

HOW RELATIVE STANDING AT INITIAL HIRING AND SENIORITY UPON CONVERSION ARE ESTABLISHED

Teresa Harmon, Manager, CAD



With all the recent MHA hiring and the additional conversions slated to occur by March 13, 2021, we have been getting many questions about how relative standing is established at initial hiring, as well as how seniority is established upon conversion to full-time career. In this issue, I want to explain how both of these are decided.

To be hired for a USPS position, all applicants must take a Virtual Entry Assessment (VEA), which is completed online and has replaced the traditional hiring test of the past. For a Mail Handler position, that assessment is called the M475 MH.

HIRING LIST RANKING

Each applicant who passes the VEA will be ranked on a hiring list. This ranking is performed by the Human Resource Shared Service Center (HRSSC). The ranking is determined in accordance with the provisions set forth in USPS Handbook EL-312, which is the test score and any applicable veteran preference points, 5 or 10 points based on prior military service. If the veteran earns points, those points are adjudicated and added to their final test score for placement on the hiring list. All veterans with compensable points (CD and CPS) are placed at the top of the hiring list in score order and veterans with non-compensable points (XP and TP) are ranked at the top of their score over non-veterans with the same score.

Who is considered a 10-Point Preference (CP)?

Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served at any time and who has a compensable service-connected disability rating of at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent.

Who is considered a 10-Point 30 Percent Compensable Disability Preference (CPS)?

Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served at any time and who has a compensable service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more.

Who is considered a 10-Point Disability Preference (XP)?

Ten points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of:

- A veteran who served at any time and has a present service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs but does not qualify as a CP or CPS; or
- A veteran who received a Purple Heart.
- Who is considered a 5-Point Preference (TP)?

Five points are added to the **passing** examination score or rating of a veteran who served:

- *During a war; or
- *During the period April 28, 1952 through July 1, 1955; or
- *For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976; or
- *During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992; or

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- *For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom; or
- *In a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized.
- Any Armed Forces Expeditionary medal or campaign badge including El Salvador, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Southwest Asia, Somalia, and Haiti qualifies for preference.

When two or more applicants on a hiring list have the same final numerical rating, the tie is broken by:

- Placing XP preference eligibles ahead of TP preference eligibles.
- Placing TP preference eligibles ahead of nonpreference eligibles.
- Using the number, from lowest to highest, randomly assigned to the candidate's application by the online application system.

RELATIVE STANDING

Once hired as a MHA from the hiring list, each MHA's relative standing as a MHA and each MHA's eventual conversion to a career position are established based on their initial MHA appointment date. In the 2019 National Agreement, new language was added stating that effective May 9, 2020 "all newly hired MHAs shall be deemed to have an initial MHA appointment date on a Saturday, at the start of the pay period during which they began work in the installation. The MHA may start working any day of that pay period as determined by the Employer."

If there is more than one MHA hired on the exact same date, in the same installation, then the tie breaker rules in the contract will apply. Remember these only apply in the event that more than one MHA has the same initial appointment date. These tie breaker rules are found on page 176 of the National Agreement under the MOU Re Relative Standing of Mail Handler Assistants and Subsequent Seniority Upon Conversion to Career Mail Handler. These rules for breaking ties in relative standing are a revised version of the rules found in Article 12.2G8 to govern tiebreakers for seniority. The relative standing rules states as follows:

G8 Except as otherwise specifically provided for in this MOU, when it is necessary to resolve a tie in relative standing or seniority between two or more newly hired Mail Handler craft employees, effective October 4, 2014 the following criteria shall apply in the order set forth below:

- **G8a** Total continuous postal career service in the Mail Handler craft within the installation.

- **G8b** Total postal career service in the Mail Handler craft within the installation.
- **G8c** Total postal career service in the Mail Handler craft
- **G8d** Total postal career service within the installation
- **G8e** Total postal career service
- **G8f** Total Mail Handler Assistant service
- **G8g** Total postal non-career service
- **G8h** By the order ranked on the hiring list (as described in Handbook EL-312, Employment and Placement, Subchapter 43 part 436 and Subchapter 44)

CONVERSION TO CAREER

MHAs will be converted to career positions in the Mail Handler craft in the exact same order as they are on the relative standing list. Upon conversion, career seniority is established as the effective date of conversion. Once converted to career, there are no further adjustments to seniority ranking for Mail Handlers converted to career on the same date in the same installation.

ARTICLE 12.2G8 TIEBREAKERS

Additional tiebreaking language is found in the National Agreement under Article 12.2G8. These tiebreakers are a little different than the ones used for determining relative standing. These are used when there is a need to resolve a tie in seniority involving career employees. For example, these seniority tiebreakers may be used for: reinstatements; a transfer that is effective the same day as a conversion to career; or an AMP consolidation of facilities where the seniority lists are merging. The tiebreakers used under Article 12.2G8 consist of:

- **G8a** Total continuous postal career service in the Mail Handler craft within the installation.
- **G8b** Total postal career service in the Mail Handler craft within the installation.
- **G8c** Total postal career service in the Mail Handler craft.
- **G8d** Total postal career service within the installation.
- **G8e** Total postal career service.
- **G8f** Total Federal service as shown in the service computation date.
- **G8g** Numerical by the last 3 or more numbers (using enough numbers to break the tie but not fewer than 3 numbers) of the employee's social security number, from the lowest to the highest.

If you have any further questions, or need any additional information, please talk to your union representative.