

Reduction in Force Suggested Guidelines

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Introduction

Separation of employees through reduction in force should not occur until management has exhausted every feasible alternative available to avoid it. Therefore, a reduction-in-force decision should be reached only after measures such as a hiring freeze on vacant positions, limits on purchasing and travel, retirement options, and job sharing and work schedule alternatives have proven insufficient.

A reduction in force necessarily compels a thorough evaluation of the accomplishments of specific programs, the need for particular positions, and the relative value of specific employees so that an agency can provide the highest level of service possible with a reduced work force. The determination as to the retention or separation of a particular employee should include an evaluation of the relative skills, knowledge and productivity of the employee in comparison to the services necessary to give the above factors more weight than other considerations, such as length of service. An agency's guidelines should provide an opportunity to systematically determine when an individual with less skills, knowledge and productivity should be separated to allow the retention of an individual with greater skills, knowledge and productivity.

Suggested Guidelines

The agency's guidelines for reduction in force should include, in addition to or in lieu of other factors, the following criteria:

- (1) Determination of the number of positions which must be deleted to meet the established goal.
- (2) The feasibility of eliminating entire programs or parts of programs.
- (3) Identification of areas where the number of positions must be reduced or eliminated.
- (4) Identification of the classification of positions to be eliminated to determine whether personnel can be interchanged with other work units. Before deletion,

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attention should be given to using vacant positions to utilize employees who would otherwise be separated.

- (5) Exploration of all measures which would avoid the involuntary separation of employees.
- (6) Evaluation of employees subject to reduction in force by using the following criteria, where possible, and others where appropriate:
 - Needs of agency to deliver services
 - Relative skills, knowledge, productivity and value of employees (refer to documentation available from Performance Management Program).
 - Length of service of employees
- 7) Documentation of steps followed in reduction in force
- 8) An impact analysis of proposed reduction in force on the agency's workforce demographics.

It is also recommended that agencies contact the Equal Opportunity Services Division to review model procedures for conducting an impact analysis and agency considerations for minimizing and/or avoiding potential reduction in force administrative problems.
