

SPECIAL RATES OF PAY

1. Why do we have special rates?

Special rates are a management tool that was designed to help overcome existing or likely significant handicaps in the recruitment or retention of well-qualified personnel.

2. Who should the manager contact for assistance with special rates?

Due to the number of technical requirements the manager should seek the assistance of a Human Resource Consultant.

3. What role does a manager have in special rates?

The manager plays a key role in identifying situations where subordinate positions are difficult to fill or suffer an unusual rate of turnover.

4. What would be an example of a situation where a manager would seek a special rate?

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) would look for evidence of a current, demonstrated staffing problem, caused by substantially higher pay rates in private enterprise for the occupation(s) concerned in one or more areas or locations.

5. When a special rate is authorized, who may be paid the special rate, and when would payment begin?

Special rates are published by the OPM for specific locations, occupational series and grades. It is important to remember that only employees in the locations, series and grades specified in each

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authorization may receive the special salary rates. If an existing position is later reclassified to a series and grade for which special rates are authorized, the special rates can be paid only from the date of the reclassification.

6. Who may generate a request for special rates?

Requests for special rates are submitted to OPM by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget.

7. Who has the authority to establish or discontinue a special rate?

Only OPM may establish pay rates. The Department is responsible to document the need for special rates and to provide OPM with an annual review of the need to continue special rates. However, when the need is determined to have eroded, the employee does not suffer a reduction in salary, but instead would fail to receive General Schedule increases until the General Schedule rate of pay "catches up" with the special rate.

8. What are the legal and regulatory references for special salary rates?

5 U.S.C. 5305

5 CFR, part 530, subpart C

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