



# THE ADVISOR NEWSLETTER

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## Director's Corner

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had some time to relax and enjoy some time with family and friends. As we get back into our Battle Rhythm in support of our individual missions, we pick up where we left off last year. Last year was filled with change for CHRA and the Army and this year will likely continue with changes. There were some new programs (Expedited Referrals and Expedited Vetting for example) implemented. We also had the Army IG team on a follow-up for their 2016 review of the Army Civilian Hiring Program (ACHP). There are many good ideas being discussed and locally we are continuing to review and update local policies to improve the hiring process. We were able to update the Fort Sam Houston Merit Promotion Placement Plan and the Fort Sam Houston Pay setting Policy. Army is continuing to review policies and working to reduce the time it takes to hire someone. We are excited to see new policies and systems unfold, and while there will likely be some hiccups as there always are, the ACHP will be stronger and better!



Norman Fernaays  
Director, FSH CPAC

INSIDE THIS ISSUE :	
Director's Corner	1
Go Army Ed for DA Civilians	1
Excellent Customer Service	2
Position Classification Frequently Asked Questions	3
Leave Planning and the Importance of Conservation	4
Wi-Fi Safety Tips	4
Weingarten Rights	5
Hail & Farewell	6
CFC Guest Speaker	7
In the Spotlight	7
CPAC Holiday Party	8
CPAC Holiday Open House	9
CPAC Business Hours	9

## Go Army Ed for DA Employees

By: Steve Gonzalez



As a reminder GoArmyEd is the Army's virtual gateway to apply for most centrally managed and centrally-funded competitive training opportunities and the submission of the SF 182s (Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training) online. As an online portal, GoArmyEd has automated many of the paper-based processes historically conducted by Career Program and Training Managers. It is a one-stop location for managing education, training, professional development, as well as managing and resourcing training requests. GoArmyEd is the authoritative source for the SF 182.

With GoArmyEd being the training management system for Army Civilians to request for competitive professional development training, education and leader development events, all Army Civilians, Supervisors, Career Program Managers, and Training Managers must have active accounts with GoArmyEd and Army Career Tracker (ACT) <https://actnow.army.mil/> in order to apply for and approve training request. As an Army Supervisor you are required to have both an account as a Supervisor and as an employee.

If you currently do not have a GoArmyEd account, it is critically important that you visit [GoArmyEd.com](https://www.goarmyed.com/for_civilian.aspx) @ [https://www.goarmyed.com/for\\_civilian.aspx](https://www.goarmyed.com/for_civilian.aspx) to create or reactivate your account. Don't miss out on an important career enhancing training opportunity because you failed to create or maintain your GoArmyEd account.

For additional information on how GoArmyEd is supporting Army Civilian Education, check out the "Army Civilian Desk Reference" a GoArmyEd quick reference guide at [https://www.goarmyed.com/docs/pdf/Army\\_Civilian\\_Guide\\_12\\_JULY\\_2018\\_Blue\\_v1\\_APPROVED.pdf](https://www.goarmyed.com/docs/pdf/Army_Civilian_Guide_12_JULY_2018_Blue_v1_APPROVED.pdf)





## Excellent Customer Service

- By Sabrina Clay



What is excellent customer service? Why is excellent customer service so important? Does excellent customer service really play a role in the world of Human Resources? These are questions we tend to ask ourselves when we are being asked to provide excellent customer service. This article will provide a few tips that will allow us to excel in this area.

**Tip #1:** Knowing our job and being confident in what we are doing is a major factor in excellent customer service. This is not saying we have to know everything, but we should know where to go to find the answers. When our customer receives accurate answers to their questions, it builds trust. Providing well researched and correct information to our customers is critical. When the customer feels confident in our advisory services, they will not hesitate to ask questions and follow our lead.

**Tip #2:** Effective communication skills are crucial when it comes to providing excellent customer service. Often times in our world of Human Resources, we tend to use a lot of acronyms and terminology that we are very familiar with but our customers are not. We can't assume they know or understand the terms we use on a daily basis. Using common terminology that everyone understands goes a long way in ensuring everyone has a knowledge of the process. For example, if we are talking to a customer about submitting a hiring action instead of telling them to submit an "RPA" we should take the time to say "Request for Personnel Action". Doing this will help educate our customer and thus cause them to feel they know and understand what we are telling them.

**Tip #3:** Active listening skills are also a key in providing excellent customer service. Many times

we are quick to tell what, how, and when we are going to do something that we don't take the time to listen to the needs our customer is trying to communicate to us. We become so focused on getting off the phone that we tend to take over the conversation and do not hear what the customer is trying to say. Taking the time to listen carefully to what the customer is requesting helps alleviate a lot of rework and helps build a rapport that will result in a positive working relationship.

**Tip # 4:** Response time to inquiries and requests can be the fine line between good customer service and excellent customer service. It is very important to respond quickly via email or phone to all inquiries and requests, even if it is only to say we are looking into the issue and will be back in touch. Whatever the extra step may be, if you want to provide excellent customer service, take it. There is

nothing worse than being non-responsive to a customer who is trying to get help, resolve an issue, or fill a position that has been vacant for a long time. In our world, some response is always better than no response.

In conclusion, in a job where production is a huge factor, many of us tend to get caught up in the "hurry up and get it out" mentality. While we do have the customer on our mind, we are in such a rush to push to the next phase we are guilty of not taking the time to really focus on what is important and that is our customer. Taking the time to practice these tips will not only ensure we provide excellent customer service, practicing these tips will help us build a partnership. In our line of work it is critical that we work together with our customer because at the end of the day it is about putting the right person in the right position.



## Surprising Facts About Winter

IT SOMETIMES SNOWS WHERE YOU LEAST EXPECT IT.

You wouldn't be shocked to see snow on the ground of Siberia or Minnesota when traveling to those places during the winter months. But northern areas don't have a monopoly on snowfall—the white stuff has been known to touch down everywhere from the Sahara Desert to Hawaii. Even the driest place on Earth isn't immune. In 2011, the Atacama Desert in Chile received nearly 32 inches of snow thanks to a rare cold front from Antarctica.

THE EARTH IS CLOSEST TO THE SUN DURING THE WINTER.

Every January (the start of the winter season in the northern hemisphere) the Earth reaches the point in its orbit that's nearest to the Sun. Despite some common misconceptions, the seasonal drop in temperature has nothing to do with the distance of our planet to the Sun. It instead has everything to do with which direction the Earth's axis is tilting, which is why the two hemispheres experience winter at different times of the year.



## Position Classification Frequently Asked Questions

- By Kevin Wolf

Q. How can positions with similar work be classified or graded differently?

A. We are sometimes asked why positions that seem to involve the same kind of work in different locations or organizations are classified differently. There are two reasons why positions that seem similar are classified differently:

- Because the positions or jobs are actually different. While the tasks might seem to be similar, the complexity of the work, as well as the level of responsibility, authority, level of contacts, purpose of contacts, or other classification or job grading factor could be sufficiently different to justify a different classification or grading. The classification or job grading decision is made by HR Classification experts who have the most information about the position or job in question and experience/training in proper application of the pertinent Position Classification Standard.

- Because one or more of the positions or jobs is not classified or graded correctly. OPM classification and job grading standards may have been interpreted differently by whoever classified or graded the positions or jobs. When we learn of such situations, we remind the organization of their responsibility to submit these PDs for review to ensure consistency.

Q. What is a position description?

A. A position description or "PD" is a statement of the major duties, responsibilities, and supervisory rela-

tionships of a position. In its simplest form, a PD indicates the work to be performed by the position. The purpose of a PD is to document the major duties and responsibilities of a position, not to spell out in detail every possible activity during the work day.

Q. What is a position classification standard?

A. Position classification standards encourage uniformity and equity in the classification of positions by providing a common reference across organizations, locations, and agencies. Classification standards may cover one or many occupations. They usually include a description of the work performed; official titles; and criteria for determining grades. Classification flysheets describe the work, but refer the user to other standards or guides for grading guidance. Some broad standards are issued as "functional guides" and provide criteria for determining the grade level of work in multiple occupations. Position classification standards and guidance covering most Federal positions are accessible on the internet at: <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/index.asp> for white collar positions, and <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/html/fwsdocs.asp> for trades, craft, and labor positions.

\*\* Position Classification Standards should always be reviewed and referenced by managers and supervisors when creating or updating position descriptions. \*\*

Q. Are classification and qualifications the same thing?

A. "Classification" and "qualifications" are often confused; however, each has its own distinct function.

- Classification pertains to a position or job and the evaluation process that determines the appropriate pay system, occupational series, title, and grade/pay band.

- Qualifications pertain to a person and describe the knowledge skills and/or abilities a person must have to be successful in a particular occupation. OPM publishes minimum qualifications for white collar jobs in the Federal service in the Operating Manual: Qualifications Standards for General Schedule Positions. For trades, craft, and labor positions, refer to The Job Qualifications System for Trades and Labor Occupations. HR specialists use these manuals to evaluate applicants for vacant positions in the Federal service.

Q. How does an employee request a position review?

A. Under the Delegated Classification Authority, management has responsibility for both assignment of duties and classifying positions. Employees should express concerns about position description accuracy/classification to their chain of command. If management determines that a new position description is warranted, it is their responsibility to review the pertinent OPM Classification Standard and submit a properly formatted draft or finalized position description to the CPAC through their organization HR Liaison using the Workforce Planning Tool (WPT) for advisory and implementation.

**CLASSIFICATION**





## Leave Planning and the Importance of Conservation

- By Sara Orozco

As we enter 2019 and a new leave year, it is important to stop and reflect upon how much leave you have and your plans for the rest of the year. Additionally, the value of maintaining a leave reserve cannot be overstated. Let's face it: life happens. Unexpected events pop up, such as illness, car trouble—even unexpected vacations!—and it's important to be ready.

The following are some helpful leave tips for consideration so you are ready for anything in 2019.

Have you filled out a leave projection (if required)? Have you planned any vacations? The simple act of projecting the leave is not a tacit approval to take the time off; it is simply a projection of time you would like to be off. Remember, in order to take leave you need to have leave available. If you know you are going to need a specific amount of time off,

make sure you are planning to have at least that much leave available to you at the time you need it. For example, if you've planned an amazing two week trip to Europe, but only have the equivalent of three days of leave available when the time comes to depart, your supervisor is under no obligation to approve Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for the rest of the time. In fact, you may be marked Absent Without Leave (AWOL) if you do not report for duty. AWOL can lead to disciplinary action.

Have you considered what would happen if you became ill and unable to work? Employees with more than a year of service are entitled to 480 hours of leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. While this time can be charged to LWOP, it can also

be taken in conjunction with other forms of leave, meaning that even while on FMLA, a paycheck continues. As such, by ensuring you maintain a leave bank of at least 480 hours (be it sick, annual, or another form of leave), you are prepared should you or an immediate family member have a medical emergency.

Leave projection is also important for those with Use or Lose Leave. It is not unusual to hear that an employee with use or lose leave had requested time off between Thanksgiving through New Year's Day. Be aware that while you can request leave, the approval of that leave is dependent upon mission requirements. It may not be feasible for an employee to take off huge swaths of time. Therefore, the use of Use or Lose throughout the year is highly recommended.

## Wi-Fi Safety Tips

- By Diana Kent



# 1 Only Connect to Trusted Networks - Are you the type of person who opens your smartphone or laptop and immediately connects to any unsecured connection? In today's wireless world, these free hotspots are increasingly easy to find. Beware though. To a cyber criminal with just a smidgen of experience, it can be relatively easy to create a free network to entice you in with your mobile device—only to direct you where he wants or grab any information you use. Stick to SSIDs you recognize, like those listed in public places that advertise free Wi-Fi. Following this tip will help decrease your chances of electronic eavesdropping, but a seasoned hacker can still drop in on your online sessions and steal your logins and passwords.

# 2 Look for Free Wi-Fi Accounts that Require a Log-in - The accounts that require you to enter a password you obtain from the business you're patronizing, or at least require some secure agreement page before gaining access, are typically safer than an unknown network without any security. Look for WPA encryption, if it's offered.

# 3 Use Paid Wi-Fi Access For More Security - Why pay for something you can get for free? Because that access point is likely to be more secure. By taking this route, you'll get secure log-in credentials which should help toughen up the barriers against the free, but perhaps uncertain, Wi-Fi path.

# 4 Your Smartphone May Open Its Doors Too - If you're like many people, your smartphone is set to automatically connect to open Wi-Fi accounts. This can help save your cell minutes, and potentially offer faster downloads, too. But are you aware of what hotspots your phone is grabbing onto to when you're out? Check what's available before you connect, or simply go into your phone's settings and turn off the option to connect to anything and everything.

# 5 Don't Visit Free Public Wi-Fi Unless it's a Secure Connection - There's only one way that's absolutely certain to prevent free, unsecured Wi-Fi snooping, and that's avoiding free, unsecured Wi-Fi altogether. Is this going too far? Perhaps, it can depend upon the sites you're visiting. If you're checking the weather and local restaurants through a recognizable connection, you're probably all right. But, why chance it?

## Weingarten Rights

- By Dawn Wilkie

Weingarten rights guarantee an employee the right to Union representation during an investigatory interview. These rights, established by the Supreme Court in 1975 in the case of J. Weingarten Inc., must be claimed by the employee. The supervisor has no obligation to inform an employee that s/he is entitled to Union representation.

### What is an Investigatory Interview?

An investigatory interview is one in which a Supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his/her conduct. If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or discharge may result from what he/she says, the employee has the right to request Union representation.

Examples of such an interview are:

- The interview is part of the employer's disciplinary procedure or is a component of the employer's procedure for determining whether discipline will be imposed.
- The purpose of the interview is to investigate an employee's performance where discipline, demotion or other adverse consequences to the employee's job status or working conditions are a possible result.
- The purpose of the interview is to elicit facts from the employee to support disciplinary action that is probable or that is being considered, or to obtain admissions of misconduct or other evidence to support a disciplinary decision already made.
- The employee is required to explain his/her conduct, or defend it during the interview, or is compelled to answer questions or give evidence.

It is an obligation of the Union to educate bargaining unit employees about their Weingarten rights **BEFORE** an occasion to use them arises. An employee must state to the employer that he/she wants a Union representative present; the employer has no obligation to ask: the employee if she/he wants a representative.

### Weingarten Rules

When an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:

- Rule 1 - The employee must make a clear request for Union representation before or during the interview. The employee can't be punished for making this request.
- Rule 2 - After the employee makes the request, the supervisor has 3 options. He/she may either:
  - ◆ Grant the request and delay the interview until the Union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or
  - ◆ Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
  - ◆ Give the employee a choice of: 1) having the interview without representation or 2) ending the interview.
- Rule 3 - If the supervisor denies the request and continues to ask questions, this is an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. The employee cannot be disciplined for such refusal but is required to sit there until the supervisor terminates the interview. Leaving before this happens may constitute punishable insubordination.

### **An employee has NO right to the presence of a Union representative where:**

- The meeting is merely for the purpose of conveying work instructions, training, or communicating needed corrections in the employee's work techniques.
- The employee is assured by the employer prior to the interview that no discipline or employment consequences can result from the interview.
- The employer has reached a final decision to impose certain discipline on the employee prior to the interview, and the purpose of the interview is to inform the employee of the discipline or to impose it.
- Any conversation or discussion about the previously determined discipline which is initiated by the employee and without employer encouragement or instigation after the employee is informed of the action.

Even in the above four (4) circumstances, the employee can still ask for representation. Most employers will permit a representative to attend even when not required to.

### Hail and Farewell



Vivian Albarico  
Joan Conlon  
Andrew Faucett  
Catherine Guerra  
Delina Melendez  
Carlos Reyeshislop  
Robert Rodriguez



Shelby Goodman  
Cheyenne Love  
Abigail Lucas



Congratulations to Mr. Shelby Goodman, HR Specialist (Labor Relations) who accepted a position at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



During the Combined Federal Campaign, Ms. Bianca Peralta from Habitat for Humanity was invited to FSH CPAC to speak and provide information about the San Antonio area nonprofit housing organization.



**Where is your hometown?**

San Antonio, Texas. Home of the 5-time NBA Champion San Antonio Spurs!

**Which Branch do you work for?**

Dynamic D.

**How long have you been with the CPAC?**

A little over 4 years.

**What is your favorite part about working at the CPAC?**

Knowing that my co-workers and I are dedicated to the mission and doing the best job possible for the United States Army.

**What is something most people would not know about you?**

I love music and need to hear it at least once a day.

**What is it that you do that sets you apart in providing excellent customer service?**

I listen to what the customer's needs are so that I can provide them the right person in the right job.



### CPAC Holiday Party!

Branch A



Branch B



Branch C



Branch D



Talent Support Branch



LMER



CPAC Support Branch



# HOLIDAY PARTY



### CPAC Holiday Open House

CIVILIAN  
PERSONNEL  
ADVISORY CENTER



Building 144  
2438 Stanley Road  
Fort Sam Houston, TX. 78234

Phone: (210) 221-1425

Fax: (210) 221-1015



<https://www.samhouston.army.mil/cpac/index.aspx>



<https://www.facebook.com/Ft-Sam-Houston-Civilian-Personnel-Advisory-Center-217123538373277/>



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Every year our customers are invited to come and spend the afternoon with the CPAC staff for some holiday fun, food and good cheer!

### FSH CPAC OPERATING HOURS



The Fort Sam Houston (FSH) Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) operating business hours are from 0800 -1500. Anything outside the FSH CPAC core business hours will always be supported. However, we ask that an appointment or prior coordination be made accordingly. For additional information, questions, or inquiries please call (210) 221-1425.

The FSH CPAC is closed for training on the first Thursday of each month from 1400 -1600. We appreciate your patience and support during this time. The FSH CPAC staff will return phone calls and emails the next business day.