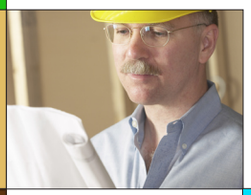
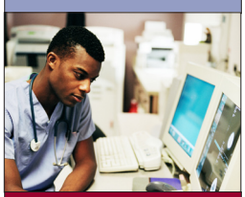
Employee Handbook





RALPH H. JOHNSON
MEDICAL CENTER

Our Three Promises to All Our Veterans

- We will provide care, second to none ~ the best care anywhere.
- We will maintain and expand veterans' health care services.
- Every veteran will be personally satisfied with the care that they receive from us, based on the outcome.

Our Core Values

Trust ~ Respect ~ Commitment ~ Compassion ~ Excellence

109 Bee St. • Charleston, SC 29401 • (843) 577-5011 • www.charleston.va.gov

RALPH H. JOHNSON MEDICAL CENTER

Welcome from our Director

John E. Barilich, MSW, MBA
Director, Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center
Charleston, SC

The 154 hospitals and more than 870 clinics in the Department of Veterans Affairs have been ranked best in class by a number of independent groups on a broad range of measures. There are about 23.8 million living veterans that represent 20% of the U.S. population, and it is our privilege to care for many of them.

Not only does the Department of Veterans Affairs provide inpatient and outpatient health care, but statutory benefits such as disability compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, death pension and cemetery administration to honor veterans with final resting places.

Our goal is to honor and serve each veteran with the highest quality of care and compassion. Thanks for being part of the dedicated team that cares for our Nation's heroes!

We trust this Employee Handbook contains information that will assist you as you begin your career at Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.
Here is what you will find:

1-3	INTRODUCTION TO VA
4-7	EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION
8-9	BENEFITS
10-13	LEAVE AND EARNINGS
14	PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS
15	AWARDS PROGRAM
16-17	YOUR CAREER
18	YOUR RIGHTS
19	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
20	SAFETY
21	STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
22-23	INTEGRATEDETHICS
24	FOR MORE INFORMATION

PFC Ralph H. Johnson, USMC

On September 5, 1991, the Charleston VA Medical Center celebrated 25 years of service to our veteran population and conducted a facility renaming ceremony. The Medical Center was renamed the Ralph H. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Ralph H. Johnson was born January 11, 1949, in Charleston, South Carolina. He attended Sinemonton Elementary School, 1956-1958, and Courtney Middle School, 1958-1966, in Charleston. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at Oakland, California on March 23, 1967, and was discharged to enlist in the Regular Marine Corps on July 2, 1967. Upon completion of recruit training, he was transferred to the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California. He underwent Individual Combat Training completing the latter in November 1967. He was promoted to Private First Class on November 1, 1967.

In January 1968, PFC Johnson arrived in the Republic of Vietnam, and served as a Reconnaissance Scout with Company "A". In the early morning hours of March 5, 1968, PFC Johnson was a member of a fifteen-man reconnaissance patrol manning an observation post on Hill 146 overlooking the Quan Duc Valley deep in enemy controlled territory. They were attacked by a platoon-size hostile force employing automatic weapons, satchel charges and hand grenades. Suddenly, a hand grenade landed in the three-man fighting hole occupied by PFC Johnson and two comrades. He shouted a warning and unhesitatingly hurled himself upon the explosive device. When the grenade exploded, PFC Johnson absorbed the tremendous impact of the blast and was killed instantly. His prompt and heroic act saved the life of one marine at the cost of his own and undoubtedly prevented the enemy from penetrating his sector of the patrol's perimeter.

In view of the above, Private First Class Johnson was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. Other medals and decorations included: The Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Vietnamese Military Merit Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Civil Actions First Class and Good Conduct Marine Corps.

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is a primary, secondary, and tertiary care facility that provides a full range of patient care services, including education and research to veterans along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Comprehensive health care is provided through acute medical, surgical, and psychiatric inpatient care, as well as primary and specialized outpatient services and nursing home care. The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is a part of the VA Southeast Network, which includes facilities in South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.

The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center encompasses the main hospital and four Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) located in Savannah, Myrtle Beach, Beaufort and Goose Creek. The Savannah clinic serves veterans in 10 Georgia and three South Carolina counties; the Myrtle Beach clinic serves veterans in Georgetown, Horry and surrounding counties; the Beaufort clinic serves veterans in Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper counties; and the Goose Creek clinic serves veterans in Dorchester and Berkeley counties and surrounding areas.

Facts about the Department of Veterans Affairs

From the Colonial era through today, America has cared for its veterans - the men and women who won and have maintained the nation's freedom. This rich history can be viewed by visiting http://www1.va.gov/opa/feature/history/index.asp.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established on March 15, 1989, succeeding the Veterans Administration. It is responsible for providing federal benefits to veterans and their families. Headed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, VA is the second largest of the 15 Cabinet departments and operates nationwide programs for health care, financial assistance and burial benefits.

Of the 24 million veterans currently alive, nearly three-quarters served during a war or an official period of conflict. About a quarter of the nation's population, approximately 74.5 million people, are potentially eligible for VA benefits and services because they are veterans, family members or survivors of veterans.

The responsibility to care for veterans, spouses, survivors and dependents can last a long time. Three children of Civil War veterans still draw VA benefits. More than 200 children and widows of Spanish-American War veterans still receive VA compensation or pensions.

For more information on the Department of Veterans Affairs, please visit the website at www.va.gov or the Charleston VA website at www.charleston.va.gov.

Employment Information

Types of Appointments

An individual's appointment to a position in VA may be one of several kinds and may be full time, part time, or intermittent. The kind of appointment has a bearing on the employee's status and job tenure. The principal types of appointments under Civil Service include career conditional, career, temporary, Senior Executive Service, and Excepted. VA has the authority to appoint physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, nurses, and other health care personnel to positions under separate Federal laws found in Title 38 of the U.S. Code. Each of these appointment authorities is described briefly below.

Career-Conditional Appointment

It is the first step toward a career in the Federal service. If you hold this kind of appointment, the first year of your service is a probationary period and essentially an extension of the examination process under which you were appointed. During the probationary period, your appointment can be terminated without formal removal procedures for skill deficiencies, poor work habits or attitude, or unsuitability.

Career Appointment

After you have completed 3 years of substantially continuous, creditable service as a career-conditional employee, your appointment automatically converts to a career appointment. This confers on you greater retention rights in the event of a reduction-in-force, priority placement if separated because of such a reduction, and reinstatement eligibility following a break in service.

Career-conditional and career employees can be promoted, reassigned, or transferred to any vacant position for which they are eligible and qualified within VA or in any other Federal agency.

Temporary Appointment

Temporary appointments are made to cover particular work situations and usually have a time limitation of one year or less. Temporary appointees are not eligible for promotion, reassignment, or transfer and may be separated at any time during their appointment.

Senior Executive Service

Senior Executive Service (SES) appointments are made to top level executive positions in VA. These appointments may be made on a career, noncareer, limited term, or limited emergency basis. Positions are primarily managerial and supervisory. The SES is a gradeless system in which salary is linked to individual performance, not the position.

Excepted Appointment

Excepted appointments are made to positions that have been specifically excluded from competitive requirements by a statute, Executive Order, or by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Candidates for excepted positions must meet appropriate qualification standards, but do not compete in civil service examinations, do not have competitive status, and serve initial trial periods.

Title 38 Employment

VA has a separate employment system under Title 38 U.S.C. for appointment of Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Optometrists, Nurses, Nurse Anesthetists, Physician Assistants, and Expanded-Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs). These appointments are made on the basis of an individual's qualifications and professional attainments in accordance with standards that have been established by the Secretary. Title 38 employees are paid under specific pay schedules. Appointments may be either full-time permanent, temporary full time, part time, or intermittent. Most full-time appointments under Title 38 are subject to a 2-year probationary period. A functional statement is provided that spells out the duties and responsibilities of the employee. The functional statement is updated when a change in duties occurs.

Title 38 Hybrid

Title 38 hybrid employees are employed under a combination of both Title 5 and Title 38 personnel systems. Currently, Title 38 hybrid positions include Certified/ Registered Respiratory Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Pharmacist, Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse and Social Workers. Hybrids are covered by Title 38 for appointment, advancement, and certain pay matters, and Title 5 for performance appraisal, leave, hours of duty, adverse actions, probationary period, reemployment rights, reduction-in-force, and retirement rules (except part-time service is calculated under Title 38 retirement rules). A functional statement is provided that spells out the duties and responsibilities. The functional statement is updated when a change in duties occurs. During the probationary period, your appointment can be terminated without formal removal procedures for skill deficiencies, poor work habits or attitude, or unsuitability.

General Schedule (GS) Employee

Your grade, official position title, and occupational series are determined by a process called position classification under the Office of Personnel Management. The process starts with the development of a position description, describing the major functions of your position. Your supervisor is responsible for assigning your duties and responsibilities, writing your position description, and periodically reviewing it to ensure that it is still complete and accurate. You can assist by calling attention to any significant changes in duties or responsibilities that may have occurred since the last review. You should have a copy of your position description. If you do not have one, ask your supervisor for a copy.

Employment Information

Classification

Classification of Position

At Charleston, the VISN Human Resources in Augusta along with the local Human Resources Management (HRM) Office is responsible for evaluating the duties and responsibilities for positions according to a set of classification standards which are written, published, and periodically updated by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The classification process may also, but does not have to, involve an audit at your work site and discussion with your supervisor.

If you feel your position has been improperly classified, you have the right to appeal the classification and the right is given to you by law and may be exercised at any time. However, before filing an appeal, you should discuss the classification of your position with your supervisor and HRM Office. They will explain how the classification was determined. Your recourse may be to request an appeal either through the HRM Office at Charleston who will work through the Classification Staff in Augusta or contact the Office of Personnel Management.

Hybrid Positions

Although certified respiratory therapy technicians, registered respiratory therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and licensed practical/vocational nurses are governed under the General Schedule for some pay purposes, their assignments are not subject to the classification system described above. Their grades are based on personal qualifications and complexity of assignment in accordance with standards established by the Secretary.

Wage Grade

These positions are often referred to as blue collar positions and represent the manual trades and crafts. As a Federal Wage System employee, your grade, your official title, and your occupational series are determined by a process called job grading. As with the General Schedule, the process of job grading begins with the development of a job description. Most job descriptions describe the work in terms of four factors: skill and knowledge required, level of responsibility of the job, physical effort required, and working conditions encountered. Your supervisor is responsible for assigning your work, writing your job description, and periodically reviewing it to ensure that it is still complete and accurate. You can assist by calling attention to any significant changes in your job that may have occurred since the last review. You should have a copy of your job description. If you do not have one, ask your supervisor for a copy.

After your job description is developed, it is sent to your local HRM Office. Your local HRM Office evaluates your job in relation to a set of Job Grading Standards which are published and periodically updated by OPM. As with General Schedule positions, the grading of a blue collar job may, but does not have to, involve a work site audit and discussion with your supervisor.

Official Personnel Folder

Your Official Personnel Folder (OPF) contains the official papers pertaining to your employment and is the permanent record of your service in the Federal Government. It is maintained for official use only and is not open to inspection by unauthorized persons.

Benefits

Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program

Almost all VA employees are eligible to participate voluntarily in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI), for which no physical examination is required. You share the cost of this insurance with the Government. As a new employee, you will automatically be covered under Basic Life insurance coverage unless you waive that coverage. If you have Basic Life insurance, you have up to 31 days from your initial appointment date (and up to 60 days following a Qualifying Life Event, e.g., marriage, birth of a child, death of spouse) to elect optional life insurance.

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program helps protect you and family members against the costs of illnesses, accidents, and hospitalization. The Government shares the cost of this insurance if you elect to participate. As a new employee, you may be eligible for FEHB. You may also choose to participate in Premium Conversion. Participation in Premium Conversion is automatic if you elect FEHB and means you will pay for your FEHB premium PRIOR to being taxed on your earnings. For most employees, this will result in more take-home pay. However, you may elect not to participate in Premium Conversion. You have up to 60 days from your initial appointment date or a Qualifying Life Event, e.g., marriage, birth of a child, etc., to make these elections.

Office of Workers Compensation and Pension

If you are injured at work, notify your supervisor immediately. You will need information about your benefits under the Federal Workers' Compensation Program. You will also need to complete the appropriate claim forms.

Information and forms are available from your Workers' Compensation representative. Benefits for job-related injuries and illnesses may include medical care and compensation. Some of this care may be offered in your local VA Health Unit. You should review the pamphlet CA-11, "When Injured At Work," for more information on this subject.

Employee Express

Employee Express puts federal employees in control of their payroll-personnel information.

With Employee Express, you can view and make changes online to your personnel-payroll information. Employee Express transfers your change request to your servicing payroll-personnel office eliminating the need to submit a paper form. It is that easy – just visit www.employeeexpress.gov.

Thrift Savings Plan

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings plan for civilians who are employed in a permanent position by the United States Government and members of the uniformed services. All Federal employees covered by Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) are eligible to participate in the TSP. However, if you are a newly hired FERS employee, you must wait a certain period of time, generally, 6 to 12 months before you can begin to participate in the TSP. If you are a rehired FERS employee, when you can begin to participate in the TSP depends upon your previous TSP eligibility. The website https://www.opm.gov/fers_election/ri_90/f_tsp.htm provides detailed information about the Thrift Savings Plan.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to assist employees with a variety of personal, emotional, mental, legal, or family concerns they may be experiencing.

Employee Health

VA also provides a limited health service program for employees that include emergency treatment, protection of employees from communicable disease, maintenance of a healthy working environment, and preventive health measures. Pre-employment and periodic examinations are also provided for employees in certain occupations.

Information about the health services that are specifically available to you will be provided by your local Human Resources Management Office when you report for duty. Additional information can be found on the following website: http://www.opm.gov/insure/.

Retirement

Retirement coverage is based on your date and type of appointment. Generally, career employees hired after December 31, 1983, are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and Social Security. Most career employees appointed before January 1, 1984, are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) along with the Medicare portion of Social Security. Temporary employees are covered by Social Security. In addition to retirement benefits, these systems provide disability and survivors' benefits.

Both retirement systems allow employee participation in a tax-deferred savings plan called the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). All participants in the TSP receive tax deferral on contributions, choice of investment funds, a loan program and a choice of withdrawal options. CSRS-covered employees may contribute up to 10 percent of basic salary and FERS-covered employees may contribute up to 15 percent of basic salary, not to exceed maximum allowable tax deferred contributions under current Tax Code. Contribution percentages may be increased based on the annual cost-of-living adjustment referred to in the Tax Code.

CSRS-covered employees are also eligible to participate in the Voluntary Contribution Program (earnings are tax deferred); however, this program is not available to FERS-covered employees. You should contact your local Human Resources Management office for more detailed information regarding the program.

The Human Resources Management office can also provide retirement information such as preparation of annuity estimates.

You may be able to carry your Federal Employees Group Life Insurance policy and Federal Employees Health Benefits into retirement.

Additional information on the Federal Retirement System can be found on the following website: http://www.opm.gov/retire/.

Child Care Subsidy Program

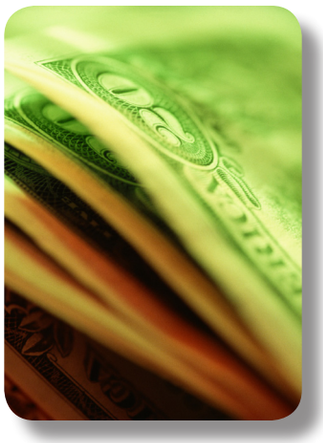
Child care can be extremely expensive, especially for lower income families. But without quality child care arrangements, working parents are hard-pressed to remain effective either at work or at home. Federal agencies, at their own discretion, can now use appropriated funds, including revolving funds otherwise available for salaries, to assist lower income employees with the costs of child care.

This Child Care Subsidy Program applies to employees whose children are under the age of 13, or disabled and under the age of 18, and are enrolled, or will be enrolled, in licensed family child care homes or center-based child care. The child care must be licensed and/or regulated by State and/or local authorities.

Applications for this program may be obtained through your Human Resources Management Office.

Leave and Earnings

Salary and Pay Systems



The pay you receive depends on the pay system that applies to the position you were hired for which could fall under the following pay schedules:

- General Schedule (GS)
- Federal Wage System (FWS)
- Senior Executive Service (SES)
- Senior-Level Pay System
- Title 38; Locality Pay System
- Veterans Canteen Service (VCS)

General Schedule Pay

The General Schedule is a nationwide schedule of annual rates of pay that applies to you if you are an administrative, technical or professional employee in the civil service. The schedule consists of 15 grades ranging from GS-1 (least difficult) to GS-15 (most difficult). There are 10 steps within each grade. Your grade is determined by the classification process. The rates for the General Schedule are based on comparability with private enterprise pay for work levels of similar difficulty. To maintain comparability, annual adjustments to the General Schedule may be made on a nationwide basis. Adjustments made on a nationwide basis are commonly referred to as general comparability increases and affect many GS employees.

Adjustments made on a locality basis are referred to as locality comparability payments. These adjustments are based on a comparison of Federal pay with local non-Federal pay rates. The amount of locality pay an employee receives depends on the geographic area where he or she works. As a result, the amount of locality pay may change if the employee changes duty stations.

Wage Grade

The Federal Wage System applies to you if you are in a trade, craft, or labor occupation. FWS pay rates are based on comparability with private enterprise and the range of rates that applies to you is based on the grade level assigned to your job. The rates of pay for FWS employees are established on an area-by-area basis. Each wage area has a 15-grade schedule for nonsupervisory employees and leaders and a 19-grade schedule for supervisors.

Senior Executive Service

Ranging from ES-1 to ES-6, pay rates for Senior Executive Service employees are typically based on the level of responsibilities of the assignment and the individual's qualifications and performance. Generally, ES-5 and ES-6 rates are reserved for senior executives assigned to the agency's most complex SES positions.

Senior-Level

The Senior-Level Pay System includes senior-level (SL) positions classifiable above GS-15 and scientific or professional (ST) positions. Employees who meet the criteria for these positions may be paid at rates of not less than 120 percent of GS-15, step 1, or more than the rate of basic pay for Level IV of the Executive Schedule. Initial pay for these highly technical positions is set at any rate between these limits based on review of the employee's qualifications, the responsibility level of the assignment, and the impact of the position on VA, the Government, or the public.

Title 38 Pay System

If you are a physician, dentist, podiatrist, optometrist, physician assistant or expanded-function dental auxiliary in a health care facility, you are paid under the provisions of Title 38, U.S. Code. Your grade level is not based on a position description, but rather on your personal qualifications. Your pay schedule, however, is linked to the General Schedule by a comparison of duties and responsibilities at certain grade levels, and is adjusted at the same time as the General Schedule. If, however, you are at certain levels of administration (e.g., facility Director), your pay is based on the complexity and responsibility of the assignment, as well as on your performance and qualifications.

Locality Pay System

If you are a nurse or nurse anesthetist, you are paid under VA's Locality Pay System (LPS). This means that your salary rate is based on a survey of non-VA health care establishments in your local labor market area. The salary surveys determine the competitiveness of a facility's locality pay rates. They are conducted at least once a year for each facility, but they may be conducted more often if the facility Director determines it is necessary. There are five grade levels in LPS. Assignments to grade levels I, II, and III are based on personal qualifications, while assignments to grades IV and V are based on the complexity of the assignment as well as personal qualifications.

Hybrid Pay System

If you are a physical therapist, certified respiratory therapy technician, registered respiratory therapist, occupational therapist, pharmacist, or licensed practical or vocational nurse, you will be compensated under the General Schedule, but your grade will be based on personal qualifications, and at certain levels, it will also be based on the complexity of your assignment.

Veterans Canteen Service Pay

If you are employed in the Veterans Canteen Service, your salary depends on the duties and responsibilities of your position. Canteen officers and Canteen officer trainees are paid annual salaries that are related to the General Schedule. Otherwise, your pay is based on salaries paid by firms that serve the general public in your geographic area.

For more information on salaries and pay scales, visit the OPM website at www.opm.gov and click on Salaries and Wages under Most Requested options.

For more information on leave administration go to: http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/index.asp.

Pay Periods

Pay periods are 2 weeks long; they begin on Sunday and end on Saturday. You are paid every other Friday, and the payment you receive is for the previous pay period, which ended 6 days before. Salary payments must be by direct deposit to your financial institution and usually are in your account on the Friday before pay day.

Along with your salary, you will receive an earnings and leave statement each pay period that will show your annual and sick leave balances and the amount of each kind of deduction from your gross pay. Some of these deductions are required, while others are optional. The amount withheld for Federal and applicable state income taxes depends on your gross earnings and the number of exemptions you claim.

Deductions are also made if you elect coverage under the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program or one of the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plans.

You may also authorize deductions from your salary for the purchase of U.S. Savings Bonds, for your pledge to combined charity drives, for the payment of dues to recognized labor organizations, for deposit to such financial institutions as banks, savings and loan associations, and credit unions, and for other purposes. If there is a significant, unexplained change in the amount of your salary payment, you should contact the payroll office.

Leave and Pay Increases

General Schedule (GS)/Hybrid Title 38

For licensed physical therapists, certified respiratory therapy technicians, registered respiratory therapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, licensed practical/vocational nurses and upper level management positions, increases come

- after 52 calendar weeks of creditable service in steps 1, 2, and 3
- after 104 calendar weeks of creditable service in steps 4, 5, and 6
- after 156 calendar weeks of creditable service in steps 7, 8, and 9

Federal Wage System (FWS)

- after 26 calendar weeks of creditable service in step 1
- after 78 calendar weeks of creditable service in step 2
- after 104 calendar weeks of creditable service in steps 3 and 4

Title 38

- 104 calendar week waiting period, except as noted below
- 52 calendar week waiting period for expanded-function dental auxiliaries and associate grade physician assistants in steps 1 and 2 of the regular rate range
- periodic step and within-in grade increases begin on the first day of the first pay period after you meet all of the above requirements

Locality Pay System

For nurses and nurse anesthetists

- 104 calendar weeks of creditable service for Nurse II Step 1
- 52 calendar weeks of creditable service for Nurse I, Level I employees to advance to steps 2, 3 and 4 of the level
- 52 calendar weeks of creditable service for Nurse I, Level II employees to advance to steps 2, 3 and 4 of the level
- 52 calendar week waiting period for Nurse I, Level III employees to advance to steps 2, 3 and 4 of the level (Level III does not apply to nurse anesthetists)

Leave and Earnings

Work Schedules

If you are a full-time employee, your tour of duty is generally 8-1/2 hours a day (the half hour includes an unpaid lunch), 5 days a week, Monday through Friday. If you are involved in patient care or have some other job that requires extended coverage, you may be required to work other than a standard Monday through Friday tour of duty (e.g., at night or weekends). Other non-standard tours of duty, called alternative work schedules (AWS), may be approved in some work units in order to provide employees more flexibility in scheduling work.

All employees are required to be on duty during the full period of their tour of duty unless absent on approved leave; to observe the opening and closing hours established for the tour of duty; and to adhere to the established luncheon periods.

If you are a GS or FWS employee, a Title 38 nurse, nurse anesthetist, physician assistant, or expanded-function dental auxiliary, you are entitled to overtime pay when you are required to work more than your daily/weekly scheduled tour. Your overtime rate is generally 1-1/2 times your regular rate of pay. Higher graded GS employees, however, may be limited to the overtime rate for GS-10, step 1. There is no limit on the overtime rate for Title 38 nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants, expanded-function dental auxiliaries, and FWS employees. In lieu of payment for overtime work, compensatory time off is occasionally appropriate. If you are a GS employee with a basic rate of pay of more than GS-10, step 10, you will be granted compensatory time off unless the appropriate authority has approved your request for overtime pay. On the other hand, if you are a GS employee with a rate of pay equal to or lower than GS-10, or an employee eligible for overtime pay under Title 38, you will be paid for the overtime work unless you request compensatory time off in writing and your request is approved.

FWS employees receive compensatory time off only in limited circumstances (e.g., compensatory time off for religious observances or when participating in a flexible or compressed work schedule). Thus, as an FWS employee, you are typically paid for required overtime work.

GS and FWS employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are entitled to overtime pay under FLSA. Your position description indicates whether you are covered (nonexempt) by FLSA or not covered (exempt).

You may elect to work compensatory overtime for the purpose of taking time off without charge to leave when your personal religious beliefs require you to be absent from work during certain periods of the workday or workweek. Such a request will be approved unless your services are necessary to carry out the mission of your organization.

If you are in SES or a Title 38 physician, dentist, podiatrist or optometrist, you are not entitled to overtime.

For more information on work schedules please visit the website at: http://www.opm.gov/oca/worksch/index.asp. Other sources of information include the facility CPM and the local union agreement.

Leave Benefits

Annual Leave

As a Federal employee, you earn annual leave for vacations and other personal uses. The amount of annual leave you earn each year depends on your length of service (Federal employment and military service). If you are a full-time employee and have less than 3 years of service, you earn 4 hours of leave a pay period, or 13 days per year. If you have between 3 and 14 years of service, you earn 6 hours per pay period, or 20 days per year. At 15 years of service, you earn 8 hours per pay period, or 26 days per year. Annual leave is charged in quarter-hour increments. Part-time employees on regularly scheduled tours of duty earn leave on a prorated basis according to the number of hours they work. Unused annual leave at the end of the year may be accumulated for use in succeeding years, up to a maximum of 240 hours. (Part-time employees' maximum leave accumulation limit is prorated in accordance with their work schedule. SES employees may accumulate up to 720 hours.) If you leave the Federal service, you will be paid for annual leave to your credit.

Sick Leave

You receive 4 hours of sick leave each full pay period or 13 days of leave per year. Unlike annual leave, it accumulates year after year without limit. Unused sick leave may be used to extend your creditable service when you retire, if you have creditable service under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) during your Federal career. Part-time employees with regularly scheduled tours of duty earn sick leave that is prorated according to the number of hours they work. Sick leave is also charged in quarter-hour increments and is used when you are ill, for medical, dental, or optical examinations and treatments, and the adoption of a child. Sick leave should be considered as insurance against loss of income during periods of extended illness, so it should be used responsibly. Employees may also use up to 40 hours, and based upon eligibility requirements, up to 104 hours of sick leave to provide medical care and assistance to family members, including arranging for and attending funeral services. An employee may use a total of up to 12 administrative workweeks of sick leave each year to care for a family member with a serious health condition, subject to certain limitations.

Physicians, dentists, podiatrists, and optometrists receive 15 calendar days sick leave per year. Full-time nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants, and expanded-function dental auxiliaries receive 4 hours of sick leave each full biweekly pay period or 13 days per year. There is no limitation on the amount of sick leave that an employee may carry forward at the end of the leave year. Part-time employees accrue 1 hour of sick leave for each 30 hours in pay status. Sick leave is charged in quarter-hour increments.

Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

If the need arises and you have exhausted your leave, you may request to become a leave recipient through the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. The leave transfer program allows you to receive annual leave donated by another employee if you have a medical emergency. Additional employee leave entitlements include 12 administrative workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period after the birth of a child, to adopt a child, to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition, or to personally recover from a serious illness. Employees who serve as bone-marrow donors are granted up to 7 days of paid leave in a calendar year. Employees who serve as organ donors are granted up to 30 days of paid leave in a calendar year. Your local Human Resources Management representatives can provide more information about your leave entitlements.

Legal Holidays for Federal Employees

- New Year's Day . . . . . January 1
- Inauguration Day . . . . . January 20 every 4 years (Washington, DC, metropolitan area only)
- Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. . 3rd Monday in January
- Washington's Birthday . . . . . 3rd Monday in February
- Memorial Day . . . . . Last Monday in May
- Independence Day . . . . . July 4
- Labor Day . . . . . 1st Monday in September
- Columbus Day . . . . . 2nd Monday in October
- Veterans Day . . . . . November 11
- Thanksgiving Day . . . . . 4th Thursday in November
- Christmas Day . . . . . December 25

If you are a full-time employee and a holiday falls on your day off, another day is designated as your day off in lieu of the holiday. If you are required to work on the holiday or the "in lieu" day, you will receive additional compensation or, in the case of Title 38 physicians, dentists, podiatrists and optometrists, alternative time off.

You can get additional information from your local Human Resources Management representatives about military leave, court leave, time off for voting, authorized absence without charge to leave, leave for family reasons, and leave without pay.

Performance Appraisals

All of us like to know what tasks we are expected to perform, how well we are expected to do them, and whether our work is measuring up to expectations. As an employee, you need to know these things for your own satisfaction and to help you progress in your job. Your supervisor needs to know them too, for the manner in which you do your work has a direct bearing on the quality of service VA gives to veterans and their families.

VA has a Performance Appraisal System. The key elements of this system are (1) written performance standards that principally describe the quality, quantity, and timeliness of work and which will be given to you by your supervisor; (2) discussions, as necessary, between you and your supervisor about your job performance; and (3) a formal written performance rating once a year, which is maintained in a separate folder by your Human Resources Management representatives.

Your performance rating is used in making determinations on promotions, reductions-in-force, within-grade increases for GS, FWS and hybrid employees, training, and adverse actions based on poor performance. Should you disagree with the performance rating assigned to you, there are procedures available to have the rating reviewed.

Most Title 38 employees in VHA are evaluated annually under a Proficiency Rating System that addresses their effectiveness in their current assignments and during the previous year of service. The Proficiency Report provides a basis for strengthening employee-supervisor relationships and is a factor in considering employees for advancements within the grade or promotion to a higher grade. It may also serve as a basis for action in cases where an employee's service is unsatisfactory. An employee who disagrees with a proficiency rating may submit comments concerning the rating in writing to the supervisor for filing in the Official Personnel Folder.

SES and some Title 38 employees are evaluated annually by supervisors and decisions on performance ratings and related pay matters are made to the Secretary or Administration head, as appropriate. Title 38 employees are not covered by the merit promotion plan. Instead, they are considered for promotion on a regular basis by a Professional Standards Board that carefully evaluates their performance, experience, and professional attainment. Promotion recommendations are based on the qualifications of the individual employee.

You should talk to your supervisor or see your local Human Resources Management representatives for further details regarding how the Department's performance appraisal systems work.

Further information is also available in VA Handbook 5430.1 and the Question & Answer (Q&A) Guide located at http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm.

Awards Program

You may receive an increase in pay, cash award, time-off award, honor, or non-monetary award in recognition of a contribution, act, service or achievement that benefits VA or beyond, or for overall sustained performance beyond normal requirements. Overall exceptional performance during the appraisal period (typically 12 months) can earn you a quality step increase (QSI).

VA employees have a number of opportunities to be recognized for their extra efforts on behalf of the Government. Honor or non-monetary awards such as certificates or plaques can be used to recognize employee contributions that improve the economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of VA operations and services.

Title 38 employees may be awarded additional steps in their grade as Special Advancement for Performance or Achievement in recognition of exceptional and recognized achievements within their profession. Nurses and nurse anesthetists may also be eligible for cash awards of up to $2,000 when they have demonstrated both exemplary job performance and exemplary job achievement. Nurses and nurse anesthetists are also entitled to cash awards of up to $2,000 for becoming certified in specialties related to the accomplishment of VA's health care mission.

In addition to awards for performance contributions, your ideas that benefit VA may earn you cash awards. Through the VA Employee Suggestion Program, VA welcomes your suggestions on how to save time, money, materials, reduce paperwork, simplify procedures, or improve services to veterans. Ideas are submitted on VA Form 3951, Employee Suggestion.

You are encouraged to talk to your supervisor or others who know the subject matter of your suggestion in order to improve your chances of having your idea adopted. Each suggestion is evaluated by a qualified subject-matter expert, and if your suggestion is adopted, you will be eligible for recognition commensurate with the benefits derived from implementation of the suggestion.

Your Career

Training in VA has two main goals. First of all, you will get the training you need to help you do your present job in an effective, productive way. Most of this training will be given on the job by your supervisor, who has the primary responsibility for deciding what training you need. However, he or she can use your help to make these decisions. Therefore, you should discuss your training needs and any goals you have with your supervisor. Occasionally, you may be sent to a class to learn additional skills.

In addition, you may be given training to help prepare you for future duties and responsibilities. This will depend on what skills VA needs in the future, available resources, and your own goals and initiative.

The VA Learning University (VALU)

VALU provides leadership for learning initiatives spanning the three VA administrations, and all VA staff offices. VALU coordinates the various educational entities within VA to maximize educational resources through collaborative efforts, and facilitates internal and external learning partnerships.

VALU operates on the premise that learning is a strategic force within an organization, and that it should be the business of every employee to seize learning opportunities to enhance job skills and realize personal potential. A variety of learning modalities are offered to you by VALU (correspondence, CD-ROM, classroom, or satellites), so you can select one that best suits your learning style and needs.

Upward Mobility Program

The Upward Mobility Program provides an opportunity for employees in lower level jobs to be competitively selected for development. This program usually involves a combination of on-the-job training and classroom training.

Your supervisor or local Human Resources Management representatives should be able to answer your questions about training. There are many leadership training programs active within VA such as Leadership VA (LVA), New Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, and Women Executive Leadership (WEL). Your local Human Resources Management representatives have additional information (detailed description and eligibility requirements) about formal VA training programs, Upward Mobility, leadership, and non-VA training.

VHA sponsors a wide variety of educational opportunities to ensure an adequate supply of health professionals for VA and the Nation. VHA employees receive training and education to improve effectiveness and productivity. It is VHA's goal that 50 percent of full-time employees receive 40 hours of continuing education or training each year; and that all frontline providers have, as part of the 40 hours, 20 hours directly related to patient safety.

Succession Planning Committee

Similar to VA's Upward Mobility Program, VHA has its Succession Planning Committee, which is charged with developing a well-defined, comprehensive succession plan for VHA. This group links the succession plan to the High Performance Development Model and ensures that the plan addresses workforce assessment, defines career tracks, and identifies required skill sets, recruitment and retention strategies, and comprehensive leadership and staff development training.

Employee Education System

The Employee Education System (EES), VHA's education and training organization, specializes in providing quality products and services for continuous learning and performance improvement. EES programs keep pace with the profound changes affecting VA and those who care for our Nation's veterans.

EES has expanded its role from serving primarily as a provider of education to providing leadership in partnering with its customers to meet the educational needs of all employees through collaborative efforts. Its mission is to provide educational services which are customer-focused, accessible, performance-based, cost-effective, and which lead to the accomplishment of VHA's organizational goals and objectives of providing quality health care and services to our Nation's veterans. EES's vision is to be the partner of choice for learning.

The Employee Education Resource Centers across the country develop partnerships with employees to provide the education and training they need based on the National Training Priority Areas established by the VHA Integration Council.

The VA Learning Management System (LMS) is a web-based learning program that does automatic recording of learning progress. Employees go to this site to complete mandatory modules on specific contents.

To find out more about the products and services provided by EES, visit the Web site at vaww.ees.lrn.va.gov, or contact your local Education Service Representatives.

Scholarship Program

VHA offers scholarships administered by VHA's Health Care Staff Development and Retention Office, and reimbursement for tuition. The following list identifies some of the programs you might want to learn more about:

Employee Incentive Scholarship

The Employee Incentive Scholarship Program provides awards for VA employees enrolled in academic degree programs for selected health care professions, such as registered nurse, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, certified respiratory therapy technician, registered respiratory therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, nurse anesthetist, clinical pharmacist, and clinical nurse specialist.

Tuition Reimbursement Program

The Tuition Reimbursement Program supports employees in nursing degree programs and those taking courses required for acceptance in degree programs.

Affiliated Education Programs

VA Affiliated Education Programs provide funding support for more than 2,300 affiliated trainees (i.e., individuals training in an academic institution affiliated with VA) in such disciplines as audiology/speech pathology, dietetics, nursing, occupational and physical therapy, pharmacy, psychology, blind rehabilitation, and social work.

Annual Training Requirements

You are required to have 40 hours of training every Fiscal Year. You may obtain appropriate training class/workshops through Learning Management System. Applications for Training within the community can be obtained from the Education Committee. Tuition assistance is available for certain career fields. Contact Education Service extension 7495.

Additional information regarding educational opportunities can be found at the following website:

http://www.vacareers.va.gov/12_Salary_Support.cfm

CPRS Provider Training

- http://it.visn7.med.va.gov/cprs/

  This link takes the user straight to the CPRS Provider training from inside the VA.
- http://www.southeast.va.gov/

  This link can be used via the Internet. User clicks on: New Trainee Orientation. Enter "training" for the password.

Your Rights

You have the right, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, to form, join, or assist a union or not to do so, and you will be protected in exercising this right. However, your right to hold an office in a union, to act as a union representative, or to participate in its management may be affected by the job you hold. An employee cannot represent management in dealing with a union while at the same time representing that union. For this reason, employees who are supervisors or management officials, or who are engaged in human resources work other than clerical duties, cannot hold office in a union, serve as its representative, or participate in its management. These restrictions, however, do not deny the right of any Federal employee to join a union.

If you are in a unit of recognition, you may voluntarily have your union dues deducted from your paycheck. Your local union representative can provide you with further information concerning dues deductions.

An agreement between the union and management will normally have been negotiated to cover some aspects of human resources policies and practices if you are in a unit of recognition. You should obtain a copy of this agreement and become familiar with its provisions.

A variety of services may be offered to employees displaced by reorganization or downsizing to assist them in transitioning to other careers in VA, in other Federal or state organizations, in the private sector, or in self-employment. Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) assistance typically includes training in job search skills, use of the internet to seek job vacancy information, resume writing, interviewing skills, stress management, and similar related topics. Special programs may be locally available to assist employees displaced due to downsizing. For additional information or assistance, contact your local Human Resources Management representatives.

The local Human Resources Management representative may provide or refer you for retirement counseling services and guidance on personnel flexibilities such as leave sharing, leave for medical conditions, family responsibilities, and care of a sick relative; part-time employment; and flexible work schedules.

In situations involving a potential disciplinary or adverse action, an investigation could be made into the incident as soon as possible to obtain the facts and determine what action, if any, is warranted. A bargaining unit employee being examined in an investigation (an investigatory examination or interview) is entitled to union representation if the examination is conducted by a representative of the agency, the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action, and the employees asks for representation. Such examinations are Weingarten examinations because Congress, in establishing this right, specially referred to the private sector case establishing such a right. Your local HRM representative can provide you with further information about Weingarten rights.

VA employees are encouraged to use mediation to help resolve workplace conflicts as early as feasible, to the maximum extent practicable, and in an appropriate and cost-effective manner. Mediation is a process in which an impartial person, the mediator, helps people having a dispute to talk with each other and resolve their differences. The mediator does not decide who is right or wrong but rather assists the persons involved create their own unique solution to their problem. Mediation can be elected early in a dispute when individuals are having problems that they cannot seem to work out on their own. It can be used before putting the problem into a formal dispute process like EEO or the grievance procedure. It can be used after a problem or dispute has gone into the formal process, even while the matter is being investigated, being processed by the Office of Resolution Management, going through the various steps of a grievance, or at a hearing before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, arbitrator, or administrative judge. VA mediators are fellow VA employees who have voluntarily agreed to mediate workplace disputes. They are specially trained and skilled in mediation techniques and conflict resolution. In electing to use mediation, an employee does not give up any other rights. If the mediation does not result in a satisfactory solution, the employee can still go back to the EEO complaint, grievance, or other administrative processes for resolution. For more information about how the mediation program works at your facility, contact your local facility Alternative Dispute Resolution coordinator, EEO Counselor, or a Union Representative.

For more information about VA's mediation program generally, visit the VA's Alternative Dispute Resolution Internet site at http://www.opm.gov/er/adr.asp.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Office of Resolution Management has developed programs to improve the overall management of Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination complaint processing services within VA. Office of Resolution Management provides EEO discrimination complaint processing services to VA employees, applicants for employment, and former employees. These services include counseling, investigation, and procedural final agency decisions. Alternative Dispute Resolution is encouraged through all phases of the complaint process.

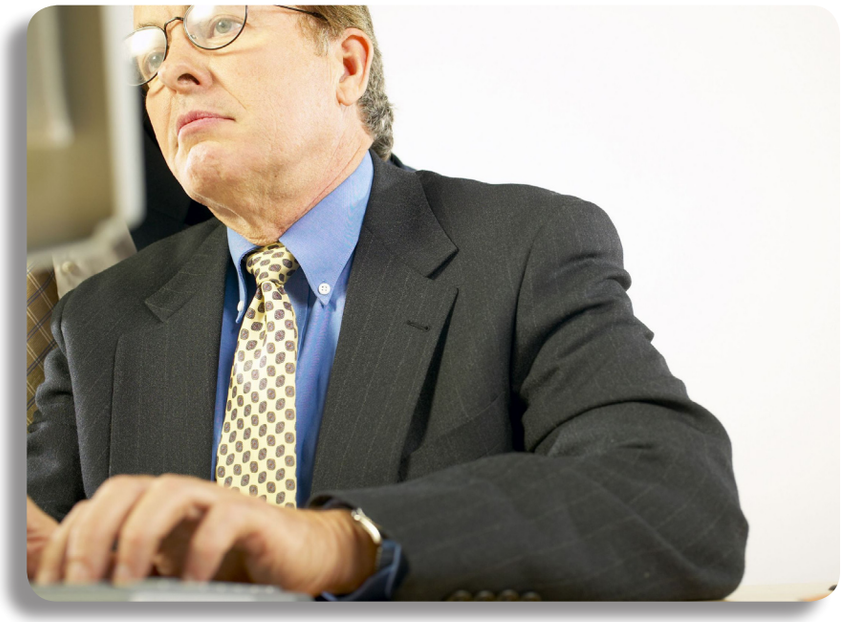
ORM provides compliance oversight functions on final decisions, appellant reviews, matters relating to settlements including breach of settlement agreements, and fully investigates claims for compensatory damages.

ORM has oversight responsibility for the Department's External Civil Rights Program which ensures compliance with Title VI and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act.

Contacting an EEO Counselor

Aggrieved persons who believe they have been discriminated against must contact an ORM EEO counselor prior to filing a formal complaint. The person must initiate counselor contact within 45 days of the matter alleged to be discriminatory.

An aggrieved person may seek EEO counseling by either calling 1-888-RES-EEO1 (1-888-737-3361) or 888-626-9008 (TDD) for more information. To avoid delay, call or write beforehand if you need special assistance, such as an interpreter, to file a claim. You may also visit the local ORM Field Office to seek counseling.



For additional information, call the EEO Program Manager at extension 6326.

Safety

The VA is committed to providing a safe and healthful workplace for all VA employees and volunteers. Each VA facility is required to develop and implement an occupational safety and health program to eliminate work-related injuries and illnesses.

In support of this program, each VA employee and volunteer must:

- Follow safe work procedures at all times (e.g.,wear required personal protective equipment).
- Learn to recognize unsafe conditions or practices.
- Upon identifying an unsafe condition or practice:
    - immediately correct those which are under your control; or
    - report them to supervisory personnel.
- Report work-related injuries/illnesses to supervisory personnel.
- Learn about the safety and health requirements that apply to your work.
- Attend safety and health training when scheduled.
- Wear a seat belt and shoulder harness, when available, while traveling on official business.
- While on travel or assigned to non-VA facilities, learn about local and health requirements and take appropriate precautions to ensure safety and health.

If you have any concerns regarding safety or health issues, you may talk with your supervisor or with your local safety and health officer.

Standards Of Conduct

As a VA employee, you have certain rights and responsibilities. You have the right to expect fair and considerate treatment, decent working conditions, and a sincere concern on the part of VA for you as an individual. In return, VA expects that you will serve diligently, loyally, and cooperatively. You must avoid misconduct and other activities that conflict with your employment; exercise courtesy and dignity; and otherwise conduct yourself, both on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively upon yourself and VA. Below is a partial list of your responsibilities as a VA employee. For more information, ask your supervisor, your local Human Resources Management representatives, or Regional Counsel.

You are required to be at work every day as scheduled unless on approved leave or excused absence. Failure to notify your supervisor and to request appropriate leave for an absence may be considered absence without leave (AWOL) and cause for disciplinary action.

You must be impartial in carrying out your official duties. You must avoid any action that might result in or look as though you are giving preferential treatment to any person, group or organization. You must not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, sex, religion, national origin, politics, marital status, or disability in any employment matter or in providing benefits under any law administered by VA. There is ZERO tolerance for incidents involving Sexual Harassment, Violence in the Work Place, derogatory remarks regarding race or sexual orientation.

You may not make a governmental decision outside of official channels. You may not take any action that impedes Government efficiency and economy, affects your impartiality, or otherwise lowers public confidence in the Federal Government. With certain exceptions, you are prohibited from asking for or accepting any gift, tip, entertainment, loan, favor, or anything of monetary value for yourself or any member of your family from any person or organization that is seeking or has a business or financial relationship with VA. This restriction is necessary to avoid the appearance that your official actions might be influenced by such gifts.

You must avoid any action that might result in or look as though you are using public office for private gain or might conflict, or appear to conflict, with the interest of VA or the Federal Government. You may not attempt to accomplish indirectly, through your immediate family or otherwise, any action that is prohibited. If you have any doubt as to whether planned actions may result in a conflict of interest with your VA responsibilities, first seek advice from your Regional Counsel Office.

You may not engage in outside employment or activity that is not compatible with the full and proper discharge of your VA duties and responsibilities. Outside employment activities by certain Title 38 health care professionals are governed by specific VA regulations. To be sure there is no conflict with your VA responsibilities, check with your Regional Counsel Office before you begin any outside employment activity.

You have a positive responsibility to protect and conserve, and not willfully damage any Federal property, including equipment, supplies, and other property entrusted or issued to you. You may not directly or indirectly use Government property of any kind, including vehicles, tools, instruments, or property leased to the Government for other than officially approved activities. You are responsible for all Government property entrusted to you, and you may be held financially liable if it is not treated and used properly.

IntegratedEthics

VA has recognized the need to establish a national, standardized, comprehensive, systematic, integrated approach to ethics in health care—and IntegratedEthics was designed to meet that need. This innovative national education and organizational change initiative ensures ethical practices in VHA are based on both rules and values. An IntegratedEthics program improves ethics quality by targeting the three levels of quality—decisions and actions, systems and processes, and environment and culture—through three core functions: ethics consultation, preventive ethics, and ethical leadership.

Ethics Consultation Committee handles both requests for consultation about specific ethical concerns and requests for general information, policy clarification, document review, discussion of hypothetical or historical cases, and ethical analysis of an organizational ethics question.

Preventive Ethics Committee proactively identifies, prioritizes, and addresses concerns about ethics quality at the organizational level. Preventive ethics aims to produce measurable improvements in an organization's ethics practices by implementing systems-level changes that reduce disparities between current practices and ideal practices. The Preventive Ethics Committee is also responsible for maintenance activities such as facility-wide ethics education and policy development. The chair of the Preventive Ethics Committee may be reached at ext. 7399.

Ethical Leadership function of IntegratedEthics calls on leaders to make clear through their words and actions that ethics is a priority, to communicate clear expectations for ethical practice, to practice ethical decision making, and to support their facility's ethics program. The IntegratedEthics Council meets monthly and is chaired by our Medical Center Director.

The chair of the Ethics Consultation Committee and he may be reached at ext. 7133.

For more information about Ethics Program Topics, please visit the website at

http://www.usoge.gov/pages/about_oge/ethics_program.html.

Federal Code of Ethics

Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees

U.S. OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005

1. Public Service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.

2. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.

3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.

4. An employee shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.

5. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.

6. Employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.

7. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

8. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.

9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.

10. Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.

11. Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.

12. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those--such as Federal, State, or local taxes--that are imposed by law.

13. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

14. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards promulgated pursuant to this order.

For More Information

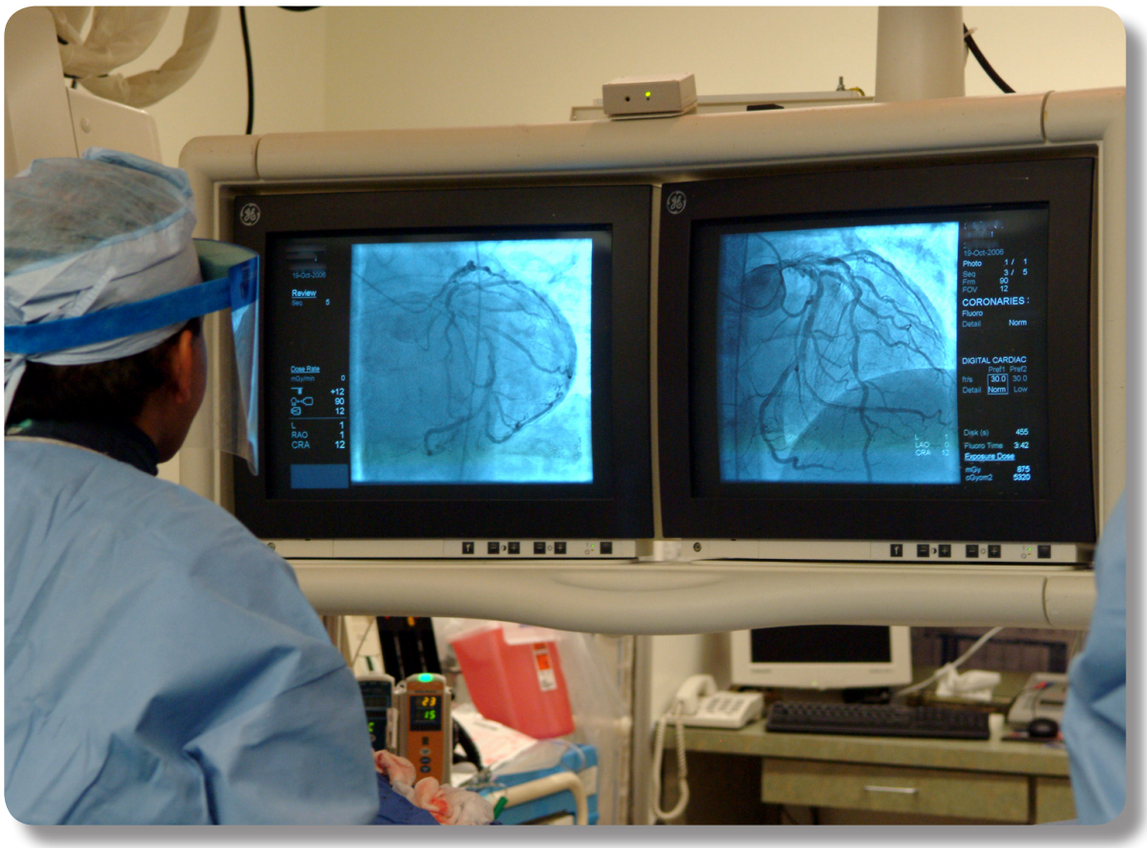
- History of the VA
  http://www1.va.gov/opa/feature/history/index.asp
- Department of Veterans Affairs
  www.va.gov
- US Office of Personnel Management
  www.opm.gov
- Charleston VA Medical Center website
  www.charleston.va.gov
  (forms, salary tables, insurance information, etc)
- Employee Express
  http://vaww.eex.va.gov/
- Government Job Announcements
  www.usajobs.gov
- Student Job Opportunities
  http://www.studentjobs.gov/
- Educational Opportunities
  http://www.vacareers.va.gov/12_Salary_Support.cfm
- Application Process
  http://www.doleta.gov/jobs/Federal_Application_Process/
- Government Job Info
  http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Work_for_the_Government.shtml
- Retirement Benefits:
  http://www.opm.gov/retire/
- Health Insurance Information
  http://www.opm.gov/insure/
- CPRS Provider Training
  http://it.visn7.med.va.gov/cprs/
  This link takes the user straight to the CPRS Provider training from inside the VA

  http://www.southeast.va.gov/
  This link can be used via the Internet
  ~ User clicks on: New Trainee Orientation
  ~ Enter "training" for the password
- Leave Administration
  http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/index.asp
- Various Topics (alphabetical)
  http://www.opm.gov/topics.asp
- Ethics Program Topics
  http://www.usoge.gov/pages/about_oge/ethics_program.html

This handbook is for informational purposes only. It provides a general introduction to the VA and its personnel policies, regulations and benefits. Individual pages will be updated and distributed to all employees as required by changes in laws, regulations or other circumstances. Station bulletin boards and employee newsletters are an additional source of general information or notices of change in station and agency policy. For specific questions, see your supervisor or visit your personnel office. In all instances, pertinent statutes, regulations, and statements of official VA policy shall prevail.

Our Mission

To improve the health of the veteran population by providing primary, specialty and extended care and related social support services through an integrated healthcare



Our Vision

We will be the recognized leader:

- In providing innovative methods for treating patients and supporting their total health care needs.
- In recognizing and developing employees who enthusiastically and significantly contribute to the medical center and community.
- In conducting meaningful research which provides breakthroughs in treatment and prevention of disease.
- In continually improving everything we do in order to meet the needs of those we serve.

109 Bee St. • Charleston, SC 29401 • (843) 577-5011 • www.charleston.va.gov