

R 221349Z MAR 04 ZUI ASN-A00082000103
FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-WPC//
TO ALCGCIV

BT
UNCLAS //N12290//
ALCGCIV 013/04

SUBJ: HR DESIGN NEWS CORNER: INTRODUCING MAX HR: Q AND A

1. THE PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEM IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO:
 - A. BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT TO TAKE SWIFT ACTION AND ADAPT TO THE CHANGING NATURE OF OUR WORK.
 - B. CONTINUE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN HIGHLY TALENTED AND MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES.
2. THE PROPOSED SYSTEM WILL ENSURE THAT:
 - A. EMPLOYEES HAVE A GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THEIR PAY.
 - B. PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE RELEVANT AND ACCURATELY LINKED TO THE MISSION.
 - C. EMPLOYEES AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES CONTINUE TO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.
 - D. ISSUES ARE RESOLVED FASTER, AND DUE PROCESS IS MAINTAINED.
3. MAXIMIZING TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, AND MAXIMIZING YOUR POTENTIAL, ARE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE HR SYSTEM. THEREFORE, THE NAME "MAX HR" WILL BE USED TO CHARACTERIZE THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEM AND DESCRIBE SUBSEQUENT HR IMPROVEMENTS AND PROGRAMS.
4. BECAUSE THE SYSTEM WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON DHS' CULTURE AND PEOPLE, MAX HR, ALONG WITH THE TAG LINE "MAXIMIZING RESULTS, REWARDING EXCELLENCE" PERSONALIZES THIS INITIATIVE AND HIGHLIGHTS THE CORE INTENTIONS OF THE NEW SYSTEM--TO FOCUS ON RESULTS AND TO SEEK AND REWARD EXCELLENCE THROUGHOUT THE DEPARTMENT.
5. AS WE TRANSITION TO THE NEW SYSTEM, YOU WILL SEE REFERENCES TO MAX HR ON THE DHS INTERNET, INTRANET, AND IN FUTURE HR-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS.
6. Q AND A.
 - A. SINCE THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW HR SYSTEM WERE PUBLISHED LAST MONTH, A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST HAS BEEN GENERATED. A NUMBER OF YOU HAVE PROVIDED COMMENTS THROUGH THE FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS; WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS THROUGH THE FEEDBACK MAILBOX AND VARIOUS EMPLOYEE FORUMS WITH DHS LEADERS INCLUDING DEPUTY SECRETARY JAMES LOY, UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT JANET HALE, AND CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER RON JAMES. YOUR CONTINUED FEEDBACK WILL HELP US ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM MEETS THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES.
 - B. IN MONITORING AND ADDRESSING YOUR FEEDBACK, WE'VE NOTICED SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS THAT WE THOUGHT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO SHARE IN THIS WEEK'S ARTICLE.
Q: I AM DUE A LONGEVITY STEP INCREASE IN OCTOBER 2004. WILL I LOSE THIS UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM OR WILL I RECEIVE MY STEP INCREASE?
A: CHANGES TO THE GS PAY SYSTEM WON'T BEGIN UNTIL 2005. SPECIFICALLY, WE ARE PLANNING A PHASED ROLL OUT OF THE PAY SYSTEM WITH THE FIRST GROUP OF EMPLOYEES (DHS HEADQUARTERS AND COAST GUARD CIVILIANS) CONVERTING TO THE NEW PAY SYSTEM SOME TIME IN CALENDAR YEAR 2005. ALL EMPLOYEES WILL STILL RECEIVE THEIR SCHEDULED WITHIN GRADE STEP INCREASES, ASSUMING THEIR PERFORMANCE IS SATISFACTORY, UNTIL THEY ARE CONVERTED INTO THE NEW SYSTEM. THE PROPOSED NEW PAY SYSTEM INCLUDES A PROVISION WHERE WE WILL "BUY OUT" EMPLOYEES' NEXT WITHIN GRADE INCREASES, ON A PRO-RATED BASIS. UPON CONVERSION TO THE NEW PAY SYSTEM, EMPLOYEES' BASE PAY WILL BE ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR NEXT WITHIN GRADE INCREASE BASED ON THE TIME SPENT IN THEIR CURRENT STEP AND THE WAITING PERIOD FOR THE NEXT STEP.
Q: WHAT TYPES OF PAY INCREASES ARE AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES UNDER THE PROPOSED SYSTEM?
A: PAY ADJUSTMENTS UNDER THE PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM WILL FALL INTO TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES: MARKET-RELATED ADJUSTMENTS (INCLUDING A GENERAL ADJUSTMENT AND LOCALITY SUPPLEMENTS) AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE-BASED PAY INCREASES. IN KEEPING WITH THE DESIRE OF SECRETARY RIDGE AND OPM DIRECTOR KAY COLES JAMES FOR A HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE, THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS STIPULATE THAT THESE PAY ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED ONLY TO EMPLOYEES WHO MEET OR EXCEED PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS.
Q: HOW WILL THE NEW SYSTEM AFFECT MY RETIREMENT AND BENEFITS?
A: THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS DO NOT CHANGE THE CURRENT RULES AND POLICES REGARDING RETIREMENT, HEALTH OR LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS, OR LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS.
Q: WHERE CAN I FIND THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW PERSONNEL SYSTEM?
A: THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW HR SYSTEM ARE PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER, WITH A 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, WHICH CLOSED ON MARCH 22, 2004. ALL DHS EMPLOYEES, ALONG WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT FORMAL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED SYSTEM.
Q: HOW TO SUBMIT PUBLIC COMMENTS.
A. ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE ENCOURAGED TO VOICE THEIR THOUGHTS,

RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCERNS DURING THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. ALL SUBMITTED COMMENTS WILL BE REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED. THERE ARE TWO METHODS FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENT:

(1) VIA THE INTERNET. PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE HR DESIGN PROCESS CAN BE FOUND ON LINE AT WWW.EPA.GOV/EDOCKET. THIS SITE INCLUDES A LINK TO THE DHS/OPM REGULATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENT ELECTRONICALLY. NOTE: YOU CAN ALSO VIEW ALL PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY AT THIS LOCATION. THERE IS ALSO A LINK TO THIS SITE ON THE DHS INTERNET HOME PAGE (WWW.DHS.GOV) AND THE DHS INTRANET (WWW.DHSONLINE.DHS.GOV).

(2) VIA U. S. MAIL. INDIVIDUALS CAN ALSO SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS TO DHS/OPM HR SYSTEM PUBLIC COMMENTS, PO BOX 14474, WASHINGTON DC 20044-4474.

B. ALL WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS MUST REFERENCE DHS/OPM AND THE DOCKET NUMBER (DHS-2004-001).

C. FOR GENERAL COMMENTS. DHS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE AND RESPOND TO INPUT AND SUGGESTIONS VIA THE FEEDBACK MAILBOX AT [HRDESIGN\(AT\)DHS.GOV](mailto:HRDESIGN(AT)DHS.GOV). PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ADDRESS IS FOR INFORMAL COMMENTS ONLY AND SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BECOME A PART OF PUBLIC RECORD.

8. INTERNET RELEASED AUTHORIZED.

9. RELEASED BY RONALD R. KOGUT, CHIEF, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL.

BT

NNNN