

# Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning

## Personnel Newsletter

September 2003

### ANNUAL LEAVE "USE OR LOSE"



The time of the year has arrived when employees should review their annual leave balances, keeping in mind the 30-day (240 hours) carryover limitation. Annual leave in excess of the carryover limitation is considered "use or lose" annual leave and must be used before the end of the leave year to avoid forfeiture.

If it appears that you will have an excess of annual leave, the following information should be considered:

#### **EMPLOYEES:**

1. Plan your leave for the balance of the leave year, which ends January 10, 2004. Special attention should be given to schedule leave to avoid forfeiture of "use or lose" annual leave.
2. Submit an e-mail request to your supervisor requesting "use or lose" leave before the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year (November 29, 2003). Once WebTADS is available, you may use WebTADS to submit the request.
3. If your annual leave request is denied or approved leave is canceled, an alternative period of time should be scheduled using e-mail (or WebTADS, if available).
4. Maintain copies of the e-mails that document your request to use your "use or lose" annual leave and your supervisor's approval. These documents will be needed if you have to request restoration of forfeited leave. If you use WebTADS to request the leave, the documentation will be maintained by WebTADS.
5. If you do not request leave or do not use the leave that was approved, any resulting forfeiture will be considered to be by your choice.
6. Comptroller General decisions state that Federal employees who do not schedule leave in advance and in writing and who forfeit the leave due to exigencies of public business may not have that leave restored. The Comptroller General has also ruled that informal notification or verbal requests are not sufficient for scheduling leave, even when extenuating circumstances exist.

#### **SUPERVISORS:**

1. Assist your employees in planning and scheduling the use of annual leave on a year-round basis to provide for reasonable vacation periods and to ensure the use of leave that employees might otherwise forfeit.
2. Take prompt action on leave requests.
3. Ask an employee to resubmit an e-mail request for another period if you have had to deny a request for "use or lose" leave. E-mails approving "use or lose" leave must be dated no later than November 29, 2003. Requested leave and approvals may be accomplished using WebTADS.
4. Request an exigency of public business be approved if you see no alternative to cancellation of employee's leave, which could result in a loss of leave. An exigency of public business must be approved by the Human Resources Officer before you cancel "use or lose" leave that cannot be rescheduled before the end of the leave year.

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## CARRYOVER OF EXCESS ANNUAL LEAVE

Unused earned annual leave may be carried over from one leave year to the next. The carryover amount, however, is limited by Federal law to 30 days (240 hours) for non-SES employees. Annual leave that was forfeited because it was in excess of the maximum leave ceiling, may be restored if lost due to administrative error, exigency of public business when the leave was scheduled in advance, or sickness of the employee when the leave was scheduled in advance.

In order to be eligible for excess leave carryover, the following requirements must be met:

1. The leave must have been scheduled, in advance, prior to the start of the third pay period before the end of the leave year (by November 29, 2003). To be considered scheduled in advance, the leave must have been requested and approved prior to the cut-off date. E-mails requesting and approving the use of leave or documentation from WebTADS must be available to document that the leave was scheduled in accordance with this requirement.
2. If applicable, an exigency of public business must be approved by the Human Resources Officer prior to canceling any scheduled "use or lose" leave. In such cases, the immediate supervisor must prepare a memorandum addressed to the Human Resources Officer, requesting an exigency of public business determination. The request should identify:
  - the proposed exigency;
  - the beginning and ending dates of the proposed exigency;
  - an indication that no other employee can carry out the work to be accomplished;
  - a description of the effects of a postponement of the work; and
  - the number of hours of annual leave involved if an exigency is approved.

The written request should be concurred on by the Director Of or Staff Office Chief and be routed through the Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning, Program and Policy Office. Documentation of the request and approval of the leave should be attached to the memorandum.

After the beginning of the leave year, an employee may request restoration of leave lost due to an approved exigency, an injury or illness prevented him/her from taking scheduled annual leave, or an administrative error. The official authorized to approve excess leave carryover is the Human Resources Officer. Requests to the Human Resources Officer for excess leave carryover due to exigency or illness/injury must include copies of the e-mail requesting and approving the use of the annual leave lost, or documentation from WebTADS, as applicable.

The Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning will post information with detailed instructions on the specific procedures to be followed on [Today@Glenn](mailto:Today@Glenn).

### Technical and Engineering Development Catalog Updated

Over 50 new self-study courses have been added. You can view the catalog online at:

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/LC>

or request a copy by calling the Learning Center at 3-2996/2997.



**The Learning Center**

### Training Application Deadline for FY 2003

It's that time of the year again when we are getting ready to close the books for FY03. In an effort to ensure that monies are spent, all training applications for any training that commences prior to September 30<sup>th</sup> should have been submitted to the Organization Development and Training Office by close of business on Friday, August 15, 2003. A training application is required for all offsite training, which includes conferences, seminars, short courses and academic training. Training applications for training commencing after September 30<sup>th</sup> may be submitted, but will be held in the Organization Development and Training Office until approval to forward fund is received.

## New Systems and Features Coming for Training in the Agency

**SOLAR/Single Sign-on (SSO)** – In the coming weeks, SSO will become an integral part of SOLAR. It enables users to login one time, getting authenticated access to all SSO member applications to which a user has been granted access. This solution eliminates the need to remember multiple user IDs and/or passwords. The applications impacted by the SSO feature are 1) SOLAR, the Agency system that primarily delivers Web-based training like annual IT Security and Ethics programs, 2) AdminSTAR, the Agency system for maintaining employee training records, and 3) the NASA Online Registration System (NORS), a new system in development. The NORS will give employees the online capability to view and register for upcoming training courses offered by the Organization Development and Training Office and the ability to electronically fill out training applications for offsite courses. NORS will also give the employees the capability to view their course schedule, training history records, and fill out online course evaluations.

The implementation of SSO should have a minimal impact on the user. If a user goes directly to the SOLAR site and tries to login, the system will automatically redirect the user to the Single Sign-On URL. Your user ID and password for SOLAR will become your user ID and password for SSO.



This October Glenn Research Center (GRC) employees will be recording time and attendance information in the new WebTADS system. The deployment of WebTADS supports NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe's Freedom to Manage initiative, the President's Management Agenda for E-Government, and is an enabler for the coming e-Payroll initiative. Accordingly, the use of WebTADS at all NASA Centers will allow for a simpler transition to the Department of Interior's payroll processing system next year.

GRC will go-live with WebTADS in one wave. Over 1,900 civil service employees will be using the system for the first time in mid-October. Each and every civil service employee must attend training to receive a user ID and password for the WebTADS System. The implementation team will conduct over 80 training classes in a 4-week timeframe – quite a challenge for all involved. Training classes are scheduled to begin the week of September 15.

The biggest change that WebTADS brings is the responsibility of the employee to enter his or her own time in the system. To do this, employees need to understand the system, basic payroll policies and procedures, and other changes resulting from implementing WebTADS. Training classes focus on providing all of these learning components.

In addition to formal classroom training, The Learning Center will host Open Houses for WebTADS assistance. Open Houses will provide end users with a chance to test the system both prior to go-live and during the first pay period. The staff from The Learning Center will provide support to those who want assistance with using the new system on their own.

For additional information on training, contact Shirley Livingston at 3-3704.

## Glenn Engineering Training Committee

The Glenn Engineering Training Committee (ETC) was formed in February 1998 to develop a Centerwide, integrated training plan to meet the needs of approximately 1,000 engineers and scientists at GRC and align them to the NASA Strategic Plan and Center Implementation Plan. Over the years, the members have changed; however, the current members are:

*John Taylor (Chair)*  
*Kathleen Schubert*  
*Sandra Foust*  
*Barbara Esker*  
*Nona Akos (OD&TO)*  
*Kathy Clark (OD&TO)*  
*Cynthia Forman (OD&TO)*



The Charter of the Engineering Training Committee is as follows:

**Objective:**

- Develop Centerwide engineering training plan linked to Center implementation plan.

**Scope:**

- Technical training for all GRC employees classified as engineers and scientists.

**Functions:**

- Collection/Consolidation of Centerwide engineering training needs.
- Develop Center Engineering Training Plan.
  - Link needs to strategic/implementation plans
  - Fit training within available budgets
  - Look for areas of commonality
- Advocate/implement recommendations.
- Establish/maintain/report metrics.

If you have any questions, call a member of the Engineering Training Committee (ETC).

## NASA EXTERNAL AWARDS

Every quarter, the Center receives requests for nominations for a wide variety of non-NASA awards. A call letter with nomination criteria summaries is sent to the directorate offices for distribution. Please call the Awards Office at extension 3-2493, for specific information. Additional information regarding external awards can be found at:

<http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/employeebenefits/awards/awardcriteria.htm>.

The following is a list of non-NASA External Award solicitations due the upcoming quarter, October - December 2003.

External Awards	Category 1, 2, or 3	Due Dates	
		To the Awards Office M/S 500-314 thru Mr. Campbell's Office	To the Sponsoring Organization thru Mr. Campbell's Office
Federal Engineer of the Year Award	1	<b>October 6, 2003</b>	
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Awards (Various Awards)	3		<b>Various Dates</b>
Frank G. Brewer Trophy	1	<b>November 28, 2003</b>	
National Public Service Awards	3		<b>October 3, 2003</b>
Space Technology Hall of Fame	3		<b>October 3, 2003</b>
Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy	1	<b>October 27, 2003</b>	
Roger W. Jones Award	1	<b>December 1, 2003</b>	
Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award	1	<b>December 1, 2003</b>	
Stellar Awards	3		<b>November 3, 2003</b>
Engineers' Council Awards	3		<b>November 10, 2003</b>
Careers and the Disabled Magazine's Employee of the Year Award	3		<b>September 22, 2003*</b>
Lemelson-MIT Prize	1	<b>September 15, 2003*</b>	
GEICO Public Service Award	2	<b>September 10, 2003*</b>	

**\*These award nominations are due in September because NASA Headquarters/Sponsoring Organizations need time to prepare nomination packages for approval and distribution in early October 2003.**

# Managing Stress In The Workplace

By Sidne Buelow, Ph.D.

Freud said that ‘love’ and ‘work’ are the two main areas of life, so I see coping with “Workplace Stress” as very important to our well-being. Full-time work today amounts to about 36 percent, or a little over a third of one’s waking time spent at work. And many people work overtime or at a second job.

Areas of work stress include feeling frustrated by a current situation (e.g. dealing with an irritable customer or co-worker), or threatened by some possible change looming in the future (e.g., downsizing), or experiencing conflicting expectations. Then there is the added strain of internal states, like physical illness, home stress or poor sleep from staying up with a sick child. Stressors may be positive, like accepting a long-desired promotion.

Under stress the body produces ‘fight or flight’ stress hormones and neurotransmitters, such as epinephrine, nor epinephrine, and cortisol. Some short-term results of the ‘fight or flight’ response include increased alertness, increased heart rate and breathing, and more alert senses. When the reaction is intense, the result may be panic, or anger, with clouded decision-making.

As the stress response becomes chronic, the person may exhibit poorer concentration and memory and may be less organized in his coping. Physical problems may even begin to develop, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and suppression of the immune system.

Snapping or being rude, often reacting out of proportion to what is going on, being chronically late, lacking energy to get ordinary work duties done, doing sloppy work, or missing normal deadlines may signal that you are feeling overstressed and in need of renewing and adding to your coping skills.

How stress affects people is not necessarily negative. Some people feel challenged by negative stressors and develop greater toughness or sturdiness. In part, the difference lies in how a person interprets a given stressor. Do you see a particular stressor negatively – as a threat, a loss, or as harmful? Do you consider it “not a problem” or as a “challenge to be solved?” Reframing a stressor as a challenge can help you regain your sense of humor and creativity.

## Things To Do

**Pause** – Delay a response. Take a deep breath, or say, “let me think about that” and then delay your answer.

**Prioritize and Reprioritize** – Think flexibly. What is urgent, what will slowly improve things, what can wait? Keep yourself at the top of your list and make time for yourself and your family everyday.

**Play** – Laugh at jokes, celebrate birthdays, babies, weddings, etc.

**Consult and Negotiate** – Seek help and look for a “win-win” solution.



## Things To Avoid

**Personalizing** – When someone offers feedback well or poorly, consider if there is anything in what they are saying that is something for you to work on.

**Publicly Venting** – This sets up a “lose/lose” situation, with lots of bad feelings left over, is not usually satisfying after the words are said, and adds to low morale.



**Perpetuating the Problem** – If others come to you with problems about other workers, other departments, supervisors – “stay calm, stay connected, stay out,” according to the advice of Harriet Lerner in her book, *Dance of Anger*. Resist giving advice. If you listen, do it briefly to help the person identify for themselves how they are going to work on the problem. Encourage them that you trust them to sort it out and offer emotional support.

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