

Subject: All CPF E-Mail - TSP Open Season 15 Apr - 30 Jun 03  
Sent: Friday, 11 April 2003

The next Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season begins 15 Apr 03 and runs through 30 Jun 03. This is the first spring open season under the revised dates. Previously, the spring open season was 15 May - 31 Jul.

During this open season, Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees may contribute up to 13 percent of their basic pay and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees may contribute up to 8 percent of their basic pay, the same as last open season. The effective date of contribution elections made between 15 Apr and 31 May will be 1 Jun 03. Elections made between 1 - 14 Jun will be effective 15 Jun, elections made between 15 - 28 Jun will be effective 29 Jun, and elections made between 29 - 30 Jun will be effective 13 Jul 03.

Information on the 15 Apr - 30 Jun 03 TSP Open Season can be found in the Apr 03 edition of the BEST Newsletter and on the BEST Homepage under "What's New," Apr 03. We are attaching a copy of the recently released TSP Open Season Public Affairs article.

We appreciate your continued support.

Chief, Special Operations Division  
Air Force Personnel Center

Attachment  
TSP Open Season Public Affairs Article

**April 2, 2003**  
**Release No. 024**

**AF announces Thrift Savings Plan open season**

*AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER* -- Civilian and military employees can sign up for or change current Thrift Savings Plan accounts during "open season" April 15 - June 30.

"TSP is an easy, long-term retirement savings plan, that everyone should consider," said Maj. Alessandra Stokstad, chief of the contact center here. "Current account holders might be interested, too, in transferring money from one fund to another -- the TSP folks are set up to handle that."

"Either way it's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans," said Maj. Stokstad. "It's important to note that TSP is not limited to investing in stocks. People can choose safer government securities as well."

"Employees already contributing to the TSP are encouraged to review their TSP plan and account balances," said Janet Thomas of the center's civilian benefits and entitlements service team, "as the open season period is the best time to open an account or make changes to an existing one."

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement.

"You can take out loans and make withdrawals from your TSP account," said Ms. Thomas. "And you can keep your account even if you leave military or federal service."

Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck "so you never have to think about it," said Major Stokstad. "That makes it easy to 'pay yourself first' while only investing what you deem appropriate."

The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

"As with any individual retirement account, the sooner you begin contributing, the better." said Maj. Stokstad.

Account changes made on or before May 31 will take effect June 1 for both military and civilian personnel. Changes made on or after June 1 will become effective in the following pay period for civilians and the following month for military.

Some of the specifics of the program include:

**Military** -- Military members can contribute up to eight percent of their base pay. Airmen also have the ability to invest all or part of their bonuses or special pay. But their total yearly tax-deferred investment cannot exceed \$12,000.

-- Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$40,000 in annual contributions.

-- Military members can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/mypay/>. They can also enroll by filling out a form TSP-U-1 at local military personnel flights, finance offices and family support centers.

-- Contribution allocations (how an employee chooses to invest money among the five funds) can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777 or on the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/>. For general TSP questions, call the AFPC Contact Center at DSN 665-5000 or (866) 229-7074.

**Civilian** -- Contribution limits are based on which retirement system an employee has. For the current open season, the following contribution rates apply:

-- Federal Employees' Retirement System employees may contribute up to 13 percent of basic pay each pay period. Once eligible, the government provides matching funds of up to four percent as well as an automatic one percent each pay period whether the employee contributes or not, making the government's contribution five percent.

-- Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System may contribute up to eight percent of basic pay, but do not receive any matching contributions.

-- "The percentage FERS and CSRS employees may contribute will increase by one point each year through 2005, when they will be restricted only by the Internal Revenue Code's annual limit, \$12,000 in 2003," said Ms. Thomas.

-- Specific information is available for civilian employees from the Thrift Savings web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/> or the BEST homepage at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm>, and for Air Force military personnel at [http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift\\_savings\\_plan.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm).

-- All Air Force-serviced civilian employees must make their TSP contribution elections (amount an employee wants to contribute from their basic pay) or changes through the BEST automated phone system at (800) 997-2378, or commercial 527-2378 in San Antonio. Hearing impaired employees may contact BEST by calling TDD (800) 382-0893 or commercial 565-2276. Overseas employees can dial a toll-free direct access number for the country they are in. Direct access numbers and instructions are located at [http://www.att.com/international\\_business/dialing\\_guide/country-diallist.cgi](http://www.att.com/international_business/dialing_guide/country-diallist.cgi). Counselors are available weekdays, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Central Time. The BEST Employee Benefits Information System web application is located at [http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST\\_GRB/EBIS.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm).

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