



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

August 30, 2006

**MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**FROM:** LINDA M. SPRINGER   
Director

**SUBJECT:** HR Flexibilities Available to Assist Federal Employees Affected by Severe Weather Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Many parts of the United States must occasionally cope with severe weather emergencies and natural disasters, frequently with little warning. Such emergencies are often dangerous and extremely disruptive for those who live in the affected communities. As "hurricane season" is upon us, this memorandum reminds you of the various human resources (HR) flexibilities currently available to assist Federal employees affected by severe weather emergencies and natural disasters and their aftermath.

**Pay and Leave Benefits**

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) *Handbook On Pay and Leave Benefits For Federal Employees Affected By Severe Weather Emergencies or Other Emergency Situations* provides a general summary of the pay and leave benefits available to Federal employees prevented from working, or required to work, in an area affected by severe weather emergencies or other emergency situations. The *Handbook* is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca>.

**Employee and Family Support Benefits**

Benefits for Federal employees and eligible family members remain unchanged during severe weather emergencies. Information about employee and family support benefits and policies is available at <http://www.opm.gov/pandemic/agency6h-federalbenefits.pdf>.

**Telework**

One of the major benefits of the telework program is the ability of telework employees to continue working at their alternative worksites to maintain the continuity of Government operations during severe weather emergencies. An agency may require its teleworkers to continue to work at their alternative worksites on their telework day or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays during emergency situations when the agency is closed. An agency would not have to designate a teleworker as an emergency employee, but any requirement that a

telework employee continue to work if the agency closes on his or her telework day or on any of his or her regularly scheduled workdays should be included in the employee's formal or informal telework agreement. For additional information on telework, please see *A Guide to Telework in the Federal Government* at <http://www.opm.gov/pandemic/agency2a-guide.pdf>.

### **Special Solicitations for Charitable Contributions During Emergencies and Disasters**

The Director of OPM may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, outside of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters. Agency written requests should include the following: information on the agency(ies) and location(s) where the special solicitation will be conducted; dates on which the special solicitation will be conducted; and information on the charitable organization(s) that will be the recipient of special solicitation funds. For information on the CFC, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/cfc>.

### **Emergency Critical Hiring**

Under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(2), an agency may make 30-day appointments in the excepted service to fill a critical hiring need. An agency may extend these appointments for an additional 30 days. This authority may be used to fill Senior Level positions, as well as positions at lower grades; the agency determines what qualifications are required. Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Reemployment Priority List (RPL), and Interagency CTAP (ICTAP) requirements under 5 CFR part 330 do not apply to these appointments.

### **Direct-Hire Authority**

Agencies are reminded of current OPM-authorized Governmentwide direct hire authorities. These authorities, allow agencies to appoint candidates directly for GS-0602 Medical Officers, GS-0610 and GS-0620 Nurses, GS-0647 Diagnostic Radiologic Technicians, and GS-0660 Pharmacists at all grade levels and all locations. Agencies may give individuals in the categories, occupations and specialties, and grades listed above competitive service career, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, an agency must adhere to the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and all ICTAP requirements. Additional information on these authorities is available at <http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/sroa2.asp#directhire>.

An agency should contact its OPM Human Capital Officer if it believes it has one or more occupations for which an agency-specific direct-hire authority may be appropriate in support of relief and recovery efforts.

### **Other Hiring Flexibilities**

An agency may contract with private sector temporary employment firms for services to meet emergency staffing needs. These contracts may be for 120 days and may be extended for an additional 120 days, subject to displaced employee procedures.



An agency may make competitive service appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP or ICTAP. However, these programs may help identify one or more well-qualified displaced Federal employees who are available for immediate employment.

Current and former employees on agency RPL are another immediate source of qualified individuals available for temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments. Conversely, in some cases, an agency may make an exception to the RPL provisions to appoint someone else under 5 CFR 330.207(d).

Should additional personnel be required for relief efforts, OPM may authorize other options upon agency request. These include temporary emergency need appointments (up to 1 year) and SES limited emergency appointments. In addition, OPM may authorize waivers that facilitate the re-employment of annuitants or the rehiring of retirees or others who left the Federal Government with buyouts.

### **Additional Information**

For additional information, agency Chief Human Capital Officers and/or Human Resources Directors should contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officer. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers  
Human Resources Directors