

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Federal Grain Inspection Service
Washington, DC 20250

FGIS Directive 4295.1, Rev. 2
11/21/79

REQUESTS FOR PERSONNEL ACTION - FORM SF-52

I PURPOSE

This instruction prescribes the use, preparation, and submission of Standard Form SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, and lists other documents to be submitted for various personnel actions.

II AUTHORITY TO SIGN FORM SF-52

A Delegation of Authority.

1 Authority to sign Form SF-52 is delegated to Agency officials in AMS/FGIS Instruction 106-2 and FGIS Instruction 106-2, Delegations of Administrative Authorities. The offices initiating Form SF-52 are referred to in this Instruction as "requesting offices."

2 In making redelegations to supervisory officials, Division, Staff, and Regional Directors shall include authority for all types of actions for positions and employees under their supervision up to and including the grade level for which redelegation is made.

B Limitation of Authority. The redelegation of authority to sign Form SF-52 does not give the designee authority to initiate his/her own personnel action.

C Prior Approval. Division, Staff, and Regional Directors may require that prior approval by higher approving officials be obtained for certain actions before Form SF-52 is submitted to Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, Personnel (PE) Division.

III USE OF FORM SF-52

Form SF-52 shall be used to request employment or classification action, or a combination of these actions. A single Form SF-52 may be used to simultaneously effect any two actions. Examples of some of the actions for which Form SF-52 is required are as follows:

A Employee Actions.

1 Appointment or reinstatement of an individual.

2 Promotion of an employee or change to a lower grade.

3 Conversion of an employee's appointment from one type to another.

4 Detail of an employee for 30 days or more.

5 Reassignment of an employee within the

Department, or transfer to or from an agency outside the Department.

6 Placement of an employee in a nonpay status for 30 days or more, or return to active duty after such a nonpay period.

7 Change of an employee's official tour of duty (from part-time to full time, full-time to intermittent, etc., or change in number of hours worked).

8 Separation of an employee (resignation, retirement, or other separation action).

B Position Actions.

1 Establishment of a new position, or reclassification of an existing position, when recruitment and/or merit promotion is not involved. (See AMS/FGIS Instruction 302-1, Merit Promotion Plan, when recruitment and/or merit promotion is involved.)

2 Movement of a position from one organizational unit or location to another other than by mass change.

3 Abolishment of a position.

C Dual Actions.

1 The establishment and filling of a position.

2 The promotion of an employee to a different position, and the cancellation of the vacated position.

IV PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF FORM SF-52

A Standard Procedure. The requesting office shall:

1 Prepare Form SF-52 in an original and as many additional copies as required for internal Division, Staff, and Regional use. See Exhibit A, attached, for instructions for completing Form SF-52.

2 Submit the original only of Form SF-52, through established supervisory channels, to the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, as soon as it is known that a personnel action is required. Form SF-52 must be received in the PE Division a minimum of 7 workdays prior to the proposed effective date. Late submission can delay the effective date of an action, cause loss of salary to the employee, or delay final salary and lump-sum leave payment to a separating employee.

B Emergency Procedure. If an emergency exists which prevents mailing Form SF-52 in time to allow the required 7-workday lead time, the requesting office may:

1 Telephone the headquarters Administrative Office and request that Form SF-52 be prepared and hand carried to the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, for emergency processing; or

2 Use Form AD-347, Notification of Personnel Action,

to make an emergency appointment locally (if the office has short-term employment authority). For short-term employment, see AMS/FGIS Instruction 323-1, Short-Term Employment.

V PREPARATION OF FORM SF-52 FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS

A Accession of actions include Career or Career-Conditional, TAPER (Temporary Appointment Pending Establishment of Register), Temporary Limited or Term, and excepted appointments. Exhibit B, attached, describes the documents which shall be furnished or completed by the employee and/or the requesting office and submitted, through established supervisory channels, to the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division.

B Change actions include conversions, reassignments, promotions, change to lower grade, name changes, change in type of employment, and change in total number of hours worked under a part-time tour of duty. In general, follow procedures for preparation of Form SF-52 as shown in Exhibit A, attached. For specific actions, certain information and accompanying documents are required as described below.

1 Conversions. (Change in type of appointment of an employee already on the rolls of the Department.) The required supporting documents are:

a Form SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, or Form SF-172, Supplemental Experience and Qualifications Statement, if Form SF-171 is on file with PE Division.

b Form SF-78, Certificate of Medical Examination, if required by the new position.

c Promotion memorandum, if applicable.

d Form AD-332, Position Description cover sheet and 2 copies of position description for an established position, or 7 copies for a new position.

2 Reassignments. (Change of an employee from one position to another position, without promotion or demotion.) Required supporting documents are described in subparagraph 1, above.

3 Promotions. (Change from one grade level to a higher grade level.) Required supporting documents are described in subparagraph 1, above.

4 Demotions. (Change to a lower grade.) If the change to lower grade is:

a At the request of the employee, attach to Form SF-52 a memorandum signed by the employee requesting the change to lower grade. The memorandum must also state that the employee waives eligibility for a 2-year period of salary retention under the Salary Retention Act.

b At the request of the Agency or under adverse action, such action is initiated by PE Division.

Division, Staff, or Regional personnel are requested to contact their Administrative Office for guidelines in specific cases.

c Supporting documents required are:

- (1) Form AD-349, Declaration Sheet and Appointment Affidavits.
- (2) State income tax forms, if applicable.
- (3) Position description, as described in Section V B 1 d of this Instruction.

5 Name Change.

a Show on Form SF-52, PART 1, employee's new name. In Item F, show employee's former name and reason for the name change.

b Attach to Form SF-52 a written request for name change signed by the employee. The request must state the reason for the name change, i.e., marriage, divorce, or other legal action, and the date of the legal action effecting the change.

6 Change in Type of Employment.

(Change in tour of duty, such as full-time to part-time to intermittent, change in number of hours worked, etc., or in the number of months worked under a seasonal appointment, as described in Exhibit A, attached.) The required supporting documents are:

a If the change is at the employee's request, the employee shall submit a written request for the change in the type of employment, or tour of duty. The request shall state that the employee understands which employee benefits (leave, health, and life insurance coverage, etc.), if any, will be lost. Conversely, a change in type of employment, such as intermittent to part-time or full-time, may result in increased benefits to the employee. Since benefits vary according to a specific situation, the requesting office, or employee, is requested to contact the Employee Relations and Services Branch, PE Division, in each specific case (see AMS/FGIS Instruction 306-1, Tours of Duty and Hours of Work, regarding approval requirements for changing tours of duty).

b If the change is Agency-initiated, this type of action may be covered under adverse action regulations, or other regulations. Division, Staff, or Regional personnel are requested to contact their Administrative Office for guidelines in each specific case.

7 Requesting Establishment of New Position.

When Form SF-52 requests establishment of a new position or reclassification of an existing position, attach the required number of copies of the proposed position description. See AMS/FGIS Instruction 310-1, Classification of Positions.

C Separation actions include resignations, terminations, retirements, separation-transfers, and reductions in force. Specific administrative statements and other information for certain separation actions must be included on Form SF-52, as described below.

For requirements for Form SF-8, Notice to Federal Employees About Employment Compensation, see AMS/FGIS Instruction 342-2, Unemployment Compensation.

1 Resignations. Procedures to be followed in accepting resignations, and in documenting the reason for resignation on Form SF-52 are described in Exhibit A, attached, and in AMS/FGIS Instruction 332-1, Resignations. If the employee is entitled to lump-sum payment for annual leave and/or compensatory time, attach to Form SF-52 a completed Form AD-581, Lump-Sum Leave or Compensatory Time Payments. Form AD-581 must show any advanced sick leave to be refunded by the employee, if such leave has not been forgiven.

2 Terminations. (Involuntary separation).

a Career and Career-Conditional Employees. Career and career-conditional employees may not be unilaterally separated or terminated. Division, Staff, or Regional personnel are requested to contact their Administrative Office for guidelines in specific cases.

b Temporary Employees. The procedures set forth below apply to the termination of all temporary employees except Schedule A employees. Procedures for termination of Schedule A employees are set forth in Item 2, below.

(1) TAPER, Temporary Limited, and Term. The requesting office shall explain on the Form SF-52 (PART I, Item F) the reason the termination action is being effected, and state whether the employee has been offered an extension of the current appointment, or another position. If another position has been offered, give position title, grade, salary, geographic location, and reasons for refusal. If the reasons for refusal are not known, so state. The total number of days for which service was performed, or the total amount of compensation earned during the service year, shall be shown for an appointment having a service-year limitation.

(2) Schedule A (FGIS Field Offices). When a Schedule A employee is not performing in a satisfactory manner, the Field Office Supervisor shall:

(a) Prepare a draft letter to the employee citing specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, specifying dates, locations, and the observing supervisor. The draft letter shall also include the proposed effective date of termination.

(b) Obtain verbal approval of the proposed letter of termination from the Employment and Classification Branch, FGIS, PE Division.

(c) Give the approved letter of termination to the employee and verbally advise him/her of the effective date of termination. If the employee cannot be personally contacted, send the original copy of the letter of

termination, by certified mail, and a carbon copy, by regular mail, to the employee's last known address.

(d) Submit to Employment and Classification Branch, FGIS, PE Division, Form SF-52 terminating the employee. Attach to Form SF-52 a copy of the letter of termination, indicating on the copy of the letter the name of the previous contact in PE Division.

3 Retirements.

a Disability. The requesting office shall identify on Form SF-52, PART I, Item F, that part of the work the employee was not able to perform, i.e., "Unable to perform duty of loading and unloading truck." State whether other employment was offered and, if so, give the reasons for the employee's refusal.

b Optional. The requesting office shall give in specific detail on Form SF-52, PART 1, Item F, the actual facts, if known, that caused the retirement. If the employee does not give any reason and if one is not known, so state. If other employment is offered, give the position, title, grade (if any), salary, and geographic locations offered, and the reason for refusal. If the reason for refusal is not known, so indicate. Form AD-581, Lump-Sum Leave or Compensatory Time Payments, must accompany Form SF-52.

c Supporting Documents. Attach Form SF-2801, Application for Retirement, to Form SF-52 for disability or optional retirement requests.

4 Separation-Transfer. (Transfer from USDA to another government agency.) The requesting office shall prepare Form SF-52 as described in Exhibit A, attached. Under PART I, Item F, on Form SF-52, show the agency to which the employee is transferring.

5 Reduction-in-Force. The requesting office shall prepare Form SF-52 separating the employee by reduction-in-force after the affected employee has been properly notified by the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division. The requesting office shall work directly with the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, in effecting reduction-in-force actions.

6 Other Types of Separations. The requesting office shall inform the Employee Relations and Services Branch, PE Division, of the circumstances for effecting the separation actions described below prior to submitting Form SF-52, and shall include, as applicable, the following information on Form SF-52, PART 1, Item F.

a Failure To Accompany Activity or Accept New Assignment. State the reason the employee is not accompanying the activity or accepting the new assignment. If another position was offered, give the title, grade (if any), salary, and geographic location offered. State the reasons given by the employee for

nonacceptance.

b Abandonment of Position.

State the conditions under which the abandonment of position occurred, e.g., "Walked off the job without notice either before or after leave."

(Note: An action may be initiated when an employee is absent over 15 consecutive workdays, including holidays, on other than a scheduled absence, provided he/she fails to inform the office of the expected absence; cannot be reached during the period of absence; or, if contacted, fails to return to duty.)

c Disqualification During Probationary Period.

When an employee is separated during the probationary period for reasons arising after the appointment, describe the nature and extent of the actions and events which caused the separation. (This information will be included on Form AD-350A, Change Action Notice, which serves as a notice of separation to the employee.)

VI CORRECTIONS TO PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Any error on Form SF-52 must be corrected, especially if it involves the name, Social Security number, duty station, tenure, or employment status of the employee. The tenure of an employee is determined primarily by the type of appointment, length of service, and eligibility for veteran's preference. The items affecting employment status are generally those containing information about compensation, grade, and position classification. In some instances, nature of action, legal authority, or employing office may be in error, and must also be corrected.

A Action by the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division. Errors in Form SF-52 such as position number, types of action, etc., will generally be discovered and corrected by the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division. In such cases, corrections will appear on Form AD-350, Notification of Personnel Action, which is sent to the requesting office for its records.

B Action by Requesting Office. When errors in Form SF-52 are discovered by the requesting office (either after Form SF-52 has been sent to the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, or after ratification that action has been taken), the requesting office shall immediately notify, by telephone, the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division. The PE Division will take corrective action as is applicable in each case.

VII CANCELING PERSONNEL ACTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR PERSONNEL ACTIONS

A Action by Requesting Office. A requesting office may wish to cancel Form SF-52 before the personnel action is effected. In such cases, the requesting office shall immediately notify the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, by telephone so that appropriate action may be taken. The canceled Form SF-52 with documented reason for cancellation, will be kept on file in the PE Division or the appropriate Regional office for 6 months.

B Action by the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division. Generally, the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, will be aware of the reasons and situations which will require cancellation of Form SF-52,

e.g., position not established, position not classified, etc. In such cases, the Employment and Classification Branch, AMS or FGIS, PE Division, will cancel Form SF-52 and inform the requesting office of the action. The canceled Form SF-52, with documented reason for cancellation, will be kept on file in the PE Division for 6 months.

/s/ Irving W. Thomas
Deputy Administrator, Management

Attachments

(PLEASE CONTACT THE APHIS ISSUANCE STAFF AT 301-734-5359
FOR COPIES OF THE ATTACHMENTS)