

# BENEFITS BULLETIN

November 26, 2010

BULLETIN NO: 10-08  
SUBJECT: Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Enrollment for 2011  
TO: All USGS Employees

## **BULLETIN HIGHLIGHTS**

- For 2011, the annual limits remain the same as 2010. For regular TSP contributions the annual limit is \$16,500 and for TSP Catch-up it remains \$5,500.
- There is no Open Season for the TSP; you can enroll, change or cancel your contributions at any time using Employee Express at [www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov).
- If you want to continue your current **regular TSP contributions** in 2011 no action is required.
- If you want to make **TSP Catch-up contributions** in 2011 you **must** make an election.
- FERS participants are strongly encouraged to distribute their contributions over the entire year. If you do not you will not receive your receive Agency Matching Contributions each pay period.
- To distribute TSP contributions equally over all 26 pay periods in 2011 make your election during the period December 5 thru 18, 2010 (pay period 26).

## **REGULAR TSP CONTRIBUTIONS:**

There is no Open Season for TSP - you can enroll, change or cancel your contributions at any time in [Employee Express](http://www.employeeexpress.gov). You can contribute any dollar amount or percentage (1% to 100%) of your basic pay up to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) elective deferral limit. The regular TSP contribution elective deferral limit for calendar year 2011 remains the same as in 2010, **\$16,500**.

If you want equal payments deducted over the calendar year for 26 pay periods, and you are currently contributing \$635 each pay period, you don't need to do anything. Your current contributions will continue. On the other hand, if you are currently contributing a lesser or higher amount, but want equal payments withheld over the course of the year that will equate to \$16,500, you can change your election in [Employee Express](http://www.employeeexpress.gov).

**Important Note:** If you are a FERS participant, you will receive Agency Matching Contributions on the first 5% of basic pay that you contribute each pay period. The first 3% of basic pay that you contribute will be matched dollar for dollar; the next 2% will be matched at 50 cents per dollar. Contributions above 5% will not be matched. If you reach the IRS elective deferral limit before the

end of the year, your contributions and Agency Matching Contributions must stop for the remainder of the year. As a result, you will lose some of your Agency Matching Contributions.

The TSP calculator can help you to determine the specific dollar amount to be deducted each pay period in order to maximize your contributions. The calculator is available at <https://www.tsp.gov/planningtools/electivecontributions/electiveContributions.shtml>. For additional information, read the fact sheet “Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals” available at <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/oc91-13.pdf>.

### **TSP CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS:**

If you are age 50 or older (or will reach age 50 at any time during 2011) and contribute the maximum amount of regular TSP contributions, you can also elect to make TSP catch-up contributions up to the IRS deferral limit. The TSP catch-up contribution elective deferral limit for calendar year 2011 remains the same as in 2010, **\$5,500**.

If you made TSP catch-up contributions during 2010 they will **automatically stop** at the end of the calendar year or when you reach the maximum dollar limit for the year. If you want to make TSP catch-up contributions in 2011 you must make a new TSP catch-up election in [Employee Express](#).

If you want to distribute the \$5,500 over 26 pay periods, you should elect to contribute \$212 per pay period by December 18<sup>th</sup>. If you elect later than this, you can adjust the amount by the number of pay periods remaining. Additional information about TSP catch-up contributions is available at <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/oc03-03.pdf>.

### **HOW TO MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR TSP CONTRIBUTIONS:**

You can start, change or stop your TSP contributions at any time using Employee Express available online at [www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov). If you need assistance with access, contact the Employee Express helpdesk at 1-800-827-6254.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE OF TSP ELECTIONS:**

Your TSP election will be effective at the beginning of the pay period following the date you made your election. If you want to distribute your regular TSP or TSP catch-up contributions equally over all 26 pay periods in 2011 you should make your election during the period December 5 – 18 2010 (pay period 26). The election will be effective December 19, 2010 and will be withheld from your first paycheck in tax year 2011, which you will receive on January 11, 2011.

If you make a TSP election after December 18, 2010, it will be effective at the beginning of the pay period following your election and will be withheld from your paycheck on the pay date for that pay period. Information about pay periods is available at <http://www3.nbc.gov/customer/PersonnelPay/Payroll/payrolltopics/payrollschedules.html>. Remember that the pay date is always the second Tuesday after the end of the pay period – a delay of almost two weeks.

Contact your Human Resources Benefits Specialist if you have any questions regarding the information in this Bulletin. All Benefits Bulletins are posted on the USGS Employee Benefits Intranet webpage at <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/hro/benefits>.

**Kathy Shearman**  
**Benefits Officer**