

# Reduction in Force (RIF) [ printable version ]

## Lesson Content

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### RIF and Human Nature

*“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear. And the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.”*

H. P. Lovecraft

### Employee questions



Most Federal employees don't like to talk about RIF. We all get nervous when we hear the term RIF. It means we may lose our jobs. Until the RIF notices are handed out, we all wonder what will happen. Will I get downgraded? Will I lose my job? What happens if I do? How do they decide who gets hit and who doesn't? Is there anything I can do to help myself?

Those questions are normal. We're often told fear of the unknown is one of the most powerful human emotions. What will happen in a RIF is unknown to most of us, and what could happen causes fear.

### The Basics of RIF

#### Definitions



Let's start our explanation of RIF with some of the terms that are used when we talk about RIF. Each term describes a part of the RIF process. The terms are in the order they are used in RIF. Each is a building block on which the next step depends.

- **Competitive area.** The competitive area is the geographic and organizational area in which the RIF is conducted. The elements of an organization in a commuting area are typically the competitive area for RIF purposes. That means you compete for jobs with other employees in your

organization and can't bump or retreat into a job in another organization. For RIF purposes, the organization may be an entire military command, or it may be a part of the command. The DLA Human Resources Center (DHRC) can explain what is included in your competitive area and why.

- **Competitive level.** The competitive level is a group of jobs so much alike that the person filling one can fill another in the same level. Remember: The competitive level is based on the job, not on your qualifications. To be in the same competitive level, jobs have to be in the same job series and have the same grade level. Jobs with the same series and grade level *may* be in different competitive levels if they have important differences (such as qualification requirements or full-time versus part-time).

## Your Retention Standing

### Determining factors

Whether you are affected in a RIF depends a lot on your retention standing (who is senior and junior). Your retention standing is based on three factors:



**Factor 1—Subgroup.** Your subgroup is the combination of your tenure group (career or career-conditional) and your veterans' preference. The following table describes the tenure groups and veterans preference codes.

If you . . .	Then your . . .
are a career employee	tenure group is 1.
are a career-conditional employee	tenure group is 2.
do not have veterans preference for RIF	veterans preference code is B.
have veterans preference for RIF but are not a 30% disabled veteran	veterans preference code is A.
have veterans preference for RIF and a 30% or more disability	veterans' preference code is AD.

When you combine the two conditions, you get the subgroup. For example, a career employee without veterans' preference is in subgroup 1B. Most of your placement rights depend on your subgroup. The subgroups are listed below:

**1AD 1A 1B 2AD 2A 2B**  
 Highest -----Lowest

**Factor 2—  
Service  
Computation**

**Date (SCD).** Your SCD is based on the number of years of service you have. You get credit for time in civil service jobs and in the military. If you are retired military, you usually don't get credit for all the time you were in service. You will get credit for time you spent in combat zones, on campaigns or expeditions, and similar assignments.



**Factor 3—Performance Ratings.** DHRC will adjust your SCD based on your performance ratings. You get credit for your last three annual ratings, as long as they are not more than four years old on the day RIF notices are handed out or the cut-off date, if one is established. If you have only two ratings in the last four years, your SCD is adjusted by the average of the two ratings. If you have only one rating in the last four years, your SCD is adjusted by that rating. Keep in mind that the SCD shown on the Standard Forms (SF) 50, Notification of Personnel Action, you receive does not include the credit for performance ratings.

DLA's performance management system uses a three-level rating system: Fully Successful, Minimally Successful, and Unacceptable. 20 additional years of service credit will be assigned for each rating of Fully Successful. No additional service credit is given for each rating of Minimally Acceptable or Unacceptable.

An employee who has not received three annual performance ratings of record shall receive additional service credit based on a combination of the ratings actually received and/or an assumed Fully Successful sufficient to credit the employee with three performance ratings.

When there are at least two different rating patterns among the affected employees, (combination of three-levels and five-levels), 20 additional years of service will be assigned for each rating of Fully Successful or higher.

The last three performance ratings will be averaged, for a maximum of 20 additional years of service credit.

## Round One

### Release from competitive level

The first step in running a RIF is to identify the job(s) being abolished. It is the first round of a RIF. After that, the procedure used to decide if you stay in your job (or one like it) is fairly simple.

1. The employees in a competitive level are listed in order of retention standing.
2. Within the subgroups listed above, employees are listed in order of SCD.
3. The job being abolished is found on the list, and the employee in that job competes to stay in the competitive level. If the employee is not the most junior employee, he or she takes the job of the junior employee, and the junior employee is released from the competitive level. An example is shown below:

~~Tom Jones IAD 01/03/60 (job abolished)~~  
Betty Doe IA 09/10/55  
Bill Smith IA 09/11/55  
Jim Fritz IB 10/19/65  
Frank Green IIA 02/05/78 (displaced by Tom)

In the example above, Tom is the most senior employee, and Frank is the junior employee. Remember that Tom is above Betty because his subgroup is higher than hers, even though she has more years of service. If Tom's job is abolished, he takes Frank's job, and Frank is released from the competitive level.

It is important to remember that these people are all in the same competitive level. That means they are the same series and grade level, and the qualification requirements for the jobs are substantially similar. There is no “bumping” or “retreating”—terms that will be explained in the next section—at this step in the RIF.

## Round Two

### Procedure

In Round 2, all the employees who are released from their competitive levels in Round 1 will compete with the other employees who were released. Employees will compete for placement both in vacant jobs and in jobs that are already filled.

The released employees are placed in order of retention standing. Grade level does not decide who gets placed first. The example below shows how employees who are affected in Round 1 are arranged to compete in Round 2:

Employee	Grade	Subgroup	SCD
Fred Jones	GS-4	1AD	09/08/63
John Smith	GS-5	1A	08/21/61
Debra Doe	GS-9	1B	09/30/61
Jane Eliot	GS-9	1B	10/10/65
Dan Brown	GS-11	1B	12/12/68
Joan Green	GS-7	2B	04/05/78

Notice that the employees are not arranged in order of grade level. They are listed in order of subgroup, and in order of SCD within each subgroup. The employees must be placed or separated in order of their Subgroups.

### Results of Round 2

Employees who compete in Round 2 can

- *bump* another employee
- *retreat* to a job they held before
- be placed in a *vacant* job, or
- be *separated*.

The following is an explanation of these terms:

**Bumping.** You can bump another employee who is in a lower subgroup (1A, 1B, 2A, etc.) than you. You must be qualified and able to perform the duties without substantial training, but you don't have to have been in the job before.

When you are qualified for several jobs, you get the best offer. The best offer is the highest-graded job, even if one has promotion potential to a higher grade. For example, if the jobs are a GS-5, and a GS-4 with promotion potential to GS-6, the best offer is the GS-5. That may not sound right or fair, but it is the way the rules for RIF are written. If there are several jobs at the same grade level, you cannot pick the one you want.

**Retreating.** You can retreat to a job you've held, if the person in the job is in the same subgroup as you and if the person's RIF SCD is more recent than yours. For example, if you are a 1B and your SCD is 2/2/70 and the person in the job now is a 1B with an SCD of 4/2/72, you can retreat to the job. You cannot retreat to a job in another organization, only to an identical job in your competitive area.

**Vacant job.** You can fill a vacant job, if the activity has decided to use it in the RIF. Most activities use as many vacant jobs as possible.

**Separation.** If you can't bump, retreat, or be placed in a vacant job, you will be separated from service.

### **Grade interval limits**

RIF regulations limit how far you can go down in grade level when you bump or retreat. You can bump or retreat no more than three grade intervals below your current job. A grade interval is the way you normally get promoted in your line of work.

For example, a Budget Analyst normally goes from GS-5 to GS-7 to GS-9 to GS-11. A GS-11 Budget Analyst can bump or retreat three grade intervals (GS-9, GS-7, and GS-5). If you are a 30% disabled veteran who has veterans' preference for RIF, you may retreat up to five grade intervals, but bumping is still limited to three grade intervals.



## Order of actions

Whether you are placed by bumping, retreating, or placement in a vacancy depends on what jobs are available. Remember: You are entitled to the best offer. You bump, if the best offer is a bump. You retreat, if the best offer is a Retreat. DHRC places you in a vacancy first, then you bump, then you retreat, but you always get the best offer.

## RIF Notices

### Timeframes

You get at least 60 days' notice if you are demoted or separated because of a RIF. The longest notice allowed by the rules is 120 days.

If you get a RIF notice, DHRC may amend it later. The amendment will usually give you a better offer. For example, you may get a separation notice, then a demotion notice after someone turns down a job or retires. If the amended notice is offering the same or higher grade job, you do not get a new 60-day notice.

RIF notices for demotions will be in the form of an offer, and you can accept or decline the offer. If you decline, you will be separated on the effective date of the RIF, unless a better offer can be made.

## Putting it all together

### Reference

If the RIF process isn't clear and easy to understand now, don't be discouraged. RIF is confusing, and even people who work with it often have to think twice before answering RIF questions. For your information and reference, DLA Regulation 1410.1, Reduction In Force, Furlough, and Transfer of Function, governs RIF within DLA. The regulation can be accessed in the DLA One Book,

[https://dla1.eportal.dla.mil/irj/portal?NavigationTarget=ROLES://portal\\_content/mil.dla.f.workplace/mil.dla.f.objects/mil.dla.f.objects.worksets/resources/mil.dla.w.resources/mil.dla.all.TheOneBook/p.dla.onebook.user.main](https://dla1.eportal.dla.mil/irj/portal?NavigationTarget=ROLES://portal_content/mil.dla.f.workplace/mil.dla.f.objects/mil.dla.f.objects.worksets/resources/mil.dla.w.resources/mil.dla.all.TheOneBook/p.dla.onebook.user.main).

### RIF process example

The following description of a RIF walks you through the process from start to finish. It should give you a good idea of how a RIF works.

The competitive area for this RIF is a small organization with 20 employees. The organization is abolishing five jobs. There is one vacant job.

#### Step 1—Prepare the retention register.

The first step in running the RIF is to prepare a retention register—a list of employees in order of their competitive levels and their retention standing. Within each competitive level, they are listed from 1AD to 2B. Within each subgroup, they are listed from senior to junior. The following is a sample retention register:

<b>Job</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Competitive Level</b>	<b>Name</b>
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1AD	10/10/65	1111	Fred Smith
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/18/55	1111	John Doe
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/24/55	1111	Joe Eliot
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1B	3/22/44	1111	Betty Jones
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1A	7/3/77	1112	Frank Green
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1B	3/3/65	1112	Jane Black
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	2B	3/3/79	1112	Irving Stein
Aircraft Mechanic Helper, WG-8852-05	1AD	9/30/67	1113	James Hunter

<b>Job</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Competitive Level</b>	<b>Name</b>
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1AD	6/4/76	1110	Rosie Rock
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1A	11/4/56	1110	Bill Williams
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1B	2/9/45	1110	George Jones
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	1B	2/2/55	1114	Debra Smith
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	2B	12/5/75	1114	Donna Rose
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	2B	5/23/76	1114	Stan Stanley
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	3/30/63	1115	Dorothy Parker
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	5/28/67	1115	Cindy McGee
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	7/30/67	1115	Greg Lusk
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	2A	5/3/78	1115	Joan Meridith
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2A	4/2/78	1116	Darlene Mann
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2B	5/4/77	1116	Mike Clark
File Clerk, GS-305-3			1117	Vacant

**Sample RIF retention register**

<b>Job</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Competitive Level</b>	<b>Name</b>
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1AD	10/10/65	1111	Fred Smith
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/18/55	1111	John Doe
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/24/55	1111	Joe Eliot
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1B	3/22/44	1111	Betty Jones
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1A	7/3/77	1112	Frank Green
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1B	3/3/65	1112	Jane Black
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	2B	3/3/79	1112	Irving Stein
Aircraft Mechanic Helper, WG-8852-05	1AD	9/30/67	1113	James Hunter
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1AD	6/4/76	1110	Rosie Rock
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1A	11/4/56	1110	Bill Williams
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1B	2/9/45	1110	George Jones
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	1B	2/2/55	1114	Debra Smith
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	2B	12/5/75	1114	Donna Rose
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	2B	5/23/76	1114	Stan Stanley
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	3/30/63	1115	Dorothy Parker
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	5/28/67	1115	Cindy McGee

Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	7/30/67	1115	Greg Lusk
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	2A	5/3/78	1115	Joan Meridith
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2A	4/2/78	1116	Darlene Mann
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2B	5/4/77	1116	Mike Clark
File Clerk, GS-305-3			1117	Vacant

### Step 2—Conduct Round 1

After the retention register is complete, it is time to do Round 1. In Round 1e, DHRC identifies the jobs to be abolished release employees from the Competitive Levels. The following retention register shows Round 1 results with the abolished jobs marked with a strike through.

<b>Job</b>	<b>Sub group</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Competitive Level</b>	<b>Name</b>
<del>Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10</del>	1AD	10/10/65	1111	Fred Smith (Reassigned to Betty Jones' job)
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/18/55	1111	John Doe
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/24/55	1111	Joe Eliot
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1B	3/22/44	1111	Betty Jones (Released from competitive level)
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1A	7/3/77	1112	Frank Green
<del>Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08</del>	1B	3/3/65	1112	Jane Black (Reassigned to Irving Stein's job)
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	2B	3/3/79	1112	Irving Stein (Released from competitive level)

Aircraft Mechanic Helper, WG-8852-05	1AD	9/30/67	1113	James Hunter
<b>Job</b>	<b>Sub group</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Competitive Level</b>	<b>Name</b>
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1AD	6/4/76	1110	Rosie Rock
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1A	11/4/56	1110	Bill Williams
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1B	2/9/45	1110	George Jones
<del>Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5</del>	1B	2/2/55	1114	Debra Smith (Reassigned to Stan Stanley's job)
<del>Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5</del>	2B	12/5/75	1114	Donna Rose (Released from competitive level)
Secretary (Typ), GS-318-5	2B	5/23/76	1114	Stan Stanley (Released from competitive level)
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	3/30/63	1115	Dorothy Parker
<del>Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4</del>	1B	5/28/67	1115	Cindy McGee (Reassigned to Joan Meridith's job)
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	7/30/67	1115	Greg Lusk
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	2A	5/3/78	1115	Joan Meridith (Released from competitive level)
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2A	4/2/78	1116	Darlene Mann

Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2B	5/4/77	1116	Mike Clark
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In this example, Fred Smith, Jane Black, Debra Smith, and Cindy McGee are reassigned in Round 1. They did not bump or retreat. These are Round 1 reassignments made because they were not the junior employees in their competitive levels.

Betty Jones, Irving Stein, Donna Rose, Stan Stanley, and Joan Meridith are released from their competitive levels.

### Step 3—Conduct Round 2

The employees are now ready to move into Round 2, where the bumping and retreating take place. DHRC redoes the retention register to list all remaining employees in retention order. The competitive levels are no longer a factor. When the register has been redone, the released employees can be placed. The following is the placement list:

<b>Job</b>	<b>Sub group</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Name</b>
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1B	3/22/44	Betty Jones
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	2A	5/3/78	Joan Meridith
Secretary (Typing), GS-318-5	2B	12/5/75	Donna Rose
Secretary (Typing), GS-318-5	2B	5/23/76	Stan Stanley
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	2B	3/3/79	Irving Stein

The employees on the placement list are placed or separated in order of their retention standing. The first placement that is attempted will be the most senior employee. Remember that grade level has nothing to do with who gets placed first.

## Sample RIF retention register redone for use in Round 2

The following register does not list abolished jobs.

<b>Job</b>	<b>Sub group</b>	<b>Adjusted SCD</b>	<b>Name</b>
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1AD	10/10/65	Fred Smith
Aircraft Mechanic Helper, WG-8852-05	1AD	9/30/67	James Hunter
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1AD	6/4/76	Rosie Rock
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/18/55	John Doe
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-10	1A	9/24/55	Joe Eliot
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1A	11/4/56	Bill Williams
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1A	7/3/77	Frank Green
Materials Handler, WG-6907-5	1B	2/9/45	George Jones
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	3/30/63	Dorothy Parker
Aircraft Worker, WG-8852-08	1B	3/3/65	Jane Black
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	5/28/67	Cindy McGee
Clerk-Typist, GS-322-4	1B	7/30/67	Greg Lusk
Secretary (Typing), GS-318-5	1B	2/2/55	Debra Smith
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2A	4/2/78	Darlene Mann
Mail Clerk, GS-305-4	2B	5/4/77	Mike Clark
File Clerk, GS-305-03			VACANT

## Explanation of sample RIF Round 2

The following is an explanation of how Round 2 works:

1. Betty Jones, a 1B, has the highest retention standing of the employees on the placement list. She is placed first.

The first step in placing Betty is to look for a WG-10 job she can fill by bumping, retreating, or filling a vacancy. There are no WG-10s she can displace by bumping or retreating, and there are no vacant jobs.

A review of Betty's record shows that she was promoted to the WG-10 Aircraft Mechanic from a WG-8 Aircraft Worker job. If we look at the retention register, we see that Jane Black is also a 1B, and she has less service than Betty. That means Betty can retreat to the job Jane is in now. Since there is no vacant job at the WG-8 level to place Betty in, she will retreat to Jane's job, and Jane will be added to the placement list. Jane has been RIFed.

2. Jane is the most senior person on the placement list now, so she gets placed next. There is no one at the WG-8 level she can displace by bumping or retreating, so we have to look at lower grade levels.

A review of Jane's qualifications shows she is qualified to be a Mail Clerk or a File Clerk at the GS-3 or GS-4 level. There is a vacant GS-3 position that Jane could be placed in without affecting anyone else. There are also two GS-4 Mail Clerk jobs occupied by people who are in lower tenure groups than Jane.

Mike Clark, a 2B, has the lowest retention standing. Even though the GS-3 is vacant and placing Jane in it wouldn't affect anybody else, the GS-4 is the best offer. Jane bumps Mike because we have to give everyone the best offer. Remember: It is a bump because Mike is in a lower subgroup than Jane. She is a 1B and he is a 2B. Mike is then added to the placement list.

3. The next person on the placement list is Joan Meridith, a 2A. Her only Federal job is the Clerk-Typist job she is in now, so she doesn't have any retreat rights.

There are no employees in subgroups lower than hers, so she can't bump anyone. However, the GS-3 File Clerk job is still vacant. Joan will be placed in that job.

4. The next person on the placement list is Donna Rose, a 2B. She was promoted to her current job from a GS-4 Mail Clerk job.

Donna can't bump anyone because there is no one on the retention register who is in a lower subgroup. There are no vacancies left, so she can't be placed that way. There is one Mail Clerk, GS-4, but it is filled by a 2A (Darlene Mann). Remember: Mike Clark's GS-4 Mail Clerk job was already taken by Jane Black. Since there is no place to put Donna, she is separated.

5. The three people left on the placement list (Stan Stanley, Mike Clark, and Irving Stein) are all in the same situation as Donna. They have no one to bump, they haven't held any jobs they could retreat to, and there are no vacant jobs left. They will all be separated.

## Result

The result of our sample RIF is shown in the following table:

Employee	Former Job	New Job	Comments
Betty Jones	WG-8852-10	WG-8852-8	Retreated to job held by Jane Black
Jane Black	WG-8852-8	GS-305-4	Bumped Mike Clark
Joan Meridith	GS-322-4	GS-305-3	Filled vacant job
Donna Rose	GS-318-5	None	Separated
Mike Clark	GS-305-4	None	Separated
Stan Stanley	GS-318-5	None	Separated
Irving Stein	WG-8852-8	None	Separated

As you can see, five jobs were abolished, but seven people were affected by the RIF. That ratio is a bit lower than we typically see in a RIF. It is not uncommon to see two people affected for every one position abolished.

## After the RIF

### Affected employee's entitlements

An employee downgraded or released from Federal service by RIF has entitlement to placement assistance through both the DOD Priority Placement Program and the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program. Information on both of these programs is provided to employees in their RIF notices. Additionally, human resources offices typically have extensive outplacement programs in place that include not only placement assistance but other services such as resume writing, interviewing techniques, searching for jobs on the Internet, and employee assistance programs.



Employees downgraded or released from Federal service by RIF may appeal the action if they feel they were affected unfairly. Employees covered by a negotiated agreement must file a grievance with the agency that conducted the RIF. Non-union employees must file directly with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). These appeal rights are also included in the employees' RIF notices.

Some employees separated by RIF may be eligible for either severance pay or discontinued service retirement and are informed of their eligibility in the RIF notice.

- End -