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CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ACADEMY EMPTY SEATS

The Chief Petty Officer Academy (CPOA) is one of the Coast Guard's most important leadership training programs. We have worked hard to provide 640 training quotas a year. Yet, we have more than 1,500 Chiefs who have not attended the Academy. The school normally has a lengthy waiting list (upwards of 30-40 people) for each class. However, in FY04, we lost over 50 quotas because of late cancellations, no-shows, or disenrollments because of disqualifying medical and weight issues. In FY05, we lost over 20 quotas. Every empty seat is a missed opportunity, and I ask prospective students and their chain of command to do everything possible not to lose these precious opportunities.

Addressing the following core issues will significantly reduce the number of CPOA empty seat:

- Students must report to the CPOA meeting the required physical standards (including weight);
- Cancellation of orders to the CPOA must be treated as an important command decision made only for urgent personal or command reasons; and
- In those circumstances when orders must be cancelled, the Training Quota Management Center (TQC) must be notified as early as possible to allow a Chief on the waiting list to have an opportunity to attend.

Commandant Instruction 1500.15 (series), Chief Petty Officer Academy provides information on the policy and procedures for attending the CPOA. We are currently reviewing possible changes to that Instruction to help minimize empty seats. Pending changes, we have moved out with the following:

- Orders are now issued three months prior to class convening instead of 4 to 6 weeks to allow more time for the unit and member to prepare for the extended TAD. This allows the unit to request TAD augmentation if needed and permits the member and family to make necessary arrangements. It will also permit travel arrangements if assigned to a cutter that is deployed.
- We will continue every effort to fill cancelled slots. But, to minimize the churn and inefficiencies associated with late orders due to cancellations, TQC will stop issuing orders to those on the waiting list who are two weeks or less away from the reporting date.
- The CPOA is developing a method for students undergoing the course of instruction at the CPOA to contact incoming students to answer any questions and help them prepare for the program. This should reduce

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anxiety and build excitement for the training.

Pending changes to the Commandant Instruction, I ask units to immediately institute the following:

- Ensure student profiles are submitted 30 days prior to class convening, using the modified physical examination form found in the Medical Manual (Figure 3-A-1, page 3-12). This form is signed by a medical officer. The CPOA will send a message to the unit if the member does not submit their student profile on time. Upon receiving the student profile, the CPOA will flag any issues that may preclude successful completion of the program.
- Include the Gold Badge Command Master Chief (Sector, District, MLC, or Area) on all requests to cancel orders to the CPOA. This will provide greater visibility to the Sector, District, MLC or Area Commanders.
- Cancelled orders to CPOA should be released by O-5 and above unit COs/XOs only, Headquarters Office Chiefs or higher, or Area/MLC/District Division Chiefs or higher. This will ensure command and senior level attention to the urgency of canceling a quota.

I appreciate everyone's cooperation as we all endeavor to get the most value out of the absolutely essential leadership training the CPOA provides to our Chiefs.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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