonbargaining position must serve a probationary period of six months of continuous service in the Postal Service, or 12 months of combined service (federal and postal) without a break of a workday in positions in the same line of work.

584.33 Position Change During Probationary Period

A career probationary employee who is promoted, demoted, or reassigned from one position to another during the probationary period, must complete the probationary period uninterrupted in the new position.

584.34 Noncareer Appointment

Noncareer employees do not serve probationary periods. However, periodic review of their performance and completion of a 90-day evaluation report are required. Unsatisfactory casual or temporary employees should be separated as soon as it becomes evident that they are unable to meet the requirements of their positions.

584.35 Reinstatement

Former federal and postal employees who are reinstated must serve new probationary periods.

584.4 Counting Probationary Service

584.41 Periods of Absence

Periods of absence during which an employee is carried on the rolls count toward completion of a probationary period.

584.42 Periods of Military Service

Military service counts toward completion of a probationary period for employees who leave positions in which they were serving probationary periods to enter military service. If the military service is insufficient to complete the probationary period, the employee is required to complete the period upon return.

584.43 Periods of Noncareer Service

Postal service in a casual or temporary status does not count toward completion of a probationary period, even though such service may have immediately preceded the career appointment.

584.44 Reassignment During Probation

The probationary period that begins before a reassignment continues uninterrupted after the reassignment.

584.45 Position Changes During Probation

A change from part-time to full-time employment does not interrupt or otherwise change the time counted toward completion of a probationary period. Promotion, demotion, or reassignment in the same installation or to another installation within the Postal Service does not require a new probationary period, but does require completion of any unfinished probationary period.

Note: An employee can satisfy the career probationary requirement only while performing in a career position. Time spent in a noncareer position cannot be credited toward completion of the career probationary period.

584.5 Bargaining Employees

Form 1750, *Employee Evaluation and/or Probationary Report,* establishes benchmarks for satisfactory work performance. For noncareer employees, the form serves as an evaluation report to make the appropriate rehire decisions, to facilitate coaching and counseling, and to provide assistance to employees needing guidance. For career employees, the form serves as a probationary report that clearly outlines expectations for the probationary period, including the factors to be evaluated. During the employee's first week at the work site, the immediate supervisor must hold an initial discussion to clearly outline performance expectations for the evaluation or probationary period, including the factors to be evaluated and examples of satisfactory performance.

584.51 Performance Evaluation Intervals

The supervisor must discuss the employee's performance with the employee at the end of 30 days, and again at the end of 60 days. Both the supervisor and the employee must initial Form 1750 to indicate that these discussions have taken place. The final evaluation occurs at the end of 80 days, and it contains a definitive recommendation regarding whether the employee should be retained or separated. This evaluation requires the signatures of both the supervisor and the employee.

584.52 Formal Evaluations at Other Intervals

Most deficiencies can be corrected with discussion, training, and counseling. Additional formal evaluations are made only when informal evaluations have not been successful and only after employees understand their deficiencies, and have had a reasonable opportunity to correct them. If these additional evaluations occur during an employee's probationary period, they are documented using Form 1750.

584.53 Evaluation After the Probationary Period

Regular performance evaluations are encouraged after the employee has completed the probationary period. Such evaluations are used for promotion recommendations and for the early identification and correction of problems.

584.6 Nonbargaining Employees

Reserved.

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6 Selection

61 Selection Preparations

611 Responsibility

Appointing officials are responsible for selecting applicants for appointment. It is the policy of the Postal Service not to discriminate in personnel decisions on the basis of (1) race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability as provided by law, or (2) other nonmeritorious factors such as political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

612 Maintenance of Records

To support selection decisions, human resources must keep a record of the eligibles considered for each hire or group of hires on the *Hiring Worksheet* or *Casual Hiring List* (for casual positions). Selections and considerations are placed on paper records or in the Hiring and Testing system.

613 Updating Registers

Changes that might affect which applicants will be certified on *Hiring Worksheets* should be identified and entered on the register prior to preparation or request of a *Hiring Worksheet*. Updates include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Requests to change applicant mailing address.

b. Requests to change veterans' preference.

c. Requests for reactivation where the request can be honored, i.e., applicant now satisfies reason for inactivation and eligibility has not expired.

d. Screening checks that result in disqualification.

e. Performance test results.

f. Actions taken for applicants on other *Hiring Worksheet*s.

g. Actions taken to place applicants who are entitled to lost consideration on one or more subsequent *Hiring Worksheets,* because they were not considered when they should have been.

h. Moving expired applicants to the inactive file.

614 Number of Jobs to Be Filled

614.1 Vacancies

Appointing officials determine number of vacancies in the category (e.g., clerk, carrier, mail handler).

614.2 Eligibles

Enough applicants are processed to allow the appointing official to consider 3 applicants who are eligible and suitable for each vacancy. The availability of eligibles will vary depending on the type of appointment offered, the length of time the eligibles have been on the register, and the local employment conditions. Experience will suggest to the human resources official the approximate number of eligibles to be processed for a given number of vacancies. The human resources officials should allow at least 3 applicants for the first vacancy and an additional applicant for each additional vacancy.

615 Preparing Hiring Worksheets

615.1 Sequence

Number the *Hiring Worksheets* sequentially within the calendar year (e.g., 2001–1 for the first worksheet issued in 2001 and 2001–2 for the second, etc.). Use a single numbering sequence for all registers, not a separate sequence for each register. Show date, title of position, and number of vacancies to be filled. List the eligibles' names and ratings in register order in the appropriate spaces on the worksheet.

615.2 Validity

Hiring Worksheets are valid for a period of 21 calendar days. If needed for more than 21 days, an extension of 10 calendar days may be granted. Requests for an extension, with documentation of the reasons for it, must be made to the district manager of Personnel Services. All offices, however, must make every effort to close out *Hiring Worksheets* as soon as possible so that eligibles will not miss out on other hiring opportunities.

615.3 Processing Requests for Hiring Worksheets

All requests must be date stamped upon receipt, and if possible, the time of receipt should also be indicated. *Hiring Worksheets* are issued in the same order as requests are received.

615.4 When a Register Is Used for More Than One Position

If a register is used to fill more than one entrance position (such as carrier, clerk, and mail processor) and there is a *Hiring Worksheet* that was issued from that same register and is still outstanding, names of applicants shown on the first *Hiring Worksheet* are not listed on the second worksheet. Once the first *Hiring Worksheet* is closed, any applicants who are still active will be available for future certification.

615.5 Special Order of Certification of Applicants

In the following situations applicants are certified on *Hiring Worksheets* in a special order:

a. *Restricted Positions* — For positions restricted to preference eligibles, the applicants are certified in the following order:

(1) Preference eligibles who are entitled to lost consideration.

(2) All 10-point preference eligibles who have a service-connected disability of 10 percent or more.

(3) All remaining preference eligibles. Should a tied score exist, veterans with an XP designation are listed ahead of those with a TP designation.

(4) All remaining eligibles (if nonveterans were allowed to compete).

Nonpreference eligibles should be certified only if there is a likelihood that the supply of preference eligibles will be exhausted before all vacancies have been filled.

b. *Professional Positions in Grades EAS 17 and Higher* — Applicants are certified in the order of their numerical ratings, including claimed veterans' preference points. To break ties where the final scores are the same, applicants with CP or CPS preference would appear ahead of XP applicants who would be listed ahead of TP applicants.

615.6 Issuing Hiring Worksheets

The following procedures are required for all *Hiring Worksheet*s issued from the same register:

a. *Hiring Worksheets* are prepared in triplicate. Two copies are sent to the appointing official of the requesting office and the district office retains one copy.

b. Eligibles may be certified for only one temporary appointment at a time, regardless of position type (e.g., clerk or carrier). While certified for a temporary position, an eligible may also be certified for a career position. However, an eligible may be certified for only one career position at a time regardless of position type.

c. Eligibles certified for a career appointment first must not be certified for a temporary position at the same time. When *Hiring Worksheets* must be prepared for temporary and career positions simultaneously, those eligibles with the highest ratings will be certified on the career *Hiring Worksheet* first, and eligibles with lower ratings will be certified on the temporary *Hiring Worksheet*.

d. The preemployment investigation file (or copy) for each eligible certified should be sent to the appointing official along with the *Hiring Worksheet*.

e. A log of worksheets issued must be maintained (see Exhibit 615.6).

616 Recording Hiring Worksheet Details on Register

Record the date and number of the *Hiring Worksheet,* and the title of the position for which eligibles were certified, on the register. For Area Eligibility Registers (AERs) or mega registers, also record the post office for which the *Hiring Worksheet* is issued.

617 Contacting Eligibles

617.1 Preparation of Interview Notice

Send Form 2550, *Interview Notice,* to each eligible listed. In an urgent situation, eligibles may be contacted by phone; however, in such cases make a note of the call on the *Hiring Worksheet* and keep a record of those eligibles who decline the opportunity or are unavailable. In an impartial manner, describe to all eligibles the position or positions to be filled. Inactivate all eligibles who decline to be considered, fail to respond, or from whom a communication is returned undelivered.

617.2 Maintaining Copies of Interview Notices

Retain a copy of every Form 2550 with the *Hiring Worksheet.*

618 Checking the Status of Suitability Checks

Applications and related documents must be carefully reviewed. Check police, driving, and military records to determine the status of background checks and eligibility and suitability determinations (see 51, Employment Eligibility and Suitability, and 52, Determining Eligibility and Suitability).

Exhibit 615.6
Hiring Worksheet Log

HWS #	Date Request Received	Installation	# of Vacancies	Position Title	Type of Appt.	# of Names on HWS	Date Issued	Date Due	Notes	Date of Audit	# of Selections

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62 Selection Procedures

621 Preemployment Interview

621.1 Interview Requirements

Before a selection has been made or the medical assessment scheduled, a certified interviewer is scheduled to conduct an interview with applicants on the *Hiring Worksheet* (see 54, Preemployment Interview). Wherever feasible, the eligibles must be given the opportunity to visit the actual job site and to observe working conditions. The selecting official or certified interviewer discusses the following with the eligible:

a. Duties of the position.

b. Working hours including reporting times, overtime, holidays, and weekends.

c. An explanation of the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policy.

d. Required dress code.

See 512.21, Preemployment Orientation, for additional information.

621.2 Evaluation of Eligibles

621.21 Appointing Officials' Role in Evaluating Applicants

Appointing officials are responsible for the cost effective and efficient operation of their installations, for the security and sanctity of the mail that flows through their installations, and for the conduct of their employees. To uphold this responsibility, it is important that appointing officials carefully and accurately evaluate eligibles.

621.22 Evaluating Basic Competence in Speaking and Understanding English

Employees routinely receive and must respond to inquiries from supervisors and customers; therefore, employees must have a basic competence in speaking and understanding English.

622 Applicants Excluded From Selection Process

622.1 Applicants Not Available For Consideration

622.11 Applicants to Be Inactivated

Ratings are removed from the active register and placed in the inactive register *only* as a result of:

a. Failure to respond to *Interview Notice* or other official correspondence.

b. Return of official communication undelivered.

c. Indication from applicant of unavailability for career appointment.

d. Receipt of request from applicant to remove his or her name from register.

e. Applicant declining a career position, unless applicant requests retention on the register for future consideration.

622.12 Other Applicants Not Considered

Postal employees will not be considered if:

a. The *Hiring Worksheet* is for a career appointment and the employee holds a career position.

b. The *Hiring Worksheet* or list is for a temporary appointment and the employee holds a career or temporary position.

622.13 Postal Employees Who Are Preference Eligibles

Preference eligibles who are omitted from consideration as provided in 622.12 are not considered to have been passed over.

622.14 Changes on Hiring Worksheet When Veterans' Preference Is Adjusted

When adjustment in rating is necessary because claimed veterans' preference has been disallowed, and the eligible is being considered for appointment in a current selection action, the eligible's position on the *Hiring Worksheet* will also require adjustment according to the new rating. The selecting official lines out the rating and name, and notes the reason. The new rating and name is entered on the *Hiring Worksheet* in score order of the adjusted rating, if the eligible would still be within reach on the register for consideration in the current hiring action.

Note: Veterans' preference points cannot be adjusted *upwards*, (e.g., 5 to 10 points) based on new information provided by the eligible when he or she is being considered for appointment in a current selection action.

622.2 Failure to Meet Eligibility, Suitability, or Job Requirement

622.21 Removal From Consideration

An eligible who fails to meet the requirements for a specific position (for example, ability to type when that is required) is not to be included among those available. The *Hiring Worksheet* must be properly endorsed.

622.22 Applicants Without Satisfactory Driving Record

An eligible being considered for a position requiring driving who presents a Form 2480, *Driving Record — For Positions That Require Driving,* that does not meet Postal Service criteria for a safe driving record is not included among those available. If an applicant was not determined to be ineligible for consideration because of an unsafe driving record until after being certified on the *Hiring Worksheet*, the applicant must be notified in writing when he or she might become eligible for consideration in the future. The applicant is further notified that he or she is responsible for notifying the district when his or her driving record is satisfactory to request reactivation on the appropriate register.

622.23 Applicants With Pending Criminal Charges

If an applicant has a pending violation that if it resulted in a conviction, would disqualify the applicant, no further action may be taken on the application until the charges are resolved (see 514.38, Additional Considerations).

622.24 Eligibility Period for Disqualified Applicants

Periods of disqualification will not extend the normal term of eligibility, which is limited to a maximum of 3 years.

622.25 Unsuitable Applicants Not Selected

Those who do not appear to be capable of meeting Postal Service requirements must not be selected.

623 Selection From Three Highest Ranked Eligibles

Selection is made from among the 3 highest rated eligibles available for the type of appointment being offered from the appropriate register. However, a preference eligible may not be passed over to select a nonpreference eligible who is lower on the register unless the action is documented (see 627, Objection to or Pass Over of Preference Eligible).

Note: At the appointing official's option, a selection may be made, even if only 1 or 2 eligibles are available, or return the *Hiring Worksheet* to the district and request additional names.

624 Applying the Rule of Three in Selection

Appointing officials are required to select the applicants whose qualifications make them the best fit to the positions for which they are being considered. In order to do this, they must use the *rule of three* when making selections (see 623 and 625). Eligibles who are not suitable are disqualified as described in 52, Determining Eligibility and Suitability.

625 Selection Sequence

For the first vacancy, the appointing official selects from among the 3 highest on the *Hiring Worksheet* who are available for the position to be filled. If more than one vacancy is available, eligibles not selected in filling the first vacancy and the next available eligible listed on the *Hiring Worksheet* are then considered. An eligible who has been considered 3 times for the same job category, and not selected, is not considered again for that job category and installation. However, the eligible's name remains on the active register until considered 3 times for other job categories and installations for which the register is used (see 628.2, Retention on Register).

626 Selection Decision

In making selection decisions, the appointing official follows the procedures specified in 62, Selection Procedures, paying particular attention to the provisions stated in 624, Applying Rule of Three in Selection, and 625, Selection Sequence.

Selection decisions must be made allowing sufficient time for medical assessments and to meet scheduled reporting dates. Once a decision is reached, the appointing official must advise selectees that their appointments are contingent upon their being found medically suitable. Selectees must also be given the date, time, and location of the medical assessment. After the medical assessment has been administered and the results reviewed, the appointing official must notify selectees of their employment suitability. If possible, forward employment notifications to suitable selectees at least 2 weeks prior to scheduled reporting dates. This will allow sufficient time for selectees to notify their present employers, if applicable.

627 Objection to or Pass Over of Preference Eligible

627.1 Preference Eligibles Except CPS

These instructions apply to all veterans' preference eligibles *except* CPS that did not result in pass over.

627.11 Preparation

Whenever it is proposed to object to a preference eligible for *other than medical* reasons, or to pass over a preference eligible and appoint a nonpreference eligible, the appointing official must prepare written reasons that justify the proposed action.

627.12 Review and Concurrence

The review and concurrence of the manager of Human Resources is required. He or she will rule as to whether or not there is sufficient reason for the proposed objection or will pass over. The manager of Human Resources notes concurrence or denial of the proposal on the written request. The document is then signed and dated by the manager of Human Resources. Evidence of the review and concurrence or denial is filed with the *Hiring Worksheet*.

627.13 Reasons for Objection or Pass Over

The only acceptable reason for passing over an eligible who has veteran's preference and appointing an eligible without preference is that there is evidence that indicates the preference eligible fails to meet suitability requirements (see 51, Employment Eligibility and Suitability, and 52, Determining Eligibility and Suitability).

Example: The veteran is being considered for a mail handler job. While previously employed as a temporary mail handler a short time ago, the veteran's performance was clearly unsatisfactory and was so documented.

This could be considered a valid reason for passing over the veteran and appointing a nonpreference eligible lower on the register.

627.14 Procedure

The following procedures apply:

a. *Time limits.* If the reviewing official cannot act on the request in time so that the *Hiring Worksheet* will be returned to the issuing office within 21 days, the desired final action may be noted on the *Hiring Worksheet.* However, at least 1 appointment for each applicant must be reserved until the reviewing official's decision is received. If the reviewing official denies the request, the proposed objection or pass over may not be put into effect.

b. *Reconsideration.* Any preference eligible objected to or passed over in favor of a nonpreference eligible is given the reasons for this action in writing and he or she will be informed of the right to request reconsideration by the selecting official (see 524, Applicant Request for Reconsideration). The selecting official's decision is final.

627.2 Veterans With 30 Percent or More Compensable Disability

627.21 General

When there is a proposal to pass over a CPS veteran and to select a nonpreference eligible in the same *group of three*, the CPS eligible must first be afforded the right of an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) review as described below. The appointing official must hold a position open until OPM gives a final decision. *A nonmedical objection to a CPS eligible that does not result in a pass over is handled in accordance with* 627.1*,* Preference Eligibles Except CPS*.*

627.22 Action by Installation

The appointing official forwards to the manager of Human Resources a file containing:

a. A completed Side A of SF 62 in triplicate.

b. A copy of the eligible's PS Form 2591, *Application for Employment.*

c. A copy of all information relied upon to support the pass over.

d. A signed, undated written notice to the eligible. The notice must:

(1) Advise the eligible that the pass over is proposed and explain the reasons for it.

(2) Specify the name of the installation, position title, level, and *Hiring Worksheet* number.

(3) Advise the eligible of the right to respond in writing within 15 days of the date of the notification to:

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
NACI CENTER
SAB
BOYERS PA 16018-0245

(4) State that OPM will notify the eligible of its decision on the proposed pass over.

627.23 Action by District

The following actions are taken by the district:

a. When the manager of Human Resources, receives the file from the appointing official, he or she will review the file to see that it is complete and contains adequate supporting documentation.

b. If the district finds that the file *does not* adequately support the tentative rejection, it will advise the appointing official to appoint the eligible or furnish additional relevant backup documentation.

c. If the district finds that the file *does* adequately support the tentative rejection, it will:

(1) Date the notice (which was previously prepared and signed by the appointing official) and send it to the veteran by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(2) Send OPM the SF 62, a copy of the written notice sent to the veteran, PS Form 2591, and all supporting documents upon which the disqualification was based. Send via certified mail, return receipt requested, to:

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
NACI CENTER
SAB
BOYERS PA 16018-0245

(3) Steps (1) and (2) above must be completed within 10 calendar days.

627.24 Action by OPM

The following actions are taken by OPM:

a. If OPM sustains the reasons for pass over of the CPS veteran, the application and one copy of the SF 62 are immediately returned to the manager of Human Resources, and another copy of the SF 62 is concurrently forwarded to the appropriate installation. The appointing official may then take action to select the nonpreference eligible.

b. If OPM does not sustain the reasons for the request to pass over the CPS veteran, the appointing official may submit more detailed information to the district. If the district determines that the circumstances warrant reconsideration by OPM, the same submission procedures will be followed, again giving the CPS eligible 15 days to respond to the more detailed information. If OPM does not sustain the reasons for the proposed pass over, the appointing official may not pass over the preference eligible.

628 Updating Records

628.1 Codes to Be Used on Hiring Worksheet

Use the following symbols to record both on the *Hiring Worksheet* and on the register, or in the Hiring and Testing system the action taken concerning each eligible processed in a hiring action:

Code	Description
SEL	Selection
NS0	Nonselection, no considerations
NS1	Nonselection, one consideration
NS2	Nonselection, two considerations
NS3	Nonselection, three considerations
ENU	Not available until a given date
FTR	Failure to respond
CRU	Communication returned unclaimed
DNR	Declined did not request retention
CCE	Current career employee regardless of installation, location, or level of position
EPR	Not available, no date given
NAP	Not available pending resolution of suitability (Has pending criminal charge, which if convicted upon, would disqualify applicant; or does not meet English competency requirements)

628.2 Retention on Register

628.21 Applicants to Be Inactivated

Ratings are removed from the active register and placed in the inactive register as a result of the following:

a. A selection for a career appointment.

b. If the eligible has been considered 3 times for career appointment for each job category filled by the register.

628.22 Other Inactivation Rule

If the register is used to fill more than 1 job category (e.g., clerk, carrier, and mail processor), nonselection for one category would not eliminate the eligible from consideration for the other types of positions.

628.3 Processing Applicant Records

Applicant records are handled according to their ending statuses on the *Hiring Worksheet*:

a. *Current career employee (CCE) or current noncareer employee (SSE)*. (1) CCE in the inactive register and (2) SSE in the active register.

b. *Declined — did not request retention (DNR).* In the inactive register, if the position declined was career and the eligible did not request that his

or her name be retained on the register for future consideration for career appointment. If the position declined was other than career, place the applicant record in the active register for future consideration for career appointment, unless the eligible asked to have his or her name removed from the register, or indicated clearly, in writing, that there is no interest in a career appointment from this register. If so, the applicant record is filed in the inactive register.

c. *Eligible not available until* (ENU). In the active register.

d. *Eligible's personal request (EPR).* In the inactive register if it is clear that the eligible is not interested in any postal position. However, if eligibles were being considered for a temporary appointment and may, in fact, be interested in a career appointment, then, return the record to the active register.

e. *Failure to respond* (FTR) and communication returned unclaimed (CRU). In the inactive register.

f. *Nonselection* (NS0, NS1, NS2). In the active register.

g. *Nonselection (NS3).* In the inactive register.

h. *Selection (SEL).* In the inactive register, if the appointment was career. If the appointment was other than a career appointment, the applicant record is refiled in the active register since the eligible is entitled to consideration for a career appointment from the register when such an appointment is being made and the name is reached for consideration.

63 Auditing Selection Actions

631 General

Reviews of hiring practices and procedures in postal installations are made, as necessary, by the Inspection Service. *Hiring Worksheets* must be kept for 5 years.

632 Worksheet Audits

Hiring Worksheets must be audited at the district before appointments are made. Auditing is the process in which *Hiring Worksheets* are reviewed to ensure compliance with regulatory selection rules and procedures (see Exhibit 632, Auditing Hiring Worksheets). The auditing employee determines that all documentation required for declinations and exclusions-from-consideration is in order and that all selections have been made in regard to the rule of three and veterans' preference. Detected violations must be immediately brought to the attention of appointing officials so corrective action can be taken. Evidence of this audit (e.g., Audited by (signature) on (date)) must appear on the *Hiring Worksheet* (see 631, General, for retention period).

Hiring Worksheets issued by the Hiring and Testing system are audited the same as other *Hiring Worksheets* using the system selection application. The rule of three does not have to be done manually since appropriate notations are generated by the system.

633 Return of Hiring Worksheets Without Selection

If a *Hiring Worksheet* is returned and no selections were made, the selecting official submits a report stating the reasons why no selections were made. It is not enough to state: *Position to be filled by reassignment, promotion, change to lower level, transfer,* or *position not filled at this time,* if the manager or postmaster intends to submit another request for filling the same position in the near future.

Exhibit 632
Auditing Hiring Worksheets

The following instructions provide a systematic way to validate selections, nonselections, and other applicant dispositions from *Hiring Worksheets:*

a. If a name has been removed improperly from consideration, the selecting official's code must be changed to *NS* (Nonselection) before auditing continues.

b. The following steps should be observed in determining the proper order of selection:

(1) Disregard all candidates who have been legitimately removed from consideration.

(2) For the first vacancy, determine who the first 3 available candidates are and place a *c* beside their names to indicate the group of 3 from which the first selection can be made. Then determine that the first selectee was within the top 3 available candidates, that is, that there are not 3 NS candidates above him or her. An example may look like this:

95.0 TP	Armstrong	c			SEL
93.0	Baker				DNR
90.0	Carter	c			SEL
89.0	Davis	c			NS1
89.0	Evans				FTR
85.0	Farmer				NS
82.0	Green				SEL
82.0	Hamilton				NS

(3) Then determine that the first selectee is either (a) a preference eligible, or (b) that there is not a nonselected preference eligible above him or her on the *Hiring Worksheet*. If steps 2 and 3 check out, the first selection is legitimate.

(4) If there was more than one selection made from the *Hiring Worksheet,* place a *c* beside the names of the remaining 2 eligibles who were not selected for the first vacancy and the name of the next available eligible, working downward on the *Hiring Worksheet*. Our example will now look like this:

95.0 TP	Armstrong	c			SEL
93.0	Baker				DNR
90.0	Carter	c	c		SEL
89.0	Davis	c	c		NS2
89.0	Evans				FTR
85.0	Farmer		c		NS1
82.0	Green				SEL
82.0	Hamilton				NS

(5) For the second vacancy, determine that the selectee is within the second group of 3 and that he or she meets the criteria outlined in 3 above. If so, the second selection is legitimate. It is also apparent that Davis has received 2 bona fide considerations and is entitled to a third.

Exhibit 632 (continued)
Auditing Hiring Worksheets

(6) If there were more than 2 selections made from the *Hiring Worksheet,* place a *c* beside the names of the remaining eligibles who were not selected for the second vacancy (in our example, Davis and Farmer) and the name of the next available eligible, working downward on the *Hiring Worksheet*. Our example will now look like this:

95.0 TP	Armstrong	c			SEL
93.0	Baker				DNR
90.0	Carter	c	c		SEL
89.0	Davis	c	c	c	NS3
89.0	Evans				FTR
85.0	Farmer		c	c	NS2
82.0	Green			c	SEL
82.0	Hamilton				NS0

(7) For the third vacancy, determine that the appointee is within the third group of 3 and that he or she meets the criteria outlined in 3 above. If so, the third selection is legitimate. It is also apparent in our example that Davis has now received 3 bona fide considerations without being selected. Davis's name can now be removed from consideration if there is a fourth vacancy to be filled. His line on the *Hiring Worksheet* can be shown with a *NS3* written on the *Hiring Worksheet* to reflect the 3 valid considerations (see below):

89.0	Davis	c	c	c	NS3

(8) Continue following these steps for each additional vacancy over 3.

c. If the *Hiring Worksheet* will not audit properly, then an invalid selection has been made. The selecting official must be notified immediately. Corrections must be made before the individual selected in error enters on duty.

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7 Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion

71 Introduction

711 Organization

Qualified career employees fill most postal positions (excluding new hires) through assignment, reassignment, and/or promotion. This chapter contains policies and procedures governing the following inservice placements:

a. 72 — Bargaining Positions.

b. 73 — Initial Level Supervisor Positions.

c. 74 — EAS Positions.

d. 75 — Associate Supervisor Positions.

e. 76 — Bargaining Position Qualification Standards.

f. 77 — Employment Restoration After Military Service.

712 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy

It is Postal Service policy that selections for positions to be filled by assignment, reassignment, or promotion comply with the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements, and are based on merit and the relevant experience, training, knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the positions being filled. It is the policy of the Postal Service not to discriminate in personnel decisions on the basis of (1) race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability as provided by law, or (2) other nonmeritorious factors such as political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

713 Exclusions and Limitations

These Chapter 7 procedures specifically exclude:

a. Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) positions.

b. *Restricted Positions*. Provisions on filling positions restricted to preference eligibles (as specified in 232.52, Positions Restricted to

Applicants Eligible for Veterans' Preference) do not apply to inservice placements of career employees.

c. *Veterans' Preference*. Preference does not apply to the internal placement of career employees. Preference does, however, apply to external applicants.

The existing limitations include:

a. Restrictions on filling sensitive jobs and EAS positions at level 20 or above with noncitizens (see 513.5, Citizenship Policy).

b. Eligibility for consideration to some positions is limited to employees in specific levels, occupations, geographic areas, or organizations.

714 Selection Definitions and Philosophy

714.1 Definitions Applicable to Selection

The following definitions clarify and standardize the terms used in the selection process:

a. *Requirements.* The knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, and physical and other conditions that pertain to a specific *position* (or duty assignment). Not all these requirements are appropriate for every position; only those types of requirements that an individual needs to successfully perform the duties of the position upon entry are used.

b. *Qualifications*. The knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and physical and other conditions that pertain to the *applicant* or *bidder*. Applicants and bidders must meet the requirements, which means that they must possess as qualifications the same knowledge, skills, abilities, etc., that are requirements for the position. It also means that bidders must demonstrate that they possess each of these *qualifications* at a level that is sufficient for satisfactory (as opposed to unsatisfactory) performance in the position. The timing for meeting the requirements for senior qualified positions is discussed in 727.4, Timing and Sequence of Evaluation.

c. *Special conditions*. The conditions that apply to nonbargaining positions only. They describe the circumstances under which the work is performed. Being able to meet a special condition is essential to satisfactory performance at entry. Often conditions pertain to the willingness of the applicant to perform certain duties or tasks (e.g., willingness to travel frequently or to work irregular hours).

d. *Special requirements*. The requirements that apply to bargaining positions only. However, special requirements are stated as knowledge, skills, or abilities of the particular job assignment. These requirements may be added locally and used in addition to the position qualification standard.

e. *Qualification standard.* An official document that identifies the requirements of a bargaining position that are needed at entry. The requirements specified might not be an exhaustive list of requirements for continued satisfactory performance in the position.

f. *Desirable qualification*. A knowledge, skill, or ability that is not a mandatory requirement of the position, but one that would be beneficial in performing the duties of a specific job and applies only to best qualified positions.

g. *Factors*. Clusters of related knowledge, skills, and abilities evaluated as a single requirement. Factors occur only in postmaster and initial level supervisor selection.

h. *Job posting (bid posting)*. A posting for the filling of bargaining senior qualified bid positions. *Vacancy announcement* refers to the filling of entrance positions, best qualified positions, or nonbargaining positions. The job posting or vacancy announcement contains either a list of requirements needed upon entry to the position, the qualification standard number, or an attached qualification standard. Requirements listed in a vacancy announcement are not considered exhaustive for continued satisfactory performance in the position.

714.2 Selection Philosophy

The philosophy underlying all selections is that a person placed into a position must be qualified — that is, must meet the requirements of the position. For senior qualified positions, selection is based on a determination of whether the senior bidder is qualified. For best qualified and nonbargaining positions, selection is based on a determination of who is best qualified on the basis of total qualifications.

Employees are responsible for updating their personnel records to reflect current experience, education, training, and other qualifications. Human resources personnel must assist employees who need help in properly documenting such information.

715 Use of Penalty Mail for Applications

Current postal employees may forward job applications and job bids by penalty mail if the application or bid is in response to an official Postal Service job announcement.

716 Positions Filled Temporarily

When a career employee is temporarily absent, his or her position may be filled by temporary assignment, reassignment, or promotion. The applicant must understand the terms of such an assignment — specifically, that when the absent employee returns, the applicant returns to the position he or she occupied prior to the temporary assignment (see 716.23, Preappointment Statement).

Examples of temporary absences of an incumbent that justify filling a position temporarily include the following:

a. Serving active military duty.

b. Serving as a national officer of a postal employee organization.

c. Being temporarily assigned and/or promoted to another position.

d. Being appointed as an officer-in-charge.

716.1 Temporary Assignments

Temporary assignment is the placement of an employee into an established position for a limited period of time to perform duties and responsibilities other than those contained in the employee's normal position description. A formal reassignment and/or promotion personnel action is not required.

716.11 Temporary Bargaining Assignments

Unless stated in the relevant collective bargaining agreement, employees in temporary bargaining assignments must meet the qualification standards for the positions to which they are assigned. When the relevant collective bargaining agreement contains specific provisions regarding higher level bargaining assignments, these provisions must be followed.

716.12 Temporary Assignments to Nonbargaining Positions

The following general policies apply to temporary assignments to nonbargaining positions:

a. Temporary assignments to nonbargaining positions are made only for the shortest practical time limits and may be used to meet emergencies caused by abnormal workload, a change in mission or organization, or unanticipated absences.

b. When a nonbargaining employee is absent (except postmaster), every effort must be made to have the duties absorbed by other employees of the same or higher level.

c. The appointing official or designee may temporarily assign any qualified employee to meet service needs.

d. Normally, priority is given to unassigned employees (i.e., employees whose positions have been abolished).

e. A temporary assignment may be terminated at any time, either at management's discretion or at the employee's request.

f. Temporary assignment of an employee to a position at the same or lower level should not exceed 90 calendar days unless extended by the next higher level of management above the appointing official. (See 716.144, 120-Day Time Limit, for time limits on temporary assignment to a higher-level position.)

g. Temporary assignments must be documented using Form 1723, *Assignment Order*.

716.13 Temporary Assignment to Higher Level — Bargaining

See 716.11, Temporary Bargaining Assignments.

716.14 Temporary Assignment to Higher Level — Nonbargaining

716.141 Necessity

No one may be temporarily assigned to a higher-level nonbargaining position unless such an assignment is absolutely essential to the effective operations

of the Postal Service, and the person selected assumes the full core responsibilities of the higher-level position.

716.142 **Higher Management Level Approval for Assignments of 30 Calendar Days**

Higher-level temporary assignments of 30 or more calendar days require approval from next level of management.

716.143 **Higher Level Assignments Limited to 90 Calendar Days Unless Extended**

Temporary assignment to a higher-level position, during the absence of the incumbent, is limited to a maximum period of 90 calendar days, which may be extended with the prior approval of the vice president of Area Operations.

716.144 **120-Day Time Limit**

Temporary assignment to a higher-level vacant position, *pending selection of a person for permanent placement,* is limited to a total of not more than 120 calendar days. If the employee on temporary assignment could become or is a potential candidate for the vacant position, the higher-grade assignment must be terminated before the 121st day. If that employee is not a candidate, the next higher-level manager over the manager with the vacancy may approve an extension of that employee's temporary assignment beyond 120 days, until a selection is made and the new employee assumes the position. (See 743.16, Exceptions to the 120-Day Limit, for exceptions.)

716.2 Temporary Promotion

Temporary promotion is limited to situations where it is impractical to fill a higher-level position by other temporary means. Such situations include, but are not limited to, long-term absences of the incumbent or the need to defer the permanent filling of a position for a lengthy period of time.

716.21 Selection Procedures

Temporary promotions are filled using competitive promotion procedures. When the position is filled permanently, competitive procedures are used again. An employee who has served in a position through competitive temporary promotion is eligible to recompete, regardless of the duration of the temporary promotion.

716.22 Appointment Duration

Temporary promotion may be made for 1 year or less, depending upon need. If the employee's services are still needed in the temporary assignment after the initial period expires, it must be determined whether the situation is still temporary, or whether the position should be filled permanently. A temporary promotion may not be extended beyond 1 year without approval of the district Human Resources manager. No temporary promotion may exceed 2 years. Unless extended, a temporary promotion automatically terminates on a specified date. However, at the discretion of management, it may be terminated at any time prior to the automatic termination date.

716.23 Preappointment Statement

Applicants for temporary promotion must be informed of the conditions of the appointment including the expected duration. Persons selected must be

assured of return to their regular positions when no longer needed in the temporary assignments, whether or not the expected period has ended. To avoid any misunderstanding at a later date, the following statement should be obtained from any employee selected for temporary promotion:

> *I understand that my selection for the position of (position title) is temporary and that I will be returned to my present permanent position upon termination of the temporary promotion.*

717 Positions Filled Permanently

717.1 Reassignment

Reassignment is the permanent assignment with or without relocation of an employee to another established position with the same level in the same salary schedule, or to a position with an equivalent level in another salary schedule. The following policies apply to reassignment:

a. *Reassignment to Bargaining Positions.* General policies and procedures governing reassignments to bargaining positions are contained in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. (See 72, Bargaining Positions, and 76, Bargaining Position Qualification Standards, for detailed policies and procedures.)

b. *Reassignment to Nonbargaining Positions*. Management may reassign nonbargaining employees noncompetitively. Employees with saved grade are considered noncompetitively for positions up to the level of their former position or at any intervening level. Employees who desire reassignment may apply in the same way as employees who desire promotion consideration.

c. *Mutual Exchanges*. Career bargaining employees may exchange positions at the same level if the exchange is approved by management at the installations involved, subject to the provisions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement. An exchange of positions does not necessarily mean that the employees involved take over the duty assignments of the positions.

Exclusions: Part-time flexible employees may not exchange positions with full-time employees, or bargaining employees with nonbargaining employees, or nonsupervisory employees with supervisory employees.

717.2 Unassigned Employees

Employees whose positions have been abolished are assigned in accordance with ELM 354, Assignment of Unassigned Employees.

717.3 Promotion

A *promotion* is the permanent assignment with or without relocation of an employee to an established position with a higher level than the employee's previous position, or to an established position with a higher than equivalent level in another schedule (see ELM 413, Promotion to Nonbargaining Positions). Restrictions on the promotion, or recommendation for promotion,

of immediate relatives of nonbargaining employees are detailed in 513.3, Relatives. The following policies apply to promotion:

a. *Promotion to Bargaining Positions*. General principles governing promotions to bargaining positions are contained in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement (see 72, Bargaining Positions).

b. *Promotion to Nonbargaining Positions*. General policies and procedures governing promotions to nonbargaining positions are contained in ELM 350, Assignment, Reassignment, and Promotion. (See 73–75 of this handbook for specific policies.)

717.31 Competitive Procedures

Except as otherwise indicated, competitive procedures apply to all permanent promotions.

717.32 Exceptions to Competitive Procedures

The following promotion actions are excepted from competitive promotion procedures:

a. Promotion of the incumbent to a position reclassified at a higher level without significant change in duties and responsibilities.

b. Promotion and assignment of present or former nonbargaining employees to higher-level nonbargaining positions under the specific conditions described in 73–75. This includes employees with retreat rights, those previously reduced in level, or those serving with saved grade.

c. Promotion of an employee who satisfactorily completes an approved training program that specifically provides for promotion, if the employee was selected for the program under competitive procedures, and the fact that selection could lead to promotion was made known to potential candidates for the program.

717.4 Absent Employees

717.41 Not on Active Military Duty

Employees on extended leave including leave without pay will also be considered provided they are otherwise eligible and have applied for promotion. If the employee is selected for promotion, the personnel action is processed upon return to postal duty. The date placed on the personnel action is the date the promotion would have occurred had the employee not been absent. Upon selection and while the personnel action is pending, notation of the selection is made in the employee's official personnel folder.

717.42 On Active Military Duty

717.421 Bidding on Positions

While on active military duty, employees continue to gain seniority and may bid on positions that become vacant during the employee's absence. A written or electronic notice must be submitted by the employee to human resources, or if appropriate, to the manager-in-charge, such as postmaster, indicating the employee's interest to bid on specific positions. The bid must

be processed and awarded in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement *as if the employee is actively employed.* If awarded, a personnel action is initiated to place the employee in the newly gained position and pay scale and to assure that seniority is credited as specified by the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Unsuccessful bids are retained until the desired position is gained or the employee resumes active employment upon return from the military service. Training is deferred for employees who gain a position for which there is contractually required training until they return. Upon their return, the employee will be required pursuant to the respective collective bargaining agreement to meet the training requirements. No personnel action is to be initiated until the training requirement is completed. In these cases, every effort must be made to train the employee upon return to work. The employee would only be awarded the position upon satisfactory completion of the required training. An audit trail documenting the bid submissions must be maintained.

717.422 EAS Positions

Nonbargaining and bargaining employees on military duty who are interested in being considered for EAS positions are required to submit to human resources personnel a completed Form 991, *Application for Promotion or Assignment,* for vacancies in desired positions and locations. Human resources personnel activate the application as soon as there is a vacancy in the desired position and location. The application is considered in accordance with the area of consideration noted on the announcement. Applications resulting in a nonselection are considered for other vacancies as they occur in the specified occupation, until the applicant has been successfully selected. Applications from employees who are on active duty with the uniformed services are to be accepted at any time for subsequent consideration when an appropriate vacancy is announced.

EAS employees on active military duty may also request reassignments to lateral or lower level positions in accordance with the EAS selection policy. Selected individuals are to be placed in the new position with the appropriate pay level by initiating a personnel action while in the leave without pay (LWOP) status.

An audit trail of the selection activity must be established and retained by human resources. Upon return from active military service, the responsibility for submitting bids or applications for EAS positions reverts to the employee.

718 Vacancy File

A vacancy file is established for all promotions made under the competitive procedures (see 728.26 and 728.38 for bargaining procedures and 743.42 for nonbargaining procedures).

72 Bargaining Positions

721 Filling Positions

The filling of bargaining positions through assignment, reassignment, or promotion is subject to the provisions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreements. Except for provisions in the agreements covering excess and ill or injured employees, vacancies must be filled by promotion or reassignment within the appropriate craft and installation, if qualified bidders or applicants are available (see 212.13, Promotion to Entrance Level Positions).

722 Conversion to Full-Time Status

A *full-time residual position* is filled by assigning an unassigned full-time employee or a full-time flexible employee. The conversion to full-time of a qualified *part-time* flexible employee with the same designation or occupation code as the vacancy should occur only after unassigned full-time employees have been assigned. Part-time flexible employees must be changed to full-time regular positions, if appropriate, within the installation in the order specified by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

723 Area of Consideration

The area of consideration is described in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. If necessary, the area may be expanded to eligible employees in other crafts at the same installation, and then to eligible employees at other installations.

724 Position Requirements

Requirements for individual duty assignments are indicated in qualification standards, vacancy announcements, or job postings. These requirements pertain to assignment, reassignment, or promotion. A vacancy announcement or job posting may indicate requirements in addition to those in the applicable qualification standard. These additional requirements include special requirements or typing and/or driving requirements that may be added (see 725.2, Appropriate Special Requirements, and 763.22, Local Options for Typing and Driving Requirements). Qualification standards are available for most bargaining positions on Bqnet, *Bargaining Qualifications on the Net*. When a qualification standard exists for a specific bargaining position, its provisions must be followed. (See 727.2, No Qualification Standards, when a qualification standard is not available for a position.)

725 Special Requirements

725.1 Identification, Justification, and Documentation

Special requirements must be related to the job, and must be justified to show that the particular requirement will enable applicants to perform critical job duties that they would otherwise be unable to do satisfactorily. Sufficient

documentation must be available to show that special requirements are clearly job-related, and the documentation must be retained in the vacancy file.

725.2 Appropriate Special Requirements

Special requirements for bargaining positions should be written as knowledge, skill, or ability statements.

Examples of appropriate special requirements if justified for a particular position include:

a. Knowledge of a language other than English.

b. Knowledge of a particular computer programming language that cannot readily be acquired after selection.

725.3 Inappropriate Special Requirements

Educational requirements, such as a bachelor's degree, or length of experience, such as 6 months' experience, are *not* appropriate as special requirements and must not be added locally. If education or experience requirements are listed on a qualification standard, they may *not* be modified. No tests may be added, *except* as allowed for typing requirements. Other examples of inappropriate special requirements include:

a. A requirement that could readily be met by a brief initial period of orientation and familiarization in the assignment.

b. A requirement that unduly restricts the number of eligible candidates or favors a particular candidate.

c. A requirement not immediately essential to the position, such as one based on a possible future assignment, except in the case of a trainee position where ability and potential to advance to higher levels in the occupation are required.

726 Posting Requirements

All vacant craft duty assignments that are not to be reverted must first be posted within the craft for filling in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Bidders or applicants must meet all requirements before being placed into the position. When posting does not result in successful bidders or applicants, the following may be used to fill the position:

a. Reassignment.

b. Change to lower level.

c. Promotion.

d. Reinstatement (see 233.32, Reinstatement).

e. Transfer from another federal agency (see 233.33, Transfer From Another Federal Agency).

f. Other external appointment.

726.1 Entry Positions in PS-5 and Below

Entry-level promotional opportunities to residual vacancies remaining after exhausting the bidding or application procedures need not be posted. However, procedures must be developed locally to inform lower level employees of promotional opportunities and to arrange for appropriate inservice examinations for employees who have not already qualified. Management must encourage employees to apply, and extend every opportunity for promotion to employees who are eligible, qualified, and available before recruiting from external sources.

Employees on active military duty may leave bids or applications for future bargaining vacancies with human resources, or an appropriate manager, for actualization when posting occurs.

726.2 Senior Qualified Positions

Senior qualified positions must be posted in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

726.3 Best Qualified Positions

Best qualified positions must be posted in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. The following posting requirements are applicable for best qualified positions only:

a. Position by title, number, level, and duties.

b. Location, tour of duty, and scheduled workweek.

c. Existing requirements. If a qualification standard is available on Bqnet, it must be used.

d. Directions where to send applications, the date by which applications must be submitted, and where additional information can be obtained.

e. Specification that selection will be made from among the best qualified applicants who are eligible and available.

f. Craft designation, in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

g. Statement on equal employment opportunity.

h. Statement on prohibition of political recommendations.

727 Bargaining Selection Procedures

The goal of bargaining selection procedures, whether for entry or inservice positions, is to ensure that qualified people are selected to fill the positions. Eligibles selected, promoted, or reassigned at any level must meet all the requirements of the position as stated on the qualification standard, and the vacancy announcement or job posting.

727.1 Qualification Standards

Bargaining qualification standards, available on Bqnet, *Qualification Standards, Bargaining Positions on the Intranet,* indicate the requirements

that all bidders or applicants must meet to be eligible for placement in the position. The qualification standards are applicable when filling both entry and inservice positions. Additional requirements for positions may be established only as specified in 725, Special Requirements, and 76, *Bargaining Position Qualification Standards*. These additional requirements must be specified on the job posting or vacancy announcement. Section 76 contains further instructions on the use of qualification standards.

727.2 No Qualification Standards

Some bargaining positions do not have qualification standards. Requirements for these positions must be developed locally and be included in the vacancy announcement or job posting. Appropriate documentation used to develop requirements must be retained in the vacancy file.

727.3 When to Evaluate Qualifications

Human resources personnel are obligated to ensure that successful bidders have demonstrated that they meet all the position requirements, including the following:

a. *Bidding for a Change in Schedule*. When a bid is to a position of the same title and level in order to obtain a change in the work schedule, an evaluation of qualifications is limited to typing or driving requirements and special requirements, if any, that may be different from those in the current duty assignment.

b. *Bidding to Return to a Position Previously Held*. When a bid is to return to a position previously held, appropriate records must be reviewed to determine if the requirements for the position are the same as when the bidder originally obtained the position. If any requirements have changed, the bidder must meet all new requirements, regardless of how long it has been since the bidder left the position. An eligible bidder may be disqualified on a current bid if the bidder was previously taken out of the same or similar position for not meeting a job requirement. Similarly, a record of pending removal in a previous position may also be justification for disqualification. In both cases, the amount of time passed between bidding out and bidding back, and the bidder's record in the interim must be considered.

727.4 Timing and Sequence of Evaluation

Time frames and sequences appropriate to the evaluation process, indicated elsewhere in this chapter and in the collective bargaining agreements, state that while applicants and/or bidders must *meet the requirements* of the position, not all the requirements must necessarily be demonstrated at the same time. For example, after a senior bidder has been found to meet all other requirements of a position with training requirements, the bidder is placed into training and then must demonstrate satisfactory completion of the training. Also, an applicant or bidder may be awarded a position pending review of driving history records and the actual driver's license to ensure its validity (see 516, Driving History, and 517.5, Driver's License Review). Evaluators, review committees, and selecting officials must take such

sequences into account when evaluating qualifications or requesting that applicants and bidders demonstrate their qualifications.

727.5 Evaluating Qualifications

When qualifications are evaluated, applicants and bidders have the obligation to demonstrate that their qualifications meet the requirements. If there is insufficient information to establish a senior bidder's qualifications, information from the bidder is requested after close of the posting (see 728.22, Bidding and Qualifications). If an applicant or bidder does not meet all the requirements of the position, including an examination, the person is not qualified and therefore, not eligible for further consideration. (See 714.1b, for an explanation of *meeting the requirements,* and 727.4, for information that covers when requirements must be met.)

727.6 Pertinent Information

In evaluating qualifications, evaluators must consider available pertinent information that tends to show whether the employee does or does not possess the qualifications. Pertinent information may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

a. Interviews.

b. Supervisory appraisals.

c. The written application specifying *verified* experience, education, and training.

d. Certificates of course completion or transcripts, accompanied by school catalog specifying course content, when requested.

e. Examination results.

f. Personnel records.

Note: Interviews for best qualified positions must be used as indicated in 728.34, Conducting Interviews. For senior qualified positions, interviews must be used as indicated in 728.23d.

728 Selection Procedures

728.1 Placement Principles

The following sections discuss selection of employees for placement under the senior qualified and best qualified procedures.

a. *Senior Qualified Positions*. Employee placement into positions filled through senior qualified procedures must be based on the following:

(1) The employee's eligibility to bid.

(2) The employee's seniority.

(3) The senior bidder's qualifications in relationship to the requirements.

(4) The employee's successful completion of required training, if any.

b. *Best Qualified Positions*. Employee placement into positions filled through best qualified procedures must be based on:

(1) The employee's eligibility to apply.

(2) The best qualifications among employees who have met the requirements.

(3) The employee's successful completion of required training, if any.

728.2 Senior Qualified Positions

Senior qualified bidders, having met the position requirements given on the qualification standard or job posting, are placed into the position, or into training for the position, in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. Human resources personnel are responsible for ensuring that qualifications are evaluated for bids to all senior qualified positions (see 727.4, Timing and Sequence of Evaluation).

728.21 Documentation of Qualifications

In many cases, there is no need to document the evaluation of the senior bidder's qualifications. When such documentation is required, the evaluator must complete Form 1796-A, *Qualifications Rating Sheet for Senior Qualified Positions*.

728.22 Bidding and Qualifications

Bidders for senior qualified positions submit bids in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement — i.e., by telephone, computer, or in writing using Form 1717, *Bid for Preferred Assignment.* Following the close of the posting, the senior bidder's qualifications should be evaluated through a review of the employee's OPF and any other pertinent information available (see 727.3, When to Evaluate Qualifications, and 727.4, Timing and Sequence of Evaluation). If there is *sufficient* information to show that the senior bidder meets the job requirements, the senior bidder is presumed to be qualified. Otherwise, the 5 senior bidders must be requested to address the requirements of the position in writing, using the following procedures:

a. Each of the 5 senior bidders is asked to furnish his or her qualifications for the position in writing; however, if any of the 5 are currently qualified through previous qualification, they are *not* subject to this requirement (see 727.3b, When to Evaluate Qualifications, *Bidding to Return to a Position Previously Held*).

b. A copy of the qualification standard, and the B-element questions, if applicable (see 763.1b, Contents, *Appendix I*) must be provided to the bidders. If the position does not have a qualification standard, a copy of the posting indicating the requirements must be provided to the bidders.

c. Bidders are allowed at least 3 days to respond. They must record their qualifications on Form 991, *Application for Promotion or Assignment*, and return it by the deadline specified.

d. If a test is required that is normally given after the posting closes, the 5 senior bidders — at a minimum — are scheduled for the test, unless currently qualified.

e. If there are fewer than 5 bidders for a position, these procedures apply to all who bid.

728.23 Evaluating Qualifications

If a test is required, any existing test scores are obtained for the bidders. A qualification evaluator from human resources considers the senior bidder's qualifications in comparison to the position requirements, as follows:

a. The evaluator may review the employee's OPF and other official records that contain pertinent information, and, if necessary, contact the bidder and/or an appropriate supervisor for clarification.

b. If written statements were obtained, the evaluator must complete Form 1796-A, *Qualifications Rating Sheet for Senior Qualified Positions* for the senior bidder.

c. Only if the senior bidder is found to be *not qualified* will the next senior bidder be evaluated, and Form 1796-A completed for that bidder.

d. The evaluator may conduct interviews to supplement the written record to establish whether a bidder meets specific requirements. The use of interviews for a senior qualified position must not be used to rank or selectively choose among bidders.

728.24 Using Form 1796-A

Form 1796-A is used to document that the senior bidder meets all the requirements of the position. This form is *not* used if the senior bidder is determined to be qualified from the OPF review. However, if the 5 senior bidders have been requested to address their qualifications on Form 991, the evaluator must complete Form 1796-A to document the evaluation process for the senior bidder as follows:

a. In Column A, Identification of Requirements, the evaluator lists the test requirements including the knowledge, skills, and abilities, and any other requirements for the position.

b. In Column B, Demonstration, the evaluator must decide whether the senior bidder has demonstrated each requirement, based on the information available. If the bidder failed a required examination, the bidder is not qualified and no additional information is needed on Form 1796-A. Similarly, if the position requires driving and the bidder failed a driver's license checklist review (see 517.5, Driver's License Review), the bidder is not qualified, and no additional information is needed on Form 1796-A.

c. In Column C, Measurements Used, the evaluator *must* indicate how the determination for each requirement was made. The statements may be brief, but should provide enough information to enable the evaluator to recall the facts that led to the decision. This column is not completed for examination requirements.

d. The evaluator completes Section 3, Finding, checking *qualified* if the bidder has demonstrated every requirement. If the evaluator checked *no* in Column B for 1 or more requirements, the bidder is not qualified. (See 727.4, Timing and Sequence of Evaluation, which explains timing and sequences for bidders to meet some requirements.)

728.25 Selecting the Senior Bidder

When the evaluation is completed, the senior bidder is selected for the position if qualified. An evaluation of the next senior bidder's qualifications is not necessary when the senior bidder is selected.

728.26 Vacancy File

Appropriate documentation, including Forms 1796-A (if completed), Forms 1717, the posting, and written statements (if obtained) must be maintained with employee bidding records.

728.3 Best Qualified Positions

Qualifications determine the relative standing for selection of career employees who are eligible to apply for such positions based on applicable collective bargaining agreements. Of those applicants who meet all of the requirements, the applicant who is found to be the best qualified on the basis of total qualifications will be selected. This determination is made on the basis of a comparison of total qualifications among applicants for the position (see 728.36, Selection of Best Qualified Applicant).

728.31 Selecting Official

For filling best qualified positions, the selecting official is normally the supervisor or manager with the vacancy. Bargaining employees serving as acting supervisors may not serve as selecting officials. The selecting official has numerous options with regard to review committees and interviews, and these options are described in the sections that follow. If recommendations are made to the selecting official from a review committee, the selecting official may have access to all information used by the review committee, including completed Forms 1796-B, *Qualifications Rating Sheet for Best Qualified Positions*.

728.32 Documentation of Qualifications

The initial determination of qualifications is documented on Form 1796-B. The review committee or in the absence of a review committee, the selecting official, completes this form for every applicant.

728.321 Applications and Qualifications

Applicants for best qualified positions are required to describe their qualifications in writing (see 765.2, Best Qualified Positions). Form 991, *Application for Promotion or Assignment,* must be used for this purpose. Applicants must address each of the requirements listed on the qualification standard or posting, including desirable qualifications, if any. Applications must be submitted by the deadline specified.

728.322 Evaluating Qualifications

The qualifications of all applicants are compared to the position requirements stated on the vacancy announcement or job posting. As a minimum, applicants' written statements are reviewed by selection officials and review committee members. The applicants' OPFs and other official records may be reviewed; however, it is recommended that the selecting official review the OPF of the person to be selected before finalizing the decision. The selecting official's decision whether to use a review committee normally is based on the number of applicants and the time available to the selecting official to review the applications.

728.33 Review Committees

The function of the review committee is to evaluate the applicants' qualifications and eligibility for the position, to conduct interviews if appropriate (see 728.34, Conducting Interviews), and to make recommendations to the selecting official on the best qualified applicants. The selecting official may also choose to have the review committee make the determination of the best qualified applicant.

728.331 Review Committee Structure

All review committee members must be nonbargaining employees. Normally, a committee will consist of 2 nonbargaining employees from the functional area of the vacancy, and 1 from outside the functional area. A selecting official who asks a review committee to *determine* the best qualified applicant may also be a member of the committee. However, a selecting official who asks a review committee to *recommend* those who best meet the requirements of the position may not be a member of the committee.

728.332 Review Committee Procedures

Review committee procedures follow the principles of independent work and consensus decision-making. Specific steps are:

a. Each committee member should independently determine if the applicants have demonstrated each requirement.

b. Members should discuss their decisions collectively and arrive at a consensus for each requirement for each applicant.

c. The committee chairperson must complete Form 1796-B through column B based on this consensus for each applicant. Applicants found not qualified at this stage are removed from further consideration for this vacancy. For those applicants who are not qualified, the chairperson completes column D and section 5, and obtains signatures for section 6 of Form 1796-B.

d. For applicants who are qualified, individual review committee members should then determine the level of demonstration of each requirement by each applicant.

e. Members should then discuss their decisions collectively and arrive at a consensus on the level of demonstration of each requirement by each applicant.

f. The chairperson completes a Form 1796-B for each applicant and all members sign the form.

g. If the review committee conducts interviews, it selects applicants based on the highest point totals on Form 1796-B. There is no set minimum or maximum number of applicants to interview. Applicants who are tied in point totals must be treated equally. Either all applicants are interviewed or no applicants are interviewed.

Note: Applicants found not qualified must not be interviewed.

h. If the review committee makes recommendations to the selecting official but does not interview, approximately 3–5 applicants (there is no set minimum or maximum number), are recommended based on the highest point totals on Form 1796-B. Applicants who are tied in point totals must be treated the same. Either they are all recommended or none of them are recommended. The review committee must prepare a signed memorandum to the selecting official indicating, in alphabetical order, the names of the recommended applicants.

i. If the review committee interviews and makes recommendations to the selecting official, approximately 3-5 applicants (there is no set minimum or maximum number) are recommended. No formal method exists for incorporating the results of the interview. The review committee must recommend only those applicants who best meet the position requirements based on the point totals from Form 1796-B, the interview, and any other pertinent information reviewed during the evaluation. The review committee must prepare a signed memorandum to the selecting official indicating, in alphabetical order, the names of the recommended applicants.

j. If the selecting official wishes the review committee to determine who is the best qualified applicant, then no recommendations are made to the selecting official. In this case, the review committee must interview the potential applicants. The review committee determines who the best qualified applicant is based on the point totals from Form 1796-B, the interview, any other pertinent information reviewed during the evaluation, and consideration of any desirable qualifications. The review committee must prepare a signed memorandum to the manager of Human Resources indicating the names of the best qualified applicant and 2 alternates in rank order.

728.34 Conducting Interviews

Interviews provide additional information for a comparison of the applicants' qualifications. Interviews are mandatory and may be conducted by the selecting official, the review committee, or both. Interviews may be conducted only after completion of Forms 1796-B. No documentation of the interviews is required. Review committees must reach consensus on combining the interview results with the point totals from Forms 1796-B (and other pertinent information) in reaching their final recommendations or final determination of the best qualified applicant.

728.35 Using Form 1796-B

Form 1796-B documents whether an applicant has demonstrated all the position requirements, and, if so, the level of their qualifications. Form 1796-B does not document interviews. The following list gives specific instructions for the correct use of Form 1796-B.

a. In Column A, Identification of Requirements, the review committee or selecting official lists all the position requirements. These are divided into *Examination Requirements; Physical and Driving requirements;* and *Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities* (that may be written in B-element format, per 763.1b, *Appendix I*, Bqnet). Desirable qualifications are not listed as requirements (see 714.1f).

b. In Column B, Demonstration, the review committee determines whether the applicant has demonstrated each requirement, based on the information available. If the applicant does not meet all the requirements — i.e., if the evaluator checked *no* under *Demonstrated* for any requirement, the applicant is not qualified and Column C is not completed.

Note: If the applicant failed a required examination, the applicant is not qualified, and no additional information is needed on Form 1796-B.

c. In Column C, Points, information is entered only for those applicants who meet all the position requirements as established by Column B. The review committee or selecting official assigns points to indicate the level of qualifications demonstrated by the applicant. No points are assigned for driving or physical requirements.

d. In Column D, Measurements Used, the review committee or selecting official must indicate briefly how the decision was made. These statements need not include all facts considered.

e. In Section 4, Score Calculation, the total points in Column C are averaged and multiplied by 20. The maximum points that can be earned from the evaluation are 100. The examination score, if any, is then added to this score to obtain the total points.

f. In Section 5, Finding, the results of the evaluation of the applicant's qualifications are summarized.

728.36 Selection of Best Qualified Applicant

Selection for the position will be based on total qualifications, considering the point totals on Forms 1796-B, the results of the interviews, desirable qualifications (if any), and other pertinent information reviewed during the evaluation.

728.37 Selection Oversight

It is imperative that selecting officials, review committee members for best qualified positions, and evaluators for senior qualified positions, know the scope of their responsibilities and the correct application of the principles of selection. In this regard, it is helpful, but not mandatory, to include a nonbargaining human resources employee on each review committee for a best qualified position.

728.38 Vacancy File

The vacancy file must contain full documentation supporting the selection decision. This documentation includes a copy of the announcement, the qualification standard, applications, Forms 1796-B, a list of review committee members, and the name of the selecting official. Notes made by individual review committee members are the members' own property, not records of the Postal Service, and they are not included in the vacancy file.

73 Initial Level Supervisor Positions

731 Purpose

The Initial Level Supervisor (ILS) Program is used to fill 2 initial level supervisory positions (1) supervisor, Distribution Operations, EAS-16, and (2) supervisor, Customer Services, EAS-16, at installations where the Associate Supervisor Program (ASP), as described in 75, Associate Supervisor Positions, has not been implemented. The ILS program is designed to reflect the critical importance of effective communications and the working relationships between bargaining employees and management.

732 Noncompetitive Procedures

732.1 Reassignment and Voluntary Reduction

Competitive procedures are not required when management initiates or an employee requests reassignment to the same level, or when an employee voluntarily accepts or requests in writing a position at a lower level. Such action may be taken at any time by the selecting official without regard to where in the competitive process the filling of a vacancy is at the moment of request. Employees selected in this manner must meet the qualification requirements for the position.

732.2 Noncompetitive Selection for Announced Vacancies

An employee eligible for noncompetitive consideration may apply for change to lower level or reassignment to a position as a result of a vacancy announcement issued under the competitive procedures. Noncompetitive application may be made for any position and location for which the employee is eligible for noncompetitive consideration. The following procedures apply:

a. The employee submits an application for the position, along with a written request for noncompetitive consideration, explaining the basis of the request.

b. The selecting official may select the employee before an advisory panel is convened, or may defer the decision in order to consider the candidates recommended by the panel. There is no requirement that the employee be selected.

c. At the discretion of the selecting official, the panel may be asked to consider, in competition with applicants for promotion, the application of an employee who applies for noncompetitive consideration.

733 Competitive Process

Residual vacancies are announced to all career employees with 1 year of continuous career service, who are within the area of consideration determined by the installation head or human resources. This area may not be less than installation-wide, or broader than all installations within commuting distance. Normally, it should not be necessary to relocate an employee to fill an initial level supervisory position.

734 Announcement Procedures

734.1 Vacancy Announcement

The vacancy announcement must be posted throughout the area of consideration, for no less than 15 calendar days for applicants to prepare Forms 991. The announcement must identify the positions to be filled and the area of consideration and must state the duty station, the starting and ending times, and the nonscheduled days of the vacant position. The announcement must also describe the duties of the positions, proficiency requirements, desirable qualification factors, and selective factors, if used (see 714.1, Definitions Applicable to Selection).

734.2 Application Procedures

Employees apply by submitting completed Forms 991 including supervisor evaluations directly to the location specified in the announcement by the close of business, on the closing date.

734.3 Advisory Panel Role

An advisory panel has a dual role under these procedures. First, the panel acts as a Candidate Evaluation Board (CEB) to rate the applicants. The panel then evaluates and recommends applicants to the selecting official.

734.31 Advisory Panel Composition

An advisory panel consists of at least 3 supervisors or managers, including 1 from human resources and 1 from the function corresponding to the position to be filled. Normally, the members should be in pay levels higher than that of the vacancy. The selecting official may not be a member of an advisory panel. All advisory panel members must be certified in Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training, course number 21553-00.

734.32 Advisory Panel Rating Procedures

The advisory panel takes the following steps:

a. *Step 1*. Using the CEB Guidelines, the panel rates each applicant as *superior, above average,* or *basic.* The panel creates a list showing each applicant's name, Social Security number (SSN), and rating. This

list is retained in the vacancy file. Human resources advises applicants of their overall ratings.

b. *Step 2.* The panel considers those rated *superior* and if necessary, those rated *above average.* Applicants rated *basic* will receive no further consideration. The panel then interviews and recommends for selections those applicants who best meet the requirements of the position. The panel should recommend at least 2 more names than there are vacancies (if there are enough qualified applicants), and a minimum of 3 names for a single vacancy. If the panel cannot recommend 3 qualified applicants for a single vacancy, it advises the selecting official, who may either consider the recommended candidates and make a selection, or have the vacancy reannounced with an expanded area of consideration.

c. *Step 3.* The advisory panel's recommendation is submitted by memo, signed by each panel member, with the recommended candidates' names listed by last name in alphabetical order.

735 Selection Process

The selecting official is normally the supervisor or manager with the vacancy. The selecting official is responsible for choosing the individual who best meets the position requirements from among those recommended by the advisory panel. The selecting official may interview any of those recommended. Selection must be made exclusively on merit.

736 Vacancy File

An advisory panel contributes to the vacancy file for all selections made. The file may be identified by vacancy announcement number and/or position title.

736.1 Vacancy File Contents

Only the following documents should be retained in the vacancy file:

a. Vacancy announcement.

b. Position description and qualification standard.

c. Names, position titles, and levels of all advisory panel members.

d. Documentation on any exceptions authorized.

e. For individual announcement selections, copies of all Forms 991, *Application for Promotion or Assignment,* and the list of ratings giving each applicant's name, SSN, and rating (superior, above average, or basic).

f. Advisory panel's recommendation memo (signed by all panel members) listing recommended candidates in alphabetical order.

g. Name, title, and level of the selecting official.

h. Name of persons selected.

i. Copy of completed Form 5938, *Promotion Report*.

Personal notes made by individual advisory panel members to assist in evaluating applicants are considered their own property, and not records of the Postal Service. Such notes must not be circulated among other advisory panel members, nor are they to be included in the vacancy file.

736.2 Vacancy File Retention

Vacancy files are retained for 5 years and then destroyed, unless an audit, investigation, or appeal is pending. In that case, the file is retained until the need is satisfied and the matter resolved.

74 EAS Positions

741 Purpose of Subchapter 74

These policies and procedures are to be used in filling area and field EAS positions, including managerial, administrative, clerical, and postmaster positions. Supervisory positions are filled using the policies and procedures contained in 73, Initial Level Supervisor Positions, or in 75, Associate Supervisor Positions.

742 Selection Principles

Managers administering these policies must ensure the following principles are observed:

a. Assess talent available to fill specific positions and advertise accordingly.

b. Make high quality selections to meet current and future organizational needs.

c. Make selections and keep records that make it possible to demonstrate how established selection procedures have been followed.

d. Ensure that the system and process are fair and that selections are made from as inclusive and diverse group of candidates as possible.

743 Selection Process

743.1 Internal Recruitment

The following sections describe the characteristics of the internal recruitment process.

743.11 When to Consider Noncompetitive Applications

Management should consider noncompetitive applications for voluntary lateral reassignment or a change to lower level at any time they are received, before the competitive announcement process begins, during the process, or after the competitive applications have been assessed.

Individuals with saved grade are considered noncompetitively for positions up to the level of their former position, or at any intervening level.

743.12 Competitive Selection

If a position is not filled through noncompetitive procedures, then it is filled competitively through employee application in response to a vacancy announcement.

743.13 Defining the Area of Consideration

Selecting officials are responsible for defining the area of consideration. The minimum area of consideration should consist of no less than all eligible career EAS employees within the commuting area, or within the district, whichever is smaller.

All eligible EAS employees (including headquarters and headquarters field units) may apply if they live (official residence) or are domiciled within commuting distance to the vacancy or to the district, as stated in the vacancy announcement.

After the assessment of potential applicants, the area of consideration may be expanded to include bargaining employees, larger geographic territory, areas, the entire Postal Service, or external advertisement. A PCES executive at the next level of management must approve expansion of the area of consideration involving the payment of relocation benefits.

743.14 Determining Eligibility

All EAS career employees with 1 year of current continuous career postal service and postmasters who have served in their current assignment for 1 continuous year are eligible to apply, if they are within the area of consideration.

Other employees are eligible under the following circumstances:

a. *Extended eligibility.* Eligibility is extended for certain postmaster positions, as follows:

   (1) *Postmaster* — Bargaining employees may apply for postmaster positions advertised to them.

   (2) *EAS-11, EAS-13, and EAS-15 and A-E postmaster* — Postmaster relief/leave replacements (PMR/LRs) with 1 year of continuous successful service may apply and compete for postmaster vacancies within the commuting area. Service as a temporary postmaster (OIC) is counted the same as PMR/LR employment for the purpose of eligibility for this application opportunity. When the PMR/LR applies for his or her Post Office, the PMR/LR must be considered by the selecting official at that Post Office.

   (3) *Postmaster (self-nomination)* — Local career employees from the vacancy office who are qualified and eligible for the postmaster position may exercise the right of self-nomination to ensure review by the selecting official. This opportunity applies to all career EAS employees at the vacancy office, as well as career

bargaining employees for those postmaster positions advertised for EAS and bargaining employees.

b. *Special nomination for EAS positions*. Vice presidents of Area Operations and the manager of Corporate Personnel Management may nominate employees from any location within the Postal Service for any vacancy advertised so that they may be considered in competition with applicants from within the area of consideration. This nomination process is to ensure expanded opportunities to resolve saved grade situations, hardship, and/or trailing spouse cases.

743.15 120-Day Time Limit on Higher-Level Temporary Assignment

When a vacant nonbargaining position is filled by higher-level temporary assignment (detail) pending selection of a person for permanent placement, an employee may be assigned to the position for a total of not more than 120 calendar days. A vacant position is one where the previous employee has been separated or has been placed in another job. If the employee on temporary assignment could become or is a potential candidate for the vacant position, the higher-level assignment must be terminated before the 121st day. If the detailed employee is not a candidate, the next higher-level manager over the manager with the vacancy must verify the noncandidate status of the employee in order to approve an extension of the temporary assignment beyond 120 days. The duration of this approval is until a selection is made and the new employee permanently assumes the position. An employee who has served in a vacant position for more than 120 days is ineligible for placement in that position.

743.16 Exceptions to the 120-Day Limit

The 120-day time limit does not apply if the assignment is:

a. To a position at the same or lower level.

b. During the temporary absence of an employee.

c. To an officer-in-charge assignment.

d. To an initial level supervisor position.

e. To a headquarters position.

743.17 Posting a Vacancy Announcement

The vacancy announcement is prepared using the guidelines provided in Handbook EL-350, *Establishing Nonbargaining Requirements*. Announcements are posted for a minimum of 15 calendar days. The following elements are included as appropriate:

a. The duty station, work assignment, nonscheduled days, and work hours must be included. If any or all of these elements require frequent change in order to meet operational requirements, the announcement must so state.

b. For postmaster vacancy announcements, include a statement that the selected applicant may be required to relocate to the new Post Office community if it is determined necessary to provide the required services, and to ensure his or her community involvement.

c. Newly appointed postmasters may not be reassigned or appointed to another position in the Postal Service until 1 year has elapsed from the date of appointment as a postmaster. Individuals accepting postmaster appointments must be advised of this requirement. (For exceptions see 746, Requests for Exceptions to Policies.)

743.2 External Recruitment

The following sections describe the characteristics of the external recruitment process.

743.21 Recruiting for Additional Applicants

Generally, EAS positions are filled from within the Postal Service. Management is not required however to select postal applicants over significantly better qualified external applicants. Every effort must be made to select the individual who best meets the requirements of the position.

The human resources manager initiates external recruitment efforts when requested by the selecting official. This process may be initiated after exhausting the normal internal selection process, or simultaneously with internal selection to produce an adequate number of well-qualified applicants to be considered for vacant positions. External applicants must complete Form 2591*, Application for Employment*. (See Exhibit 743.21, External Recruitment — EAS Vacancies.)

743.22 Recruiting for A Through E Postmaster Positions

If external recruitment is needed to fill A through E postmaster positions, the vacancy must be posted for public information in the vacancy office, publicized to community organizations, and advertised in local publications. (See Exhibit 743.22, External Recruitment, Postmasters A-E*,* for the ranking and selection process for external applicants for these postmaster positions.)

743.23 Conditions for Not Announcing

A vacancy does not have to be announced if an identical vacancy was announced previously and fewer than 60 calendar days have elapsed since the identical vacancy's closing date. The two vacancies must have the same position title, occupation code, grade, location, tour (where applicable), and position requirements.

Exhibit 743.21
Exernal Recruitment — EAS Vacancies

Publicize vacancies for external recruitment throughout the geographic area of consideration by placing paid or unpaid commercial advertisements to reach the diverse mix of professionals represented in the specialty of the vacancy.

Select from the external candidate pool by utilizing the methods described in the Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training, Course 21553-00.

Eliminate the obviously not qualified applicants first.

Rate and indicate the applicant's demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities for each requirement statement on the:

Requirement by Applicant Matrix

	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3
Applicant 1			
Applicant 2			
Applicant 3			

Use the following scale:

a. *0 points* — Not demonstrated at minimum level.

b. *1 point* — Minimally acceptable.

c. *2 points* — Strong.

d. *3 points* — Excellent.

Total the number of points achieved for each requirement and make the following computation:

a. Divide the total point score by the number of requirements for the position. This computation results in the applicant's point average.

b. Multiply the applicant's point average by 33.3, round the result, and add any applicable veteran's preference points to achieve the final score.

c. Establish a list of applicants in descending score order, observing veterans' preference as follows:

(1) *Group 1, compensable disability* — All 10-point preference eligibles with a compensable service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are placed in descending order of the final rating. The 30 percent or more disabled veterans are placed ahead of this group in descending order.

(2) *Group 2, all other eligibles* — Eligibles claiming other 10-point preference or a 5-point preference are placed ahead of nonpreference eligibles with the same numerical rating. 10-point eligibles are placed ahead of 5-point eligibles with the same rating.

Make selections in accordance with the applicant's standing after meeting all other suitability criteria.

Exhibit 743.22
External Recruitment, Postmasters A–E

a. The selecting official defines the commuting area.

b. For external recruitment, post Notice 1, *Postmaster Vacancy*, for 10 days in the lobby of the vacancy office. The notice explains that only applicants who reside in the delivery and/or commuting service area will be considered.

c. Publicize the vacancy to community organizations and in publications within the delivery and/or commuting area.

d. Interview the applicants in accordance with the list and start with those who are resident in the service area, as follows:

   (1) *Group 1* — All qualified and suitable applicants with *CP/CPS* preference listed in order of their relative qualifications.

   (2) *Group 2* — All other qualified and suitable applicants in order of their relative qualifications with the veterans' preference entitlement shown.

e. Using the rule of three, identify the top 3–5 applicants from the hiring list, observing veterans' preference.

f. Submit the names for three to five applicants in ranked order in accordance with veterans' preference to Office of Personnel Management to conduct a Special Agency Check with Inquiries investigation.

g. Conduct the drug test. Failure to pass disqualifies the applicant.

h. Obtain management approval of the selection and make job offer.

i. Obtain the preemployment medical assessment and make the medical suitability determination to ensure that the candidate meets the physical requirements of the vacancy, with or without reasonable accommodation.

743.3 Internal Applications

Internal applicants for all EAS positions must use Form 991*, Application for Promotion or Assignment*. A supervisory evaluation is required only for Initial Level Supervisor (ILS) applicants, as described in 73, Initial Level Supervisor Positions, or associate supervisor, as described in 75, Associate Supervisor Positions.

Applicants submit their applications directly to the location shown on the announcement, with an information copy to their current manager. The selecting official may verify any information provided on the Form 991 with appropriate individuals.

743.4 Assessing Applications

The following sections discuss 2 components used in assessing applications (1) the use of guidelines by personnel involved in the process, and (2) the maintenance of vacancy files and promotion reports by the Human Resources manager.

743.41 Using Guidelines

Selections are to be made in line with the philosophy and methods described in Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training (Course number 21553-00), available on the Postal Service Intranet. This course is required training for selecting officials and review committee members. Individuals who previously were certified on the instructor-led EAS Selection Methods training, Course 21553-00, do not need recertification; however, review of the Intranet-based training is recommended.

743.42 Maintaining a Vacancy File and Promotion Report

The Human Resources manager establishes and maintains a vacancy file for each vacancy. The file is maintained for 5 years by the vacancy announcement number and/or position title. The file must include:

a. Vacancy announcement.

b. Position description and job requirements.

c. Needs assessment or community issue statement (if postmaster vacancy file).

d. Form 991s for all applicants.

e. Review committee's recommendation memo, signed by all members.

f. Copies of all letters to nonselected applicants, recommended, and not recommended.

g. Copies of Form 5938, *Promotion Report*.

h. Copies of any exception memoranda.

i. Copy of offer letter.

743.5 Roles of the Selecting Official and Review Committee

743.51 Selecting Official

The selecting official is the manager or supervisor with the vacancy. The selecting official assesses the potential applicant pool, defines an area of consideration and selects candidates for designated vacancies. He or she ensures that selections are made in keeping with all applicable selection principles, including equal employment opportunity laws and the Affirmative Action Program of the Postal Service.

743.52 Review Committee

743.521 Review Committee Function

When 5 or more applications are received, the selecting official with the vacancy must designate a review committee of at least 3 members. If there are less than 5 applicants, the selecting official has the option of designating a review committee or personally interviewing every applicant. The selecting official must be certified in Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training. The selecting official must ensure that where a review committee is required, he or she verifies that each member has met the training requirement.

Two major functions of the review committee are to assist the selecting official in assessing the applicants and to prepare a recommendation memo.

The selecting official and the committee establish a relationship that includes sharing information concerning the objectives of the office and the role of the vacancy in supporting these objectives.

743.522 **Level of Committee Members**

Review committee members must be EAS employees at a level equal to or higher than that of the vacant position. For review committee membership, level is defined as an employee's permanent (or saved) grade, not a part-time or temporary level resulting from a temporary assignment (detail), ad hoc assignment, or temporary promotion.

743.523 **Restrictions on Setting Up Review Committee**

The restrictions on setting up the review committee include:

a. Neither the supervisor of the position to be filled nor any manager exercising authority over the supervisor, up to and including the selecting official, may serve on the review committee or participate in its deliberations.

b. Exceptions to review committee membership may be approved only by the area vice president. The reasons for making the exception must be fully documented and placed in the vacancy file.

c. Review committee members are prohibited from participating in the consideration or recommendation of a relative as defined in EL-312, 513.122. Each member is responsible for identifying the relationship to the committee chairperson and will be immediately excused and replaced. A note explaining the action taken is included in the selection file.

743.524 **Review Committee Duties**

The duties of the review committee include:

a. Considering Forms 991 submitted by all applicants.

b. Conducting telephonic interviews or personal interviews as needed.

c. Possibly requiring applicants to submit written samples of their past work that demonstrate their abilities to perform requirements directly related to the vacant position. However, the committee is prohibited from requiring applicants to take a written test, to write a paper on a specified topic, to analyze and solve in writing a prescribed managerial or technical problem, or to undergo any other kind of written examination.

d. Recommending applicants to the selecting official.

e. Notifying nonselected applicants.

743.525 **Review Committee Recommendation Memo**

The committee recommends applicants who best meet the position requirements. The committee prepares a memorandum (signed by all members) to the selecting official, listing the names of the recommended candidates. Recommendations are submitted in alphabetical order of the candidates' last names. The Forms 991 (and written work samples, if required) of the recommended applicants are also furnished to the selecting official. The selecting official endorses the memorandum that all committee

members have been certified on the Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training.

743.53 Applicant Selection

The selecting official with or without the assistance of a review committee identifies an applicant whose knowledge, skills, and abilities best meet the requirements of the position, and has a high probability of successful performance in the position.

744 Implementing the Selection

744.1 Effective Dates

Effective dates should be coordinated between the gaining and losing organizations to ensure appropriate coverage.

744.2 Transition

Whenever possible, the gaining manager and the successful applicant should meet to share expectations and concerns and to assist with an effective transition to the new position. The selecting official should introduce newly selected EAS employees to the workforce whenever practical.

744.3 Postmaster Installation

The manager of Post Office Operations, is responsible for coordinating postmaster installation ceremonies and determining the approach most appropriate for the office and the community based on the overall business value. Activities can range from rescheduled group meetings with community members to open houses, product presentations, receptions, etc. (see ASM 333.5, Open Houses, Tours, and Postmaster Installations, for guidance).

745 Funding

745.1 Relocation Expenses

Employees who are selected competitively or noncompetitively as a result of application or nomination under a vacancy announcement are entitled to reimbursement of authorized relocation expenses as described in Handbook F-15, *Travel and Relocation*. This rule also applies when employees voluntarily apply for announced positions at their present or lower levels and are selected. Allowable relocation expenses are paid by the gaining installation.

Relocation expenses are not paid by the Postal Service incident to other voluntary reassignments or other voluntary changes outside of the vacancy announcement process.

Any request for exceptions to the relocation guidelines must be made to the area Finance manager.

745.2 Review Committee Travel Expenses

Allowable travel expenses for interviews of review committee meetings are borne by the selecting official's organization.

746 Requests for Exceptions to Policies

Any request for exceptions to the EAS selection policies and procedures must be approved by the area Human Resources manager in coordination with the area vice president, with a copy sent to the vice president, Employee Resource Management.

747 Responsibilities for Selection

747.1 District and Plant Managers

District and plant managers provide policy and direction to all selecting officials and assist with needs assessment as necessary to ensure a quality selection process.

747.2 Selecting Officials

The selecting official has the following responsibilities:

a. Assesses the applicant pool, defines the area of consideration, and selects applicants for vacancies.

b. Determines the need for a review committee (if less than 5 applications were received) and assembles only members who he or she has verified as certified in personnel selection methods training.

c. Provides background information to the review committee if needed. This includes any needs assessment and guidelines for the maximum number of applicants to be referred.

d. Notifies nonselected candidates in writing, expresses appreciation for their interest, and encourages them to improve their competitiveness for future vacancies.

e. Coordinates the selection and job offers with human resources.

f. Ensures that selections are made in accordance with all applicable selection principles, including equal employment opportunity laws, the Affirmative Action program, and diversity objectives.

g. Explains the rationale for the selection process followed and the selection made, if either is questioned.

h. Determines whether newly selected postmasters must relocate to the vicinity of the post office service area to meet operational and community needs.

747.3 Human Resources Managers

The Human Resources manager or designee has the following responsibilities:

a. Maintains the vacancy file for the selecting official after completion of the selection process.

b. Provides support and guidance to managers on selection, compensation, and personnel action processing.

75 Associate Supervisor Positions

751 Purpose

The Associate Supervisor Program (ASP) is an intensive training program that develops qualified applicants for initial level supervisory vacancies. Where ASP is in use, it replaces the selection process under the Initial Level Supervisor (ILS) program described in 73, Initial Level Supervisor Positions. ASP is usually used in larger installations, or groups of multiple smaller offices. The ASP is designed to ensure that prospective supervisors are provided with the technical, administrative, and leadership skills necessary to be effective in all aspects of a first line supervisory job. The goal of this structured program is to select and develop the available applicants who best meet the needs of the position. The entry-level position after successful completion of the training program is associate supervisor, EAS-15, with selection opportunities to EAS-16, initial level supervisor position, as those vacancies occur. In installations with associate supervisors, competition for promotion to initial level supervisor positions is restricted to Associate Supervisors and EAS employees requesting a lateral or lower-level reassignment.

752 Program Overview

The ASP is comprised of a comprehensive selection process followed by an in-depth 16-week training program. A trained local coordinator monitors the program from start to finish and works closely with district human resources personnel to administer the ASP program. Recruitment may be conducted internally, or internally and externally, concurrently. If the selecting official ascertains that the internal candidate pool is insufficient, then external recruitment may be initiated. The selection process evaluates candidates on critical job requirements, as demonstrated through an examination, a review committee evaluation, and a structured interview. The training program includes classroom instruction in basic supervisory/administrative topics, on-the-job training, and cross-functional training. Successful candidates are placed directly into the Associate Supervisor (EAS-15) position at the conclusion of training.

753 Internal Recruitment

753.1 Employee Information Seminars

These sessions are held for the benefit of interested employees. Included is information on initial level supervisory positions that cover expectations and duties. Details on the selection procedures and training topics are covered in these seminars.

753.2 Internal Recruitment Sources

The following sections discuss conditions for noncompetitive and competitive applications for ASP.

753.21 Noncompetitive

Selecting officials consider noncompetitive applications for ASP by lateral reassignment or change to lower level. However, current initial level supervisors are ineligible to apply for a lower level or lateral reassignment for associate supervisor. Application is made by written request to the selecting official, with placement solely at the discretion of the selecting official.

753.22 Competitive

The vacant positions are announced to all career employees within the area of consideration determined by the installation head or Human Resources manager. The application process requires the completion of the first 2 pages of Form 991, (for internal applicants) or a Form 2591, *Application for Employment* (for external applicants), along with the Associate Supervisor Applicant Booklet to address each knowledge, skill, or ability listed on the vacancy announcement. These materials are submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor. The supervisor is required to complete an Associate Supervisor Candidate Evaluation form.

753.3 Review Committee

Only 1 review committee per ASP posting cycle is convened. Members are to include at least 1 representative from each of customer services, processing and distribution, and human resources.

753.4 Suitability Information

The committee reviews information considered relevant to their suitability determinations, within the following guidelines:

a. Suitability issues must be recent, relevant, and related to the nature of the position.

b. The nature, severity, and repetitiveness of the behavior resulting in discipline or adverse supervisory evaluations must be considered.

c. Committee members may request additional relevant information from an applicant, the applicant's current and/or past supervisors, and/or official documentation.

d. Committee members must consider improvement efforts made by the applicant since any adverse incident.

753.5 Review Committee Process

The review committee convenes to rate the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of the applicants.

753.51 Interviewing Applicants

The review committee uses a structured interview process that is based on asking the same questions in the same way to all candidates. Review committee members must be certified on Personnel Selection Methods Web-based Training, Course 21553-00.

753.52 Determining Suitability

The committee must reach a consensus on each applicant's suitability. Such action must be documented in the selection file.

753.6 Register Setup

Eligibility is established only for installations that are within the geographic service area of the ASP register and the ASP position titles reflected on the vacancy announcement.

The structured interview process results in a numerical score for each applicant. Scores are entered on the appropriate registers of eligibles in descending numerical order.

753.7 Candidate Feedback

Applicants may be notified as soon as there is evidence of a failure to demonstrate an eligibility factor, such as length of employment or application from outside the zone of consideration. After the review committee concludes its process, all candidates are to be notified of the results at the same time. The candidates are to be provided with their overall ratings (not qualified, minimal, strong, or excellent) at the conclusion of the review committee process. The committee may make itself available to provide individualized feedback to candidates who require additional information.

753.8 Vacancy File

As part of the internal selection process, a vacancy file is established.

754 External Recruitment

External recruitment is preceded by an analysis of the internal talent pool, and this analysis must be in conjunction with the internal recruitment effort. If external and internal recruitment is concurrent, the 1-year postal employment requirement for internal applicants must be deleted from the vacancy announcement. If external recruitment begins after the internal vacancy announcement has been posted with the 1-year requirement, the

announcement must be reposted excluding the requirement. Internal applicants must be considered first.

754.1 Notifying Labor Relations Policy Administration

When the decision is made to initiate external recruitment, Labor Relations Policy Administration must be notified of the decision by mail or facsimile to the following address:

MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION RELATIONS SPECIALIST
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 9120
WASHINGTON DC 20260-4114
FAX: 202-268-7490

754.2 Notifying Management Association Relations

When the decision is made to initiate external recruitment, Management Association Relations must be notified of the decision by mail or fax to the following address:

MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION RELATIONS SPECIALIST
US POSTAL SERVICE HEADQUARTERS ROOM 9120
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260-4114
FAX: 202-268-3074

754.3 External Advertisements

Outside recruitment generally involves the use of newspaper advertisements serving the specific labor market. However, prior to retaining the services of a vendor, contact the Purchasing and Materials Service Center for assistance with selecting a vendor familiar with the Postal Service corporate identification standard for newspaper advertising. Diversity Development will review and provide input into the content of an advertisement.

754.31 Developing the Advertisement

The advertisement is developed from the requirement statements, and should reflect their meaning and content as closely as possible, given the need for brevity. A closing date for application requests must be indicated, with a notation that requests received past the closing date will not be honored.

754.32 Posting Requirements

External recruitment announcements must be posted on the lobby bulletin board, and all community organizations that normally receive open examination announcements must be notified.

754.4 Review Committee

Just as in the internal process, a review committee is established.

754.5 Review Committee Process

754.51 Rating Applicants

Ratings are based on the results of the standardized test and the Supplemental Application. A rating of *no demonstration* on any of the KSAs will exclude an applicant from further consideration. If the applicant is considered further, additional requirements are as follows:

a. At the end of the rating process, human resources adjudicates claims for veterans' preference.

b. The review committee provides external candidates with feedback of whether or not they will be interviewed.

754.52 Interviewing Applicants

The interview process is identical to that described in 753.5, Review Committee Process, except that all veterans in rating categories *excellent, strong,* or *minimal* must be interviewed to determine final ratings. After the review committee creates the rating list, selecting officials are urged to interview prior to making their selection decisions.

754.6 Establishing the Rating List

Claims for veterans' preference points are adjudicated and are added to the final score achieved during the interview. The scores are entered on the rating list in descending order.

754.7 Selection Process

Using the rating list, the selecting official interviews the 3 highest-ranking applicants and makes the selection decision. Selection of a lower ranking nonveteran on the basis of qualifications must be substantiated in writing, and a copy retained in the selection file.

After candidates have been selected, the rating list is closed. After extending job offers, human resources staff conducts medical suitability determinations.

754.8 Selection File

As part of the external selection process, a selection file is established. This file contains all material pertinent to the process, such as the following:

a. Copy of the advertisement.

b. Copies of other publicity.

c. Resumes.

d. Form 2591, *Application for Employment*.

e. Associate Supervisor Applicant Booklet.

f. Veterans' preference documentation.

g. Test results.

h. Copies of ratings by the review committee.

i. Documentation relating to those passed over on qualifications.

j. Written statements of selection.

k. Copy of offer letters.

l. Any other appropriate information.

76 Bargaining Position Qualification Standards

761 Purpose

The purpose of qualification standards is to establish selection criteria so that Postal Service positions are staffed with fully qualified persons whose job performance will provide effective customer service and efficient postal operations. Qualification standards state the minimum knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements that are essential for successful job performance. Some qualification standards may also indicate desirable qualification factors that may be used in selecting applicants for best qualified positions.

762 Scope

Bqnet contains qualification standards for use in both entrance and inservice placements for bargaining positions. Qualification standards may not currently be available for all positions covered by collective bargaining agreements. (See 727, Bargaining Selection Procedures, when selections are being made for such positions.)

763 Bqnet

Current qualification standards are maintained in an electronic database located on the Human Resources, *Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition,* Postal Service Intranet (Bqnet — *Bargaining Qualifications on the Net*). Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition will issue new and revised standards by updating Bqnet.

763.1 Contents

The following qualification standards, indexes, and appendixes are available in electronic form *only* at Bqnet — *Bargaining Qualifications on the Net*.

a. *Qualification Standards*. The qualification standards are identified by a qualification standard number. Each number is unique to the standard. In most cases, the first 4 digits of the occupation code form the qualification standard number, although an additional letter may be added to maintain unique numbers.

b. *Appendix I*. Appendix I contains a list of elements reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that are requirements common to many positions in the Postal Service. These are called *B-elements* that are denoted by a *B* before the requirement number. This notation refers to a B-element in this appendix. Appendix I also lists questions by B-elements to guide selecting officials in using specific B-elements.

(See Bqnet, Appendix I, for further information on the use of these questions.)

c. *Appendix II*. Appendix II contains a list of elements reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are requirements common to positions covered by the Maintenance Selection System.

d. *Occupation Code Index*. This index of qualification standards is arranged numerically by occupation code.

e. *Alphabetical Index*. This index of qualification standards is arranged alphabetically by position title.

f. *Qualification Standard Number Index*. This index of qualification standards is arranged in order by qualification standard number.

763.2 Contents of Qualification Standards

763.21 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Requirements

This section of a qualification standard contains the knowledge, skill, and abilitiy (KSA) requirements. In some standards, these requirements may be identified as *B-elements* that refer to the elements in Appendix I, Bqnet. Other requirements may simply be numbered or lettered consecutively.

763.22 Local Options for Typing and Driving Requirements

Some standards do not specify typing or driving requirements. However, the ability to type and/or drive may be essential to the efficient performance of some specific duty assignments. When filling any vacant position where there are no officially published typing or driving requirements, local management may add (1) Computer Based Test (CBT) 713 or CBT 714 as a typing requirement and/or (2) a driving requirement to operate a motor vehicle or powered industrial equipment. Typing or driving requirements must be reasonably related to the efficient performance of the duties of the job, and may be added only when typing or driving is expected to be performed on a regular basis.

763.221 Typing Requirements

Use the following standards for CBT 714 and CBT 713:

a. CBT 714 must be used when the kind of typing performed is data entry or typing on forms. When this test is added locally as a requirement, the low standard is always to be specified. Include the following information on the job posting or vacancy announcement:

> *Applicants must demonstrate the ability to type 25 correct lines in 5 minutes by successfully completing Postal Service Test 714 at the low standard.*

b. CBT 713 must be used for all other typing applications. When this test is added as a requirement, include the following information on the job posting or vacancy announcement:

> *Applicants must demonstrate the ability to type at a rate of 30 net words per minute for 5 minutes. This requirement must be demonstrated by successful completion of Postal Service Test 713.*

763.222 Driving Requirements

If driving is added as a requirement, include one of the following statements on the job posting or vacancy announcement, as appropriate to the position:

a. Applicants must have or be able to obtain authorization to operate a motor vehicle.

b. Applicants must have or be able to obtain authorization to operate powered industrial equipment.

Local officials may not modify or delete existing typing or driving requirements contained in official qualification standards.

763.23 Physical Requirements

Physical requirements are included in some qualification standards. These requirements are intended primarily for applicants who are entering the Postal Service. Medical assessments for inservice applicants or bidders are administered only when the physical requirements for the new positions are more demanding than those required in the employee's current position. All employees must be physically able to perform the essential functions of the positions for which they are applying, with or without reasonable accommodation where appropriate, and without posing a direct threat of harm to themselves or others.

763.24 Examination Requirements

Examination requirements may include a performance test, a rated application, or a written examination. The Examination Requirements section of the qualification standard will indicate if an examination is required. Battery Configuration I (Group 1) applies to position categories clerk, city carrier, distribution clerk, machine and flat sorter machine operator. Configuration II (Group 2) applies to mail handler, mail processor, and markup clerk, automated. Since 1993 when the battery was implemented, distribution clerk, machine and mail processor have been obsoleted.

763.241 Rated Applications

A rated application is a method of evaluating and rating applicants' experience and training to determine their qualifications for specific positions. The Examination Requirements section of some qualification standards will indicate that the position is *filled by rated application.* In such cases, the rated application is to be used only for entrance and inservice application procedures. Rated applications are *not* used for in-craft applications. The following situations apply to rated applications:

a. *Bid Procedures.* When a position is being filled through bid procedures and the qualification standard for this position specifies a rated application, the rated application is not used in this instance. However, any examination specified in the qualification standard is required. Human resources offices must ensure that bidders for these positions meet all the requirements indicated in the qualification standard.

b. *Reviewing Qualifications.* When a rated application is used for inservice application procedures, officials are still required to review the applicant's qualifications, and to complete a Form 1796-A after

receiving (1) the individual's rated application score and (2) any other applicable test scores.

763.242 **Test Development and Use of Results**

With the exception of scheme examinations, tests are developed by or at the direction of Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition. In cases where a written test is required, the results of that test must be used according to the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Applicants or bidders who have previously qualified on a written test are not retested.

763.243 **Substitution of Typing Examinations**

Substitutions for typing examinations include the following:

An applicant who bids a position that requires Test 713 need not take that test, if the applicant has qualified within the 2 years prior to application on Test 712, or the applicant currently holds a position requiring regular use of the typing skill level for Test 712.

No typing test is allowed as a substitution for Test 714.

763.25 Experience Requirements

Many qualification standards contain experience requirements. These are minimum requirements that all applicants must meet. The substitution of education or training for experience is appropriate only as indicated in the qualification standard.

763.26 Desirable Qualifications

Some qualification standards contain factors identified as *desirable qualifications.* These factors are used to select applicants for best qualified positions. They may not be used as a basis for disqualification.

764 Using Qualification Standards to Fill Vacancies

Vacancies to be filled by bid or application are posted in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement and 72, Bargaining Positions. The qualification standard appropriate for the particular position must be included in the announcement. No additions, deletions, or modifications are permitted except as provided by 725, Special Requirements, and 727.2, No Qualification Standards.

765 Selection Decisions

765.1 Senior Qualified Positions

For bargaining positions filled on the basis of *senior qualified,* the senior bidder's qualifications are compared to the published qualification standard. The senior bidder is selected if qualified (see 72, Bargaining Positions).

765.2 Best Qualified Positions

For bargaining positions filled on the basis of *best qualified,* all applicants are required to describe their qualifications based on relevant education, training,

or experience. This description must address the requirements given on the qualification standard. Where applicable, applicants should consult the B-element questions given in Appendix I. Where there is no appreciable difference in qualifications, seniority is considered, except where it will be the determining factor as required by a collective bargaining agreement.

766 Waiver of Qualification Requirements

766.1 Actions Prior to Requests for Waivers

Applicants for positions for which standards have been published must fully meet the specified requirements. If an appointing official determines that there is no qualified employee available for consideration in the normal area of consideration, the following alternative courses of action must be taken prior to requesting a waiver of the specified standard for the position:

a. Expand the area of consideration for internal applicants.

b. Conduct an extensive external recruitment effort aimed at the applicant pool for the position.

766.2 Approving Authority and Procedures

When there is valid reason to request a variation from a published standard, the following procedure is used:

a. The appointing official must request, in writing, a variation of 1 or more items of a qualification standard through normal channels of communications to the manager of Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition.

b. Requests for variation must include appropriate evidence to support the request. Such requests must be responsive to the following questions as well as any other pertinent information:

   (1) Have adequate recruiting efforts been made to secure a fully qualified applicant (i.e., expansion of area of consideration, advertising, contacts with professional community groups, and use of employment services, etc.)?

   (2) What is the impact of the variation on the equal employment opportunity policy of the Postal Service?

   (3) Does the variation seek to lower an established educational requirement?

   (4) Does the variation seek to establish a new education requirement where none has been required? (Mandatory education requirements should not be necessary for most bargaining positions.)

c. Requests must be for qualification standards for the position only, never for an individual. If the waiver is approved, the selection process must begin again, using the revised standards for that particular position. All newly eligible applicants must be given consideration for the job.

d. The qualification requirement waiver applies only until the job is filled. Subsequent vacancies for the same position must be posted using the published qualification standard.

e. Normally, an employee may be selected for a position that has the requirements waived only once in any 12-month period.

766.3 Documentation

The written request for variation from a qualification standard must be addressed as specified in 766.2a, and must include the specific information shown in 766.2b. The request must provide approving officials with the information necessary to reach a decision and provide employees with a record of an approved variation. The request will also serve as a record of the variation for inclusion in the vacancy file.

77 Employment Restoration After Military Service

771 Policy

It is the Postal Service's policy to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, as amended (USERRA). It is the responsibility of postal management to ensure that personnel actions comply with the requirements of USERRA.

771.1 Eligibility

Reemployment rights are extended to employees who were absent from work because of active duty in the uniformed services, including the following:

a. *Uniformed Services*. Consist of the following military branches: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, their respective reserve components and the Army and Air National Guard; Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service; and any other category of persons who are designated by the President as uniformed service in time of war or emergency.

b. *Types of uniformed service (voluntary or involuntary)*. Consists of the following: active duty, active duty for training, including initial training, inactive duty training, full-time National Guard duty, or time needed for an examination to determine fitness for any of the above types of duty.

c. *Types of postal positions covered*. Includes all career and temporary classifications. Casual employees, in some situations, are covered by USERRA. Temporary and eligible casual employees are reemployed for the remainder of their term if temporary employees are still used. The time spent in active service is not counted against the term of temporary appointment.

771.2 Duration of Uniformed Service

Under USERRA, the cumulative length of absence from employment because of military service is limited to 5 years. The following are exceptions to this limit:

a. Service required in excess of 5 years to complete the initial period of service obligation.

b. Service from which a person, without control over the circumstances, is unable to obtain release.

c. Required training for reservists and National Guard members. This training includes inactive duty drills, active duty training periods, and any additional training mandated as essential to the professional development of service members by a specific secretary of a uniformed service.

d. Service required under an involuntary order to active duty or to be retained on active duty because of domestic emergencies or national security matters.

e. Service as a result of an order to active duty or to remain on active duty during a war or a national emergency declared by the President or Congress.

f. Active duty performed in support of an operational mission for which selected reservists have been involuntarily activated.

g. Active duty performed in support of a critical mission or critical requirement during the time of no involuntary call-up, no war, or national emergency. The Secretary of a uniformed service has the authority to designate a military operation as a critical mission or requirement.

h. Federal service by members of the National Guard called into action by the President to suppress an insurrection, repel an invasion, or execute the laws of the United States.

Service time prior to the effective date of USERRA, December 12,1994, will not be applied to the 5-year limit unless it would have counted under the previous law, the Veteran's Reemployment Rights Statute.

771.3 Character of Service

Under USERRA, persons separated from the uniformed services with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge, or an administrative discharge under *other than honorable conditions,* are not eligible for restoration to employment or any other benefit the law provides. Likewise, officers dismissed from the service through court-martial or Presidential order lose USERRA protections. Persons dropped from the military rolls for unauthorized absence for more than 3 months or who are imprisoned by a civilian court are not eligible for restoration to employment or any other benefit the law provides.

771.4 Effects of Performance and Conduct on Restoration

Restoration rights may be denied if the conduct of the employee while in the uniformed service was such that the returnee would be disqualified for employment under postal regulations.

771.5 Advance Notification of Entering the Uniformed Services

To ensure entitlement to reemployment and benefits, employees must give their immediate supervisor reasonable notice of the impending absence from work because of service in the uniformed services. The advance notice can be given by the employee orally, in writing, or:

a. Notification can also be made orally or in writing by the employee's military command. This situation may arise if military necessity prevents the employee from giving notification.

b. No advanced notice is required if it is precluded by military necessity, or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable to give notice.

772 Management — Supervisor Action

Upon receipt of notification, the immediate supervisor contacts the responsible human resources office to assure continuation of appropriate benefits. This notification is made in writing regardless of the way the employee's departure for the military service became known. Typical employee identifiers such as full name, pay location, and Social Security number are to be included.

Note: It is important to note that employees serving in the military and the Postal Service have a mutual responsibility under USERRA. Given the nature of the employee's obligation and the operational needs of the Postal Service, it is essential that both parties make a good faith effort to avoid conflict. Employees must give reasonable advanced notice of pending military duty requirements to provide management time to arrange for coverage.

In the event that managers face a legitimate operational burden, they may contact the employee's military command to express their concerns, and to determine if the military duty can be rescheduled for the reservist.

However, the military authority determines the schedule for duty. USERRA clearly reflects that the nature of duty, its time or frequency is not relevant to compliance with USERRA, as long as the employee has given proper notice and the time limits stated above have not been exceeded.

772.1 Notification of the Employee's Rights and Obligations

Managers are responsible for notifying employees orally or in writing of their rights, obligations, and benefits before departing for and upon return from active service. This notification includes any appeal and grievance rights. However, this does not relieve the employee from the responsibility to exercise due diligence to request this information from management or the appropriate human resource office.

Additionally, the law requires that individuals on military duty are to be given the opportunity for career advancement as if they are actively present on the job. To assure compliance, local human resources offices need to include the following in the discussion as appropriate:

a. *Bargaining Positions*. While on military service, employees continue to accrue seniority and may bid on positions that may become vacant during the employee's absence. The following procedures apply:

(1) A written or electronic notice must be submitted by the employee to human resources, or if appropriate, to the manager-in-charge, such as Postmaster, indicating the employee's interest to bid on specific positions.

(2) The bids should be processed and awarded in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement (CBA) as if the employee is actively employed. If awarded, a personnel action needs to be initiated to place the employee in the newly gained position and pay scale to assure that seniority is credited as specified by the appropriate CBA.

(3) Unsuccessful bids are retained until the desired position is gained or the employee resumes active employment upon return from military duty. Training will be deferred for employees who gain a position for which there is contractually required training until they return.

(4) Upon return, the employee will be required to meet the training requirements pursuant to the respective collective bargaining agreement. No personnel action is to be initiated until the training requirement is completed. In these cases, every effort must be made to train the employee upon return to work. The employee would only be awarded the position upon satisfactory completion of the required training. Human resources must maintain an audit trail documenting the bid submissions.

b. *Nonbargaining Positions*. Nonbargaining and bargaining employees on military service who are interested in being considered for EAS positions are required to submit completed Forms 991 for specific position descriptions to human resources reflecting the desired positions and locations. Human resources will activate the application as soon as the desired position and location has a vacancy. The application is considered in accordance with the EAS selection policies for local and national positions and in accordance with the area of consideration noted on the announcement. Applications resulting in a nonselection are considered as vacancies occur in the specified occupation, until the applicant has been successfully selected. Applications from employees who are on active duty with the uniformed services are accepted at any time for subsequent consideration when an appropriate vacancy is announced. In addition, the following provisions apply:

(1) *Reassignment requests*. EAS employees on active duty may also request reassignments to lateral or lower level positions in accordance with the EAS selection policy.

(2) *When personnel action should be effected*. Selected individuals will be placed in the new position and the appropriate pay level by initiating a personnel action while in the LWOP status.

(3) *Return from military duty*. Upon return from the military service, the responsibility for submitting bids or applications for EAS positions reverts to the employee.

772.2 Audit Trail

Human resources must establish and retain an audit trail of the selection activity.

772.3 Personnel Action

Employees called for active duty are to be placed in a LWOP status, using NOA-460 and Special Benefit Code *U* as stated in CMS Update 97.70, dated December 5,1997.

Individuals who exercise a written option to resign with the intention of not returning to the Postal Service must be advised that their restoration rights are not affected by the resignation. In these cases, a resignation military, NOA-313, is to be initiated. These individuals will be restored to employment and are entitled to seniority as if they had never left for military service. However, they forfeit the nonseniority based employment benefits they would have earned during the period of military service if they had not resigned and had opted instead to go on LWOP. Employees should be advised that they forfeit nonseniority rights if they elect to resign their employment, but later seek reemployment following military service.

773 Return to Work

The following time limits have been established for return to work after the completion of the military service:

a. *Service of 1 to 30 days.* The employee must report by the beginning of the first regular scheduled day of work following 8 hours after return home from the military service. If an employee's return to work within this time frame is unreasonable or impossible, and he or she is not at fault for the delay, the employee must return to work as soon as possible.

b. *Service of 31 to 180 days.* A written request for return to duty must be submitted no later than 14 days after the employee's completion of the military service. If submission of written request for return to duty is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the employee, it must be submitted as quickly as possible.

c. *Service of 181 or more days.* A written request for return to duty must be made within 90 days from the date of discharge.

Note: Individuals who fail to request return to duty in writing within the above specified time frames do not forfeit their rights automatically. However, they are subject to discipline because of unexcused absences.

d. *Service-connected hospitalization or convalescence.* Members of the uniformed services, who are hospitalized or convalescing because of a service-connected disability incurred during active service, are required to return to work once recovered. They are to report or apply in accordance with their length of service as stated in a, b, and c above. The normal recovery period may not exceed 2 years. However, the 2-year period will be extended in order to accommodate circumstances that prevented the returnee from reasonably reporting or applying. This extension will be of minimum duration to reasonably resolve the difficulty beyond the returnee's control.

774 Documentation to Return to Work

USERRA requires the restoration of returnees to work in a prompt fashion. The following documentation should be requested from a service returnee who was absent in excess of 30 days:

a. Timely written request for restoration accompanied by the following:

(1) DD 214 or other official documentation showing that the returnee was in military service during his or her absence (see 771.3, Character of Service, above).

(2) Documentation relating to convalescence or hospital confinement that resulted in a delay of returning to employment.

b. If the returnee is unable to provide satisfactory documentation, the following applies:

(1) The returnee is promptly reemployed.

(2) If the returnee is not subsequently able to provide documentation that meets the eligibility requirements for restoration, the individual can be separated.

775 Reemployment Positions

Returnees from the uniformed services are to be reemployed promptly based on their length of military service as defined in sections 775.1 through 775.3.

775.1 Length of Service

The following length of service time periods are used to establish reemployment priorities for returnees from military service:

a. *One to ninety days of service.* Without exercising any other options, the returnee will be restored in accordance with the following priority:

(1) The returnee will be restored to the seniority, step, and position he or she would have held if he or she had remained continuously employed. This is known as the *escalator position*. This means that bargaining employees progress in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate contract as if they had been active with the Postal Service during the period of military service.

(2) If the employee is unable to qualify for a position in (1), then the employee is assigned to the position prior to entry in the service with full seniority.

(3) If not qualified after reasonable effort, then to a position of lesser status and pay, with full seniority, that the returnee is qualified to perform.

b. *Ninety-one days and more service.* Without exercising any other option, the returnee will be restored according to the following priority:

(1) To the escalator position with full seniority, or position of like seniority, status, and pay.

(2) If not qualified after reasonable effort, then to a position of like seniority, status, and pay.

(3) If not qualified after reasonable effort, then to the position held prior to entry in the uniformed service, with full seniority, status, and pay, or position of like seniority, status, and pay.

(4) If not qualified after reasonable effort, then to any position of lesser status, and pay that most closely approximates the positions in (1), (2), or (3) above that the returnee is qualified to perform, with full seniority.

c. *Probationary period.* Employees who were serving their probationary period at the time of entry into active duty and who met the probationary time period while serving on active duty are considered as having met the probationary time.

775.2 Returnees With a Service-Connected Disability

The following is the priority for reemploying individuals who return from the uniformed service with a service-connected disability:

a. Restore the returnee to the escalator position with reasonable accommodation.

b. If not qualified for the position after a reasonable effort to accommodate the disability, then employ the individual in any other position equivalent in seniority, status, and pay that the applicant is qualified to perform or could become qualified to perform with reasonable efforts.

c. If the returnee is not qualified for a position in *a* or *b*, then employ the returnee with full seniority, consistent with the circumstances of the individual's case, in a position that approximates as nearly as possible the equivalent position in subparagraph *b* above in terms of status and pay.

775.3 Reasonable Effort to Qualify — Reasonable Accommodation

Postal management is obligated to make reasonable efforts to qualify returning individuals who are not immediately qualified to assume employment in a position to which they are entitled. The qualifying efforts may include appropriate testing, training, or refresher course to update skills

where the employee did not have the opportunity to keep up with skills or technological advances.

In addition, service members returning with a service-connected disability are entitled to reasonable accommodation or training for a position set out in section 775.2, Returnees with a Service-Connected Disability.

Service members with nonservice-connected disabilities may also be entitled to reasonable accommodation. Accommodations are to be made in line with Handbook EL-307, *Reasonable Accommodation, An Interactive Process.*

776 Other Rights

Service members are entitled to participate in the rights and benefits that are available to employees on a nonmilitary leave of absence. Furthermore, they are entitled to participate in any nonseniority right and benefit that became effective during their service time. Postal Service policy complies with USERRA and includes, but is not limited to, the features outlined in this section.

776.1 Employee Benefits

USERRA provisions apply to retirement, Thrift Savings Plan, Flexible Spending Accounts, and to health and life insurance programs. For additional information, refer to instructions issued under separate cover by headquarters Compensation.

776.2 Use of Accrued Leave During Military Service

Employees on active military service are permitted to request earned leave, such as annual or sick leave, during the period of military service. However, these requests cannot be approved for the purpose of qualifying an employee who is on leave without pay for holiday pay (ELM 434.4). Furthermore, military leave is authorized in accordance with ELM 517, Paid Military Leave.

776.3 Employment Protection and Military Service Credit

Employees on active military service are protected in the following situations:

a. While on military service, an employee may not be demoted or separated except for cause.

b. Employee does not participate in a reduction in force (RIF).

c. If an employee's position is abolished during the absence for military service, he or she must be reassigned to another position of like status and pay.

Reemployed service returnees with career status are protected from discrimination and retaliation. Furthermore, they are protected from discharge, except for cause, as follows:

a. For 1 year after the date of reemployment, if the period of military service was for more than 180 days.

b. For 180 days, if the period was for more than 30, but less than 181 days.

c. No protection is provided under this section for employees who served less than 31 days.

d. Temporary employees who are reemployed for the remainder of their term are not protected.

777 Enforcement of USERRA

USERRA prohibits discrimination against an applicant or an employee on the basis of service in the uniformed services and prohibits acts of reprisal for exercising a right stipulated in its provisions or for seeking its enforcement. The remedy for violations of USERRA may include the award of back pay, lost benefits, and legal costs.

777.1 Filing Complaints

Employees and applicants may file a complaint with the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) of the Department of Labor, which has the responsibility for investigating and resolving complaints. If VETS cannot successfully resolve the complaint, VETS may ask the office of special counsel to represent the employee or applicant in an appeal before the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). Further, the employee or applicant may bypass VETS and appeal to the MSPB.

777.2 Dealing with VETS

The VETS has the right of reasonable access to records that it deems relevant to the case and to examine and duplicate them. The VETS has been granted subpoena power for witnesses and documentation. Responses to requests by VETS for information and/or records should be coordinated with Labor Relations and the managing counsel. Additionally, Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition will provide additional policy guidance.

778 Employment of Activated Employees — Guard or Reserve

778.1 Postal Service Employees on Active Military Duty

Postal Service employees serving on active military duty under federal status cannot be scheduled to work for the Postal Service in any capacity while on such active duty.

778.2 Employees on Terminal Military Leave

Employees on terminal military leave from the Guard or Reserve who voluntarily desire to return to work before their official discharge may do so with management's approval by providing the following documentation to Human Resources:

a. A copy of an uncertified DD 214 or, if not available,

b. A signed, written statement from the command that the reservist will be released from active duty at a specific date after use of the reservist's terminal leave.

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Appendix A

Sample Letters

Sample letters to request criminal records checks and to communicate with applicants' suitability decisions are shown in this Appendix. Modify these letters as necessary to suit local needs. Samples are:

A-1, Letter of Inquiry — Conviction Record of Job Applicant.

A-2, Request for Applicant's Comments.

A-3, Notifying Applicant of Favorable Suitability Determination.

A-4, Notifying Applicant of Disqualification (Nonmedical).

A-5, Notifying Applicant of Disqualification (Nonmedical) — Used After Letter of Inquiry) (A-1).

A-6, Drug Screen Applicant Scheduling Letter

A-7, Notifying Applicant of Medical Unsuitability (Nonveterans and Veterans with Less Than 30 Percent Disability).

Sample Letter A-1

Letter of Inquiry — Conviction Record of Job Applicant

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ police department__]

Dear Sir or Madam:

The person identified below has been appointed to, or is an applicant for, the position shown. To help determine whether the person is suitable for postal employment, please search your files for the information requested and report the results on this form as soon as possible. A self-addressed, postage-free envelope is enclosed for your reply.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Name:_____
Date of Birth:_____
Social Security:_____
Address:_____
Position:_____

Do the records of your office show that the person identified above has been convicted for any violation of law or is now under charges for any violation of law?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer is yes, please list the details below:

Date:_____
Age Given:_____
Charge:_____
Disposition:_____

Note: It is not the policy of the U.S. Postal Service to inquire into the arrest records of applicants for employment where the charges arising out of an arrest have been dismissed, there has been an acquittal, the proceedings have otherwise not resulted in a conviction, or where the record of such charges does not contain or reflect an actual conviction on such charges. If possible, please exclude all such charges in the requested conviction record, except those that are still pending.

This information is requested under federal statute or Executive Order and may be released by criminal justice agencies in accordance with our obligations to provide a reliable and efficient mail service throughout the United States, and to protect the security of the mail while it is in the custody of the U.S. Postal Service, 39 U.S.C. 101, ASM 274.

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Sample Letter A-2 (p. 1)

Request for Applicant's Comments

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

Certified — Return Receipt Requested

Restricted Delivery

To: [__ applicant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Dear [__Mr./Ms. name__]:

This refers to your application for positions covered by the battery examination for the [__ name__] office.

Inquiries were made to determine your qualifications and suitability for the position. Replies to these inquiries have given us information on which we need your comments or explanation. The information is shown on the attached sheet(s) with space provided for you to write your comments.

You should submit your comments or explanation within 10 days from the date of receiving this letter. Your comments should be as complete and accurate as possible regarding each item of information. Please use the attached sheet(s) for making your reply and return the material to this office in the envelope provided. Sign the last sheet in the space provided, and place your initials at the bottom of each of the other pages.

If your reply is not received within the specified time, we shall assume that you are no longer interested in this position and we will not consider your application further.

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Sample Letter A-2 (p. 2)

Statement to Accompany Request for Comments

Information Disclosed by Inquiries in the Case of

John Doe

On your application for positions covered by the battery examination, you answered *no* to the question regarding your history of criminal conviction. The records of the Chicago Police Department show the following conviction of a person with a name identical or similar to yours:

> January 4, 1996 — Convicted of armed robbery in Chicago, IL. Sentenced to two years in the Cook County Prison and released on probation, March 30, 1997.

You are being given this opportunity to submit any comment or explanation you wish to make concerning this matter, and the apparently intentional false statement on your application.

In support of your comment or explanation, you may submit documentation from court records, probation or parole officers, or other sources.

It is the policy of the Postal Service to evaluate the employability of each job applicant with a criminal record individually. The mere fact that an applicant has a criminal record does not automatically disqualify him or her from postal employment.

[Leave space for answer]

[Following should go on final sheet]

I have initialed each of the above pages that give my comments concerning matters referred to in the letter of (postal installation fills in date of letter of inquiry) from (postal installation fills in name and title given on letter of inquiry). I am aware that the statements made by me are a continuation of statements made in my application for employment and that false statements are punishable by law.

[Signature]

[Date]

Sample Letter A-3

Notifying Applicant of Favorable Suitability Determination
(Used After Letter of Inquiry)

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

Application for: [__position___]

To: [__ applicant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Dear [__Mr./Ms. name__]:

In connection with your application for the position shown above, we requested comment or explanation from you concerning certain information received from inquiries made to determine your qualifications and suitability for the position.

After careful consideration of all the facts, including your explanation, the [__ facility__] has determined that you are suitable for the position shown above.

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Sample Letter A-4

Notifying Applicant of Disqualification (Nonmedical)
(Based on Application Information)

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ applicant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Dear [__Mr./Ms. name__]:

This refers to your application for positions covered by the battery examination dated [__ date__].

On your application you admit a conviction for [__name of charge__] in [__location (city and state)__], on [__month, day and year__], for which you were convicted and received a sentence [__time to serve or fine__].

After careful consideration, we have determined that because of your conviction, you are disqualified for employment at the present time.

You may make a written request for reconsideration of this decision within 15 calendar days from the date of this letter. Your request must be addressed to the undersigned at (specify mailing address).

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Sample Letter A-5

Notifying Applicant of Disqualification (Nonmedical) — Used After Letter of Inquiry (A-1)

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ applicant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Dear [__Mr./Ms. name__]:

This refers further to your application for the positions covered by our battery examination and to our letter of [__ date__] requesting your comments or explanation concerning information secured from inquiries made to determine your qualification and suitability for this position.

After careful consideration of all the facts, including your explanation, we have found that, because of your habitual use of intoxicating beverages to excess, your conviction record, and your false statements in your application concerning the conviction, you are disqualified for employment in the Postal Service.

You may make a written request for reconsideration of this decision within 15 calendar days from the date of this letter. Your request must be addressed to the undersigned at [specify mailing address].

Sincerely

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Sample Letter A-6

Drug Screen Applicant Scheduling Letter

U.S. Postal Service

[date]

[applicant's name]
[mailing address]

Dear [applicant]:

The Postal Service requires applicants for employment to provide a urine sample for drug testing. You have been scheduled to provide such a specimen.

Please report on [date] at [time] to the following location, where your urine specimen will be collected for drug testing:

[Complete address (number, street, room number, city, and state) of collection site].

Please bring this notice and positive identification, e.g., driver's license, military identification card, or credit card with picture. If you are not able to report for specimen collection, please contact (name of human resources employee) at (office telephone number) prior to the date scheduled to set up another appointment.

Failure to report as scheduled or to make advance arrangements to be rescheduled will result in your name not being considered for jobs in this district.

Sincerely,

[name and title of employment or personnel official]

Sample Letter A-7

Notifying Applicant of Medical Unsuitability (Nonveterans and Veterans With Less Than 30 Percent Disability)

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal installation and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ applicant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Dear [__Mr./Ms. name__]:

You have been found medically unsuitable for the position of Mail Handler.

A review of your medical records and evaluation by our medical staff revealed recurrent dislocations of your left shoulder. This condition is not compatible with the strenuous activities required for this position, which includes heavy lifting, pushing, pulling, repetitive stretching, and reaching. Under these conditions, postal employment would place your personal health and safety in jeopardy.

The United States Postal Service medical suitability process for applicants provided full and fair opportunity to present all relevant medical documents, raise issues, and become involved in the reasonable accommodation interactive process when limitations or risks are identified, and reasonable accommodation was requested. The process allowed for documentation and information to be submitted prior to the rendering a final employment decision.

Based on this final employment decision, please be advised that you will not receive additional consideration for this position.

I sincerely hope you will find suitable employment that is rewarding to you. Thank you for your interest in employment with the Postal Service.

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

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Appendix B

Sample Letters Nonbargaining

Sample letters to an employee who has applied for an announced nonbargaining vacancy. The sample letters may be modified as necessary to suit local needs. Samples are:

B-1, Nonselection — Applicants Not Recommended to the Selecting Official

B-2, Nonselection — Applicants Recommended to the Selecting Official

B-3, Offer Letter — Nonsensitive

Sample Letter B-1

Nonselection — Applicants Not Recommended to the Selecting Official

[_____employee_____]

[_____home address_____]

Dear [_____employee_____]:

We appreciate your interest in responding to Vacancy Announcement Number [_____number_____], [_____job title_____], EAS-[_level_].

The Review Committee for the above position made a careful review of your qualifications, along with those of other applicants. Your nonselection as a final candidate does not reflect on your capabilities but rather represents our judgment in identifying and recommending the candidates who we believed best met the position requirements.

You are encouraged to apply for other vacancies which would provide the career advancement and growth you are seeking.

Sincerely,

[_____chairperson of review committee_____]

Note: Send after selecting official advises that a selection has been made.

Sample Letter B-2

Nonselection — Applicants Recommended to the Selecting Official

[_____employee_____]

[_____home address_____]

Dear [_____employee_____]:

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to evaluate your qualifications for Vacancy Number [_____number_____], [_____job title_____], EAS-__level_].

In making a final selection, the qualifications of each candidate were carefully evaluated. Although you were not selected, this does not reflect upon your capabilities. Instead this represents my judgment of who, in light of experience and training, was the best qualified candidate.

Again, thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

[_____selecting official_____]

Sample Letter B-3

Offer Letter — Nonsensitive

[_____employee_____]

[_____home address_____]

Dear [_____employee_____]:

It is a special pleasure for me to confirm our offer, and your verbal acceptance of the position of [_____job title_____], EAS-[_level_], Vacancy Number [_____number_____], at a salary of $[_____amount_____] per year.

This will also confirm [_____date_____] as the effective date of your new assignment.

Sincerely,

[_____selecting official_____]

cc: [_____employee's supervisor_____]

Appendix C

Sample Letters for Use With State Employment Office

These letters are used to establish interest with the State Unemployment Office to utilize its job referral service for casual and temporary employment opportunities. The sample letters may be modified as necessary to suit local needs. Sample letters include:

C-1, Letter of Intent for Filing With State Unemployment Office

C-2, State Unemployment Office's Letter of Certification

Sample Letter C-1

Letter of Intent for Filing With State Unemployment Office
Used to initiate utilization of the State Unemployment Office's job referral service for casual and temporary employment opportunities.

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal facility and address__]

[__ date__]

[__ state__] Unemployment Office
[__ street address__]
[__ city/state/ZIP+4__]

The U. S. Postal Service plans to utilize your job referral service for casual (limited-term) noncareer appointments. We believe these appointments, when needed, will not only assist us in meeting certain operational needs, but will also furnish us with an important opportunity to broaden our relationship.

To be eligible for referral, an individual must be on the rolls of your office as actively seeking employment, at least 18 years of age, and either a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien. Once referred, the individual will be subject to our suitability screening.

Since we are able to accommodate only applicants who are able to meet our specific needs, referrals should be made only on request. Referral requests will provide complete information, such as salary, hours, and nature of the work, as well as a date and time for interview.

My telephone number is [__ number__].

The U.S. Postal Service is an equal employment opportunity employer.

[__ signature__]

[__ name__]

[__ position title__]

[__ district__]

Sample Letter C-2

State Unemployment Office's Letter of Certification
Used by the State Unemployment Office to certify that the referred individual meets Postal Service requirements.

[__ state unemployment office letterhead__]

[__ date__]

United States Postal Service

[__ postal facility__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city/state/ZIP+4__]

Dear [__ postmaster__]

[__ name of applicant__], [__ Social Security number__], [__ address__] is actively seeking employment and meets the requirements you have placed on file with this office.

[__ signature__]

[__ name__]

[__ position title__]

[__ district__]

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Appendix D

Dual Compensation Tracking Procedures and Sample Letters for Use With Dual Compensation Issues

The following information applies only to Postal Service annuitants who are hired to fill temporary relief carrier (TRC) or postmaster relief/leave replacement (PMR/LR) positions and for whom a dual compensation waiver has been approved. Sample letters included in this appendix may be modified as necessary to suit local needs. Sample letters include:

D-1, Annuitant's Dual Compensation Waiver Statement.

D-2, Notice to Reemployed Annuitant of Effect of Special Reemployment Status on Retirement and Insurance.

D-3, Notice to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) of Reemployment of Annuitant.

D1 Dual Compensation Administrative and Tracking Procedures for Postal Service Annuitants

Reporting Requirements

Letter	Description	Disposition
Sample D-1, Annuitant's Dual Compensation Waiver Statement	Each Postal Service annuitant selected for a TRC or PMR/LR position signs a dual compensation waiver statement	A copy is placed in the annuitant's OPF, and the original is forwarded to the district
Record of Approval (not included as a sample letter)	A separate record of the approval of each dual compensation waiver is prepared that includes the annuitant's name, the position to which appointed and its location, and a brief description of recruitment efforts undertaken	A copy is placed in the annuitant's OPF, and the original is forwarded to the district
Sample D-2, Notice to Reemployed Annuitant of Effect of Special Reemployment Status on Retirement and Insurance	An annuitant's notification letter is prepared for each annuitant selected for a TRC or PMR/LR position	A copy is given to the annuitant, a copy is placed in the employee's OPF, a copy is retained by human resources, and a copy is submitted to the Office of Personnel Management
Sample D-3, Notice to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) of Reemployment of Annuitant	—	This letter is sent to OPM, with a copy retained by human resources and in the employee's OPF

D2 Tracking Dual Compensation Waivers

For the purpose of tracking the use of the Postal Service's authority to waive dual compensation provisions for former postal employees hired as reemployed annuitant PMR/LRs and TRCs, the district Human Resources manager must:

a. Consolidate year-end listings of the names, Social Security numbers, and positions (TRC or PMR/LR) of persons for whom waivers were approved, along with copies of the separate records of each dual compensation waiver approval and the retiree's dual compensation waiver statement from local hiring officials.

b. Prepare statistical reports for a final year-end summary reflecting the following information:

Reporting District:	Name of District:
Statistical Elements:	Number of hired civilian retirees (postmaster relief/leave replacements (annuitants) or temporary relief carriers (annuitants)).

c. Forward copies of the following information to Headquarters within 10 working days after the close of the calendar year:

(1) Year-end listing of persons for whom waivers were approved.

(2) Records of waiver approval for each person showing the appointee's name, position to which appointed and its location, and a brief description of recruitment efforts.

(3) The retiree's dual compensation waiver statement.

(4) Year-end statistical reports.

(5) Negative reports, if appropriate.

d. Mail reports to:

MANAGER, SELECTION, EVALUATION, & RECOGNITION
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 9671
WASHINGTON DC 20260-4250

Note: Human resources personnel and postmasters are to note that any documentation related to the hiring under this authority and the granting of pay or annuity reduction waivers are subject to OPM's review upon request. It is essential to maintain complete employee files that include all items listed above.

Sample Letter D-1

Annuitant's Dual Compensation Waiver Statement

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal facility and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ postmaster__]

I hereby accept reemployment with the U.S. Postal Service as a [__ postmaster relief/leave replacement or temporary relief carrier__].

My acceptance of this appointment is with the understanding that under the dual compensation waiver provisions of Public Law 103-336 and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) authority, I will serve as a [__ postmaster relief/leave replacement or temporary relief carrier__] on an emergency basis without offset of pay or annuity. It is also my understanding that this appointment with the dual compensation waiver is limited to 180 days of actual work in a calendar year. Any days worked beyond the allowable time frame will be subject to a salary or annuity reduction.

Signature:

Print Name:

SSN:

Date:

Sample Letter D-2 (p. 1)

Notice to Reemployed Annuitant of Effect of Special Reemployment Status on Retirement and Insurance

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal facility and address__]

[__ date__]

To: [__ annuitant__]
[__ street address__]
[__ city, state, ZIP__]

Date of Birth:

SSN:

CSA Number:

Date of Appointment:

This is to advise you of the status of your retirement benefits during your reemployment as a temporary relief carrier (TRC) or postmaster relief/leave replacement (PMR/LR) hired on an emergency basis.

Reemployed annuitants under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) generally continue to receive their annuity during reemployment, but their salary during reemployment is reduced by the amount of annuity allocable to the period of reemployment. However, beginning from the date of your reemployment stated above, you are not subject to these requirements due to a special provision of Public Law 103-336, Federal Employees' Pay Comparability Act of 1990. Under this special provision, you will continue to receive your annuity and full salary while you are serving as a TRC or a PMR/LR. This exception to the regular offset provision is applicable only while you serve under this appointment. Because you qualify to receive full salary and full annuity during this appointment, the following rules apply to you:

Retirement

By law, you are not covered by CSRS or FERS for your service under this appointment. This means that you will not have retirement deductions for CSRS or FERS withheld from your pay, and your service under this appointment will not count toward additional retirement benefits. You are also not eligible to participate in the Thrift Savings Plan.

If you are receiving a disability annuity and you have not been found recovered or restored to earning capacity, you will continue to receive your annuity and full salary. However, the reemployment may result in a finding of recovery or restoration to earning capacity. If you are found recovered or restored to earning capacity, the annuity will be terminated.

Sample Letter D-2 (p. 2)

Notice to Reemployed Annuitant of Effect of Special Reemployment Status on Retirement and Insurance

Health and Life Insurance

Any health and life insurance coverage you have as an annuitant under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) or Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Programs will continue while you are employed under this appointment, unless you voluntarily elect to drop your coverage, or in the case of a recovered disability annuitant, the annuity is terminated. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will continue to withhold premiums from your annuity as long as your coverage continues as an annuitant.

If you have additional questions regarding your appointment or the effect of your reemployment on your retirement benefits, you should contact [__ name__] at [__ number__].

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

cc: U. S. Office of Personnel Management

Sample Letter D-3

Notice to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) of Reemployment of Annuitant

[__ Postal Service letterhead with postal facility and address__]

[__ date__]

Retirement Operations Center
US Office of Personnel Management
PO Box 45
Boyers PA 16017-0045

RE: [_____ annuitant's name_____]
CSA Number:
SSN:
DOB:

This is to advise you of the reemployment of the above-named annuitant.

[__ Mr./Ms. name__] will be reemployed with the U. S. Postal Service as a [__ postmaster relief/leave replacement or temporary relief carrier__], effective [__ date__], in an intermittent limited term appointment for a period not to exceed 180 days of actual work in a calendar year. During this appointment, the annuitant will be exempt from annuity offset per OPM approval granted in accordance with 5 CFR, Part 553, and Public Laws 102-190, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 and 103-336, Pay Comparability Act.

Enclosed is a copy of the personnel action effecting the appointment and the *Notice of Effect of Special Reemployment Status on Retirement and Insurance* provided the annuitant. Your office will be notified upon completion of the reemployment.

Any questions regarding this matter may be referred to [__ name__] at [__ number__].

Sincerely,

[__ signature__]

Manager, Human Resources

[__ district__]

Enclosures

cc: Employee

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Appendix E

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Legal and regulatory requirements underlie many Postal Service personnel procedures. Following is an overview of the most notable requirements:

a. *Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 (PRA).* Before July 1, 1971, the Civil Service Commission (now the Office of Personnel Management) had responsibility for recruiting and examining applicants for postal employment. Since that date, these activities have been within the authority of the Postal Service.

b. *Veterans' Preference Act of 1944.* The PRA requires the Postal Service to recognize veterans' preference in the rating, ranking, and selecting of postal applicants. This preference includes:

   (1) The opportunity of certain veterans to compete in examinations that are not open to the general public.

   (2) The addition of either 5 or 10 points to scores on competitive entrance examinations.

   (3) Placement of a veteran with compensable, service-connected disabilities of 10 percent or greater at the top of the ratings list, ahead of all other ratings.

   (4) Priority in selection decisions.

   (5) Restricted positions from external recruitment sources. See 232.52, Positions Restricted to Applicants Eligible for Veterans' Preference.

   (6) OPM review of the case file for any applicant with compensable, service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more who is disqualified for failure to meet the medical requirements of the job, or is passed over in favor of a lower ranking nonveteran based on personal unsuitability. See 627.2, Veterans With 30 Percent or More Compensable Disability.

c. *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection.* These guidelines apply to all procedures used in making an employment decision, such as hiring, retention, promotion, transfer, demotion, and dismissal.

d. *Rehabilitation Act of 1973.* This law requires federal employers, including the Postal Service, to establish affirmative action plans *for the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities,* 29 U.S.C. 791(b). The term *qualified individual with* (a disability) is defined

at 29 CFR 1614.203(a)(6) as, with respect to employment: *an individual with (a disability) who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position in question without endangering the health and safety of the individual or others.* The law also prohibits a federal employer from asking an applicant orally or in writing about the applicant's physical fitness until a bona fide job offer is made.

e. *Prohibition Against Political Recommendations.* 39 U.S.C. 1002 prohibits political and certain other recommendations for Postal Service appointments, promotions, assignments, transfers, or designations. Statements relating solely to character and residence are permitted. All other statements are prohibited unless (1) they are requested by the Postal Service and consist solely of evaluations of an individual's work performance, ability, aptitude, and general qualifications, or (2) they are requested by a government representative investigating the individual's loyalty, suitability, or character. Anyone who requests, solicits, or accepts a prohibited statement or recommendation is subject to disqualification or disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Postal Service.

f. *Prohibition Against Appointment or Promotion, or Recommendation of Appointment or Promotion, of a Relative.* The Postal Service is subject to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 3110 (39 U.S.C. 410(b)(1)), 18 U.S.C. 208 (39 U.S.C. 410(b)(2)), and 5 CFR 2635.502 (5 CFR 2635.102), which impose broad restrictions on the employment of relatives by agency officials.

g. *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.* This law makes it illegal to hire unauthorized aliens in the United States. Postal policy requires an applicant to be either a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien. The law requires employers to verify and document employment eligibility, which is done by the Postal Service after a job offer has been extended. See 55, Eligibility to Work in the Postal Service.

h. *Public Health Service Act*. This act added a new section to the United States Code (5 U.S.C. 3328). The act prohibits any man born after December 31, 1959, from being appointed to a position in an executive agency if he is or was required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) and is not registered, or knowingly and willfully did not register before the requirement terminated or became inapplicable to him. As an excepted agency, the Postal Service is not required to comply with this legislation, but does so voluntarily. See 513.4, Selective Service System Registration Requirements.

i. *Drug Abuse and Treatment Act of 1972.* This act provides, in part, that no person may be denied or deprived of federal civilian employment or a federal professional or other license or right solely on the ground of prior alcohol or drug use. As an excepted agency, the Postal Service is not required to comply with this statute, but does so voluntarily. See 515, Drug Abuse History and Exhibit 522, Suitability Factors — Partial List of Reasons for Disqualification.