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# Office of Civilian Personnel Management Survey of Navy Civilian Attitudes December 1989: Management Report

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Dianne J. Murphy

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This Management Report was prepared for the Office of Civilian Personnel Management  
by the  
Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, San Diego, California 92152-6800

# Office of Civilian Personnel Management Survey of Navy Civilian Attitudes December 1989: Management Report

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Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By _____	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

This Management Report was prepared for the Office of Civilian Personnel Management by the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, San Diego, California 92152-6800

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# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE November 1990		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATE COVERED Admin. Pub.	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Office of Civilian Personnel Management Survey of Navy Civilian Attitudes December 1989: Management Report				5. FUNDING NUMBERS Program Element and Work Unit No. 0630707N.R1770 MPO13	
6. AUTHOR(S) Patricia G. Roth, Dianne J. Murphy					
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Navy Personnel Research and Development Center San Diego, California 92152-6800				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER NPRDC-AP-91-2	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Office of Civilian Personnel Management 800 N. Quincy Street, Room 1204 Arlington, VA 22202				10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, in cooperation with the Navy Office of Civilian Personnel Management, developed the Navy Civilian Personnel Survey (NCPS). In December 1989, NCPS was administered to a random sample of 3,629 Navy civilian employees. The number of usable responses was 1,958, about 54 percent of the original sample. The survey data were representative of the entire civilian work force at the 95 percent level of confidence, +/- 5 percent error. NCPS examined attitudes in the following areas: recruiting, pay and benefits, job satisfaction, and training.					
14. SUBJECT TERMS Leave transfer, child care, drug testing, AIDS, recruiting, pay, benefits, job satisfaction, training, management supervision and feedback, promotion system, equal employment opportunity, working hours, overseas employment, retirement, job sharing				15. NUMBER OF PAGES 22	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED				16. PRICE CODE	
				18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	
19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED		20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED			

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## INTRODUCTION

Department of the Navy managers have the responsibility of attracting, developing, and maintaining a civilian work force, which in concert with the military force, must be capable of accomplishing the Navy's mission. To fulfill this responsibility, managers need feedback from the civilian work force concerning attitudes about current and contemplated programs and policies.

To this end, the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center (NPRDC), in cooperation with the Navy Office of Civilian Personnel Management, developed the Navy Civilian Personnel Survey (NCPS). In December 1989, NCPS was administered to a random sample of 3,629 Navy civilian employees. The number of usable responses was 1,958, about 54 percent of the original sample. The survey data were representative of the entire civilian work force at the 95 percent level of confidence, +/- 5 percent error.

NCPS examined attitudes in the following areas:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Recruiting</li> <li>* Pay and Benefits</li> <li>* Job Satisfaction</li> <li>* Training</li> <li>* Management, Supervision and Feedback</li> <li>* Promotion System</li> <li>* Equal Employment Opportunity</li> <li>* Working Hours</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Overseas Employment</li> <li>* Retirement</li> <li>* Job Sharing</li> <li>* Leave Transfer</li> <li>* Health and Wellness Programs</li> <li>* Elderly Dependent Care</li> <li>* Drug Testing</li> <li>* AIDS in the Workplace</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

NCPS utilized new survey technology to reach the civilian work force and to solicit their attitudes. Using a computer-enhanced Navy survey system (CENSUS), employees sat down with a personal computer at their work location, answered questions displayed on a screen, and had their responses electronically transmitted to NPRDC. Their responses were quickly analyzed and made available to decision makers much sooner than ever before.

The following sections feature the results of the survey. For a more in-depth description of these results, consult the technical report, *Survey of Navy Civilian Personnel, December 1989: Highlights and Results*, to be published in 1991 by NPRDC.

## **SAMPLE PROFILE**

An understanding of the characteristics of the people surveyed should precede a discussion of their attitudes. A representative sample was drawn from all Navy full-time career and career conditional employees who were U.S. citizens in the continental United States, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

In most cases, the characteristics of the sample corresponded closely with those of the population. The only exception worth noting is that the sample generally contained more people higher in the organization (e.g. supervisors, GM personnel). However, this difference was relatively small.

The sample of people surveyed had the following demographic characteristics:

- About two-thirds of the respondents were male and one-third were female.
- There were 73 percent whites, 17 percent blacks, and 10 percent other minorities.
- The majority of people ranged in age from 21 to 55.
- One-third of the sample were high school graduates and two-thirds had attended at least some college.
- By pay plan, 20 percent of the respondents were General Management (GM), 55 percent were General Schedule (GS), and 23 percent were Wage Grade (WG) personnel.
- One-fourth of the sample were supervisors.
- The sample contained a fairly equal number of people in the various occupational codes (i.e. scientists/engineers, management and administrative, clerical, and craftsmen/mechanics).

## RECRUITING

### Recruiting involves attracting employees...

***29% of civilians chose to work for the government because it offered work they desired; 28% chose it for the job stability.***

A third of respondents reported learning of their first civilian job from a family member or friend. Formal methods such as placement offices and information services were used less often.

More than half of the civilian employees were employed when hired by the federal government, usually in business/industry. The top reasons civilians chose the government were that it offered desirable work as well as job stability. Geographic location was the primary reason they chose the Navy.

### ...and keeping them.

***46% of employees said the government is a better employer than business/industry; 33% said business/industry is better.***

When asked to compare the federal government and business/industry as employers, more employees said they preferred the government. Answers to a similar question revealed that the Navy was seen as a better employer than other federal agencies.

When these comparisons were examined across the different pay plans, it was found that more GS and WG personnel favored the government while more GM personnel favored business/industry. In addition, more blacks preferred the government, while more whites preferred business/industry.

Although a third of civilians plan to seek a job change within the next 5 years, most want to stay with the federal government, particularly the Navy. Reasons given for wanting to change jobs include better pay and benefits and promotion opportunities.

## PAY AND BENEFITS

### Federal government pay and benefits..

***44% of civilians were satisfied with their pay; 61% were satisfied with their benefits.***

A larger number of civilians were dissatisfied with their rate of pay than satisfied. However, with regard to benefits, more employees reported being satisfied than dissatisfied.

Over half of the employees said that many to almost all of their financial needs are satisfied with the pay and benefits they receive. About a third reported that few of their needs are satisfied.

About 40 percent of civilians claimed that their pay has no influence on their overall attitude toward their job. Of the remaining civilians, half thought pay had a positive influence and half thought pay had a negative influence.

### **...are compared with business/industry.**

***68% of employees felt pay is better in business/industry than government; only 54% felt similarly when considering both pay and benefits.***

When asked to compare pay in the federal government and in business/industry, more employees said pay was better in business/industry.

Although this pattern was also found when pay and benefits were considered as a whole, relatively fewer people felt business/industry was better. Health insurance was perceived as much better in business/industry. However, the government was seen as far superior in its annual and sick leave policies.



## JOB SATISFACTION

### Job satisfaction...

*Employees were most satisfied with their hours of work.*

Navy civilians reported that they are moderately satisfied with their jobs. It was found that older employees and those with more years in service tend to be more satisfied.

The highest and lowest ranked dimensions of the job are listed in the table below. Respondents were most satisfied with their hours of work and the job security. They were least satisfied with their chance of promotion, the management style, and their rate of pay.

*Employees were least satisfied with their chance of promotion.*

5 Highest Satisfaction Items:	5 Lowest Satisfaction Items:
1. Hours of work	1. Chance of promotion
2. Job security	2. Management style
3. Amount of variety	3. Rate of pay
4. Fellow workers	4. Management/worker relations
5. Amount of responsibility	5. Recognition for good work

### ...includes both extrinsic...

Extrinsic job satisfaction refers to the external or environmental components of the job. These include physical work conditions, fellow workers, immediate boss, and rate of pay. Civilians were moderately satisfied with the extrinsic aspects of their jobs.

### ...and intrinsic components.

Intrinsic job satisfaction deals with components that are internal or indigenous to the individual. Items in this group include amount of variety, freedom to choose method of work, and attention paid to suggestions. Again, respondents were moderately satisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their jobs.

## TRAINING

### Training of Navy civilians...

In the past year, 6 in 10 employees requested some form of training. A comparable number of employees were satisfied with the training and educational opportunities available to them. Satisfaction with opportunities is important because it was related to satisfaction with the job overall.

*10% more women requested training last year than men; about 10% more whites were satisfied with training opportunities than blacks.*

Of those who requested it, three-fourths attended training. The type of training most frequently attended was technical in nature. Civilians reported that their expectations for the training were met to some extent (53 percent) or to a great extent (40 percent).

There appears to be a trend for personnel higher up in the organization (e.g., GMs, management and administrative, scientists and engineers) to more often request training, be satisfied with training opportunities, and attend training.

### ...has had positive effects...

When asked about training benefits, civilians were very positive. Most respondents felt training has helped them advance in their career, deal with changes in their job, and, most of all, do a better job. Further evidence of positive effects due to training came from supervisors. Over 75 percent of supervisors said that the training received by their employees has resulted in improved job performance.

*As age increased, fewer people requested training or felt they need it to do their jobs well; however, satisfaction with training opportunities increased with age.*

### ...but more is needed.

Half of the respondents felt they needed additional training to perform their job effectively; about 20 percent did not feel they needed more training. Again, technical training was the most frequently desired type.

## MANAGEMENT, SUPERVISION, AND FEEDBACK

### Attitudes about management are more negative ...

Employees held fairly negative attitudes about management in the organization. Fifty-three percent of employees were dissatisfied with the way the organization is managed and 46 percent were dissatisfied with the relationship between management and workers.

Most people did feel that they receive fair treatment with regard to leave requests, discipline, grievances and appeals, as well as work, overtime, and temporary duty assignments. Few people said they receive fair treatment when it comes to awards.

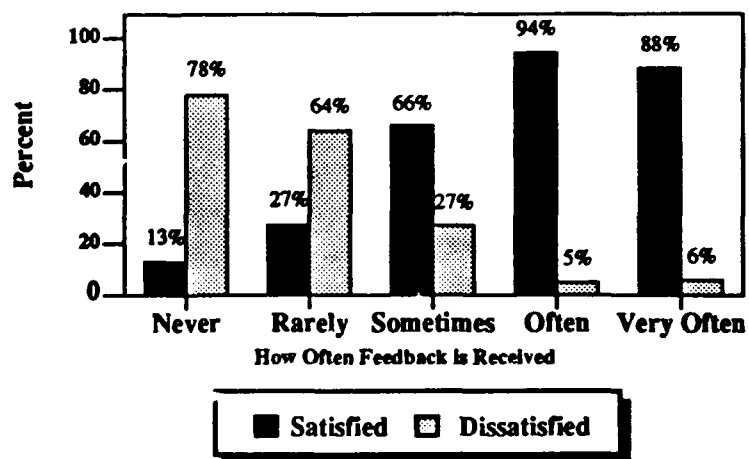
### ...than those about supervision and feedback.

Although people were generally dissatisfied with management, three-fourths were satisfied with their immediate boss.

One of the most important aspects of supervision is feedback. Although over half of the respondents reported some level of satisfaction with the amount of feedback they receive, most still want more. The graph below illustrates that those people who reported receiving more frequent feedback were more satisfied with the amount of feedback received.

*75% of respondents said they were satisfied with their immediate boss.*

**Satisfaction with Amount of Feedback by  
How Often it is Received**



A more formal method of providing feedback is the performance evaluation. About 60 percent of employees said that their supervisor carefully considers the important aspects of the job, resulting in a fair and accurate rating they agree with.

## PROMOTION SYSTEM

### **Attitudes toward promotion are somewhat negative.**

About half of the respondents reported being dissatisfied with their chance for promotion and with the promotion system itself.

When asked to estimate the likelihood of their promotion in the next 2 years, 34 percent said it was somewhat or very likely. Of the 55 percent who said promotion was unlikely, the primary reason given was a lack of vacancies; unfairness in the system was also cited.

Interestingly, those people who thought the problem was due to unfairness in the promotion system also had lower overall job satisfaction. This group included more WG as well as craftsmen and mechanics.

### **Promotion attitudes were described concerning minorities,...**

*58% of whites and 28% of blacks said there is equal opportunity of promotion for their race.*

About half of the respondents said there was equal opportunity of promotion for their race. A quarter believed minorities received preferential treatment for promotions. More whites than blacks felt there was equal opportunity of promotion for their race.

### **...women,...**

*70% of men and 55% of women said there is equal opportunity of promotion for women.*

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported that there was equal opportunity of promotion for women. A fourth felt women received preferential treatment for promotions. More men than women felt that women have equal opportunity and receive preferential treatment in promotion.

### **...and older employees.**

Almost half of the respondents said age does not affect an employee's chance for promotion. As the age of the respondents increased, fewer people believed that age is not a factor in promotion decisions.

### **More beliefs about promotion were reported.**

When asked whether the best qualified people were promoted in their organization, nearly half of the employees disagreed. A fourth agreed.

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### EEO issues affect all employees,...

***45% of employees said they would be comfortable talking with an EEO counselor; 23% would not.***

Eighty-four percent of employees said they know where to find information on filing an EEO complaint. In addition, twice as many people said they would feel comfortable seeking help from an EEO counselor than said they would feel uncomfortable. Reasons given for feeling uncomfortable included a fear of the action being held against them later and the belief that it would not make a difference.

***38% of respondents said they would get fair treatment in filing an EEO complaint; 16% said they would not; and 46% did not know.***

Employees were asked if they thought they would receive fair treatment if they filed an EEO complaint. More than twice as many people believed they would receive fair treatment than believed they would not.

An interesting pattern of responses was found with regard to filing an EEO complaint. People higher in the organization (e.g. GMs, management and administrative, supervisors) more often knew where to file a complaint, would feel comfortable talking to an EEO counselor, and believed they would receive fair treatment.

### ...particularly supervisors.

About two-thirds of all supervisors have received EEO training. Most supervisors said that although it did make them more sensitive to EEO issues, they did not let concern over a possible EEO complaint affect the way they utilized their staff.

## WORKING HOURS

### Satisfaction with hours of work...

Of all aspects of the job, Navy civilians were most satisfied with their working hours. Ninety percent of respondents reported some level of satisfaction.

### ...is related to availability of alternative hours...

About half of civilians have an alternative work schedule (e.g., flex-time, compressed time) available to them. Those employees who have such a schedule available were more satisfied with their working hours than those who do not. Further, alternative work schedules have provided an incentive to stay with the organization for a third of these employees.

Of those people who do not have an alternative work schedule available to them, three-quarters reported wanting one, primarily to increase their flexibility.

### ...and participation in alternative work schedules.

In addition to the availability of an alternative work schedule, participation in such a schedule is important. Over two-thirds of employees who have one available chose to participate. This group more often described themselves as "extremely" satisfied with their working hours than those who chose not to participate.

*95% of employees with alternative work schedules available were satisfied with their working hours; of those without such a schedule available, only 84% were satisfied.*

## OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT

**Some civilians have worked overseas...**

One in 10 Navy civilians have worked overseas. Ninety-five percent of those who have been overseas said it was a good experience. They enjoyed the travel and adventure, the chance to live in another culture, and the career enhancement aspects.

**...and more would do so in the future.**

Of the people who have not worked overseas, 41 percent reported that they would be likely to accept such a position. Again, they would consider overseas employment for the travel and adventure, the chance to live in another culture, and the career enhancement aspects.

*When people were unwilling to go overseas, it was most often due to a lack of interest, spouse's career and family obligations.*

The remaining 59 percent of employees reported that they would not be likely to accept an overseas position. The primary reason cited was a lack of interest. Other reasons included spouse's career and family obligations.

Women were less likely to report a willingness to work overseas than men. Similarly, clerical personnel were less likely to be interested than other occupational categories.

## RETIREMENT

### **Knowledge about the Thrift Savings Plan...**

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a tax-advantaged savings plan (401k) available to federal employees. Fifty-six percent of FERS employees use TSP and 21 percent of CSRS employees use it.

Of those FERS employees not using TSP, the top reason given was a lack of money for savings. In addition to a lack of money, CSRS employees frequently said their money was in other savings plans.

Over half of all people using TSP felt their return was good or very good; however, more FERS employees felt it was very good. Seventy-five percent of those using TSP were satisfied with the plan overall; again, more FERS employees were very satisfied.

### **...and other retirement benefits is vital for everyone,...**

About 8 in 10 people said they were informed about the benefits of their retirement plan. Still, virtually all employees indicated interest in retirement counseling and education. Topic areas of particular interest include annuity plans, post-retirement insurance, and Social Security benefits. Most respondents suggested that such assistance be given early in the civil service career.

### **...not just for those about to retire.**

Fourteen percent of all respondents stated that they plan to retire within the next 5 years. Of these, over half reported being likely to accept "Early Out" retirement and nearly two-thirds reported being likely to retire at minimum eligibility.

*56% of those who plan to retire in the next 5 years said they would be likely to accept an "Early Out."*

When asked how many of their financial needs will be met at retirement, over half said few to almost none of their needs will be met. Forty-five percent said many to almost all of their needs will be met. Most employees plan to work at least part-time following retirement.



## JOB SHARING

### **There is some interest in job sharing by employees...**

***35% of women said they would share a job; only 16% of men would.***

In a job sharing program, two or more individuals would work part-time, sharing the responsibilities of a full-time position. Nearly a quarter of the respondents said they would participate in such a program, preferably sometime in the future. Job sharing was more heavily favored by women and employees in clerical positions.

Two-thirds of the employees would not consider job sharing. The most common reason given is that their situation requires them to have full-time employment.

### **...as well as supervisors.**

***30% of supervisors favored job sharing for their staff; 40% did not favor job sharing.***

When supervisors were asked whether they favor job sharing for their staff, 30 percent said they do. The primary reason given for favoring job sharing was that they could employ qualified people not otherwise available.

Forty percent of supervisors reported that they do not favor job sharing. They believed that job sharing was not appropriate for their type of work and would result in work inconsistencies.

## LEAVE TRANSFER

### People know about the leave transfer program...

*Personnel higher in the organization (e.g., GMs, supervisors, management, and administrative) were better informed about the leave transfer*

Leave transfer is a new program which allows employees to donate annual leave to another employee's leave account to assist with medical emergencies. Eight in 10 people were at least somewhat familiar with this program.

### ...and are using it.

About 10 percent of those employees who know about the leave transfer program have used it to donate leave. The remaining 90 percent of the people who have not yet donated leave said they would, particularly if they had extra leave or knew the person in need.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

*Employees were most interested in Navy-provided health and wellness educational programs.*

### The Navy should provide educational programs,...

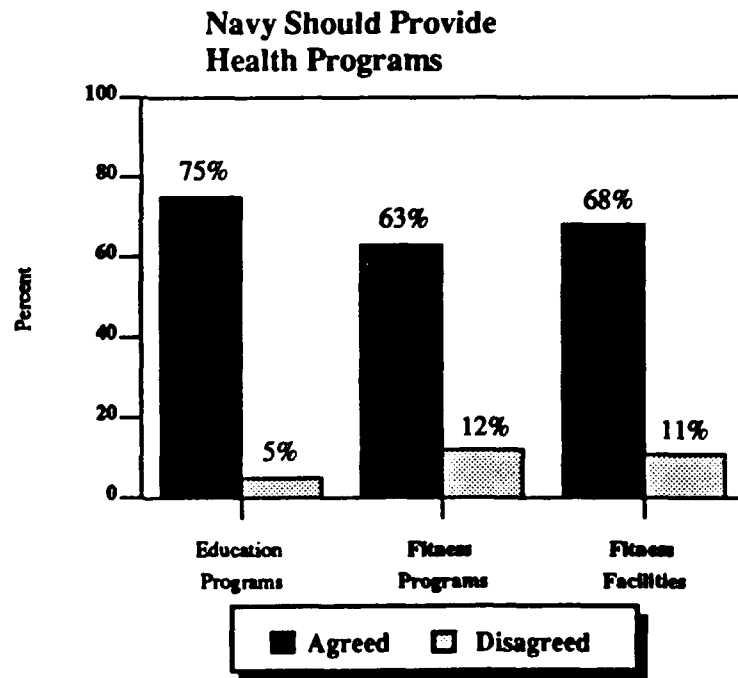
Respondents were asked several questions about whether the Navy should provide various health and wellness programs for its civilian employees. Three-quarters of employees agreed that the Navy should provide health awareness/educational programs. Only 5 percent disagreed.

### ...fitness programs,...

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said that the Navy should provide health/fitness programs. An example would be a systematic weight loss program. Twelve percent did not feel that fitness programs should be provided.

### ...and fitness facilities.

Over two-thirds of the people reported that the Navy should provide health/fitness facilities for its employees. Eleven percent did not agree that the Navy should provide such facilities.



## CHILD CARE

### Child care needs and resulting problems...

Two in 10 Navy civilians reported a requirement for child care. Usually, employees required all day care and some needed care only before and after school.

Almost 40 percent of respondents who reported a requirement for child care currently use a private facility. An additional 20 percent use a relative to serve their child care needs. Nearly 10 percent said they have no present arrangement.

Over half of the employees with child care needs said these needs never or rarely interfere with their job performance. However, about a third said their child care needs sometimes do affect their job performance, particularly in the form of absenteeism.

...could be moderated by Navy-provided child care.

Respondents were asked what the Navy should do for its civilian employees in the area of child care. One third of the people thought the Navy should provide child care at the workplace; 17 percent thought the Navy should not get involved in child care.

Some respondents felt the Navy should provide child care more than others did. Specifically, more women, blacks, and younger people thought the Navy should provide child care at the workplace. More men, whites, and older people thought the Navy should not get involved in child care issues.

*Over half of those with child care needs would use Navy-provided child care if cost were not prohibitive; however, a fourth prefer to make their own arrangements.*

## ELDERLY DEPENDENT CARE

**In the area of elderly care needs,...**

Seven percent of employees reported some responsibility for an elderly/disabled dependent. This was most commonly in the form of all-day care although some just needed assistance with household chores. Older employees were more likely to have responsibility for an elderly dependent.

**...the Navy could provide assistance.**

Employees were asked what the Navy should do in the area of elderly dependent care. Almost a third of the people thought the Navy should provide extended health benefits for elderly dependents; 13 percent thought the Navy should not get involved in elderly care.

***30% of civilians  
thought the Navy  
should provide  
extended health  
benefits for families  
with elderly care***

More blacks and WG employees felt the Navy should provide extended health benefits for the care of elderly dependents. More whites and GM personnel thought the Navy should not get involved in elderly dependent care issues.

## DRUG TESTING

***56% of all employees reported that they favor a mandatory drug testing policy.***

### **Civilians have clear opinions about drug testing...**

The survey asked several questions to elicit opinions about drug testing in the workplace. Fifty-six percent of the respondents reported that they favor a mandatory drug testing policy, would not object to providing a urine sample, and do not fear that drug testing would be used as an excuse to fire employees for reasons unrelated to drug use.

An additional question asked whether people think the results of drug tests are accurate. Thirty-four percent thought they were accurate, 18 percent thought they were not accurate, and a high 48 percent were unsure of the accuracy of drug tests.

### **...and finding help for substance abuse problems.**

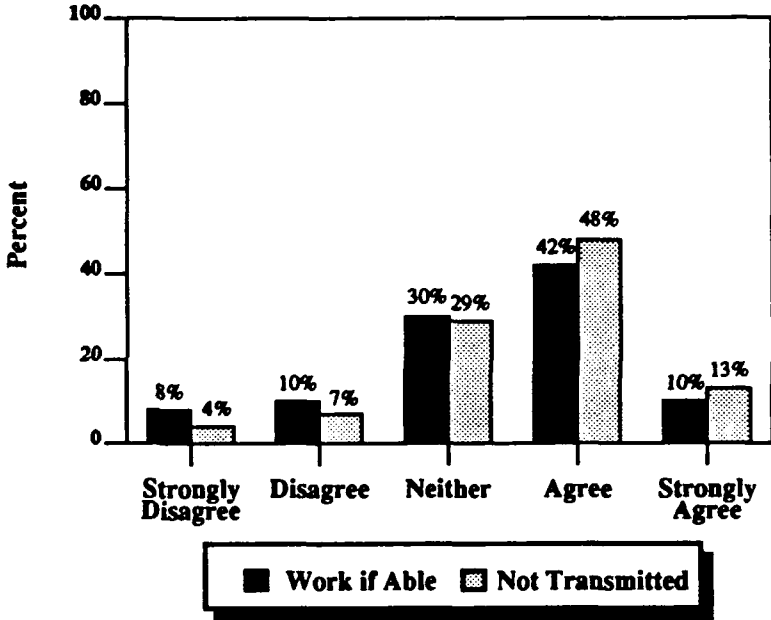
A final question dealt with employees who have alcohol or drug problems getting help from their organization. Over two-thirds of the respondents said employees could get help; only 6 percent felt they could not.

# AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE

People are favorable about AIDS patients working...

Over half of the employees felt AIDS patients should be able to work as long as they are able. Also, most people agreed that AIDS is not transmitted by normal workplace contact.

Attitudes Toward AIDS Patients



...but want more AIDS information.

*65% of employees said their organization should provide more information about AIDS.*

In the area of education, 57 percent of the people surveyed said they were well informed about AIDS; 18 percent were not well informed. Two-thirds of the respondents felt their organization should provide more information to reduce anxiety about the disease.

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