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MSPB ISSUES A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM PRINCIPLES

The Merit System Principles (MSPs) and Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs) are a concise set of standards, established in law, that govern the management of the executive branch workforce. For example, the eighth MSP directs Federal agencies to protect employees from favoritism and arbitrary action, and the eighth PPP prohibits retaliating against an employee for blowing the whistle on agency wrongdoing. Unfortunately, prior MSPB research has shown that many Federal employees, including high-level officials, lack an adequate understanding of the MSPs and PPPs and how to effectively lead employees in a merit system.

To help close this gap in understanding, MSPB has issued a very brief, user-friendly guide, [*The Merit System Principles: Keys to Managing the Federal Workforce*](#), for new agency leaders and managers. The guide includes:

- 1) Highlights from the history of the Federal civil service;
- 2) A set of questions and answers regarding the MSPs;
- 3) An overview of each MSP, with examples of actions to take or avoid; and
- 4) References for additional information.

For further information on the MSPs, please see the MSPB report, [*The Merit System Principles: Guiding the Fair and Effective Management of the Federal Workforce*](#), at <http://www.mspb.gov/studies/browsestudies.htm>, or visit MSPB's Merit System Principles web page at <http://www.mspb.gov/msp/meritsystemsprinciples.htm>.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is a bipartisan, independent, quasi-judicial agency whose mission is to protect the Merit System Principles and promote an effective Federal workforce free of Prohibited Personnel Practices. To request a printed copy of this guide, e-mail studies@mspb.gov, call (202) 653-6772, x4802; or write to: Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20419. Copies are also available on the web at <http://www.mspb.gov/studies/browsestudies.htm>.