



February 19, 2009

MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (AREA)
MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (DISTRICT)
MANAGERS, MAINTENANCE

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2009 Maintenance Selection System Open Season
Preliminary Requirements

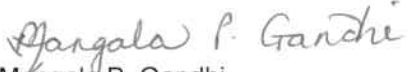
In accordance with the National Agreement, the US Postal Service will offer opportunities for maintenance craft employees to apply for Maintenance Selection System (MSS) groups they have not previously completed. MSS Open Season applications will be accepted March 1 through March 31. As established pursuant to Article 38, Section 5.B.7 of the 2006 National Agreement, applicants must receive their results by August 28. The open season also covers non-MSS positions.

In order to effectively administer the open season in accordance with the required timeframe, we will need support and cooperation from Maintenance and Human Resources. The following open season rules and attachments must be reviewed by your designated MSS Coordinators. Please determine the needs for your area or district and take steps to implement them **BEFORE** the open season begins.

1. *Moratorium on all in-service examinations for MSS between April 20 and August 28:*
 - a. Districts should immediately determine their needs to open announcements for any of the five in-service MSS groups before August 28. If they determine that there is no need to replenish the in-service register(s) before this date, no further action is needed.
 - b. The last review panels should be conducted and the last applicants' examinations should be administered before March 31 but no later than April 20.
2. *Completion of all non-update craft applications with a register date prior to March 31:*
 - a. Because of the Print Rule, the open season results will not print until all non-update craft applications for a single installation and group have been completed or abandoned. This means that offices will not make the open season results available if any previous application remains incomplete.
 - b. Reports are sent to all MSS coordinators on a weekly basis for careful review. Determine if a component is missing (in this case, complete the component and send to Headquarters Examination Processing, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 9671, Washington, DC 22260-4250), or if it is in error status (contact Robyn R. Pearson via email with the correction), or if the applicant needs to be abandoned for that group because the applicant failed to participate (send an official request to abandon via email to Robyn R. Pearson).

- c. MSS Coordinators need to work with the Headquarters Examination Processing staff to resolve current components rejected by the Talent and Acquisition Processing System. Because of errors, close monitoring of the reports is a must to ensure that districts resolve all current problems before the beginning of the open season.

We will be issuing further instructions on the next steps after March 31.


Mangala P. Gandhi
Manager
Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition

Attachments

2009 MAINTENANCE IN-CRAFT OPEN SEASON INSTRUCTIONS

IN-SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Postal Service management has a contractual obligation to complete the Maintenance Selection System (MSS) Open Season process by August 28. In order to alleviate the additional burden on Human Resources caused by opening in-service tests, a moratorium on in-service has been implemented beginning April 20. Therefore, **do not** announce the application process for in-service testing or send components to the Headquarters Examination Processing during these dates (April 20 through August 28).

UPDATES AND NEW-TO-CRAFT

We will continue to process updates and employees new to the Maintenance Craft in the usual manner. New-to-craft employees must not use the open season process in lieu of the new-to-craft process. It does make a difference. Employees who joined maintenance before the open season register date (March 31) benefit from their earlier register date. The register date for a new-to-craft employee is the date they joined the Maintenance Craft. Those who joined after March 31 are not eligible for the open season process. **Do not** use the date of **March 31** for new-to-craft applicants. This date is reserved for the open season.

APPLICANTS ELIGIBLE FOR OPEN SEASON

In-craft maintenance employees who are not on a promotion eligibility register (PER) or the ineligible list for a PER may apply for that PER during the 2009 Maintenance Open Season. Applicants who have abandoned the process for any group may apply for that same group during the open season.

APPLICANTS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR OPEN SEASON

Maintenance employees already on a PER or ineligible list for a PER **may not** reapply for that PER. **The Update process is the only method available to improve a rating once the process has been completed.**

Pre-1989

Applicants who have Pre-1989 ratings and are on a PER cannot apply during the open season.

PROCEDURES FOR NON-MSS POSITIONS

Non-Maintenance Selection System Maintenance Craft positions authorized at an installation must be open for in-craft application during the March open season application period. All Maintenance Craft employees who previously abandoned or never applied for non-MSS positions may apply for PER inclusion during this open season.

Employees who apply must satisfy the current examination requirements for the position. The exam requirements for the Maintenance Support Clerk positions include Test 710, Verbal Abilities and Test 714, Data Entry. Only employees who qualify on Test 710 should be scheduled for Test 714, Data Entry. The rating results of an employee's effort to qualify, whether eligible, ineligible, or a numerical score, are required should the employee wish to request an update of these requirements at a later date. Normally, the qualification review panel is only required when examination requirements are met. However, under the Maintenance in-craft procedures, it is necessary to convene a review panel to determine the applicant's overall qualifications.

For positions filled as best qualified, the PS Form 1796-B process should be used. Please refer to Handbook EL-312, *Employment and Placement*, Section 728 for guidance on evaluating proficiency requirements. Also, please see Article 38, Section 5.B.8 for procedures regarding the banding of scores.

TIME LIMIT FOR OPEN SEASON

Article 38, Section 5.B.7 of the 2006-2010 National Agreement reads in part: "The employees who apply will receive the results of their application(s) no later than one hundred fifty (150) days from March 31, provided the applications have been properly completed by the applicants."

In order for an applicant to receive his/her results, ALL applicants with a previous or same register date must have completed ALL components. This requires MSS Coordinators to complete or abandon ALL craft applicants who did not participate and are still showing as incomplete before the open season deadline (March 31) for cleanup processes. **The end date for the open season will be August 28.**

OPEN SEASON - MILITARY SERVICE

Current Maintenance Craft employees who miss the March 2009 Open Season because of active military service (NOA Code 460, Special Benefit Code U), must be afforded an opportunity to participate in the open season process upon their return.

Within 14 calendar days of their return to work, offices must notify these employees of the opportunity to apply for inclusion on the appropriate promotional eligibility register(s) (PER) as provided in Article 38.5.B.7 and these instructions.

Employees who are activated prior to March 1 may submit an open season application prior to their departure. Do not separate these forms - include with all other applications.

Due to the likely possibility for extended call-ups, it is also suggested that the employee's file be annotated with a reminder that the employee is eligible for the open season upon their return.

Any questions should be sent via email to Robyn R. Pearson.

VARIATIONS IN OPEN SEASON TIME FRAMES

Below are the timelines approved by Selection, Evaluation, and Recognition (SER). Any office seeking exceptions to this timeline must contact SER for approval.

PHASE 1 – APPLICATION PROCESS

Step 1 – Clean Up Error Report

The error report for maintenance craft applicants must be cleaned up before March 31. Using the MSS combined reports, review your specific district's errors and complete the required processes or abandon the craft applicants that have a register date prior to March 31.

Step 2 - Post Announcement

Using the sample announcement included, add information on where applicants can pick up the Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form. Post a listing of the available registers in your facility with the announcement. **Post by March 1 and remove the posting at the close of business on March 31.** (See Exhibit 1)

Step 3 - Make Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form available to applicants and accept completed forms.

See Exhibit 2 (The Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form). Modify the form locally by deleting jobs not available in your facility. Make sure the announcement tells the employees where to obtain these forms. The forms must be available no later than March 1 and must not be accepted after the close of business on March 31.

Exhibit 1:

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT

2009 MAINTENANCE IN-CRAFT OPEN SEASON

The Maintenance In-craft 2009 Open Season application period runs from March 1 through March 31, 2009.

In-craft maintenance employees are eligible to apply for any register authorized in this office (see attached list) if they are not currently on that register or on the ineligible list. Employees who have previously abandoned the process for any group may reapply during Open Season.

Eligible applicants may pick up an Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form (EMPS) between March 1 and March 31, 2009, at **(specify location)**. Applicants must return the EMPS by the close of business March 31, 2009.

Applicants for Open Season will be placed on a register (or the list of ineligibles for that register) with a register date of March 31, 2009.

(At this point add any other information which you would normally use for your announcement. Just make sure the information provided in the sample announcement is included on the posting.)

Exhibit 2:

Employee Maintenance Position Selection Form

Employee Name: _____
(Please Print)

Employee ID: _____

Return By: _____

The following MSS positions should be authorized in your facility. You must return this form, with a check mark beside each position in which you are interested, by the deadline listed above.

	POSITION TITLE/LEVEL
	CHECK BOX
0	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Technician / PS-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Technician / PS-11
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic, MPE / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic, MPE / PS-9
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic / PS-6 <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Mechanic / PS-7
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Area Maintenance Specialist / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Area Maintenance Technician / PS-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Blacksmith-Welder / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Building Equipment Mechanic / PS-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Building Equipment Mechanic (MESC) / PS-9 <input type="checkbox"/> General Mechanic (MES) / PS-6
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance Custodian / PS-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter / PS-7 <input type="checkbox"/> Letter Box Mechanic (Shop) / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Machinist / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Electrician / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Painter / PS-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Plumber / PS-8

Employee Signature Required

Date Signed

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
MSS OPEN SEASON 2009**

1. Question: Who can participate in Open Season 2009?

Response: All incraft maintenance employees who are not currently on a specific Promotional Eligibility Register (PER) or the ineligible list for a specific PER may apply for that group during Open Season.

2. Question: Who should already be on a PER?

Response: Maintenance employees who have requested, during an application opportunity to be on a PER, and who qualify, will be placed on the PER.

3. Question: What will happen if incraft employees already have incraft ratings and still apply during Open Season?

Response: Incraft employees who have completed the MSS process for a group in the past will have either a qualifying or non-qualifying score for every position in that group. The local office should check records for each employee and inform them that their application will be rejected during Open Season if they already have completed the process for an MSS group.

Employees who fully participated but have a non-qualifying score can only apply through the update process. There is no update process related to Open Season.

4. Question: What will happen to applicants who qualify for a group during Open Season?

Response: Employees who fully participated and have a qualifying score for the PER applied for will be placed on the PER along with other successful applicants AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE OPEN SEASON PROCESS when all applicants have completed.

This procedure complies with the long-standing "print rule" that states all applicants must be either completed or abandoned before any applicant is placed on the PER in accordance with the Open Season.

5. Question: How does Open Season apply to Transferred employees?

Response: Transfers and Open Season are considered separate opportunities for an employee to apply for a PER. When an employee transfers to a new facility, they are given an opportunity to apply for all PERs in the new office. Open Season is a separate and distinct opportunity.

6. Question: If an applicant has abandoned a process for a certain group during the year, is he/she eligible to apply for MSS Open Season 2009?

Response: Yes. If a process has officially been abandoned, then, the applicant may reapply for the group which has been abandoned.