# Researching Basics for Pay and Pay Corrections

**Introduction**

This guide is an effort to provide pay technicians and auditors a starting point for researching all pay cases. This includes how and where to research, determining the correct rate of pay, using the Knowledge Base and Direct Access (DA) user guides, and entering pay corrections into DA.

**Pay Case Research: Policy**

Pay entitlement research **ALWAYS** begins by asking the following questions:
- When is the entitlement authorized?
- What requirements must be met for a member to receive the entitlement?
- Does the member meet those requirements?
- What is the rate of the entitlement?
- Have there been any policy changes or updates affecting the entitlement?
- Are there any programming issues to be aware of before data entry should occur?

Over time, knowledge and experience will speed up the research process but it is important to always check for changes and updates to policy. A good starting point to answer the questions posted above is the Procedures & Development (P&D) Branch's webpage, specifically the Reference Library. The most commonly used policy manuals and instructions are:
- Coast Guard Pay Manual, COMDTINST M7220.29 (series)
- Joint Travel Regulations
- Department of Defense Financial Management Regulations (DoD FMR)
- Personnel and Pay Procedures (3PM), PPCINST M1000.2 (series)

**Remember**, this list is not all inclusive but only the most frequently accessed manuals and instructions.

Another resource that should **ALWAYS** be checked is official message traffic. Many policy changes and updates are released through message traffic and become the authority until the manual or instruction can be updated with the new changes. In addition, some entitlements requirements and rates are released solely through message traffic such as Special Duty Pay (SDP), Assignment Pay (AP), as well as Reserve orders and drilling requirements. **The message board must be checked regularly for updated or new guidance.**

# Researching Basics for Pay and Pay Corrections, Continued

**Pay Case Research: Knowledge Base**

The Knowledge Base (CG Portal) should **ALWAYS** be reviewed prior to any data entry.  The Knowledge Base not only provides additional guidance on data entry but will also provide a list of any Known Issues (i.e., any programming issues to be aware of that may alter the way a pay item should be entered or how it pays out).  Many times, the Knowledge Base will provide a combination of policy, data input guidance, and any known issues.

**Correct Rate of Pay**

Understanding the requirements to receive an entitlement helps ensure the member receives the correct rate of pay from the initial input to the ultimate pay out.

The Military Accounts Support (MAS) Branch webpage should be reviewed to identify correct rates of pay for each pay item:  MAS – Latest Pay Rates and Benefits.

**Payroll Data Input into DA**

In addition to the Reference Library, the Procedures & Development (P&D) Branch web page also provides a significant number of user guides that provide step-by-step instructions on how to enter, correct, and sometimes delete pay entitlements in Direct Access (DA).

These guides should always be used when entering pay entitlements into DA to ensure the pay entitlement is entered correctly the first time.  Failure to use these guides often results in unnecessary, and sometimes significant pay problems for the members.

(**NOTE:**  It is also recommended to open the guide from P&D's webpage instead of saving a copy to your desktop.  Saving the guide to your desktop could result in missed changes to data entry procedures).

While many of these user guides provide general data entry guidance, they also provide useful information in researching pay problems, including providing information on Known Issues and links to applicable references and messages.

These are specific guides for the entire service.  Sometimes it is necessary to see the differences between levels of access to troubleshoot a problem.  For example, reviewing the differences between data entry by the member vs data entry by the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO).

# Researching Basics for Pay and Pay Corrections, Continued

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| **Payroll Data Input into DA**, continued | The most commonly used sections by SPOs include:<br>• Personal Data, Job Data, and Dependency Data<br>• SPO Pay & Allowances<br>• SPO Pay Deductions<br>• SPO Permanent Change of Station (PCS)<br>• SPO Reserve Specific Transactions<br>• SPO Tools (NP500, Paycut Roster, Programming Info, and more) |
| **Payroll Processing Schedule** | Timing is just as critical as accuracy. It is important to ensure pay entitlements are approved in a timely manner. Timing = accurate and timely pay. Following the Military Payroll Processing schedule (found on the MAS Branch webpage) is essential to ensure pay entitlement entries are processed in a timely manner to avoid delayed pay or pay problems for the member. |
| **Payroll Data Entry Corrections / Pay Corrections Action Request** | When the field makes payroll corrections, it is recommended to open **BOTH** the Pay Corrections Action Request user guide **AND** the original user guide for the pay item. While the Pay Corrections Action Requests guide provides the procedural steps for the pay correction action request, the original DA user guide will provide additional information specific to the pay action being corrected.<br><br>All resources mentioned in prior sections should also be consulted and reviewed with senior experienced leadership to ensure any corrections are entered accurately. |
| **Understanding Payroll Computations** | Understanding military pay and allowances and how they are calculated begins with a review of:<br>• Chapter 2 (Computation of Service and Basic Pay) of the Coast Guard Pay Manual, COMDINST M7220.29 (series)<br>• Appendix C (Computation of Service) of the Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual (3PM), PPCINST M1000.2 (series) |

# Researching Basics for Pay and Pay Corrections, Continued

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| **Understanding Pay Calculations** | The user guides listed below (and located on the P&D Branch webpage) are recommended to help understand DA payroll programming:<br>• Pay Calculations Results<br>• Element Assignment By Payee (EABP)<br>• One Time Positive Input (OTPI)<br>• In Range vs Out of Range<br>• Understanding Reserve Pay Processing in Direct Access |

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| **Payroll Auditing Standards** | One of the biggest strengths to DA programming is the ability to verify the correctness of pay, typically the next day.  Pay is recalculated every night with the exception of some Thursdays (DA maintenance and system upgrades are performed Thursday evenings).  This is important to know because any transaction submitted can be verified the next day to ensure it processed correctly.  By reviewing transactions, any potential pay errors may be identified and corrected prior to finalization.<br><br>Direct Access finalizes payroll once per pay calendar (pay period). Finalizing the pay calendar means the Pay Calculation Results earnings and deductions that were present on the day of finalize are closed out and reflect what the member will receive on payday.  However, any day prior to finalization, if a transaction was input incorrectly, it may be corrected or adjusted.<br><br>Once a **pay calendar is finalized**, any submitted pay transaction or corrections made will **NOT** change the Pay Calculation Results for that pay calendar.  After finalization, documentation is electronically submitted to the U.S. Treasury.  Any transactions submitted after finalization will be processed as a retro-active adjustment on a future pay calendar.<br><br>Some pay transactions will affect a member's Job Data rows, therefore it is recommended that a member's Job Data should also be reviewed in addition to their Pay Calculation Results to ensure the new rows started timely (i.e. Reserve Order Begin (ROB) and Reserve Order End (ROE), Legislative Pay Change (LPC), advancement, reduction, promotion, PCS transfer, RELAD, Separation, and Retirement).<br><br>See the Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual (3PM), PPCINST M1000.2 (series), Chapter 11.A: Auditing Standard Pay Transactions for more information on the procedures for auditing all standard pay transactions entered in DA by the SPO. |