

# POStPlan FAQs

Updated June 8, 2012

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) apply only for the Post Office Structure Plan (POStPlan), a new operating tool that will result in the adjustment of retail hours in offices Evaluated Postmaster EPM-51 through EAS-16.

**The date above indicates the date that this document was reviewed and updated. Whenever this document is updated, every FAQ is reviewed, but not every FAQ requires a change.**

## 1. Can you provide an overview of what will happen?

The following summary is intended as a helpful overview but Postmasters should still read the following FAQs for complete information:

The other POStPlan FAQs.

2012 Special Incentive Offer FAQs: Postmasters, found at:

[https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/workforceconnection/pdf/Incentive\\_FAQs\\_Postmaster\\_06052012\\_v4.pdf](https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/workforceconnection/pdf/Incentive_FAQs_Postmaster_06052012_v4.pdf)

Questions and Answers on Benefits, Pay, and Leave Under Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), found at:

[https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/retirement/ver/pdf/hrssc\\_vera\\_qa.pdf](https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/retirement/ver/pdf/hrssc_vera_qa.pdf)

Organizational Change FAQs, found at:

[https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/organizationalchanges/oc\\_home.shtml](https://liteblue.usps.gov/humanresources/organizationalchanges/oc_home.shtml)

Under the POStPlan, all current EAS-16 and below post offices will be reevaluated as EAS-18 offices or as 6-hour per day offices, 4-hour per day offices, or 2-hour per day offices. Offices reevaluated as 6-hour offices will be staffed by an EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster. Offices reevaluated as 4-hour or 2-hour offices will be staffed by a non-career Postmaster Relief (PMR).

Postmasters (not including PCES Postmasters) have a 2012 Special Incentive Offer and Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) opportunity, and must make an irrevocable decision by July 2, 2012, to retire or resign on July 31, 2012 (or August 31, 2012 or September 30, 2012 if otherwise designated by the Postal Service), to receive the incentive and/or to retire under VER.

A Postmaster whose office is reevaluated as an EAS-18 office will be immediately upgraded to EAS-18 and on the effective date of the upgrade will receive a 2% increase in salary (not to exceed the maximum of the EAS-18 pay range) or the amount of increase needed to bring the Postmaster's salary to the minimum of the EAS-18 pay range.

If a Postmaster of an office reevaluated as a 4-hour or 2-hour office doesn't separate now, he or she will continue to be employed in his or her current full-time or part-time Postmaster position as a career employee with no changes until 2014 as described below.

Postmasters in offices reevaluated as 6-hour, 4-hour, or 2-hour offices who do not retire or resign under the 2012 Special Incentive Offer may apply for other positions, but if they still remain in their current position in June of 2014, the following will occur:

- **Postmasters in offices reevaluated as 6-hour offices:** Postmasters whose offices are reevaluated as 6-hour offices will be issued a Specific RIF Notice in June 2014 informing them that they will be demoted by RIF effective October 1, 2014, to the EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster position that will staff their office.

Postmasters who thereafter still remain in their current position on September 30, 2014, will be demoted by RIF effective October 1, 2014, to the EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster position. Those Postmasters will not receive any grade/pay protection (except for Postmasters who were previously demoted by RIF under the Delivery Unit Optimization (DUO) program discussed below). Effective October 1, 2014, their salary will be reduced to the hourly rate of the EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster position for the 6 hours per day of their office's evaluation.

Some Postmasters were demoted by RIF effective November 5, 2011, under the DUO program and received conditional 2 years of saved grade and indefinite saved salary thereafter. Those DUO Postmasters who are demoted by RIF effective October 1, 2014, to an EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster position under the POSTPlan will receive their saved hourly rate indefinitely for the 6 hours per day of their office's evaluation.

An employee whose pay is reduced may file for unemployment compensation. The applicable laws and regulations of the employee's state will then determine whether the employee is eligible to receive unemployment compensation.

Refer to [Organizational Change FAQ #148](#) for a description of the effects on benefits and leave of changing from a full-time career employee to a part-time career employee.

- **Postmasters in offices reevaluated as 4-hour or 2-hour offices:** Postmasters whose offices are reevaluated as 2-hour or 4-hour offices will be issued a Specific RIF Notice in June 2014 informing them that they will be separated by RIF effective September 30, 2014. Those Postmasters will not be assigned by RIF to the non-career Postmaster Relief (PMR) position that will staff their office. (A Postmaster who retires may be reemployed in a non-career PMR position in a 4-hour or 2-hour office and continue to collect his/her full annuity while collecting the full pay of the position. If that Postmaster retired under the 2012 Special Incentive Offer, he/she will not be required to repay to the Postal Service any of the incentive payment(s) received. A Postmaster who resigns may be reemployed in a non-career PMR position in a 4-hour or 2-hour office. If that Postmaster resigned under the 2012 Special Incentive Offer, he/she will not be required to repay to the Postal Service any of the incentive payment(s) received.)

Postmasters who thereafter still remain in their current position on September 30, 2014, will be separated by RIF effective on that date.

The [Organizational Change FAQs](#) explain the various scenarios summarized here:

- On September 30, 2014, an employee's age and service will determine whether he or she qualifies for optional retirement, discontinued service retirement, deferred retirement, or no retirement. Refer to the [Retirement and Separation](#) section of the [Organizational Change FAQs](#) for the specifics, including information on the FERS Special Retirement Supplement and the crediting of sick leave in the retirement computation.
- Employees who qualify for optional or discontinued retirement should refer to the [Federal Employees Health Benefits \(FEHB\)](#) section for the requirements for continuing health insurance coverage into retirement and the waiver opportunities for employees who do not meet the standard requirements.

- Employees who do not have continuous FEHB coverage for the last five (5) years or since their first opportunity normally do not qualify to continue health insurance coverage into retirement (although they may request a waiver from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and OPM may or may not grant the waiver). However, employees who retire under the 2012 Special Incentive Offer and Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) opportunity and do not meet the five (5) year or first opportunity requirement for continuing health insurance coverage into retirement have a *preapproved* waiver opportunity. They may continue FEHB into retirement if they have been covered under the FEHB program continuously since the beginning date of the OPM-approved VER, which is May 9, 2012, and retire during the OPM-approved VER period, in other words, by July 31, 2012 (or by August 31, 2012 or September 30, 2012 if otherwise designated by the Postal Service) and take the 2012 Special Incentive or VER offering. Therefore, take special note that employees who will not have continuous FEHB coverage for the last five (5) years or since their first opportunity on September 30, 2014, will not be able to continue FEHB coverage into retirement (unless they request and OPM grants a waiver) but they *could* qualify for the *preapproved* waiver if they retire under the 2012 Special Incentive Offer and Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) opportunity.
- Employees who qualify for optional or discontinued retirement should refer to the [Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance \(FEGLI\) section](#) for information on the requirements for continuing life insurance coverage into retirement.
- Employees who do not qualify on September 30, 2014, for optional retirement or discontinued service retirement, and who qualify for deferred retirement or who do not qualify for retirement, or who do not meet the requirements for continuing health insurance or life insurance coverage into retirement, should refer to the [FEHB section](#) for information on Temporary Continuation of Coverage or the conversion of health insurance to private coverage, and to the [FEGLI section](#) for information on the conversion of life insurance to private coverage.
- Employees who will be separated on September 30, 2014, should refer to the [Organizational Change FAQs](#) for information on Social Security, Medicare, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), the Federal Employees Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP), the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) program, leave, and the Commuter Program.
- Employees separated from employment for any reason may file for unemployment compensation. The applicable laws and regulations of the employee's state will then govern whether the employee is eligible to receive unemployment compensation.
- Employees who do not qualify on September 30, 2014, for optional retirement or discontinued service retirement should refer to the [Organizational Change FAQs](#) for information on severance pay. (Employees who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in [ELM 435.1](#) would be eligible to receive severance pay. However, if the Postal Service offers an employee a position where the employee would be similarly situated within the 50 miles commuting area and they refuse the job offer – then they would not be eligible.)

## 2. Do all postmasters have Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) rights?

Postmasters and certain other postal employees have MSPB rights to appeal an adverse action; only preference-eligible employees (postmasters and others) have MSPB rights to appeal a reduction-in-force (RIF) demotion or separation.

### **3. Who is a preference-eligible employee?**

Preference-eligibles are:

- Certain individuals who served in the armed forces; and
- Specified relatives of certain individuals who served in the armed forces.

Not all individuals who served in the armed forces are preference-eligible, and not all individuals who are preference-eligible served in the armed forces. In addition, some individuals who retired from the armed forces are not preference-eligible for RIF purposes, although they are preference-eligible for hiring and other federal employment purposes. For further information see [Organizational Change FAQ's, number 11](#).

### **4. What is my competitive area?**

At the present time, your competitive area is your post office.

### **5. My office has been evaluated at 6 hours a day. What does that mean for me as a career full time postmaster?**

Postmasters in offices reevaluated as 6-hour offices will be issued a Specific RIF Notice in June 2014 informing them that they will be demoted by RIF effective October 1, 2014, to the EPM-55 part-time career Postmaster position that will staff their office. At that time your salary will be reduced to the part-time postmaster hourly rate ranging from \$12.30 to \$18.18. If your hourly salary exceeds the maximum of the new grade, your salary is immediately reduced to the new grade maximum.

### **6. My office has been evaluated at 2 or 4 hours a day. What does that mean for me as a career full time postmaster?**

Postmasters whose offices are reevaluated as 2-hour or 4-hour offices will be issued a Specific RIF Notice in June 2014 informing them that they will be separated by RIF effective September 30, 2014. If at that time you have 20 years of service and are 50 years old, or have 25 years of service regardless of age, you will be eligible for Discontinued Service Retirement (DSR) effective on the RIF effective date.

### **7. I'm a PMR in an office that will be 2 or 4 hours of operation. Will I be kept as the PMR in this office?**

If you are a PMR in an office that has 2 or 4 hours of operations daily the district office can assign you to the position at your office.

### **8. I'm a PMR in a part-time office that will be staffed by a part-time postmaster. Will I be retained as a PMR in this office?**

At this time it is expected that the hourly office (2, 4 or 6 hours) will operate six days a week so PMRs may be needed for the sixth day.

### **9. My office will be upgraded to EAS-18. What increase will I get?**

A Postmaster whose office is reevaluated as an EAS-18 office will be immediately upgraded to EAS-18 and on the effective date of the upgrade will receive a 2% increase in salary (not to exceed the maximum of the EAS-18 pay range) or the amount of increase needed to bring the Postmaster's salary to the minimum of the EAS-18 pay range.

## **10. What is an RMPO?**

Remotely Managed Post Offices (RMPO) are offices that are grouped geographically and have operations of 2, 4 or 6 hours. They report to an Administrative Post Office.

## **11. What is a PTPO?**

Part Time Post Offices (PTPO) are stand alone offices that do not fit the RMPO model; they have 6 hours a day operations and report to the district Manager Post Office Operations (MPOO).

## **12. Can I apply for vacant positions before the RIF?**

Postmasters will have opportunities to apply for vacant postmaster and other vacant positions prior to September 30, 2014, the RIF effective date.

## **13. Can an impacted postmaster return to a bargaining position?**

During the RIF process, an employee can be assigned to a position only in his or her competitive area. Because there will be no bargaining unit positions in an impacted postmaster's competitive area, there will be no bargaining positions available for RIF assignment for an impacted postmaster. Voluntary return to the craft is a management prerogative and not a right for the employee to claim. The ELM and the applicable labor agreement would provide guidance on this alternative.

## **14. Clarification of DUO impacted Postmasters Examples:**

- EAS-18 down to EAS-13 as a result of DUO now down to a non-career as a result of POSTPlan

This question refers to individual who received conditional DUO salary protection because employee was demoted through a RIF notice effective November 5, 2011. This individual received conditional salary protection at EAS-18. If POSTPlan now evaluates the office as a 2 or 4 hour position, the incumbent will receive a RIF separation in September 2014, Salary protection will continue until the RIF separation date, September 30, 2014.

- EAS-18 down to EAS-13 as a result of DUO now down to an EPM-55 (6 hours) as a result of POSTPlan.

This question refers to individuals who received conditional DUO salary protection because employee was demoted through a RIF notice effective November 5, 2011. This individual received conditional salary protection at EAS-18. If POSTPlan now evaluates the office as a 6 hour position, the incumbent will receive a RIF assignment to an EPM-55 part-time career position effective October 1, 2014. The salary protection will provide that the employee continues to receive the hourly rate for the EAS-18 position for the number of hours of the office's evaluation (6 hours).

- Postmasters who were not demoted by DUO RIF but who are now impacted by POSTPlan will remain in their current position, current grade and current salary (or increased salary if salary is increased under regular pay policies before September 30, 2014) until September 30, 2014 and at that time there is no grade/salary protection. These postmasters whose offices are evaluated at 6 hours a day will get a RIF assignment to the EPM-55 part-time career position and their salary at that time will be the hourly rate of the EPM-55 position. If these postmasters are in offices that are evaluated at 2 or 4 hours a day they will get a RIF separation effective September 30, 2014.

**15. Will all retirement and Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) eligible's receive a retirement packet and when?**

Eligible employees in full time offices have been sent their retirement packets. Interested employees in part-time offices need to request retirement packets from the HRSSC.

**16. Do we have a plan to fill the vacancies on August 1 and transfer all these offices on the same day? Our understanding is that all those who chose to retire will leave on the same day.**

The retirement effective date for postmasters is July 31, 2012. However, management has the discretion to use one of the following dates (August 31, 2012 or September 30, 2012) if there are operational or customer service needs. There is one exception per the 2012 Special Incentive Offer FAQs. An employee who was in process as of May 9, 2012, with a scheduled retirement date on or before July 31, 2012, will be permitted to retire on his or her scheduled retirement date and be eligible for the Special Incentive Offer.

**17. What happens to the impacted offices in which the PM retires on one of the following dates (July 31, August 31 or September 30, 2012)? Will they remain at that level until after the community meetings? What salary rate will the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) earn?**

Actual changes to office hours will not occur until after the community meetings.

**18. The Implementation Plan states – b. Phase 2 – Employees identified as impacted will receive reduction in force (RIF) notifications as applicable. It is anticipated the RIF will be initiated in May 2012 and the Specific RIF Notice will identify the employees' RIF assignments (EPM or PMR). Does this mean that after two years, RIF assignments will be offered to Postmasters who will be PMRs (non-career?) For example, if an EAS-13 PM is downgraded to a level 4 or 2 hour office, will they be offered RIF assignments at the end of two years?**

See the answers to FAQs Nos. 4 and 5. The RIF will not be initiated in May 2012. Following RIF avoidance activities, the Specific RIF Notice of separation or demotion, as applicable, will be issued in June 2014 and the RIF effective date will be September 30, 2014. Postmasters in offices that are evaluated as 4-hour or 2-hour offices will not be demoted by RIF to the non-career Postmaster Relief (PMR) position that will staff their office. Instead, those Postmasters will be issued a Specific RIF Notice of separation.

**19. Why are some Post Offices not on the list of impacted offices (Ex; EAS-11, 13 or 15)? Since they are not on the list of downgraded offices, are we to assume they will be upgraded?**

Each impacted postmaster will receive a follow-up letter from Operations identifying the change in their office.

**20. What criteria was used to select the offices that were upgraded to EAS-18?**

Offices upgraded to EAS-18 had FY 2011 annual earned work hours.

**21. Can current EAS-18 Postmasters lateral into a newly established or vacant EAS-18?**

Yes, non competitive requests at the same or lower grade may be submitted directly to the selecting official for consideration outside the competitive process. Non-competitive applicants are encouraged to include a copy of their eCareer profile along with their request.