



HRO NEWSLETTER

New Mexico National Guard

4th Quarter Issue #4

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From the desk of the Personnel Systems Manager



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 4th Quarter edition of the HRO Newsletter. In this edition you will find valuable information on “How to apply for Technician Jobs” to “Retirement Planning”.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and informative. If you have any questions please, see the last page of this issue for names and numbers of the point of contact (POC) to best assist you.

If you have any suggestions to improve our newsletter please let us know.

Thank you

SMSgt Donnie Reams
Personnel System Manager
AGR Manager for Air



Human Resources Officer Mr Steve Moya

22 Days Military Law Enforcement Leave

Subject: New Provisions on Applicability of Law Enforcement Leave (LEL) for Active Duty Contingency Operations, 22 Days (176 hours) per Calendar Year

References:

<http://www.DFAS.mil/money/civpay/earnings-ded.pdf>

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/LEAVE/HTML/military.HTM>

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/LEAVE/HTML/MILQA.asp>

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/LEAVE/HTML/MILITARY.ASP>

Eligibility. National Guard (NG) technicians serving under a permanent or indefinite appointment status

Effective Date: 24 Nov 03

Availability: Twenty-two (22) workdays of LEL are available for usage at the beginning of each calendar year (CY). Convert the 22 days into 176 hours. There is no pro-ration for a partial year. No carry-over of unused LEL occurs from CY to CY.

Use: There are two conditions under which employees are entitled to an additional 22 days of military leave (a.k.a. LEL) under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 6323(b). Reservists or National Guard members who perform military duty in support of civil authorities in the protection of life and property are eligible for an additional 22 workdays of military leave. In addition, effective November 24, 2003, employees who perform full-time military service as a result of a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation as defined in section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code, are entitled to 22 days of military leave under 5 U.S.C. 6323 (b). LEL **is not** a dual compensation leave. This means the technician does not keep both military and technician pay. It is in addition to the 15 days of military leave. And, the 22 days is managed in hourly increments, totaling 176 hours.

Compensation: An employee is entitled to the greater of his civilian or military pay, not both. For military LEL under 5 U.S.C. 6323(b), the employee's civilian pay is reduced by the amount of military pay for the days of military LEL. The military pay received by an individual who has been activated in support of a contingency operation (as defined in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(13)) must be credited (less any travel, transportation, or other per diem allowances) against any Federal civilian pay the employee received during the 22 workdays of military leave provided by 5 U.S.C. 6323(b). The servicing finance office may calculate the amount of military pay (less any travel, transportation, or per diem allowances) an employee will receive for the time period that corresponds to the 22 workdays of military leave and reduce the employee's civilian pay by that amount during the 22 workdays of military leave. In contrast, finance may choose to continue to pay the employee his or her full civilian pay during the 22 workdays of military leave. At the end of the 22-day period of military leave, the agency requires the employee to refund to the agency an amount equal to the amount of military pay received (less any travel, transportation, or per diem allowances) up to the amount of his or her civilian pay for the time period that corresponds to the 22 workdays of military leave.

Your point of contact is 1LT Sonya Montoya, 474-1283

STEVE R. MOYA, GS-13, NMANG
Human Resources Officer



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT SECTION

SMSgt Ray Flores

Mid-Career Retirement Training Planned for 29-31 August 2007 (For FERS & CSRS Employees)

The HRO Benefits Branch and the Employee Development Branch is currently planning a CSRS/FERS **Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar** at the Regional Training Institute, Santa Fe. This two-day seminar is planned for both Army and Air Guard CSRS and FERS employees who are within 10-20 years of their retirement date. The course is planned as follows: 28-29 Aug (FERS) and 29-30 Aug (CSRS). If you are eligible to enroll and are interested in enrolling in the 28-30 August 2007 class, please send a DD Form 1556 to HRO-HRDS, Attention SMSgt Ray Flores by COB 30 May 2007.

ATRRS News Flash—A REMINDER!!!

Supervisors are asked to submit their PEC course requirements (DD Forms 1556) **60-days prior** to course start dates. The reason is that we are losing quotas and missing out on reservations. When NGB sees that a trapped course is not being utilized, they will review the status 51-days prior to class start. At 45-days prior, they open the class up for grabs – any state can “steal” the quota from another. Let’s get those courses filled. Please check with HRO Employee Development Branch for a quota source **PRIOR** to submitting a DD Form 1556.

**Please submit your DD Form 1556s
NLT 45-60 days prior to class start.**

No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.

Attention All Supervisors!! TRAINING REQUIREMENTS 2008 Training Forecast - Needs Analysis

The 2008 Training Forecast/Needs Analysis will be sent to all users via e-mail in the Air and Army Guard on 27 November 2006. The e-mail containing the excel spreadsheet known as the **Standard Operating Budget 2008 (SOB)** will be used to establish your training needs and budget for Fiscal Year 2008.

The **deadline to submit** this document to HRO is **20 February 2007**. Failure to submit this document by the deadline could result in loss of funding and loss of potential to fulfill your training requirements. Please submit a DD Form 1556 when you submit your forecast.

This important document will be forwarded to the National Guard Bureau to obtain an annual budget for Army Guard technician training requirements. Army Technician training is now NGB centrally funded. The Air Guard is still being funded by using local funding sources. Their needs helps the Wing commander make the necessary decisions and establish Air Technician Training funding levels.

HRO Contact

Your Employee Development Points of Contact:

SMSgt Ray Flores
NMNG-HRO-HRDS
DSN 867-8513 Comm. 505-474-1513
FAX DSN 867-8544 Comm. 505-474-1544
Email: ray.flores1@nm.ngb.army.mil



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SECTION

Liz Perry

SFC Cecilia Chavez



Technician Health Benefits Open Season

All Technicians:

The Federal Employees Health Benefits open season is 13 November 2006 thru 11 December 2006. This is your opportunity to enroll, cancel or change health plan providers. An SF-2809 must be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Office by Close of business on 11 December 2006. All enrollments, changes or cancellations will be effective 7 January 2007.

For information on health providers please call either Liz Perry (505) 474-1286 or Cecilia Chavez (505) 474-1028 or stop by the HRO to pick up some brochures.



Mr. Ray A. Chavez

STAFFING SECTION

MSgt Tony Cuellar



CURRENT PROCEDURES WHEN APPLYING FOR TECHNICIAN JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

The current process for submitting applications at the New Mexico National Guard is USA JOBS. There are two ways to apply using the current procedures. The following steps will assist you with the process.

Option #1:

1. Log onto the New Mexico National Guard website and go to the HRO Jobs menu. Click on the job vacancy you wish to consider and you will be directed to the announcement located on the "USA Jobs" website.
2. Although the layout of the job announcement has changed, all of the information you need, including how to apply will still be available. You may view all of the information on the job announcement if you go to overview, duties, qualifications & evaluations, benefits and other information. If you wish to apply, go to the "How to Apply" section of the announcement
3. There are two required documents that will need to be submitted. Your resume or OF 612 application and OPM Form 1203-FX. The OPM Form 1203-FX is a questionnaire form which is associated with the job announcement. The questions requiring responses are located in the "How to Apply" section of the job announcement. **Note:** *The OPM Form 1203-FX is a required form and if you fail to include it along with your application, an automatic rejection of your application will occur.*
4. The OPM Form 1203-FX will be available on the New Mexico National Guard jobs page in electronic format. You may print the form if you decide to complete it manually, or use the form fill electronic format. **Note:** *If you are applying using the Online Resume Builder, you will be able to complete the questionnaire on the USA Jobs website after you complete your resume*
5. Once your application and OPM Form 1203-FX is complete and ready for submission, refer to the "How to Apply" section of the announcement for the appropriate fax number or mailing address. Make sure your application is submitted timely in order to meet the close date of the job announcement
6. As stated above, you may apply by faxing or mailing your documents. However, there is an Online Resume Builder which is the preferred method of submitting applications. There are two reasons why you may want to use this new electronic format:
 - The online method gives you step by step instructions on how to apply and will allow you to cut and paste information from your resume. Once this is complete and you submit your application electronically, you will receive an e-mail notification acknowledging receipt of your resume
 - Another advantage of utilizing the Online Resume Builder is that your resume will be saved for future use in applying for other positions.

Option #2:

1. Log on to the USAJobs web-site (www.usajobs.gov). Use the search page to locate all job vacancies in the New Mexico National Guard. The process to apply is the same as in option #1, steps 2-6.

We understand that you may need some assistance with this new process, so feel free to contact Mr. Ray A. Chavez, DSN 867-8216 / Comm (505) 474-1216; or MSgt Tony Cuellar, DSN 867-8291 / Comm (505) 474-1291; if you have questions or require assistance

NOTE: Please keep in mind as you are filling out your application that the more detailed the information is that you provide on your application, the easier it is for the evaluator to assess your qualifications. Pay close attention to the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities related to the position and remember to include schools, training, or civilian experience that you believe may help you in qualifying for the vacant position. Ensure that your resume, OF 612 and OPM Form 1203-FX are complete and that you have included any additional documentation requested in the job announcement. Again, submit your application package as soon as possible, to avoid any unforeseen problems or issues.



Classification Section

Mr. Don Saiz

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief, Office of Technician Personnel, NGB. Administers the position management and position classification programs for the National Guard. These responsibilities include ensuring compliance with all pertinent directives, policies, position classification and job grading standards; providing interpretation and implementation guidance on pertinent publications; providing position classification and position management advisory services and developing and classifying PDs for implementation nationwide.

Human Resource Officers (HRO's). The HRO provides the day-to-day administration of the position management and classification programs within their respective states. In addition to responsibilities regarding specific personnel actions, the HROs shoulder the program improvement responsibility. The HRO is the focal point for position management program and provides guidance for its effective application. This office has responsibility for identifying requirements and evaluating the technical content of position management training for supervisors and managers.

State Classifier's Responsibility.

- a. Provide advice and assistance to supervisors on position management and classification issues.
- b. Assist supervisors in developing exception PDs and, as necessary, revising PDs for all positions supervised.
- c. Perform classification audits when requested by management/employees, in response to other organizational needs (e.g., as part of a classification review project), and when implementing NGB classification releases.
- d. Prepare evaluation statements for exception PDs.
- e. Supply documentation requested in conjunction with classification reconsiderations or appeals.
- f. Develop and maintain state level guidance pertaining to position management and classification.

Managerial/Supervisory Responsibility.

a. Supervisors and managers are the core of a systematic approach to an effective position management program. This approach begins with the structuring of positions, functions, and organizations in a manner that optimizes organizational effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency. It involves an analysis of the organizational structure to assure effective and efficient functional placement and structuring, appropriate span of control, and effective use of positions for accomplishment of the organization's mission and functions. It also involves position design that most effectively concentrates employee skills, knowledge's, and qualifications. This approach achieves a proper balance between economy, skills utilization, attraction and retention of competent personnel, employee motivation and development, career progression, and organizational stability.

b. Supervisors and managers have primary accountability/responsibility for effective position management in their respective organizations for:

- (1) The work to be accomplished.
- (2) The organization of work and the design of positions.
- (3) The skills requirement for employees to perform their work satisfactorily.
- (4) The organization of positions into consistent working groups.
- (5) The organization of these groups into rational organizational structures.
- (6) The maintenance of up-to-date organization charts to be provided to the HRO annually.



STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANGER

MSG Stephen A Gonzales

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE COORDINATOR

Sexual Assault:

When Someone You Care About is a Victim of Sexual Abuse

Overview

Childhood sexual abuse affects many people. Here are some ways to help a loved one cope with the effects of abuse.

Lately, childhood sexual abuse has become a common topic on the news. It seems we hear of new incidents every day. Some of the stories can be very disturbing. So when someone you know or love tells you they were sexually abused as a child, especially if incest was involved, it can be hard to know how to respond. You may feel unsure about what to say or how much to talk about it. You may be afraid that talking about it will cause pain or embarrassment. Or it may just be hard to hear because you've been through sexual abuse yourself. Whatever the situation, people do recover from the trauma of sexual abuse, and you can give your loved one hope about his or her own recovery.

Knowing what to say

How can you comfort someone who has just told you the most horrible thing that's ever happened to them? How do you respond in a way that will be helpful? Although no magic words can take away your loved one's pain, you can include a few things in your response that will help them feel heard and supported.

- *Be sure to thank your loved one for telling you.* Sometimes the hardest thing a person can do is admit to having been sexually abused. Letting them know that you're glad they trusted you can go a long way towards helping them feel safe about talking about it.
- *Let them say as little or as much as they like.* Letting them decide how much and what to say allows them to maintain a sense of control. It may be best just to listen sympathetically, as it can be dangerous to ask too many probing questions or force them to share details they may not be ready to handle. Remember, you can always direct them to professional help if you feel overwhelmed or if they seem obsessed with the incident.
- *Stick to what you know.* You don't have to say that you understand what the person is going through if you don't. What you do know is that they're in pain and also very brave for talking about it.

Let them know that their feelings, whatever they may be, are normal. Coping with traumatic memories and talking about them is often terribly painful. Survivors of sexual abuse often experience profound feelings of rage, grief, guilt, and sadness. Feelings are neither good nor bad, and anything the survivor feels about the abuse is perfectly normal, even if it seems shocking to you. For example, if your loved one doesn't usually show anger and now does, that's OK. Acknowledging and naming feelings can start the process of healing.

- *Let your loved one know that healing is a process* and that you don't expect them to "get over" their feelings about the abuse anytime soon. Healing from sexual abuse varies from person to person and depends on many factors -- such as how many abusers were involved, how long the abuse lasted, whether it included violence or sadistic acts, and what relationship the abuser had to your loved one. If the abuser was a family member or an ongoing caregiver, you can expect recovery to be more complicated than for someone who experienced a one-time trauma at the hands of a stranger.
- *Encourage your loved one to continue taking care of themselves.* Point out how they usually take care of themselves. If they usually exercises or pray or go out with friends as a way of coping, remind them of the strength they already have in these things.
- *Ask your loved one to consider getting professional help.* Let them know that they do not have to go through the pain alone, and that there are counselors trained specifically in the area of sexual abuse who can help.

What recovery means

Safety is a crucial issue for survivors of sexual abuse. Attempting to uncover traumatic memories or feelings on one's own can be dangerous. To be safe and effective, recovery means getting into a regular program of supportive therapy with a mental health professional. Within the safe bounds of therapy, your loved one can begin to confront and make sense of his feelings. Eventually, he comes to view the sexual abuse as a part of his life experience but not the whole of who he is. In this way, the abuse no longer dominates his thoughts or feelings. This is the ultimate goal of recovery.

For sexual abuse survivors, recovery also means connecting the dots, recognizing how the abuse affected the rest of their lives. They start to understand, for example, the ways in which they have disconnected from their feelings, perhaps by:

- "Numbing out" on drugs or alcohol. The mental haze produced by various chemicals keeps unwanted feelings in check.
- Disassociating -- the act of mentally and emotionally leaving one's body. Some survivors report that while the abuse was happening, it was as if they were watching from outside themselves.

Engaging in anonymous and/or risky sex, thereby putting themselves in potential danger.

- Engaging in generally dangerous or even criminal behavior -- reckless driving, getting into physical fights, etc.
- Developing eating disorders and weight problems. It is not uncommon for sexual abuse survivors to become overweight. It can be a way of trying to appear unattractive, so as not to be considered sexual. Some survivors even have trouble with the physical act of eating, reporting difficulty swallowing and choking sensations, or they may attempt to stop eating all together.
- Keeping themselves stuck in the role of the victim in one way or another -- at the workplace, in families, and in relationships with significant others who treated them cruelly.
- Attempting suicide. Believing themselves to be less powerful than the rest of the world, they may have even given up on life at times, attempting to take their own life. Resorting to attempting suicide seems to be the exception, not the rule. Recovery from sexual abuse can often be a lot like taking inventory of one's life. For some survivors, acknowledging the harm they have done to themselves and others can be a particularly difficult aspect of recovery, because survivors are already so prone to feeling shame and guilt. If incest was involved, this shame and guilt is often magnified. It often helps survivors to understand that they made mistakes, like using drugs or alcohol, out of pain and not because they are "bad" people. Realizing that there is a real root cause for their behavior helps many survivors make sense of their lives. Coming to an understanding that the incident was not their fault, and learning self-forgiveness are also important parts of the recovery process. Sometimes recovery means taking legal action against the abuser or abusers. This is not always possible, depending upon the laws of the state in which the abuse occurred; sometimes there is a statute of limitations which means it's too late to press charges. And not everyone feels safe about pursuing a criminal case, especially if the perpetrator is a family member. The decision whether to contact the authorities is one that only the survivor of sexual abuse can make. However, some survivors do experience success in a court of law, and it can help create a sense of closure. Some just feel better about speaking with their local district attorney's office, even if no charges can be brought against the abuser. **Getting help** Working through the recovery process with a counselor or mental health professional often ensures a more successful way of coping with sexual abuse. Let your loved one know that help is available in many forms:
- *Sexual abuse support groups exist in most communities and also online.* Contacting the National Organization for Victims Assistance at 800-TRY-NOVA can help you locate such groups. Your local United Way may also refer you to a support group, as well as the Rape And Incest National Network (RAINN), which can be reached 24 hours a day at 800-656-HOPE.
- *Your loved one can access individual counseling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or health insurance.* EAPs provide mental health professionals who can assess your loved one's situation, provide support, and make appropriate referrals.
- *If no EAP or insurance is available, most communities have agencies that provide counseling on a sliding-fee basis, charging only according to income.*

Your local police department may offer free counseling through Victims' Services. There is no denying that sexual abuse is traumatic and life changing. But with the right type of support, victims can and do recover, and go on to live productive, satisfying lives.



STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANGER

MSG Stephen A Gonzales

DISCIPLINE DISCRIMINATION DANGERS

Problem: A female employee with an "attitude problem" has been skating on thin ice for some time. When she receives yet another warning about her behavior toward her co-workers, she throws a temper tantrum. She claims that because of her sex, she's being scrutinized more closely than her male co-workers, and she's going to file a sex discrimination lawsuit.

Solution: Disgruntled employees often try to blame their problems on everyone and everything but their own bad behavior. And when that employee is a member of a protected class, the potential for a courtroom discrimination battle becomes very real. There are steps you can take, however, to lessen the chances that a problem employee will throw a temper tantrum in court. Here are some discipline do's and don'ts.

DO document the employee's personality and behavioral problems which negatively affect the workplace. Issue verbal and written warnings, and place copies in the worker's personnel file.

DON'T just hand over a warning to the employee. Conduct a disciplinary interview, too, outlining the employee's boorish behavior and why and how it must be corrected. Use both positive and negative incentives to bring about change.

DO offer training to modify the employee's deficient attitude and work habits.

DON'T issue a final warning without ensuring that the employee clearly understands the consequences of another outburst of bad behavior.

Discrimination — Investigations

Q. We recently discovered that one of our employees told his supervisor that he felt discriminated against because the supervisor doesn't like Mexicans. He has not, however, made a formal complaint through our Human Resources process. Should we investigate the claim anyway?

A. Yes! An Agency may be able to argue it didn't have knowledge of harassment or discrimination in its workplace if an employee only told other employees. But once a supervisor or manager is informed, most courts will agree that the company has been put on notice -- regardless of whether the employee followed the Agencies procedure.

First, your employee (all employees, actually) should be aware that his supervisor is not his only recourse, especially because his supervisor is the alleged problem. Then, you should put someone else in charge of the investigation, since the supervisor is obviously part of the situation. Since it seems that the employee's complaint is well-known to upper management, proceed as you would with any other investigation.

Get both the employee's and supervisor's sides of the story. See if you can get specific examples of discrimination from the employee (e.g., unfair discipline for absenteeism). See if you can get concrete evidence from the supervisor to support his actions (e.g., legitimate time cards showing absences/tardiness). Then try to find witnesses to any of the alleged events, especially if it turns into a case of the employee's word against the supervisor's.

If you determine that discrimination has occurred, rectify the situation immediately. If not, make sure you clearly explain the results of your investigation to the employee and ensure that he understands why you're not, in his eyes, rectifying the situation. Once the investigation is over, be sure to keep a weather eye out for potential friction which may result from the accusations, investigation, etc.

Discrimination — "Other" Hostile Environments

Q. I am trying to find some information on hostile work environments which do not include sexual harassment. We have what I consider a very hostile environment at one of our facilities, but there is no sexual harassment occurring. Is there such a thing as a non-sexual hostile environment?

A. Federal laws such as Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) certainly recognize "other" forms of harassment based on race, national origin, religion, age, and disability. And courts have been recognizing that a hostile environment need not be sexual in order to exist. Here are some examples.

In *Crawford v. Medina General Hospital* (CA 6, 1996), the court ruled that hostile environment claims do exist under the ADEA. Like Title VII, an employee must show that the harassment was "severe and pervasive" enough to "create an abusive working environment" to prove a case of age-based hostile environment. Note: In this particular case, the employee failed to show that the behavior was "severe or pervasive" enough to alter her working environment.

Courts have also agreed that hostile environment claims may exist under the ADA. According to the court in *Bryant v. Compass Bank* (D.C. N.A.L, No. CV-95-N-2458-S, 1996), a hostile environment exists under the ADA "only when the employer's criticism is used as a subterfuge to discriminate against the employee" because he/she has a disability.

And finally, the court in McCoy v. Rex Radio and Television, Inc. (D.C. N.A.L, No. CV-95-C-0007-W, 1996) awarded an employee \$1.5 million for the racially hostile environment he endured.

And finally, in McSwain v. Runyon (N.D.IL, WL 25729, 1998), a court gave a Pentecostal employee's religious harassment claim a green light. Court: A reasonable Pentecostal missionary could find a workplace to be a hostile environment when a supervisor yells curse words and uses profanities in referring to the employee's religion, as this worker alleges her supervisor did.

Q. We have several managers who feel it is appropriate to yell at and berate their employees. Even though there are no racial epithets, the comments are beyond rude. The Agency feels there is nothing to be done and the HR Director just says "they're poor managers." When does this type of abuse fall into the legal arena for recourse?

A. The situation you describe certainly has the potential to blow up in your Agencies face if not resolved. Not only is the managers' abusive behavior "poor management," which could lead to lower employee morale and productivity; it could also cost the Agency big in court if an employee decides to file an "intentional infliction of emotional distress" claim against the Agency.

In fact, in Subbe-Hirt v. Baccigalupi (CA 3, No. 95-5786, 1996), an appeals court ruled that a supervisor's harassment of an employee (which included calling her obscene names, constantly asking for her resignation, and humiliating her in front of her co-workers), showed that the supervisor "unquestionably intended to inflict emotional distress" on the employee and that he "essentially set out to put (the employee) out of the Agency."

In another case (Travis v. Alcon Laboratories, Inc., WV Sup. Ct, WL 261007, 1998), an employee was subjected to unwarranted criticism and profane and abusive language by his supervisor. Despite his many complaints to upper management, nothing was done to stop the supervisor's infliction of emotional distress. The employee eventually resigned and sued the employer, and the court ruled that the employer could, indeed, be held liable for the supervisor's outrageous conduct.

As you can see, even though your managers' abuse of their subordinates may not be racial, sexual, or otherwise discriminatory in nature, it's in the Agencies best interest to put a stop to it. Ignoring the behavior won't make it go away. Encourage your HR Director to implement a strong, well-publicized anti-harassment policy. Then, make sure it's applied consistently. You may want to point out that by doing so, not only will the Agency have a better chance of staying out of court, but employees will be more productive and happier in their jobs.



STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANGER

MSG Stephen A Gonzales

Technician Abuse Program Coordinator

Promoting a Drug-Free Workplace:
Drug and Alcohol Abuse: Warning Signs

Overview

Provides information about the warning signs of substance abuse along with information about what types of help are available.

If you are concerned that you may have a drug or alcohol problem, it's important to know what the warning signs of substance abuse are. It's also important to find out what kinds of help are available. Left untreated, drug and alcohol abuse can have serious consequences, including significant health problems and damage to relationships with family members and others. With professional help, these kinds of problems can be limited or avoided.

The following information isn't meant to take the place of a formal drug or alcohol assessment, but it will help you decide whether you need outside help. Although this information is written primarily for people who are concerned about their own alcohol or drug use, it can also help if you are concerned about a family member or friend's alcohol or drug use.

A problem for all kinds of people

If you are concerned that you may have an alcohol or drug abuse problem, you aren't alone. Substance abuse affects all kinds of people, from pre-teens to the elderly, in every income level and occupation. But alcohol and drug abuse are treatable, and there are more options available today than ever before.

Warning signs

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you could have a drug or alcohol abuse problem and may benefit from outside help:

- Do you think often about using drugs or alcohol?
- Have friends, family members, or your employer expressed concerns about your use of drugs or alcohol?

Has your use of alcohol or drugs had a negative effect on any of the following areas of your life?

relationships with family members and others

your work

your physical health

your mental health

your recreational activities

your finances (from the expense of purchasing alcohol or drugs and from diminished ability to work)

your legal situation (including charges of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol)

- Do you or others notice a significant change in your personality when you are using drugs or alcohol? Do you become extremely sad or extremely happy, or not care what is happening in your life?
- Does your behavior change in other ways when you are using drugs or alcohol? Do you embarrass yourself or others? Do you become aggressive or violent toward yourself or others? Do you withdraw from other people? Do you miss work regularly?
- Have you driven a vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- Do you seek out activities that will include drug and alcohol use?
- Is it hard for you to stop drinking or drugging once you start?

Do you ever have trouble remembering periods of time when you've been drinking?

Other indications

In addition to the kinds of personality and behavior changes described above, a person who is abusing alcohol or drugs may experience symptoms that interfere with daily functioning. In the case of alcohol or other depressants like opiates or benzodiazepines, symptoms might include drowsiness, slurred speech, and loss of coordination. In the case of stimulants like cocaine and amphetamines, symptoms might include insomnia and appetite loss. (It is important to keep in mind, however, that symptoms like these do not necessarily indicate drug or alcohol abuse. They can be caused by wide range of health problems, including strokes and neurological diseases, or by depression.)

The importance of getting help

Alcoholism and drug addiction are progressive diseases. The long-term health consequences can be devastating. Untreated alcoholism can lead to conditions like cirrhosis of the liver, increased cancer risk, heart disease, and damage to the brain. Continued drug abuse can lead (depending on the drug used) to respiratory problems, mental health problems, and risks of death from overdose. Continued drug or alcohol abuse can also result in serious family conflicts, loss of friendships, chronic feelings of guilt, loss of self-esteem, financial problems, and problems at work.

The sooner you seek professional help, the better your chances of avoiding or limiting long-term problems.

Treatment options

Although some people with alcohol or drug problems are able to stop using alcohol or drugs for a while, most need professional or twelve-step help to recover. Many kinds of help are available. The treatment option most appropriate for you will depend on where you live, the seriousness of the problem, and your own individual circumstances.

Treatment options fall generally into the following categories:

- *Educational classes* to learn about abuse and addiction
- *Support programs*, like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous
- *Detox programs*, where a person's medical condition can be monitored
- *Outpatient treatment programs*
- *In-patient programs*, also called residential programs
- *Combination in-patient outpatient programs*

Halfway houses, which provide longer-term support

Formal assessments

Most treatment begins with a "formal assessment" of a drug or alcohol problem. This is an evaluation to determine the severity of the problem and the best course of treatment. This is a face-to-face assessment usually performed by a chemical dependency counselor or a mental health professional with training in substance abuse or addiction. It can be performed at a treatment program or by a qualified professional, who, after the assessment is completed, can make a referral to an appropriate treatment program.

Getting help

If you, like many other people, are concerned that you or someone you know may have a drug or alcohol problem, you have taken an important first step by starting to educate yourself about warning signs and treatment. You can obtain more help, including referrals to treatment programs, by talking with your medical provider or religious adviser, a professional addiction counselor, a local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous (<http://www.na.org>) or Alcoholics Anonymous (<http://www.aa.org>), or your employee assistance program (EAP), if available.

Interesting Facts

Harry S. Truman was the last U.S. President with no college degree.

Warner Chappel Music owns the copyright to the song 'Happy Birthday'. They make over \$1 million in royalties every year from the commercial use of the song.

Male hospital patients fall out of bed twice as often as female hospital patients.

The temperature of the earth's interior increases by 1 degree every 60 feet down

The first owner of the Marlboro company died of lung cancer.

Average number of days a German goes without washing his underwear: 7

Its impossible to smoke oneself to death with weed. You won't be able to retain enough motor control and consciousness to do so after such a large amount.

The average bed is home to over 6 billion dust mites.

The average chocolate bar has 8 insect legs in it.

The average American consumes 1.2 pounds of spider eggs a year and eat 2.5 pounds of insect parts a year

Every drop of seawater contains approximately 1 billion gold atoms

Abe Lincoln bought 50 cents worth of cocaine in 1860

9 out of 10 people believe Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. This isn't true; Joseph Swan did

The average person can live 11 days without water.

Percentage of American men who say they would marry the same woman if they had it to do all over again: 80%.

Percentage of American women who say they'd marry the same man: 50%

It has been recommended by dentists that a toothbrush be kept at least 6 feet (two meters) away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush!

Jeremy Bentham, a British philosopher who died in 1832, left his entire estate to the London Hospital provided that his body be allowed to preside over its board meetings. His skeleton was clothed and fitted with a wax mask of his face. It was present at the meeting for 92 years.

The amount American Airlines saved in 1987 by eliminating one olive from each salad served in first class: \$40,000.

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE STAFF

COM (505) 474-XXXX DSN: 867-8XXX FAX: 474-1544 867-8544
E-Mail: firstname.lastname@nm.ngb.army.mil

Vacant	Human Resources Officer	
Mr. Steve Moya	Acting HRO	EXT. 1287
1LT Sonya Montoya	Supervisory Human Resources Specialist	EXT. 1283
Mr. Ray Chavez	Human Resources Specialist (Recruit & Placement)	EXT. 1216
MSgt Anthony Cuellar	Human Resources Specialist (Recruit & Placement)	EXT. 1291
Mr. Don Saiz	Human Resources Specialist (Classification)	EXT. 1219
Mrs. Liz Perry	Human Resources Specialist (Employee Benefits)	EXT. 1286
SFC Cecilia Chavez	Human Resources Specialist (Employee Benefits)	EXT. 1028
SMSgt Ray Flores	Human Resources Specialist (Employee Development)	EXT. 1513
MSG Steve Gonzales	SEEM	EXT. 1228
Mr. Walter Ross	Human Resources Specialist (Labor Relations)	EXT. 1556
SMSgt Donnie Reams	Human Resources Specialist (Information Systems) Human Resources Specialist—AGR Program (AIR)	EXT. 1218
Ms. Kathy Montoya	Program Analyst	EXT. 1295
LTC Carla Romero	AGR Program Manager	EXT. 1573
SFC Marcella Cooper	Personnel SGT— AGR(ARMY)	EXT. 1849
SSG Randy Trujillo	Personnel SGT—AGR (ARMY)	EXT. 1577
Mr. Damien Jaramillo	HRO Remote Designee (ANG Only)	DSN 263-6825
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