



**MyFAA**

## ATC Vision 100 Retirement FAQs

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### Air Traffic Controller Retirement Status Update

The following Q&A offers the latest information on air traffic controller retirements and the status of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) inquiry. The current situation with OPM potentially impacts approximately 4% of the FAA controller workforce – those in covered 2152 positions with first- and/or second-level supervisory time and 30 years or more of Federal service. FAA is actively pursuing options with OPM to ensure enhanced benefits for those who may be impacted by the matter.

#### FAQs (top)

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### Common Retirement FAQs

- How do I request an annuity estimate?  
([https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_](https://my.faa.gov/employee_)
- What are the best possible dates for voluntary retirement?  
([https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_dates](https://my.faa.gov/employee_dates))
- How do I apply for retirement?  
([https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_](https://my.faa.gov/employee_)

### Resources

- Retirement  
([https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_](https://my.faa.gov/employee_)
- CSRS  
(<https://my.faa.gov/empl>
  - CSRS FAQs  
(<https://my.faa.gov/emplfaq.html>)
- FERS  
(<https://my.faa.gov/empl>
  - FERS FAQs  
(<https://my.faa.gov/emplfaq.html>)
- Calculator: Federal Ballpark Estimator  
([http://www.opm.gov/retireme\\_services/calculators/federal-](http://www.opm.gov/retireme_services/calculators/federal-)

- I made career decisions based on the enhanced annuity. What do I do now?
- What if I'm not an Air Traffic Controller? How does this impact me?
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- What documentation did FAA submit to OPM to make the case for inclusion of first- and second-level supervisory service under the enhanced MRA+30 provisions?
- What was OPM's response to FAA's Nov. 20, 2015 submission?
- Who do I contact?

ball-park-estimator)  
(OPM.gov)

- Deposits & Redeposits  
([https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_redeposits.html](https://my.faa.gov/employee_redeposits.html))

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### **What's the status of the OPM inquiry on MRA+30 air traffic controller retirements?**

As many of you know, in fall 2015, OPM first questioned how FAA was certifying first- and second-level supervisory ATC service under the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) +30 provisions of Vision 100. We responded with extensive documentation demonstrating the critical operational nature of these 2152 positions to the overall safe control of air traffic.

This week, we received an official response from OPM. Unfortunately, it's not the response we were hoping for. Essentially OPM said that it will not accept certification of first- and second-level ATC service at the enhanced rate for MRA+30 annuitants.

OPM's response doesn't affect the 20 years regular ATC Special Provisions pursuant to which over 75% of our controller workforce retires. It does impact about 4% of our covered 2152s who historically retire with 30 or more years of service with some first- and/or second-level supervisory time.

We do not agree with the OPM's interpretation and are continuing to seek an alternative resolution.

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### **What is MRA+30? How is it different from the regular ATC Special Provisions retirement?**

The Vision 100 law opened a second enhanced annuity option for covered 2152s under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) who have five or more years of ATC frontline service, but not the 20 years necessary to vest under ATC Special Provisions, or who may work beyond the 20 years with at least 30 years of service.

The two ATC controller retirement options are outlined in the chart below:

	<b>ATC Special Provisions Retirement</b>	<b>ATC MRA+30 Enhanced Retirement</b>  (OPM Interpretation)
<b>Requirements</b>	Age 50 + 20 years of covered ATC service  Any age + 25 years of covered ATC service	MRA + 30 years of Federal service (minimum of 5 years 2152 CPC service required)
<b>Annuity Calculations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7% for any combination of covered 2152 time not to exceed 20 years</li> <li>• 1% for all other time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7% only for all CPC time</li> <li>• 1% for 1<sup>st</sup>-/2<sup>nd</sup>-level sup time, other service</li> </ul>
<b>COLA</b>	Included immediately	Begin at age 62

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**What does OPM’s response mean for my controller retirement?  
Are my 20 years safe?**

Yes – your 20 years under special controller retirement are safe. OPM’s response has ZERO IMPACT on ATC Special Provisions retirement, which calculates any combination of 20 years of covered 2152 service (including first- and second-level service, ATM time, etc.) at the enhanced 1.7% rate.

OPM's response only impacts the MRA+30 retirements. For those with 30 or more years of Federal service (at least 5 years have to be CPC time), OPM is saying that they will only process "frontline controller" or CPC service at the enhanced 1.7% rate.

Every retirement is unique. FAA's Benefits Operations Center (BOC) can help answer your specific questions on how this impacts your individual retirement (1-855-FAA-BENE)

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### **The law took effect 12 years ago. Why is this happening now? How did this come about?**

Federal agencies use one of three approved calculators to compute retirements. In July 2015, FAA updated its retirement calculator and noticed that the MRA+30 retirement estimates were coming back lower than expected. We contacted the vendor, who contacted OPM to verify the changes in the retirement calculations. This triggered the OPM inquiry.

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### **What is OPM's issue with the way FAA has been certifying service?**

It really comes down to a difference in how OPM and FAA interpret the definition of controller in the Vision 100 law. OPM takes a very strict and narrow interpretation, where FAA views applicability more broadly in an operational context.

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### **What's changing at OPM? How will ATC retirements be processed?**

There is no change to the way regular ATC retirements will be processed (20 years at the enhanced 1.7% rate). For MRA+30 retirements, OPM will not accept FAA certification of first- and second-level supervisory service at the 1.7% rate.

Upon processing the retirement, OPM will give ATCs who qualify for the MRA+30 two options – the ATC Special Provisions or the MRA+30.

Until we can work out an alternative resolution, OPM will process the

ATC retirements as follows:

<b>Years of 2152 Service</b>	<b>ATC Special Provisions Retirement  <u>NO CHANGE</u></b>	<b>ATC MRA+30 Retirement  OPM's Interpretation</b>
<b>20 years</b>	1.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7 % CPC time (min. 5 years)</li> <li>• 1.0% 1st-, 2nd-level supervisory time</li> <li>• 1.0% Other service</li> </ul>
<b>20 years, 1 day to  29 years, 364 days</b>	1.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7 % CPC time</li> <li>• 1.0% 1st-, 2nd-level supervisory time</li> <li>• 1.0% Other service</li> </ul>
<b>30+ years</b>	1.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.7 % CPC time</li> <li>• 1.0% 1st-, 2nd-level supervisory time</li> <li>• 1.0% Other service</li> </ul>

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### **Why does it even matter what OPM thinks?**

Legally, OPM administers CSRS and FERS. FAA has been delegated the responsibility to certify an employee's ATC service to OPM. OPM then makes the final determination on how to process the retirement annuity. FAA consistently has certified first- and second-level 2152 service at the enhanced rate. OPM makes the final decision on service certification and the amount of the retirement annuity.

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### **What is the FAA doing about this? How is the FAA going to address OPM's response?**

We are exploring a number of options. We will continue to engage OPM regarding the critical operational work that first- and second-level supervisors perform.

The FAA also is responding to requests for technical assistance from Congress regarding this issue.

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### **I just submitted my paperwork. How is this going to affect my retirement?**

The FAA Benefits Operations Center will continue to process all ATC retirements. There will be no change to the ATC Special Provisions retirements (20 years of ATC service).

If you qualify for the MRA+30 retirement, you will still have two options – the ATC Special Provisions retirement (20 years at 1.7%; 1.0% for every year thereafter) or the MRA+30 retirement (all CPC time at 1.7%; all other time at 1.0%). For those with first- and second-level supervisor service, your MRA+30 annuity calculation will reflect the 1.0% rate for years of supervisory service until we can reach resolution with OPM. Under any solution, we are seeking retroactive application to your and any other retirement that may be affected.

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### **So if I had just retired last year, I would have been fine, right?**

We're not sure at this time. OPM requested a recertification of MRA+30 retirements with any supervisory time going back to February 10, 2004. OPM also opened the door to further conversation on the matter. FAA maintains that it correctly certified 2152 service under FAA's interpretation of the Vision 100 law and will continue discussions with OPM on this subject.

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### **What will happen to employees who already retired?**

OPM's response potentially could impact those 2152s who retired under MRA+30 with supervisory ATC service. We are working closely with the Chief Counsel's office to find an equitable solution.

We are hopeful that we can find a positive resolution that preserves FAA's interpretation of the MRA+30 enhanced retirement provisions for past, current and future retirees.

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### **Why should I work more than 20 years?**

Many 2152s already work more than 20 years and continue to accrue retirement at the rate of 1% for any service beyond the 20 year vesting requirement under the ATC Special Provisions retirement. This is true for CPCs, FLMs, OMs, ATMs and any other covered 2152 positions. This practice will continue unchanged.

You have to work at least 30 years and reach the minimum retirement age in the Federal Government and have a minimum of 5 years of CPC service to qualify for the MRA+30 retirement. For those who meet these criteria, all CPC time is calculated at the 1.7% rate. Additionally, even under OPM's current interpretation, MRA+30 can be a good option to receive some enhanced credit for those who have 5 or more years of CPC service, but do not have the 20 years of 2152 time required for the regular ATC retirement.

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### **Will OPM begin questioning ATC Special Provisions retirements?**

We have no reason to believe that OPM will question the ATC Special Provisions retirement. OPM and FAA are in agreement as to how the Vision 100 law applies to ATC Special Provisions retirement (any combination of 20 years of covered 2152 service, including first- and second-level supervisory service).

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### **I made career decisions based on the enhanced annuity. What do I do now?**

The enhanced annuity is still available under the ATC Special Provisions retirement and for CPC service under MRA+30 until we resolve this issue with OPM. We understand how difficult this news is for many of you and for your families. We assure you that we working to reach a positive resolution as quickly as possible.

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### **What if I'm not an Air Traffic Controller? How does this impact me?**

The current situation with OPM only impacts a small proportion of the air traffic controller workforce with first- and second-level supervisory experience and 30 or more years of service. It has no impact on retirements for other FAA employees.

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### **Why are there enhanced annuity retirement provisions for qualifying ATCs?**

Enhanced annuity retirement provisions can be found in professions, such as law enforcement, firefighting and air traffic control, where there is a mandatory retirement age and other conditions of employment that may shorten the career span.

While qualifying air traffic controllers receive an enhanced annuity upon retirement, they also contribute a higher percentage from each paycheck to the FERS retirement fund (1.3%). Other FAA employees under FERS contribute 0.8%, but also have the ability to work beyond the ATC Certified Professional Controller or Frontline Manager mandatory retirement age.

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**What documentation did FAA submit to OPM to make the case for inclusion of first- and second-level supervisory service under the enhanced MRA+30 provisions?**

[FAA Enhanced Annuity Submission to OPM - Nov. 20, 2015 \(PDF\)](#)

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**What was OPM's response to FAA's Nov. 20, 2015 submission?**

[OPM Response on ATC Service Under Vision 100 - Feb. 8, 2016 \(PDF\)](#)

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**Who do I contact?**

For questions about ATC retirement, [contact the BOC](#)

[\(https://my.faa.gov/employee\\_services/benefits\\_retirement/boc\\_contact\\_information.html\)](https://my.faa.gov/employee_services/benefits_retirement/boc_contact_information.html)

at 1-855-FAA-BENE (322-2363).

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