



28 Sept 2015

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Rear Admiral David A. Seore, NOAA  
 Director, NOAA Corps

**FROM:** Captain Lawrence T. Krepp, NOAA  
 Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 2016 Officer Corps Management Plan

**PURPOSE**

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) presents the current state of the NOAA Corps workforce and provides recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 promotion zones. The OCMP analysis focuses on 18 months of accession and attrition data, Years of Service (YOS) by grade, and the needs of the Service. The OCMP serves as an execution plan based on properly managing the Corps' promotion process to ensure officers have the appropriate opportunity to gain the necessary experience to be eligible for the next grade.

**OVERVIEW**

Annually, CPC develops the OCMP by analyzing workforce strength, attrition trends and forecasts, promotion decisions from the prior year, and accession needs for the commissioned officer workforce. The decisions made with this memorandum enable the NOAA Corps to meet workforce needs within its legal, historical and logistical constraints.

There are three steps to the officer promotion process: eligibility, selection, and promotion. Each step is controlled by laws, regulations, and administrative procedures.

- 1) Eligibility for promotion to each grade is based on the parameters described in NOAA Corps Directive (NCD) Chapter 4, Part 3. The *critical* elements considered in determining promotion eligibility are: 1) experience and training, 2) years of service (YOS), 3) time in grade (TIG) (Table 1), and 4) completion of periodic medical examinations.
- 2) The selection process is dependent on the authorized strength, the timing to move packages from selection to promotion, and the needs of the Service. These elements are all taken into consideration when determining the zone size and opportunity of selection percentage.
- 3) Once officers have been selected for promotion, the clearance process to legally promote selectees can take from two to twelve months. The variance in timing is dependent on: the NOAA's, DOC's and White House's processes and calendars; the selection grade; or other circumstances that arise.

Captain (O-6)	Four years in the permanent grade of commander
Commander (O-5)	Four years in the permanent grade of lieutenant commander
Lieutenant Commander (O-4)	Three years in the permanent grade of lieutenant
Lieutenant (O-3)	Two years in the permanent grade of lieutenant (junior grade)
Lieutenant (junior grade) (O-2)	One year in the permanent grade of ensign

Table 1 Time in Grade (TIG) Requirements for Promotion



**DEFINITIONS**

**Strength.** The FY 2008 Omnibus Bill increased NOAA Corps’ authorized strength to 321 non-flag officers. In FY 2013, the NOAA Corps received authorization for an additional position of importance and responsibility increasing NOAA Corps Flag officer billets to four (one VADM, one RADM, and two RDMLs). The total number of officers authorized by law to be on the lineal list during a fiscal year may be temporarily exceeded so long as the average number on the list during that fiscal year does not exceed the authorized number. For planning purposes this average is referred to as the Annual Average Strength (AAS) and its calculation does not include Flag officers.

**Accession.** Accession is the increase in strength, which mainly occurs by bringing new officers into the Service via BOTC, or through Inter-Service Transfer (IST). The FY 2016 accession plan for new officer candidates is targeted for a minimum 22 officer candidates, yielding an estimated AAS of 321 officers (plus four Flag Officers).

**Attrition.** Attrition is any retirement, or separation of a member from service. Attrition rate is calculated annually based on the number of officers that detach from the NOAA Corps and the average annual strength. Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grades and may affect the overall number of NOAA Corps promotions allowable per year. Table 2 shows the attrition rates for the previous three years. Provided that the attrition trend holds for FY16 the AAS should not exceed 321 officers (plus four Flag Officers).

<b>Attrition Shown by Grade</b>				
	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>Average</b>
O-6	5	8	3	5
O-5	6	2	3	4
O-4	1	1	8	3
O-3	6	4	6	5
O-2	6	6	6	6
O-1	4	4	5	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Overall Percent Attrition</b>	<b>8.76%</b>	<b>7.85%</b>	<b>9.66%</b>	<b>8.41%</b>
<b>Average Annual Strength</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>320</b>

\*Does not include officers recalled from retirement.

**Table 2 Attrition Rates Overall Strength and By Grade**

**Control Grade Distribution by Law.** 33 U.S.C. 3004 specifies the strength and distribution of NOAA Corps officers. Of the total number authorized non-flag officers on the lineal list, the proportion (in percentage) of each grade are shown in Table 3. The authorized number of officers in each non-flag grade is controlled by the overall non-flag strength of the NOAA Corps.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Established Percentage</b>	<b>Authorized Number of Officers</b>
O-6	8%	26
O-5	14%	45
O-4	19%	61
O-3	23%	74
O-2	18%	58
O-1	18%	57*
<b>Total Authorized</b>		<b>321</b>

**Table 3 Control Grade Distribution by Law**

\*Note: The number of officers in each grade is rounded to the nearest whole number. The number of ensigns is decreased by one to account for this in order to keep the total at the proper end strength count.

Vacancies. The forecasted grade vacancies are based on the average attrition rate per grade over the three prior years, the approved detachment dates of known attrition, and the promotions of officers to the next grade. The estimated annual attrition rate per grade is calculated using a three prior year average of percent attrition of total attrition by grade (Table 4).

Percentage of Overall Attrition by Grade				
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Average
O-6	17.9%	32.0%	9.7%	19.87%
O-5	21.4%	8.0%	12.9%	14.10%
O-4	3.6%	4.0%	22.6%	10.07%
O-3	21.4%	16.0%	19.4%	18.93%
O-2	21.4%	24.0%	16.1%	20.50%
O-1	14.3%	16.0%	19.4%	16.57%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 Annual Percentage of Overall Attrition for Each Grade

Opportunity of Selection (OOS) and Promotion Zone Size. NOAA Corps has the ability to adjust the OOS based on Service needs, by plus or minus 10 percent of what is listed in NCD 04204. The opportunity of selection (promotion percentage) model is shown in Table 5.

To Grade	Percent Opportunity (+ or - 10%)
O-6	50% (40-60%)
O-5	70% (60-80%)
O-4	80% (70-90%)
O-3	Determined annually (typically 90%)
O-2	100% of qualified

Table 5 Opportunity of Selection Percentages by Grade

Per NCD, the number of officers in a promotion zone (the zone size) shall not be less than the number of selections planned, divided by the applicable opportunity of selection shown in the table above. For example, if four O-6 vacancies are to be filled, and 50% is the OOS, the zone size will be  $4/.5=8$ .

## DISCUSSION

For FY 2016 there are two major considerations to take into account while planning for the promotion zones and appointment selections: the annual average strength, and the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act's (DOPMA) desired promotion timing for officers.

In the previous years the need for more officers has been demonstrated throughout NOAA. However, FY 2015 was the first year since 1996 that the Corps could have potentially exceeded its authority for average annual strength. Based on the trends of the previous four years there was a slow decline in the overall attrition rate (Figure 1). This risk forced mitigating actions including an increase in recommendations of officers, not selected for senior operational assignments, to be reviewed for continuation, reducing accessions via BOTC and delaying an IST. These activities yielded significant increases in attrition, as evident in the spike in O-4 attrition count (Table 2).

Currently, the anticipated attrition and the proposed accession plan for FY 2016 yield an estimated AAS of 321, plus four Flag officers. For FY 2016, based on the current number of officers voluntarily separating or retiring, there is potential for normal attrition rate to be sufficient to prevent the Corps' from exceeding its authorized AAS. Going into FY 2016, it would be prudent to remain vigilant in monitoring the AAS to ensure the Corps does not exceed its authority, while ensuring accessions do not stall and impact the supply of new officers to meet operational needs. As stated above, a minimum of 22 officers

accessed would allow the corps to retain an AAS of 321. Currently, this minimum is planned to include 10 officers for BOTC 127 and 12 officers for BOTC 128. The Aviation Operations Center has also identified the need in their 2016 AOC staffing plan to access highly qualified aviators via inter-service transfer (2 navigators) from other services. This may be accomplished, provided that their transfer dates are planned in accordance with the continuous monitoring and management of the AAS to ensure the Corps does not exceed its authority.

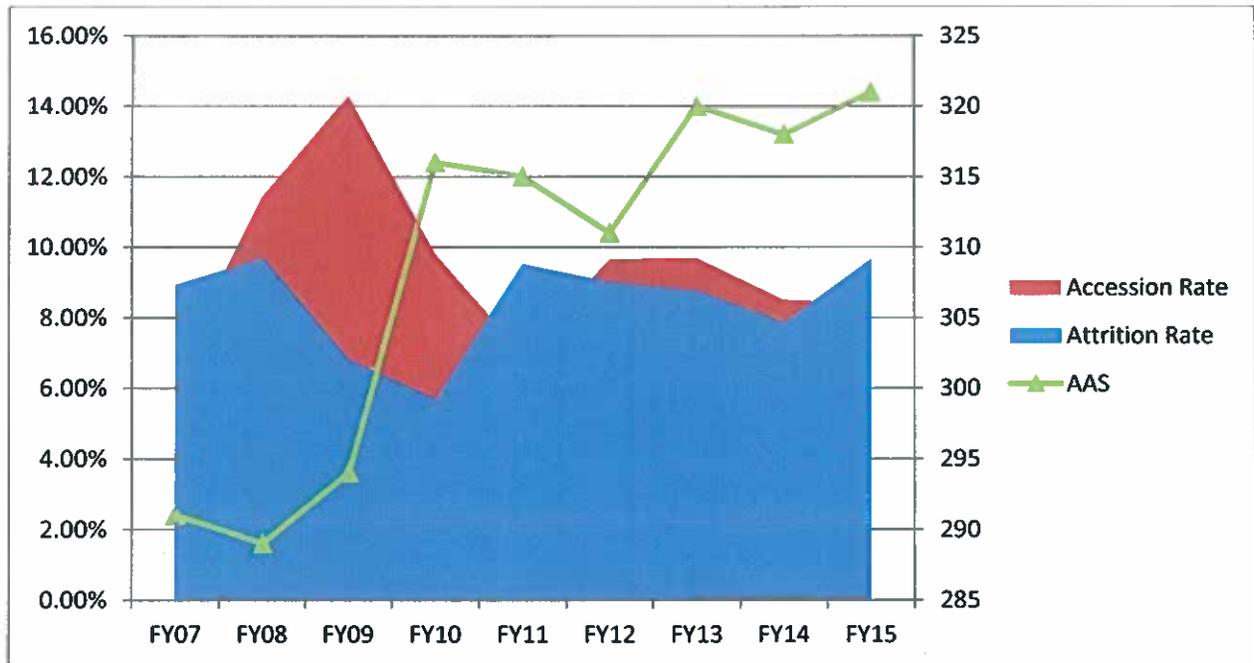


Figure 1 Attrition and Accession Data for FY 2007 through FY 2015 and Average Annual Strength (AAS)

The second consideration is the DOPMA desired promotion timing for officers by grade. The DOPMA recommendations are based on YOS for those who compete for promotion to the next higher grade. Table 6 shows the recommended YOS from DOPMA compared with the NOAA Corps’ average YOS within the proposed zones. In previous years, the accelerated rate for promotions was evident in the O-6 which is significantly below the DOPMA recommendation. The difference in NOAA Corps timing from the DoD timing was the result of the hiring freeze of the mid-1990’s, the accelerated growth of the Corps since 2008 to meet the new authorized strength level, and NOAA Corps’ mandatory Control Grades above O-2.

To Grade	DoD Promotion Opportunity	DoD Timing	NOAA Corps Timing
		Zone YOS	FY 2016 Recommended Zone YOS
O-6	50%	22 ± 1	20.06
O-5	70%	16 ± 1	16.19
O-4	80%	10 ± 1	11.07
O-3	90%	3.5/4	6.05
O-2	100 % of Fully Qualified	2	1.91

Table 6 Department of Defense (DoD) DOPMA Up-or-Out Promotion System for “Due Course” Officer Compared to NOAA Corps Recommended Zone Averages Based on Recommended Board Dates.

The successful implementation of previous OCMP recommendations has allowed the recommended zones for FY 2016 to meet the recommended DOPMA timing when it comes to total YOS, with exception of the O-6 zone. The average TIG for the recommended O-6 zone exceeds the minimum requirement.

While the AAS remains at the maximum authorized ceiling, the expected impact will be a general slowing of the promotion rate with TIG averages beginning to increase, until the Secretary receives the authority to increase the NOAA Corps' AAS. The exception being O-1s, whom by law must be promoted by the completion of 3 YOS or be separated. For FY 2016, CPC recommends holding the selection boards in April of 2016 with the exception of the O-6 zone which we recommend holding in May 2016.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To Be Grade	Board Date (on or about)	Average YOS for Zone	Average TIG for Zone (years)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	May 2016	20.06	4.78	8	60%	5
O-5	April 2016	15.31	5.22	23	70%	16
O-4	April 2016	10.94	4.20	24	80%	19
O-3	April 2016	6.05	2.65	24	90%	22
O-2	April 2016	1.91	1.91	26	100% Fully Qualified (FQ)	26

Table 6 Proposed Promotions Zones for FY 2016

These recommended zones meet the following criteria:

- Needs of the Service
- Average YOS and Time in Grade support the needs of the next grade
- Projected vacancies in the grades for FY 2015 and into FY 2016.
- At time of promotion, the average timing is within the framework for desired YOS compared to the DoD (Table 6)

**DECISION**

**A. Number to Select/Zone Size.** CPC recommends you approve the following zones and number of officers to be selected for promotion to the next higher grade. For each grade, the promotion selection Officer Personnel Board would be authorized to select “up to” the number of officers listed.

To Be Grade	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	To Select (up to)
O-6	8	60%	5
O-5	23	70%	16
O-4	24	80%	19
O-3	24	90%	22
O-2	26	100% (FQ)	26

Table 7 Opportunity of Selection (OOS) Recommendation Summary by Grade for FY 2016



  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Board Schedule.** Recommend approval of the following board schedule for announcing to the NOAA Corps.

Board Schedule	Board Date (on or about)
O-6 Selection	01 May 2016
O-5 Selection	01 April 2016
O-4 Selection	01 April 2016
O-3 Selection	01 April 2016
O-2 Selection	01 April 2016

Table 8 Board Schedule for FY 2016


  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Delegation of Zone Sizes.** Any unanticipated change in attrition (increase or decrease) between now and the Board dates will change the required number of selections. Therefore, we recommend delegating to CPC the final selection number and zone size determination that coincide with your OOS decisions.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
 
  
 Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Cancellation of Annual Review for all Grades.** Recommend that CPC not convene a Review Board in FY 2016.


  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_