

# NSPS

NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL SYSTEM

## New system uses merit principles for hiring, firing

The human resources management system for DoD civilian employees has ushered in an era of flexibility and increased fairness with the National Security Personnel System.

It will serve to replace outdated and often rigid civil service rules with a system that rewards excellent individual performance and recognizes the civilian DoD workforce as an integral part of the total force.

The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) has created an NSPS Program Implementation Office to assist in developing this new personnel system throughout DoD.

Congress authorized NSPS in the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, signed by President Bush Nov. 24.

This sweeping reform allows the DoD to establish new rules for how civilians are hired, assigned, compensated, promoted, and even disciplined; but all within the framework of merit principles, accommodation of veteran's preference, and respect for employees' right to bargain at the national level.

The civilian workforce is crucial to our nation's defense, but the current longevity-based compensation system does not allow the flexibility to

attract, reward, and grow the most talented workforce we can.

Several measures under the NSPS will transform this process using such key elements as pay banding, pay-for-performance, and expedited hiring.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has created a Web site that provides detail regarding NSPS design, range, and impact. It answers frequently asked questions such as:

### **What is pay banding and what does it mean to me?**

*Pay banding is the consolidation of existing pay grades into a few broad bands.*

*The small number of pay bands simplifies job classification and broadens pay ranges.*

*Positions are placed in one of several "career groups" in a pay band. Individual pay is set within the range of salary dollars in the band. This allows for more flexible pay-setting procedures.*

An Air Force-level Web site is in the works as well, that will tailor presentation of NSPS to an Air Force audience. For example, current information indicates initial conversion to NSPS will be limited to 300,000 DoD wide, and will exclude

the Air Force units already in a pay banding demonstration project.

It's still important to research the changes designed to map our civilian workforce toward the same flexibility and adaptability as our military.

What's not going to change under NSPS is of equal note as well.

Elements key to the stability and welfare of DoD civilians such as merit system principles, rules against prohibited personnel practices, training, and anti-discrimination laws remain core under this new system.

The significant improvements under NSPS have been compared to those of the Civil Service Reform Act of 25 years ago by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. He said, "These reforms will provide senior managers greater flexibility in managing our dedicated civil service, empower them to compete for high quality talent, offer compensation competitive with the private sector, and reward outstanding service.

It will build greater pride in the civilian workforce and attract a new generation of civilians to public service." NSPS—Transformation for a new era of warfighting support, transformation to put the right person in the right job. (Submitted by AFCA Civilian Career Force Management Branch)

**NSPS Web site ● <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps//>**