

HRO HIGHLIGHTS and TRAINING NOTES



Human Resources Office

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/>

April 2002

Important Employee Action Items



E-mail Your Telework Questions
and Comments to
telework@hro.nrl.navy.mil

Long Term Care (LTC) Insurance
Early Enrollment Period:
March 25 - May 15

LTC Open Season:
July 1 - December 31

Science and Engineering
Apprentice Program:
June 24 - August 16

Daylight Savings
April 7

Secretary's Day
April 24

Announcement of Awards
(See Page 11 for details)

Training Notes
(See Page 12 for details)

Benefits Contacts
(See Page 14 for details)

HRO HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WEB
at
<http://personnel1.nrl.navy.mil/highlightsweb/> or link from Pipeline

HRO Service Desk - What We Do to Help You

The HRO Service Desk, Code 1802, has been created to help our customers in the following ways. Visit us in Bldg. 72N lobby, call us at (202) 767-3031 or email us at the following HROServiceDesk@hro.nrl.navy.mil. (Note procedures may vary at NRL-SSC and NRL-MRY.)

New Employees. We greet each new NRL employee and initiate the "check-in" process by providing general information about the Laboratory and Government service.

Telephone Screening. We direct callers to appropriate HRO or NRL personnel when the caller contacts us and doesn't know who handles a certain subject.

Job Announcements. We publicize all NRL job announcements (please email questions about announcements to public@hro.nrl.navy.mil).

We maintain a computer you can use to research job announcements or access Resumix, the Navy's automated job application process.

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HRO Service Desk...

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Mementos for Departing Employees. We prepare NRL mementos for division presentation to employees who are retiring or otherwise separating from NRL. Administrative officers (AOs) request them using procedures on the HRO website at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/> (click on HRO Service Desk). Urgent requests should be emailed, with date of need indicated.

Sign Language Interpreters. We coordinate your requests (procedures are on our website.)

Official Personnel Folders (OPF). We help access information or documents in your OPF, located at the HRSC-NE, Philadelphia, PA. We also assist management officials who need to know information from your OPF (typically, your supervisors and administrative office/HRO staffs). OPFs contain over 100 types of documents. These include copies of notification of personnel action (NPA) forms and earlier records that document your federal government and military service; benefits enrollment forms that predate electronic enrollment; and any life insurance/unpaid compensation beneficiary designations.

To request OPF review or information, you must complete HRSC-NE Form #12293/1, which you can obtain from us or the HRO forms website located at the following <http://personnel1.nrl.navy.mil/hrforms/>. Where possible, be very specific as to the information you desire. Doing so enables the HRSC to locate the specific information or copy of a document and mail it to your home address or fax it to the HRO, thus avoiding the need to ship and track your entire OPF. If you do request your OPF, it will be shipped to the HRO Service Desk, where you will report to review it. **Important note:** to access an NPA form issued since September 10, 2000, contact your administrative officer.

Training Records. Per procedures in Training Notes, page 12, you (or AOs in certain cases) send us copies of DD 1556 forms that document your completed training. We send these to the HRSC for purposes of updating your record.

Employee Performance Folders (EPF). We maintain or can access your performance appraisals and other official performance-related documents that concern you; these are not filed in OPFs. Except for Contribution-based Compensation System (CCS) appraisals, hard copies are filed in your EPF which you (and officials needing access) can review. CCS appraisals are maintained in the CCS Data System (CCSDS), which you, your supervisor/s and administrative officer can access directly.

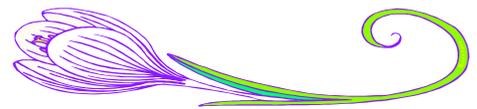
Employment Verifications. Here's something **we don't do**. We no longer respond to requests for employment and salary verifications received from third parties, such as lenders and landlords. We stopped doing this due to actions DoD has taken to protect your personal privacy and ensure that verifiers have quick access to complete and accurate information. Advise third-party verifiers to obtain needed information through The Work Number at 1-800-367-2884 or through the website at www.theworknumber.com. Before verifiers can obtain information about you, you must access this number or website and request a "salary key," which is a 6-digit number that verifiers would enter to gain access to information you want released. Tip: Call or click to familiarize yourself with this procedure and obtain your salary key before you visit your lending institution. It's very user friendly and your salary key is provided during the call or site visit.



Safeguarding Personal Information Covered by the Privacy Act - We're All Responsible!

Personal information is that which is intimate or private to an individual, such as date of birth, social security number, marital status, home address and telephone number, net salary and deductions, performance ratings, and NRL Contribution-based-Compensation System (CCS) scores. Government organizations must safeguard all personal information they possess. Also, organizations must safeguard other pay-related information, such as gross salary and awards, since unwarranted disclosure may violate an individual's personal privacy, depending on the context in which it was sought. These types of protected information are distinguished from information that is open to the public - open because it relates solely to employees' job functions - such as their position title, series, organizational code, and office telephone number.

Continued...



HRO HIGHLIGHTS

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Personal Information...

Continued...

When, as NRL and ONR personnel, we maintain or use others' personal information to make emergency contacts, process personnel actions, etc., we must safeguard it to prevent disclosure to persons not having an official need to know the information. For instance, you must route, distribute and file in a manner that prevents inappropriate disclosure all Notification of Personnel Action forms; travel forms that contain personal data; medical certificates and leave requests; performance ratings, and any other document containing a social security number or other personal information. Keep in mind that forms used to collect personal information in the first place contain a Privacy Act notice that advises the employee as to the authority and reasons for collection and the purposes for which the personal information will be used. If your subsequent actions fail to safeguard personal information in your possession, and the information is seen by someone who doesn't have an official need to know it, a Privacy Act violation has occurred.



What's New on the Employee Relations Website



Employees and supervisors can benefit from checking out the Employee Relations (ER) menu located at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800>. Click on *Staff Directory* for a list of ER subject areas and contacts for each. View *News and Announcements* for info on the hottest issues involving these subjects and employee benefits.

Need procedures to request temporary clerical personnel? Click on the menu item for NRL's Temporary Clerical Contract. Are you interested in learning about unemployment compensation procedures and benefits associated with

separation from your employment or an extended period of non-pay status? Click on Unemployment Compensation. Have ideas for improving our website? Email us at <mailto:jwalker@hro.nrl.navy.mil>.

The following are some additions to the Retirement and Insurance page:

- We've Been Asked - TSP and New IRS "Catch Up" Rules
- 2002 Social Security Benefit/Tax Changes
- Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) Website Information and Link (for changing your withholdings, allotments and address, accessing your W-2 and LES, etc.)
- Information about and link to "The Work Number" (you can give lenders, landlords, etc., permission to obtain on-the-spot verification of your employment and salary)
- Procedures NRL Administrative Officers Use to Report Employee Deaths to the HRSC-NE
- Savings Bond Calculator
- Retirement Service Credit Payment Calculator (use to estimate your CSRS or FERS deposit payment for periods of service not covered by retirement deductions)
- Chart CSRS Employees Can Use to Calculate the Conversion of Unused Sick Leave into Service Credit at Retirement
- State Tax Treatment of Federal Annuities for Tax Year 2001
- The HRO Service Desk (what we do and email address)

We've added to the Performance Appraisal and Awards page:

- We've Been Asked - Answers from the Contributions-based Compensation System (CCS) Staff
- Contributions-based Compensation System (CCS) - Employee and Supervisor Communication



Database of Outside Awards and Honors Applicable to NRL Research Staff

On March 6, Robert August, Code 6130, held the last NRL Awards Database training session. An identical session was held on February 13, and separate VTEL broadcasts were made available to Stennis and Monterey on both dates.

The database captures, in more than 200 categories, at least 1200 awards and honors that outside sources could bestow on eligible members of the NRL research staff. This database is new and is separate from the NRL Incentive Awards Program administered by Code 1850.

Division and Branch Heads were encouraged to attend a training session and have also been asked to complete a questionnaire. If you are a division or branch head, we encourage you to complete the questionnaire. Completion will enable you to effectively use the database. Based on your input, we will send you advance email notice of nomination deadlines and other information that will enable you to submit a nomination. This email process began in late March.

We encourage division and branch heads who missed attending one of the training sessions to view a videotape that we are developing and making available in the libraries at the NRL-DC, SSC and MRY sites.

In the future, NRL hopes to have an awards database website or library that employees can search at their convenience. Email inquiries about the database to robert.august@nrl.navy.mil.

Long Term Care Insurance is Here!

The Office of Personnel Management is sponsoring the Federal Long Term Care (LTC) Insurance Program. LTC insurance covers benefits that are generally not covered by your health insurance or Medicare. It helps pay for your needs if you can't take care of yourself because of an illness, injury or aging. This insurance program is designed specifically for Federal employees, Federal annuitants, survivor annuitants, spouses of Federal employees and annuitants, adult children 18 years or older of employees and annuitants, and parents, parents-in-law, and stepparents of Federal employees (but not of annuitants). **So please notify eligible family members!**

An open season will be held from July 1 through December 31, 2002. Potential enrollees can access OPM's website located at www.opm.gov/insure/ltc. It provides up-to-the-minute information about the program. In addition, by accessing www.ltcfeds.com or calling 1-800-582-3337, interested individuals can sign up to receive information at their residence address.

Individuals who desire to apply prior to the open season can do so during an early enrollment period from March 25 through May 15, 2002. Contact the LTCFEDS website or phone number for further information.

More Questions and Answers About Long Term Care Insurance



These most recently asked questions and answers may help you decide if and how this insurance can benefit you and your family. For more up to date and complete information, access the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) LTC website at www.opm.gov/insure/ltc or the LTC Partners website located at www.ltcfeds.com.

Q. I'm retired from the military but I am also a retired Federal employee receiving a Federal annuity. Does it matter whether I apply as one or the other?

A. No it doesn't matter because all annuitants (whether uniformed services Federal or Postal) will need to answer the same questions about their health.

Q. I'm retired from the Federal Government, but I am also a Federal employee. Can I apply as an employee and thus be required to answer fewer questions? Are my parents eligible to apply only if I apply as a Federal employee?

A. Employees in your situation are eligible to apply as an annuitant or as an employee provided their current Federal employment is in a position that conveys Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program eligibility. In that case, it would be more advantageous for an individual to apply as an employee (less health-related questions and parent eligibility). Nearly all of NRL's

reemployed annuitants were rehired on an intermittent work schedule and thus are not eligible for FEHB. Their LTC eligibility status is limited to that of a retiree, which means more questions and no parent eligibility.

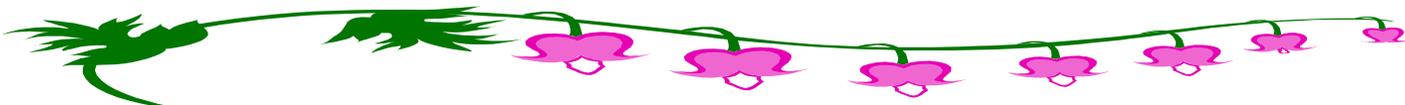
Q. Are federal deferred annuitants eligible to apply for this insurance?

A. Yes, they are. Deferred annuitants are eligible to apply for this program when they satisfy all requirements (age and service) for title to their annuity and have filed the application for that annuity.

Q. Is this program the same as the Long Term Care Insurance offered by WAEPA, USAA, or various recreation associations targeted to Federal or military personnel?

A. No, it is entirely separate from any other LTC Insurance Program. The Federal LTC Insurance Program sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and offered by John Hancock and MetLife is the ONLY program authorized by Congress to be officially offered to Federal employees and retirees, members and retired members of the uniformed services, and qualified family members. When reading solicitations and material, make sure you know if the material is officially sponsored by OPM, has the OPM seal on it, and is part of the Federal LTC Insurance Program.

NRL Travel Office Advisory!
Rental car reservations must be obtained through the Scheduled Air Traffic Office (SATO). Failure to follow this policy may reduce the allowable reimbursement amount for the cost of the rental.



Long Term Care Insurance Program Tapes Available Soon!

On March 6, OPM and Long Term Care Partners held the first of three live satellite broadcasts aimed at preparing you to make smart decisions about the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program. It featured four national experts discussing what is long term care, your odds of needing it, and your options for paying for it, along with real-life stories. This broadcast was taped and tapes will be available should you want to borrow one. Email Charlene Proctor at cproctor@hro.nrl.navy.mil. You will be notified by email when and where to pick up a tape.

Ethics Reminder – Gifts from Outside Sources

Highlights provides brief overviews of the rules of ethical conduct that all employees should know and must follow. These overviews do not provide each specific rule or cover unusual circumstances. If you have a particular question or issue, seek advice from an ethics counselor in the NRL Office of Counsel at (202)767-2244 or, at NRL-SSC, (228) 688-4826. ONR employees should call (703) 696-0191.



When can I accept a gift?

Generally, anything that has monetary value is considered a gift, such as cash, paperweights, meals, trips, concert tickets and services. With some exceptions mentioned later, you may not accept a gift from anyone who is giving the gift to you because of your Government position. Ask yourself if the gift would have been offered if you were not working for the Government. If the answer is no, then the gift is being offered because of your Government position and you cannot accept it.

Also, you may not accept a gift from people or organizations who are "prohibited sources" – those who do business with, or seek to do business with your agency, who seek some official action by your agency, or who have activities regulated by your agency. Gifts from these people or groups are prohibited, whether or not you deal with them when doing your job. You must also turn down a gift from those who have interests that may be significantly affected by your official duties, as they are also considered "prohibited sources."

What about accepting a cup of coffee? A cup of coffee is all right. It is such a modest refreshment that it is not considered a gift. So you may accept it without worrying about who is giving it or why. Other inexpensive food and refreshment items such as donuts or soda may also be accepted. There are some other

items as well that are not considered gifts, such as greeting cards, bank loans at commercial rates, publicly available discounts, certain contest prizes, and things for which you pay fair value. But remember that the definition of a gift is very broad. If you have a question about a gift, ask your ethics counselor.

May I accept a lunch? Meals are gifts. If the person who wants to pay for your lunch is a "prohibited source" or if the meal is offered because of your position, then the rule on not accepting gifts applies. However, you may be able to accept a lunch or other meal under an exception for gifts valued at \$20 or less. But you may not go to lunch on a frequent basis as the guest of the same person, because there is a \$50 per year limit on gifts from any one source.

Can the \$20 exception be used for anything other than lunch? Yes, but no cash! The \$20 exception may be used to accept any gift that is not worth more than \$20. If you don't know the actual value of an item, you may make a reasonable estimate.

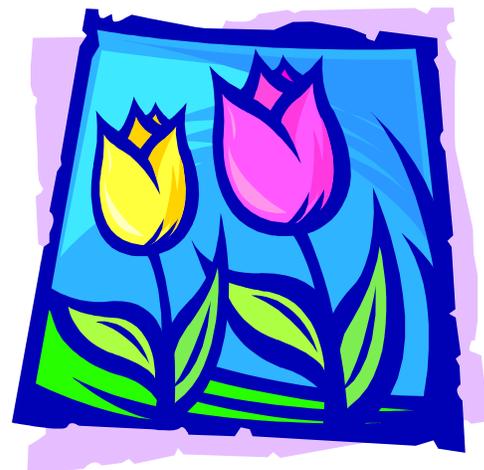
There are some other things you should keep in mind before you use the \$20 exception. First, it allows you to accept, but not to ask for, something worth \$20 or less. Second, the rule allows you to accept gifts worth \$20 or less on a single occasion. That means if several gifts are given at the same time, their total value cannot exceed \$20. Again remember, there is a \$50 per year limit on gifts from the same source.

There are other exceptions that would allow you to accept (but not to ask for) gifts that would otherwise be prohibited, such as the "friends and family" exception for gifts based on personal relationships. Other examples are special discounts (such as from your agency credit union), gifts that result from an outside job for you or your spouse when they are not given because of your Government position, achievement awards, and

certain dinners or other events that your agency approves for you to attend. All of the exceptions are subject to certain limits and some have conditions that must be met. For example, you cannot accept a gift for an official act, because of a criminal statute (18 USC 201). Before using an exception, the best course to follow is to ask your ethics counselor about it. Your ethics counselor can also tell you how you may properly dispose of a gift that you have received but are not allowed to keep.

One of my long-time close friends performs contract work for NRL and is therefore a prohibited source. May I use the "family and friends" exception to accept gifts from her, or should I apply the \$20/\$50 limit? As long as the circumstances make it clear that the gift is motivated by a personal friendship rather than your position with the Government, you may accept any gift from your friend using the "family and friends" exception. Relevant factors to consider include the history of the relationship and whether the friend personally pays for the gift.

I travel on official business at Government expense. Can I keep travel-related promotional material (points, miles, upgrades, etc.) for personal use? Yes - provided the promotional material was obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government.



Free Summer Help at NRL

The Department of Defense (DoD) is working with the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students with Disabilities to offer summer employment for persons with targeted disabilities. What does this mean for NRL? It means NRL managers can hire summer help for free. NRL has been allocated a limited number of billets that would be of no cost to managers on a first-come, first-served basis. The funding covers the period May 15 through September 30.

WRP provides managers the opportunity to view students' resumes from a referral database and place them in summer jobs within their respective NRL division. In the past, managers have employed students majoring in engineering and computer science, while others requested administrative support. These students can help by undertaking special projects you may have postponed due to lack of time or resources, assist permanent staff with key projects, share specialized knowledge and innovative technical skills, or assume responsibilities of staff on vacation or leave or absence. In addition, they can prove that qualified people with disabilities make excellent employees.

Please take the time to consider this wonderful opportunity. You are only committing to summer employment. Let's make the promise to look within our organizations to see if we can employ at least one well-deserving student. Remember, this can be a win for all!

By the time you read this article, NRL will have received applicant data. So if you missed our earlier publicity but still want to participate, contact the WRP Coordinator, Lynn Granados, as soon as possible. You can reach her at 202-767-8392 or <mailto:lgranado@hro.nrl.navy.mil>. You'll need to move quickly! Competition for students can be fierce, especially in the Washington, D.C. area where many opportunities exist.

NRL-DC Sign Language Interpreter Service

Employees at NRL-DC who need the services of a sign language interpreter can get qualified interpreters by contacting the HRO Service Desk.



Sign language interpreters are an important commodity to NRL's hearing-impaired employees, as well as their supervisors and co-workers. Interpreters help make meetings, training sessions, and special events held at NRL-DC more comfortable and efficient. For technical or sensitive issues, employees can request that an interpreter be proficient in specialty areas such as: computer jargon, American Sign Language, medical terms, etc.



HRO Service Desk is the **only** office authorized to make requests to a sign language company. Requests that are not made by the Service Desk are unauthorized commitments, and the person making the request will be held personally responsible for all costs incurred.



To request services, contact the Service Desk on 202-767-3031 or <mailto:HROServiceDesk@hro1.nrl.navy.mil>. Provide the Service Desk with the following: your code; your name; your point of contact for the meeting; the point of contact's telephone number; the assignment address; the date(s) and beginning and ending times that the interpreter(s) will be needed; the number of interpreters needed; the type of meeting, etc.; language preference; the type of assignment (if the service is for a small group, platform, conference, one-on-one, round table, or other); and the name of the hearing-impaired employee(s) if known. (These request procedures are maintained on the HRO website.) The HRO Service Desk looks forward to accommodating your requests.



Has Your Address Changed? Sick Leave - You Can Use It When Adopting a Child!



If your home address on file with your servicing Payroll Office, DFAS, is incorrect, your TSP statement will not be deliverable and will be returned to the TSP Service Office. If your home address has changed, or will change, please complete a change-of-address form and return it to your servicing Payroll Office or, better yet, use the Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) website, which we featured in the March issue of Highlights and Training Notes. Details are found on the DFAS home page at <http://www.dfas.mil>. If you don't have access to a computer you may call the E/MSS toll free number at 1-877-363-3677 or commercial 478-757-3119.

You may use your accrued sick leave for purposes relating to the adoption of a child, such as appointments with adoption agencies, social workers, and attorneys; court proceedings; required travel; and any other activities necessary to allow the adoption to proceed. With appropriate approval, you may be advanced up to 30 days of additional sick leave. To the extent possible, you should submit your sick leave requests at least 3 days in advance of the desired time off.



Contribution-based Compensation System (CCS) - Supervisor/Employee Communication

NRL's fourth annual CCS appraisal cycle, which began on October 1, 2001, is well underway. This is to remind both supervisors and employees of the importance of clear communication and understanding of both parties regarding performance and contribution score expectations. This can help avoid disappointments or surprises at the end of the rating cycle.

Supervisors: All 2000/2001 CCS plans (summary form and critical element charts) are accessible to employees via the CCS Data System (CCSDS). You are responsible for assuring employees are aware of this or have received a hard copy. There is no requirement to print and sign the summary form.

Once plans are issued, communication continues to be important throughout the appraisal cycle. Although a formal mid-year review is not required unless the employee specifically requests one, you may conduct any formal reviews you believe may be beneficial to your employees. Whether or not a formal review is conducted, informal communication between you and the employee is expected to be ongoing as appropriate. To facilitate discussion, you may invite employees to ask questions if they have concerns about CCS. You may also provide supplemental criteria to individual plans. Keep in mind that written supplemental criteria that benefits the employees' understanding may be issued at any time and need not be entered into the CCSDS. And finally, frequent feedback on employees' work products is important if you want to avoid misunderstandings at the end of the appraisal cycle.

Employees: It is important for you to be proactive in knowing and understanding CCS as it relates to you. You are responsible for finding

out what is expected of you in order to gain contribution scores for your normal pay range (NPR) if you do not know. Ask your supervisor for examples of accomplishments that will likely score you within the NPR. (You will find the NPR scores that relate to your level of pay under the menu item "Personal Data" in the CCSDS.) If you are in a position with growth potential and do not know what higher contributions provide greater potential for higher pay, ask your supervisor for that information. You could also offer your own ideas on increasing the value of your work to NRL. In other words, take charge of your own career development.



The Demonstration Project's tutorial, which explains CCS, may be reviewed at any time by accessing the HRO website located at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/>.

In addition, you are encouraged to ask your supervisor for specifics on areas of concern or any confusion you may have.

The yearly accomplishment report (YAR) is very important—this is your opportunity to describe your contributions during the appraisal period. YARs are a key source of information for supervisors and pay pool panel members when they assess the contributions of employees to determine CCS scores. You are encouraged to keep a record of your accomplishments throughout the appraisal period. This avoids the "crunch" of trying to gather all that information at the end of the cycle, and increases the likelihood that you will have a complete record of your accomplishments for consideration by your supervisor and pay pool panel. If you wish, you may enter and update your list of contributions directly into the YAR field in the CCSDS throughout the cycle.

All: If supervisors or employees want ideas for enhancing communication for their particular circumstances, they may contact Lynda Heater on 202-404-7960 or Janet Deschak on 202-404-8314 for guidance.

You May Assign Your Government Life Insurance to Another Person(s) or Trust(s)

As an employee, or former employee, you have the right to assign irrevocably your Federal Employees Group Life Insurance coverage (Basic, Option A, and Option B) to another person(s), or trust(s). In addition, if you are terminally or chronically ill, you may assign your coverage to a viatical settlement firm, which will then pay you a cash amount. Assignments generally are made to comply with the requirements of a court order upon divorce, for inheritance tax purposes, to obtain money prior to death (for terminally and chronically ill persons only), or to satisfy a debt.

Assignment means that you *forever* give up ownership and control of your life insurance coverage. Your assignee(s) own and control it and may reassign it. But since the insurance is still on your life, you continue to pay the premiums. If you elect to assign your insurance, you must assign all of it (although you do not have to assign all of it to the same person, firm, or trust). An exception is Family Option C, which cannot be assigned.

For further information and forms, access www.opm.gov or call the Benefits Line at 1-888-320-2917.

Update on Frequent Flyer Miles and Taxes.

The IRS has issued an announcement clarifying that frequent flyer awards/benefits attributable to business or official travel do not need to be reported by the recipient for tax purposes.



Save Your Life! Five Steps to Safer Health Care

According to the Office of Personnel Management, medical error and patient safety aren't well understood by most Americans.



When we need vital or risky health care services, we want to believe that someone else has made sure that we'll get safe care. Sadly, every hour, 10 Americans die in a hospital due to avoidable errors; another 50 are disabled. Too many patients get the wrong medicines, the wrong tests and the wrong diagnosis. By asking questions, learning more and understanding your risks, you can improve the safety of your own health care, and that of your family members. Take these simple steps:

Speak up if you have questions or concerns. Choose a doctor who you feel comfortable talking to about your health and treatment. Ask questions and expect answers you can understand. Take a relative or friend with you if this will help you ask questions and understand the answers. Federally-employed family members can use sick leave for this.

Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about the medicines that you take, including over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and dietary supplements like vitamins and herbals. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. Ask the pharmacist about side effects and what foods or other things to avoid while taking the medicine. When you get your medicine, read the label, including warnings. Make sure it is what your doctor ordered, and you know how to use it. If the medicine looks different than you expected, ask the pharmacist about it.

Make sure you get the results of any test or procedure. Ask your doctor or nurse when and how you will get the results of tests or

procedures. If you do not get them when expected – in person, on the phone, or in the mail – don't assume the results are fine. Call your doctor and ask for them. Ask what the results mean for your care.

Talk with your doctor and health care team about your options if you need hospital care. If you have more than one hospital to choose from, ask your doctor which one has the best care and results for your condition. Hospitals do a good job of treating a wide range of problems. However, for some procedures (such as heart bypass surgery), research shows results often are better at hospitals doing a lot of these procedures. Also, before you leave the hospital, be sure to ask about follow-up care, and be sure you understand the instructions.

Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery. Ask your doctor and surgeon: Who will take charge of my care while I'm in the hospital? Exactly what will you be doing? How long will it take? What will happen after the surgery? How can I expect to feel during recovery? Tell the surgeon, anesthesiologist, and nurses if you have allergies or have ever had a bad reaction to anesthesia. Make sure you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done during the operation.

"Hands-on" Parenting Influences Teen Drug Use

*Ralph Surette, Ph.D.
NRL-DC C/RS*

Want to reduce the chances that your teenager will use alcohol or other drugs? Then remain "hands-on," say researchers at Columbia University's Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA). Using inter-views with teens 12 to 17, CASA



researchers identified 12 parenting tasks that influence teen drug use. Parents who consistently perform 10 of the 12 tasks are considered "hands-on" and their children are less likely to use. Parents who consistently perform five or fewer tasks are "hands-off." Teens from these homes are four times more likely to drink, smoke or use illegal drugs. The 12 tasks are:

- Monitoring what their teens watch on TV
- Monitoring what they do on the Internet
- Placing restrictions on the compact discs they buy
- Knowing where their teens are after school and on weekends
- Being told the truth by their teens about where they are really going
- Being aware of their teens academic performance
- Imposing a curfew
- Making clear that they would be "extremely upset" if their teens used marijuana
- Eating dinner with their teens six or seven nights a week
- Turning off the television during dinner
- Assigning their teens regular chores
- Having an adult present when the teen returns from school

Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP) Services.

When you experience difficulty coping with either work-related or personal matters, consider contacting a CEAP counselor. The CEAP offers free, private, and confidential short-term counseling for employees and their family members. If you require more than short-term help, you will be referred to affordable and appropriate community re-sources.

The CEAP includes the contractor staff of the NRL-DC Counseling/Referral Service (C/RS) at (202) 767-6857; the NRL-SSC CEAP Coordinator, Ms. B. J. Darrow, at (228) 688-4518; and the NRL-MRY CEAP, which is serviced by Federal Occupational Health at 1-800-222-0364.



Government Travelers - Note These Travel Card Changes That Can Cost You Money or Cause You Problems!



In February, NRL Notice 4650 set forth travel policy changes that apply to NRL and other DoD employees. NRL employees who have questions should contact Travel Services at (202) 767-5265.

Pay Your Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Bill Timely or Risk Salary Offset and Collection Fees!

At the request of Bank of America (BOA), deductions will be made from your salary to cover amounts you owe that have been delinquent for over 90 days. Salary offset may include additional charges (administrative fees, late fees) related to the cost of such collection. The Government will not reimburse you for these charges.

Pay Timely or Incur Increased Nonreimbursable Monthly Late Fee!

A \$29 per month late fee is imposed when your payment is 75 days delinquent. With rare exceptions noted in the NRL Notice, the Government will not reimburse you for this fee.

Note Other Nonreimbursable Fees!

If your check is returned, you will be charged \$29. If you elect to pay your travel charges by phone, you will be charged \$10.

Pay on Receipt of Billing Statement or Risk Having No Available Balance for a Back-to-Back Trip!

To ensure that you maintain a sufficient line of credit, you must pay your bill upon receipt of your monthly statement. This is because BOA has replaced cardholder credit "limits" with credit "lines." Credit limits express the maximum you may spend each month, while credit lines express the maximum outstanding balance allowable. Before the change, if you had a credit limit of \$5,000, you could spend up to \$5,000 in one statement month,

and your credit limit would be restored to a \$5,000 balance in the next statement month even if the previous month's bill was not paid. Now, if you charge \$5,000 in one month, you will have no available balance until the bank has posted your payment. So, **if you perform back-to-back trips, you may need to have your line of credit increased by contacting your agency program coordinator (APC).** At NRL, the APC is located in Travel Services, Code 3352.2. Start by calling Linsey Bowie on (202) 404-6510 or Sheryl Davenport on (202) 767-3582.

Before Traveling, Make Sure that Your Card Hasn't Been Deactivated Due to Infrequent Use!

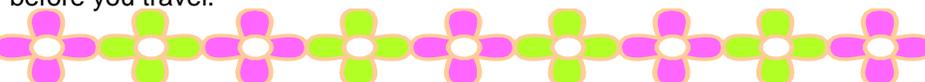
The BOA may have deactivated your card if you did not use it between October 1, 2000 and September 30, 2001. Deactivation may also have occurred if you used the card less than three times in one year or charged less than \$1,000 in one year. NRL employees may verify that your card is still active, and if necessary, have it reactivated by contacting your APC before you travel.

Cafeteria and Vending Machine News

In accordance with District of Columbia tax laws, the NRL Cafeteria Services Contractor, ARAMARK, is required to collect a restaurant sales tax of 10% on all food purchased in the cafeteria and deli. Therefore, this change has recently been made to comply with DC laws.

As an offset to this increase, the NRL Cafeteria Board has successfully negotiated a decrease of approximately 10% on sodas purchased at the cafeteria or deli and from the vending machines.

We encourage you, the customer, to give us your comments or suggestions on how we might better serve you in a cafeteria environment. Email them to derwin@hro.nrl.navy.mil or route them to Code 1830, Debbie Erwin. You will receive a personal reply.



Government Travelers May Keep Frequent Flyer Miles and Other Travel-Related Gifts, Gratuities, and Benefits

If you travel on official business at Government expense, you may now keep travel-related promotional material for personal use. This includes frequent traveler benefits such as points or miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs or facilities. This applies to promotional items received before, on, or after December 31, 2001. The promotional material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional cost to the Government. Promotional items received for travel using funds other than those of a Government agency (e.g., contributed travel) are not covered under the same new rule. Travelers should seek guidance from those funding authorities. NRL employees with questions may contact Travel Services at 202-767-5265.



Ideas for Dealing with Mentoring Challenges

Mentoring is the process in which successful individuals (managers, supervisors and others) go out of their way to help others establish goals and develop the skills to reach them.

The following mentoring tip was written by Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones of the Mentoring Group and we are printing it with her permission. *In doing so, our purpose is to provide helpful tips versus encourage doing mentoring any particular way.* Mentoring at NRL includes opportunities to participate in our formal Mentoring Program. If you would like to participate as either mentor or mentoree, contact the Program Coordinator at (202) 767-2957 or by email at dbrown@hro1.nrl.navy.mil, or apply to the Program by completing an application located at website <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/> (click on Employee Relations). For additional information about mentoring, check that website or the Mentoring Group's website at www.mentoringgroup.com.

Although mentoring is a vital and potentially life-changing people-development strategy, it doesn't take place without challenges. This is the first of a series of tips for resolving potential stumbling blocks that you could face as a mentor or mentoree.

Solution: Consciously clear your mind and keep it open. Notice where you tend to prejudge. Listen far more than you talk. Be open to learning from your mentoring partner, and find out as much as you can about his/her culture. Try to step into your mentor's or mentoree's shoes and picture his/her life. Ask questions. When you're not sure of how to interpret something said, ask what it means. Read up on your partner's culture, attend a cultural event together, or read a book he/she read growing up.



BB Hill, principal consultant at Organization Development Associates, has worked with a number of people from different countries. "My preconceptions of people in Germany were that they would be more structured and task-oriented, and less people-oriented," says BB. "I was willing to suspend my own judgments. I found that my perceptions were not correct."



Random Drug Testing Results and Rates

In compliance with DoD requirements, annual random drug testing of NRL and ONR test-designated position (TDP) occupants increased from 25% to 50% in October 2000. Presently, at NRL, 515 random tests are conducted each year; at ONR, 40 are conducted. These totals do not include applicant testing for new TDP hires.

Due to the volume of tests, the Command Drug Program Coordinator (DPC) has stopped sending letters notifying employees of their negative test result. Notifying the rest is easy since it's been 2-1/2 years since a member of the NRL workforce has tested positive, and 8 years since an ONR member tested positive. So, if you don't hear anything after being tested, assume your test result was also negative! If you have questions or suggestions for the Command Drug Program Manager, Roxanne Drake, call 202-767-6737; or visit her in NRL Bldg. 43, Rm. 120.



Cultural Differences Between Mentoring Partners - If you and your mentor or mentoree are from different cultures, you have different traditions, customs, and practices. If you don't understand each other's culture, you have a greater likelihood of misunderstanding, miscommunicating, and potentially offending or hurting your mentoring partner. What stereotypes do you have of different cultures? What preconceived notions do you have of how people from different backgrounds behave? Holding on to old beliefs perhaps learned in childhood can be a block to truly understanding others.

Latest TSP Return Rates					
Month	C Fund	F Fund	G Fund	I Fund	S Fund
Mar 01	(6.33%)	0.51%	0.45%		
Apr 01	7.78%	(0.42%)	0.43%		
May 01	0.65%	0.61%	0.47%	(4.13%)	1.42%
Jun 01	(2.42%)	0.39%	0.47%	(3.99%)	0.66%
Jul 01	(0.98%)	2.22%	0.48%	(1.79%)	(4.13%)
Aug 01	(6.27%)	1.20%	0.45%	(2.58%)	(4.32%)
Sep 01	(8.05%)	1.15%	0.43%	(9.95%)	(12.5%)
Oct 01	1.85%	2.12%	0.41%	2.47%	5.09%
Nov 01	7.62%	(1.37%)	0.37%	3.56%	7.84%
Dec 01	0.88%	(0.61%)	0.42%	0.52%	5.31%
Jan 02	(1.47%)	0.79%	0.45%	(5.33%)	(2.02%)
Feb 02	(1.92%)	0.98%	0.40%	0.66%	(2.64%)
Previous 12 Months 3/1/01 – 2/28/02	(9.58%)	7.79%	5.36%	(19.55%)	(6.32%)

Percentages in () are negative.

Announcement of Awards

Nominations for the following awards are due as indicated below to the NRL-HRO, Code 1850, or the ONR Training Branch (exceptions noted). Access the HRO's Performance Appraisal and Awards website from the Employee Relations menu at <http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800> for detailed criteria and format, a calendar of other upcoming awards, and other helpful information in this area.

William T. Pecora Award

Due May 1, 2002

This annual award is sponsored jointly by the Department of the Interior and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to recognize outstanding contributions by individuals or groups toward the understanding of the Earth by means of remote sensing. Any individual or group working in the field of remote sensing of the Earth is eligible to receive the award.

Outstanding DoN Employee with Disabilities

Due May 11, 2002



This award is presented by the Secretary of the Navy at a Pentagon ceremony. The award recognizes DoN employees who have demonstrated job performance clearly exceeding requirements in spite of severely limiting physical and/or mental factors and exhibited courage and initiative in overcoming disabilities. It also serves to heighten awareness on the part of DoN employers of their responsibility as managers to provide employment opportunities to a valuable source of DoN workers.

Hispanic Five Point Program Recognition Award

Due May 20, 2002

This award recognizes military and civilian personnel, who through their personal commitment and

professional initiative have made demonstrable contributions in recruiting, retaining, and providing career advancement opportunities to Hispanic civilian employees in support of the Secretary of the Navy's Hispanic Five Point Program.

The following award nominations may be submitted at anytime:

Commanding Officer's Award for Achievement in the Field of Equal Employment Opportunity

Any employee may nominate an individual for this award, which recognizes those NRL supervisors/managers and nonsupervisory employees who have made outstanding contributions to the EEO Program through excellence in their leadership skills, imagination, and accomplishments.

Secretary of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Award

The second highest DoD award granted to career civilian employees who have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service of major significance to DoD.

Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Award

The highest award that the Secretary of the Navy may confer upon a DoN civilian employee. Bestowal is on a highly selective basis to those who have distinguished themselves by extraordinary service or contributions of major significance to DoN. **Receipt of this award is an example of recognition considered suitable for inclusion in a CCS distinguished contribution allowance nomination.**

Navy Superior Civilian Service Award

The highest honorary award that the Chief of Naval Research may confer on a civilian command employee.

This award is granted to recognize superior civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in exceptional values and/or benefits to the DoN.

DoN Distinguished Achievement in Science Award



Granted to civilians by the Secretary of the Navy to recognize pioneering scientific achievements that are extraordinary and significant in nature and that contain a potential for far-reaching consequence (a "breakthrough"). **Receipt of this award is an example of recognition considered suitable for inclusion in a CCS distinguished contribution allowance nomination.**

Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award

The highest DoN award that the NRL Commanding Officer may confer on a civilian employee. This award will be granted to recognize meritorious civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in high values and/or benefits to DoN.

NRL Lifetime Achievement Award

Bestowed on a highly selective basis to a current NRL civilian employee or team for continual and extraordinary achievements in the sciences (or engineering) that contribute substantively to the knowledge and capabilities of the nation and the U. S. Navy during a lifetime as an NRL scientist or engineer.

NRL Award of Merit for Group Achievement

May be given at any time for an NRL group contribution comparable to one for which an individual would receive Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award consideration.



**NRL Human Resources Office
Training Information**

NRL Training Office: Code 1850

Voice: (202) 767-2364

Fax: (202) 767-1902

Points of Contact: Judy Cabos,

Email: jcabos@hro1.nrl.navy.mil

Charlene Proctor,

Email: cproctor@hro1.nrl.navy.mil

HRO Training Website:

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800>

ONR Contact for NRL advertised training:
Lasondra Gray, Training Office, 703-696-5054

NRL encourages you to improve your skills and knowledge to better meet the needs of our organization and your own growth. The HRO supports this by making you aware of a variety of training sources. We advertise training opportunities on the HRO website, by email and in HRO Highlights.



Our training website provides a link to Form DD 1556, which you must complete for all training (unless otherwise specified in the training announcement). We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

Remember that you are not enrolled in a class until you receive confirmation. To receive confirmation, include on your DD 1556 your current voice and fax number and email address. If you don't receive a confirmation prior to the start of a class, contact the organization that is sponsoring the training.

Updating Employee Training Records - Who's Responsible for What and When: Your official government training record is maintained at the HRSC-NE in Philadelphia. NRL employee training records are updated in one of three ways, depending on the type of course taken.

By Employee: For training you take at a site away from NRL, if you want that training to be recorded in your official record, **you** must send a copy of the completed training request (DD 1556) to the HRO, Code 1802, for forwarding to the HRSC-NE. (If you paid for the

training, complete a "dummy" DD-1556 just for this purpose, in which case supervisory signatures are not required.) Individual college classes and short courses given at the USDA are examples of this type of training. Before entering the information in your official record, the HRSC-NE requires that Block 36 of the DD 1556 be completed and signed. Even though block 36 indicates that a school official should certify the completion of training, you may self certify and sign this block.

By Administrative Officers (AO): For training contracted and paid for by your division and held at NRL (includes classes with topics specific to a division and attended by its employees), your **AO** must forward to the HRO, Code 1802, a completed training request (DD 1556) with a list of the participants and their social security numbers. Even though Block 36 indicates that a school official should be the signer, the AO will complete and sign that block. Once received, the HRO will forward the form and list to the HRSC-NE.

By the HRO: For training classes facilitated by the HRO (whether paid for by the HRO or by other NRL divisions), the HRO completes a DD 1556, including Block 36, and forwards this form and a list of participants and their Social Security Numbers to the HRSC-NE. The Contracting Officer's Representative class and the Principal Investigator class are examples of this type of training.

To ascertain what's in your training record, see your administrative officer, who can access the record for you.

TRAINING SOURCES AND SCHEDULES

NRL COURSE: Management I: Introduction to Supervision for Scientists, Engineers and Researchers

Date/Time/Location/Cost: April 23, 24, 25, 2002/ 8:30 – 4:00/Bldg. 226, Rm. 113

No cost for NRL employees; per person fee for other employees or no shows is \$793.00

Instructor: Ray Cienek

Description: This is a foundation course for advanced supervisory and management training. Course content includes management fundamentals in a research environment, attitudinal issues, enhancing communications effectiveness, supervisory listening skills, NLP, delegation/motivation techniques, conflict resolution, unique concerns in supervising scientists/engineers/researchers, performance improvement, team building, and managing change. The program makes extensive use of appropriate behavioral insight scales, case studies and feedback opportunities.



E-Learning Training Source

All Navy civilians, active or retired military or their dependents can access the courses and links to sites for career development, research and libraries at <http://www.navylearning.com>. The site includes a variety of personal and professional development courses, which may be taken at **no cost** to you or your activity. Check this site periodically for new offerings. Courses may be taken at home or at work with the approval of your supervisor. At the login screen enter the requested information. If you have any difficulty, the Desk/Customer Assistance Center can be reached at (877) 253-7122 (toll free) or DSN 922-1828.



Naval Financial Management Career Center (NFMCC)

The Department of Navy NFMCC conducts the Enhanced Defense Financial Management Course. This 5-day course, provided at **no cost** to individual or activity, is intended to improve the overall technical and managerial capabilities of the DoD financial management workforce. It will be offered in the Washington DC area several times during FY-02. Please visit their website for further information and course schedules located at www.nfmc.navy.mil/edfmc.htm.



National Independent Study Center (NISC) Correspondence Training

Self-study allows employees to learn at their own pace at any location. In addition, the course materials often become invaluable reference sources after course completion. NISC offers more than 50 courses in English and writing, supervision, financial and project management, mathematics and statistics, human resources management, general skills and other areas. A list of their courses can be accessed through the Graduate School, USDA website (see below) or through a catalog maintained by the HRO. You may call NISC at (303) 236-8525 or <mailto:nisc@grad.usda.gov>.



The Institute for Management Studies (IMS)

IMS conducts one-day seminars each month for the convenient and continuous management and leadership development of mid-level and senior managers. Each seminar is an interactive workshop on a different topic, presented by a different speaker and attended by 60 to 100 senior managers from the federal government and large corporations. IMS speakers are faculty from major university business schools or are well-known and respected management consultants. Monthly seminars are held in 21 cities in the US and 5 cities in Europe and Canada. Review the schedule at www.ims-online.com, click on "Member Services, enter the password "navy", and then click on the city of interest. To register, call the IMS chairman listed under each city and then complete a DD Form 1556. Two upcoming courses are listed below.

Graduate School, USDA

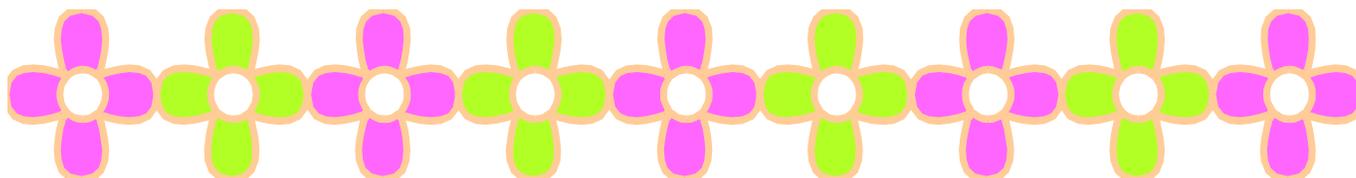
The Federal Government's trainer, the Graduate School, USDA provides affordable training in a wide variety of subject areas that include include: accounting, financial management, budgeting and procurement and contract administration; human resources management; administrative and business skills; language courses, including English as a second language; auditing; program and management analysis; public affairs and policy; pre-retirement planning and social security for employees; science and math, test preparation and speed reading; management and supervisory development; editing; graphic arts and photography; and computer science and information technology. Visit their website at www.grad.usda.gov or call (202) 479-4970. For organizational development services, call Gary Dzurec at (202) 314-3464 or click on Special Programs from their website. The NRL-HRO maintains a catalog.



Dealing With Difficult People

May 10, 2002 at Tyson's Corner Holiday Inn Cost \$225

The presenter for this session is Dr. Rick Brinkman, who has been involved with management development and executive training for over 15 years. He has been featured on CNN and in a cover story in the Wall Street Journal. Dr. Brinkman will discuss why effective communication requires the right tactic for each difficult behavior. Participants will be shown how to deal with types of behavior that make certain people difficult to work with and they will also be given the opportunity to learn how to diffuse problem behaviors before they begin.



Leading Strategically: Inspiring Commitment and Ensuring Performance

May 30, 2002 at Tyson's Corner Holiday Inn Cost \$225

Today's competitive environment demands that organizations be flexible yet focused, efficient yet innovative, and fast yet quality driven. This session will discuss how strategic leaders must combine a compelling vision, an unyielding focus on the marketplace, and a fluid organizational structure to meet these challenges in a changing business environment. Dr. Albert Vicere, the presenter, is an Executive Education Professor of Strategic Leadership for the Smeal College of Business Administration at Penn State. His teaching and research interests focus on the areas of leadership development and strategy implementation.



NRL Toastmasters Training

Your success in life depends on your ability to verbalize your ideas so they are heard, understood, and acted on. NRL Toastmasters International can help you. Both NRL Clubs have ongoing communications and leadership programs in which members learn by doing in an atmosphere of understanding and friendship. A basic manual is used for the first ten speeches. Twelve additional advanced manuals cover specific areas of communication, such as Technical Presentations, Speaking to Inform, The Discussion Leaders, Speeches by Management and the Entertaining Speaker.

Forum Club

First and Third Tuesdays
of every month
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
West Dining Room, Cafeteria
Bldg. 28
POC: George Arthur
(202) 767-4389

Thomas Edison Club

Weekly on Thursdays
12 noon to 1 p.m.
Bldg. 207, Rm. 157 (Chemistry)
First Floor, Conference Room
POC: Tom Rodilosso
(202) 404-4106

Revised Benefits Contacts

Health/Life Insurance and TSP Benefits: If you have questions in these areas, call the Benefits Line at 1-888-320-2917. To carry out health/life insurance and TSP enrollments or changes that affect your paycheck, use the Benefits Line or the web-based EBIS at <http://www.donhr.navy.mil/>. You can no longer make paper transactions.

Retirement and Survivor Benefits: When you need counseling or have questions, email the HRSC-NE at BENEFITS_ne@ne.hroc.navy.mil or call Marsha Wesley at (215) 408-5077, DSN 243-5077; Joanne Frederick at (215) 408-5071, DSN 243-5071; or Dawn DiRenza at (215) 408-5083; DSN 243-5083. Where appropriate, when emailing the HRSC-NE, include your date of birth and the last four digits (only) of your social security number. Mail retirement and survivor benefit paperwork, as well as designation of beneficiary forms for life insurance and unpaid compensation due from your payroll office to:

Human Resources Service Center-Northeast
Code 51.1
111 South Independence Mall East
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2598

Mailing through the postal service must be done at your own expense – you may not use a government-franked envelope. As an alternative, the NRL Mail Service will forward items via bulk mail. When using the NRL Mail Service, you may: 1) use either a plain or franked envelope or 2) use a messenger envelope addressed to: HRSC-NE, Philadelphia, PA. Be aware that under normal circumstances (pick-up schedules, weekends and holidays) associated with the NRL Mail Service, sending documents through that service could delay your transmittal by 1 to 5 days.

