



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
 OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS  
 COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL CENTER  
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282

FEB 11 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral Michael J. Silah, NOAA  
 Director, NOAA Corps

FROM: Captain Devin R. Brakob, NOAA  
 Director, Commissioned Personnel Center



CAPT, NOAA

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019 Officer Corps Management Plan

**PURPOSE:**

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) is an annual plan for the management of the NOAA Corps Workforce. The OCMP provides recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) promotion zones based on a projection of planned officer accessions and attritions, an analysis and projection of historical officer accession and attrition data, and Service needs. The OCMP serves as an execution plan to initiate the NOAA Corps promotion process.

**OVERVIEW:**

The Commissioned Personnel Center (CPC) develops the annual OCMP by analyzing on-board workforce strength, attrition trends and forecasts, and accessions required to maintain the commissioned officer workforce. The decisions made with this memorandum enable the NOAA Corps to meet workforce management needs within legal requirements.

There are three steps to the officer promotion process: eligibility, selection, and promotion. Each step is controlled by laws, regulations, and administrative procedures. The promotion process for the NOAA Corps is described in NOAA Corps Directive (NCD) Chapter 4, Part 2.

- 1) Eligibility - Eligibility for promotion to each grade is provided in NCD Chapter 4, Part 3. The *critical* elements considered in determining promotion eligibility are: 1) completion of required training; 2) years of service (YOS); 3) time-in-grade (TIG, Table 1 below); and 4) medical qualification.

Table 1 - Required Time-in-Grade for Promotion	
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



- 2) Selection - A range, or zone, of officers on the lineal list eligible for selection are evaluated and recommended (or not recommended) for promotion by an Officer Personnel Board (OPB). Officers are considered to be "in zone" if they meet eligibility requirements, have not twice failed to be selected for promotion, and do not have an approved voluntary retirement or resignation. The zone size is dependent on the number of vacancies in each rank, the opportunity of selection, the time required to promote selected officers to fill known and estimated vacancies, and the needs of the Service.
  
- 3) Promotion - Following selection for promotion, officers may have their promotion effected anywhere from 2 to 18 months after notification of selection. The variation in timing is dependent on differences between planned and actual vacancies, promotion approval processes, executive calendars, and the needs of the Service.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Authorized Strength:** 33 U.S.C. § 3005 established NOAA Corps' authorized strength at 321 commissioned officers. Flag officers are not included in determining the authorized strength.

**Accession:** Accession is the increase in strength through bringing new officers into the Service via Basic Officer Training Class (BOTC), Inter-Service Transfer (IST), or original appointment.

**Attrition:** Attrition is any retirement, death, resignation, or separation of a member from the Service. Attrition rates are calculated annually using the number of officers that detach from the NOAA Corps and the average annual strength (AAS). Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grades and affects the actual number of NOAA Corps promotions effected in a given year. Table 2 shows historical attrition rates by grade for the four previous years.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	Average	*% Average
O-6	3	10	3	3	5	17.2%
O-5	3	1	2	4	3	10.3%
O-4	8	1	1	4	4	13.8%
O-3	7	7	13	9	9	31.0%
O-2	6	5	3	3	4	13.8%
O-1	4	4	5	5	5	17.24%
<b>TOTAL</b>	31	28	27	28	29	100.0%
<b>Overall % Attrition</b>	9.7%	8.9%	8.5%	8.8%	9.0%	*% Average based on four years; FY15-18
<b>Avg. Annual Strength</b>	321	313	317	319	318	

Note: Does not include officers recalled from retirement. Averages in each grade are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Average Annual Strength (AAS):** The average number of officers on active duty in the NOAA Corps over a given fiscal year. The OCMP is planned using the authorized strength. Vacancies in each rank are determined and promotions are effected using average annual strength.

**Cohort:** A grouping of officers in sequential order on the lineal list that share identical or similar time-in-grade and/or total years of service.

**Control Grade Distribution by Law:** 33 U.S.C. § 3004 specifies the distribution of NOAA Corps officers by grade. Of the total number of officers on the lineal list, the proportion (in percentage) and total number of officers authorized in each permanent grade for an authorized strength of 321 is shown in Table 3. The actual number of officers in each grade is controlled by the average annual strength of the NOAA Corps.

Table 3 - Grade Distribution of Officers (33U.S.C. § 3004 )		
Grade	Percentage By Law	Authorized Number of Officers
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>100%</b>	<b>321</b>
* 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 rounding error and to keep the total authorized strength at 321.		

**Vacancies:** The planned vacancies are based on the attrition rate per grade over four previous years, approved detachment dates of known attritions, and planned promotion of officers to the next grade.

**Opportunity of Selection (OOS):** To meet Service need, the Director, NOAA Corps has the authority to adjust the OOS annually.

Table 4 - Opportunity of Selection	
To Grade	Percent Opportunity
O-6	Determined annually
O-5	Determined annually
O-4	Determined annually
O-3	Determined annually
O-2	100% of qualified ensigns

**Promotion Zone Size:** 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 approved table. In cases where the results contain a fraction, the zone size will be rounded to the next higher number. For example, if six O-6 vacancies are to be filled, and 50% is the opportunity of selection, the zone size will be  $6/.5 = 12$ .

## **DISCUSSION:**

There are several workforce challenges that influence the FY19 OCMP. First, the projected number of O-6 vacancies is far greater than the number of eligible candidates which will require a time-in-grade waiver for an entire cohort group as well as an over one year time-in-grade waiver for part of another cohort. The cohort groups for promotion to O-6 (with exception of the 2016 cohort) are shallow with relatively low time-in-grade. The inability to fill the senior ranks with time-in-grade qualified candidates would create a down-stream promotion impact on more junior ranks.

The low FY 2016 AAS of 313 recovered to 319 in FY 2018. Going into FY 2019, it will be necessary to remain vigilant in monitoring the AAS to ensure the NOAA Corps does not exceed its authority, while ensuring accessions do not stall and impact the supply of new officers to meet operational needs. A plan of 31 officers accessed, based on historical attrition, would allow the NOAA Corps to reach an AAS of 321. Currently, this plan includes 16 officers for BOTC 134 and 13 officers for BOTC 135. The Aircraft Operations Center leadership has also identified the need in their FY 2019 staffing plan to access two highly qualified aviators 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 NOAA Corps does not exceed its authority.

Given these factors along with the need to balance career development against rank progression, and with the goal of maintaining an average authorized strength of 321 officers, this OCMP recommends a more active approach to management at all ranks, which necessitates the breakup of cohorts in all promotion zones except lieutenant and lieutenant (junior grade). Cohort integrity would result in much lower OOS for all grades and result in a large number of officers not selected for promotion. These actions support a working strength of 321 officers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The OOS and zone sizes have been established to ensure the NOAA Corps is managed as efficiently as possible, to maintain its 321 officer authorized strength, and meet legal grade distribution. Involuntary separation of under-performing officers will become more common at lower years of service than in previous years. This plan will allow the NOAA Corps to retain high-performing individuals, through consistent execution of policies and legal authorities, and effecting separations earlier in cases of non-selection for promotion when warranted. These recommended zones meet the needs of the Service and projected vacancies in the grades for FY 2019 and into FY 2020.

Based on this analysis, the following actions are respectfully submitted for your approval:

A. Zone Size and OOS. CPC recommends you approve the following zones and OOS for promotion to the next higher grade and authorize the OPB to not exceed the number of officers recommended for selection. In cases where the results contain a fraction, the zone size is rounded to the next higher number.

To Be Grade	Board Date (on or about)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select	TIG by Board Date
O-6	8 May 2019	16	50%	8	3.44
O-5	8 May 2019	15	70%	10	4.59
O-4	8 May 2019	20	80%	16	3.69
O-3	8 May 2019	34	83%	28	2.17
O-2	8 May 2019	16	100% (if qualified)	16	2.09

Michael G. Schick 2019-02-12  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date

B. BOTC 134 and BOTC 135. CPC recommends you approve the selection of up to 16 candidates for BOTC 134 and 13 candidates for BOTC 135 to be assessed FY 20 (January).

Michael G. Schick 2019-02-12  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date

C. Time-in-Grade Waivers. In accordance with NCD 04203B, when the needs of the NOAA Corps require, the Director may adjust length of time-in-grade requirements, to the extent that time-in-grade requirements are not otherwise fixed by statute. CPC recommends that you approve 52 waivers for time-in-grade to expand the zone of eligible candidates for promotion within the zones of captain, commander, lieutenant commander, and lieutenant. Captain is to increase from 2 eligible to 16 in zone, commander is to increase from 5 eligible to 15 in zone, lieutenant commander is to increase from 13 eligible to 20 in zone, and lieutenant is to increase from 13 eligible to 34 in zone.

Michael G. Schick 2019-02-12  
 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Do Not Concur \_\_\_\_\_ Date

D. Board Schedule. CPC recommends approval of the following board schedule to hold the FY19 promotion boards and for announcement to the officers in zone. Dates are approximate and may be adjusted.

Board Schedule	Board Date (on or about)
O-6 Selection	8 May 2019
O-5 Selection	8 May 2019
O-4 Selection	8 May 2019
O-3 Selection	8 May 2019
O-2 Selection	8 May 2019

*Michael G. Stahl* 2019-02-12  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

E. Annual Review. CPC recommends performing an Annual Review of the lineal list in accordance with 33 U.S.C. § 3022.

*Michael G. Stahl* 2019-02-12  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

F. Inter-Service Transfers. CPC recommends approval to select up to two inter-service transfers to support aviation requirements.

*Michael G. Stahl* 2019-02-12  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date