

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 850.101 Purpose and scope.

(a) The purpose of this part is to enable changes needed for implementation of the new retirement and insurance processing system created by the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Retirement Systems Modernization (RSM) initiative. RSM is OPM's strategic initiative to improve the quality and timeliness of services to employees and annuitants covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) by using contemporary, automated business processes and supporting technology. The RSM initiative is designed to transform the retirement process, as well as the processing of annuitant insurance elections of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), and Retired Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (RFEHB) coverage, by employing more efficient and effective business systems to respond to increased customer demand for higher levels of customer service and online self-service tools.

(b) The provisions of this part authorize exceptions from regulatory provisions that would otherwise apply to CSRS and FERS annuities and FEGLI, FEHB and RFEHB benefits processed by or at the direction of OPM under the RSM initiative. Those regulatory provisions that would otherwise apply were established for a paper-based retirement and insurance benefits processing system that may eventually be phased out but which will continue to operate concurrently with RSM for some time, until RSM is fully implemented. During the phased transition to RSM processing, certain regulations that were not designed with RSM in mind, and which are incompatible with RSM business processes, must be set aside with respect to aspects of retirement and insurance processing accomplished under RSM. The regulations set forth in this part make the transition to RSM processes possible.

(c) The provisions of this part do not affect retirement and insurance eligibility and annuity computation provisions. The provisions for capturing re-

tirement and insurance data in an electronic format, however, may support, in some instances, more precise calculations of annuity and insurance benefits than were possible using paper records.

§ 850.102 Applicability.

(a) The provisions of parts 831, 835, 837 through 839, 841 through 847, 870, 890, and 891 of this chapter remain in effect, as applicable, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with one or more provisions of this part or implementing directives prescribed by the Director under § 850.104.

(b) The provisions of this part do not supersede or alter any functions performed by a private insurance company or carrier with which OPM has entered into a contract, or with which OPM may enter into a contract in the future, under chapter 87 or 89 of title 5, United States Code, or under any other provision of law or regulation.

§ 850.103 Definitions.

In this part—

Agency means an Executive agency as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code; a legislative branch agency; a judicial branch agency; the U.S. Postal Service; the Postal Regulatory Commission; and the District of Columbia government.

Biometrics refers to the technology that converts a unique characteristic of an individual into a digital form, which is then interpreted by a computer and compared with a digital exemplar copy of the characteristic stored in the computer. Among the unique characteristics of an individual that can be converted into a digital form are voice patterns, fingerprints, and the blood vessel patterns present on the retina of one or both eyes.

Cryptographic control method means an approach to authenticating identity or the authenticity of an electronic document through the use of a cipher (i.e., a pair of algorithms) which performs encryption and decryption.

CSRS means the Civil Service Retirement System established under subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code.

Digital signature is an electronic signature generated by means of an algorithm that ensures that the identity of the signatory and the integrity of the data can be verified. A value, referred to as the “private key,” is generated to produce the signature, and another value, known as the “public key,” which is linked to, but not the same as, the private key, is used to verify the signature.

Digitized signature means a graphical image of a handwritten signature, usually created using a special computer input device, such as a digital pen and pad, which contains unique biometric data associated with the creation of each stroke of the signature, such as duration of stroke or pen pressure. A digitized signature can be verified by a comparison with the characteristics and biometric data of a known or exemplar signature image.

Director means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

Electronic communication refers to any information conveyed through electronic means and includes electronic forms, applications, elections, and requests submitted by email or any other electronic message.

Electronic Official Personnel Record Folder (e-OPF) means the electronic Official Personnel Folder application that will replace the current paper personnel folder across the Government.

Electronic retirement and insurance processing system means the new retirement and insurance processing system created by OPM’s Retirement Systems Modernization (RSM) initiative.

Employee means an individual, other than a Member of Congress, who is covered by CSRS or FERS.

Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) means the comprehensive electronic personnel record-keeping and analysis system that supports human resources management across the Federal Government.

FEGLI means the Federal Employees’ Group Life Insurance Program established under chapter 87 of title 5, United States Code.

FEHB means the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program established under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code.

FERS means the Federal Employees’ Retirement System established under chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code.

Member means a Member of Congress as defined by section 2106 of title 5, United States Code, who is covered by CSRS or FERS.

Non-cryptographic method is an approach to authenticating identity that relies solely on an identification and authentication mechanism that must be linked to a specific software platform for each application.

Personal identification number (PIN) or password means a non-cryptographic method of authenticating the identity of a user of an electronic application, involving the use of an identifier known only to the user and to the electronic system, which checks the identifier against data in a database to authenticate the user’s identity.

Public/private key (asymmetric) cryptography is a method of creating a unique mark, known as a digital signature, on an electronic document or file. This method involves the use of two computer-generated, mathematically-linked keys: a private signing key that is kept private and a public validation key that is available to the public.

RFEHB means the Retired Federal Employees Health Benefits Program established under Pub. L. 86-724, 74 Stat. 849, 851-52 (September 8, 1960), as amended.

Shared service centers are processing centers delivering a broad array of administrative services to multiple agencies.

Shared symmetric key cryptography means a method of authentication in which a single key is used to sign and verify an electronic document. The single key (also known as a “private key”) is known only by the user and the recipient or recipients of the electronic document.

Smart card means a plastic card, typically the size of a credit card, containing an embedded integrated circuit or “chip” that can generate, store, or process data. A smart card can be used to facilitate various authentication technologies that may be embedded on the same card.