

# No Fear Act Notice:

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*Department of the Army mandates NO FEAR Act Training every two years. Public (Law 107-174), requires that all Federal employees receive training regarding their rights and remedies under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws. Employees will gain understanding of the purpose of the No FEAR Act, know their rights and remedies and how they can exercise their rights under these laws. This training is available online through LMS. On May 15, 2002, Congress enacted the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002," which is now known as the No FEAR Act. One purpose of the Act is to "require that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of anti-discrimination and whistle blower protection laws." [See Public Law 107-174, Summary.] In support of this purpose, Congress found that "agencies cannot be run effectively if those agencies practice or tolerate discrimination." [See Public Law 107-174, Title I, General Provisions, section 101(1).] The Act also requires this agency to provide this notice to Federal employees, former Federal employees and applicants for Federal employment to inform you of the rights and protections available to you under Federal anti-discrimination and whistle blower protection laws.*

## **Anti-discrimination Laws:**

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee, former employee, or applicant with respect to the terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status or political affiliation. Discrimination on these bases is prohibited by one or more of the following statutes: 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(1), 29 U.S.C. 206(d), 29 U.S.C. 631, 29 U.S.C. 633a, 29 U.S.C. 791 and 42 U.S.C. 2000e-16. If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action, before you can file a formal complaint of discrimination with your agency. See, e.g. 29 CFR 1614. If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a written complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) (see contact information below). In the alternative (or in some cases, in addition), you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through your agency's administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

## **Whistle blower Protection Laws:**

A Federal employee with authority to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action must not use that authority to take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, a personnel action against an employee or applicant because of disclosure of information by that individual that is reasonably believed to evidence violations of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, unless disclosure of such information is specifically prohibited by law and such information is specifically required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs. Retaliation against an employee or applicant for making a protected disclosure is prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8). If you believe that you have been the victim of whistle blower

retaliation, you may file a written complaint (Form OSC-11) with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505 or online through the OSC Web site: <http://www.osc.gov>

### **Retaliation for Engaging in Protected Activity:**

A Federal agency cannot retaliate against an employee or applicant because that individual exercises his or her rights under any of the Federal anti-discrimination or whistle blower protection laws listed above. If you believe that you are the victim of retaliation for engaging in protected activity, you must follow, as appropriate, the procedures described in the Anti-discrimination Laws and Whistle blower Protection Laws sections or, if applicable, the administrative or negotiated grievance procedures in order to pursue any legal remedy.

### **Disciplinary Actions:**

Under the existing laws, each agency retains the right, where appropriate, to discipline a Federal employee for conduct that is inconsistent with Federal Anti-discrimination and Whistle blower Protection Laws up to and including removal. If OSC has initiated an investigation under 5 U.S.C. 1214, however, according to 5 U.S.C. 1214(f), agencies must seek approval from the Special Counsel to discipline employees for, among other activities, engaging in prohibited retaliation. Nothing in the No FEAR Act alters existing laws or permits an agency to take unfounded disciplinary action against a Federal employee or to violate the procedural rights of Federal employee who has been accused of discrimination.

### **Additional Information:**

For further information regarding the No FEAR Act regulations, refer to 5 CFR part 724, as well as the appropriate offices within your agency (e.g., EEO/civil rights office, human resources office or Solicitor's office). Additional information regarding Federal anti-discrimination, whistle blower protection and retaliation laws can be found at the EEOC Website: <http://www.eeoc.gov> and the OSC Website: <http://www.osc.gov>

### **Existing Rights Unchanged:**

Pursuant to section 205 of the No FEAR Act, neither the Act nor this notice creates, expands or reduces any rights otherwise available to any employee, former employee or applicant under the laws of the United States, including the provisions of law specified in 5 U.S.C. 2302(d).

The intent of this Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, "No FEAR Act" is that federal agencies will pay more attention to their EEO and whistle blower complaint activity and act more expeditiously to resolve complaints at the administrative level when it is appropriate to do so. Each agency is required to post on its primary website homepage, a link to the data required to be posted under the Act and designate the link and that data as "Equal Opportunity Data to be posted by the No FEAR