



USAG FORT BELVOIR

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Everyone in the workplace, regardless of position, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Maintaining a harmonious work environment, free from discrimination decreases interpersonal conflict among employees, improves customer service and public perception, productivity, creativity, and employee morale.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is about valuing people and respecting their abilities, backgrounds and talents, and removing barriers to make sure the workforce has the chance to perform to the best of their abilities. EEO is about maximizing the potential of Fort Belvoir's diverse population.

Lack of respect can create difficulties for management, as well as a disruption and expense for the agency. As professionals we are to be respectful, we are to be consistent and we are to set the example by treating individuals with Dignity and Respect!

TRAINING

Supervisors and Managers Reasonable Accommodation and Treating Individuals with Dignity and Respect Training

The Fort Belvoir Garrison Equal Employment Opportunity Office hosted mandatory training for Managers and Supervisors on Reasonable Accommodations and Treating Individuals with Dignity and Respect. On July 26, 1990 President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a gateway for more than 50 million people including 5.5 million veterans living abroad.

Twenty-three years ago this week our nation established a comprehensive mandate to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities by enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Department of Justice is proud to play a critical role in enforcing the ADA and opening up the gateways to full participation and opportunity for people with disabilities. Today, the Department of Justice is working towards a future in which all the doors are open to equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, integration and economic self-sufficiency for all for persons with disabilities (Department of Justice, July 2013).

The focus of the training was to bring about the awareness, trends, rapid changes, and challenges of the ADA as Amended in 2008, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. An open dialogue of the training allowed leaders to explore recent cases and rulings from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within the past year. The EEO Office serves as a conduit for federal employees of the garrison and partnering agencies within the Fort Belvoir area of operations, to assist in processing reasonable accommodation requests for federal employees. The training closed with an overview of dignity and respect presentation as a reminder of the challenges and changes of a new generational of leaders and employees entering the workforce as we emerge further into the 21st century.

For more information visit: www.eeoc.gov www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml

*The pessimist
Complains about
the wind; the
optimist expects it
to change; the
realist adjusts the
sails.*

William A. Ward



Legal Corner



*The ultimate
measure of a man
is not where he
stands in
moments of
comfort and
convenience, but
where he stands at
times of
challenge
and
controversy.*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
1929-1968*

Employment References

Scenario: A prospective employer calls you to get an employment reference for a former employee. The employee had filed an EEO complaint while working for you. This looks like an opportunity to “get back” at the employee since he/she is no longer at the agency. What would you do? Before you plan to give into the temptation, read what the EEOC has to say about former employees and negative job reference.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has long held that former employees are considered “employees” for the purposes of protection from retaliation. In 1997, The U.S. Supreme Court agreed in *Robinson v. Shell Co.*, 97 FEOR 9005 (1997), a case involving a claim of retaliation that was filed after a former employer gave the plaintiff a negative job reference. The plaintiff asserted that he received the negative job reference because he filed a charge with the EEOC claiming that he was terminated from the company because of his race.

The Court found that the term “employees” was ambiguous as used in Section 704(a) of title VII. However, based on the context provided by other sections of the statute, as well as the EEOC’s argument that allowing an employer to retaliate against its former employees would “undermine the effectiveness of Title VII,” the Supreme Court found that former employees were entitled to protection from retaliation.

Reference: www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/supreme_court.html

Just the Facts:

In FY 2006 the number of Retaliation Title VII charges filed were 19,560; four years later in FY 2010 the numbers filed increased to 30,948!

Communication In the Workplace

Communication: we do it all the time, but how well do we communicate in the workplace?

Effective communication is one of the biggest factors in successful leadership. Without good communication skills, managers often fail to gain commitment from employees, achieve business goals and develop rapport with the people on their team. Communication involves active listening.

First and foremost, the most effective leaders know when to stop speaking and start listening. This is especially important in three situations: when emotions are high, in team situations and when employees are sharing ideas. Extreme emotions, such as anger, resentment and excitement, warrant attention for both personal and business reasons. On a personal level, people feel acknowledged when others validate their feelings, and when managers ignore feelings, they create distance between themselves and their employees. From a business perspective, emotions can also interfere with clear thinking. Allowing employees to address their emotions helps them move beyond the situation at hand and get back to business. Managers can develop stronger relationships with their employees while enhancing productivity simply by listening to their employees when emotions are high.

Listening also is critical in team situations, which involve multiple personalities, complex dynamics and competing agendas. By listening carefully, managers can ensure that everyone is working toward the same goal. Listening also helps managers identify and address conflicts early, as well as facilitate healthy working relationships among team members. Third, listening is vital when employees are sharing ideas. When managers stop listening to ideas, employees stop offering them, and managers are essentially cut off from the creativity and expertise of the people on their team.

Reference: <http://www.shrm.org>

*By three methods
we may learn*

*Wisdom: First, by
reflection,
which is noblest;*

*Second, by
imitation, which
is easiest;*

*and third by
experience,
which is the
bitterest.*

Confucius

EEO 2nd Annual Partnership Alliance Cook Out

The Fort Belvoir Garrison Equal Employment Opportunity Office kicked off its 2nd annual partnership alliance building cook out summer 2013 event June 6.. The event was sponsored by the members of the Fort Belvoir Garrison EEO/EO Office as an opportunity to strengthen relationships with neighboring EEO/EO agencies, labor attorney's/legal offices, Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance and Complaints Review (EEOCCR), Department of Defense EEO directorates, and the Belvoir Garrison and Battalion leadership. Participants enjoyed grilled burgers, hotdogs, chicken, ribs, fajitas, and salads, while engaged in dialogue of ideas and best practices in serving the Fort Belvoir Community in the wake of the upcoming furlough. The idea of the event is to build on the diversity of knowledge, communications, and relationships through collaborative joint community efforts of both military and civilian leadership. The EEO director thanks her team of professionals who volunteered their energy, talents, and skills in making the event a success!

*A strong,
positive, self
image is the best
possible prepa-
ration for
success.*

Dr. Joyce Brothers



MARK
YOUR
CALENDAR

Upcoming Events

GET
READY!



Women's Equality Day Observance

Celebrating Women's Right to Vote

August 26, 2012

1130-1300

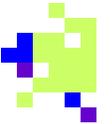
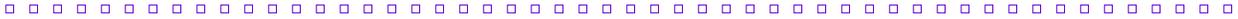
USO at Bldg 5940 9th St. Belvoir Rd– Fort Belvoir, Virginia



EEOC EXCEL Conference

27-29 August 2013

Denver, Colorado



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