



CPC CYBERFLASH

JUNE 11, 2007

HONOR

RESPECT

COMMITMENT

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From the Director's Desk

In this edition of the CyberFlash I'd like to provide some benefits information associated with a very serious and important topic and one we all obviously hope our families and loved ones never have to experience – those related to personnel casualty. The prompting for this information was generated as a result of CPC's ongoing effort of updating NOAA Corps Directives Chapter 11, titled Casualties and Decedent Affairs, as well as periodic inquiry from fellow Corps officers. Please read and share the following with your family and be assured CPC's assistance is not limited to the subjects covered here nor are the highlighted benefits necessarily an exhaustive list.

The Directive rewrite will be provided once completed and approved. Until such time all officers shall reference the existing NCD Chapter 11, dated 4/26/2004.

All officers are also reminded of the importance of updating NOAA Form 56-14, Record of Emergency Data, whenever notable family changes occur (e.g., birth of child/children, marriage/remarriage, address change, etc). This form is the definitive document in providing death gratuity and unpaid pay and allowances to those listed as beneficiary(ies).

Some of the more common benefits:

Service member's Group Life Insurance (SGLI)

The maximum amount of SGLI coverage is \$400,000. Service members have the option of electing full coverage, reduced coverage in increments of \$50,000, or no coverage. Payment is made by SGLI in approximately forty-five days to the beneficiary(ies) specified by the Service member.

If the NOAA Corps officer did not select a beneficiary, the law requires the insurance be paid in the following order of precedence:

- 1) Spouse
- 2) Children in equal shares
- 3) Parent(s) in equal shares

- 4) A duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate
- 5) The next-of-kin entitled to payment under the law of the Service member's state of residence

If you are a SGLI beneficiary, the Commissioned Personnel Center will assist you with completing the necessary claims forms. If you are not the beneficiary, privacy laws forbid the government from divulging the name of the beneficiary to you.

Survivor Benefits Plan

Surviving spouses of Service members (retirement eligible) who die on active duty are entitled to Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments. SBP payments are equal to 55 percent of what a member's retirement pay would have been had he or she been retired at 100 percent disability. Your SBP annuity will be reduced by the amount of payments provided under the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation program (see DIC below). Spouses may choose "child only" SBP benefits. This option is helpful when the spouse's DIC is greater than the amount of SBP. SBP payments are subject to federal income taxes, although DIC payments are not. If the spouse remarries before age 55, SBP payments cease; but if the remarriage ends payments can be reinstated.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

This compensation will probably be the most important part of your long-range financial planning. It is paid to eligible survivors of active duty Service members and survivors of those veterans whose deaths are determined by the DVA to be Service related. It is a flat monthly payment, independent of the pay grade of the veteran. The 2007 spouse DIC monthly rate is \$1,067. This payment is adjusted annually for cost of living increases and is non-taxable. It is important to remember that DIC benefits will not be paid unless you apply for them. The Commissioned Personnel Center can arrange for your beneficiaries to meet with the local DVA office to file their application. Certain documents must be submitted with the application. Survivors of active duty Service members will need:

- Completed VA Form 21-534a
- DD Form 1300, Report of Casualty

This benefit is payable for the life of the spouse, provided the spouse does not remarry before the age of 57. However, should a remarriage end, DIC benefits can be reinstated. Income from other sources does not affect eligibility. The only requirements are proof of relationship to the deceased Service member and that the Service member's death was service-connected. The rate of compensation increases for a spouse with one or more children with the deceased veteran. The 2007 monthly benefit for each child is \$265. Children are eligible for this compensation under the following conditions:

- Until they marry or turn 18 (or 19 if still in secondary school)
- If they are between the ages of 18 and 23 and are attending a DVA approved institution of higher learning
- For life, if they are disabled

If there is no surviving spouse, DIC will be paid in equal shares to the children of the deceased veteran. For more information contact your local Department of Veteran Affairs office, access the DVA website at <http://www.va.gov>, or call 1-800-827-1000.

Disbursement of Pay and Allowances

Any pay or allowances due to the Service member at the time of death will be paid to the designated beneficiary or a legal representative. Normally, pay and allowances due to the deceased Service member will be limited to money earned during the month of death or since the last pay day. Service members have the right to name any person as Beneficiary for money remaining due at time of death. In the absence of the Service member's written instructions, money due will be paid to survivors in the order listed below:

- Spouse
- Children in equal shares
- Parents
- Duly appointed legal representative of the estate

Death Gratuity

The death gratuity is a lump sum payment made by the NOAA Corps to the survivors of a Service member who dies on active duty or within 120 days after release from active duty if the death is due to a Service related disability. The purpose of this payment is to assist the survivors in meeting immediate living expenses. The death gratuity will normally be paid within 72 hours to the eligible beneficiary. By law only certain people are eligible to receive death gratuity payments and an order of precedence has been established as follows:

- Surviving spouse
- Children (in equal shares without regard to age or marital status if there is no surviving spouse)
- Parents, people acting as parents, brothers or sisters (if designated by the Service member)

Burial Benefits


The NOAA Corps will care for, transport, and inter the remains of your loved one. The surviving spouse, the dependent children, and the service member's parents are authorized travel entitlements. If the spouse, children, or parents choose not to travel to the funeral, the person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains plus two close relatives may use this benefit. Travel entitlement includes round trip transportation and two days per diem upon arrival at the interment site. It is advisable to delay making any travel plans until after speaking with

the Commissioned Personnel Center.

This will ensure that transportation and arrival times are coordinated for maximum support and that no unauthorized expenses are incurred with the expectation of reimbursement.

Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA)

A wealth of information concerning compensation and benefits for families of deceased Service members is also available from the Department of Veterans Affairs (<http://www.va.gov>).



Captain Todd C. Stiles, NOAA
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

NOAA Corps Values

OMAO is in the process of preparing specific anecdotal information about the NOAA Corps' value to the nation—examples of what sets the Corps apart. This information will be used for various venues, ranging from congressional briefings to magazine articles.

We are asking Corps officers to reflect upon your service over the past two to three years to see what stands out as helping to illustrate “value added” to NOAA and the nation. Keep in mind that this information may be used outside of NOAA to inform people who are not familiar with what we do, so write your descriptions accordingly. Please send your contributions to director.cpc@noaa.gov by June 25. Officers will be credited on any pieces of information used.

TRICARE Dental Program

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) Basic Benefit Descriptions and Administrative Corrections: Final Rule.

On November 27, 2006 a final ruling regarding the TRICARE Retiree Dental Basic Benefit Descriptions and Administrative Corrections was published in the Federal Register by the Department of Defense. This final rule amends TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) Basic benefit descriptions and replaces specific American Dental Association (ADA) dental

procedure codes and nomenclature with general benefit categories and descriptions for the basic (TRDP). This action is necessary because Dental procedure codes are added, revised, and deleted by the (ADA) every two years in order to keep the regulation current.

The final rule revises several inaccurate sentences, obsolete, or historical terms pertaining to the TRICARE program as well as inaccurate statements regarding the appeals and grievance process.

The changes set forth in the final rule are considered minor and does not change or eliminate any of the current TRDP benefits which include the following covered dental benefits (Diagnostic services, preventative services, restorative services, endodontic services, periodontal services, oral surgery, and other general services). Any changes to TDRP benefits, limits and exclusions will be communicated to beneficiaries via marketing materials.

Promotions

Congratulations to the following officers who were promoted effective June 1, 2007.

TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER:

Arthur J. Stark, Jr.
Thomas J. Peltzer

Billet of the Week

The Environmental Conservation Division (ECD) of the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFS) in Seattle, Washington is seeking an officer to assume the duties and responsibilities of billet #2172 - OIC, R/V HAROLD W. STREETER/Staff Biologist.

The R/V HAROLD W. STREETER is a 45' wooden trawler which conducts biological and oceanographic sampling operations throughout Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the San Juan Islands with occasional extended trips into British Columbia. The vessel spends approximately 100-120 days a year at sea, conducting a mixture of day trips and trips of 1-3 weeks duration. Vessel operations consist of bottom trawling, surface pair trawling, long-lining, as well as deployment of buoys, sediment grabs, oceanographic instruments, and towed equipment.

The officer is responsible for the safe operation of the vessel while underway and all aspects of vessel maintenance. The officer will work directly on vessel repairs and coordinate other maintenance activities with contractors, including biannual dry-docking.

The officer will be tasked to coordinate and refine program requirements for a replacement vessel and use these requirements to develop a contract solicitation. The opportunity to build a new boat from defining operational requirements to sea trials will involve working with many NWFS

Divisions to determine the operational and logistical requirements to meet the Center's increased sampling effort, as well as representing NWFSC interests as an owner's representative in the boat yard selected to construct the replacement.

In addition to the duties on the STREETER, the officer acts as the ECD Small Boat Vessel Operations Coordinator. The officer is responsible for the upkeep, scheduling, and administration of the division's small boats. The officer will become familiar with the NOAA Small Boat Program and ensure division compliance.

Typical duties include mechanical and structural maintenance, small boat and boat trailer inspections, updating or developing risk assessments and vessel operation manuals, and coordinating independent third-party inspections of NOAA small boats located at the NWFSC.

Opportunity to participate directly in scientific research exists and is dependent on the officer's experience, education, and aptitude. It is also possible to engage in field data gathering, laboratory and statistical analysis, and/or the preparation and publication of scientific papers. Educational opportunities abound in the Seattle area. The Center is located in close proximity to the University of Washington and within reasonable distance from several other institutions of higher education.

If anyone should have any questions regarding this billet, please feel free to contact LCDR Jeremy Adams at 301-713-2367 x106 or jeremy.adams@noaa.gov or the Assignment Officer, LCDR John Caskey, at 301-713-7748 or assignmentbranch.cpc@noaa.gov.

NOAA Corps Lineal List

The Lineal List of Commissioned Officers, dated June 1, 2007, has been placed on the CPC website under Publications. The format remains the same with all pertinent information provided. Effective immediately, the Lineal List will be updated and posted quarterly. As such, CPC will no longer be providing printed copies. If you are unable to download and print the Lineal List, please request a copy via email to Director.CPC@noaa.gov.

On The Horizon

This section is designed to provide the NOAA Corps officers with some of the highlights of items under consideration that may have an impact on them. The items discussed may or may not be approved at a later date.

This section will be updated in a future CYBERFLASH.