

Introduction

What is RITS?

RITS (Retirement and Insurance Transfer System) is a specially tailored option of the Inter-Governmental Payment and Collections System (IPAC) which automates the submission of the **Report Of Withholdings And Contributions For Health Benefits, Life Insurance And Retirement (SF 2812)** and **Report of Withholdings and Contributions for Health Benefits by Enrollment Code (SF 2812A)** to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). RITS was jointly developed by OPM and Financial Management Services (FMS). The application's primary purpose is to automate the transfers of Federal employees' health benefit, retirement and life insurance program information and payments. A separate RITS 2812/2812A report is required for each payroll office.

RITS Processing

OPM invests monies received in interest bearing US Treasury Securities. The monies are used to pay the health insurance and life insurance carriers and to pay annuities to retirees. RITS accumulates information from the Federal Program Agencies (FPAs) about the total amount of withholdings and related agency contributions for retirement and insurance. Each user agency defines one or more payrolls, associated pay cycles and payroll start dates. From these parameters, RITS creates and maintains an automated payroll/report schedule. This schedule gives the FPAs and OPM the ability to calculate and track obligation due dates and payment timeliness.

Agency submission performance is monitored on a regular basis by OPM. In the event that a payment is delinquent, OPM has the ability to create an estimated report on the agency's behalf. Estimated reports are based on the most recent payment made by the agency that best reflects the probable amount of the current obligation. Once an agency generates a successful RITS transaction for the delinquent obligation, the RITS application automatically reverses any estimated payment processed by the OPM administrator.

On a daily basis, the OPM administrator initiates a process to collect all RITS transactions due and submitted for payment. This process extracts all health benefit, retirement and life insurance program information for transmission to OPM for its internal processing. At the same time, it generates formatted transactions to be submitted to IPAC to transfer funds to satisfy the obligations incurred by each report.

RITS System Requirements

To use the RITS System, the computer must have:

- Access to the Internet
- A browser with 128-bit encryption - Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher or Netscape Navigator 4.0 or higher
- The browser must have cookies enabled
- Software to view Portable Document Format (PDF) files (such as Adobe Acrobat™)

About This Manual

This Guide's Audience

This Manual is intended for new users of the RITS system and experienced users of RITS transitioning to the newest version. The intention of this manual is to describe the RITS online system in its entirety, though individual users will only have access to the screens and functions that are authorized by their organization. For a list of roles and functions available in the RITS application, see *Appendix E—RITS Roles and Functions*.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the users of this manual are familiar with the following:

- The use of a personal computer in a Windows environment.
- The basics of the Internet and the Internet browser they will be using.
- The accounting procedures unique to their organization.
- The Treasury reporting requirements outlined in the **Treasury Financial Manual (TFM)**.

Organization

The information in this manual is divided into Sections corresponding to function buttons from the **RITS Main Menu**. These sections will describe the processes available under each menu choice and will include screen views to ensure that the correct paths are being followed. The manual also contains this Introduction, which discusses the purpose of the manual, its intended audience and some of the functions common to the entire RITS application. There are also a Table of Contents, an Index and the following Appendices:

- A. Samples of Forms 2812 and 2812A (Paper Copy and RITS Generated)

- B. Table of Figures
- C. Netscape® Configuration for PDF files
- D. Configuring Browsers to Accept Cookies
- E. RITS Roles and Functions
- F. Military Time Conversion Chart
- G. Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Terminology

The following definitions of payroll terms used in RITS are also contained in the *Glossary* for this manual.

Pay Cycle

A regular, repeated sequence of pay dates representing a particular payroll. In RITS, a Pay Cycle is defined with a Pay Cycle Description, Pay Cycle Type and by a Pay Cycle ID.

Pay Cycle Description

A functional description used by a Payroll Office to identify a Pay Cycle. Descriptions should be explanatory, such as “Monthly Executive Payroll” or “Hourly Non-Exempt Payroll” to aid in identification.

Pay Cycle ID

An identification number assigned by RITS to a Pay Cycle when that cycle is first entered in the system.

Pay Cycle Type

The length of the pay period representing the pay cycle. There are five types of pay cycle: **W** Weekly (7days), **B** Bi-Weekly (14 days), **S** Semi-monthly (1ST through 15th and 16th through the end of the month) **F** Four Weeks (28 days) and **M** Monthly (1st through the end of the month).

Date Payroll Paid (Pay Date)

The date on which payroll funds are made available to an employee or a direct deposit of funds for a payroll amount is made to an employee’s account.

Payroll

A data base comprised of a group of employees who are paid on a regular, continuous series of pay days (such as the Employee’s Payroll or the Director’s Payroll). This term can also be used to refer to amounts disbursed on a particular Pay Date (such as the May 15th Payroll).

Days Past Ending Date

The number of days past the ending date of a pay period that a payroll is paid. If a weekly payroll ends on Saturday and the employees are paid on the following Thursday, the Days Past Ending Date for that payroll is five.

Holiday Handling Flag

Pay cycles contain a Holiday Handling Flag. This flag is used to change the normally scheduled pay day to an adjusted pay day when the normally scheduled pay day falls on a weekend or a holiday. This will be the pay date that RITS is looking for the 2812 report and the pay date that the payroll offices should indicate on their transmissions. The holiday flag is determined at the time the pay cycle is established. Values for the Holiday Flag are P (Prior) and S (Subsequent). For example:

- If the normally scheduled pay day falls on Monday, May 28th (Memorial Day) and the Holiday Handling Flag is “P”, the adjusted Pay Date will be Friday, May 25th (the “P”rior work day). If the Holiday Handling Flag is “S”, the adjusted Pay Date is Tuesday, May 29th (the “S”ubsequent work day).
- If the normally scheduled Pay Date falls on a Saturday or a Sunday and the Holiday Handling Flag is a “P”, the adjusted Pay Date would be Friday. If Friday is a holiday the adjusted Pay Date would be Thursday. If the Holiday Handling Flag is “S” the adjusted Pay Date would be Monday. If Monday is a holiday the adjusted Pay Date would be Tuesday

Conventions Used in this Manual

The following conventions are used throughout the manual:

- References to **screen names** will appear in bold print (i.e. **RITS Main Menu**).
- Names of **screen buttons** will be in “quotes”.
- References to **field names** on a screen will be underlined.
- References to **other sections** of this manual will be in *italics*.

Conventions Used in the RITS Application

Title Bars

As you use the RITS application, the title bars on your screen will help you keep track of your location within the program. Once you leave the Main Menu, the title bar of each screen usually contains the name of the function under the application in which you are currently working, as shown in Figure I.1.

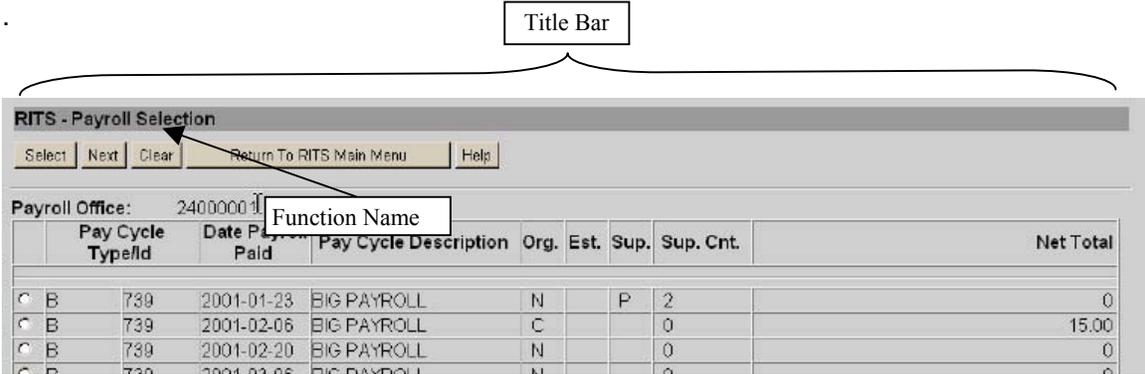


Figure I.1 Title Bar

Browser Buttons

You must **NOT** use the “Back” and “Forward” buttons of your browser to navigate through the RITS screens. The program expects data to be submitted in specific sequence and using the browser navigation buttons can result in the activation of intruder detection software. If you accidentally hit the “Back” button of the browser, you may be returned to the **RITS Main Menu** with none of the data entered on your most recent screen saved to the database. If, after selecting the “Back” button, you are not automatically returned to the **RITS Main Menu**, you will need to manually go back to the **RITS Main Menu** and begin processing again.

The system cannot accurately process information once the “Back” button has been selected.

Cursor Movement

When a screen first displays, you must click to position the cursor in the first data entry field or menu selection. You may continue to position the cursor with the mouse, or you may use the “Tab” key to move forward between fields, “Shift - Tab” to move backward. You **must** use a button to submit data to the RITS database.

Hitting the Enter key while in a data entry field is **NOT** the same as clicking the “OK” button, the “Submit” button, or other RITS screen buttons. If you would like to use the keyboard rather than the mouse to click a button, use the Tab key to move the focus to the button (“OK” “Submit” etc.), then hit Enter

Standard Buttons

Standard Buttons have been established for use throughout the RITS application. Their availability may vary as needed by the function being performed, but when they appear they will operate in a consistent fashion. They typically include “Submit”, “Print”, “Clear”, “Cancel”, “OK”, “Help” and “Return to the RITS Main Menu”. Additional buttons will be included as needed by the program.

Explanation of Standard Buttons

“Submit”

The data on the current screen will be submitted for entry in the RITS database. If the data is accepted, you will be presented with a confirmation screen, then returned to a previous screen or to a menu. If a required field is blank, or if an error is detected, an error message will be displayed and the cursor will be placed in the entry field where the error occurred.

“Print”

You will be forwarded to a report printing screen where the printing of a document or report can be requested. Typically, on this screen, you will be presented with several output options that are discussed in detail later in this Introduction.

“Clear”

All of the data entry fields modified since the last time the screen was displayed are returned to their former values and you remain on the current screen. No data is submitted to the database.

“Cancel”

No data is submitted from the currently active screen and you are returned to the previous screen or to a menu.

“Help”

A new browser window is opened and page level, context sensitive help for the current screen is displayed. After reading and/or printing the help screen, you should close the help window by using the “Return” button on that screen to return to the previous screen. (The back button on your browser will not be functional on the help screen since this is a new window with no history.)

“OK”

This acknowledges that you have read any message on the current screen. You are returned to the previous screen or to a menu.

“Return to RITS Main Menu”

No data entered on the current screen will be saved. You will be returned to the RITS Main Menu.

“Return”

Closes the current **Help** screen and returns you to the previous program screen.

Formats

Button Formats

Because screen presentation is influenced solely by your browser configuration, all **function buttons will display at both the top and the bottom of all RITS screens**. Either set may be used depending on your location and preference as shown in Figure I.2.

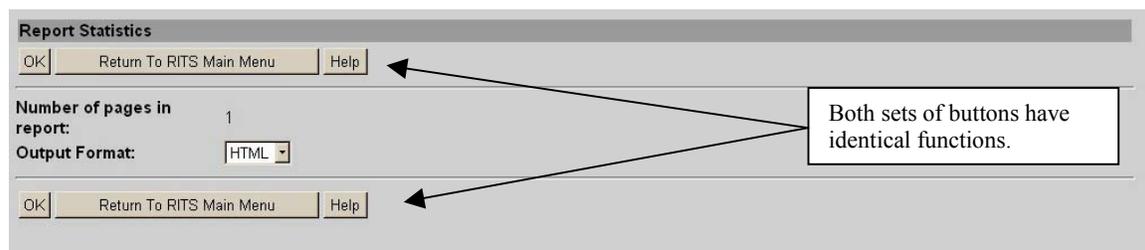


Figure I.2 Function Button Locations

Date Formats

When entering dates in RITS through the keyboard, the format is **YYYY-MM-DD** (2001-06-22 for June 22, 2001). Dates entered in any other format will not be accepted and will

return an error message stating that you have used an invalid date format. (Note: the RITS Bulk File Format uses a different date format.)

Time Formats

When a start or end time is required, enter the time in military time format, which uses a 24-hour clock, four digits and does not use punctuation to separate hours from minutes. Military time is told on a continuous 24-hour clock. Rather than distinguishing between morning (AM) and afternoon (PM), the time is read sequentially from 0000 to 2359. For example, fifteen minutes past midnight is 0015, one thirty in the morning is 0130, and two o'clock in the afternoon is 1400. For a Military Time Conversion Chart, see *Appendix G*.

All time stamps generated by RITS will be in Eastern Standard Time.

Currency Formats

When you enter currency amounts in RITS, you may enter up to 11 numbers, with two of them following the decimal point. **Do not** enter characters (\$, ¢, etc.) other than numbers, commas and/or the decimal point. Amounts entered are assumed to be whole dollars unless you enter a decimal point. If you enter 500 (without a decimal point), the amount will be recorded as \$500.00, not \$5.00. After the amount you enter is submitted to the server, formatting, to include decimals and commas, will be automatic.

Telephone Number Formats

Since the RITS application is distributed worldwide, there is no “mask” to automatically format telephone numbers. They will be displayed exactly as you enter them. Since all telephone numbers entered should include your area code (and country code for foreign exchanges), it is recommended that you use some formatting characters to make the telephone numbers easier to read, as in (202) 874-8270 or 202-874-8720.

Help Screens

The RITS Application is supported by the **Financial Management Service's** (FMS') GOALS Customer Support Staff. You can select a “**Help**” button from most RITS screens to display the telephone number to reach this support group as shown in Figure I.3 This information is provided in a new browser window, which behaves like any other browser window on your system. The **Help** screen information may be printed through your browser's print facility. The “Back” button on this window will be dimmed and

inoperable since this is a new window with no history. Selecting the help button again or selecting another “Help” button, will open a new browser window without closing the current help window. To avoid confusion and to save your system’s memory, help windows should be closed when you have finished with their information, either by using the “Return” button on the screen or by clicking on the Windows close box.

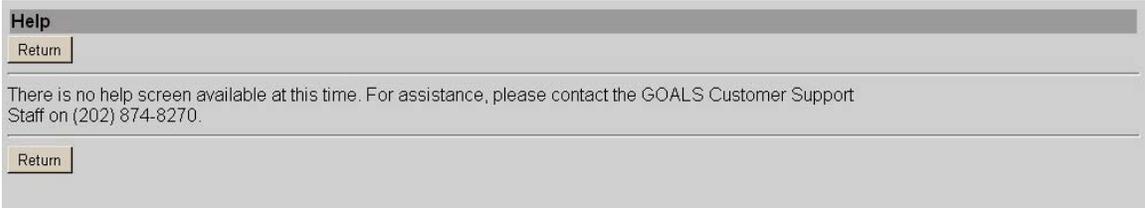


Figure I.3 Sample Help Screen

Error Messages

An error message is generated by the RITS System when an action taken is improper or the data entered is incorrect. The error messages state the nature of the error made. Error messages display in a browser window, just as help information does. The **Error Message** window is smaller, and it remains open without being cleared until closed. This allows you to refer to the Error Message while resolving the error; it also means that error messages will continue to accumulate as the window is called for message display. Since this can be confusing, it is advisable to close the **Error Message** window, using the Windows "Close" button when you no longer need the information it provides. A sample Error Message is shown in Figure I.4.

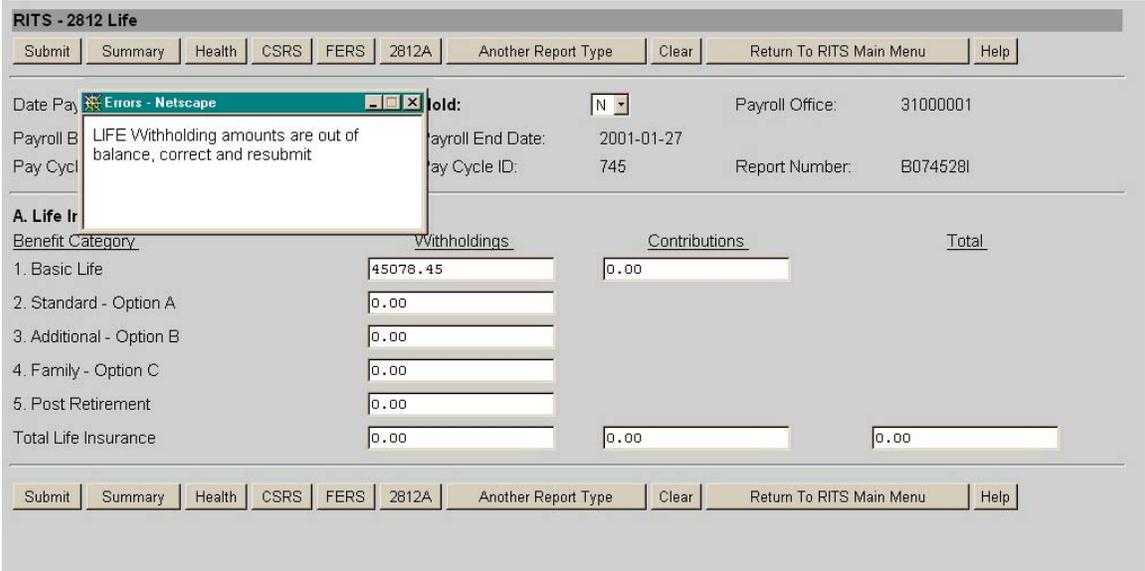


Figure I.4 Sample Error Message

Whenever you receive an error message from RITS, the submission causing the error is returned to you unprocessed.

Viewing and Printing Documents through RITS

Common conventions are used throughout the RITS application for printing documents and reports. When you select a report to be generated, you will be forwarded to a report printing facility where the data just entered, a document or a report can be printed. Usually you will first see a Report File Description and Footer Comments entry screen, referred to in this manual as the **Report Request** screen. Then the **Report Statistics** screen displays which has several output options as discussed below.

Report File Description/Footer Comments (Report Request) Screen

When you select a report to be generated, the next screen to display, the **Report Request** screen, will call for the entry of a Report File Description and Footer Comments for the report, as shown in Figure I.5. The title of this screen will vary depending on your location in RITS, but the appearance and functionality of the screen will be consistent.

The screenshot shows a window titled "RITS - Holiday Report". At the top, there are buttons for "OK", "Clear", "Return To RITS Main Menu", and "Help". Below this, the "Report File Description:" field contains the text "Sample holiday report for documentation.". The "Start Date:" field is set to "2001-01-01" and the "End Date:" field is set to "2001-05-31". The "Footer Comments:" field contains the text "Sample report footer on Holiday Report". At the bottom, there are again buttons for "OK", "Clear", "Return To RITS Main Menu", and "Help".

Figure I.5 Report File Description/Footer Comments (Report Request Screen)

Data Entry Fields

There are two data entry fields on this screen. It is not mandatory that you complete either field, but it is highly recommended that you complete the Report File Description field.

Report File Description

This field is used to name and/or describe the report. It will be this name or description that displays in the system when a report is later retrieved for viewing, printing or deleting. The description that you assign to the report should be as meaningful as possible to help with later report identification. This description does not print on the report itself.

Footer Comments

This field is printed on the bottom of each page of your document or report. Figure I.6 shows a sample report with the location of the Footer Comments marked.

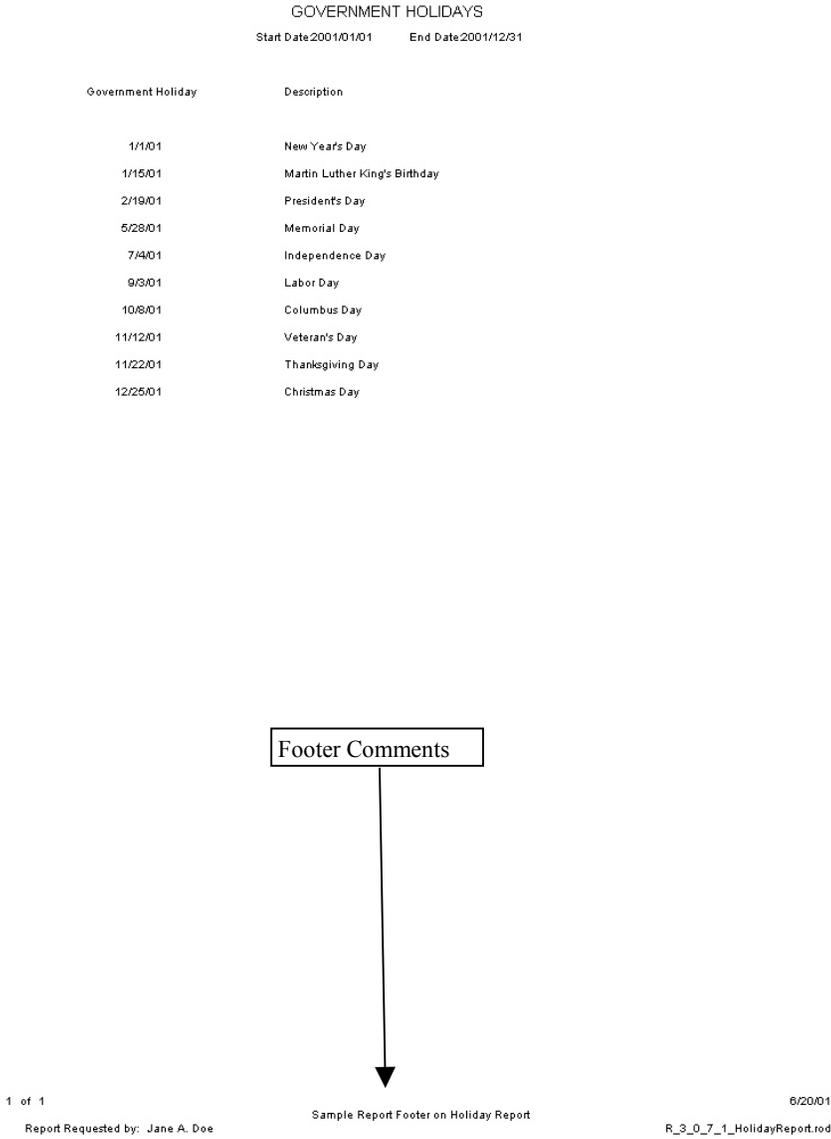


Figure I.6 Sample Footer Comments

Function Buttons

There are four standard function buttons on the **Report Request** screen:

“OK”

Accepts the information on the screen as the report description and report footer, extracts the report contents from the database and displays the **Report Statistics** screen shown in Figure I.7.

“Clear”

Resets the data entry fields to their values the last time the screen was displayed. No data is submitted to the RITS database.

“Return to RITS Main Menu”

Returns to the **RITS Main Menu** without saving any information entered.

“Help”

Displays the system help for this screen.

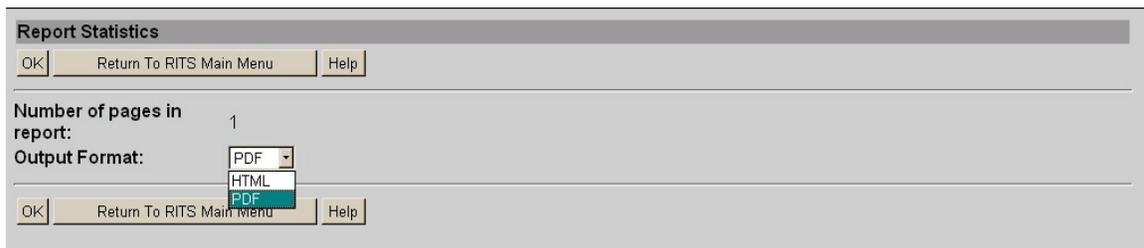


Figure I.7 Report Statistics

Report Statistics

Selecting “OK” from the **Report File Description / Footer Comments** screen will display the **Report Statistics** screen shown in Figure I.7. This screen displays the number of pages the report or document will have and provides you with a drop-down menu option of output formats.

Menu Choices

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)

The document format used on the World Wide Web. Choose this option to view the report immediately. This is the default choice. The report is generated in HTML format and displays in the RITS Report Viewer.

PDF (Portable Document Format)

A file format, read with Adobe Acrobat™ Reader, for saving the report to be viewed or printed on-line. The Acrobat reader must be available to view or print the report.

Function Buttons

“OK”
Displays the report in the specified format.

“Return to RITS Main Menu”
Returns to the Main Menu without generating, saving or printing the report or document.

“Help”
Displays the system help for this screen.

Viewing HTML Format Documents and Reports

When a report is generated in HTML format for viewing online, the RITS Report Viewer is automatically called to display the report as shown in Figure I.8.



Figure I.8 RITS Report Viewer

The RITS Report Viewer will display the document or report one page at a time with as much of the page visible as your browser will allow. To see the rest of the page, use the scroll bars. If you attempt to print this report through your browser, only the page currently being viewed will be printed. When printing a report, it is recommended that you use the PDF format, as described in the next section, rather than the HTML format.

Report Viewer Function Buttons

The Report Viewer also has standard function buttons, shown in Figure I.8, which appear at both the top and the bottom of the screen.

“First”

Moves you to the top of the first page (page 1) of the document.

“Last”

Moves you to the end of the last page of the document.

“Next”

Moves you to the next page in the document unless you are already on the last page.

“Prior”

Moves you back one page in the document unless you are already on the first page.

“Page Number”

Moves you to the page number entered in the Page Number field. If the field is left blank, clicking “Page Number” will move you to the first page of the report. If the field is set to a page number greater than the number of pages in the report, clicking “Page Number” will move you to the last page of the report. The presence of a page number in the field does not affect the operation of the “First”, “Last”, “Next” or “Prior” buttons.

“Back to Statistics Screen”

Returns you to the **Report Statistics** screen, discussed earlier in this section, where you can choose to display or print the report in another format.

“Return to RITS Main Menu”

Returns you to the **RITS Main Menu**. In a future release of RITS, the report will be saved for later viewing through the Retrieve Report Function.

Viewing, Saving and Printing PDF Format Documents and Reports

If your system is equipped with Adobe Acrobat®, then a better choice for viewing or printing the report may be the **PDF (Portable Document Format)** format. PDF, read with an Acrobat reader, allows documents to be displayed and printed in different operating systems while retaining its formatting properties and appearance. There are Acrobat readers available for DOS, Windows, UNIX and Mac platforms.

If you choose PDF as your file output format and see an error message similar to the one in Figure I.9, then either Acrobat is not installed on your system, or your browser is not configured to use it.

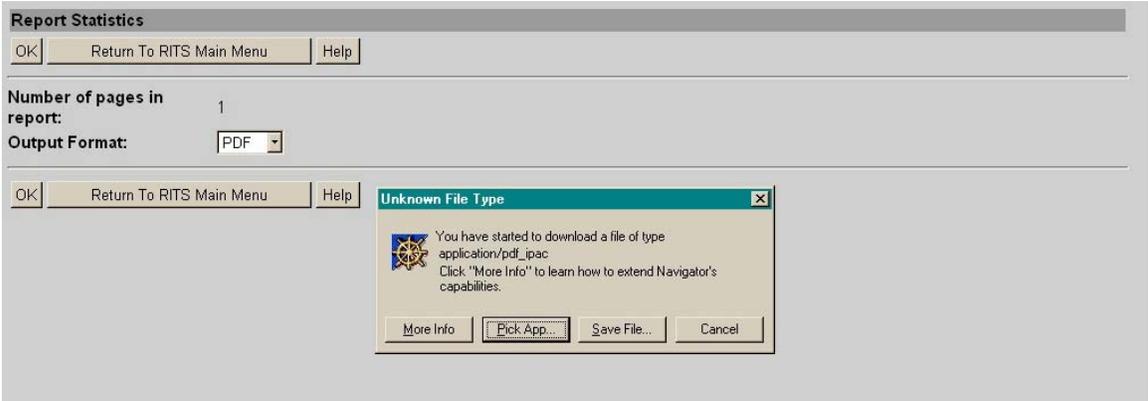


Figure I.9 Adobe Acrobat Error Message

If your browser is configured to use Adobe Acrobat Reader, the next screen you see should be similar to Figure I.10. This is a warning that some files downloaded from the Internet can be dangerous. It also asks you if you would like to open the file or save it to disk.

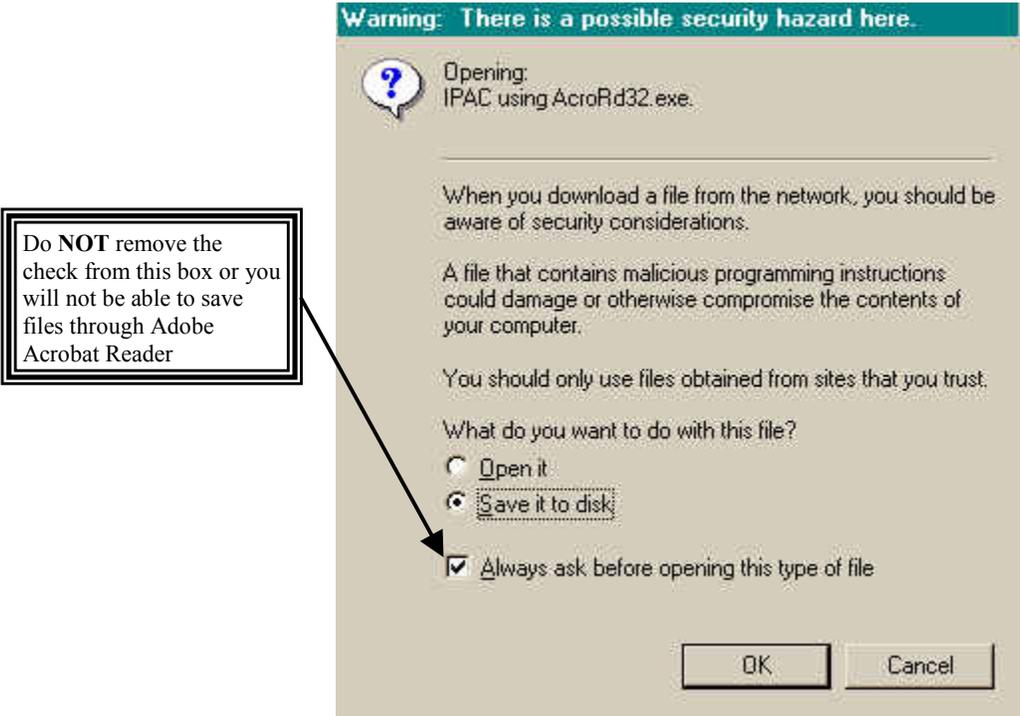


Figure I.10 File download warning.

Since this report is coming from RITS, a secure system, you can trust the source of the report. On this screen you must also decide if you want to open the report for viewing and printing, or if you want to save it to disk. Do NOT remove the check mark from the

“Always ask before opening this type of file” box or you will not be able to save (or view, depending on which option button is selected) files through the Acrobat Reader.

Viewing and Printing a Report with Adobe Acrobat Reader

If you choose to **Open** the file, the report will be generated by RITS and the Adobe Acrobat Reader will automatically be opened to read the file. Figure I.11 illustrates Acrobat Reader’s view of an RITS report.

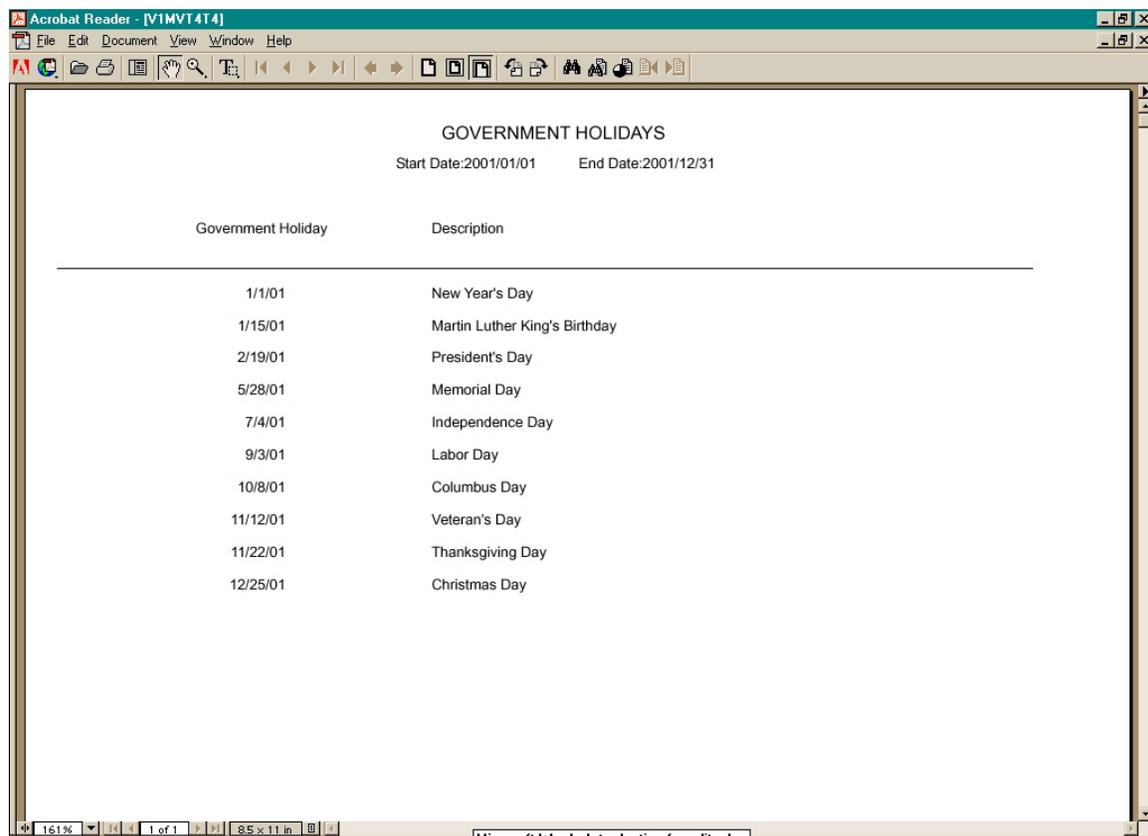


Figure I.11 Adobe Acrobat Reader View of Report

Acrobat is an easy program to use, and the buttons on its toolbar function as expected. For further assistance in the use of Acrobat, click **H**elp while in the program, then **R**eaders **O**nline **G**uide, then **V**iewing **P**DF **D**ocuments for further information.

The report can also be printed from within the Acrobat reader. Click the **F**ile option of the Acrobat menu bar to display the menu shown in Figure I.12.

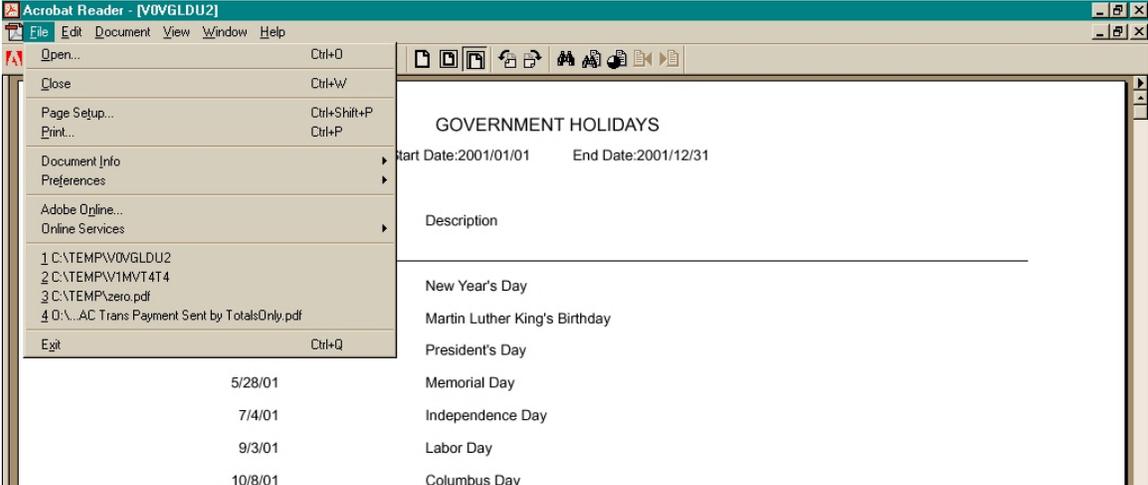


Figure I.12 Acrobat File Menu

Choosing the **Print** option from this menu will display the standard Windows **Print** menu shown in Figure I.13

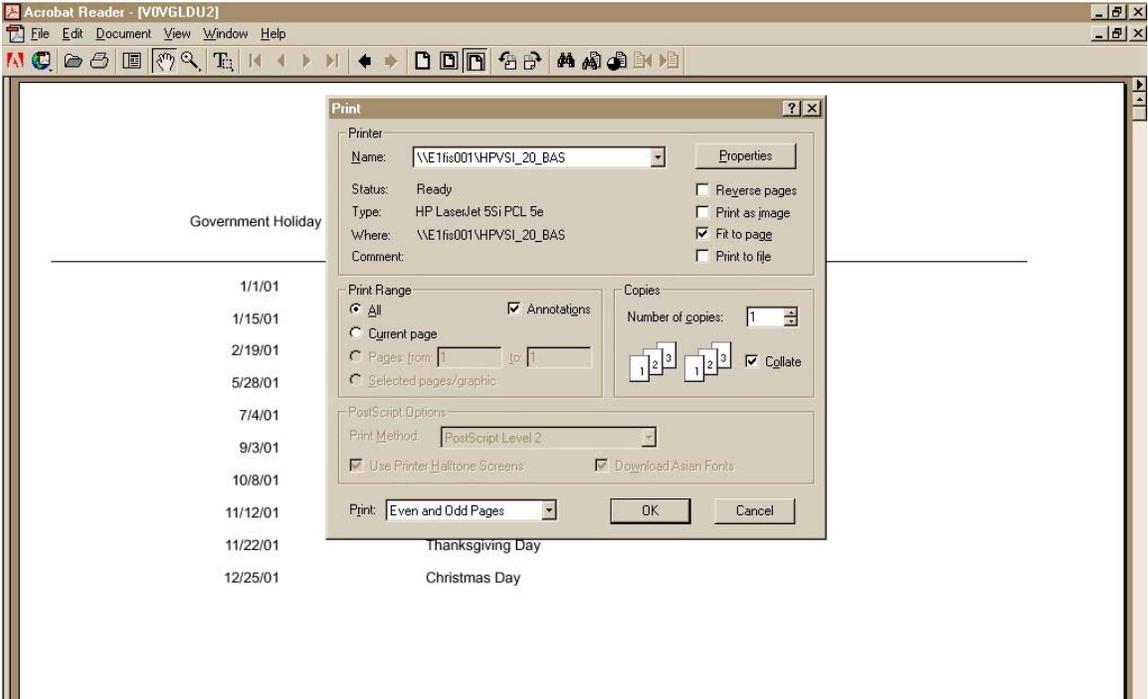


Figure I.13 Windows Print Menu

From here you can print the entire report, the current page of the report or a range of pages to your default printer. If you put a check in the "Print to File" box on this menu screen, the report will be saved to a file that can be interpreted by your printer, but will

not be readily viewable by you. To save the file to a disk, choose the “Save it to disk” option on the previous menu. (See Figure I.10 and read below.)

Saving a Report with Acrobat

If you choose **Save it to disk** from the earlier menu shown in Figure I.10, you will see a standard Windows “Save As...” Dialogue Box (see Figure I.14). This allows you to name the output file, choose the location for the file and specify the type of file to save. The location and name you choose for the file will depend on your computer’s configuration and your agency’s procedures. Do NOT remove the check mark from the “Always ask before opening this type of file” box or you will not be able to view through the Acrobat Reader. Once the file is saved, you will be returned to the **Report Statistics** screen where you can display the report in another format or return to the **RITS Main Menu**.

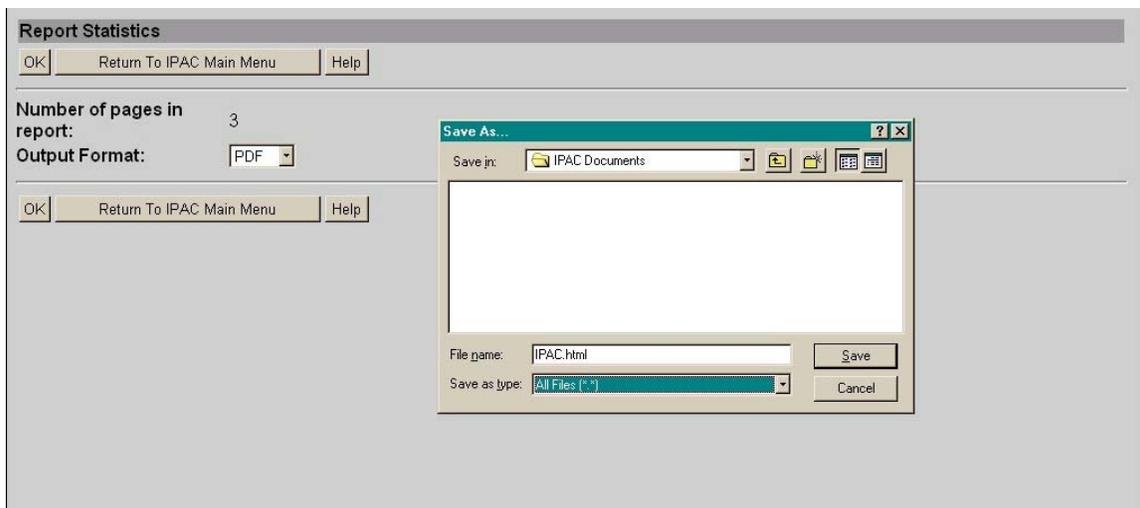


Figure I.14 Windows “Save As...” Dialogue Box

Accessing the System

RITS is an Internet application that can be accessed using a secured web site address. The on-line version of the manual does not list the secured web site address. For more information contact the GOALS Customer Support Staff on (202) 874-8270.

Security Login

When you first open the IPAC system in your browser, you will be presented with a Logon Screen similar to the one in Figure I.15. The actual appearance of this window may vary with the browser you are using to access the RITS System, but the data entry boxes will remain the same. You must enter your User Name (Logon ID) and Password to be allowed through the security layer and into the IPAC system web site.

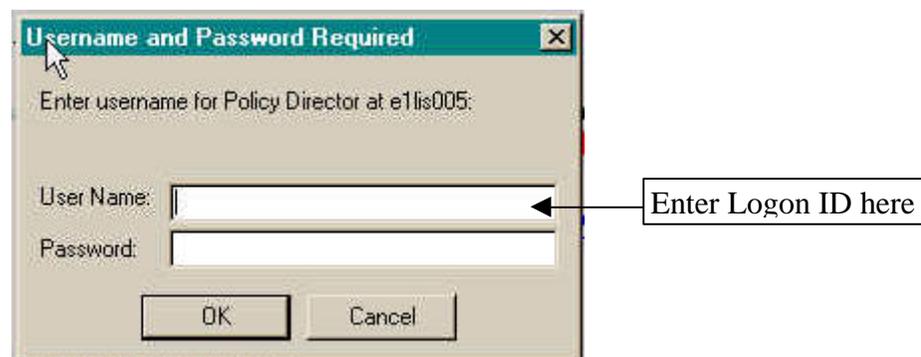


Figure I.15 Security Login Screen

When you are authorized as a user of RITS, you will be assigned a Logon ID and a one-time-use password. Your Logon ID will tell RITS about your authorization to access various functions within the program. It will also tell RITS the Payroll Office(s) for which you are authorized to do business. The first time you log onto the RITS System you will be required to change your password. RITS is a secure system and has specific requirement for passwords.

Passwords

Passwords must contain:

1. A minimum of 8 characters
2. At least 2 alphabetic characters
3. At least 3 non-alphabetic (numeric and special) characters
4. At least 5 unique (different) characters

An example of a valid RITS password is **test123\$**

- Passwords are aged and expire automatically every 30 days.
- The user will receive warnings that the password is about to expire for the last 5 days of the password life.
- Passwords will be disabled after 3 unsuccessful attempts.
- The system will not let users reuse any of their last 5 passwords
- The same password cannot be reused within 120 days.

To restore your password, contact your IPAC Agency Administrator.

“Must See” System Messages

RITS and its component programs contain facilities for presenting messages to the entire system or to specified Payroll Offices. The “Must See” messages can be transmitted system wide to all users of the IPAC system program, and may contain IPAC system general instructions, training announcements, new reporting requirements or other administrative information. When you first go to the IPAC system web site, if there is a current “Must See” message, you will be presented with a message screen similar to the one in Figure I.16 though the actual appearance of the message window will depend on the browser you use. Once you have read and noted the message, you may close that window.

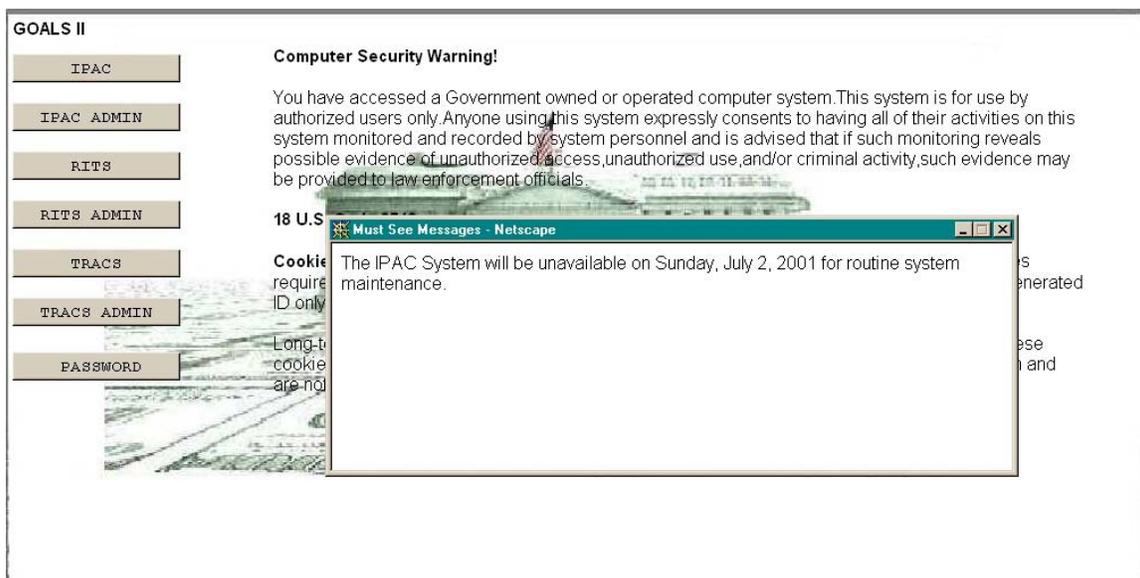


Figure I.16 IPAC System Messages

There is another messaging system for “Broadcast Messages”. These messages can be distributed to groups or to an individual Payroll Office. They are viewed through a button on the **RITS Main Menu** and will be discussed later in this manual.

IPAC System Main Menu

Once you have completed the **Logon Screen** and closed any system messages that display, you will see the **IPAC System Main Menu** screen shown in Figure I.17.



Figure I.17 IPAC System Main Menu Screen

Security Warning

This screen contains a Federal Government **Security Warning**. The RITS application is restricted to authorized users. Use of the system constitutes the granting of permission for the user’s actions to be monitored and recorded. Any evidence of criminal activity uncovered through such monitoring may be provided to law enforcement officials.

Cookie Policy

The screen also displays the IPAC System cookie policy. To access the IPAC programs, **cookies MUST be enabled**. *Appendix D* contains information regarding cookies and proper browser settings to accept cookies for both Netscape® Communicator 4.75 and Microsoft® Internet Explorer 5.

RITS Main Menu

To enter the RITS module of the IPAC system, click on the “RITS” button in the top left area of the screen. This will bring up the screen shown in Figure I.18, the **RITS Main Menu**.

Figure I.18 RITS Main Menu Screen

The **RITS Main Menu** is your primary interface with the RITS program. The only data entry field on this screen is the Payroll Office.

Payroll Office

- If you are only authorized to act on behalf of one Payroll Office, that Payroll Office will appear in the Payroll Office data entry box as shown above.
- If you are authorized to act for **multiple Payroll Offices**, those Payroll Office numbers will appear in a drop-down menu box for the Payroll Office field.
- If you are authorized to act for **more than 25 Payroll Offices**, the Payroll Office field will appear as a blank data entry box.

Function Buttons

Sections 1 through 7 of this manual discuss the functions accessed through the buttons on the **RITS Main Menu Screen** as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. 2812 | 5. Reports |
| 2. Payroll Office/Pay Cycle | 6. Admin Processing Status |
| 3. Report Retention Management | 7. Retrieve Report/Data File |
| 4. Display Messages | |