

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 90-401

May 16, 2007

Staffing and Organization

Hardship Transfer Consideration, NWSPD 90-4

PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP TRANSFER

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Certified by: W/CFO3 (N. Leivers)

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 90-401 dated February 6, 2003. Changes include 1) updating OPR Code and certification name, 2) adding sentence “As a Hardship Transfer Candidate, you must apply for the vacancy through the vacancy announcement process in order to be considered for the requested position” to section 7, 3) changing signature to current CFO/CAO, and 4) changing “SF-171” to OF-612 section 3d, 5) changing “the CFO3 designee” to “CFO3”), 6) deleting Appendix H, 6) adding “Regional Administrative Officers and other regional designee(s)” to Section 6, 7) deleting section 7.1 “Notification of Vacancy”, 8) adding “and/or regional designee(s) to section 9, 9) adding an item “e” to section 6, 10) adding paragraph under section 6.1 regarding removing candidates from list if they decline offer, and 11) deleting two reporting requirements in section 9.

Signed by
Robert Byrd
Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Administrative Officer

May 2, 2007
Date

Procedures for Consideration of Hardship Transfers

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1. Introduction. The National Weather Service (NWS) Policy 90-4 establishes policy for consideration of hardship transfer requested by NWS employees. This instruction describes the procedures and criteria for consideration of request for hardship transfer.
2. Hardship Transfer Categories. Hardship transfers are considered in the following three categories.
 - a. Category I. The medical condition of the employee, the employee's spouse or children residing in the employee's household requires relocation to a geographic area deemed medically necessary to improve or maintain health or receive health services. (Satisfactory documentation from professional health care provider will be required.)
 - b. Category II. When an employee or employee's spouse is the primary caretaker of a dependent parent and the medical condition of the parent requires the employee or employee's spouse to relocate to another geographic area. (Satisfactory documentation from professional health care provider will be required.)
 - c. Category III. In cases where a family is separated, where the transfer of an employee to another geographical area would allow the employee to maintain contact with his/her dependent children. Not all separations from children are considered a hardship.
3. Application for Hardship Transfer Consideration. An employee may request consideration of a hardship transfer by sending an application to NWS's Management and Organization Division (CFO3). Each application must include the following information:
 - a. A statement from the employee requesting a hardship transfer.
 - b. The eligible position(s), grade(s), and geographical location(s) the employee is requesting to be transferred.
 - c. The category of hardship under which the employee is applying, the specific reason(s) justifying the hardship, and all supporting documentation, including for Category I and II requests, satisfactory records from professional health care providers. The documentation provided should be specific to the request.
 - d. An updated OF-612 or resume and a copy of the employee's last performance appraisal.
 - e. A signed release by the employee and/or the employee's relative authorizing the NWS to contact appropriate sources, as applicable, for the purpose of validating or clarifying any supplied documentation. Any follow up medical related inquiries should be directly connected with the request for consideration of hardship transfer.

Requests for hardship transfer consideration should be sent to:

National Weather Service
Hardship Transfer Request, W/CFO3
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

4. Application Log. CFO3 will receive and log applications for hardship transfer consideration. The following information will be included in the log:
 - a. Employee name
 - b. Current grade/series/step
 - c. Current duty station
 - d. Requested duty station(s)
 - e. Bargaining unit status
 - f. Date application was received
 - g. Hardship category
 - h. Date receipt of application was acknowledged, more information was requested, or application was returned as not valid
 - i. Date the employee notified application accepted or not accepted
 - j. Date the accepted applicant was added to the HTCL
 - k. Date a request to withdraw the applicant or remove a name from HTCL was received
 - l. Date a request to withdraw the application or remove a name from HTCL was acknowledged

Information will be added to the log as it becomes available.

5. Process Applications. Once the application is logged the steps below are followed.
 - a. Step 1: Identification of the NWS Employees Organization (NWSEO) Involvement. CFO3 will review the application to determine if the employee is in the bargaining unit. If the employee is in the bargaining unit, CFO3 will provide a copy of the application to the NWSEO designee. If the employee is not in the bargaining unit, NWSEO is not consulted.
 - b. Step 2: Response to the Applicant. Within seven days of receipt of the application, CFO3 will respond to the applicant in one of the following ways:
 1. Acknowledge receipt using the letter shown in Appendix A
 2. Request additional information using the letter shown in Appendix B
 3. Advise the applicant that the application is not valid, along with an explanation and return the application using the letter in Appendix C

- c. Step 3: Consultation. With a complete application, CFO3 will consult with NWSEO (if applicable).
 - 1. Identify which of the three hardship categories applies
 - 2. Determine if the application conforms with NWS policy
 - 3. Determine if additional information is needed
 - d. Step 4: Determination of Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Application. After consultation based on step three, CFO3 will decide whether to accept or not accept the application for consideration of a hardship transfer. However, if the applicant is a bargaining unit employee, CFO3 will obtain a consensus decision with the NWSEO designee on acceptance or non-acceptance of the application. Without consensus, the application will not be approved.
 - e. Step 5: Letter of Acceptance/Non-Acceptance to Applicant. Within 30 days of receipt of an application, CFO3 will send the applicant a letter of acceptance (Appendix D) or non-acceptance (Appendix E). The letter of non-acceptance will provide an explanation of why the application was not accepted. The application will be returned with the letter of non-acceptance.
6. Hardship Transfer Candidate List. Accepted applicants will be added to the HTCL. Access to this list will be restricted to Deputy Regional Directors, Executive Officers for NWS Headquarters Offices and the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, Staff Office Directors, Regional Administrative Officers, other regional designee(s), and an NWSEO designee. These officials will provide the selecting official with a copy of the HTCL. CFO3 will update the HTCL monthly and will include the following information:
- a. Employee Name
 - b. Current Grade/Series/Step
 - c. Current Duty Station
 - d. Requested Duty Station
 - e. Category of Hardship
- 6.1 Request to be removed from the HTCL. Applicants accepted into the hardship transfer consideration program have the option of withdrawing their application or removing their name from the HTCL.
- a. Withdrawal of application: Within seven days of receipt of a request to withdraw an application, CFO3 will return the application with an acknowledgement (see Appendix F). If the applicant is in the bargaining unit, CFO3 will notify the NWSEO.

- b. Removal of Name from HTCL: Within seven days of receipt of a request to remove an accepted applicant's name from the HTCL, CFO3 will send an acknowledgment to the applicant and return the application (see Appendix G). If the applicant is in the bargaining unit, CFO3 will notify the NWSEO.

Please note that a candidate may decline an offer in requested duty station only once. If candidate is offered another position in their requested duty station and declines the second offer, CFO3 will remove the candidate's name for list and candidate will have to reapply to the program. The waiting period to reapply is 30 days from date of removal for HTCL.

7. Vacancies. The HTCL is a recruitment source for selecting officials. When a vacancy of an appropriate and/or desired position becomes available, the selecting office will review the HTCL for employees requesting the duty station of the vacancy. *NOTE: As a Hardship Transfer Candidate, you must apply for the vacancy through the vacancy announcement process in order to be considered for the requested position.*
- 7.1 Candidacy for Vacancy. Selecting Officials will take eligibility for a hardship transfer under consideration when making a selection. However, while this will be a consideration factor, the candidate must be qualified for the vacancy and meet minimum qualification standards. The selecting official will note consideration given in the selection package.
8. Travel and Relocation Expenses. NWS will pay travel and relocation expenses for an employee's permanent change of station in accordance with applicable law and regulation.
9. Reporting Requirements. By October 31 of each year, Deputy Regional Directors, Executive Officers, Staff Office Directors, and/or regional designee(s) will provide a report on hardship transfer activity in their respective Office or Region. Each report will include the following information:
 - a. Number of hardship transfer candidates who were selected for positions
 - b. Number of hardship transfer candidates who accepted job offers
- 9.1 Summary Report Requirements. CFO3 will provide a NWS-wide summary report on the information in Section Nine to the Workforce/Human Capital Committee and the NWSEO designee.

APPENDIX A

Acknowledge Receipt of Application

Dear _____:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your application for hardship transfer consideration. You will be notified of acceptance/non-acceptance of your application within 30 days.

Sincerely,

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

cc: NWSEO Designee
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

APPENDIX B

Request for More Information

Dear _____:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your application for hardship transfer consideration. Before your application can be considered, we need the following information:

Sincerely,

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

cc: NWSEO Designee
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

APPENDIX C

Application Not Valid

Dear _____:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your application for hardship transfer consideration. Your application cannot be considered for the following reasons:

Your application is enclosed. You may re-apply with additional information or should your situation change.

Sincerely,

NWSEO President
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

Enclosure

APPENDIX D

Acceptance of Application

Dear _____:

Your application for hardship transfer consideration has been accepted and your name placed on the National Weather Service (NWS) Hardship Transfer Candidate List. NWS selecting officials have access to this list. You will need to qualify and apply for the vacancy to be considered.

Sincerely,

NWSEO President
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

APPENDIX E

Non-Acceptance of Application

Dear _____:

Your application for hardship transfer consideration was not accepted for the following reasons:

Your application is enclosed. You may re-apply with additional information or should your situation change.

Sincerely,

NWSEO President
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

Enclosure

APPENDIX F

Acknowledge Request to Withdraw Application

Dear _____:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your request to withdraw your application for hardship transfer consideration. Your application is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

Enclosure

cc: NWSEO Designee
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)

APPENDIX G

Acknowledge Request to Remove Name from HTCL

Dear _____:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your request to have your name removed from Hardship Transfer Candidate List. Your name has been removed from the list. Your application is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Chief, Management and
Organization Division

Enclosure

cc: NWSEO Designee
(if employee is in the
bargaining unit)