

*The*  
**Reserve**  
**ENS-LCDR**  
*Assignment Guide*



**August 2014**

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>References</b>             | COMDTINST M1001.28B, Reserve Policy Manual<br>Annual Reserve Officer Assignment Year (AY) Kickoff message<br>RPM-2 webpage: <a href="http://www.uscg.mil/rpm/rpm2/">http://www.uscg.mil/rpm/rpm2/</a>   |
| <b>Purpose</b>                | This document contains the basic principles of the O4 and below assignment process. While primarily of interest to officers anticipating reassignment, our goal is for this information to be of equal value to commands, career counselors, and mentors. We have created this guide to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demystify the process;</li><li>• pass along some of the rules of engagement we follow;</li><li>• provide information that will help everyone involved in the process manage expectations; and</li><li>• help prepare you with some assignment process survival tips.</li></ul> |
| <b>The Key Elements</b>       | The governing principles for Reserve officer assignments is in COMDTINST M1001.28B, Reserve Policy Manual. The Reserve Personnel Management Division Chief (PSC-RPM) is the final approval authority for all O4 and below assignments, based on recommendations by the Reserve Assignments Branch Chief (PSC-RPM-2) and the individual Assignment Officers (AOs).   |
| <b>The AY Kickoff Message</b> | The AY Kickoff message, which is released in late summer and posted to the PSC-RPM-2 webpage, contains key information regarding the assignment process and actions required of members and their commands.   |

### **The Shopping List**

As a starting point, the Shopping List in each AY includes billets in which the incumbent officer is scheduled to transfer, separate, or is selected for promotion the following AY.

The Preliminary Shopping List of all the billets we believe will be open in the current AY is typically made available in late summer via message traffic, CG Portal, PSC-RPM-2 webpage, and/or Direct Access. Commands are highly encouraged to review and verify the accuracy of this Shopping List. Discrepancies should be reported to PSC-RPM via the Shopping List validation (command concerns) process outlined in the AY Kickoff message.

Once we receive command concerns we will release Shopping Lists in Direct Access in early November. Changes to the Shopping List will be posted on the PSC-RPM webpage. Changes may occur as a result of billet reprogramming actions and Service needs. Other changes will likely occur as officers re-evaluate their career and personal goals (e.g., request for Retirement, IRR, etc.).

Shopping List updates give potential candidates a chance to consider new alternatives. Please keep in mind that it is inappropriate to subject the Assignment Officer (AO) or any incumbent in an advertised billet to questions regarding why the billet will be vacant or what is happening with the incumbent.

Use the Shopping List to develop and/or update your e-resume. If you are tour complete or desire a transfer in the current AY, ensure your e-resume is submitted in accordance with the timeline in the AY Kickoff Message.

### **Contacting Commands or Incumbents**

When reviewing the Shopping List, members typically build a list of preferred billets and try to get an understanding for the command and the work involved. Members often contact the command that owns the billet or the current incumbent to get an appreciation for the duties and expectations associated with being assigned to that particular billet and unit.

Note: Often the billet title does not accurately reflect the actual duties associated with the position number. Also, as units execute reprogramming actions, there may be changes associated with a billet that are a departure from the duties of the past. AOs are available to provide counsel and assist in tracking down information concerning the billet.

**The E-Resume** The e-resume is your primary, and in some cases may serve as the only, method of communication with your AO. You should not consider submitting your e-resume as an entering position to begin an extensive, iterative dialog. Providing the most complete and accurate information up front allows us to provide the best possible service. Updates along the way, based on Shopping List changes or other new information, are always welcome. **The bottom line is that your e-resume should accurately reflect your personal preferences and be submitted by the deadline stated in the AY Kickoff Message.**

**E-Resume Craftsmanship** A well-crafted e-resume should allow flexibility and acknowledge an array of possible outcomes. If an e-resume lists only an extension or only billets at a single unit, it will appear that the member has not considered the possibility of being assigned to other positions. A very narrow e-resume (i.e., one or two billets listed) makes our work almost as easy as a blank e-resume, as we presume you'll be equally thrilled with any assignment after the few preferences listed. A broad e-resume tells us your preferences and addresses alternatives that you would like the Service to consider you for given your background and/or experience. A realistic e-resume lists multiple assignment options and possibly more than one geographic location. Past assignment history, qualifications, and other information available in Direct Access is not necessary in the e-resume.

Please use the most current shopping list when developing or updating an e-resume. AOs can aid in crafting e-resumes and offer tips to best communicate assignment desires.

The e-resume allows officers to update their selections as often as they would like. You should update it based on changing circumstances (e.g., new solicitations, AO input). **Take time to develop a well-crafted e-resume the first time and submit it prior to the submission deadline.** The AOs will query Direct Access for billet candidates very soon after the deadline. Direct Access 9.1 does not allow late e-resume submission. If you miss the deadline, you may submit your assignment preferences on form CG-2002, via email to your AO. This, however, subjects you to a process that has already begun, and you risk not receiving the assignment of your choice.

Use the comment section to amplify your assignment request. Let us know of your career desires, special considerations you want us to consider, etc. This is the vehicle to advise us of your desires and express your concerns. Use it!

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

**E-resume Due Date**      **Be sure to submit your e-resume according to the timelines advertised in the AY Kickoff message.** That’s when we begin a broad assessment of program and unit needs before moving forward in developing assignment slates. We try to be as responsive as possible in adjusting to changes as they occur throughout this dynamic process. You should notify your Assignment Officer immediately via email of any changes to your e-resume. **Delayed submission of your assignment preferences may reduce your assignment options, and you can expect to be significantly disadvantaged during the assignment process.**

**Extensions**      Extensions are assignment decisions made by the AO during the normal course of the assignment process. A request for an extension is simply viewed as one assignment preference. Again, you should provide other options in the event the extension cannot be accommodated. A command endorsement is required for all extension requests.

The likelihood of being extended in your current billet depends on several factors. In some cases, Service need may be best met by extending you in a billet. At other times, the Service need is best met by moving you to afford others the opportunity to serve in a desirable or developmental billet. There is no standard rule that can be applied. Each request is different and is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Early Rotation**      All requests for an early rotation **MUST** have a command endorsement addressing backfill requirements. The purpose of a command endorsement is not to give an opinion of the suitability for the requested position(s), but rather to address the effect an early departure would have on continuity or the overall skill/experience level of a unit or staff. Conditional positive endorsements (e.g., “I support early rotation for position X, but not for position Y”) are not appropriate. It is important to keep in mind that if an early rotation is requested, you will be considered for all available assignments during that AY, not just your “dream job”. Command approval of an early rotation does not guarantee reassignment.

On occasion, early rotations may be required when a specific Service need cannot be adequately satisfied using officers that are tour complete. An early rotation request while serving in a Senior Reserve Officer (SRO) or command position will normally be denied.

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

**Reasonable Commuting Distance (RCD):** Each assignment is based on several factors, including Service and unit needs, member desires, reasonable commuting distance (RCD) and other considerations. AOs attempt to assign officers to vacant positions within RCD whenever possible. Though an assignment consideration, RCD is often exceeded due to the geographic constraints of the Reserve assignment system and the need for experiential diversity for future promotion and career enhancing opportunities.

**Special Considerations** Balancing family, civilian employment and Coast Guard duties is well understood by AOs. We make every effort to take these factors into account when made aware of them. Open dialog with AOs allows the best opportunity for all parties to understand the impact of decisions on a Reserve officer's career and allows the AO to best consider the assignment impact on an individual.

**Co-Location** Unlike the active duty assignment process, there is no specific co-location policy governing the Reserve assignment process. However, if you are a Reserve officer married to an active duty member, make the AO aware of the situation. In such cases, AOs will make every attempt to provide suitable options. Where no paid billet is available, we will offer suggestions on how to mitigate any career impacts.

**The Assignment Process** Armed with your well crafted e-resumes, we begin to process all the information we need to develop assignment recommendations.

AOs take career history and experience into consideration. Absent disqualifying matters of record or lack of requisite experience, most officers are found acceptable for an assignment. AOs will not share details of their decision process with members, just as they don't discuss details of a member's e-resume with anyone other than that member.

### **Strategizing and Forming the Lists**

Considerable time goes into laying groundwork. Commands are given the opportunity to submit command concerns early in the AY that will be considered by the AOs. Programs and units are contacted to discuss skills requested for incoming officers. The dialogue normally covers special concerns, priorities regarding billets, and information with which to reconcile questions on billets and the broad population of officers meeting those billet needs.

We develop a list for each billet that includes the name of every officer requesting the billet on his or her e-resume. We may place your name on a list for some billets even though you didn't include them on your e-resume. We do this in cases where we find you meet the needs identified by the command or office exercising cognizance over the billet and an adequate pool of qualified officers was not obtained from those requesting the billet.

In filling some O4 and below billets, we may talk directly to unit Executive Officers, Department Heads, or SROs. For other billets, we work through the incumbent's supervisor under the assumption that the supervisor will coordinate and validate input within their chain of command.

### **Who's in Play?**

The short answer is every officer who is tour complete, has requested early rotation, or is more senior in rank than their current billet. Officers with approved retirement requests are not normally considered for reassignment. There is a general hierarchy. If you're tour complete, you will get orders even if approved for an extension or assigned to the IRR in a non-paid status. If you're not tour complete and you ask for orders, you MAY be reassigned. Fleet-ups or reassignment to another billet in the same geographic area are common examples. If you're a Lieutenant Commander (select), not tour complete, and serving in an O3 billet, you are normally more susceptible to an early transfer than a person already in an O4 billet. Officers promoted to the pay grade O3 or below are less likely to be reassigned before their normal tour rotation. This allows more continuity for training and command return on their training investment.

If you're not tour complete and you don't want to move, we may still propose to move you if Service needs require it. Examples would be where we have a billet need for your background or qualifications that we can't satisfactorily meet with the pool of tour complete officers.

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

### **Long Term Active Duty Orders**

Reserve Officers on Extended Active Duty (EAD) are not typically in play for Selected Reserve (SELRES) assignments until they are coming off of EAD orders and returning to SELRES status.

Reserve personnel involuntarily recalled under Title 10 U.S.C. §12302 (T10), by policy, continue to encumber the SELRES billet they were in at the time of recall. Once they come off T10 orders, they should return to that command and billet unless they have surpassed their rotation date.

Reservists whose rotation date lapsed while they were on T10 orders will require assignment to a new SELRES position, and they should submit an e-resume by the deadline stated in the AY Kickoff message to participate in the assignment process. We also encourage communication with the AOs to discuss assignment options.

Reservists on long term Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) are, by policy, removed from their SELRES billet while on long term ADOS and should submit an e-resume by the deadline stated in the AY Kickoff message to participate in the assignment process if they desire a SELRES assignment following ADOS. Alternatively, not submitting an e-resume by the deadline stated in the AY Kickoff message will likely result in the member being transferred to the IRR upon being released from ADOS orders.

Officers should monitor message traffic and adhere to the guidance in the AY Kickoff message to communicate to AOs when they expect to complete ADOS, EAD, T10, or other types of long-term active duty orders.

### **Hierarchy of Assignments**

Generally, assignments are worked “top down” to ensure the most robust candidate pools of officers are considered for the highest priority billets.

The missions and deployable nature of Deployable Specialized Forces (DSF) units (Maritime Safety and Security Teams, Port Security Units, Strike Teams) require these units to be staffed to the maximum extent possible. AOs make every effort to fill all Personal Allowance List (PAL) billets. (Officers residing within RCD of DSF units should expect one or more assignments to these units during their career.) Following DSF assignments, priority is given to operational commands followed by staff assignments. Careful consideration is given to matching members to billets so that Service needs, professional development and member desires are maximized.

### Career Progression

A promising Reserve officer career path consists of having experience in two areas: Sector operations and the Joint Forces/Interagency community. The challenge for the junior officer is to gather competencies that will allow him or her to successfully function in both communities. Early goal setting, forethought, and good mentoring are extremely important. Junior officers should aggressively seek CG operational expertise and broaden their experience into the Joint/Interagency communities, making use of their CG expertise.

*Developing a Career as a Coast Guard Officer* provides an overview of the unique characteristics of an active duty officer's career including fundamental officer corps roles, leadership development, officer specialties, and expectations at major career milestones. This document is available on the PSC-OPM website:  
[http://www.uscg.mil/opm/opmdocs/Developing\\_a\\_Career\\_as\\_a\\_CG\\_Officer.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/opm/opmdocs/Developing_a_Career_as_a_CG_Officer.pdf)

The *Commandant's Guidance to Officer Selection Boards and Panels* contains expectations for the qualities needed in the officer corps as well as specific guidance for boards considering officers for promotion to all grades. This document is available on the PSC-OPM website at:  
<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/opm/Opm1/Opm1docs/Commandant's%20Guidance%20to%20PY15%20Officer%20Selection%20Boards%20and%20Panels-13JUN14.pdf>.

A long-range career question to consider as an officer progresses through the ranks is how much job diversity should be in his or her background. If an officer has been at the same unit for all junior officer tours, **they should not expect to stay there**. In reality, this neither benefits the command long-term nor does it benefit the member. If geographic stability is a special consideration for a member, then it is the member's responsibility to notify the AO of this special situation. Also understand that this may make a difference between being placed in a paid billet and being transferred to the IRR.

Individual officers seeking assignment counseling should contact their AO (as specified by the AY Kickoff message), and consult their SRO. Finding mentors to help develop a career is a must and should also be a high priority.

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

**Assignment  
Priority  
Considerations** Like the active duty assignment process, the Reserve officer assignment process does not make formal recognition for officers who have completed tours of duty in hard-to-fill assignments or lengthy involuntary recalls. As such, there is no automatic assignment preference afforded these officers. That is not to say these factors won't be taken into consideration - they will. They will simply be included in the mix of other factors such as Service need, officer pay grade, career progression, performance, skill sets, personal desires of the member, and so on.

It should also be noted that there is no formal humanitarian assignments program for Reserve officers. Cases involving severe family hardships would fall under special considerations and will be viewed by the AO as an additional factor in any given assignment decision.

AO assignment proposals are their assessment of the best match of Service needs, unit needs, and the member's personal desires, in that order, and based upon all the information available. AOs try to weave a matrix that best accommodates all the various concerns in filling every vacant billet while trying to achieve the best balance possible in meeting Service needs.

**Over-billeting** On a limited basis, junior officers may be assigned in an over-billet status at a command where another officer already occupies the position to which the member will be assigned. This is a rare occurrence, which is based on a variety of factors including Service need, unit training capacity, and other factors.

### **The Feedback Loop**

As the process takes us into March and April, the interest (and anxiety) level is understandably heightened among officers in play for reassignment. You're certainly welcome to call and check on things, but we appreciate your patience if the answer you get is "we don't know yet" or "it's too early to tell." Certain parts of the slate are worked out before others, but there is usually some collection of billets for which the most likely outcome isn't known until late in the assignment season. We try to strike a balance between getting information to you sooner and providing you with information that is not likely to change.

Typically, in late March and early April for LCDRs and below we start to get a sense of billets for which you may be most competitive. One caution: saying you are "competitive" is not an indication of what may eventually be seen at the conclusion of the assignment process. Being competitive normally means you are among the pool of a few candidates from which we think the billet will be filled. Remember, we are telling the same thing to a few other people. We will not tell you who they are. Just as we do not discuss your e-resume with anyone but you, we will not discuss other officers' preferences with you either.

### **Orders**

Orders are issued in late May or as indicated in the AY Kickoff message. We do not specify detaching or reporting dates. The majority of orders are issued with the following statement: "Firm reporting date to be coordinated between transferring and receiving commands; DIRLAUTH." While Direct Access requires an estimated report date in order to cut orders (typically 01 October is entered as a default), commands are authorized to arrange exact dates among themselves. The reporting date can be adjusted +/- 60 days without AO approval. Reporting dates outside of this 60-day window require AO approval and a change to the orders.

The member's Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) completes the data system requirements in Direct Access and provides the signed/endorsed copy of PCS orders to the member.

### **Security Clearances**

Another issue involving orders is that of security clearances and polygraphs. Some positions require an increased security clearance and/or a polygraph that often has long lead times to complete. These requirements should be reflected in your orders but you should always check with your new command to verify if they are required. It is in your best interest to start the ball rolling at the earliest possible opportunity. The responsibility to start this process rests with the member and the command he or she is departing.

### **Off-Season Assignments**

Although the vast majority of officer assignments are handled in the AY assignment cycle, each year circumstances arise that require off-season transfer decisions not previously contemplated.

When we become aware of an off-season vacancy, the AO will consult the billet owner to see if it needs an immediate fill. Typically only DSF billets fall into this category. We will advertise the billet in an ALCGRSV message, along with any other billets that are opening. We consider the officers who respond to the solicitation along with any others we might have identified who also have the right seniority, skills, and experience. We consider the billet owner's input, current command endorsements, and our ability to minimize a chain reaction of assignments. If there are no volunteers for a DSF billet, AOs may select and direct an officer who resides within RCD to fill the position. Positions that are not filled during the regular assignment cycle may also be advertised and filled through an off-season solicitation and assignment process. These opportunities are normally reserved for officers in the IRR, but all applicants are considered.

Billets that are not filled in the AY assignment cycle or through an off-season solicitation will likely remain vacant and will be shopped in the next regular assignment cycle, unless there are officers assigned to that unit in an over-billet or unbudgeted status. In these cases, eligible officers may be moved into the vacant positions without changing their current rotation date, and the billet will be shopped the next AY where the incumbent, as well as other officers, can compete for it.

## RESERVE JUNIOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

---

### **Retirement in Lieu of Orders (RILO):**

When the AO's initial assignments are approved, AO's will notify officers of their assignments. In some cases members may decide to RILO instead of accepting their orders. It is important to understand the RILO parameters – and the difference between the active duty RILO process and the Reserve RILO process.

- Unlike the active duty RILO, which is strictly a request for retirement, the Reserve RILO encompasses two choices: retirement, or transfer to IRR status.
- Under the Reserve RILO process, retirements or changes in status (i.e. Reserve Component Category) will typically be effective 1 October of the assignment cycle.

Another option is separation from the Service. Members who do not have a military service obligation to fulfill may decide to separate from the Service instead of accepting assignment orders.

Please note that each of these options have varying career impacts. While we fully understand that the Reserve career is typically your secondary or tertiary life consideration, these decisions should not be made in a vacuum. It is in your best interest to call your AO and get a complete understanding of options, outcomes, and down range ramifications. Your SRO will also be able to provide guidance.

### **Direct Access Information**

Be sure that your personal information is correct in Direct Access at all times. This includes security clearance, academic degrees, contact information, etc. If information is missing or incorrect in Direct Access or a member's record, the member should forward the appropriate documentation to his/her SPO to correct the information in Direct Access.

### **Good LUCK!**

We hope this information is useful in understanding the Reserve junior officer assignment process. We recognize how important the outcome of an assignment decision is to each individual and to the Service. We look forward to serving members and hope that our messages, website, and personal contact keep you well informed. If you have additional questions, please feel free to send an email to: ARL-PF-CGPSC-RPM-2-Assignments@uscg.mil.