



ECHOES

Army plans to close retiree AKO accounts by Mar. 31, 2014

By Mark Overberg, Deputy Chief, Army Retirement Services

On Sept. 20, the Army published its plan to modernize Army Knowledge Online (AKO). The plan transitions business users to a suite of more secure, interoperable Department of Defense (DOD) services. The improved security requires users to have Common Access Cards (CAC) embedded with users' personal digital certificates.

The Army will close all accounts for military and civilian retirees and family members, who do not have CACs.

The Army plans to close inactive retiree and family member AKO accounts on Dec. 31, 2013. These are accounts that have not had a password change in over 90 days and are not set to automatically forward email to another government account. The Army will also remove email storage for active retiree and family member accounts on this date.

On Mar. 31, 2014, the Army will close all remaining retiree and family member AKO accounts.

To ease the transition, the Army G-6 recently approved an exception to policy that allows retirees and family members to automatically forward their AKO email to a civilian email address until Dec. 31, 2014. However, retirees must set this up in their AKO account profiles before Dec. 31, 2013.

To avoid disruptions to communications and personal accounts, retirees should take the following steps as soon as possible:

- Obtain a personal email address from a civilian provider.
- Replace AKO email addresses in all personal accounts – especially **myPay** accounts at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (<https://www.mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.)
- Obtain a premium DS Logon account. This account allows access to personal benefits records and claims on DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs websites. See the DS Logon article on the next page for more information.
- Download important emails and files to a personal computer.

The Army has many sources of information that retirees may access in place of AKO. The Army home page (www.army.mil) provides official Army news and information and links to Army social media sites (Army Facebook, Army Twitter, Army YouTube and Army Flickr.) It also includes links to Army images, audio, video, presentations, and Army Live, the official Army blog. The U.S. Army Installation Management Command's home page (www.imcom.army.mil) includes links to individual installations and garrisons that provide local information and services to retirees. The Army's official benefits website is MyArmyBenefits (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>.)

The Army plan indicated that retirees may share files using free and paid commercial services. The plan also noted retirees may join comment forums at military service organization and commercial websites.

For updated information on the AKO transition, visit <http://www.eis.army.mil/ako>.

Official U.S. Army Internet Sources

Army Home page: www.army.mil
News: <http://www.army.mil/news/>
Early Bird: <http://ebird.osd.mil/ebird2/index.html>
Information: <http://www.army.mil/info/>
Benefits: <https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>
Audio/video: <http://www.army.mil/media/amp/>
Mobile phone apps: <http://www.army.mil/mobile/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/USArmy>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/USArmy/>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/usarmy>
Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/>
Soldiers Magazine: <http://soldiers.dodlive.mil/>
Army Live Blog: <http://armylive.dodlive.mil/>
Stand To!: <http://www.army.mil/standto/>

Key AKO transition dates

Dec. 31, 2013

- Inactive AKO accounts closed
- Email storage removed from active accounts
- Retirees complete set up of autoforwarding of AKO email to commercial email

Mar. 31, 2014

- All remaining AKO accounts closed

Dec. 31, 2014

- Autoforwarding of AKO email to commercial email ends