

The
Commander
Assignment
Guide



Purpose

The O5 assignment process is slightly different from what most of you have experienced at lower pay grades, therefore we have created this guidebook to:

- Explain and demystify the Commander assignment process;
- Pass along some of the rules of engagement we follow; and
- Provide information that will help everyone involved in the process manage expectations
- Help prepare you to counsel/educate your wardrooms on some assignment process survival tips

While we have targeted the information in this guidebook for Commanders and Commanders (Select), we hope that others will find it useful for themselves or in counseling others.

The Key Elements

The O5 assignment process, to a large extent, is basically not much different from what you've experienced in the past in that the key elements are the Shopping List and your e-Resume (formerly known as the ADC and affectionately called a "Dream Sheet"). One main difference is that assignments are actually made by the Commander Assignment Panel. Another is that there is a slightly higher level of engagement between Assignment Officers (AOs) and Program Managers or receiving unit in developing assignment recommendations to balance skill set and experience bench strength across the various senior positions at the unit or program office. Essentially, it's the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center (CG PSC) Officer Assignments Branch (PSC-opm-2) that makes recommendations to the Commander Assignment Panel and the Panel that makes the actual assignments. The Commander Assignment Panel will typically convene in early January and a message announcing the results released immediately upon its conclusion.

The Shopping List

The Shopping List of all O5 billets expected to be available in the upcoming Assignment Year (AY) is initially made available in early summer via message traffic, CG Portal OPM webpage and/or Direct Access.

As a starting point, the list includes all those billets where the incumbent will be tour complete the following summer, billets where we have approved separation requests on file, O5 billets currently filled by an O6, and those O5/O5s (Select) or inzone for O5 sitting in an O4 position one year from being tour complete. Commanders or Commanders (Select) who are one year from being tour complete and currently in a command cadre position will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but should NOT plan to move unless an exigent Service need exists. Commanders who are tour complete and once non-selected for Captain will usually be involuntarily extended in their current billet and, therefore, their billet

will not be shopped. Commands are highly encouraged to review and verify the accuracy of the Shopping List in Direct Access. Discrepancies should be reported to the AO responsible for that billet.

Once we receive everyone's validations, we will release an O5 Shopping List via an ALCGOFF message in late July/early August. Changes to the Shopping List will also be communicated in subsequent ALCGOFF message updates and AY SITREPs. Both the Shopping List and all associated changes are posted on the CG Portal at the following link: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/units/psc/opm-2/SitePages/Home.aspx>. Normally, the greatest number of changes occurs after publication of the Captain Selection Board and the Captain Assignment Panel results. Other changes will likely occur as officers evaluate career and personal goals and make retirement decisions.

Shopping List updates give potential candidates a chance to consider new alternatives and frequently are issued simply to develop assignment contingency plans that may never be implemented. Please keep in mind that it is inappropriate to subject the AO or any incumbent in an advertised billet to questions regarding why the billet will be vacant or what is happening with the incumbent.

Please use the Shopping List to develop and/or update your e-Resume. We highly encourage you to share the shopping list with your family and discuss your goals and objectives before submitting 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 outlined in the AY Kick-off Message released in May.

The e-Resume

The e-Resume is your primary - and in the majority of cases can serve as the only necessary - method of communicating with your AO. You should not consider submitting your e-Resume as an entering position to begin an extensive, iterative dialog or negotiation with us. 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.

e-Resume Craftsmanship

A well-crafted e-Resume should allow flexibility and acknowledge an array of possible outcomes. If your e-Resume only lists five Commanding Officer billets, and nothing more, that sends a message that you really haven't considered the possibility of not being assigned to command. The same applies to e-Resumes that list only an extension or only billets in a single geographic area. If you have an established specialty, but prefer an out-of-specialty assignment, please communicate that. You should, however, also tell us what your preferences are

within your specialty in the event the Panel cannot accommodate your desires. A very narrow e-Resume (*i.e.*, just one billet 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 (*i.e.*, 10-15 or more diverse billets identified) tells us your preferences and addresses alternatives that you would like the Service to consider you for given your specialty background and/or experience.

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 the 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. Always remember that the e-Resume system within Direct Access is passive in nature. If you submit an updated e-Resume after the deadline, ensure you notify the servicing AO via phone or e-mail that you have done so. Otherwise, you may not be considered for the new assignment(s) requested. This is absolutely critical since Direct Access does not provide an automatic notice that you have changed your e-Resume.

Use the comment section to amplify your assignment request. Let us know of your career desires, special considerations you want us to be aware of (collocation issues, special needs enrollment, etc), and anything else you deem necessary. Bearing in mind that we have access to your entire record, you do not need to restate past assignment history, qualifications, awards, or other items that are already a part of your official record.

Extensions

Extensions are assignment decisions made by the Commander Assignment Panel. A request for an extension is simply viewed as one assignment preference. Again, you should provide other options in the event that 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 Rotations

All e-Resumes requesting an early rotation **MUST** have a command endorsement. The purpose of a command endorsement is not to give an opinion of the suitability for the requested billet(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” endorsements (e.g., “I support early rotation for billet X, but not for billet Y”) are not appropriate. Many requests for early rotation stem from someone’s highly desired billet coming open before they are tour complete. 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 specialty or service need cannot be adequately satisfied using officers that are tour complete. An early rotation request while serving in a command position will normally be denied.

Special Needs

Many officers have “Special Needs,” but remember that in this context, a Special Need is a specifically defined term describing types of situations involving an officer and/or family that must be approved for acceptance into the Special Needs Program. Any officer with a Special Need must register in this **mandatory** program in accordance with COMDTINST 1754.7 (series). This ensures early identification of families with Special Needs and serves to minimize family stress and undue hardships as well as costly, disruptive off season reassignments. Enrollment in the program will create a special flag in Direct Access that is visible to the AOs. It only tells us that you have a Special Need but does not divulge any details. When we see that indicator, we work closely with the local Health, Safety, Work Life (HSWL) Special Needs Case Managers to ensure potential assignment outcomes are compatible with your Special Need. Please don’t wait to introduce this consideration until after you’ve received orders. This makes it more difficult to accommodate your needs.

Being enrolled in Special Needs does not give anyone the advantage for any particular assignment. We work to ensure access to appropriate care rather than a particular care provider.

Familiarize yourself with Work Life policies. We find many officers who should be enrolled in the program, but are not. The reason given most often is they don’t want to bother the Coast Guard, or they don’t want special treatment. Whatever the medical condition or other situation, the Work Life staff can tell us where your needs can be met. It may not be somewhere you believe you should be, and you may not be able to stay in an area just because you like the doctor you have now, but we strive to locate an assignment area where the Special Need can be met.

OCONUS Assignments

OCONUS positions are considered earlier in the assignment season. We do this to give officers requesting these assignments extra time to complete the logistical issues associated with their move. This also allows AOs to consider larger candidate pools that have not served at an OCONUS unit while developing assignment recommendations. Some specialties have high numbers of OCONUS billets and require us to “recruit” candidates to fill these billets. For example,

there are a large number of pilot billets in Alaska and some years there are not enough officers requesting these positions. Therefore, at the beginning of the assignment season the candidate pool of officers will include all pilots due for rotation that have not previously served at an OCONUS unit.

If you are requesting an overseas assignment review Article 1.H.2 of Military Assignments and Authorized Absences COMDTINST M1000.8. Additionally, the following statement must be entered into the comment section of your e-resume:

“My family (if applicable) and I meet the criteria for overseas assignment as outlined in Article 1.H. of Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, COMDTINST M1000.8 (series). My spouse (if applicable) and I have reviewed the Command Checklist for Overseas Screening, the Financial Assessment Checklist and the Dependent Overseas Screening (if applicable) shown in Enclosure 1.H.1. and 1.H.2. of Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, COMDTINST M1000.8 (series).”

Other Concerns

Aside from Special Needs, among the most prevalent concerns many Commanders have relate to children in school, caring for aging parents, and spouse employment. While we are sympathetic to those concerns and will make every effort to accommodate these issues, everyone should understand that they are fairly common. As such, it becomes impossible to accommodate everyone’s situation.

Collocation

The collocation policy allows married active duty members the opportunity to reside jointly whenever possible. IAW ALCOAST 055/13 (https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/generalmessages/General%20Messages/GENMSG2013/ALCOAST/055-13_alcoast.txt) collocation policy supports same sex domestic partnerships. Same sex Couples should familiarize themselves with the reporting requirements listed in ALCOAST 055/13 to ensure they understand and are compliant with policy. All couples should realize that the Service might not be able to co-locate them throughout their careers depending on Service needs and professional development. In cases where tour lengths are not aligned, Assignment Officers **may** adjust the tour length of one member to allow for both to transfer during the same Assignment Season.

Both married members and same sex domestic partnerships desiring collocation with their spouse/partner should tailor comments in their e-Resumes accordingly. We recommend that couples work together on their e-Resumes and give the Assignment Officers reasonable geographic and position options.

Senior Service School and

Senior Education and Fellowship Panel (SEFP) programs imbue senior leaders with strategic thinking and policy development skills needed to meet the

Fellowships

challenges and opportunities presented in a rapidly evolving world. Most programs are approximately one year in duration. Students who attend War Colleges, ICAF, NDU CIO, CEM, and MIT programs earn a Masters degree. Fellows do not earn a degree, but will have an autonomous schedule with daily opportunities to interact with respected government and industry leaders. Fellows are expected to add to public policy discourse by contributing to ongoing research studies and/or authoring articles.

If you are looking for reassignment coming out of senior service school or a fellowship program, there are several things to consider. As a return on investment for the Coast Guard, you can expect that you will do a staff tour associated with the advanced education recently received. For example, officers competing for a War College course should expect assignment to a position in the Defense Operation Program. Many billets are tagged to have a graduate school “pay back” fill. While the program manager for your Training Allowance Billet will make a recommendation, the final assignment resides within opm-2. The best time to attend a senior service school or fellowship program is coming off a field level tour. This will allow payback assignment without leaving your specialty too long.

Officers who have applied and successfully screened for both command and SEFP will be contacted by their assignment officer. An officer must decide shortly after the conclusion of both panels whether to accept the SEFP opportunity, at which point the assignment process stops, or forgo the SEFP opportunity to continue to compete for command. If the officer chooses to compete for command, they will need to submit an e-resume listing specific command opportunities and other assignment options in accordance with above guidance. This does not guarantee assignment to command, only the opportunity to continue to compete for assignment.

**e-Resume
Due Date**

Please submit your e-Resume according to the timelines advertised by the AY Kickoff Message. That’s when we begin a broad assessment of program and unit needs across pay grades, evaluate tradeoffs, and take a vertical look at workforce issues before moving forward in our horizontal (by pay grade) Assignment Panels and decisions. We try to be as responsive as possible in adjusting to changes as they occur throughout this dynamic process. Delayed submission of an e-Resume may reduce your assignment options and you can expect to be significantly disadvantaged during the assignment process. You should notify your Assignment Officer immediately via email of any changes to your e-Resume after the submission deadline because there is no mechanism in Direct Access to let us know that a new E-resume has been submitted.

The Assignment Process

Armed with the Shopping List and your well crafted E-Resumes, we can then begin to amass all the information we will need to develop assignment recommendations and explain them to the Assignment Panel.

Strategizing and Forming the Lists

Considerable time goes into laying groundwork. In October and November, AOs again review the Command Concerns provided for specific billets and begin to contact Program Mangers and units concerning their O5 positions expected to be filled in the upcoming AY. The dialogue normally covers billet priorities, reconciling questions on billets and the population of officers meeting specialty/billet needs, and any special concerns.

At this time we also start developing a list (candidate pool) 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, and even when we know you may not be interested in them. We do this in cases where we find you meet the needs identified by the command/staff office exercising cognizance over the billet and an adequate candidate pool of qualified officers was not obtained from those requesting the billet.

In filling most Commander billets, we normally talk directly with the supervisor of the billet. For some billets, we will work through the incumbent's principal supervisor under the assumption that for they will coordinate and validate input with the Commanding Officer, Office Chief or Flag Officer as necessary.

Who's in Play?

The short answer is every Commander and Commander (Select) is in play, unless scheduled for retirement. Of course, not everyone is going to transfer so there is a general hierarchy. If you're tour complete, you will get orders even if the Assignment Panel elects to extend you. If you're not tour complete and you ask for orders, you MAY be reassigned. However, if you are in a command billet and not tour complete, you should NOT plan to move unless an exigent Service need exists. Fleet-ups or reassignment to another billet in the same location are common examples. If you're a Commander (Select), not tour complete, and serving in an O4 billet, you are normally more susceptible to an early transfer than a person already in an O5 billet. 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 specialty (operational or technical) or experience that we can't satisfactorily meet with the pool of tour complete officers. This is why you should keep a current e-Resume on file. Fiscal constraints do come into play, but not such that they overwhelm our mission to best staff the Service for success.

**Command
Screening Panel**

Officer assignments are primarily performance based decisions. The best way to compete favorably for desired assignments is to demonstrate a pattern of sustained, high level of performance regardless of job assignment history. Command Screening Panels screen eligible officers for potential selection to all Commanding Officer positions. Personnel must screen for command in order to be considered for any Commanding Officer position. Timelines concerning applications and screening can be found in the Schedule of Active Duty Promotion List (ADPL) and Inactive Duty Promotion List (IDPL) Officer Personnel Boards and Panels, PSCNOTE 1401.

**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. Command cadre assignments and high profile, special assignment billets requiring interviews (*e.g.*, Military Aide to the President, Congressional Affairs, etc.) are the first to be completed. If you request these types of billets, you must ensure you meet the submission deadlines by reviewing current ALCGOFF messages and as well as the opm-2 website to ensure your e-Resume meets submission deadlines.

Commanders-select and newly promoted Commanders do not get assigned to billets after more senior Commanders are assigned. In fact, officers selected for promotion within a given pay grade may be assigned before more senior officers in that pay grade. In any case, we will strive to eventually issue orders to fill every vacant billet, including those billets for which no one asks.

**Unit
Engagement**

When the AO identifies a candidate for an assignment, that candidate is proposed to the unit or office where that billet resides. For most billets, only one officer will be proposed as opposed to a list of officers to choose from. With very few exceptions, we do not supply a short list of candidates and ask the receiving command to rank order them. The information we pass to the prospective receiving command is: your year group; specialty; assignment history; and relevant training, education, or experience. We will also provide general answers to questions regarding your record of performance.

In return, we ask for very simple feedback the officer we propose. We ask the prospective receiving command to tell us whether they find our proposed candidate acceptable or not. Absent a disqualifying matter of record or lack of requisite experience, most officers are found acceptable. We don't share details of these conversations with you, just as we don't discuss details of your e-Resume with anyone else.

For billets that are Flag Officer/SES assistants, the principal's preference is usually accommodated except where there is competition for the same officer. If

the Assignment Panel considers an assignment other than what the Flag Officer/SES expected, the Panel President will normally discuss the matter with the affected principal before finalizing the assignment so all input is considered.

The Feedback Loop

As the process takes us into November, 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 info that is not likely to change. We make every effort to keep you informed of our progress in working the slate via AY SITREP messages supplemented by general info and specific "AO Notes" posted on CG Portal.

December is when we start to get a sense of the 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.

Career Progression

Once deciding to stay in the Coast Guard to retirement eligibility, career choices made by senior officers still influence their future. By the time someone is selected for promotion to Commander, a specialized career path will ideally become more broadened. This can take one of two pathways; either through out-of-specialty assignments or through diverse assignments within one's specialty. Since different specialties will have different opportunities for broadening based upon the supply and demand for officers with a specific specialty skill, there may be some constraints on assignment decisions. Sustained superior performance is still the best way to ensure the availability of out-of-specialty opportunities.

While all officers moving into senior ranks are expected to develop an understanding of the major issues facing the Coast Guard as a whole, there is still a need for experienced specialists and a very successful career can be achieved within a given specialty. Career broadening strategies within a given specialty include assignment diversity, participation in studies/task forces, and special assignments.

Resources to assist in career planning, even for senior officers, are available at the following CG Portal site: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/units/psc/opm->

2/SitePages/Home.aspx. These resources remain vital references to map a “Broadened Specialist” construct for you career. The concept is based on junior officers developing in-depth knowledge in one specialty and adding additional knowledge and skills as they become more senior. *Developing a Career as a Coast Guard Officer* provides an overview of the unique characteristics of an officer’s career. This document provides an overview of fundamental officer corps roles, leadership development, officer specialties, and expectations at major career milestones.

Published annually, the Commandant’s Guidance to Officer Selection Boards and Panels contains expectations for the qualities needed in the officer corps. It also contains specific guidance for boards considering officers for selection for promotion at all grades – from Lieutenant to Flag Officer. This guidance is part of each selection board precept, and supplements COMDTINST M1000.3A(series), Officer Accessions, Evaluations and Promotions, where the basic criteria for selection (performance, professionalism, leadership, and education) are found.

Individual officers seeking career counsel can also contact the Officer Career Management Branch (PSC-opm-4). Their advice revolves around competencies and career paths, performance management, and career broadening strategies. Officers who wish to schedule an appointment can send an e-mail to ARL-PF-CGPSC-OPM-4@uscg.mil and they will be contacted shortly thereafter.

**Out of Specialty
Tours**

It is still possible to pursue out of specialty tours. Please keep in mind that this may be difficult due to the significant investment in training necessary in certain specialties. Officers seeking out of specialty assignments should plan to return to their community after that tour in order to maintain proficiency and still gain valuable out of specialty experience. The available number of officers with the same specialty background will determine if you are able to compete for assignments out of specialty. Some specialties do not have enough officers to fill their billets (*e.g.*, aviation, marine inspectors, finance, C4IT, legal), therefore out of specialty opportunities may be difficult to arrange.

Additionally, many officers desire special staff assignments (*e.g.*, Congressional Affairs, CGLO, etc.) that are often very competitive. Officers desiring to complete these rotational tours should review their career progression. It is generally best to apply for these positions after completing a field tour in their primary specialty. This will enable you to go out of specialty and then return while still current. Assignments such as these enhance an officer’s professional expertise through a broader understanding of the Coast Guard and how it fits into the national government and with our interagency partners.

Assignment

Unlike enlisted assignments, the officer assignment process does not include

Priority Considerations

formal recognition for officers who have completed tours of duty in hard-to-fill or particularly arduous assignments. As such, there is no automatic assignment preference afforded these officers like there is for enlisted personnel. This is not to say that completion of a tour of duty in an arduous duty assignment or hard-to-fill billet won't be taken into consideration. It will simply be included in the mix of other factors such as career progression, performance, skill sets, Service needs, pay grade, and personal desires. It should also be noted that there is no formal Humanitarian Assignments program (HUMS) for officers. Cases involving severe family hardships that do not fall under the Special Needs program (as discussed previously) will be considered as yet another assignment factor.

Prior to Assignment Panel

During the week or so prior to the Panel convening date, we attempt to notify each person who is tour-complete or likely to be reassigned what we think their assignment outcome from the Panel will be. That means most will have a good sense of what the future holds before the Panel convenes. The Commander Assignment Panel, however, is the final authority and they are not obligated to stay with the AO-prepared slate, so some officers may see a different assignment outcome in the message.

We normally stop communication the day before the Panel convening date, and do not return or make calls while they are in session. If you do get a call from us during that time frame, it's at the Panel's direction. After the Panel recesses and reports out, we do not discuss their deliberations. Those remain confidential.

The Panel

The Commander Assignment Panel will typically convene in early January. Panel membership consists of one Flag Officer and four Captains. The only other people in the room are: the Officer Assignments Branch Chief; the AO briefing the assignment recommendation; and other AOs who provide Executive Assistant support to the Panel. The Panel typically meets for three to four days before issuing their initial report and recessing for five days during the Retirement In Lieu of Orders (RILO) period. The post-RILO session is much shorter, and yields the final report.

Behind Closed Doors

Proposals made to the Panel are the AOs' assessment of the best match of Service needs, unit needs, and your personal preferences, in that order. We're trying to weave a matrix that best accommodates all the various concerns in filling every vacant billet. We don't pretend that there is a "right" answer. We simply try to achieve the best, optimal balance possible in filling every billet.

Besides proposals to the Panel, we also make available letters to the Panel President, source documents such as screening panel results, your assignment history, and a characterization of your record. We convey to the Panel what

preference the proposed billet is on your e-Resume or if it was not even listed. If we know you specifically do not want an assignment being proposed, we state that and make our best attempt to represent your case on your behalf. Similarly, we present divergent views when they may arise between a Program Manager and a Flag Officer. We are held accountable by the Panel to justify our rationale for all proposed assignments and note alternatives as requested. Any alternative to a proposed slate, however, is almost never a one-for-one replacement, but rather creates a chain reaction impacting several assignments.

Retirement In Lieu of Orders (RILO)

When the Panel's initial assignments are approved, an ALCGPSC message is released and the 5-day RILO period begins.

It is important to understand the RILO parameters as not everyone is eligible.

- If you have 20 years of service, you have no obligated service requirements, and you prefer to retire instead of accepting orders, your request will normally be granted.
- If you are selected for promotion, eligible to retire, and request to RILO, you must also ask to voluntarily have your name removed from the list of promotion selectees.
- If you are newly promoted, our personnel regulations require you to serve in grade for two years prior to retiring. If your two years of obligated service isn't up by 01 September, or if you have other obligated service (advanced education pay-back, OCONUS transfer, etc.), you are not eligible to RILO.
- You must have 10 years commissioned officer service time at time of retirement.
- You must formally request retirement from CG PSC-opm-1 within 5 days of your orders issue date.

Please also note all RILOs must take place by 01 August, but you can ask to retire earlier. If you prefer a later retirement date (perhaps to be eligible for a longevity pay raise or to better meet your personal needs), then you need to submit your voluntary retirement request in time for us to act on it prior to the Panel reconvening. Refer to COMDTINSTM 1000.8(series), Military Assignments and Authorized Absences for more details.

Post-RILO

Shortly after the 5-day RILO period ends, the Panel reconvenes usually with one or more members participating via phone conference. By that time we have had time to consider RILO-caused vacancies and any other new developments, and have worked out alternatives for each new vacancy. We present recommended solutions to the Panel, providing information on each officer involved in the same way as the initial session. Panel decisions are then announced in an ALCGPSC message which constitutes the final report.

Those officers who are reassigned during the post-RILO session are also afforded a 5-day RILO period. Backfill actions resulting from post-final report RILOs are handled as off-season transfers.

Orders

In late January we plan to begin issuing orders starting with OCONUS transfers and other officers known to have early reporting dates. All Commanders will usually have their orders issued by the beginning of February.

We do not specify detaching or reporting dates. The majority of orders are issued with the following paragraph, "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 01July is entered as a default), commands are authorized direct liaison to arrange exact dates among themselves.

Security Clearances

Another issue involving orders is that of security clearances. Some positions require an increased security clearance that often has long lead times to complete. 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 departing command.

Off-Season Assignments

Although the vast majority of officer assignments are handled by the processes described above, each year circumstances arise which require off-season transfer decisions not previously contemplated. When we become aware of an upcoming off-season vacancy, we advertise the billet in an ALCGOFF message, along with any other billets that stand a good chance of opening as part of a chain reaction. 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. Commander off-season recommendations are developed by PSC-opm-2 and approved by PSC-opm-a.

Off-Season

Under Personnel Manual policy, eligible officers may submit a request for retirement a minimum of six months and no more than twelve months in advance

Retirements

of the desired separation date. Requests within those parameters can usually be approved. In some cases, however, Service needs or circumstances at a unit do not permit approval of the requested date. One important consideration is our ability to backfill the retiring officer's billet. There are usually no easy backfill options when a vacancy occurs outside the annual assignment process. For that reason, command endorsements on retirement requests must address backfill requirements. Retirement requests which would cause a vacancy off-season may face disapproval if an acceptable backfill arrangement cannot be found and the command is not willing to absorb a gap.

Of course, any officer who is reassigned to a new permanent duty station by the Panel, and who takes no action during the RILO period, is obliged to execute orders and serve at the new permanent duty station for at least one year (two years OCONUS.)

Conclusion

We hope you find this information useful in understanding your assignment process and that it helps reduce the associated anxiety. We recognize how important the outcome of assignment decisions is to each individual and to the Service. We look forward to serving you and hope that our messages, website, as well as personal contact keep you informed.