

Maintenance Selection System Handbook

Issue 1

April 1997

- A. Explanation.** *Maintenance Selection System Handbook* is a new handbook which replaces the *MSS Coordinator's Guide*.
- B. Instructions.** Destroy all copies of the: *MSS Coordinator's Guide*; Management Instruction EL-350-89-2, "Maintenance Selection System"; and previous draft copies of this handbook.
- C. Distribution**
- Initial.** Sent to all MSS Coordinators.
- Additional Copies.** Order from the National Test Administration Center via cc:Mail to NTAC MSS.
- D. Comments and Questions.** Send queries via cc:Mail to NTAC MSS.
- E. Effective Date.** This handbook is effective immediately.

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Summary of Changes

The recent changes in the Maintenance Selection System are designed to make the system easier to understand, reduce the workload in the field, and establish a step-by-step process.

Some of the changes include:

Forms - All scannable forms have been revised. There is now a scannable MSS Cover Sheet which replaces the MSS Transmittal Letter. There are now two review panel forms instead of the previous seven. The PD/JS form has been replaced by the Employee Maintenance Application. In addition, there is now an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form for inservice and incraft employees to select the positions for which they are applying.

Entrance and Inservice announcements can no longer be open indefinitely. Post for no more than 30 days at a time.

Test Opportunities - Applicants (entrance, inservice, or incraft) can only take the same examination once within a 365 day period. Updates are an exception.

CSA Booklet - An applicant will complete only one CSA booklet regardless of the number of registers for which he/she is applying.

MSS On-Line Query - This has been eliminated. NTAC will provide weekly updates via cc:Mail with future plans to utilize the Internet.

Notice of Rating - The cards are eliminated and replaced by a letter. Each applicant will receive a rating on all the positions covered by an examination (931, 932, and/or 933). NTAC will mail the letters directly to the applicants with copies to the District Office (Examination Center) via cc:Mail.

Update Process - Once an employee has approval to update his/her rating, the office must send an Update Set-Up Form to NTAC prior to submitting any other documents. Submit the other documents as they are finished.

Problem Review/Resolution - NTAC will assume the responsibility of troubleshooting and resolving problem documents. Your office will be notified when an action is required.

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OVERVIEW

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE MAINTENANCE SELECTION SYSTEM

The goal of the Maintenance Selection System is to ensure the selection and promotion of qualified maintenance personnel and to promote a uniform application of qualification requirements. The Maintenance Selection System (MSS) is the means to meet that goal.

Note: *Non MSS Positions.* The procedures outlined in Postal Bulletin 21770 dated August 23, 1990, (a complete revision to Handbook EL-311, Personnel Operations, subchapter 520) must be used to determine eligibility for maintenance craft positions not covered by the procedures in this handbook. These positions are commonly known as Non-Maintenance Selection System positions.

MSS GRIEVANCE SETTLEMENTS

Grievance and prearbitration settlements, EEO discussions, or similar actions involving MSS must be coordinated with NTAC and/or Headquarters Labor Relations during the investigative phase. Such coordination will ensure that settlement implementations are in accordance with provisions of MSS. See Labor Relations memorandum dated May 19, 1993 (Exhibit W).

PLANNING

Once a decision has been made to begin the entrance, inservice, or new position incraft process the planning stage begins. It is imperative that once begun, the process continues in a timely and orderly fashion. Review the timelines for the process (Exhibit A). These are the maximum amounts of time these processes should take. NTAC will track your progress once you begin and will report when the process is taking longer than normal to complete. In many cases the process can be accelerated. However, the order of the steps is critical and must be followed exactly. The process can only be accelerated by completely finishing one step early and moving on to the next.

Develop a specific initial timeline - Using the timeline for the process in question as a guide, mark down the dates for those procedures such as announcing and accepting applications which have contractual deadlines that cannot be shortened. Next, if the process is an inservice or incraft process, estimate the number of review panels required and coordinate with maintenance to determine the availability of personnel to conduct review panels. Determine whether the review panel period can be shortened, which will advance the schedule for the later steps. Conversely, if sufficient personnel

are not available for review panel service when required, consider delaying the announcement period. However, testing ahead of giving inservice or incraft review panels is not an option.

Based on the availability of resources for the review panel, you can develop a tentative schedule for the examination phase. Estimate the likely number of applicants and determine the availability of examiners and examining facilities. Determine whether the examination period can be shortened, which will advance the final receipt of your results. Conversely, if sufficient personnel or facilities are not available for conducting examinations when required, consider delaying the announcement period. Changing the order of this step is not an option. If this is an incraft process, coordinate with maintenance to make certain that the supervisor evaluations can be completed in parallel with the examination period.

Revise the timeline to accommodate the applications - At the end of the application period, make adjustments (if necessary) to your specific timelines. If more or fewer applicants than expected were received coordinate with maintenance and adjust the review panel timelines accordingly. After any needed adjustments to the review panel timelines are made, adjust the examination timelines appropriately.

Follow the timelines - Communicating the timelines to all parties who have responsibilities in the process and receiving their early commitments to meet their timeline requirements is critical. By following through to make sure that everyone meets their responsibilities, you maximize your chance of success.

THE INCRAFT PROCESS

Maintenance Craft Career Employees are given first priority in filling vacancies in the maintenance craft. Article 38 of the United States Postal Service / American Postal Workers Union (USPS/APWU) National Agreement defines a maintenance craft career employee. These employees are referred to as *incraft* employees in the context of MSS.

THE INSERVICE PROCESS

When it becomes apparent that incraft procedures will not meet the present or future staffing needs, the USPS looks to career postal employees who are qualified to fill the maintenance positions.

THE ENTRANCE PROCESS

When it becomes apparent that neither incraft nor inservice procedures will meet the present or future staffing needs, the USPS recruits outside applicants.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Coordinators: For MSS to be effective, day-to-day coordination of the program's related activities is essential. *The MSS administration is the responsibility of both Human Resources (HR) MSS Coordinators and Maintenance MSS Coordinators.*

Selecting Coordinators: Managers must select HR and Maintenance MSS Coordinators at each maintenance-capable installation. The District (Examination Center) MSS Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all activity in their areas of responsibility is completed in a proper and timely manner.

Human Resources:

- Requests from NTAC, through the Examinations Administrator, all required materials, maintaining a 6-month supply.
- Notifies, in writing, all new incraft employees that they have 30 days from the receipt of letter to request inclusion on all PERs in the office.
- Provides Employee Maintenance Application (EMA), PS Form 8085, and instructions for completing to incraft and inservice applicants.
- Receives, verifies, and mails all documents to NTAC.
- Maintains Supervisor Evaluation and Review Panel Guidelines booklets under double lock and key. Also, maintains a log of checkout and return of each numbered booklet.
- Provides Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) Booklet to applicants.
- Coordinates the establishment and scheduling of review panels.
- Maintains all files concerning MSS applicants, such as opening of examinations. Coordinates and corrects all MSS errors with NTAC.

Maintenance:

- Provides the Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines and Supervisor Evaluation Forms, PS Form 8086, to supervisors to use in evaluating incraft candidates.
- Submits Review Panel Evaluation Guidelines and completed CSA booklets to panel members for review.
- Collects and verifies the Supervisors' Evaluation Forms for completeness (gridding, etc.) and submits them to the HR MSS Coordinator for forwarding to NTAC.
- Collects and accounts for all Supervisor and Review Panel Guideline booklets and returns booklets to the HR MSS Coordinator.
- Reviews documentation submitted for incraft updates and determines whether the applicant is eligible to update.
- Completes the MSS Update Setup Form, PS Form 8084, and forwards to the HR MSS Coordinator.

LIST OF TERMS

CANDIDATE SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION (CSA) BOOKLET - The booklet completed by the incraft or inservice employees providing their knowledge, skills, and abilities for each individual position requirement.

COMPONENT - Document required to complete the MSS process, i.e., supervisor evaluation form, review panel evaluation form, and examination.

CONSOLIDATED REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION - A review panel given after February 8, 1997, for any position other than ET-10.

ELIGIBLES - Applicants who receive a numerical rating.

EMPLOYEE MAINTENANCE APPLICATION (EMA) FORM (PS FORM 8085) - Document completed by the employees on which they enter personal data and their group selections. This form is used for incraft and inservice applications only.

ENTRANCE REGISTER - A register of eligibles (based on an open entrance announcement).

ENTRANCE RESULT - The result received by entrance applicants based on the examination. A rating only guarantees the applicant further consideration. **NOTE: Entrance eligibility is not transferable to either incraft PER(s) or inservice registers.**

GRIDDING - The process of filling out scannable documents.

GROUP - Maintenance positions having the same test requirement.

INCRAFT - A career maintenance craft employee in accordance with Article 38 of the USPS/APWU National Agreement.

INCRAFT PROMOTION ELIGIBILITY REGISTER (PER) - A register established for the purpose of filling vacancies in particular occupational groups and levels (for which there is an existing or newly authorized position at an installation) in accordance with Article 38 of the USPS/APWU National Agreement.

INCRAFT RATING SUMMARY - A summary sheet generated for incraft applicants for each MSS group. The summary identifies all positions, rating for each position, and "Below Incumbent Average" and failed KSA(s). In addition, the summary also identifies the required KSA(s) for each group, and the required components for each KSA.

INCRAFT RESULT - The composite result, using all three components, received by incraft maintenance employees.

INSERVICE REGISTER - This register is a group of eligible career Postal Service employees who have applied as a result of an Inservice announcement. **NOTE: Inservice eligibility is not transferable to incraft PER(s).**

INSERVICE RESULT - The composite result, using the examinations and review panel evaluation(s), received by career postal employees who applied as a result of an inservice announcement. This result can only be used to determine whether an applicant is eligible to be placed on the inservice register for further consideration. **NOTE: Inservice eligibility is not transferable to incraft PER(s).**

INSTALLATION - A main post office, airport mail center or facility, terminal, bulk mail center, processing and distribution center or facility, Maintenance Support and Repair Facility or any similar organizational unit under the direction of one postal official together with all stations, branches and other subordinate units.

KSA - Knowledge, skills, and abilities identified for each individual position requirement.

MAINTENANCE EXAMINATION - Examination component required to complete a certain MSS Group as follows: Group A - Examination 931, General Maintenance Group Examination; Groups B & C - Examination 932, Electronics Maintenance Group Examination; or Group D - Examination 933, Mail Processing Equipment Maintenance Group Examination.

MAINTENANCE SELECTION SYSTEM COVER SHEET (MSSCS) - PS FORM 8051 - Scannable cover document used to submit MSS documents to NTAC for processing. A separate cover sheet is used for each document type, i.e., Employee Maintenance Application Form(s), Supervisor Evaluation Form(s), Review Panel Evaluation Form(s), and Update Setup Form(s).

MSS - Maintenance Selection System, the process for qualifying employees and applicants for maintenance positions within the USPS.

MSS REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION, GROUPS A, B, AND D - PS FORM 8087: Completed evaluation on a scannable form as the result of a review of the CSA Booklet and a personal interview by a review panel. This Review Panel Evaluation form is used to evaluate all KSAs for all MSS positions except the Electronics Technician, ET-10.

MSS REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION, GROUP C - PS FORM 8088: Completed evaluation on a scannable form as the result of a review of the CSA Booklet and a personal interview by the review panel. This Review Panel Evaluation form is used only to evaluate all KSAs for the Electronics Technician, ET-10.

MSS SUPERVISOR EVALUATION - PS FORM 8086: Using this form, the applicant's immediate supervisor rates the applicant based on current knowledge and observations of the applicant's abilities. This is used only for incraft employees.

MSS UPDATE SETUP FORM - PS FORM 8084: Form provides applicant biographic data, KSA(s), and Group to be updated.

NTAC - The National Test Administration Center, which maintains examination data.

POSITION - A specific job in the maintenance craft.

REGISTER DATES - The register date for an applicant depends on the application process.

Entrance - the examination date

Inservice - the closing date of the announcement

Incraft - New to Craft - the date employee entered the maintenance craft

Incraft - Newly Authorized Position - the closing date of the announcement

Incraft - Transfer to Another Facility - the date of the transfer

Incraft - Update - the employee's original register date for the register he/she is updating

REVIEW PANEL - The Review Panel is composed of one EAS Human Resources and two EAS Maintenance officials (Maintenance Manager or designee must be one of the members).

USPS/APWU NATIONAL AGREEMENT - A collective bargaining agreement between the United States Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union, which covers the maintenance craft employees.

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE - The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 specifically provides that the Postal Service continues to recognize veterans' preference in the rating, ranking, and selecting of postal applicants. The Veterans' Preference Act of 1944 allows certain privileges for those applicants who meet the requirements for veterans' preference entitlement. The privileges include the addition of either five or 10 points to competitive entrance examination scores, priority in selection decisions, and the opportunity to compete in exams not open to the general public. The law also restricts certain positions to those entitled to veteran preference.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APWU - American Postal Workers Union
ASM - Administrative Support Manual
CSA - Candidate Supplemental Application
EAS - Executive and Administrative Schedule
EEO - Equal Employment Opportunity
EMA - Employee Maintenance Application
HR - Human Resources
KSA - Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
MSS - Maintenance Selection System
MSSCS - Maintenance Selection System Cover Sheet
MTSC - Maintenance Technical Support Center
NTAC - National Test Administration Center
NTSN - National Technical Support Network
OPF - Official Personnel Folder
PER - Promotion Eligibility Register
PS - Postal Service
USPS - United States Postal Service

INCRAFT APPLICATION PROCESS

Overview

Maintenance Craft Career Employees are given first priority in filling vacancies in the maintenance craft. Article 38 of the USPS/APWU National Agreement defines a maintenance craft career employee. These employees are referred to as *incraft* employees in the context of MSS. Incraft employees are given the opportunity to fill a vacant position based on their standing on the Promotion Eligibility Register (PER). That standing is determined by the results of their completion of the MSS process for the Group that includes that position. There are four circumstances under which maintenance craft employees can apply to be included in a PER:

- (1) When first entering the maintenance craft.
- (2) When a facility announces a maintenance position newly authorized in that office.
- (3) When an employee transfers to another maintenance facility.
- (4) When there is an official MSS Open Season (every three years during the month of March, beginning in 1997).

Once an incraft applicant has completed the MSS process and received an incraft result, whether eligible or ineligible, he/she may not apply for that group, as an incraft applicant, again under any circumstances.

The applicant may, however, apply to improve that rating through a process called *updating*. Updating is available only to incraft applicants and it applies only to their incraft ratings. Basically, the update process allows an incraft applicant, who has had additional education, training, or experience in a subject area(s) measured by MSS, to participate in a subset of MSS that will reevaluate only that subject area(s) and generate a new rating. The special process and rules for updating are explained in detail in the section entitled "Updating Process".

The incraft process for MSS (except for updates) consists of seven distinct steps. They are:

- (1) Announcement
- (2) Application
- (3) Record review
- (4) Review panel evaluation
- (5) Examination
- (6) Supervisor evaluation
- (7) Results

The first two steps, announcement and application, differ depending on which of the four circumstances (new to craft, new position, new to a facility, or Open Season) apply. The remaining five steps are the same regardless of those circumstances. **The order of the steps is important!** Performing steps out of order will create additional work for both NTAC and the local office and, in some cases, it will create serious problems. There is a deadline of 150 days for completing the entire process. NTAC has developed a recommended timeline for each step (Exhibit A) and will track the progress of applications.

The following paragraphs explain the seven-step process in detail.

STEPS 1 and 2: The Incraft Announcement and Application

For the New-to-Craft Applicant.

- ⇒ **STEP 1: Notify the new-to-craft employee of the right to apply and send employee maintenance position selection form.** Human Resources (HR) must notify all new maintenance craft employees, in writing, of their right to apply (**Exhibit B**) for the Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs) in their office.¹ Retain a copy of the notification. The employee should be given the notice, along with an Employee Maintenance Position Selection (EMPS) Form (**Exhibit C**) within 15 calendar days of entering the maintenance craft. The new-to-craft employee has 30 calendar days from the receipt of the EMPS Form to return it completed and signed, indicating the position(s) for which they are applying. If they do not return the form completed and signed within the 30 days, the HR MSS Coordinator annotates the retained copy indicating that the employee was notified and declined to apply, and places it in the employee's maintenance file. No further action is required.
- ⇒ **STEP 2: Provide the employee with a Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) Booklet,** if the employee has returned the EMPS Form signed and completed. HR sends the booklet via certified mail with return receipt requested, or the employee may pick up the booklet in person. The employee has 21 calendar days from the end of the 30-day application period to return the completed CSA Booklet.
- **If the employee does not return the CSA Booklet within the 21 calendar days,** the employee is considered a non-applicant and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season, if transferred to another facility, or the office is authorized a new position. The HR MSS Coordinator should include a note on the copy of the EMPS form that the employee declined to apply by not returning the CSA Booklet, and should place it in the employee's maintenance file. No further action is required.

¹ Article 38, USPS/APWU National Agreement.

- **If the employee does return the CSA booklet within the 21 calendar days**, HR gives the applicant an Employee Maintenance Application (EMA) Form (Exhibit D) to complete. (Exhibit E provides instructions for completing the form.) Note that the applicant fills out only one EMA form regardless of the number of positions for which they applied. This form is a scannable document and must be handled carefully. The applicant completes this form immediately using a No. 2 pencil and returns it to the HR MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator verifies the accuracy of the form, paying particular attention that the register date is the same as the date on which the employee entered the maintenance craft. The HR MSS Coordinator then adds a MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) (Exhibit F) to the EMA form and sends it to NTAC via registered mail. The original EMPS Form is retained locally and will be needed again when the final results are received from NTAC.

For the Applicant to a Newly Authorized Position in an Office.

- ⇒ **STEP 1: Notify the employees of the newly authorized position.** Human Resources posts a notice (Exhibit G) announcing that a Promotion Eligibility Register (PER) is being created for the newly established position(s). The notice must be widely publicized for all career maintenance craft employees at the installation, and must be posted for no less than 30 calendar days. During this period, career maintenance craft employees may apply by completing and signing an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form which must be made widely available during the 30-day posting period. Employee Maintenance Position Selection forms will not be accepted after the announcement closing date.
- ⇒ **STEP 2: Provide the employee with a CSA booklet, if needed.** When employees submit an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form, immediately provide them with a Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) Booklet, which must be returned no later than 21 calendar days after the announcement closing date, except for the following two categories of applicants who do not need a CSA Booklet:
- (1) Applicants who have had a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation within the 365 calendar days preceding the closing date for the new position announcement will not receive a new Review Panel Evaluation and do not need a CSA Booklet.

Note: *It is the applicants' responsibility to determine if their last Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation was within 365 calendar days of the closing date. An applicant may request a verification of the date from the personnel office (look up the date on the last non-update rating notice) but the deadline will not be extended. For those applicants who are unsure of the date, you must advise them that it is in their best interest to begin completing the CSA Booklet while awaiting verification. An applicant who does not submit a CSA Booklet and mistakenly assumes that he/she has a review panel evaluation on file will not be given additional time to submit a booklet after the deadline. They will be*

considered a non-applicant for the position and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season. See Applicant Inquiries, page 19 and 20.

(2) Applicants who have completed the process for the Group containing the new position already have a rating for the new position and that is the one that must be used to place them on the new register. This includes applicants whose rating is 'ineligible'.

- **If the employee does not return the CSA Booklet within the 21 calendar days**, the employee is considered a non-applicant and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season. The HR MSS Coordinator must include a note, on the copy of the original EMPS form sent to the employee, that the employee declined to apply by not returning the CSA Booklet, and should place it in the employee's maintenance file. No further action is required.
- **If the employee does return the CSA booklet within the 21 calendar days**, HR gives the applicant an EMA Form to complete. Note that the applicant fills out only one EMA form regardless of the number of positions for which they apply. This form is a scannable document and must be handled carefully. The applicant completes this form immediately using a No. 2 pencil and returns it to the HR MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator verifies the accuracy of the form, paying particular attention that the register date is the same as the closing date of the announcement. The HR MSS Coordinator then adds a MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) to the EMA form and sends it to NTAC via registered mail. The original Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form is retained locally and will be needed again when the final results are received from NTAC.

For the Craft Applicant Newly Transferred to the Facility.

⇒ STEP 1:

- a. Notify NTAC of newly transferred craft employee.** You no longer need to notify NTAC of any newly transferred employee. The system uses the finance number gridded on the EMA form. HOWEVER, if you used an incorrect finance number on the EMA form, the HR MSS Coordinator must notify NTAC in writing (Exhibit H).
- b. Notify the newly transferred employee of the right to apply (Exhibit I) and send the Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form.** Human Resources (HR) must notify all new maintenance craft employees, in writing, of their right to apply for the Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs) in their office.² Retain a copy of the notification. The employee must be given the notice along with an Employee Maintenance Position Selection form within 15 calendar days of entering the maintenance craft. The newly transferred employee has 30 calendar days from the receipt of the notification letter to return the form

² Article 38, USPS/APWU National Agreement.

completed and signed indicating the register(s) for which they are applying. If they do not return the form completed and signed within the 30 calendar days, the HR MSS Coordinator annotates the retained copy indicating that the employee was notified and declined to apply, and places it in the employee's maintenance file. No further action is required.

⇒ **STEP 2:**

Provide the employee with a CSA Booklet, if needed. If the newly transferred employee returns a signed copy of the maintenance position selection form indicating one or more registers for which he/she wishes to apply, the HR MSS Coordinator must immediately provide the employee with a CSA Booklet, except for the following two categories of transfer applicants who do not need a booklet:

(1) Transfer applicants, who have had a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation within the 365 calendar days prior to the date of transfer to the new facility, will not require a new Review Panel Evaluation.

***Note:** It is the applicants' responsibility to determine if their last Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation was within 365 calendar days of the date of transfer to the new facility. An applicant may request a verification of the date from the personnel office (look up the date on the last non-update rating notice) but the deadline will not be extended. For those applicants who are unsure of the date, you must advise them that it is in their best interest to begin completing the CSA Booklet while awaiting verification. An applicant who does not submit a CSA Booklet and mistakenly assumes that he/she has a review panel evaluation on file will not be given additional time to submit a booklet after the deadline. They will be considered a non-applicant for the position and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season.*

(2) Transfer applicants who have completed the process for the Group, which contains the new position, already have a rating for the new position. That rating must be used to place them on the new register. This includes applicants whose rating is 'ineligible.'

- **If the employee does not return the CSA Booklet within the 21 calendar days**, the employee is considered a non-applicant and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season. The HR MSS Coordinator must include a note on the copy of the original EMPS form that the employee declined to apply by not returning the CSA Booklet, and should place it in the employee's maintenance file. No further action is required.
- **If the employee does return the CSA booklet within the 21 calendar days**, HR gives the applicant an EMA Form to complete. Note that the applicant fills out only one EMA form regardless of the number of positions for which they applied. This form is a scannable document and must be handled carefully. The applicant completes this form immediately using a No. 2 pencil and returns it to the HR

MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator verifies the accuracy of the form, paying particular attention that the register date is the same as the date on which the applicant transferred to the new facility. The HR MSS Coordinator then adds a MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) to the EMA form and sends it to NTAC via registered mail. The original Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form is retained locally and will be needed again when the final results are received from NTAC.

Note: A sufficient supply of CSA booklets should be made available to MSS coordinators and employee supervisors.

For the MSS Open Season Applicant.

MSS Open Season occurs every three years during March, beginning in 1997. NTAC will publish separate instructions outlining the announcement and application process prior to each Open Season.

STEP 3: The Incraft Record Review

Once the EMA forms are submitted by HR, NTAC processes and matches them with records already in the MSS database to determine whether there are components (examination, review panel evaluations, and/or supervisor evaluations) already on file that apply to those particular applications. This process normally takes from one to two weeks, depending on the registered mail transit time and the volume of applications being processed by NTAC. Use this time to tentatively schedule review panels, based on the number of applicants who submitted CSA booklets.

NTAC will make a list of applicants, along with the components that are already on file, available to the office. As the technology evolves, this list will change from an electronically transmitted document to an on-line database. NTAC will print separately the instructions for obtaining this list.

Once you have obtained the list:

⇒ **Review the applicants shown as not having a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation (review panels after 2/8/97) on file.** Make sure that each of these applicants submitted a CSA booklet. Finalize the schedule for conducting their review panel and notify the applicants of the schedule.

Note: If an applicant submitted a CSA booklet and the review record shows a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation on file, notify the applicant that he/she will not be scheduled for a Review Panel Evaluation (Exhibit J).

Important Note! If an applicant did not submit a CSA booklet, and the review record shows no Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation on file, notify the applicant that he/she is no longer considered an applicant for the position (Exhibit K). Request that NTAC delete the applicant from the application file

(Exhibit L). Failing to delete this applicant in a timely manner (within five days of receiving the list) will result in a delay in producing results for other applicants on the list.

- ⇒ **Review the applicants shown as not having an examination on file and make a list of them.** Make sure that enough examination material is on hand to test these applicants. The examination must take place after the Review Panel Evaluation, so schedule accordingly. If circumstances dictate that the examination must precede the review panel evaluation, you must contact NTAC first for permission to process out of sequence. Failure to notify NTAC can cause additional work and delay processing.
- ⇒ **Review the applicants shown as not having a supervisor evaluation on file and make a list of them.** The Supervisor Evaluation must take place after the Review Panel Evaluation, so delay notifying the Maintenance MSS Coordinator of a missing supervisor evaluation until after the Review Panel Evaluation is completed. If circumstances dictate that the Supervisor Evaluation must precede the Review Panel Evaluation, you must first contact NTAC for permission to process out of sequence. Failure to notify NTAC can cause additional work and can delay processing.

STEP 4: The Incraft Review Panel Evaluation

Construct a Review Panel. Each MSS Review Panel has three members:

- (1) the senior maintenance manager or designee, who serves as chairman,
- (2) a maintenance supervisor from the functional area, or, if one is not available, then a maintenance supervisor who is knowledgeable about the duties and requirements of the position in the group, and
- (3) one Human Resources representative.

When precise membership for review panels is not available, management may designate Human Resources and maintenance representatives from the next higher level or nearby facility.

Review Panel members **must not** be:

- the immediate supervisor of any applicant.
- the individual who completed the supervisor's evaluation component for **any** applicant who will be rated by that panel. **Note:** *An individual who completed the next higher manager element on the supervisor evaluation form may participate as a member of a review panel.*
- a 204B or craft employee.

For ET-10 Review Panels. Either a representative from the Maintenance Technical Support Center (MTSC) or the representative's designee (designated in writing by the

MTSC office) **MUST** be one of the members of an ET-10 Review Panel. Any ET-10 review panel conducted without an MTSC representative will be voided by NTAC. Since this is a costly and time-consuming mistake, particular care must be taken when constructing an ET-10 review panel. Be sure to use PS Form 8088, Group C - ET-10 Review Panel.³

REMINDER: All review panel members must be EAS employees. Do not use 204B or craft employees.

Conduct the Review Panel.

⇒ **Form Preparation.** The HR MSS Coordinator provides the Review Panel Evaluation Guidelines and Review Panel Evaluation Forms 8087 and/or Forms 8088 (for Group C ET-10 only) (Exhibits M-1 and M-2) to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator is also responsible for gridding the applicant's name and social security number on the form in advance. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator verifies that the candidate's name and social security number are inserted on the review panel evaluation form and provides the materials to the review panel.

Note: *Since mistakes in the names and social security numbers are expensive and time consuming to correct after NTAC has processed the forms, it is imperative that this step be done carefully. **The ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the name and social security number gridding rests with the HR MSS Coordinator. Under no circumstances should the review panel members be given forms without the names and social security numbers pre-gridded.***

⇒ **Evaluation.** The review panel evaluates each candidate's qualifications using the Review Panel Evaluation Guidelines and grids the appropriate rating on the Form 8087 (and/or 8088 for ET-10). The review panel **MUST** evaluate all the KSAs on the form.

Note: *Any Review Panel form received at NTAC without all the KSAs evaluated will be returned to the office for completion.*

⇒ **Form verification and submission.** The review panel returns the completed form(s) to the HR MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator reviews the form(s) to be certain all KSAs have been marked and adds an MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) to the review panel evaluation form(s) and sends it (them) to NTAC via registered mail.

Abandoned Review Panel Evaluations.

1) If an applicant abandons the review panel process (fails to report for a scheduled review panel or asks not to be scheduled), notify NTAC via cc:Mail (Exhibit N).

³ Refer to Management Instruction AS-630-94-2, NTSN Guidelines for PS-10 Electronics Positions.

Before notifying NTAC, verify that the circumstances justify such an action. Once an applicant is processed as having abandoned a review panel, it is a difficult, expensive, and time-consuming process to undo. Any request to NTAC to undo an abandon must be accompanied by a letter from the District Manager, Human Resources, explaining why the action was taken erroneously and what steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence (Exhibit O).

- 2) On the other hand, abandons must be processed in a timely manner. Requests to abandon must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the scheduled date for the Review Panel Evaluation. Other applicants with the same or earlier register dates cannot receive their results until the abandon request has been processed.

STEP 5: The Examination Process

Scheduling. If the Record Review step indicated a need for an examination, it should be scheduled to take place after the review panel process. Provide the employee's supervisor with a copy of the examination schedule. Do not give an examination to any applicant who abandoned the review panel process.

Conducting. Maintenance examinations must be conducted by NTAC-certified examiners according to the general rules and procedures disseminated by NTAC for the conducting of examinations.

Testing incraft applicants in an entrance session. There is a special requirement when testing incraft applicants in a session with entrance applicants. Incraft applicants **MUST NOT BE** tested in sessions that include entrance applicants unless they have also applied using the entrance process. This is because all applicants tested in an entrance session will receive an entrance result. If circumstances dictate that an incraft applicant must be tested in an entrance session, but is not entitled to an entrance result, then special procedures apply. Separate the incraft answer sheets and prepare separate time record sheets for the entrance and incraft/in-service answer sheets before sending to NTAC. Essentially, the single test session is submitted as if it were two separate sessions.

Abandoned Examinations.

- 1) If an applicant abandons the examination process (fails to attend a scheduled examination or asks not to be scheduled), notify NTAC via cc:Mail. Before notifying NTAC, verify that the circumstances justify such an action. Once an applicant is processed as having abandoned an examination, it is a difficult, expensive, and time-consuming process to undo. Any request to NTAC to undo an abandon must be accompanied by a letter from the District Manager, Human Resources, explaining why the action was taken erroneously and what steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence.
- 2) On the other hand, since other applicants with the same or earlier register dates cannot receive their results until the abandon request has been processed, abandons must be processed in a timely manner. Requests to abandon an

applicant must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the scheduled date for the examination.

STEP 6: The Supervisor Evaluation

Form Preparation. The HR MSS Coordinator provides the supervisor evaluation guidelines and the Supervisor Evaluation Form(s) (PS Form 8086, Exhibit D) to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator is also responsible for gridding the applicant's name and social security number on the form in advance. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator verifies that the candidate's name and social security number are inserted on the Supervisor Evaluation Form and provides the materials to the applicable supervisors.

Note: *Since mistakes in the name and social security number are expensive and time-consuming to correct after NTAC has processed the forms, it is imperative that this step be done carefully. The ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the name and social security number gridding rests with the HR MSS Coordinator. Under no circumstances should the supervisor be given forms without the names and social security numbers pre-gridded.*

Evaluation. The applicant's immediate supervisor evaluates each of the KSAs, using the Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines, and must base the evaluations upon the supervisor's knowledge of the candidate's qualifications. Supervisors **must** address all of the KSAs on the evaluation form. If an applicant's performance on tasks related to a specific KSA is unknown, or has not been observed, the supervisor must darken the circle marked "CE" (cannot evaluate) for that KSA on the Supervisor Evaluation Form. The supervisor grids the appropriate ratings on these forms. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that all KSAs have been evaluated in order to avoid delays in processing.

Note: *Any supervisor evaluation received at NTAC without all of the KSAs evaluated will be returned to the office for completion.*

- ⇒ **Form Review and Verification.** Upon completion of the Supervisor Evaluation Form, the immediate supervisor forwards these forms and the Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines to the next higher level supervisor for review. The next higher level maintenance supervisor signs and forwards the form and Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator reviews the Supervisor's Evaluation Forms to verify that they are properly gridded and completed, including proper applicant name and social security number, and then submits the forms along with the Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines to the HR MSS Coordinator.
- ⇒ **Form Submission.** The HR MSS Coordinator reviews the form(s) to be certain that all KSAs have been marked, adds an MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) to the Supervisor Evaluation(s), and returns the forms to NTAC via registered mail.

STEP 7: Results

Posting

The final step is recording and filing the results of the process. Once the National Test Administration Center (NTAC) receives, or already has on file, the examination, review panel evaluation, and supervisor evaluation, it will score the applicant and return the results. As the technology changes, the media for returning the results may shift from paper copy, to electronic facsimile, to on-line database. Exhibit Q shows the basic content and layout for a results letter. The actual letter will vary slightly and change over time to accommodate processing changes. The applicant will receive a similar document directly from NTAC.

Match the results letter received from NTAC with the employee maintenance position selection form which the applicant filled out at the beginning of the process. The results document may not cover each position selected since each group result is printed separately and may or may not complete the process at the same time. Place the applicant on each register selected on the form according to his or her rating for that register. Place a copy of the applicants results in their OPF and Maintenance File.

Applicant Inquiries

Results copies- The applicant may not receive his/her personal copy in the mail before the results are posted to the register. Since the office copy contains essentially the same information a copy may be provided to the applicant upon request. However, the applicant must wait at least eight (8) calendar days after the date NTAC printed the results before requesting a copy.

Remember! Incraft ratings are composite ratings and are not based from 0 to 100. If the applicant has a numerical rating, he/she is eligible.

Actual vs. Banded Score Results - Incraft scores are banded as per the Memorandum of Understanding with the APWU dated May 11, 1992. If applicants request their actual score as opposed to the banded score, they must submit a signed request in writing to the HR office listing each position for which they wish the actual score. The HR office forwards the signed request, together with a copy of the results sheet, to NTAC, preferably as a cc:Mail attachment.

Examination, Review Panel Evaluation, and Supervisor Evaluation Dates -

If an applicant questions the dates of the examination, review panel evaluation, or supervisor evaluation used in calculating the rating, review the rules and the dates with the applicant. The rules are as follows:

For other than updates - For examinations and supervisor evaluations, the system first searches for any that are within the 365 calendar days prior to the register date on the Employee Maintenance Application. It skips supervisor evaluations given for an update. If an examination or supervisor evaluation exists, the system uses it for that application. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date. If none exist, it searches for any dated after the register date. If more than one exists, it uses

the one closest to the register date. In the case of examinations, it does not matter why the applicant took the examination; if it meets the above matching rules, it is used.

For review panels - the system first searches for any given after February 8, 1997, that are within the 365 calendar days prior to the register date on the Employee Maintenance Application. It skips review panel evaluations given for an update. If a review panel evaluation exists, the system uses it for that application. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date. If none exist, it searches for any dated after the register date. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date.

For updates- For examinations, the system searches for any dated after the update setup date. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the update setup date.

For review panel evaluations and supervisor evaluations, it searches for any dated after the update setup and marked as update evaluations. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the update setup date.

Verification of Components - If, after reviewing the matching rules with the applicant, the applicant is still not satisfied that the correct examination, review panel evaluation, or supervisor evaluation was used, show the following requirements to the applicant.

NTAC will research to determine that the maintenance results received used the correct examination, review panel evaluation, and supervisor evaluation. Since such searches are expensive and time consuming, a signed request is required before beginning. The request must include the statement that you have reviewed the above rules and do not believe these rules were used in calculating your results. You must provide a copy of your rating and the dates for any examination, review panel evaluation, and supervisor evaluation you believe should have been used. Return the signed request to your personnel office. Do not mail directly to NTAC. NTAC can only research to determine whether the rules were applied correctly. This is not a forum to request a variation to the rules.

If an applicant submits a written signed request, review it for completeness and forward under cover letter to NTAC.

Rerate request - If an applicant requests a verification of the results, commonly referred to as a rerate, NTAC will review and verify the results. The applicant must submit a signed request for a review and include a copy of his/her results. If an applicant submits a signed request, review it for completeness and forward under cover letter, with attachment, to NTAC. NTAC will respond directly to the applicant with a copy to the office.

Union requests for information - While MSS documents are considered confidential, an employee may obtain copies of his/her supervisor's evaluation and review panel evaluation. Information about individual employees may be released to certified collective bargaining agents, consistent with appropriate provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements and other statutory obligations, when permitted as a routine use of the system of records. If in doubt about the obligation or the permissibility of a disclosure, obtain the advice of the chief field counsel (Reference: Administrative Support Manual, Section 353). Since the disclosure of one's social security number, date of birth, and home address, is clearly an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, such data must be deleted from copies of MSS forms or documentation authorized for release to third parties.

PROMOTION ELIGIBILITY REGISTER

Establishment -

Eligible applicants are ranked in descending order, first by banded score and then by seniority, within the same banded score.

Ineligible applicants are maintained separately from the PER, in an alphabetical listing.

Higher level employees have a right to apply for all PERs. However, they are not placed onto a PER unless it is for the same level or higher position.

Maintenance supervisors can use the individual KSA summary report as an effective tool to provide appropriate guidance and suggested training to employees.

Human Resources staff is responsible for the administration and custody of the PERs.

UPDATING PROCESS

Incraft employees who have received a rating or set of ratings for an incraft group and are on the register (or on the separate list of ineligible applicants) have the right to update that rating or set of ratings.

Management has only 37 calendar days from the date of the applicant's update request to complete the process and have results back in the office.

Eligibility to update.

To be eligible to update a group, applicants must meet all of the following five criteria:

- 1) They must have received an incraft rating or set of ratings for the group(s).
- 2) They must be an applicant for at least one position in the group (be on at least one register or list of ineligibles in the group) they are asking to update. This does not include those who abandoned the process.
- 3) They must have received new or additional education, training, or experience, and it must have been completed within 30 calendar days of the date of update request. ***Note:*** *Eligible employees may request an update on any KSA for which the criteria has been met.*
- 4) An applicant may qualify to update one or more KSA's, but not enough KSA's to begin the update process. In that case, the Maintenance MSS Coordinator keeps the records in the employee's maintenance file until he/she has qualified to update at least the minimum KSA's required (failed KSAs) for one position. In each case, the evidence of additional education, training or experience must have been submitted within 30 days of its completion.
- 5) The new or additional education, training, or experience must be relevant to the KSAs that they wish to update.

Update application process.

a. The employee: The employee must submit a request, in writing, to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator with documentation of the new or additional education, training, or experience that they have received. This request must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the completion of such education, training, or experience.⁴ The employee must also indicate which group(s) and which KSAs he/she wishes to update.

b. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator: The Maintenance MSS Coordinator reviews the documentation, the employee's Rating Summary, and the list of PERs for which the employee applied. From this, the coordinator determines if:

- The new or additional education, training, or experience is relevant to the KSA(s) for which the update is requested.
- The KSA(s) approved for update include all the failed KSAs for at least one position in the group(s) for which they are requesting an update.
- The applicant has no other update in process for the group(s) in question.

If the request is denied, either in whole or in part, the applicant must be notified in writing by the Maintenance MSS Coordinator as to the specific reasons for the denial. If the approved documentation does not satisfy all KSAs, it is filed in the employee's file until all failed KSAs are satisfied. At that time, the employee will complete the update

⁴ Article 38, USPS/APWU National Agreement.

process. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator will then complete the MSS Update Setup Form, PS Form 8084, (Exhibit R) identifying the KSAs approved for update. The form, along with a copy of the latest individual Rating Summary for the employee, is forwarded to the HR MSS Coordinator.

c. Candidate Supplemental Application Booklet: If the applicant has been approved for an update, the Maintenance MSS Coordinator (or the HR MSS Coordinator) provides the employee with the appropriate sheet(s) from the Candidate Supplemental Application Booklet to address the KSA(s) which have been approved for update. The employee must return the CSA page(s) to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator or the HR MSS Coordinator, at local option, as follows:

1-5 pages (KSAs) ----- 5 working days.

more than 5 pages ----- 10 working days.

d. The HR MSS Coordinator: If the applicant returns the CSA pages, the HR MSS Coordinator copies the Update Setup Form (you can use one Update Setup Form even if the employee is updating 2 or more groups) for reference and prepares a MSS Cover Sheet, and mails the cover sheet and original Update Setup Form to NTAC within 24 hours of receiving it. Using the Update Setup Form copy as a reference, the HR MSS Coordinator determines what components (examination, supervisor evaluation, and/or review panel evaluation) are used to evaluate the KSAs approved for update. The update applicant is then scheduled for any examination required and maintenance is notified of the need for any review panel or supervisor evaluation requirement.

Note: *Although the Maintenance MSS Coordinator approves the update, it remains the responsibility of the HR MSS Coordinator to schedule any review panel, examination and/or to notify the Maintenance MSS Coordinator of the need for any supervisor evaluation.*

e. The Update Examination: If the KSA(s) approved for update requires an examination, the examination must be given according to the general rules for examination disseminated by NTAC. The update examination must be given after the date on the Update Setup Form. Any examination given before that date, regardless of the proximity, will not be counted towards the update. However, the first examination given after that date will count.

f. The Update Review Panel: If the KSAs approved for update require an update review panel, then the panel must evaluate the applicant according to the Review Panel Guidelines. The panel must be held after the date on the update setup form. The HR MSS Coordinator must grid the applicant's name, social security number, and identify the KSA(s) to be updated on the review panel form. Under no circumstances will the update review panel be given a form to complete without the name and social security number gridded and the KSA(s) identified. The panel **must** evaluate the applicant on all of the KSAs approved for update and **only** those KSAs. Upon completion, the review panel returns the form to the HR MSS Coordinator who checks it for completion, completes an MSSCS, and mails the document to NTAC.

g. The Update Supervisor Evaluation: If the KSAs approved for update require a supervisor evaluation, the supervisor must evaluate the applicant according to the Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines. The supervisor evaluation must be dated after the date on the update setup form. The HR MSS Coordinator must grid the applicant's name, social security number, and identify the KSAs to be updated on the supervisor evaluation form. Under no circumstances will the supervisor be given a form to complete without the name and social security number pre-gridded, and the KSAs identified. The supervisor **must** evaluate the applicant on all the KSAs approved for update that are relevant to the supervisor evaluation, and **only** those KSAs.

h. Timelines: Each document must be verified and sent to NTAC as it is completed, with the update setup form being submitted first. Unlike other processes in MSS, the order of the documents is unimportant, EXCEPT that the setup form is submitted first. Any errors on the forms will delay processing, so the verification for each document is critical. Management has only 37 calendar days from the date of the applicant's update request to complete the process and have results back in the office.⁵

⁵ Article 38, USPS/APWU National Agreement.

INSERVICE APPLICATION PROCESS

Overview

When it becomes apparent that incraft procedures will not meet the present or future staffing needs of an installation, the installation may establish an inservice register for each position for which an entrance register will likely be utilized. Human Resources and Maintenance should periodically review their register(s), and when appropriate, should give current employees an opportunity to apply. Inservice applicants will use the installation finance number on the Employee Maintenance Application, PS Form 8085.

Important Note! New Inservice announcements may not be posted until such time as all prior inservice applicants have been processed and printed.

The Inservice process for MSS consists of six distinct steps. They are:

- (1) Announcement
- (2) Application
- (3) Record review
- (4) Review panel evaluation
- (5) Examination
- (6) Results

The order of the steps is important! Performing steps out of order will create additional work for both NTAC and the local office and, in some cases, it will create serious problems. NTAC has developed a recommended timeline for each step (Exhibit A) and will track the progress of applications.

STEP 1: The Inservice Announcement

The HR MSS Coordinator prepares an inservice announcement (Exhibit S) for all career postal employees within the pre-determined area of consideration (installations, districts, etc.) announcing that in-service applications are being accepted. The announcement is sent to all offices within the area of consideration for posting.

The announcement must contain the following information:

- Group(s)
- Position(s) within Group(s)
- Opening and Closing Dates
- Application Instructions

Include a statement that the register(s) established by the posting will be used to fill vacancies in the installation.

Include a description of the position and attach the appropriate proficiency requirements (KSAs) to the announcement.

STEP 2: The Inservice Application

During the posting period, career postal employees may apply by completing and signing an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form (Exhibit C), modified to show only those jobs in the announcement, which must be made available to all career employees during the posting period. Employee Maintenance Position Selection Forms will not be accepted after the announcement closing date.

NOTE: Incraft applicants who have completed the incraft process are not eligible to apply or be on inservice registers for the same positions which they completed (whether eligible or ineligible) incraft. NTAC will no longer control this. The local offices **must** ensure that their staff is adhering to this rule.

Provide the applicant with a CSA booklet, if needed. When employees submit an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form, immediately provide them with a Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) Booklet, which must be returned no later than 21 calendar days after the announcement closing date. Applicants who have had a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation within the 365 calendar days preceding the closing date of the announcement should not complete a new CSA booklet.

Note: *Inservice applicants (maintenance or other craft career employees) must be advised that the 365 calendar day rule applies in the Inservice Application Process. It is the applicants' responsibility to determine if their last Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation was within 365 calendar days of the closing date. An applicant may request a verification of the date from the personnel office (look up the date on the last non-update rating notice) but the deadline will not be extended. For those applicants who are unsure of the date, you must advise them that it is in their best interest to begin completing the CSA Booklet while awaiting verification. An applicant who does not submit a CSA Booklet and mistakenly assumes that he/she has a review panel evaluation on file will not be given additional time to submit a booklet after the deadline. They will be considered a non-applicant for the position.*

- **If the employee does not return the CSA Booklet within the 21 calendar days,** no further action is required.
- **If the employee does return the CSA booklet within the 21 calendar days,** HR gives the applicant an EMA Form (Exhibit D) to complete. (Exhibit E provides instructions for completing the form.) Note that the applicant fills out only one EMA form regardless of the number of positions for which they applied. This form is a scannable document and must be handled carefully. The applicant completes this form using a No. 2 pencil and returns the form immediately to either the Maintenance or Human Resources Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator verifies the accuracy of the form. The HR MSS Coordinator then adds an MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS), PS Form 8051, (Exhibit F), to the EMA form and sends it to NTAC via registered mail. The Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form is retained locally and will be needed again when the final results are received from NTAC.

STEP 3: The Inservice Record Review

Once the EMA forms are submitted by HR, NTAC processes and matches them with records already in the MSS database to determine whether there are examinations and/or review panel evaluations already on file that apply to those particular applications. This process normally takes from one to two weeks, depending on the registered mail transit time and the volume of applications being processed by NTAC. Use this time to tentatively schedule review panels, based on the number of applicants who submitted CSA booklets.

NTAC will make a list of applicants, along with the examinations and review panel evaluations that are already on file, available to the office. As the technology evolves, this list will change from an electronically transmitted document to an on-line database. NTAC will print separately the instructions for obtaining this list.

Once you have obtained the list:

- ⇒ **Review the applicants shown as not having a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation (review panels after 2/8/97) on file.** Make sure that each of these applicants submitted a CSA booklet. Finalize the schedule for conducting their review panel and notify the applicants of the schedule.

- ⇒ **Note:** *If an applicant submitted a CSA booklet and the review record shows a Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation on file, notify the applicant that he/she will not be scheduled for a Review Panel Evaluation (Exhibit J). **Important Note!** If an applicant did not submit a CSA booklet, and the review record shows no Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation on file, notify the applicant that he/she is no longer considered an applicant for the position (Exhibit K). Request that NTAC delete the applicant from the application file (Exhibit L). Failing to delete this applicant in a timely manner (within five days of receiving the list) will result in a delay in producing results for other applicants on the list.*

- ⇒ **Review the applicants shown as not having an examination on file and make a list of them.** Make sure that enough examination material is on hand to test these applicants. The examination must take place after the Review Panel Evaluation, so schedule accordingly. If circumstances dictate that the examination must precede the Review Panel Evaluation, you must contact NTAC first for permission to process out of sequence. Failure to notify NTAC can cause additional work and delay processing.

STEP 4: The Inservice Review Panel Evaluation

Construct a Review Panel. Each MSS Review Panel has three members:

- (1) the senior maintenance manager or designee, who serves as chairman;
- (2) a maintenance supervisor from the functional area, or, if one is not available, then a maintenance supervisor who is knowledgeable about the duties and requirements of the position in the group; and
- (3) one Human Resources representative.

When precise membership for review panels is not available, management may designate Human Resources and maintenance representatives from the next higher level or nearby facility.

Review Panel members **must not** be:

- a supervisor of any applicant.
- a 204B or craft employee.

For ET-10 Review Panels. Either a representative from the Maintenance Technical Support Center (MTSC) or the representative's designee (designated in writing by the MTSC office) **MUST** be one of the members of an ET-10 Review Panel. Any ET-10 review panel conducted without an MTSC representative will be voided by NTAC. Since this is a costly and time-consuming mistake, particular care must be taken when constructing an ET-10 review panel. Be sure to use PS Form 8088, Group C - ET-10 Review Panel.⁶

REMINDER: All review panel members must be EAS employees. Do not use 204B or craft employees.

Conduct the Review Panel.

⇒ **Form Preparation.** The HR MSS Coordinator provides the Review Panel Evaluation Guidelines and Review Panel Evaluation Forms 8087 and/or Forms 8088 (for Group C, ET-10 only) (Exhibits M-1 and M-2) to the Maintenance MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator is also responsible for gridding the applicant's name and social security number on the form in advance. The Maintenance MSS Coordinator verifies that the candidate's name and social security number are inserted on the Review Panel Evaluation Form and provides the materials to the applicable supervisors.

⁶ Refer to Management Instruction AS-630-94-2, NTSN Guidelines for PS-10 Electronics Positions.

Note: Since mistakes in the names and social security numbers are expensive and time consuming to correct after NTAC has processed the forms, it is imperative that this step be done carefully. **The ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the name and social security number gridding rests with the HR MSS Coordinator. Under no circumstances should the review panel members be given forms without the name and social security number pre-gridded.**

⇒ **Evaluation.** The review panel evaluates each candidate's qualifications using the Review Panel Evaluation Guidelines and grids the appropriate rating on the Form 8087 (and/or 8088 for ET-10). The review panel **MUST** evaluate all the KSAs on the form.

Note: Any Review Panel form received at NTAC without all the KSAs evaluated will be returned to the office for completion.

⇒ **Form verification and submission.** The review panel returns the completed form(s) to the HR MSS Coordinator. The HR MSS Coordinator reviews the form(s) to be certain all KSAs have been marked and adds a MSS Cover Sheet (MSSCS) to the review panel evaluation form(s) and sends it (them) to NTAC via registered mail.

Abandoned Review Panel Evaluations.

- 1) If an applicant abandons the review panel process (fails to report for a scheduled review panel or asks not to be scheduled), notify NTAC via cc:Mail (Exhibit N). Before notifying NTAC, verify that the circumstances justify such an action. Once an applicant is processed as having abandoned a review panel, it is a difficult, expensive, and time-consuming process to undo. Any request to NTAC to undo an abandon must be accompanied by a letter from the District Manager, Human Resources, explaining why the action was taken erroneously and what steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence (Exhibit O).
- 2) On the other hand, abandons must be processed in a timely manner. Requests to abandon an applicant must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the scheduled date for the Review Panel Evaluation. Other applicants with the same or earlier register dates cannot receive their results until the abandon request has been processed.

STEP 5: The Inservice Examination Process

Scheduling. If the Record Review step indicated a need for an examination, it should be scheduled to take place after the review panel process. Do not give an examination to any applicant who abandoned the review panel process.

Conducting. Maintenance examinations must be conducted by NTAC-certified examiners according to the general rules and procedures disseminated by NTAC for conducting examinations.

Testing inservice applicants in an entrance session. There is a special requirement when testing inservice applicants in a session with entrance applicants. Inservice applicants **MUST NOT** be tested in sessions that include entrance applicants unless they have also applied using the entrance process. This is because all applicants tested in an entrance session will receive an entrance result. If circumstances dictate that an inservice applicant must be tested in an entrance session, but is not entitled to an entrance result, then special procedures apply. Separate the inservice answer sheets and prepare separate time record sheets for the entrance and inservice answer sheets before sending to NTAC. Essentially, the single test session is submitted as if it were two separate sessions.

Abandoned Examinations.

- 1) If an applicant abandons the examination process (fails to attend a scheduled examination or asks not to be scheduled), notify NTAC via cc:Mail. Before notifying NTAC, verify that the circumstances justify such an action. Once an applicant is processed as having abandoned an examination, it is a difficult, expensive, and time-consuming process to undo. Any request to NTAC to undo an abandon must be accompanied by a letter from the District Manager, Human Resources, explaining why the action was taken erroneously and what steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence.
- 2) On the other hand, since other applicants with the same register dates cannot receive their results until the abandon request has been processed, abandons must be processed in a timely manner. Requests to abandon an applicant must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the scheduled date for the examination.

STEP 6: Results

Posting

The final step is recording and filing the results of the process. Once the National Test Administration Center (NTAC) receives, or already has on file, the examination and review panel evaluation, it will score the applicant and return the results. As the technology changes, the media for returning the results may shift from paper copy, to electronic facsimile, to on-line database. Exhibit T-1 shows the basic content for a results letter. The actual letter will vary slightly and change over time to accommodate processing changes. The applicant will receive a similar document directly from NTAC.

Match the results letter received from NTAC with the employee maintenance position selection form which the applicant filled out at the beginning of the process. The results document may not cover each position selected since each group result is printed separately and may or may not complete the process at the same time. Place the qualified applicant on each register selected on the form according to his or her rating for that register. Place a copy of the applicant's results in their OPF.

NOTE: Inservice eligibility is not transferable to an incraft Promotion Eligibility Register. Inservice eligibility only guarantees further consideration.

Applicant Inquiries

Results copies -The applicant may not receive his/her personal copy in the mail before the results are posted to the register. Since the office copy contains essentially the same information, a copy may be provided to the applicant upon request. However, the applicant must wait at least eight calendar days after the date NTAC printed the results before requesting a copy.

Remember! Inservice ratings are composite ratings and are not based from 0 to 100. If the applicant has a numerical rating, he/she is eligible. Inservice scores are not banded.

Examination and Review Panel Evaluation Dates -If an applicant questions the dates of the examination or review panel evaluation used in calculating the rating, review the rules and the dates with the applicant. The rules are as follows:

For examinations, the system first searches for any that are within the 365 calendar days prior to the register date on the Employee Maintenance Application. If an examination evaluation exists, the system uses it for that application. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date. If none exist, it searches for any dated after the register date. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date. In the case of examinations it does not matter for what reason the applicant took the examination; if it meets the above matching rules, it is used.

For review panels, the system first searches for any given after February 8, 1997, that are within the 365 calendar days prior to the register date on the Employee Maintenance Application. If a review panel evaluation exists, the system uses it for that application. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date. If none exist, it searches for any dated after the register date. If more than one exists, it uses the one closest to the register date.

Verification of Components - If, after reviewing the matching rules with the applicant, the applicant is still not satisfied that the correct examination or review panel evaluation was used, show the following requirements to the applicant:

The National Test Administration Center (NTAC) will research to determine that the maintenance results received used the correct examination and review panel evaluation. Since such searches are expensive and time consuming, a signed request is required, before beginning. The request must include the statement that you have reviewed the above rules and do not believe these rules were used in calculating your results. You must provide a copy of your rating and the dates for any examination and review panel evaluation you believe should have been used. Return the signed request to your personnel office. Do not mail it directly to NTAC. NTAC can only research to determine whether the rules were applied correctly. This is not a forum to request a variation to the rules.

If an applicant submits a written signed request, review it for completeness and forward under cover letter to NTAC.

Rerate request - If an applicant requests a verification of the results, commonly referred to as a rerate, the National Test Administration Center (NTAC) will review and verify the results. The applicant must submit a signed request for a review and include a copy of his/her results. If an applicant submits a signed request, review it for completeness and forward under cover letter, with attachment, to NTAC. NTAC will respond directly to the applicant with a copy to the office.

Union requests for information - While MSS documents are considered confidential, an employee may obtain copies of his/her supervisor's evaluation and review panel evaluation. Information about individual employees may be released to certified collective bargaining agents, consistent with appropriate provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements and other statutory obligations, when permitted as a routine use of the system of records. If in doubt about the obligation or the permissibility of a disclosure, obtain the advice of the chief field counsel (Reference: Administrative Support Manual, Section 353). Since the disclosure of one's social security number, date of birth, and home address, is clearly an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, such data must be deleted from copies of MSS forms or documentation authorized for release to third parties.

SPECIAL NOTE: Inservice results are good indefinitely unless the examination requirements are changed. If an applicant reapplies inservice, a new examination and/or review panel is required if either or both are not dated within 365 days of the new closing date.

ENTRANCE APPLICATION PROCESS

Entrance Recruitment

- a. Evaluate your labor market and then develop and implement recruiting techniques and strategies that will secure the greatest number of qualified applicants.
- b. Enlist the assistance of other functional areas (Marketing, Operations, etc.) in your recruitment activities. Examples of successful recruitment efforts include on-site job fairs and/or career conference participation.
- c. Consider paid newspaper advertisements, using maintenance-specific classified advertisements, when routine recruitment efforts are not yielding desired results.

Entrance Announcements / Application Procedures

- a. Order announcement material and Forms 2479-A/B, Application/Admission Cards from NTAC using PS Form 2487, Requisition for Test Materials.
- b. Notify NTAC, by letter, of the opening and closing dates. **Announcements may not be left open indefinitely.**
- c. Complete the announcement and post in all post offices as well as other suitable locations such as libraries, public buildings, public bulletin boards, and local union halls.
- d. Interested applicants complete and submit Form 2479-A/B, Application/Admission Card, to designated locations no later than the posted closing date.

Note: *Group C, Electronics Technician, Level 10, cannot be opened under entrance procedures.*

Record Review Procedures

While most applicants for entrance maintenance positions have not taken the multiple choice examination, you may find some applicants who have.

Applicants who have taken the examination(s) within the last 365 calendar days only complete pages 1 and 2 of the answer sheet. They do not retake the examination(s).

Examination Procedure

Scheduling - If the record review step indicates a need for an examination, schedule the examination as soon as possible following the closing date for accepting applications.

Conducting - Maintenance examinations must be conducted by NTAC-certified examiners according to the general rules and procedures disseminated by NTAC for conducting examinations.

Eligibility Notification - NTAC will send eligibility notifications to the applicants. Exhibit T-2 shows the basic content for a results letter. NTAC will electronically forward results to the district office. The eligibility notification guarantees ONLY further consideration to entrance applicants whose eligibility ratings are reached competitively.

Qualification Review Panels

Determining an Applicant's Qualifications - The Review Panel Guidelines Booklet provides information for evaluating maintenance applicants. A qualifications review panel consists of a member of HR and two maintenance supervisors/managers who are familiar with the positions. Conduct a qualifications review panel for all entrance applicants who passed the written examination, using the procedures outlined in Postal Bulletin 21770 dated 8/23/90 (a complete revision to Handbook EL-311, Subchapter 510 and 520).

Scheduling the Interview - The Qualification Standards for each position have both required and desired KSAs. HR pulls all required KSA pages from the standard Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) Booklet to make up the entrance CSA Booklet. Reproduce these booklets locally. HR mails to the applicant PS Form 2591, Application for Employment, along with the CSA Booklet and a letter of instructions advising the applicant that he/she has 14 calendar days from date of receipt to complete and return the materials to the designated office.

Evaluating the Applicant - The panel is responsible for evaluating the applicant in each of the required proficiency KSAs for the particular position. Each panel member should independently determine whether applicants have demonstrated each of the KSAs. Members should then discuss their decisions and arrive at a consensus for each KSA for each applicant. The Panel Chairperson (senior maintenance member) must complete Form 1796B, Qualifications Rating Sheet for Best Qualified Positions, based on the consensus for each applicant. The Qualifications Review Panel only determines whether applicants are qualified or not qualified on each appropriate KSA. Do not recalculate the original score on the Notice of Rating letter.

Note: All Qualifications Review Panel members must be EAS employees. Do not use 204Bs or craft employees.

Qualification Results

Eligible Applicants - Human Resources personnel process the fully qualified applicants for appointment in accordance with the established selection procedures outlined in Section 265 of Handbook EL-311, Personnel Operations.

Ineligible Applicants - HR hiring officials notify, in writing, all applicants who did not meet the KSA requirement(s). Place the applicants in the inactive register file.

Qualification Results - HR updates the results letter as follows:

CSA booklet returned undeliverable (date)

Failed to Return CSA Booklet (date)

Failed to report for interview (date)

Qualified on Review Panel (date)

Failed Review Panel (list KSAs), Notified by letter (date)

Additional Test Opportunities - Entrance applicants may not retake the same entrance maintenance examination within 365 calendar days of the date of the last examination. The MSS will not process an entrance examination for an applicant if 365 calendar days have not expired since the applicant last completed the same entrance examination. If an applicant reapplies for a group for which he/she has already taken the test within the 365 calendar day period, then they apply using Page 1 and 2 of PS Form 5925, Answer Sheet (5-Position) General Purpose. NTAC will generate results from the existing examination for the new application.

Note: Entrance register eligibility is not transferable to an incraft Promotion Eligibility Register or an Inservice register.

Duplication Of Entrance Eligibility

At the request of a entrance eligible, eligibility for the following maintenance **entrance positions** can be duplicated **at any time** to a Postal installation where there is a current entrance register for the same position **without** the examination being open and without impacting the applicant's eligibility on the original register.⁷

Electronic Technician, Level 9
Building Equipment Mechanic
Building Maintenance Custodian
Mail Processing Mechanic, MPE-7
Maintenance Mechanic, Level 5

An applicant must include in his/her request:

- A copy of the Notice of Rating card for each register eligibility.
- A statement indicating whether a qualifications review panel has been conducted for each register eligibility and the results of the evaluations (i.e., qualified, not qualified).
- Completion of a qualifications review panel evaluation is not required before accepting requests for entrance eligibility duplication. However, once an installation (original office or office accepting duplication) completes an evaluation for that particular register, subsequent evaluations need not be conducted.

⁷ Refer to memoranda dated March 17, 1989, and May 4, 1989, signed by Kevin T. McGovern, Headquarters, Employment & Placement.

REGISTERS

Eligibility for Registers

Incraft Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs) - Only career employees currently in a maintenance craft position may have their names placed on an incraft maintenance PER. (NOTE: Applicants for a lower level position cannot be placed on a PER. They must apply during open season, upon transfer to another installation, or when a new position is authorized within their installation. There is no special opportunity for applicants seeking a lower level position. They will receive a score which can be used later to qualify for a change to a lower level. This is a separate procedure which does not use the PER.)

Inservice Registers - Career postal employees (bargaining and nonbargaining) and substitute rural carriers may apply for inservice examination announcements. Inservice examinations must be opened at the installation with the vacancy(ies) and, if necessary, the area of consideration may be expanded to a wider geographical area to include other installations.

Entrance Registers - External applicants, non-career postal employees, and career postal employees (bargaining and nonbargaining) may apply for competitive entrance examinations. Entrance opportunities must be opened to the public and advertised in accordance with postal policy.

Eligibility Restoration to Register

Promotion Eligibility Register - Once an employee is selected from an incraft PER, their name is removed from that register. If a maintenance employee leaves his/her current position and wishes to have their eligibility restored to the register, they may do so if:

- He/she is currently a maintenance craft employee.
- The examination and/or qualification requirements are unchanged - meaning their original rating is still valid.
- The register position is the same or higher level than the position they are in currently.

Inservice Register - Once an employee is selected from an inservice register, their name is removed from that register. If an employee leaves a position and wishes to have their eligibility restored, they may do so if:

- The examination and/or qualification requirements are unchanged - meaning their original rating is still valid.
- He/she is a career employee when the request is made.

Order In Which Vacant Maintenance Craft Positions Are Filled

- Select the senior employee on the appropriate preferred assignment register (PAR).
- Consider higher level **qualified** maintenance employees requesting change to lower level. *Qualified* means eligible under the MSS incraft process for the position in question.
- Select the ranking employee on the appropriate promotion eligibility register (PER).
- Consider maintenance craft employees requesting transfer. (Note: The appropriate PAR and PER must be exhausted before considering other hiring options. Employees who have ineligible ratings for the position under consideration are not considered.) Transfer requests may be considered **before** or **after** inservice procedures in the following order:
 1. Maintenance craft employees who are already qualified for the position in question.
 2. Maintenance craft employees who are not qualified for the position in question but have been afforded an opportunity to qualify under the provisions for qualifying for transfer (see page 38, ***Qualifying for Transfer***).
- Give priority consideration to career maintenance craft employees using the inservice register.
- Consider career postal employees, regardless of craft, on the inservice register in score order.
- Consider entrance register eligibles in score order.

PRE-1989 RATINGS

Ratings attained under MSS before January 1989 are valid ratings and employees may remain on registers with eligible scores attained before January 1989. However, to be eligible to update the pre- 1989 score(s) or ineligible rating(s) an employee must participate in the enhanced MSS (January 1989 or later).

Employees who received ratings (including ineligibles) during the February 1997 transition scoring are enhanced MSS participants and may update pre-1989 ratings for any group for which they received a transition rating. If they received a lower transition rating than their pre-1989 score the pre-1989 score is controlling and will determine their register status.

Employees who did not receive ratings during the February 1997 transition scoring must participate in the enhanced MSS before they may update pre-1989 ratings. They may receive enhanced MSS ratings by participating in and completing the process

during Open Season, as a result of a transfer, or when a new position is announced in their office.

When updating, the enhanced MSS rating is used when determining which KSAs must be addressed. Follow the normal update procedures outlined elsewhere in this handbook. If the rating resulting from any update is lower than the pre-1989 rating the pre-1989 rating is controlling and will determine their register status.

QUALIFYING FOR TRANSFERS

An incraft employee may be afforded a special opportunity to qualify for transfer to a different installation in a position covered by the Maintenance Selection System. The transfer position may be either a promotion or change to a lower level. Both of the following criteria must be met:

- The employee has a letter from the office he or she has requested a transfer to confirming their selection for the position pending qualification
- The employee has never completed the MSS process for the group containing the position in question. Note: Employees with a prior rating of ineligible for the position in question are not permitted this special opportunity.

Once the above criteria is met the employee must be given a CSA booklet to complete if they have not had a non-update review panel in the last 365 days. They must return the booklet within 21 calendar days. Once they return the CSA booklet they must complete an EMA form that is sent to NTAC. Tentatively schedule the examination and review panel. Review the applicants record after NTAC processes the EMA form to verify that the examination, review panel evaluation, and supervisor evaluation are needed. Cancel the examination and/or review panel evaluation if one is already on file. Notify the supervisor of the need to provide an evaluation if the record review shows one is needed. Submit the components as they are completed.

If an applicant receives ratings for a group as a result of this process and does not transfer to a new office the ratings may be used to place the applicant on registers or ineligible applicant lists only during the next Open Season or if a new position is authorized in the office.

QUALIFYING FOR A CHANGE TO A LOWER LEVEL

A qualified incraft employee may request a change to a lower level incraft position in the installation and will be considered as specified in the Registers section of this handbook. An incraft employee who has not qualified under MSS for a position may not be afforded any special opportunity to qualify. The Open Season, New-To-Craft, and New Position processes described in this handbook provide the only opportunities for a incraft applicant to qualify for a lower level incraft position within the installation.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS

Post the Names of MSS Coordinators

You must permanently post the names, locations, and telephone numbers of both the Human Resources and Maintenance MSS Coordinators in the same location where registers are posted. If your installation does not have Human Resources and/or Maintenance MSS Coordinators, you must post the names, locations, and telephone numbers of the installation coordinator(s).

Re-Establish

If you abandon an applicant by mistake you must request that the applicant be re-established.

Submit a memo (Exhibit O) signed by the Manager, Human Resources requesting to re-establish the applicant, specifying:

1. Applicant's name,
2. Social security number
3. Finance number
4. Office
5. Type (Incraft or Inservice)
6. Group number(s)
7. Reasons for re-establish

Suspend Action

You may have a circumstance where one applicant has not completed the MSS requirements and cannot complete them for a long period of time (due to extenuating circumstances such as extended personal illness, or injury, military activation, leave of absences for extended periods, etc.). This individual is holding up your register since all applicants must be completed before NTAC can print the results.

To alleviate this situation, you may suspend the applicant by sending a memo (Exhibit U) to NTAC including the following information:

1. Applicant's name,
2. Social security number
3. Finance number
4. Office
5. Type (Incraft or Inservice)
6. Group number(s)
7. Detailed explanation of why you are requesting to suspend the applicant.

This memo must be signed by a Human Resources or Maintenance Manager. When the applicant returns and is able to complete the remaining MSS requirements, let NTAC know (see Resume Action) and we will restart the process for this individual.

NOTE: Do not use Suspend Action in cases where it is the office rather than the Applicant that has delayed completion of the components.

Resume

The resume action is used to reactivate an applicant whose MSS effort was suspended.

When the applicant who was suspended is ready to complete the process send a memo (Exhibit V), signed by the Manager, Human Resources, requesting to resume the applicant, specifying the following:

1. Applicant's name,
2. Social security number
3. Finance number
4. Office
5. Type (Incraft or Inservice)
6. Group number(s)

MAINTENANCE FILE

Human Resources MSS Coordinator

The Human Resources MSS Coordinator must maintain a maintenance file for each Incraft and Inservice maintenance applicant. Following is a list of items that must be maintained in this file:

- Employee Notification Letter (Incraft)
- Employee Maintenance Position Selection form
- Employee Maintenance Application forms
- Supervisor Evaluation forms
- Review Panel Evaluation forms
- MSS Results and Rating Summaries
- Update Setup forms
- All correspondence to and from the applicant, etc.
- Control sheet for tracking MSS activity
- Other materials deemed applicable

Maintenance MSS Coordinator

The Maintenance MSS Coordinator must maintain a maintenance file for each Incraft maintenance applicant. The following is a list of copies of items that must be maintained in this file:

- Employee Notification Letter (Incraft)
- Employee Maintenance Position Selection form
- Employee Maintenance Application forms
- MSS Results and KSA Summaries
- Documentation for updates
- Notification of update approval or denial
- Update Setup forms
- All correspondence to and from the applicant, etc.
- Control sheet for tracking MSS activity
- Other materials deemed applicable

SPECIAL NOTE: *DO NOT MAKE COPIES OF THE APPLICANT'S EXAMINATION ANSWER SHEET.*

While MSS documents are considered confidential, an employee may obtain copies of his/her supervisor's evaluation and review panel evaluation. Information about individual employees may be released to certified collective bargaining agents, consistent with appropriate provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements and other statutory obligations, when permitted as a routine use of the system of records. If in doubt about the obligation or the permissibility of a disclosure, obtain the advice of the chief field counsel (Reference: Administrative Support Manual, Section 353). Since the disclosure of one's social security number, date of birth, and home address, is clearly an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, such data must be deleted from copies of MSS forms or documentation authorized for release to third parties.

APPENDIX A: TEST MATERIALS

All test materials are restricted. Please refer to Handbook EL-311, Chapter 4, for in-depth explanation of handling test materials.

Required Materials

Examinations 931, 932, or 933

Directions for Conducting the Exams

Handbook EL-311, Personnel Operations

Oral Instruction Tapes

Examiner's Copy of Oral Instructions

PS Form 1796 B, Qualifications Rating Sheet for Best Qualified Positions

PS Forms 2479-A/B, Application/Admission Cards

PS Form 2487, Requisition for Test Materials

PS Form 2523, Time Record Sheet

PS Form 2591, Application for Employment

PS Form 5925, Answer Sheet (5-Position) General Purpose

PS Form 8051, Maintenance Selection System Cover Sheet

PS Form 8085, Employee Maintenance Application

PS Form 8086, MSS Supervisor Evaluation

PS Form 8087, MSS Review Panel Evaluation - Groups A, B, and D

PS Form 8088, MSS Review Panel Evaluation - Group C

Review Panel Guidelines Booklets

Supervisor Evaluation Guidelines Booklets

Ordering And Stocking Materials

The HR Maintenance Coordinator requests all forms/materials from NTAC through the Examinations Administrator. The HR Coordinator must maintain an adequate supply of materials to accommodate all activity in the applications and evaluation processes for a 6-month period.

Security Of Test Materials

All test materials are restricted and must be safeguarded accordingly. The Examinations Administrator must secure proper storage equipment and enforce such security measures. Secure restricted test material in a separate room and/or in cabinets using double locks. The Examinations Administrator has sole possession of the master key for these storage units. Do not allow unauthorized persons to handle or see the exams. Account for all copies of the exams.

Proper Completion Of Scannable Documents

All documents are processed on a high-speed scanner. The scanner reads only what is gridded. Examiners and applicants must use only No. 2 pencils when completing the forms.

These forms must be protected from exposure to environmental elements (i.e., dampness, humidity, etc.). ONLY A NO. 2 LEAD PENCIL MUST BE USED TO COMPLETE ANY OF THE SCANNABLE FORMS. No pens, typewriter, computer, etc., are to be used to complete any portion of these forms. If this occur, the forms will be returned for proper completion. This also includes the signature section.

All circles must be completely darkened. Any corrections must be completely erased. Check all forms to ensure that there are no other marks on them. The forms are processed by a high speed scanner and the scanner reads only what is gridded. These forms **MUST NOT** be folded, stapled, torn, or mutilated in any manner. When transmitted to NTAC, they must be protected with sheets of cardboard at least the same size or larger to protect the edges.

Copies of Employee Maintenance Application forms, Supervisor Evaluation forms, and Time Record Sheets should be maintained by the local office.

DO NOT COPY ANSWER SHEETS.

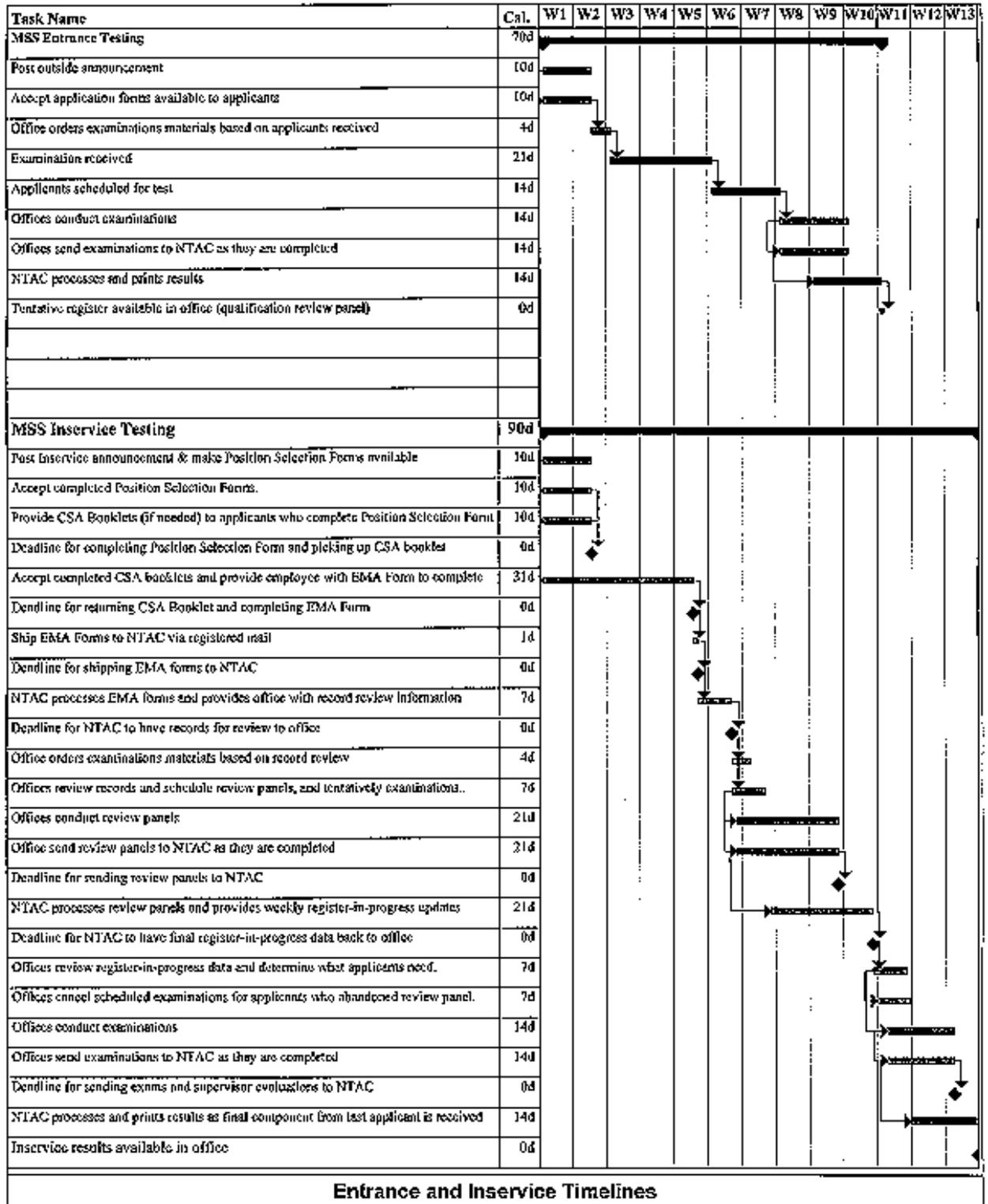


EXHIBIT A (1 of 2)

Task Name	Cal	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16	W17	W18	W19	
Phase 1 Application Process	70a																				
Post Incraft new position announcements	30a																				
Make Position Selection Forms available to applicants and accept completed forms	30b																				
Provide CSA Booklets (if needed) to applicants who complete Position Selection Form	30c																				
Deadline for completing Position Selection Form and picking up CSA booklet	40																				
Accept completed CSA booklets and provide employee with EMA Form to complete	51c																				
Deadline for returning CSA Booklet and completing EMA Form	60																				
Ship EMA Forms to NTAC via registered mail	71																				
Deadline for shipping EMA forms to NTAC	80																				
NTAC processes EMA forms and provides office with record information	14E																				
Deadline for NTAC to have records for review to office	60																				
Office orders examinations materials based on returned review	40																				
Phase 2 Review Panel Process	29d																				
Offices review records and schedule review panels, and tentatively examinations, for applicants.	70																				
Offices conduct review panels	21d																				
Office send review panels to NTAC as they are completed	21d																				
Deadline for sending review panels to NTAC	60																				
NTAC processes review panels and provides weekly register-in-progress updates	21d																				
Deadline for NTAC to have final register-in-progress data back to office	60																				
Phase 3 Examination and Supervisor Evaluation Process	22a																				
Offices review register-in-progress data and determine what applicants need.	70																				
Offices cancel scheduled examinations for applicants who abandoned the review panel.	70																				
Offices conduct examinations	14d																				
Supervisors complete evaluation	14d																				
Offices send examinations and supervisors evaluations to NTAC as they are completed	14d																				
Deadline for sending exams and supervisor evaluations to NTAC	60																				
NTAC processes and prints results as final computer form test applicant is received	14d																				
Deadline for completing new position announcement	60																				

Incraft New Position Timelines

EXHIBIT A (2 of 2)

FOR NEW MAINTENANCE CRAFT EMPLOYEES ONLY

TO: [NAME]
[ADDRESS]

In accordance with Article 38 of the National Agreement between the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the U. S. Postal Service, you have 30 calendar days from the receipt of this notice to complete and return the attached Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form for Promotion Eligibility Register(s) (PER) which is/are authorized in your facility. Please check all jobs in which you are interested.

If you do not return the attached form to (add local individual/title) within 30 calendar days, you will forfeit your right to apply for any of these positions until the next Maintenance Open Season (every three years).

Upon return of the attached form, you will receive a Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) booklet.

RETURN TO:

SPECIAL NOTE: *It is the applicants' responsibility to determine if their last Consolidated Review Panel Evaluation was within 365 calendar days of the date the employee entered the maintenance craft. An applicant may request a verification of the date from the personnel office (look up the date on the last rating notice) but the deadline will not be extended. For those applicants who are unsure of the date, you must advise them that it is in their best interest to begin completing the CSA Booklet while awaiting verification. An applicant who does not submit a CSA Booklet and mistakenly assumes that he/she has a review panel evaluation on file will not be given additional time to submit a booklet after the deadline. They will be considered a non-applicant for the position and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season.*

EXHIBIT B

EMPLOYEE MAINTENANCE POSITION

SELECTION FORM

Employee Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Return By: _____

The following MSS positions should be authorized in your facility. You must return this form, with a check mark beside each position in which you are interested, by the deadline listed above, in order for you to receive a Candidate Supplemental Application Booklet.

<u>POSITION TITLE / LEVEL</u>	
CHECK BOX	CHECK BOX
GROUP A (Exam 931)	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Equipment Mechanic / PS-7
	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Maintenance Specialist / PS-7
	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Maintenance Technician / PS-8
	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance Custodian / PS-4
	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Electrician / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mason / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Painter / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Painter-Finisher / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumber / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Blacksmith-Welder / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic / PS-5
	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter Box Mechanic (Shop) / PS-6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Machinist / PS-7
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic / PS-4
GROUP B (Exam 932)	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Technician / ET-9, PS-9
GROUP C (Exam 932)	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronics Technician / ET-10, PS-10
GROUP D (Exam 933)	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic / MPE-7, PS-7

Employee Signature Required

Date Signed

EXHIBIT C



MARKING INSTRUCTIONS



INCORRECT MARKS

CORRECT MARK

EMPLOYEE MAINTENANCE APPLICATION

Privacy Act Statement: The collection of this information is authorized by 39 USC 401 and 1001. This information will be used to determine your qualification for an appointment...

Form with columns for Last Name, First Name, and MI, containing a grid of bubbles for data entry.

Register Date form with bubbles for MMDDYY.

Social Security Number form with bubbles for digits.

Installation Finance Number form with bubbles for digits.

Announcement type form with radio buttons for Open Season and Other.

Special Instructions form with bubbles for text entry.

Examination Selection form with radio buttons for Group A, B, C, and D.

Employing Office (Please Print), State, and Signature fields.

PS Form 8085, January 1997 (PREVIOUS EDITIONS NOT USABLE) Mark Robus by NCB EM-89250-2854521 HR07 Printed in U.S.A. Copyright 1996 by National Computer Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.

EXHIBIT D

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING EMPLOYEE MAINTENANCE APPLICATION FORM (PS FORM 8085)

Before you complete the Employee Maintenance Application form, PS Form 8085, please read both the following instructions and the Privacy Act Statement on the form. You, the applicant, MUST complete this form.

CAUTION: USE ONLY A NO. 2 LEAD PENCIL TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.

If any other type pencil, pen, typewriter, computer, etc., is used, it cannot be read by the electronic scanner and the form will be returned to you. You will have to complete a new form.

When darkening the circles, make a heavy pencil mark large enough to fill the circles, but do not go into the other circles or margin area. If you make a mistake, erase it completely and darken the correct circle. The EMA forms are scannable documents and therefore must be handled with care. Do not **bend, fold, staple**, or otherwise **mutilate** these forms.

Item 1: Print your last name, first name, and middle initial in the proper sections as indicated. Below each box, darken the circle that is lettered the same as the letter in the box.

Item 2: The Human Resources MSS Coordinator should have provided you with the correct **Register Date** for this form. Darken the circle that is numbered the same as the number in the box.

Item 3: Enter your Social Security Number. Darken the circle under each box which is the same as the number in the box.

Item 4: Enter your Installation Finance Number in the boxes. Darken the circle under each box which is the same as the number.

Item 5: Darken the circle which applies to the type of **ANNOUNCEMENT** for which you are applying (i.e., Incraft or Inservice). If you are applying for an incraft announcement, you must darken the circle which corresponds to the event which allows you to complete a new EMA form (i.e., Open Season, other).

Item 6: Leave Blank.

Item 7: Darken the appropriate circle(s) that corresponds with the group(s) on the Employee Maintenance Position Selection form for which you are applying. If you are applying for more than one group being established with the same "Register Date," darken all the appropriate circles on one form.

Item 8: You must print the name of your employing office (city and state) and **sign** the EMA form in this space.

January, 1997

EXHIBIT E

NEWLY AUTHORIZED INCRAFT POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

TO: ALL MAINTENANCE CRAFT EMPLOYEES

MAINTENANCE SELECTION SYSTEM (MSS)
PROMOTION ELIGIBILITY REGISTER (PER)

Authorization has been given for Maintenance Craft employees to apply for the newly established position of _____ in the _____ Post Office.

All interested Maintenance Craft employees are invited to apply for consideration for this position.

Opening Date: _____ Closing Date: _____

Contact the following person(s) for the Employee Maintenance Position Selection form:

This form must be completed and returned by: _____.

Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) booklets are available on the following dates: _____; from the following person(s): _____. CSA booklets must be completed and returned by: _____.

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION AS AN APPLICANT:

- (1) Complete the Maintenance Position Selection form by closing date on this announcement.
- (2) Complete and return the CSA Booklet.
- (3) Complete and return PS-Form 8085.
- (4) Satisfactorily complete an interview which will be given to you by a three-member board.
- (5) Successfully complete the examination that is based on your KSAs, which will be scheduled for you after you have finished steps 1 and 2 above.
- (6) After you have finished the above 5 steps, your supervisor will complete a Supervisor Evaluation.

EXHIBIT G

SAMPLE LETTER - FINANCE NUMBER CORRECTION

(Date)

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: FINANCE NUMBER CORRECTION

The Employee Maintenance Application submitted for:

NAME:
SSN:

contained an incorrect Finance Number. The corrected information follows:

INCORRECT FINANCE NO:
CORRECT FINANCE NO:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

(NAME)
Human Resources MSS Coordinator
District

EXHIBIT H

SAMPLE LETTER FOR TRANSFERRED MAINTENANCE CRAFT EMPLOYEES ONLY

[DATE:]

TO: [NAME]
[ADDRESS]

In accordance with Article 38 of the National Agreement between the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the U. S. Postal Service, you have the opportunity to apply for any authorized positions within a group, for which you have not previously applied.

Note: If you previously applied and abandoned for a particular group, you are eligible to reapply for any positions in that group.

Please complete and return the attached Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form within 30 calendar days for Promotion Eligibility Register(s) (PER) which is/are authorized in this facility. Please check all jobs in which you are interested. If you currently have a notice of rating for any of the positions, submit a copy to the Human Resources MSS Coordinator with this form.

If you do not return the attached form, you will forfeit your right to apply for any of these positions until the next Maintenance Open Season (every three years).

If applicable, upon return of the attached form, you will receive a Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) booklet.

RETURN TO:

SPECIAL NOTE: *It is the applicants' responsibility to determine if their last consolidated Review Panel Evaluation was within 365 calendar days of the date of transfer to the new facility. An applicant may request a verification of the date from the personnel office (look up the date on the last non-update rating notice) but the deadline will not be extended. For those applicants who are unsure of the date, you must advise them that it is in their best interest to begin completing the CSA Booklet while awaiting verification. An applicant who does not submit a CSA Booklet and mistakenly assumes that he/she has a review panel evaluation on file will not be given additional time to submit a booklet after the deadline. They will be considered a non-applicant for the position and cannot reapply incraft until the next open season.*

EXHIBIT I

SAMPLE LETTER - APPLICANT NOT ENTITLED TO NEW REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION

[date]

**TO: [name]
[address]**

Our records indicate that you have a valid review panel evaluation form(s) on file.

The review panel evaluation form is less than 365 calendar days from the register date on your Employee Maintenance Application form. Therefore, you will not be scheduled for a new review panel evaluation.

Should you have any questions, please contact [name of local person] at [telephone number].

**[name]
[title]
[office]**

EXHIBIT J

SAMPLE LETTER - APPLICANT CONSIDERED NON-APPLICANT

[date]

**TO: [name]
[address]**

Our records indicate that you failed to return [Employee Maintenance Position Selection form or CSA Booklet] which was due [date].

Therefore, you are considered a non-applicant and will not be eligible to apply until the next MSS Open Season.

Should you have any questions, please contact [name of local person] at [telephone number].

**[name]
[title]
[office]**

EXHIBIT K

SAMPLE LETTER - DELETE ACTION

[Date]

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: DELETE ACTION

Please delete the following employee in the Maintenance Selection System:

NAME:
SSN:
FINANCE NO:
REGISTER NO(S):
TYPE:
REASON:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

[name]
[title]
[district/office]

EXHIBIT L

SAMPLE LETTER - ABANDON REQUEST

(Date)

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: ABANDON REQUEST

The following employee(s) did not report for the examination(s) or review panel interview as scheduled. Please abandon the MSS activity for this employee.

NAME:
SSN:
FINANCE NO:
EXAM NUMBER(S):
TYPE:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

(NAME)
Human Resources MSS Coordinator
District

EXHIBIT N

SAMPLE LETTER - RE-ESTABLISH REQUEST

(Date)

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: RE-ESTABLISH REQUEST

Please re-establish the MSS activity for the following employee:

NAME:
SSN:
FINANCE NO:
REGISTER NO(S):
TYPE:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:
REASON FOR REQUEST:

Enclosed are the necessary components to complete (NAME).

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

(NAME)
Manager, Human Resources
District

Enclosures

EXHIBIT O

INSERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

TO: ALL INSERVICE EMPLOYEES

MAINTENANCE SELECTION SYSTEM (MSS)

Authorization has been given to establish an Inservice register for the following position(s): _____.

This Inservice Register will be used to fill any vacancies not filled by incraft procedures.

All interested Inservice career employees within the area of consideration are invited to apply for this position.

Opening Date: _____ Closing Date: _____

Contact the following person(s) for the Employee Maintenance Position Selection

form: _____.

This form must be completed and returned by the following date: _____.

Candidate Supplemental Application (CSA) booklets are available

on: _____;

from: _____.

CSA booklets must be completed and returned by: _____.

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION AS AN APPLICANT:

- (1) Complete the Employee Maintenance Position Selection form by closing date on this announcement.
- (2) Complete and return the CSA Booklet.
- (3) Complete and return PS-Form 8085.
- (4) Satisfactorily complete an interview which will be given to you by a three-member board.
- (5) Successfully complete the examination that is based on your KSAs, which will be scheduled for you after you have finished steps 1 and 2 above.

EXHIBIT S

EXAMINATION CENTER: _____

Date Issued: ____/____/____

KEEP THIS OFFICIAL RECORD

RESULTS LETTER

ELIGIBLE

APPLICANT NAME: _____

APPLICANT ADDRESS: _____

This is a record of your participation in the following examination:

Date of Examination: ____/____/____

Type of Examination: _____

Installation: _____

Applicant ID: _____

Basic Rating: _____

Veteran Points: _____

Final Rating: _____

Your name is now on the list for further consideration for the following positions at the installation(s) shown on this notice. You will be contacted by the Examination Center noted above, which will provide you with the information necessary to complete the examination process.

If claiming veteran preference, you must present proof of preference when requested by the appointing officer.

It is your responsibility to direct any inquiries, changes, or corrections, in writing, to the Exam Center identified at the top of this notice. Failure to keep the Examination Center informed of any changes, or failure to respond to official correspondence from the Center, could jeopardize your position on the register.

Please include the following information when corresponding with the Examination Center:

Examination Center Name
Installation Location
Type of Examination

Applicant Name
Applicant ID

EXHIBIT T-1

EXAMINATION CENTER: _____

Date Issued: ____/____/____

KEEP THIS OFFICIAL RECORD

RESULTS LETTER

INELIGIBLE

APPLICANT NAME: _____

APPLICANT ADDRESS: _____

This is a record of your participation in the following examination:

Date of Examination: ____/____/____

Type of Examination: _____

Installation: _____

Applicant ID: _____

Basic Rating: _____

Veteran Points: _____

Final Rating: _____

Please contact the local personnel office if you require additional information.

EXHIBIT T-2

SAMPLE LETTER - SUSPEND ACTION

(Date)

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: SUSPEND ACTION

Please suspend the MSS activity for the following employee:

NAME:
SSN:
FINANCE NO:
REGISTER NO(S):
TYPE:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:

The reasons for requesting this suspend action are (GIVE DETAILED REASONS).

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

(NAME)
Manager, Human Resources
District

EXHIBIT U

SAMPLE LETTER - RESUME ACTION

(Date)

MSS COORDINATOR
NATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION CENTER

SUBJECT: RESUME ACTION

Please resume the MSS activity for the following employee:

NAME:
SSN:
FINANCE NO:
REGISTER NO(S):
TYPE:
EXAM CENTER FINANCE NO:

Enclosed are the necessary components to complete (NAME).

Please contact (NAME) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER) if further information is needed.

(NAME)
Human Resources MSS Coordinator
District

Enclosures

EXHIBIT V

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Washington, DC 20260

DATE: MAY 19 1993

OUR REF: LR400:TJValenti:cmv:20260-4125

SUBJECT: Grievance and Pre-arbitration
Settlements/Maintenance Selection
System

TO: Area Managers, Customer Services
Area Managers, Processing & Distribution
Plant Managers, Processing & Distribution
District Managers, Customer Services

This document will serve to facilitate grievance and prearbitration settlements dealing with the Maintenance Selection System (MSS). The MSS was developed to help ensure the selection and promotion of qualified maintenance personnel and to ensure a uniform application of qualification requirements. The National Test Administration Center (NTAC) administers the scoring and register status of the MSS which is computer based.

Therefore, in an effort to assist this process, NTAC should be contacted during the investigation of grievance and other settlements involving maintenance craft positions within the MSS. This coordination will further ensure that implementation of settlements is done in accordance with the MSS.

NTAC can be reached regarding this issue at (703) 207-2700. If there are any questions regarding national policy questions, you may contact Thomas J. Valenti of my staff at (202) 268-3831.

fore (signed) Frank X. Jacquette

William J. Downes
Manager
Contract Administration (APWU/NPMHU)
Labor Relations

cc: Mr. James Lingberg, Director, APWU

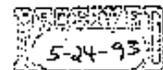


EXHIBIT W

APPENDIX B: RECORDS RETENTION

1. Vacancy File

- (a) Records Establishment: The HR personnel department establishes a vacancy file using a Notice of Intent Number.
- (b) Components: The vacancy file consists of the following:
 - Current posted PER(s)
 - Withdrawal requests
 - Name(s) of selected individual(s)
 - Effective dates of promotion(s)
- (c) Retention: Maintain the vacancy file at the installation for two years from the date of selection. After that period, it is normally destroyed UNLESS an audit, investigation, or appeal is pending. If an audit, investigation, or appeal is pending, retain the file until the need is satisfied and matter resolved.

2. PERs. Article 38 of the USPS/APWU National Agreement determines the duration of PERs. Therefore, retain all records pertaining to the establishment of PER eligibility for the duration of the Contract. All PERs since November 1985 have been rolled over to each new Contract and are still valid. All materials documenting these PERs, from 1989 forward, must be retained. After an employee retires or is deceased, files may be disposed of according to ASM.

3. Preferred Assignment Register. HR officials must:

- (a) transfer all records pertaining to a specific preferred assignment action to a closed file when the vacancy is filled;
- (b) close out this file monthly, and dispose of it six months from the cutoff date; and
- (c) if records are part of a grievance file, dispose of them with the case file.

4. Personal Notes. Review panel members and individuals may make personal notes to assist them in evaluating applicants. These notes are considered their own property and are not records of the USPS. However, do not circulate these notes among other review panel members or other supervisors, and do not include them in the vacancy file.

APPENDIX C: PRIVACY ACT AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONSIDERATIONS AND DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS

Requests For Individual Records

Postal Service employees who want access to their final ratings, CSAs, and review panel and supervisor evaluations must submit a written request as described in Part 353 of the Administrative Support Manual (ASM) to the local office and/or the District HR MSS Coordinator.

Unavailable Records

- 1. Deny any applicant's request for the following types of information:**
 - (a) Review panel evaluation guidelines
 - (b) Supervisor evaluation guidelines
 - (c) Ratings of other employees
 - (d) Examination materials

- 2. Follow the procedures in ASM 350** when you deny a request for disclosure of any record.