

How to File an Individual Claim for Special Retirement Coverage - DOI

If an individual believes he or she is eligible for the special retirement benefit, that individual is responsible for filing an individual claim package for review. But, how does one file a claim? The following information explains what needs to be in a claim package.

The following information is only a recommendation for format and documentation which should be in an individual claim for coverage. The claimant bears the burden of proof. *(Note that CSRS rules apply to service performed prior to January 1, 1987).*

Timeliness

Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) Individuals - A deadline of September 30, 1989, was made for individuals to claim coverage for all service prior to 1989. After that, for CSRS (5 U.S.C. 8336(c)) individuals with DOI service, coverage in a position or credit for past service will not be granted for a period greater than **one year prior** to the date the claim is received by the Firefighter and Law Enforcement Retirement Team (FLERT). However, CSRS employees with service beyond this one year limit may, under special circumstances, request late coverage approval (see "To Initiate a Claim" below).

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) Individuals - FERS (5 U.S.C. 8412(d)) individuals with service in DOI positions that have not been determined to be covered under the special retirement provisions, must formally initiate a position coverage claim in writing to FLERT **within six months** of entering the position. FERS employees with service in non-covered positions prior to this deadline may, under special circumstances, request late coverage approval (see "To Initiate a Claim" below).

To Initiate a Claim

To initiate a DOI position review or claim for past service for credit under the Firefighter and Law Enforcement Officer special retirement provisions, an individual **must** request in writing that he or she would like a review and determination of position or individual coverage for past service. In addition, if the claim is for positions/service beyond the time limits, the claim must include a written statement explaining why it is late, i.e., prevented by circumstances beyond your control from making the request within the time limit.

1. Claim from the individual.

A signed and dated letter or statement from the individual stating what he or she is claiming must be included in the claim. It is particularly important to show which service the individual feels meets the primary coverage, and which service meets the secondary coverage requirements. Also explain why the claim was not filed: (1) for CSRS, sooner than the last 12 months; or (2) for FERS, within six months of accepting a non-covered position. [***This is Mandatory.***]

2. Copy of SF-171.

Submit a copy (or copies) of signed and dated SF-171's, Employment Application, from Official Personnel File (OPF) which includes the work periods being claimed. We are not asking for new or updated SF-171's, but copies of old ones that were in the OPF. Resumes and the DI-612 normally do not contain the same information contained in the SF-171, and do not provide additional value to a claim package.

3. Personnel actions.

Legible copies of SF-50's, Notification of Personnel Action, MUST be provided for the periods of service for which special retirement coverage is claimed. All personnel actions should be included. These are available in the current servicing personnel office, in the OPF.

If you are no longer a Federal employee, you can request copies of the SF-50's from the Federal Records Center (include your official name, date of birth, and Social Security number):

National Personnel Records Center
(Civilian Personnel Records)
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118

The claimant must keep updating the information in their claim package with address changes and SF-50's (for any position changes) until a decision letter is issued.

4. Supporting documentation.

A. If claiming "primary" **Firefighter** coverage, documentation must support "control and extinguishment of fires" (CSRS and FERS) or "maintenance and use of firefighting apparatus and equipment" (CSRS only).

- ➔ Must clearly show that firefighting duties were the "primary purpose" of the job, on a regular and recurring basis.
- ➔ Should be able to list fires worked each year, number of days on the fire, position held on the fire.
- ➔ Provide evidence of hazard duty pay
- ➔ Need to show any physical fitness requirements
- ➔ List related training, include copies of training authorizations (or certificates), if available
- ➔ If maintenance and use of equipment are a part of the claim, must show fireline assignments and how equipment was used
- ➔ Copy of current red card

B. If claiming "primary" **Law Enforcement Officer** coverage, documentation must support "investigation, apprehension, or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of offenses against the criminal laws of the U.S." (CSRS and FERS), or "the protection of officials of the U.S. against threats to personal safety" (FERS only). These duties were so rigorous that special physical standards were in place.

- ➔ Must clearly show that LEO was the "primary purpose" of the job on a regular and recurring basis.
- ➔ List the Federal criminal law enforced & LEO training received
- ➔ Summary of arrests and citations – reasonable estimated number by year
- ➔ Requirement to carry a firearm & evidence of receipt of LEO authority (e.g., LE commission)

C. If claiming "secondary" Firefighter or Law Enforcement Officer coverage, documentation must support "secondary supervisory" (first-line supervisor of firefighters or law enforcement officers), OR "secondary administrative", for which experience as a "primary" firefighter or law enforcement officer is a prerequisite.

- List all employees you supervised and show how many were firefighters and/or law enforcement officers.
- Show what prior "primary" experience was required and how it was needed to do the job.
- Show that you are in an organization with a firefighting or law enforcement mission.

Other information to support a claim:

- Past performance appraisals
- Copies of the vacancy announcement and KSA's
- Evidence of "on-call" status, irregular tours

5. Duties claimed.

For each position for which coverage is claimed the following data should be provided:

- Position Description. Each personnel action has a position number on it. As changes occur in positions, the position number changes. A copy each position description with the position number should be included. And/or
- Statement of duties. If a position description is not available, or does not fully describe duties performed, a statement of duties should be included which describes the major duties performed, with percentages. For law enforcement, include what types of law enforcement duties were performed and what laws were enforced.

If the claimant feels that the position description does not properly describe the major duties actually performed, it is important to provide a description of duties and qualifications.

It is extremely important that percentages of time are shown on position descriptions and duty statements.

- Supervisor's statement. To substantiate the individual's claim of work performed, the individual should have the supervisor or manager, for the time period claimed, provide either a written statement, or sign in agreement on the individual's statement.

The supervisor should include their name, title, and what their role was in relation to the individual, i.e., first level supervisor, second level supervisor, or manager. If claiming law enforcement officer coverage, the supervisory statement should include what types of law enforcement the individual performed: investigation, apprehension and/or detention. Also, they need to provide a current telephone number and address where they can be reached.

- Organization chart. A chart should be provided showing three levels above and below, if applicable, to the position claimed. Also, **ALL** other firefighter and law enforcement positions within the organization should be included on the organization chart.
- Function statement. Such statements should show that the position is in an organization which clearly has firefighting or law enforcement officer functions.

An individual claim for special retirement coverage will not be approved, unless all regulatory requirements (CSRS - 5 U.S.C. 8336(c) and FERS - 5 U.S.C. 8412(d)) are met. Each individual claim package stands on its own merits, and is subject to audit by the Department of the Interior and the Office of Personnel Management.

Submit your claim to:

Department of the Interior, Office of Personnel Policy
Firefighter & Law Enforcement Officer Retirement Team
300 E. Mallard Drive, Suite 170
Boise, ID 83706-6648

Note: Be sure to keep copies of all of your claim materials that you send forward.

ATTACHMENT A

CLAIM FOR DOI POSITION/SERVICE COVERAGE		
Name (print or type): Address:	Social Security Number:	
Period of Employment:	Position Number:	
Organization assigned to: Duty Station:		
Title, Series, and Grade (e.g., Forestry Technician, GS-0462-05; Park Ranger, GS-1801-09; etc...)		
Description of duties (In this section describe your primary duties, percentage of time for each major duty.) Select One: <input type="checkbox"/> The following information supplements the attached position description. <input type="checkbox"/> The position description is not available. The following summary of duties with percentages is provided in lieu of the position description.		
(Attach separate sheets if more space is needed.)		
Employee Certification: To the best of my knowledge, I certify that this information is correct and reflects the duties of the position at that time.		
Employee Signature _____	Date _____	
Supervisor/Manager: I have reviewed the above statements and agree with the position information. In addition, I would like to provide the following information:		
Supervisor/Manager printed name _____	Signature _____	Date _____
Current telephone number: _____		
Title at time service was performed: _____		