

**RIF GUIDE for
MANAGERS and
SUPERVISORS**

Managers, Supervisors and RIF

This section is for both upper-management and front-line supervisors. Obviously, some portions of the guide will be more applicable to one level of management or supervision than others. Please read through the entire guide. A glossary of terms is at the end of this guide.

Even though it may seem like managers have no time during this process to communicate to their employees, they **MUST** make the time to communicate via meetings, e-mail, appointments, phone calls, etc. Rumors thrive when people do not have access to information. The more uncertainty there is, the greater the flow of the rumors. Time spent by the water cooler is time spent not working. Employees worry about things like: loss of a job, transfer, changes in status, power, responsibility, coworkers, and career path opportunities. Managers need to take the time to candidly tell their employees exactly what is happening and how those events will affect them in their jobs.

Managers and supervisors should not be afraid of over communicating during a RIF. The system should be flooded with information--verbal, nonverbal, oral, written, formal, informal, up, down, lateral--over and over again. The RIFed employees and the survivors need to hear the information over and over again.

RIF: An Option during Downsizing

RIF is a uniform and systematic way of making organizational changes. This is done through specific RIF procedures that make sure employees are treated fairly and given their full rights. However, RIF is probably the most disruptive option because it usually involves either moving employees from their current jobs to other jobs (through reassignments or down-grades) or separating employees. These moves are based on the employees' qualifications and rights to be retained in their competitive levels and/or to displace other employees with lesser rights. The result is a temporary loss of organizational efficiency.

RIF is also probably the most expensive option for the following reasons:

- If non-Demo employees are demoted, they may be entitled to keep their higher grade for two years (grade retention) and/or their higher pay indefinitely (pay retention)
- If Demo employees are demoted, they may be entitled to keep their higher pay indefinitely (pay retention)
- If employees are separated, they may be entitled to severance pay equal to as much as one year's salary

Indirect RIF costs are also high. These costs include lost productivity, moving employees, and overall employee morale. Also included are the staff costs for running the RIF and handling any appeals, grievances, and reconsiderations. A RIF may be more costly to an agency than not having a RIF. Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of having a RIF and deciding whether a RIF is necessary are difficult tasks. It is **CRITICAL** that all managers understand what a RIF involves and what kinds of actions are available to minimize the impact of the RIF.

Voluntary Personnel Actions:

One option that upper management may consider to minimize the effects of a RIF is liberalizing some of the employment policies. Employees can request voluntary actions that result in cost savings as well as personnel ceiling savings to the agency. For example:

Leave without pay (LWOP), optional retirement, reduction in work hours (part-time hours reduced from 32 to 24 hours per week), change in work schedule (full-time to part-time)

Management Actions:

Management can also take actions to avoid or lessen the impact of a RIF. For example:

- Hiring freeze
- Furlough
- Limit the work hours of intermittent employees
- Hiring temporary employees
- Require overtime (rather than hiring new employees)
- Reimbursable details (with another agency)

During the RIF Process

Keep in mind that during a RIF, tensions are high. This is a very stressful time for everybody involved--meaning everybody at an agency. Employees are concerned about their jobs, their worth to the organization, their self-esteem, their benefits. Managers and supervisors are concerned with their employees' morale, productivity, and health. They are also concerned with cutting costs and continuing to get the work done.

Management has the responsibility to keep employees as well informed as possible about the changes that are going to occur. They also have the responsibility to make sure the position classification and annual performance ratings are accurate. Managers need to plan how to talk to their employees who are impacted during the RIF.

Notifying staff that they have been released under a reduction-in-force is obviously a difficult task. NAWCWD recognizes that and it is Command's intent that everyone involved -- including managers and supervisors, those to be released, and those who will remain behind -- feels treated with dignity and respect. How those who are separated, down-graded and reassigned are communicated with can:

- make a difference in how they respond to the news that they are being let go and how quickly they get to a place where they are ready and willing to take constructive action in creating a life for themselves after the RIF; and
- send an important message to those who will remain behind and can influence their morale and willingness to contribute to the important work of NAWCWD.

During the RIF, managers and supervisors have the responsibility of notifying employees they are being impacted by the RIF, explain why the RIF is necessary, clarify the finality of the RIF decision, answer questions, refer employees to Human Resources (HR) to clarify questions or answers and make arrangements for pay and benefits, and encourage employees to use the counseling and career transition services provided.

General RIF Information

Employees who are affected by the reduction in force (RIF) will receive written notice at least 120 calendar days before the effective date of the RIF action. For example, in the 1996 NAWCWD RIF, actions were to be effective no later than July 31, 1996, so notices were to be handed out no later than March 31, 1996. After an employee receives a notice, that notice can be canceled or amended to show a less severe action (for example, change to lower grade instead of separation). A more severe action would require a new notice period of 120 days. Therefore, on the date RIF Notices are handed out, employees will know the "worst case" effect of the RIF.

Retention Register and Retention Standing

What exactly is the process used in a RIF prior to notification of affected employees? First, the data used to determine an employee's standing in the RIF process must be verified. The Human Resource Service Center (HRSC) uses the personnel folder to make

qualification determinations for assignment to positions during a RIF. It is recommended that employees review SF- 50 actions and their Leave and Earnings Statements on a regular basis in order to find any discrepancies or errors. Errors in the data on the SF-50 action can affect pay, leave accrual rate, service computation date for retirement, or veterans' preference for reduction in force. If there are questions or concerns about the accuracy of the data, contact your Human Resource Service Center or your local Human Resources Department for assistance. Supervisors are responsible for validating and making appropriate changes to the classification (title, series and grade) and specialty area codes on an ongoing basis throughout the year. This includes providing timely changes or updates and insuring that appropriate documentation is on file with the Human Resource Service Center and/or the local Human Resources Department.

In a RIF, employees are grouped into what is known as a "master retention register." The first grouping is by competitive areas. Employees in separate competitive areas do not compete with each other. Within NAWCWD, separate competitive areas have been established for Point Mugu, China Lake, and White Sands for Demo (Demonstration Project) employees and non-Demo employees as well as for each occupational career path within the Demo. These occupational groups are scientists and engineers, technicians, technical specialists, administrative personnel and general personnel.

Within a competitive area, employees are then grouped into levels. Separate competitive levels are established for all positions having the same service (competitive or excepted); work schedule (full-time, part-time, intermittent, or seasonal); supervisory or non-supervisory status; trainee status; title, series, level and primary specialty area code or, for non-Demo employees, competitive level code and (for Demo employees who are scientists, engineers or technicians) functional code. This results in a large number of competitive levels, perhaps as many as 3600. The number of employees in a competitive level may be as many as 60 or as few as 1. A list of competing employees within a competitive level is called a "retention register".

Within a competitive level, employees are also grouped by their tenure (career, career-conditional or term), veterans' preference, length of service and performance. An employee's relative standing on a retention register is called "retention standing." It is here that the Demo and non-Demo systems differ. Demo employees are grouped first by their performance, then by tenure, veterans preference and length of service, while non-Demo employees are grouped first by tenure, then veteran's preference, and finally length of service augmented by performance.

For retention register purposes under both systems, the three most recent annual performance ratings of record are used for establishing performance credit. Employees will receive performance credit for the three most recent annual ratings received during the four-year period before the cutoff date.

If a Demo employee has not received three actual annual performance ratings during the preceding four-year period, credit is given for up to three presumptive ratings of fully successful (level three) to bring the total number of ratings to three. For example, if an

employee were hired two years ago, he or she would have 2 ratings of record and one presumptive fully successful rating. Or, if an employee was on LWOP for an extended amount of time during the performance year, he or she may have a presumptive fully successful rating. Another case is when an employee is promoted during the 120 days before the end of the performance cycle and is, therefore, ineligible for a rating for the performance year. The Human Resources Service Center would look over the last four years to credit that employee with three ratings of record.

If a Non-Demo has less than three ratings of record, their actual ratings of record are averaged. If a Non-Demo employee has no record of rating on file they are given the "Modal Rating" for the competitive area. The "Modal Rating" is the summary rating level assigned most frequently among the actual ratings of record that is assigned under the summary level pattern that applies to the employee's position of record on the date of the reduction in force.

Demo Standings

Under Demo, three incentive pay groups are established by averaging the 3 annual performance ratings. Highly successful performance ratings (levels one and two) are assigned a value of one; fully successful performance ratings (level three) are assigned a value of two; and less than fully successful performance ratings (levels four and five) are assigned a value of three. The group "H" (highly successful) incentive pay group includes employees whose three most recent annual performance ratings average within the range of 1.0 to 1.33; the group "F" (fully successful) incentive pay group includes employees whose three most recent annual performance ratings average above 1.33 but no higher than 2.0; and the group "L" (less than fully successful) incentive pay group includes employees whose three most recent annual performance ratings average above 2.0.

Within each competitive level, employees in incentive pay group "H" are placed at the top of the retention register in standard order of tenure, veterans' preference, and length of service order; employees in incentive pay group "F" are placed at the middle of the retention register in standard order; and employees in incentive pay group "L" are placed at the bottom of the retention register, in standard order.

The first employees to be released from a competitive level will be those from the bottom of the retention register.

In other words, less than fully successful performers are the first employees to be released from their competitive level.

Employees whose positions have been brought into the Demo Project within the last three (or four) years are credited with Demo ratings that are equivalent to their non-Demo ratings. Employees accepting positions covered by the Demo Project within the last three (or four) years are credited with presumptive fully successful ratings.

Non-Demo Standings

In the non-Demo system, service credit is added to your length of service. The service credit for the last three performance ratings is averaged, then rounded up. For ratings of records received prior to 10/1/97 or when the rating of records were received after 10/1/97 AND there is a single rating pattern in the RIF competitive area; service computation dates will be augmented for performance as follows: Service credit for an Outstanding rating is 20 years; for Highly Successful, 16 years and for Fully Successful, 12 years. No service credit (for RIF purposes) is given for ratings of less than Fully Successful.

RIF Process

Once the data has been validated and the master retention register has been established, the first step in processing a RIF is for management to identify the positions that will be abolished. This determination is based on the previously established reasons for the RIF. The RIF proceeds in two steps, called "Round One" and "Round Two", and are explained below.

When a position is abolished, employees are released from their competitive levels in inverse order of their retention standing beginning with the employee having the lowest standing. This is referred to as "round one." In round one when an employee's position is abolished, the employee is not automatically released from his or her competitive level. An employee in an abolished position may have a right to be reassigned to one of the other positions in the competitive level. Employees occupying abolished positions have this right as long as they are not the lowest standing employee. If the employee in the abolished position has the lowest standing in a competitive level, he or she is the one released from the competitive level.

An employee who is released from his or her competitive level could have a right to be assigned to another position. These assignment rights are handled in "round two." This is the right of an employee to be assigned, by bump or retreat, in the second round of competition to a position in a different competitive level held by another employee with lower standing on a retention register. Term employees (tenure group III) do not have assignment rights.

Bump Rights

"Bumping" is an employee's right of assignment to a position for which the employee qualifies and which is occupied by an employee with lower retention standing within the same competitive area (NOTE: Round two involves competitive area not competitive level). For Demo employees, this would be an employee in a lower incentive pay group or, within the same incentive pay group, in a lower tenure group or tenure subgroup, in a different competitive level in the same competitive area. Length of service (this is determined by an employee's SCD_RIF date) is not taken into consideration during the bumping in Round Two for Demo employees. For example, a career non-veteran in the

“H” incentive pay group could bump a career veteran in the “F” incentive pay group, as long as he or she was fully qualified for the position.

Non-Demo employees can bump an employee with a lower tenure group or subgroup. Tenure group I employees could bump any employees in tenure groups II or III. A tenure group I, compensably disabled veteran could bump a tenure group I veteran or non-veteran employee and so on.

The occupied position must be no more than one Demo Project level or three GS grades below the position from which the employee is released. Compensably disabled veterans in Demo may bump down two Demo levels. Compensably disabled veterans in GS may bump down no more than three grades (or appropriate grade intervals or equivalent).

Retreat Rights

“Retreating” is actually a very restricted form of bumping. It is an employee’s right of assignment to a position formerly held, or essentially identical to one previously held.

Under the Demo system, the position to which the employee retreats must be occupied by a lower standing employee (lower tenure group, lower tenure subgroup, or later service computation date) in any incentive pay group and at a Demo Project level from or through which the employee was promoted.

For non-Demo employees, the position to which the employee retreats must be occupied by an employee in the same tenure group and subgroup but with less service under the RIF rules. Thus, a career non-veteran can retreat to a position occupied by another career non-veteran with less service if that employee previously held that position (or one essentially identical).

The occupied position must be in a different competitive level in the same competitive area, and must be no more than one Demo Project level or three GS grades below the position from which the employee is released. Compensably disabled veterans may bump down 2 Demo levels or down 5 GS grades.

Both bumping and retreating are restricted to the employee's competitive area. For example, a DS employee cannot bump or retreat to a DG position, even though he or she may have previously held that position. No employees may bump or retreat to a position at a different site.

RIF is obviously a very complicated process. Each action is taken according to strict rules that protect employees' rights. Each employee affected in any RIF will be individually counseled by HR on their rights and options.

RIF Notices

After the mechanics of the RIF are completed (based upon management's decisions about which positions to abolish), RIF notices will be issued. Letters and enclosures will be prepared for managers/supervisors in order to meet with employees to deliver the notices (see pages 15-27 for additional information about these meetings).

Appeals, Grievances and Requests for Reconsideration

Non demo employees who are not in a bargaining unit may file appeals of their RIF actions to the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB). Employees in bargaining units whose negotiated agreement excludes RIF grievances may also file an appeal with MSPB. Employees in bargaining units whose agreement does not exclude RIF appeals have the choice of appealing to MSPB or going to arbitration using the negotiated grievance procedure. Demo employees must use the Demo RIF appeal process. An employee who accepts an offer of reassignment in a RIF may not appeal the RIF action.

Demo employees can request review through local channels followed by the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, San Diego (the sister Navy laboratory approved in the same Demo Project) for final review and decision. Demo employees have no Merit System Protection Board appeal rights.

The International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO) at China Lake and the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) at White Sands have included RIF actions in the grievance procedure. If a unit employee appeals a RIF action, they can choose between either the negotiated grievance/arbitration process or the MSBP appeal process. They can choose one but not both.

The other bargaining units at NAWCWD (National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Indian Wells Valley Metal Trades Counsel (MTC)) do not include RIF appeal in their grievance procedure. Therefore, unit employees in these three units plus all other non-Demo/non union employees may file appeals of RIF actions to the MSPB.

If the employee's grievance raises an allegation of discrimination under Title 7, the employee may file a mixed case appeal to MSPB or initiate an informal EEO complaint within 45 days of the effective date of the personnel action or incident that gave rise to the allegation of discrimination.

If you have additional questions or need clarification about the RIF process, please contact your PMA.

CEAP and RIF

The Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP) is a critical program throughout the RIF process. The process of downsizing through a RIF (of any size) is a far more complex undertaking than simply moving people from one job to another. This is partly due to the number of people impacted--those discharged, those down-graded, those reassigned, the decision-makers, family members, co-workers, community, etc.--but mostly due to the emotional impact of the experience.

For many employees, their identities and sense of self are tied closely with their careers, work and relationships at work, hence job loss typically triggers a great deal of tension, conflict, personal issues, and reflection. People can, and do, work through these issues. However, the headlines daily announce the impact: drug/alcohol abuse, increase in domestic violence, work-place violence, etc. The stress during the pre-RIF and RIF notice period often causes an increase of on-the-job injuries, workers' compensation claims, sick leave, employee grievances and complaints of unfair treatment. Productivity can also decline sharply and some employees may even hoard work. Employees may face pressure from colleagues to retire or resign; employees not separated may feel uneasy working around those who have been given notices. The Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP) is prepared to offer services focused specifically on the tension created during this time and can reduce or eliminate these negative consequences.

How CEAP Can Help

The discharged employee will experience a recursive loss cycle; very much like the grieving cycle, which occurs on the loss of a close friend or relative. Many family members, supervisors, and co-workers will also experience this same cycle at some level.

Emotional states of job loss and transition typically involve a cycle of:

- a) Denial, shock, disbelief—a person's way of cushioning the blow;
- b) Anger, rage, hostility—a person's natural need to blame someone/something (this may include a person's desire for revenge);
- c) Bargaining, negotiating, pleading, maneuvering—a person's attempt to hold onto his/her job;
- d) Depression, sadness, fatigue—a person's second guessing of him/herself and past choices, mourning of loss and what it represents to him/her;
- e) Acceptance—very strong feelings and mood swings subside; readiness to let go of the past and to move on; the focus moves to beginning anew and making a successful transition.

Individuals may go back and forth among stages and emotions, and stages may be skipped.

Most people find the combination of group support and individual counseling sessions to be the most beneficial.

- The group sessions help employees through this time and give them the opportunity to work with and help others experiencing similar issues. It can be a relief to hear others express that a range of emotions, reactions, and plans for moving on are a normal and expected consequence of job loss. In addition, the group sessions allow a free-flowing mix of instrumental help (resume writing, job search, interview skills, identification of goals, values, etc.) to assist employees move through the emotions of the job loss.
- The individual counseling helps employees focus on the specifics in their own lives. Of course, some employees are more comfortable in one environment or the other but all employees should be encouraged to attend both types of sessions.

Many organizations focus on only the instruments to help employees find other jobs, ignoring the inner issues that also need to be addressed. At NAWCWD, the CEAP counselors are ready to assist the employees throughout the RIF Notification period.

Each individual will experience the job loss differently, however we know that they will each experience the job loss cycle, that instrumental help (the listing above and also including financial planning) helps to reduce fears, that it is important they know that the emotive, dynamic aspects of the experience are normal and will ease over time in their intensity, and that the choice is theirs in terms of what they will or will not make of the experience.

What To Expect

Family members of those affected by the RIF and supervisors will also experience related emotions and it is helpful if they are at least aware of what to expect and how it may impact them. Fear, guilt and blame are the most common feelings. For supervisors notifying employees of RIF actions, they should NOT try to do this as objectively as possible, as that kind of denial will ultimately hurt them and be negatively perceived by those discharged, down-graded or reassigned. The decision to downsize must be fully explained first and foremost by upper management, questions answered as completely as possible, and with full honesty. This will help in terms of reducing the negative feelings directed towards the organization or the supervisors.

Upper management will communicate openly and honestly about the RIF process throughout the approval time period. The supervisors will talk to affected employees individually, will communicate honestly and openly, and will be prepared to encourage people to fully confront the many issues that come forward. Only through this commitment to communication can the organization survive the RIF process.

Often signs and symptoms might exist that indicate the existence of a more serious problem. The information following is for increased awareness, it is in no way intended to be used as a diagnostic tool. If someone is experiencing any of the symptoms listed, call or refer them to the CEAP, where trained professionals are available to help.

DEPRESSION

Not everyone experiences clinical depression in the same way. Different people have different symptoms but there are some signs that might be obvious. The following is a checklist of symptoms associated with depression. If you should see or experience symptoms such as these for longer than two weeks, seek assistance by calling your CEAP office.

- A persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- Report of a change in sleeping habits (either too much or too little)
- Change in appetite
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Restlessness or irritability
- Reports of persistent physical symptoms that don’t respond to treatment (i.e. headaches, chronic pain, etc.)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Talk of suicide or death

HIDDEN ANGER

Hidden anger is not about rage; rage is anger out of control and usually observable. The items listed below are behaviors to be aware of. It is true that each can have other causes, but the presence of any of them may be a good reason to consider that hidden unexpressed anger and/or resentment is present:

- Procrastination in the completion of imposed tasks
- Perpetual or habitual lateness
- Sarcasm, cynicism or flippancy in conversation
- Over-politeness, constant cheerfulness, attitude of “grin and bear it”
- Frequent sighing
- Over-controlled monotone speaking voice
- Slowing down of movements
- Getting tired more easily than usual; getting drowsy at inappropriate times
- Excessive irritability over trifles
- Clenched jaw, facial tics, spasmodic foot movements, habitual fist clenching and similar repeated physical acts done unintentionally or without awareness
- Chronic depression—extended periods of feeling down for no identified reason

SUICIDE AWARENESS

Major depression is the psychiatric diagnosis most commonly associated with suicide. Most suicidal persons give definite indications of their suicidal intentions, but others are often unaware of the significance of these warnings or unsure what to do about them. People in the midst of a crisis often perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control. Be aware of any of the following:

- ❑ Talk about committing suicide
- ❑ Withdraw from friends or social activities; unable to get things under control
- ❑ Be preoccupied with death and dying
- ❑ Have a recent severe loss and can't see any way out of their situation
- ❑ Experience drastic changes in behavior
- ❑ Lose interest in work, hobbies, school, etc.; can't make decisions or think clearly
- ❑ Give away prized possessions
- ❑ Have attempted suicide before
- ❑ Take unnecessary risks
- ❑ Lose interest in their personal appearance
- ❑ Increase their use of alcohol and drugs

Don't Shoot the Messenger!

Caring for the "ax wielders"

The emotional toll on those who "wield the ax" is often forgotten in the scramble to take care of the RIFed employees. The job of breaking the news to employees that they've lost their jobs, are being down-graded, or are being reassigned--and having to repeat this over and over again--can create intense distress for the managers and supervisors responsible for this task.

For managers and supervisors, RIF can be a traumatic ordeal. However, these professionals are also the least likely to ask for help. Compared to the tragedy of losing a job or taking a down-grade, their own distress seems trivial. Besides, many feel guilty about being part of a process that is RIFing friends and colleagues. And many may feel undeserving of attention and support for themselves.

Supervisors who aren't directly affected during the RIF must be aware that their subordinates or peers may be affected. Remember, CEAP is available to affected employees and managers and supervisors. Encourage its use.

Whether it impacts managers and supervisors at the time of a RIF or if it surfaces later, with post-traumatic symptoms (nightmares, worries about employment, fatigue, irritability and loss of meaning in work), many professionals need help but don't seek it out.

Some factors which can influence a manager's ability to adjust to this stressful situation are:

- the clarity and acceptability of the corporate goals
- the degree to which employees are helped through the process
- quality of and trust in the leadership

Group sessions, facilitated by a CEAP professional, will be scheduled for managers and supervisors (who may also choose to use the self-referral portion of CEAP).

RIF Notification

The RIF Notification meeting is where the manager/supervisor (each competency will make their own decisions about what level of supervision to include in the meeting) will deliver the RIF Notification letters to the affected employees. Managers will receive training on appropriate delivery style and PMAs may assist by coaching supervisors and/or attending the meeting.

Managers, supervisors and PMAs should be alert to employees exhibiting danger signs. For instance, the following things should be communicated to a CEAP counselor:

- reports of chaos in the family, such as fighting, children having school or behavior problems;
- major depressive symptoms;
- potential for lethality (risk for suicide, homicide, or self-inflicted or externally directed violence. Lethality also takes into account risk-taking behaviors that increase one's chance for death or injury -- for example, a sudden interest in sky-diving or parachuting);
- intense or prolonged emotional reactions to the job loss and job search

There is additional information available in the CEAP section (pages 10-13) of this manual.

Objectives of RIF Notification Meetings

(Please note -- this is the managers'/supervisors' meeting; if the PMA attends, their role is to answer process-related questions rather than run the meeting.)

During the RIF process there's a potential for a number of notification meetings with individual employees (i.e. job abolishment, mock-RIF results, final RIF notification). The list below may include items that are not appropriate for every meeting. Supervisors should clarify the purpose and recommended process for each meeting with their management team and consult with their PMA if needed.

1. Notify affected employees of their RIF status.
2. Allow the employee adequate time throughout the meeting to raise and get questions answered with understanding and respect.
3. Ensure that the employee knows the Command policy that all levels of his/her management is accessible throughout the RIF process (i.e., person has priority via phone, appointment, e-mail).
4. Provide employees with basic information about pay and benefits associated with the RIF.
5. Identify the appointment time for the employee to meet with HR for specific information regarding his/her benefits, the RIF process and the Priority Placement Program (PPP)
6. Provide employees with information on, and encouragement to use, the career transition counseling services provided.

7. Inform employees of the other resources available (CEAP, PMAs, etc.)
8. Inform employees of next steps in the RIF process, including using outplacement, access to workspace, and the exit process.
9. Treat employees with dignity and compassion.
10. Set the stage for employees losing their jobs to make a smooth transition out of their work responsibilities and the job site.

The “DOs” and DON’Ts”

“DOs”

1. Take time to listen attentively, learn what each person is experiencing. Some want to have their say, so let them talk. **Listen.**
2. Remember that reactions of employees are going to be unique and specific to the individuals concerned.
3. Have confidence in people's resiliency and strength.
4. Acknowledge that losing a job is a BIG life change for almost anyone; it is a lot to handle.
5. Maintain eye contact with the other person; a respectful attentiveness.
6. Ask someone who is extremely quiet what he/she is thinking.
7. Encourage each employee to carefully review the pay and benefits information provided and contact HR for clarification.
8. Encourage the employee to use the career transition assistance provided.
9. Assert that the employees' skills and experiences are moving with them as they reestablish their careers.
10. If asked to be a reference, say "Yes" if you know you can be supportive.
11. Acknowledge to yourself that ending others' jobs is very stressful. Use good self care and talk over the experience with colleagues/friends. Remember that HR is available to help.
12. Continue to make yourself available to all of your employees.

"DON'Ts"

1. Respond to everything that is said.
2. Get caught up in a debate, it may only fuel the frustration level.
3. Apologize for the RIF.
4. Say "this hurts me as much as you."
5. Imply the decision is not final.
6. Become impatient.
7. Imply you disagree with the RIF actions.
8. Express hopes or expectations that the employees being let go will be rehired.
9. Blame others for the RIF decisions.
10. Try to shut down normal emotional responses of others.
11. Tell people how they are feeling; e.g., "You're angry!"
12. Tell people how to feel ("Don't worry, you'll be fine," "Don't be discouraged.").
13. Say, "I know how you feel."
14. Behave as if nothing has happened after employees have been let go.
15. Expect employees to display awareness or appreciation of your concern for them or of your own discomfort.
16. Think you should handle a difficult situation by yourself.

Job Loss and Transition Stages/Emotions

Some key points are outlined below:

1. Change, including job loss, involves
 - (1) an ending,
 - (2) a transition, and
 - (3) a new beginning.

2. What is lost when a person's job ends?

More than a paycheck and benefits related to health insurance, pensions, and leave. Job loss typically involves some loss of identity, self-esteem, sense of belonging, status with friends and relatives, and significant relationships. The emotional impact of job loss will often depend on the depth of the person's attachment to the job and what it represents to them.

3. Emotional states of loss and transition typically involve:
 - a) Denial, shock, disbelief—a person's way of cushioning the blow;
 - b) Anger, rage, hostility—a person's natural need to blame someone/something (this may include a person's desire for revenge);
 - c) Bargaining, negotiating, pleading, maneuvering—a person's attempt to hold onto his/her job;
 - d) Depression, sadness, fatigue—a person's second guessing of him/herself and past choices, mourning of loss and what it represents to him/her;
 - e) Acceptance—very strong feelings and mood swings subside; readiness to let go of the past and to move on; the focus moves to beginning anew and making a successful transition.

NOTE: Individuals may go back and forth among stages and emotions, and stages may be skipped. Also, managers and those who remain behind often experience similar emotional stages.

4. It is important to recognize feelings and experience them—refusing to deal with them can delay the transition process.

Verbal Reactions to Expect

1. "Why me?"
2. "I do my work. What about X? He/she is the poor performer in this group?"
3. "Who else is getting the ax?"
4. "This is discrimination!"
5. "I want to file an appeal. Who do I see?"
6. "You can't do this to me!"
7. "But my spouse is in the hospital and we have two kids in college and we just had to put my Dad in a nursing home!"
8. "I bet your job is protected. I bet no managers are being fired!"
9. "Why are most of the people getting RIFed women and people of color?"
10. "I oughta punch your lights out!"
11. "This is only happening because you people mismanaged things. You should be getting RIF notices, not us workers."
12. Tears of loss and worry. "This is terrible. What am I going to do?"
13. Silence, no outward expression or comments.
14. "Since you can't keep me, I want to look for a position elsewhere in NAWCWD/Navy/DOD."
15. "Can you give me a reference, help me get a job?"
16. "Is the RIFing over now? My friends want to know if they're in danger."
17. "This is actually a relief! The uncertainty has been forever and that was really hard. At least now I can move on."

MANAGER'S/SUPERVISOR'S PREPARATION CHECKLIST

1. Review and understand the material in this guide and the employee's packet (*Employee Transition Guide*).
2. For upper and mid-level managers, prepare lower level managers to support you in managing the RIF process and delivering a consistent message during the RIF period and when the separations happen.
3. Arrange any additional support desired from the supporting offices (HR, CEAP, Family Service Center, Career Transition Center, etc.).
4. Once RIF Notification starts in a work group, everyone will know. So deliver all notices as quickly as possible, preferably in one day, and develop a strategy to quickly communicate to the rest of the work group (especially those feeling at risk) that all notices have been delivered. In larger work groups, consider proceeding by sub-units-- e.g., finish notifications for a sub-unit, and then let the staff in that work group know that all the notices for their work group are done so they can relax. Also, notify employees being separated prior to notifying employees being down-graded or reassigned.
5. Ensure all employees being separated have not made travel plans and will be at work the day they are scheduled to be notified.
6. Plan what to do if employees to be separated are sick/absent on the day of the notification.
7. Prepare your approach to each meeting: have an outline but don't read the message, rehearse, don't omit, be clear, don't create false hopes, have an exit strategy (keep it moving, plan on 20-30 minutes).
8. Don't schedule the notification meetings. Go get (or have someone bring) the employee you want to meet with when you're ready for that meeting. Be aware that if you hold the meetings in your office, some employees may feel like they are "being called to the principal's office" if they never, or rarely, come to your office.
9. Schedule notification meetings early in the day, preferably on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. This will allow employees to spend the rest of the week on planning rather than stewing on the information at home, possibly alone, over the weekend.
10. Ensure someone is available to talk with employees immediately after they get notices. Reserve a convenient "out of the way" room where RIF recipients can go to talk with a counselor, PMA, or career transition POC if they wish.
11. After notification: introduce employee(s) to outplacement assistance programs.

12. Be alert for responses from persons whose jobs will continue but are concerned about dismissed employees and downsizing.

13. Plan ahead for rumor control. Be clear what information is private and what is public. Deal with rumors openly and promptly.

Additional Meeting Points to Consider

(Note: The list below includes additional points to help prepare for the meetings. Some points are included to ensure that they have been considered in some way during the period following notification (but prior to the employees' actual separation date).

1. Get to the point of the meeting as quickly as respect and courtesy permit. There's not much that one can say to soften the blow, e.g., "There is no comfortable way to talk about the downsizing NAWCWD has to do."
2. Deliver clearly and firmly the message that the employee is being separated. Avoid ambiguity. Your message should offer no encouragement to the notion of an eleventh hour reprieve. "Waffling" may create false hopes and drag out the process, resulting in additional anger and frustration.
3. Explain the organizational rationale for the decision; be brief and consistent.
4. Do not argue or further justify the decision. Repeat the organizational rationale if needed.
5. Expect an emotional reaction. Let the employee express their feelings. Be patient, calm. Don't react. Listen, listen, listen, listen!
6. Hand the employee his/her RIF letter and allow time to read it. Answer questions.
7. Notify the employee that he/she may remain on NAWCWD rolls until the effective date of the action. After separating, the employee may be eligible to receive severance pay and certain other benefits. Give the employee their appointment date and time with HR to cover their specific RIF action and benefits information.
8. In encouraging employees to use the career transition services, supervisors should clarify that the employee is responsible for finding his/her new job. Inform them that the career transition services (job search, job development, career planning, resume writing, etc.) NAWCWD is providing are aimed at making their own job search more effective, not to do it for them.
9. If the employee is interested in retirement, refer them to HR for annuity computations, eligibility, etc.
10. Give the employee his/her *Employee Transition Guide* and briefly mention the main topics it addresses. Stress the importance of the *Employee Transition Guide* as a reference on pay and benefits information, career transition services, and training opportunities.
11. Point out the phone numbers to contact supporting organizations: PMA teams, CEAP, Career Transition Center, Family Service Center, etc.
12. Note the employee must check-out of the base on their last day of work. The check-out procedures will be modified to reduce the number of places each individual must check-out. Employees will be notified of the simplified process.

13. Recover any classified material or other NAWCWD papers and property in the employee's possession. Ensure all NAWCWD data, material, equipment, etc. stays in the office. If the employee has equipment at home, now is the time to get it returned to the office.
14. Explain any changes in the employees' access to the LAN/computer network services, computer use, etc.
15. Verify the employee's home address for administrative purposes.
16. Consider how to modify your approach to deal with **non-separation notifications**—e.g., reassignments, bumping, retreating. Such notification meetings will likely stir emotions and reactions, but generally not at the same level of intensity as separation meetings. Any change/reassignment will involve transition issues. These issues will vary depending on the individual and situation.
17. When all notices have been delivered let staff who are retained know that there are no more separations to be announced. It is often useful to walk around the work area, checking with people on other matters. Listen for others responses to the RIF and empathize. Indicate by words and actions that we will experience a period of adjustment as we continue our work and serve our customers.
18. Develop a strategy for monitoring and managing the morale and emotional climate in the work group after the RIF notices are delivered. Involve others in the work group to ensure that all the bases are touched, that everyone—not just those losing their jobs—feels supported.
19. Respond to questions (see pages 26-27) for Predictable Questions and Suggested Answers).

Tips on Dealing with Emotional Reactions

Some common emotional reactions to learning one's job is ended are described below. Each is followed by some ideas for managers/supervisors on responding constructively.

1. **Quiet/Controlled**—Many employees will receive the RIF news by being thoughtful, thinking about it before responding. Some employees will be so stunned that they will be somewhat immobilized. They may seem shocked or show no emotion (verbally or non-verbally) and speak very carefully or very, very little. They may outwardly seem to “have everything under control” when inside some may feel stunned, totally at a loss and holding on tightly.

- Respond with questions to learn if this person understands their job is ended. Clarify any misunderstanding. If necessary, ask them to summarize what they've heard from you.
- Make sure they leave with the written materials confirming their termination and describing the assistance available. They may not be taking in your words.
- If they are silent, be patient, give them some time to digest the news. If they say nothing after a minute or two you might say, “You're very quiet. I'm concerned about your response to this news and I'd like to hear what you're thinking.” Inquire, but don't insist.
- If they remain silent and don't respond to your questions, end the meeting by encouraging them to talk with someone. E.g., “You haven't said anything about your response to this news. I hope you will talk it over with your friends or family, or with a counselor.”
- If you are worried about a very silent responder, talk over your concerns with a counselor. Check on how the person is doing later.

2. **Angry/Hostile**—Expect some angry reactions. The anger will vary. The “over-reactors” are VERY expressive in letting out their hurt and anger, often verbally and non-verbally. They may walk around, become flushed, use strong gestures. They may blame, accuse or threaten. Another intensely angry response is “ice cold and tightly controlled.”

- Respond with calm and patience. Anger is one normal response to a major loss.
- Don't respond angrily or by trying to close off their angry expression prematurely. Blowing off steam often helps people to get through a loss, let go, and move on.
- Don't debate the appropriateness of the decision, the RIF process, other ways the organization may save money, etc.
- If the angry expression lasts more than a few minutes, move to end the meeting. Acknowledge their anger as understandable in response to such unwelcome news. Encourage the person to talk it over with their family or friends and/or refer the person to counseling.
- Occasionally angry expression leads to threats to harm oneself or others. Threatening behavior may be verbal or non-verbal, overt or implied. While angry behavior usually de-escalates after a few minutes, it may also escalate alarmingly. If so, **move to end the meeting and dial 911 to reach the police.**

3. **Confused/Fearful**—Some employees will experience confusion and/or fear. Their responses will vary, including asking a lot of questions, repeating questions, seeming forgetful, mixing up messages, catastrophizing, having trouble concentrating and/or experiencing extreme fatigue.

- Provide clear, detailed information on what is happening and on the next steps they need to take.
- Do not get drawn into possible denial. Be clear that this is **really happening**.
- Be patient. Answer repeated questions. Ask the employee to summarize what you've told them. Then clarify points that weren't clear to the employee.
- Acknowledge that this is a lot to take in at once, and offer to talk again later.
- In closing the meeting, go over the next steps the employee should take. Emphasize the usefulness of the job search services and when they should meet the counselors.
- Check in later and ask how the job search is going.

4. **Taking in the Loss/Adapting**—Many employees will convey a sense of taking the situation in as they experience a variety of responses to loss including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and eventually acceptance. Their emotional responses will be tempered with being basically in touch with the realities of their job loss and career transition needs. Their ups and downs will be accompanied by a sense of varying but generally forward movement.

- Convey the same patience, respect, and compassion that each person deserves.
- Keep communicating, offering practical support, and acknowledging transferable talents.

Tips on Maintaining Security

Managers and supervisors are sometimes concerned about possible violent or frightening responses from persons whose employment they are ending. They should approach meetings considering their knowledge of each individual to be RIFed. If a manager or supervisor has reason to think a person they must RIF might react violently it is wise to make some provisions to increase their security. If uncertain, they should check perceptions and concerns with others.

If necessary, security staff can be at or near the meeting site. Coordinate with the PMA/RIF Task Team.

Strategies for minimizing risk and increasing one's sense of security include:

1. Choose a meeting location where others could hear if a meeting becomes unruly or you call for assistance.
2. Leave a door open. Make sure someone who could help is near enough to hear you call or look in and inquire if things don't sound right.
3. Leave a clear path for the employee as well as yourself to exit should either of you become uncomfortable and need to terminate the meeting. Don't put yourself in a position where you would feel trapped.
4. Don't argue or be drawn into extensive explaining to justify the dismissal.
5. Stay calm and repeat the main explanation for a RIF being required. Be consistent.
6. Don't take another's anger personally; minimize inclinations to respond defensively or aggressively.
7. You are not responsible for another's emotions. Don't try to change or "fix" them.
8. Sit upright, breathe deeply and slowly to evoke a calming response (in you and in others).
9. Acknowledge the other's observable behavior: e.g., "You're shouting," or "You **seem** very angry right now."
10. Terminate the meeting immediately if another's anger becomes frightening to you or they seem verbally or non-verbally threatening—e.g., "This is not a good time to talk. This meeting is over now." Get up and walk out into an open area at any time you feel threatened. Don't hesitate, move decisively.
11. If for some reason you can't leave the room, call others in immediately.
12. Prearrange a signal for others to call for security staff immediately. Also have a phone ready to call 911 if necessary.

Predicable Questions and Suggested Answers

1. Why was I selected? Who made the final decision? Was I considered for other positions? Will there be any opportunities at a later date?

[Explain management's budget/staffing requirement, skills-mix problem, Commercial Activities studies, other issues surround the decision to run a RIF.] After determining the needs of the organization, and the jobs to be eliminated, the reduction-in-force was administered by HR according to our RIF rules which took into account everyone's performance, tenure, military preference, and length of service. Unfortunately, there are no alternative positions available at present or in the foreseeable future.

2. What recourse do I have?

Demo employees -- Your right to file a reconsideration request is explained in your RIF notice. You can request review through local channels followed by the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, San Diego (the sister Navy laboratory approved in the same Demo Project) for final review and decision. Demo employees have no Merit System Protection Board appeal rights.

Non-Demo employees -- Your right to file a grievance is according to the negotiated agreement or your right to file an appeal with the Merit Systems Protection Board is explained in your RIF notice.

If the employee's grievance raises an allegation of discrimination under Title 7, the employee may file a mixed case appeal to MSPB or initiate an informal EEO complaint within 45 days of the effective date of the personnel action or incident that gave rise to the allegation of discrimination.

3. Can I continue to work for a period of time?

Yes. However, unless you are eligible to exercise your retirement option and/or don't need to find another job, we believe it is in your best interest, as well as ours, to use your time and energy over the next 120 days (the RIF Notice period) looking for employment opportunities outside of NAWCWD. The career counseling and transition services are being provided for this purpose.

4. When do I have to move out of my workspace/office?

(Situational. It is preferred not to move people before their separation date. Where workspace is not an issue, let staff know that they are free to continue to use Government resources including existing workspace in preparation for their future. However, if workspace and computer resources are in demand, let employees know this, explain why, and explain their options.)

5. Can I be rehired?

The probability of rehire is very low and you should concentrate your efforts on finding employment outside of NAWCWD. However, you will have reemployment rights, which are explained, in your *Employee Transition Guide*.

6. This seems like a clear cut case of discrimination to me! Aren't most of the RIFees women and minorities? Why did we need to RIF in the first place?

We have carefully considered this and do not believe that any discrimination has occurred. [Explain issues surrounding the decision to run RIF.] However if you believe you were discriminated against in this process, you must initiate an informal complaint with the EEO counselor within 45 days of the effective personnel action or incident that gave rise to the allegation of discrimination.

7. Will you write a letter of recommendation for me?

Yes [if you (the manager/supervisor) want to].

8. I want to talk to Mr./Ms. X (the manager's/supervisor's boss or higher).

That's fine. As you know it has been the Command policy throughout the RIF process that all levels of management are open for you to discuss your concerns.

9. I don't want to talk about this without my lawyer being present.

Of course you are free to have a legal representative contact us. Our present commitment is to help you get reestablished as quickly as possible in something that makes sense for you with the least disruption to your career and family. We strongly suggest that you attend the Career Transition briefing or keep your appointment with the career transition center. [If a lawyer contacts a manager, refer the call to the OGC Legal offices.]

10. How can you do this to me after X number of years?

This RIF affected people in a number of functions with varying years of service.

11. You're not going to get away with this! I'm going to get even with you!

I'm sorry that you feel that strongly, but I want to reemphasize that we are committed to help you reestablish yourself in a new position as quickly as possible. I strongly urge you, regardless of your feelings now, to keep the appointment with the career transition counselors. (Note: If the employee becomes increasingly hostile, you should end the meeting and contact security. In an emergency, dial 911.)

12. Was John/Jane Doe let go?

It is inappropriate to answer questions about other employees; I know you would want the same consideration extended to you.

13. Can I extend my employment beyond the date on the RIF notice?

No. Your employment must end on the date of the RIF notice (unless you get an amended notice between now and then). You have the right to use your annual leave to establish your initial retirement eligibility, and/or to continue health benefits into retirement, if you are eligible.

Priority Placement Program (The “Stopper List”)

If, in the formal notice, an employee is identified to be separated or downgraded, that employee may be eligible for the DOD Priority Placement Program (PPP). The PPP (or “stopper list”) provides employees who have been adversely affected by a RIF with placement assistance into vacancies within DOD. The PPP is the most successful placement program in the Federal service. It provides mandatory placement rights to vacant positions within DOD.

If an employee is eligible for severance pay, he/she must register for the PPP. During registration, employees will receive advice on the areas with the best placement opportunities. The areas that employees can register for PPP are clearly and specifically identified by the PPP regulations. Within those areas, employees normally will be registered for all DOD locations which could use their skills. When there is a vacancy at one of the locations that matches the employee’s skills and grade, she/he has a right to mandatory placement in that job, if she/he has been determined well qualified for that position. If this new job requires a move to another location, the Government pays for the cost of the move. If an employee accepts a job at a lower grade, her/his current grade and pay are “saved”. Demo employees are eligible for saved pay only (not saved grade). However, if an employee turns down a valid job offer (see glossary for definition), she/he will be removed from the PPP and her/his entitlement to severance pay will cease if she/he has not already been separated. [Ref: Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment (CARE) Program information booklet]

People from the DOD Civilian Assistance and Re-Employment (CARE) program office that administers the PPP will be at NAWCWD to provide information and to register employees. The schedule and locations for the briefings and registration will be publicized.

RIF Mitigation Efforts

An agency is not required to fill vacant positions in a reduction in force. It may, however, choose to fill all, some or none of them. One reason an agency may decide to fill vacant positions is that it could avoid some of the disruption caused by employees displacing other employees. Some vacancies may not be able to be filled due to the skills and qualifications needed for that vacancy.

Amended Notices

Any time after the original RIF notices are delivered to employees, they may receive an amended notice. Amended notices will always provide an employee with a better opportunity than the original RIF notification. Amended notices may provide for a down-grade, a reassignment or a cancellation of the RIF notice.

After the RIF

The Survivors

Survivors face uncertainties too. Career disruptions, new job responsibilities and increased work loads with no immediate prospects of additional help, to name just a few. If everyone in the organization was doing something important before the RIF occurred, survivors must ask themselves the following question, which managers and supervisors must help them answer: Who is going to do all the work when the separations occur? Those who remain may even look longingly at those who have gone, see new challenges they have in their new jobs or careers, and wonder what is so great about staying behind.

Both groups of employees, those who leave and those who stay, need training, communication, and a listening ear from their management. The most commonly seen scenario is as follows: RIFed employees, or “external survivors”, are expressing their anger, feeling that they are being treated unfairly, of having given “everything” to the company, only to be “stabbed in the back”. They are left with low self-esteem, lack of confidence and resistance to trust. “Internal” surviving workers are expressing frustration with added work responsibilities, additional stress, fear of the next layoff and increased competition amongst co-workers. They feel a sense of guilt and distrust of management. Managers/supervisors are struggling with how to improve profitability and the trauma of having to dismiss workers who have been treated as “family” for many years. Often unable to address the feelings and emotions of internal survivors, managers are apt to cut communication lines and retreat, trying to deny the reality of their situation. Unfortunately this is exactly the wrong approach.

Communication can ensure that security is rebuilt and further uncertainty minimized.

Management must show consideration to the survivors as they feel guilt, relief, anxiety, personal loss, and remorse. Management also must show consideration to those leaving. How management deals with the latter group sends a strong message to the survivors about how management really feels about its people. If management treats the departing employees with disrespect, distrust and haste, it tells the survivors the organization does not trust its people.

The surviving employee is dealing with his or her own feelings of anxiety, resentment, guilt, etc. And sometimes a deep sense of insecurity may set in. The survivor may feel betrayed and dismayed, concerned and uneasy that if the contract they made with the workplace (loyalty and service in exchange for job security -- especially for long-term government employees) has been violated, what’s next? The remaining employees may find themselves working harder and feeling frightened to speak out because “I’ll be next.” They may sense a change in values and norms that goes beyond any statements from management.

The survivor must get past the feelings of doom and resentment and cannot risk becoming stuck at one or another point of the grieving process. The harm of being unable to move on extends beyond the survivor experiencing these feelings. Besides himself or herself, those who risk the results of unresolved problems include others on the work team or in the division; personnel in other departments with whom he or she works; customers; friends; and family.

The first step for the manager is to address the RIF process. Make sure all employees understand the mechanics of this complex governmental process.

The second step is to provide a forum—and sufficient time and support—to move through the stages of grief and fear and develop a non-blaming, constructive view of the situation. Supervisors and counselors should begin this process by lending an ear. While the temptation will be to provide answers, just listening to the survivors is very useful. While we do learn to adapt to life after loss, it is not a smooth transition; each employee will need to be monitored during the months that lie ahead.

Success after a RIF depends upon the ability for all survivors to develop new paradigms for the way they work. An open forum for employees to share feelings -- especially those that fear that messengers with bad news and/or those who rock the boat will become the next persons RIFed. Withdrawal and isolation only ensure that things will NOT get better. Taking responsibility for becoming part of the solution rather than being part of the problem is also a way to channel the energy often associated with anxiety in useful ways.

Thirdly, managers need to find employees doing things right and let them know, applauding effort as well as accomplishment. Managers can use this opportunity to improve things they've always wanted to do better. Managers also need to be quick to support, even when they haven't been asked, and slow to find fault.

Lastly, the working relationship between employee and organization needs to be re-built.

Three golden rules an organization must follow if the survivor syndrome is going to be properly addressed:

- 1) Communicate whatever is known. It's better to hear it from the top rather than the grapevine.
- 2) Remember the organization is dealing with human beings who have feelings, emotions and are also dealing with change in other aspects of their lives. Remember internal survivors need attention to these feeling just as much as the external survivors.
- 3) Don't attempt to do too much at one time and whatever you do, do it with dignity and in observance of human feelings. Too much change can result in overtaxing and projecting doubt in the minds of those watching.

The following is a list of symptoms which may be demonstrated by the employees who "survive" downsizing:

- narrow-mindedness
- self-absorbed
- increased resistance to change
- risk aversion
- loss of pride in company
- low morale
- distrust of management
- reduced commitment
- loss of loyalty
- role confusion/conflict
- increase in job instability
- higher absenteeism
- high level of stress
- low productivity
- acts of sabotage

Placement Programs

After the RIF is completed, several placement programs are in effect and may have an impact on certain types of personnel actions. Listed below is a summary of these placement programs.

Repromotion Priority List (REPRO)

This list consists of names of employees who (through no fault of their own) were changed-to-lower grades as a result of the RIF. These employees are currently receiving salaries above the appropriate range for the job they are doing.

The HRO will review this list of names when they receive a PAR to fill any vacant position through: external recruitment of any source, merit promotion, reassignment opportunity, non-competitive reassignment/promotion/change-to-lower grade. If there is someone on the REPRO list who is fully qualified for the vacancy, HR will inform the selecting officials that they must give consideration to this individual. If the selecting officials decide to choose the individual on the REPRO list, HR will make a job offer and process the action. If the selecting officials want to by-pass the individual on the REPRO list, they must provide justification to their Level 1 Competency Leader (through a memo, e-mail, phone call) as to why they feel it is necessary to by-pass the REPRO list.

Priority Placement Program (PPP)

Regular PPP (or stopper list) rules will remain in effect.

Reemployment Priority List (RPL)

This list is for RIFed employees to be given the opportunity for priority consideration when they qualify for a vacancy which may otherwise bring in someone from outside of DOD. If HR has an external hiring action (any recruitment effort that could result in hiring someone from outside DOD including VRA (Veterans Readjustment Act appointments), NAF (Non-Appropriated Fund) conversions or transfers from non-DOD activities), they will first check the Priority Placement Program list (Stopper) for candidates still working within the commuting area and who are fully qualified. If there are no candidates still working within the commuting area, HR will then review the RPL list. IF there are any individuals on the RPL who are fully qualified they must be offered the position. IF there are no qualified RPL candidates then HR must refer back to the original PPP list to determine if there are qualified candidates not currently working in the local commuting area. If there are no qualified PPP candidates then the selecting officials can make a normal selection for their vacancy.

Comments From Affected Employees

These are some of the comments from the 1996 NAWCWD RIF. The separating employees were asked to respond to the RIF process. These are the comments that applied to their managers and supervisors.

- Only 10 minutes were allowed for the RIF notification meeting. It wasn't enough time.
- My lead doesn't understand my anxiety (I'm the only one in my code being affected).
- I met with my managers four different times before there was any one on one counseling.
- Higher management hasn't got a clue about the RIF process.
- Management hasn't done anything to help us.
- I got misinformation: they won't RIF anybody in our area, there's nothing to worry about.
- I really appreciated that our competency/department head dealt with everybody individually.
- Decisions about abolished jobs or selected vacancies is fraught with favoritism.
- Management should have been straightforward with us much earlier.
- My supervisor was in denial; kept saying "it's OK, there's not going to be a RIF."
- Command didn't make the commitment about having the RIF while offering VSIP; they were too concerned with public worry.
- Managers said that with 10 years plus of service I would be okay.

Final Comments

We all need to work hard to make sure that our employees know that they are valued members of the team. Read through this material, practice notification sessions with your peers, and if you need additional assistance -- ask for it.

GLOSSARY

If you need further clarification, please contact your PMA team.

Assignment Rights - the right of an employee to be assigned by bump or retreat in the second round of competition to a position in a different competitive level held by another employee with lower standing on a retention register

Better/Best Offer - the right of an employee to be offered the “best” option during a RIF. The best offer is the one that pays the most within an employee’s bump and retreat rights. To determine the best offer, the agency must look at the limits of the employee’s assignment rights under bump and retreat. The highest grade level to which an employee can be assigned is the one from which he or she is released. The lowest grade to which an employee can be assigned is the lowest grade to which he or she has bump or retreat rights. The best offer only takes into consideration the pay of the positions. The series, title, career progression or any other factors are not taken into consideration when making the determination of what is the “best offer.”

Bump

Demo - the assignment of an employee to a position held by another employee in a lower incentive pay group or in a lower tenure group or tenure subgroup within the same incentive pay group.

Non-Demo - the assignment of an employee to a position held by another employee in a lower group or subgroup within the same tenure group in another competitive level.

Classification - also called **POSITION CLASSIFICATION** -- analyzing and categorizing jobs by occupational grouping, series, and grade according to like duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements

Commuting Area - a geographic area in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to work; for NAWCWD, each site is a separate commuting area.

Competitive Area - the organizational and geographic boundaries in which employees compete in a reduction in force.

Demo - each site and major occupational group form a separate competitive area (e.g., a China Lake technician would only compete with other China Lake technicians),

Non-Demo - all non-demonstration project employees of NAWCWD Point Mugu with a duty station of Port Hueneme, Camarillo, Point Mugu, San Nicholas Island, or Santa Cruz Island will compete in one competitive area; non-demonstration employees of NAWCWD with duty stations of China Lake, White Sands and Albuquerque will compete within their respective duty stations.

Competitive Levels -

Demo - a group of positions in the same Demonstration Project level (pay band) and classification series that have similar duties and other requirements which are defined by the following elements:

- service (competitive or excepted)
- major occupational group (scientists and engineers, technicians, technical specialists, administrative personnel, or general personnel)
- work schedule (full-time, part-time, intermittent, seasonal, or on-call)
- supervisory or nonsupervisory status
- trainee status
- title, series, level; and specialty area and functional code, as appropriate

Non-Demo - a group of positions in the same grade and classification series that have similar duties and other requirements which are defined by the following elements:

- service (competitive or excepted)
- different pay schedules (GS, WG, WL, WS, etc.)
- work schedule (full-time, part-time, intermittent, seasonal, or on-call)
- supervisory or nonsupervisory status
- trainee status
- title, series, grade and competitive level code

Competitive Level Code (CLC) - a code for non-Demo employees to further differentiate differences within the same series. For example, an Electrical Engineer may not be qualified to work in hardware if his/her experience has only been in software. Even though the series is the same, the specific qualifications are different. Each set of qualifications is defined by a different CLC.

Incentive Pay Group (IPG) - Demo ONLY - employees grouped by performance ratings for retention purposes. IPG is the primary displacement tool in a Demo RIF action.

Length of Service Augmented by Performance Credit- Non-Demo ONLY - additional service credit is based on the last three annual performance ratings of record that were received by the employee during the four year period before the date of issuance of specific RIF notices. The service credit for the last three performance ratings is averaged, then rounded up. When ratings of records were received prior to 10/1/97 or when the rating of records were received 10/1/97 and after AND there is a single rating pattern in the RIF competitive area; service computation dates will be augmented for performance as follows: Service credit for an Outstanding rating is 20 years; for Highly Successful, 16 years and for Fully Successful, 12 years. No service credit (for RIF purposes) is given for ratings of less than Fully Successful. When the ratings of records were received 10/1/97 and after AND there is a mixed rating pattern in the competitive area; service computation dates will be augmented for performance as follows: Fully Successful and Above – 20 Years, Less Than Fully Successful – 0 years.

If a Non-Demo employee has less than three rating of record, their actual ratings of record are averaged. If a Non-Demo employee has no record of rating on file they are

given the “Modal Rating” for the competitive area. The “Modal Rating” is the summary rating level assigned most frequently among the actual ratings of record that is assigned under the summary level pattern that applies to the employee’s position of record on the date of the reduction in force.

Lowest standing employee within the competitive level -

Demo - the lowest standing employee would have the lowest Incentive Pay Group (IPG) and the lowest tenure and/or tenure subgroup within that IPG (e.g. an employee in the “L” IPG, with a tenure of I (career) and a tenure subgroup of B (non-veteran) would be the lowest standing employee if all other employees were in IPGs of “H” or “F”).

Non-Demo - the lowest standing employee would have the lowest tenure and the lowest tenure subgroup within that tenure (e.g. an employee with a tenure group II, with a tenure subgroup of B (non-veteran) and a recent SCD_RIF date would be the lowest standing employee if all other employees were in tenure groups I and II).

Notice Period - Employees will receive official written notification at least 120 days before effective date of RIF if 50 or more employees in a competitive area are separated. The notice period for RIFs involving less than 50 separation notices in a competitive area is 60 days. AN agency can request an exception to the 60 or 120 day notice period when a RIF is caused by unforeseen circumstances. In no instance will the RIF notice period be less than 30 days.

Position - a specific title, series, grade, CLC or SAC with a unique Position Description number.

RIF Notice- an official written communication provided to an individual employee announcing that he or she is affected by a RIF action.

Release from Competitive Level - an employee is released from his or her competitive level in three ways (1) during Round One when another employee displaces him or her; during Round Two (2) when another employee bumps him or her; or (3) when another employee retreats into his or her position. If an employee is released from his competitive level, he is a lower standing employee than the employee who displaced him, bumped him, or retreated into his position.

Retention Register - a list of competing employees within a competitive level.

Retention Standing - an employee’s relative standing on the retention register.

Retreat -

Demo - the assignment of an employee to a position in a different competitive level held by another employee with lower retention standing in any incentive pay group and at a Demonstration Project level from or through which the employee was promoted.

Non-Demo - Displacing an employee with less service within the released employee’s own tenure group and subgroup. The position must be the same position or essentially

identical to a position held by the released employee in any Federal Agency on a permanent basis.

Rounds of Competition - the different stages of competing for retention. In the first round of competition employees compete to stay in their competitive level. In the second round of competition employees compete for assignment to positions in different competitive levels.

Specialty Area Code (SAC) - for Demo employees -- a code to further differentiate differences within the same series. For example, an Electrical Engineer may not be qualified to work in hardware if his/her experience has only been in software. Even though the series is the same, the specific qualifications are different. Each set of qualifications is defined by a different CLC.

SCD_RIF (Service Computation Date for RIF purposes) - There are 2 different SCDs used in federal service. The first, SCD_Leave, is the most common. This date reflects an employee's time as a federal civilian, regular military service, and campaign time for retired military. It is used to determine the rate of Annual Leave accrual. The second date, SCD_RIF, is only used during a Reduction in Force. This date reflects an employee's time as a Federal civilian (permanent and temporary). In addition, some other types of service may be included if they are covered by a specific statute. For most employees both SCDs will reflect the same date. However, retired military (enlisted) and some other employees may have 2 different dates.

Term Employees - an employee who is serving under a term appointment (i.e., an appointment that is limited from one to four years).

Tenure - Competitive service tenure groups are as follows with a few exceptions:

- (1) Group I, career employees not serving a probationary period for appointment to a competitive position.
- (2) Group II, career-conditional employees and employees serving a probationary period for initial appointment to a competitive position
- (3) Group III, employees serving under indefinite appointment, temporary appointment pending establishment of a register, term appointment, status quo appointment or any other nonstatus nontemporary appointment.

Tenure Subgroup -

Demo - veterans preference

Non-Demo - veterans preference and SCD_RIF date (adjusted for performance credit)

Valid PPP job offer - an offer of a full-time permanent DoD position that matches the series, grade, and location for which the individual is registered and well qualified.. Additionally, there must be no significant changes in working conditions or conditions of employment. For employees whose work schedule is less than full-time, the work schedule of the offered position must equal or exceed the working hours of the individual's current position or the position last held prior to separation.

Veterans Preference -

Subgroup AD - preference eligible employees having a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more from the Veterans Administration

Subgroup A - preference eligible employees not included in subgroup AD

Subgroup B - nonpreference eligible employees.

Please note that retired military are only considered a preference eligible under the RIF regulations when one of the following conditions are met:

(1) The employee's military retirement is based on disability that either:

(i) resulted from injury or disease received in the line of duty as a directed result of armed conflict; or

(ii) was caused by an instrumentality of war incurred in the line of duty during a period of war as defined by sections 101 and 301 of title 38, USC.

(2) The employee's retired pay from an uniformed service is not based upon 20 or more years of full-time active service, regardless of when performed but not including periods of active duty for training.

(3) The employee has been continuously employed in a position covered by this part (5 CFR 351.501) since Nov. 30, 1964, without a break in service of more than 30 days.

(4) An employee retired at the rank of major or above (or equivalent) is considered a preference eligible under this part if such employee is a disabled veteran as defined in section 2108(2) of title 5, USC and

(i) meets one of the conditions above (1-3); or

(ii) is eligible for retired pay under Chapter 67 of title 10, USC, and is age 60 or above.