



**Retirement and Insurance Service
Benefits Administration Letter**

Number: 01-316

Date: April 13, 2001

Subject: New Interfaces with RITS

This is the first in a series of Payroll and Financial Management Guidance Letters about an important matter involving the Retirement and Insurance Transfer System (RITS). As you are probably aware, the Financial Management Service (FMS), with assistance from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (Richmond), is developing a new system for transactions between agencies called the "Intra-governmental Payment And Collection System" (IPAC). The development of IPAC will affect agency payroll offices (APO) directly because it will require new interfaces with RITS. The *tentative* implementation date of what we are calling "RITS-2" is *September 1, 2001*, and we are working with FMS to help ensure that the transition to it will be as seamless as possible.

There will be two general methods of transmitting RITS-2 data:

- ⇒ "*BULK TRANSFER*". APOs will transmit their RITS-2 file to FMS via the Internet either by a "host-to-host" or "PC-to-Host" connection. The RITS-2 bulk transfer file structure is being developed so as to minimize differences from the current "host-to-host" file structure. Thus, APOs using the current "host-to-host" method can expect to find the RITS-2 bulk transfer file structure to be essentially the same, *with one exception*: a header record will need to be appended. We will provide APOs the RITS-2 bulk data file format, including the new header record, as soon as FMS makes it available to us, which we expect will be in the very near future.

- ⇒ "*ONLINE*". APOs will access a web-site and enter RITS-2 data into an internet-based input screen. Although it will look different than the current "online" RITS data input screen, it will contain the same fields and will, like the current facility, edit data as it is entered. The RITS-2 on-line method will have the capability, however, to store data, so that all RITS information will not need to be entered in one session.

*Civil Service
Retirement
System*

*Federal Employees'
Group Life
Insurance Program*

*Federal Employees
Health Benefits
Program*

*Federal Employees
Retirement
System*

*Long Term
Care Insurance
Program*

Although APOs will eventually be able to use it, FMS has been experiencing problems using the Internet Explorer (IE) web browser with IPAC. They have asked us to inform APOs not to use it initially with RITS-2. APOs should, therefore, plan to use Netscape 4.0 or higher for RITS-2, until FMS can find a solution to this problem.

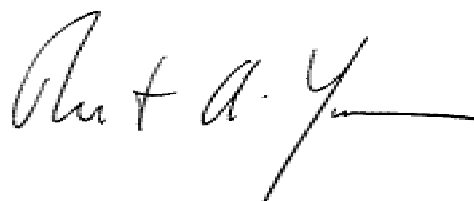
We have scheduled a meeting about RITS-2, where FMS and Richmond officials will discuss RITS-2 in its entirety, including technical requirements and the plans for testing and user training. We believe it is important that APO officials, who have responsibility for the reporting of employee benefit withholdings and contributions to us, attend this meeting and that it may be advisable that they ask a data processing professional to accompany them.

The specifics are, as follows:

Where	When
Campbell Auditorium 1900 E Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20415	April 27, 2001 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

For your information, we have attached to this Letter an announcement about an IPAC session that FMS will present two times on April 19 at the Department of Agriculture in Washington. Although this session will not contain a great deal of information specifically about RITS-2, APO officials may nonetheless find it useful.

For more information about IPAC, you should access the FMS website at www.fms.treas.gov/goals. If you would like to work with us and FMS to test RITS-2, please let us know as soon as possible. We would prefer that you email us at finance@opm.gov, so that we have a record of our communication, but you may also phone us on (202) 606-0606.



**Robert A. Yuran, Chief
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Attachment