




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

April 7, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral Nancy Hann, NOAA  
Director, NOAA Corps

FROM: Captain Douglas E. MacIntyre, NOAA  
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center 

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2022 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 2022 (FY2022) 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.

| <b>Table 1 - Required Time-in-Grade for Permanent Selection</b> |   |
|---|---|
| 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)                                 | Three years 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. NOAA Corps officers on the lineal list holding the permanent grade of ensign may be temporarily promoted to the grade of lieutenant (junior grade) provided that a vacancy exists in the higher grade.
- 3) Promotion - Following selection for promotion, officers may have their promotion effected anywhere from two to six 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:** Public Law No: 116-259 – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act of 2020 authorizes the number of commissioned officers not to exceed 500. Flag officers, and officers recalled from retired status, 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.

| Table 2 - Historical Attrition and Percentage Rates by Grade  |         |         |         |         |         |   |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
|   | FY 2018 | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | Average | *% Average                              |
| O-6   | 3       | 3       | 6       | 1       | 3       | 13.0%                                   |
| O-5   | 4       | 2       | 8       | 3       | 4       | 17.0%                                   |
| O-4   | 4       | 5       | 2       | 2       | 3       | 13.0%                                   |
| O-3   | 8       | 13      | 7       | 5       | 8       | 33.0%                                   |
| O-2   | 3       | 2       | 0       | 7       | 3       | 12.0%                                   |
| O-1   | 5       | 4       | 1       | 2       | 3       | 12.0%                                   |
| TOTAL   | 27      | 29      | 24      | 20      | 25      | 100.0%                                  |
| Overall % Attrition   | 8.5%    | 9.1%    | 7.5%    | 6.1%    | 7.8%    | *% Average based on four years; FY18-21 |
| Avg. Annual Strength  | 319     | 317     | 319     | 327     | 320.5   |   |
| 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 average annual strength. The number in each grade shall be computed by applying an applicable percentage to the total number of officers serving on active duty on the date the computation is made.

**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:** Pursuant to Public Law No: 116-259 – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act of 2020, the Secretary shall prescribe, with respect to the distribution on the lineal list in grade and not less frequently than once each year a computation to determine the number of officers on the lineal list authorized to be serving in each grade and set the grade distribution. Table 3 is the approved grade distribution percentages for FY2022.

| <b>Table 3 – Recommended Grade Distribution of Officers</b> |                           |                    |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Grade   | Percentage Recommendation | Number of Officers |
| O-6   | 8%                        | 26                 |

|   |             |            |
|---|-------------|------------|
| O-5   | 14%         | 46         |
| O-4   | 20%         | 66         |
| O-3   | 22%         | 73         |
| O-2   | 20%         | 65         |
| O-1*  | 17%         | 55         |
| <b>Total Authorized</b>   | <b>100%</b> | <b>331</b> |
| * The number of officers in each grade rounds to the nearest whole number. If a final fraction occurs in computing the authorized number of officers in a grade, the nearest whole number shall be taken. If the fraction is one-half, the next higher whole number shall be taken. |             |            |

**Vacancies:** The planned vacancies are based on the attrition rate per grade over the 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 needs, the Director, NOAA Corps has the authority to adjust the OOS annually.

| <b>Table 4 - Opportunity of Selection</b> |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>To Grade</b>                           | <b>Percent Opportunity</b> |
| 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 FY2022. First, the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect and reduce the attrition rate from historical averages. The result of reduced attrition is fewer promotions across all grades. As long as attrition remains low, officers will continue to wait longer for promotions, and fewer officers will be promoted each cycle. The course change relative to attrition is unknown once the pandemic subsides.

Additionally, funding our growing workforce continues to be a balance. While the NOAA Corps was authorized to increase based on the needs of the Nation, we are still working to ensure the necessary appropriations to grow are secured. The Commissioned Personnel Center is seeking

appropriations to grow at the recommended rate of 11 to 12 officers per year to meet staffing needs of future aircraft and vessel acquisitions while allowing officers to reach an ideal rotation tempo aboard NOAA ships and aircraft. An uptick in mission demands is expected to continue requiring experienced aviators and mariners to pass on their knowledge as new NOAA Corps officers join NOAA.

Adjustments to the grade distribution percentages are designed to allow more junior officers to advance into higher grade positions to meet this challenge. The reduction in attrition levels in 2020 and 2021, combined with the NOAA Corps Reauthorization act, have provided us an opportunity for growth. This leaves the NOAA Corps in a good position to meet workforce demands, but the influx does require strategic planning and the need to be cautious as the fiscal demands tied to growth follow status quo assignment practices. To this end, CPC has begun to plan assignment rotations to include, where possible, additional planned overlap in assignments to better support opportunities for leave enroute, adequate passdown between officers, and in-transit training that may be required. CPC is continually analyzing the operational needs of OMAO and of the Line Offices we support, and balancing the need to develop well-rounded and operationally-capable officers with recommendations for various potential new tools and initiatives that may improve our ability to retain officers in key areas. Some options we are analyzing are rotational assignments and career intermission programs..

Recognizing that forward thinking is critical to sustained growth, we are moving forward with bold decisions, and recognize that we have defensible requirements to continue to strive forward in meeting our annual implementation plan of personnel growth of 11 to 12 officers per year. This year's OCMP continues to demonstrate these efforts to meet mission, as well as future demands the nation expects of us.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The OOS and zone sizes are established to ensure the NOAA Corps is managed as efficiently as possible to maintain an officer authorized and funded end strength and meet grade distribution as approved by delegated authority by the Director, NOAA Corps and OMAO. These recommended zones meet the needs of the service with projected growth in the grades for FY2022 and into FY2023.

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         | N/A                      | 0         | 0%                  | 0      | N/A               |
| O-5         | April 20, 2022           | 4         | 75%                 | 3      | 4.72              |
| O-4         | April 20, 2022           | 13        | 91%                 | 11     | 4.59              |
| O-3         | April 20, 2022           | 14        | 93%                 | 13     | 2.48              |
| O-2         | April 20, 2022           | 21        | 100% (if qualified) | 21     | 2.11              |

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 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

- B. BOTC 140, 141, and 142. CPC recommends you approve the selection of up to 10 primary candidates and up to 25 alternate candidates for BOTC 140, BOTC 141, and 142.

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- 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 1 waiver for time-in-grade to expand the zone of eligible candidates for promotion within the zone of lieutenant. Lieutenant is to increase from 13 eligible to 14 in zone. Lieutenant (junior grade) selections are administratively controlled so that ensigns will meet the three years' time in grade requirements for permanent promotion to lieutenant (junior grade).

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- D. Board Schedule. CPC recommends approval of the following board schedule to hold the FY2022 promotion boards and for announcement to the officers in zone.

| Board Schedule | Board Date (on or about) |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| O-6 Selection  | April 20, 2022           |
| O-5 Selection  | April 20, 2022           |
| O-4 Selection  | April 20, 2022           |
| O-3 Selection  | April 20, 2022           |
| O-2 Selection  | April 20, 2022           |

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

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- F. Annual Review of Captains. CPC recommends performing a Captain Continuation process to convene a board to recommend continuation for active duty captains who will complete at least six years' service in the grade during the promotion year in which the board meets and who has not been approved for promotion to rear admiral (lower half). A Captain Continuation board is necessary to help maintain healthy flow points in the various officer grades. Recommend captains on the lineal list with a date of rank on or before 30-Sep-16 be up for Captain Continuation board review.

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- G. Inter-Service Transfers. CPC recommends approval to select up to four inter-service transfers with transfer dates in FY2022, and up to four inter-service transfer dates in FY2023.

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- H. Blended Retirement System Continuation Pay. CPC recommends approval of a 2.5x multiplier for Continuation Pay payout at 12 years for a commitment of 4 years.

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