



Chapter Six: Priority Appointments

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Introduction

This chapter provides managers with basic information about priority appointments and how to use this special appointment tool.

The chapter covers the following topics:

- What Are Priority Entitlements?
- Advantages to Appointing Priority Persons
- Your Responsibilities
- When Your Staff Gain Priority Status
- When You Are Staffing: Identifying and Assessing Priority Persons
- Priority Clearance Numbers
- Retraining of Surplus and Layoff Employees
- Lower-level Appointments and Salary Protection
- Travel and Relocation Costs
- Recourse

Myth

Priority persons are put into the system because the department doesn't want them anymore.

Fact

These are qualified, skilled and experienced people who have acquired an entitlement for a variety of reasons such as return from leave of absence or spousal relocation. They continue to be a significant first source for departments staffing positions. We share a collective commitment to placing priority persons and enjoy quick, easy and rewarding staffing when appointing them. The [internet based Service Request "Robot"](#), for priority clearance will automatically search the priority inventory and quickly identify persons for referral.

What Are Priority Entitlements?

When a person has "priority", it simply means that the person is entitled to be appointed ahead of all others. This does not mean that positions are created for priority persons; it means only that when you make an appointment, you appoint these persons first, if they are qualified to do the job.

People acquire a priority status for many reasons. They may be in career transition owing to normal life events or are affected by work force adjustment decisions made by management. The following lists the types of priority situations. You will find definitions of each in the Glossary and your human resources advisor can provide more detail.

- [leave of absence returnees](#) or their replacements;
- certain persons who cease to be employed on [Ministers' staffs](#);
- [laid-off](#) employees;
- employees declared [surplus](#);
- [employees who became disabled](#) and are returning to the workforce;
- members of the [Armed Forces or RCMP injured in special duty areas](#);
- [employees relocating with their spouse](#) or common-law partner;
- [reinstatement to level](#) of certain priority persons appointed to lower levels.

Priority entitlements apply to *any* and all jobs for which the priority person is qualified. There are no geographic or organizational limits to an entitlement. This means that entitlements apply across all departments and regions, for persons who are mobile. It also means that areas of selection established in competitions do not apply to priority persons. When you appoint a priority person, it is "without competition" and other employees do not have appeal rights.

In addition to their appointment rights, **surplus** and **laid-off employees** also have certain entitlements to retraining in cases where they do not qualify for immediate appointment. For more information, see the [work force adjustment agreements](#) and your human resources advisor.

Advantages of Appointing Priority Persons

There are many benefits to appointing priority persons. You can:

- easily retain or obtain experienced and well-qualified staff from your own and other departments;

- fill a vacancy immediately, thus reducing recruitment and staffing costs;
- improve your unit's representativeness by appointing priority persons from designated employment equity groups; and
- re-assign staff in work force adjustment situations.

By doing this you will also help to:

- reduce anxiety and improve morale for persons in career transition; and
- promote the image of the Public Service as an employer of choice that takes care of its employees.

Fact

Although the PSC's clearance service normally applies to your indeterminate positions and term positions over 12 months, the entitlement itself still applies to short term positions and in any event is not limited to persons referred by the PSC.

Did You Know?

Priority entitlements are more than a matter of good management policy. They are also important provisions of the [Public Service Employment Act and Regulations](#), which confer legal rights and obligations that we all share.

The legal authorities and reference material will help you deal with most problems that can result from the normal application of priority appointment entitlements, but consult your human resources advisor if your department :

would have to declare an existing employee surplus in order to appoint a priority person from another organisation (for example, if you intend to staff positions while re-organizing, priority entitlements might not apply); or

has declared employees surplus in one area but needs to staff positions in another area (your own surplus priorities could take precedence).

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| Predominant values and management principles in action: |
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| Affordability and efficiency, fairness and competence. Other values and principles apply to differing degrees. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointing a priority person is fast, simple and cheap. • Retention of skills is critical to all modern organizations. • When you appoint a priority person, you demonstrate the commitment of the Public Service to help employees in career transition situations. • You only appoint priority persons who are qualified. |
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Your Responsibilities as a Manager

As a manager, you have two broad responsibilities related to priority entitlements:

- ensure that your employees are informed about their own priority rights and that they are registered with the Public Service Commission (PSC); and
- identify, assess and appoint qualified priority persons when you are staffing.

The following sections expand on your responsibilities. For more information, refer to [Chapter 5 of the Staffing Manual](#), read the "role" sections of the [work force adjustment agreements](#) (for surplus, layoff and reinstatement) and/or consult your human resources advisor.

When Your Staff Gain Priority Status

Whether your employees have gained their priority status because of your management decisions (e.g., work force adjustment) or as a result of their own life events (e.g., relocation of spouse or having become disabled), you need to:

- fully inform your employees of their rights and obligations;
- inform your employees of the steps the department is taking;
- quickly register your employees with the PSC;
- incorporate your employees' status in your human resources and staffing plans.

Your human resources advisor can provide further information and assistance.

When You Are Staffing: Identifying and Assessing Priority Persons

Your first step is to find out if the kind of staffing action you are starting is the kind to which priority entitlements apply (they don't apply to deployments, secondments, acting appointments and some other situations). If priority entitlements do apply, then you identify whether potentially qualified priority persons are available and assess them.

The following outlines the means by which priority persons are identified. Your human resources advisor can provide more detail.

When you initiate a staffing action, the first thing you or your human resources advisor will normally do (after the qualifications for the position have been established) is to search your own department's priority inventories.

Then, or simultaneously, your human resources advisor will initiate an electronic search of the PSC's interdepartmental priority administration system. This priority referral and clearance service applies to indeterminate jobs and term jobs over 12 months, but not usually to shorter-term jobs. If the PSC's system finds no potential matches, your department receives a **priority clearance number** electronically within a few minutes. If potential matches are identified, the PSC conducts additional screening and then either issues the clearance number or refers potentially qualified persons to your department for assessment. After referrals, the PSC issues a clearance number for each of the positions involved, but only after the assessment process is complete, with the clearance number indicating whether a priority person is being appointed or was not qualified.

Term jobs under 12 months are posted on the PSC's recruitment Web site, along with other recruitment postings. These may be viewed by all priority persons who may want to make their

own independent applications as a priority person for any of those jobs.

Generally, therefore, the priority persons you consider are those you've identified from your own department and those who have been referred by the PSC. Occasionally, however, priority persons conduct their own job searches and may identify themselves to you on their own for priority consideration. Although this occurs most often for short-term jobs under 12 months, it may happen in relation to indeterminate or longer-term jobs.

You are expected to give fair consideration in a timely manner to priority persons, to set *bona fide* and reasonable qualifications, and to apply quality selection tools to accurately and fully assess their qualifications. You must appoint qualified priority persons ahead of all others, and inform unsuccessful candidates why they will not be considered for appointment.

Tips

If priority persons apply to you on their own, you should verify that the entitlement actually applies in your situation (you may wish to consult your human resources advisor, who will consider the nature of the staffing action, the type of priority and the level of the job compared with that of the applicant).

Managers should keep track of and find ways to place their own departments' priority persons before beginning any staffing action.

Did you know?

If you are staffing pursuant to an **approved Employment Equity Program**, you need only consider priority persons who are members of the targeted employment equity group.

FACT

After managers have assessed priority persons, departments give their assessments to the PSC. The PSC uses this valuable information to help make future referrals. If departments' reference checks and other assessments reveal that an individual was a poor performer in the home department and is unsuitable for referral elsewhere, the PSC will limit referrals to the home department or return the case to the home department.

Priority Clearance Numbers

The PSC issues a priority clearance number in the staffing process to indicate that the PSC's priority inventory has been searched and to show the results, as outlined earlier. A priority clearance number from the PSC is required before an appointment can be made to any position that is subject to priority clearance (a complete list of circumstances for which a clearance number is needed is available in the [PSC Staffing Manual, Chapter 5 - Priorities, Section 5.6 - When is a priority clearance required?](#)). Note that one clearance number is issued for each position that you are staffing.

Remember that your department may have its own internal system of priority clearance to administer to its own priority staff. Your department's clearance should not be confused with clearance by the PSC.

Retraining of Surplus and Layoff Employees

The [work force adjustment agreements](#) entitle **surplus** and **layoff employees**--only--to retraining if they are not qualified for appointment. The purpose of retraining is to render qualified those persons who fail to qualify for immediate appointment but who could be retrained to meet the qualification within the time frames and circumstances specified in the workforce adjustment agreements. You must consider retraining for surplus and laid-off employees at the time of making your assessment for appointments in order to obtain priority clearance from the PSC. For more information on retraining and the work force adjustment agreements, consult your human resources advisor.

Lower-level Appointments and Salary Protection

Persons with priority status may be referred or appointed to levels lower than their original level, although referral to the same level or equivalent is the primary goal. (In fact, some appointments could also be to a higher level for some priority types.)

Surplus and layoff priorities--only--who are appointed to lower-level positions have their salaries protected at their original (higher) level in accordance with the [work force adjustment agreements](#).

If surplus and layoff employees and employees who have become disabled are appointed to a lower level, they are entitled to a "[reinstatement](#)" priority to facilitate their reinstatement to their former level.

You should actively seek to use the reinstatement priority to facilitate such placements in your organization to reduce salary protection costs and take full advantage of the proven talent of these persons.

| Predominant values and management principles in action: |
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| Transparency, competency and fairness. Other values and principles apply to differing degrees. |
| Open, professional and fair treatment helps ensure confidence in the priority administration process and the staffing system in general; exercise care to ensure priority persons are qualified for appointment or, where applicable, are suitable for retraining. |

Travel and Relocation Costs

The responsibility for travel and relocation costs incurred while considering or appointing priority persons varies with the situation:

- Surplus and laid-off employees: these persons **shall** have their travel and relocation costs paid, by the **home** department (as per the [work force adjustment agreements and directives](#)).
- Other priority types where the person is an **employee**: this applies to the following priority types: leave of absence, reinstatement, employees who have become disabled AND have not been released for cause; employees relocating with their spouse.): these

persons **shall** have their travel or relocation costs paid by the **hiring** department.

- Other priority types where the person is **not an employee**: the responsibilities for payment and the amounts are negotiable between the hiring department and the priority person. (This applies to the following priority types: certain Ministers' staffs, employees who have become disabled AND have been released for cause; Armed Forces and RCMP who have become disabled in "special duty" areas).

For more information, consult your human resources advisor, review the applicable work force adjustment agreements, or refer to the Treasury Board's policy on "[Government Travel and Living Accommodations](#)".

Recourse

If priority persons have concerns about their priority consideration, or about the application of the work force adjustment agreements in the case of surplus and layoff, they may:

- ask you as the assessing manager for an explanation;
- ask PSC resourcing officers to intervene on their behalf;
- ask the PSC Recourse Branch to conduct an investigation;

- grieve through their departmental grievance process; or
- grieve through the [National Joint Council](#) about issues related to work force adjustment and the provisions of the Work Force Adjustment Directive.

If other employees have concerns about the priority entitlement of a person who has been appointed, those persons may verify the entitlement with the PSC or may request an investigation by the Recourse Branch of the PSC. However, there is no right of appeal with regard to a priority appointment.

For additional information on priority appointments, please check the [PSC Staffing Manual, Chapter 5](#).

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http://devmain/staf_dot/mgr-gestion/guide/chap6_e.htm