



Member Update

NATCA Update on the Hiring Freeze and Deferred Retirement

NATCA Family,

We have received an update that Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has confirmed the federal hiring freeze does not affect air traffic control hiring. He also stated on CNN this morning that the deferred retirement will not apply to air traffic controllers.

Last week all FAA position vacancies, including ATCS positions, were removed from the USA Jobs website. The day after Sec. Duffy was confirmed, the positions were put back up on the [USA Jobs website](#), as well as TMC and SSS position vacancies.

Additionally, we have been informed by FAA senior leadership that the NCEPT and all internal transfers will continue.

As for the federal employee deferred resignation program, as we informed you Jan 29, 2025, “OPM issued a [letter to all federal employees via their government e-mail](#). In the letter, OPM offered employees the option to submit a “deferred resignation letter” by February 6, 2025, which would be effective no later than September 30, 2025.

OPM subsequently issued a [memorandum providing guidance regarding the deferred resignation program](#) to heads of departments and agencies explaining that employees who elect deferred resignation will not be subject to the return-to-work requirements and should have their work reassigned. In the FAQ for Chief Human Capital Officers attached to the memorandum, the OPM makes it clear that each employing agency may specifically exclude positions from “deferred resignation eligibility.”

At this time, the FAA has not made any official determinations as to which positions will be excluded. However, today on CNN Secretary Duffy made the following statement:

“...in regard to the employment freeze, we had almost 1,200 positions that

were critical safety positions that were exempted. Those included air traffic controllers. Actually, this last week, we had new air traffic controllers that were hired. We also had postings online to bring in new air traffic controllers. So, air traffic controllers were exempted from a hiring freeze, as well as other safety positions, like inspectors. In regard to offers for people to take early retirement, for our department, actually, the critical positions in regard to safety are not offered that early retirement. **We're going to keep all our safety positions in place, no early retirement.** We're all going to stay and work and make sure our skies are safe.”

While Sec. Duffy referred to an “early retirement,” it is the deferred resignation offer, which is substantially different than Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) or an offer for early retirement.

Our previous guidance from January 29 remains unchanged. We recommend that you do not submit a deferred resignation letter until we receive additional information on how it would affect your retirement, benefits, and what positions are excluded. NATCA has asked for a briefing from the FAA on this matter.

We remain fully engaged and will continue to advocate for you, ensuring that our membership's interests and concerns are addressed.

In Solidarity,

The NATCA National Executive Board

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