



# EEO FOCUS

## News You Can Use



### Fort Carson – Striving to Become a Model EEO Employer

On 1 October 2010, Fort Carson's civilian workforce population totaled 3,485 (2,756 Appropriated Fund and 729 Non-Appropriated Fund employees).

Each year the EEO Office tracks the diversity of our workforce as part of our requirements from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Management Directive 715 (MD-715) is EEOC's reporting mechanism that ensures agencies are compliant with Title VII and the Rehabilitation Act. The MD-715 requires federal agencies to conduct annual self-assessments of their EEO policies and practices to ensure free and open workplace competition. The report analyzes the demographic profile of Fort Carson to ensure that the diversity of the workplace is reflective of the community where we live/work. Where disparities exist, initiatives must be established to correct the under-representation.

When we compare ourselves to the Colorado Springs region it is evident we are an employer with a commitment to a diverse workforce. Minorities comprise 21.1% of the region and women make up 47% of the local labor pool. At Fort Carson 26.6% of the workforce is comprised of minorities and 59% are women.

Delving more deeply, however, we do find some concerns that must be addressed across the installation. For instance, this year the number of Hispanics in our workforce dropped to 6.5% yet Hispanics make up 10.2% of the local civilian labor force. The analysis also indicates that at higher grades women and minorities are under-represented. Women are 59% of our workforce yet they hold 48% of higher graded positions; minorities make up 26% of the workforce yet hold only 22% of higher level positions. Finally, the statistics show that our workforce is made up of 10.7% people with disabilities but we are still below the federal government's goal of 2% of our workforce comprised of individuals with severe or targeted disabilities (0.86%).

Sharing this information with supervisors/managers/leaders is the first step in our plan to correct these deficiencies. If you are a hiring manager, you play an integral role in this endeavor. In the coming months the EEO team will be meeting with managers across the installation to discuss techniques you can deploy that may positively impact the installation's efforts to improve these demographics. In the meantime, if you'd like to learn more about the initiatives outlined in the MD 715 plan (Parts H, I, and J) please review the report that will soon be available on the Fort Carson EEO website (<http://www.carson.army.mil/EEO/new%20site/affirm.html>). Together we can become a model EEO employer.

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**“If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should beg night and day and never be satisfied. I should sit apart in awful solitude, a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and to others to be happy, I escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation.”**

**Helen Keller**

#### Installation EEO Goals:

- ⇒ Equal Employment Opportunity is institutionalized as an integral part of the Fort Carson mission.
- ⇒ A work environment free from unlawful discrimination.
- ⇒ Workforce that values diversity.
- ⇒ Management officials who are responsive to the concerns of the Fort Carson leaders and employees.
- ⇒ EEO careerists who are experts in their field.

### Proactive Accommodations for Individuals with Mental Health Impairments

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides free and expert one-on-one guidance on workplace accommodations to employers who employ people with disabilities. Assistance is available both over the phone and online: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu>. There are two common issues that JAN answers inquiries about are:

1. What accommodations will work for individuals with mental health impairments when workplaces are implementing substantial changes?
2. What accommodations will help supervisors work effectively with individuals with mental health impairments?

Many accommodation ideas are born from effective management techniques. When organizations are implementing workplace changes, it is important that key personnel recognize that a change in the environment or in supervisors may be difficult. Maintaining open channels of communication to ensure transitions are smooth, and providing short weekly or monthly meetings with employees to discuss workplace issues can be helpful. Supervisors can also implement management techniques that support an inclusive workplace culture while simultaneously providing accommodations.

#### Successful techniques include the following:

- Develop clear expectations of responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting performance standards
- Schedule consistent meetings with employee to set goals and review progress
- Encourage all employees to move non-work related conversations out of work areas
- Do not mandate that employees attend work related social functions
- Develop a procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodation
- Provide positive praise and reinforcement
- Provide day-to-day guidance and feedback
- Provide written job instructions via email
- Allow for open communication
- Establish written long term and short term goals
- Develop strategies to deal with conflict
- Educate all employees on their right to accommodations
- Provide sensitivity training to coworkers and supervisors



Excerpts from: JAN'S *Accommodation and Compliance Series* on Mental Health Impairments. Additional information can be found at <http://askjan.org/media/Psychiatric.html>

#### Appropriate Language Use to Promote a Positive Work Environment

The recommended manner is known as "persons first" language. This means that the person is emphasized first, the disability second. For example:

##### Say...

- ◆ person with a disability
- ◆ individual without speech
- ◆ woman who is blind or visually impaired
- ◆ person who is deaf or hearing impaired
- ◆ man with paraplegia
- ◆ woman who is paralyzed
- ◆ individual with epilepsy
- ◆ person who has a learning disability
- ◆ person with a developmental disability
- ◆ congenital disability
- ◆ person with a mental disability, cognitive impairment

##### Don't Say...

- ◆ disabled or handicapped person
- ◆ mute, dumb
- ◆ blind woman or "the blind"
- ◆ deaf person or "the deaf"
- ◆ Paraplegic
- ◆ paralyzed woman
- ◆ Epileptic
- ◆ crazy, demented, insane
- ◆ slow learner, retarded, learning disabled
- ◆ birth defect
- ◆ mentally retarded

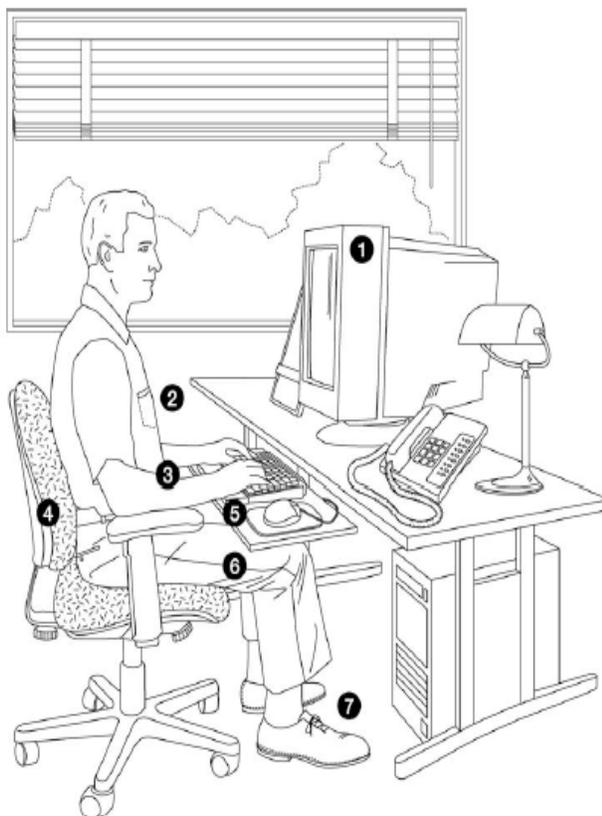
Extracted from American College Personnel Association (ACPA), Website: <http://www.acpa.nche.edu>

### Posture Matters – Proactive Workplace Injury Prevention

Ergonomics is the field of study that seeks to fit the job to the person, rather than the person to the job. This is achieved through the evaluation and design of workplaces, environments, job tasks, equipment, and processes in relationship to human capabilities and interactions in the workplace. Anytime there is a change in the workplace (new employee, new chair, new desk), new ergonomic solutions are required. It is important that all furniture (chairs, desks) and other accessories are adjustable in order to meet individual worker's needs, for no two people are alike. Ergonomics covers the entire work area, including issues regarding the chair, workstation, and lighting. Effective use of ergonomic practices will assist in maintaining high levels of productivity, avoiding painful and costly employee injuries, and increasing worker satisfaction. By designing the job around the person, employees will have a decreased risk of injury and an improved perception of their "employee-centered" role at work.

#### Workstation Review

1. **Monitor Screen Top**  
Slightly below eye level
2. **Body**  
Centered in front of the monitor and keyboard
3. **Forearms**  
Level or tilted-up slightly
4. **Lower Back**  
Supported by chair
5. **Wrists**  
Should not rest while typing
6. **Legs**  
Horizontal
7. **Feet**  
Resting flat on the floor or footrest

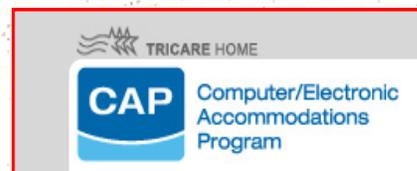


The Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program has updated their website to include Assistive Technology (AT) Demonstration videos that can provide information about different types of accommodations and how these solutions help employees with disabilities. They've included links to some helpful AT documents with information about what is available for certain networks and agencies.

Website:

<http://cap.tricare.mil/Publications/Forms/productMaterials.aspx>

Extracted from Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) The Workplace Ergonomics Reference Guide.



### Suggested Emergency Evacuation Aids for People with Disabilities

The National Fire Protection Association, NFPA suggest the below actions in the workplace to provide safe evacuations:

**Deaf/Hard of Hearing** - Visual/strobe light alarms, text pagers that vibrate, running text on a computer monitor.

**Blind or Low Vision** - Map out alternative paths of escape, then walk through those routes.

**Mobility Impaired** - Help review and select evacuation chairs and select and train staff members to assist people with disabilities. should the elevators be taken out of service. Make sure arrangements are made to have wheelchairs available after evacuation.

After effective evacuation aides are chosen, employers along with employees with disabilities, should decide who will implement the emergency plan, commit it to writing, and make it a part of the standard operating procedures. Share the plan with all employees for feedback. Practice the evacuation plan to make sure it works, and modify it as needed.

### Disability Etiquette Tips



Approximately 54 million Americans are living with a disability. Yet Americans with disabilities have an employment rate far lower than that of Americans without disabilities and they are under-represented in the Federal Workforce. Individuals with disabilities currently represent just over 5% of the nearly 2.5 million people in the Federal workforce. At Fort Carson, individuals with disabilities are just .86% of our workforce. Recently President Obama ordered compliance with Executive Order 13163 signed by President Clinton that calls for an additional 100,000 individuals with disabilities to be employed by the Federal Government over five years. At minimum the goal is to have at least 2% of the Fort Carson workforce be comprised of individuals with disabilities. As a manager, you can help us reach this goal. To learn how to hire using Schedule A authority, please contact the EEO Office Disability Program Manager at 526-5818.

Once in the workforce, everyone can follow a few simple etiquette tips for interacting with people with disabilities that will go a long way to ensuring a respectful workplace.

#### TIPS

- Use common sense and extend common courtesies to everyone.
- Be patient – people with disabilities and seniors might require more time to express themselves or to move about.
- Relax and be yourself (don't worry about saying what you think is the wrong thing – don't worry about using common phrases like "see you later" to someone who is visually impaired).
- Speak directly to the person and maintain eye contact – don't speak through a companion, aide, or interpreter.
- Ask before you help – just because someone has a disability, don't assume he/she needs help.
- Don't make decisions for people with disabilities about what they can or can't do.
- If you have trouble understanding a person with a speech impediment, ask him/her to repeat what they said.
- Be sensitive about physical contact – some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them – even if your intention is to assist – could knock them off balance.
- Don't push or touch a person's wheelchair; it's part of his/her personal space.
- Keep ramps and accessible doors to your building unblocked. Reserve accessible parking for those who require it.
- Don't lean over to shake a person's hand
- Don't obscure your face when communicating with a person who is hard of hearing.



A final word – people with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and problems and joys. While the disability is an integral part of who they are, it alone does not define them. Don't make them into disability heroes or victims. Treat them as individuals.

Excerpt from *Disability Etiquette*, a publication of the United Spinal Association

Fort Carson is one of three Army posts nationwide that has an Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Veterans Employment Services Representative assigned to the Post. The OPM representative provides direct support to transitioning Service Members, Veterans and their families in their pursuit of federal employment. The representative is located at the Soldier and Family Assistance Center, Bldg 7492, room 134, phone number (719) 524-7311.

EEO training will not be offered during the 1st Quarter of FY 11. An EEO training schedule will be posted and sent out to supervisors in early 2011. Anticipate most courses will be on-line. EEO for managers will be a seminar style course offered bi-monthly (Every two months). No Fear Act Training is not required for 2011.