



266 FW 3

Return Rights from Alaska

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3.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter provides policy and procedures for the return of employees to their home Region from remote locations in Alaska (Region 7).

3.2 To whom does this chapter apply? This chapter applies to all Service employees in a professional series at the GS-5 level or above who transfer from a Region other than Region 7 to a duty station in Region 7 excluding Anchorage and Fairbanks. Region 7 vacancy announcements will indicate positions that this policy covers.

3.3 What is the policy on return rights from Alaska? We will provide covered employees the opportunity to return to their home Region (the employee's assigned Region or home Region prior to accepting a position in Alaska) upon completion of a minimum 3-year tour of duty in Alaska. The home Region will place the employee in a position of equivalent grade in the same general occupational classification series that the employee occupied in Alaska. This does not preclude covered employees from competing for advertised positions under normal recruitment procedures.

3.4 Why does the Service have the return rights policy? The objective of this policy is to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates to remote locations in Region 7. This is not a placement program nor does it circumvent the internal merit staffing program.

3.5 What is the authority for this policy? 5 CFR 335, Promotion and Internal Placement.

3.6 Who can approve exceptions to this policy? Only the Director can approve exceptions to this policy.

3.7 How do I exercise my return rights? After you complete 2 ½ years of service in Region 7, notify the Regional Director, Region 7, and the home Region of your intention to return to the home Region. This early notification will give the home Region time to plan for your return. Both the notification and the receipt of notification must be in writing.

3.8 What happens if I do not exercise my return rights immediately? If you do not exercise the right to return following the first 3-year period, you may state your intention to return to the home Region on an annual basis for 3 consecutive years. Your right to return from Alaska will be lost if not exercised within 6 years.

3.9 Does the home Region have to place me? The home Region must place a covered employee who wishes to exercise the right of return.

3.10 How long does the home Region have to place me? When you notify the home Region of your intent to return, the home Region has 1 year to physically transfer you to a position in that Region after you complete the 3-year tour of duty in Region 7.

3.11 Do I have to accept any position that the home Region offers? You may decline the first position offered. Upon such declination, the home Region will offer a second position. If you do not accept the second position, you forfeit your right of return. You may voluntarily elect to accept a lower-graded position, but the intent of this policy is to laterally reassign employees.

3.12 Who pays for return to the home Region?

A. After the home Region and the employee reach an agreement, the home Region in concert with Region 7 will develop an estimated cost for the transfer of the employee to the home Region.

B. The home Region will pay the first \$50,000 of the costs associated with transferring the covered employee to the home Region. The home Region will notify the Director of any funds needed in excess of \$50,000.

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