

(2) Satisfies one of the following qualifications requirements:

(i) Meets all selective factors where applicable. Meets appropriate quality rating factor levels as determined by the agency. Selective and quality ranking factors cannot be so restrictive that they run counter to the goal of placing displaced employees. In the absence of selective and quality ranking factors, selecting officials will document the job-related reason(s) the eligible employee is or is not considered to be well-qualified; or

(ii) Is rated by the agency to be above minimally qualified in accordance with the agency's specific rating and ranking process. Generally, this means that the individual may or may not meet the agency's test for highly qualified, but would in fact, exceed the minimum qualifications for the position;

(3) Is physically qualified, with reasonable accommodation where appropriate, to perform the essential duties of the position;

(4) Meets any special qualifying condition(s) that OPM has approved for the position;

(5) Is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry; and

(6) Has a last performance rating of at least "Fully Successful" or equivalent.

§ 330.1203 Eligibility.

(a) In order to be eligible for special selection priority, an eligible displaced employee of the former Panama Canal Zone must:

(1) Have received a specific notice of separation by reduction in force;

(2) Have not been appointed to another appropriate position in the Government of the United States in Panama;

(3) Apply for a vacancy within the time frames established by the hiring agency; and

(4) Be found by the hiring agency as well-qualified for that specific vacancy.

(b) Eligibility for special selection priority as an eligible displaced employee of the former Panama Canal Zone begins on the date that the employee received a specific notice of separation by reduction in force.

(c) Eligibility for special selection priority as an eligible displaced employee of the former Panama Canal Zone expires on the earliest of:

(1) One year after the effective date of the reduction in force;

(2) The date that the employee receives a career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit in any agency at any grade level; or

(3) The date that the employee is separated involuntarily for cause prior

to the effective date of the reduction in force action.

§ 330.1204. Selection.

(a) If two or more individuals apply for a vacancy and the hiring agency determines the individuals to be well-qualified, the agency has the discretion to select any of the individuals eligible for priority under subpart G of this part (the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan), under subpart K of this part (Federal Employment Priority Consideration for Displaced employees of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections), or under subpart L of this part (Interagency Career Transition Assistance for Displaced Former Panama Canal Zone Employees).

(b) Except as provided in § 330.705(c), when filling a position from outside the agency's workforce, the agency must select:

(1) Current or former agency employees eligible under the agency's Reemployment Priority List described in subpart B of this part; then

(2) At the agency's option, any other former employee displaced from the agency (under appropriate selection procedures, then:

(3) Current or former Federal employees displaced from other agencies who are eligible under subparts G, K, or L of this part, and then:

(4) Any other candidate (under appropriate selection procedures) (optional).

[FR Doc. 00-21947 Filed 8-28-00; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Parts 831 and 842

RIN 3206-AI66

Retirement Eligibility for Nuclear Materials Couriers Under CSRS and FERS

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is adopting its interim regulations applicable to nuclear materials couriers employed under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). These final rules are pursuant to the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 enacted on October 17, 1998. The Act provides early retirement and enhanced annuity benefits for nuclear materials

couriers employed by the United States Department of Energy under CSRS and FERS; requires an increase in the percentage rate of withholdings from the basic pay of nuclear material couriers; and establishes mandatory retirement of nuclear materials couriers at age 57. These regulations are necessary to put the new retirement provisions into effect.

DATES: Final rules effective September 28, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Brown, (202) 606-0299.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 18, 2000, we published (at 65 FR 2521) interim regulations to implement the provisions of section 3154 of Public Law 105-261, enacted October 17, 1998, which governs the retirement eligibility, annuity benefits and deductions from basic pay of nuclear materials couriers employed by the United States Department of Energy under CSRS and FERS.

OPM received comments from one Federal agency. The commenter proposed that, for the purpose of entitlement to early retirement and enhanced annuity authorized by Public Law 105-261, the regulations be amended to extend coverage under that law for service performed as a nuclear materials courier prior to October 1, 1977, by employees of the predecessor agencies of the Department of Energy. We are unable to implement that proposal. Section 3154 of Public Law 105-261, for purposes of benefits under CSRS and FERS, specifically defines nuclear materials courier as "an employee of the Department of Energy * * *" We are aware that the nuclear materials courier function was performed by employees of the Department of Energy's predecessor agencies (Atomic Energy Commission and the Energy Research and Development Administration). However, the statutory definition reflects the specific intent and understanding between OPM and the Department of Energy that only service performed by couriers since the establishment of the Department of Energy on October 1, 1977, would be used in determining entitlement to early retirement and enhanced benefits under sections 8336(c) (CSRS) and 8412(d) (FERS) of title 5 U.S. Code as amended by Public Law 105-261. This intent is further manifested in 5 U.S.C. 8334, as amended by the law, which lists the applicable employee deductions for nuclear materials couriers under CSRS beginning on October 1, 1977. Additionally, the higher agency contributions and additional annual

payments by the Department of Energy to reimburse the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund for the estimated increase in the unfunded liability to the Fund are based on estimated additional costs of using courier service only since October 1, 1977, to provide the enhanced benefits and early retirement.

Accordingly, we are now adopting the interim regulations as final without change.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

I certify that this regulation will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because the regulation will only affect retirement benefits of retired nuclear materials couriers and their survivors.

Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Review

This rule has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget in accordance with Executive Order 12866.

List of Subjects in 5 CFR Parts 831 and 842

Administrative practice and procedure, Air traffic controllers, Alimony, Claims, Disability benefits, Firefighters, Government employees, Income taxes, Intergovernmental relations, Law enforcement officers, Pensions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Retirement.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Janice R. Lachance,

Director.

Accordingly, OPM is adopting its interim rules amending 5 CFR parts 831 and 842 published on January 18, 2000, at 65 FR 2521, as final rules without change.

[FR Doc. 00-22003 Filed 8-28-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 301

[Docket No. 99-044-3]

Oriental Fruit Fly; Removal of Quarantined Area

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Affirmation of interim rule as final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting as a final rule, without change, an interim rule that amended the Oriental fruit fly

regulations by removing the quarantine on a portion of Hillsborough County, FL, and by removing the restrictions on the interstate movement of regulated articles from that area. The quarantine was necessary to prevent the spread of the Oriental fruit fly to noninfested areas of the United States. We have determined that the Oriental fruit fly has been eradicated from this area and that restrictions on the interstate movement of regulated articles from this area are no longer necessary. This portion of Hillsborough County, FL, was the last remaining area in Florida quarantined for Oriental fruit fly. Therefore, as a result of this action, there are no longer any areas in Florida quarantined for Oriental fruit fly.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The interim rule became effective on October 7, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Michael B. Stefan, Operations Officer, Invasive Species and Pest Management Staff, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8247.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Background

In an interim rule effective October 7, 1999, and published in the **Federal Register** on October 15, 1999 (64 FR 55811-55812, Docket No. 99-044-2), we amended the Oriental fruit fly regulations, contained in § 301.93 through 301.93-10, by removing a portion of Hillsborough County, FL, from the list of quarantined areas in § 301.93-3(c). That action relieved unnecessary restrictions on the interstate movement of regulated articles from this area.

Comments on the interim rule were required to be received on or before December 14, 1999. We did not receive any comments. Therefore, for the reasons given in the interim rule, we are adopting the interim rule as a final rule.

This action also affirms the information contained in the interim rule concerning Executive Order 12866 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act, Executive Orders 12372 and 12988, and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Further, for this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived the review process required by Executive Order 12866.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 301

Agricultural commodities, Plant diseases and pests, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation.

Accordingly, we are adopting as a final rule, without change, the interim rule that amended 7 CFR part 301 and

that was published at 64 FR 55811-55812 on October 15, 1999.

PART 301—DOMESTIC QUARANTINE NOTICES

Authority: Title IV, Pub. L. 106-224, 114 Stat. 438, U.S.C. 7701-7772; 7 U.S.C. 166; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 24th day of August 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-22005 Filed 8-28-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

7 CFR Part 301

[Docket No. 98-084-2]

Mexican Fruit Fly Regulations; Removal of Regulated Area

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Affirmation of interim rule as final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting as a final rule, without change, an interim rule that amended the Mexican fruit fly regulations by removing the quarantined portion of Los Angeles County, CA, from the list of areas regulated because of the Mexican fruit fly. The quarantine was necessary to prevent the spread of the Mexican fruit fly to noninfested areas of the United States. We have determined that the Mexican fruit fly has been eradicated from Los Angeles County, CA, and that restrictions on the interstate movement of regulated articles from the previously regulated area are no longer necessary.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The interim rule became effective on August 15, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Michael B. Stefan, Operations Officer, Domestic and Emergency Operations Office, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236 (301) 734-8247.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In an interim rule effective August 15, 1998, and published in the **Federal Register** on August 20, 1998 (63 FR 44537-44538, Docket No. 98-084-1), we amended the Mexican fruit fly regulations (contained in 7 CFR 301.64 through 301.64-10) by removing a portion of Los Angeles County, CA,