

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SERVICE
1400 KEY BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VA 22209-5144

15 DEC 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Voluntary Reduction in Force

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established a legal authority to be used when documenting the various Voluntary Reduction in Force (VRIF) separations authorized by 5 USC 3502. Effective immediately, the second legal authority element on the SF-50 must contain "VBA/5 U.S.C. 3502(f)" when processing such personnel actions. OPM advises that this guidance will be included in a future update to *The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions*. Until an update is published, you may reference the decision logic table attached for necessary authority and guidance.

//SIGNED COPY

Earl T. Payne

Director

Attachment 1 (JPG)

Attachment 1 (MS WORD97)

As stated

DISTRIBUTION:

DIRECTOR FOR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND

OPERATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT,

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

DIRECTOR OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL POLICY AND PERSONNEL

PLANS, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

VOLUNTARY REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) SEPARATION

1. **GENERAL:** Section 1034 of the Fiscal Year 1996 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes the Secretary of Defense to allow the release of an employee who volunteers for separation in a reduction in force (RIF) even though the employee is not otherwise subject to the separation under RIF. Use of this Provision has the same objective as other downsizing initiatives, that is, to allow DoD activities and installations to minimize the impact of downsizing by encouraging employees to volunteer to be separated in lieu of another employee who is slated to be separated by RIF procedures. Some employees, who can afford to leave the Federal service but whose retention standing precludes separation, would like to be separated by RIF in order to be eligible for entitlements such as severance pay or continued health benefits coverage. This program sets forth the framework under which employees can volunteer to be separated in order to save other employees from RIF.

2. **POLICY:** Under the authorities and conditions described below, Component Heads may use this provision when acceptance of the offer to volunteer for separation will result in saving an employee otherwise scheduled for RIF separation.

a. Voluntary separation can be effected only during formal RIF, that is, where official RIF notices will be issued.

b. Both employees must be in the same competitive area. This program may be expanded to include other DoD competitive areas in the commuting area in coordination with, and under procedures issued by, the Civilian Assistance and Reemployment (CARE) Division Civilian Personnel Management Service.

c. Matches of separation volunteers with those affected by the formal RIF will be based on the similarity of their positions. Any position affected by the RIF can be identified for placement of a RIF separation volunteer, if separation of the RIF volunteer would result in the cancellation of a RIF separation action, and the subsequent placement of a RIF-affected employee. The placement cannot result in promotion. Activities should determine the best match for placement, considering qualifications for placement in the volunteer's position, the ability of the RIF-affected employee to do the work of the similar position, and cost effectiveness.

(1) When there are more volunteers than needed and all are equally good matches, activities will process voluntary RIF applicants in order of seniority using the Service Computation Date (SCD) for leave.

(2) When there are fewer volunteers than needed and there are equally good matches for placement, activities will select RIF-affected employees for placement in order of RIF retention standing.

d. If, at any point in the RIF process, it is determined that the voluntary separation would not result in saving a RIF-affected employee, the voluntary separation will be canceled. Volunteering for separation under the provisions of this policy does not confer RIF assignment rights.

e. Volunteering for RIF separation under these provisions is strictly a voluntary action on the part of any employee to whom this option is offered. Such employee shall not be forced or coerced in any way to volunteer for RIF separation.

3. **AUTHORITY:**

a. Heads of Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and their subordinate activities and installations are authorized to offer voluntary RIF separation to eligible individuals in accordance with the above policy.

b. This authority may not be used after September 30, 1996.

4. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS:

a. Only U.S. citizen employees of the Department of Defense, who meet the definition of competing employee in 5 Code of Federal Regulations 351.203, are eligible for voluntary separation participation. In addition, RIF separation volunteers:

- (1) must be serving under an appointment without time limitation,
- (2) may not be reemployed annuitants, and,
- (3) may not have a pending or approved application for disability retirement.

b. Separation volunteers are ineligible for registration in the Priority Placement Program, non-federal hiring incentives, and voluntary separation incentives. Separation volunteers who are reemployed by the Federal government are subject to the rules governing repayment of severance pay.

c. Generally, employees occupying critical or hard-to-fill positions, or with critical knowledge or skills, will not be allowed to participate except with the approval of the Commanding Officer or activity head. Employee participation in the voluntary RIF separation program is not an entitlement and is subject to the discretion of the Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and their activities and installations.

5. PROCEDURES:

a. Separation volunteers will be issued RIF separation notices under this authority effective on the RIF effective date. The notice shall advise them of their entitlements under RIF.

b. Volunteers must sign a statement that they realize the action is irrevocable once they have been issued a RIF separation notice. However, activities may cancel the action if necessary.

c. Separation volunteers will be treated as involuntary RIF separations, with all entitlements, except for the conditions outlined in 4. b.