CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

COMDTINST 5216.4E
February 2024

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

US Coast Guard Stop 7710
2703 Martin Luther King JR Ave SE
Washington, DC 20593-7710
Staff Symbol: CG-612
Phone: (202) 372-2673
Email: HQS-SMB-Directives@uscg.mil

COMDTINST 5216.4E
01 FEB 2024

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5216.4E

Subj: CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

Ref: (a) The Plain Writing Act of 2010, Pub.L. 111-274, 124 Stat. 2861

   (b) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 93-112, § 508

   (c) Wire or Radio Communication, 47 U.S.C. Chapter 5

   (d) Federal Records Act of 1950 (as amended), Pub.L. 81-754, 64 Stat. 578, codified as
   44 U.S.C. § 2101 et seq

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction provides Coast Guard policy for electronic and paper
correspondence, writing standards, and other correspondence related topics. This Instruction
contains guidance on how to access the latest templates, forms, plain language resources, and
writing style guides.

2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge,
deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements must comply with
the provisions of this Instruction.

3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.

4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The Coast Guard Correspondence Manual, COMDTINST
M5216.4D is hereby canceled.

5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it
itself a rule. It is intended to provide administrative guidance for Coast Guard personnel and
is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the
Coast Guard.

6. MAJOR CHANGES. Clarifications include detail on expanded paragraph and subparagraph
format, use of rank/grade in memoranda, increased emphasis on a tone of respect in email
correspondence, and general refresh reflecting the Coast Guard writer in the current DoD365
environment including a new location for templates in the Directives Library under Other
Publications.

7. <u>SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES</u>. It is recommended the reader become familiar with the directives and publications that are noted throughout this Instruction and are listed in numerical series order:

Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307, COMDTINST 1000.14 (series);
Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual, COMDTINST M1650.25 (series);
Coast Guard Civilian Awards Manual, COMDTINST M12451.1 (series);
Mail Management Postal Program Policy, COMDTINST 5110.1 (series);
Forms Management Program, COMDTINST 5213.9 (series);
Directives System Program; Commandant Instruction (CI), ALCOAST and Other Publications, COMDTINST 5215.6 (series);
Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement, COMDTINST 5216.18 (series);
Change Management, COMDTINST 5224.5 (series);
Accessible Systems and Technology Program (ASTP); Section 508, 5230.60 (series);
The Coast Guard Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.3 (series);
Organization Management, COMDTINST 5400.7 (series);
Cybersecurity Governance, COMDTINST 5500.13 (series) (FOUO);
Publishing of Printed and Bound Materials for the Coast Guard, COMDTINST 5604.1 (series);
Printing of Executive Stationery for Routine Use, Official Ceremonies, and Special Events, COMDTINST 5603.1 (series);

8. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS</u>. The Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47) reviewed this Commandant Instruction and the general policies contained within, and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. This Commandant Instruction will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the action proponent to evaluate all future specific actions resulting from this policy for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other applicable environmental requirements, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).

9. <u>DISTRIBUTION</u>. Electronic distribution in the Directives System Library. Intranet/Pixel Dashboard: Directives Pubs, and Forms - PowerApps (appsplatform.us) . If Internet released: Commandant Instructions (uscg.mil), Coast Guard Forms (uscg.mil) .

10. <u>RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</u>. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series) and the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center Microsoft SharePoint site at: https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/cg61/SitePages/CG-611-RIM.aspx .

11. <u>FORMS</u>. Suggested changes and/or corrections for immediate action may be submitted to USCG.Forms@uscg.mil . Refer to Appendix D. for a "List of Correspondence Forms."

12. <u>SECTION 508</u>. This policy is created to adhere to accessibility guidelines and standards as promulgated by the U.S. Access Board with consideration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) requirements. If accessibility modifications are needed for this artifact, please communicate with the Section 508 Program Management Office (PMO) at Section.508@uscg.mil. Concerns or complaints for non-compliance of policy and/or artifacts may be directed to the Section 508 PMO, the Civil Rights Directorate (https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/) for the Coast Guard, or to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at accessibility@hq.dhs.gov .

13. <u>REQUEST FOR CHANGES</u>. Units and individuals may formally recommend changes through the chain of command using the Coast Guard memorandum. Also, general comments and suggestions from users of this Instruction are welcomed. All such correspondence may be emailed to Commandant (CG-612) at HQS-SMB-Directives@uscg.mil.

/CHRISTOPHER A. BARTZ/
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for C4IT (CG-6)

Appendix A. Resources for the Coast Guard Correspondence Writer
Appendix B. Coast Guard Models of Address
Appendix C. Sample Memoranda and Letters (Including Easy Edit Formats)
Appendix D. List of Correspondence Forms
Appendix E. Command Long Titles and Abbreviations

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

Correspondence is written communication exchanged for the purpose of communications both internally and externally to the Coast Guard. Correspondence refers to letters, memoranda, general messages, email, forms, directives, issue/white papers, and other internal and external publications. Advances in technology will continue to influence how the Coast Guard corresponds. The Coast Guard writer must remain both vigilant and agile to future changes in organizational policy related to the domains of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as it evolves, such as learning AI (process improvements, and problem solving) and natural language processing (understanding human language as it is spoken and written).

The Coast Guard relies on clear, consistent, and responsive communications to carry out vital missions as well as provide transparency to Congress and to the public. All correspondence should be concise, accessible, and not detract from the professional image of the Coast Guard. The most common correspondence examples are presented in this Instruction. The Coast Guard writer is encouraged to cross reference with authoritative directives and government style guides for specialized correspondence needs. The objective of correspondence management is to provide uniform standards in the preparation and dissemination of correspondence. The result should be a product that demonstrates both effective written communication and compliance with the policies contained in this Instruction. Along with federal requirements to improve the quality, tone, clarity, and responsiveness, all correspondence, information, communications, and technology-based correspondence must be accessible to those with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) style standard, unless noted, is to use the Government Publishing Office (GPO) Style Manual as a reference for internal and external correspondence and other written materials. DHS requests that all components refer to their DHS Executive Correspondence Handbook (series) to serve as a principal guide for the preparation and dissemination of written communications, both internal and external. This includes that DHS is compliant per Reference (a) with the Plain Writing Act of 2010; that electronic content remains in compliance per Reference (b) the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and is compliant per Reference (c) with the Wire or Radio Communication, 47 U.S.C. Chapter 5.

Correspondence routing may be complex, and a chain of command may impose communication preferences for a diversity of mission and mission support areas. Not every example of correspondence is provided within, and ultimately good judgment of the writer should be demonstrated.

CHAPTER 1 CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT

A. Standards.

1. <u>Tone</u>. The Coast Guard's image and effectiveness may be impaired if correspondence is difficult to understand, disrespectful, or impersonal. DHS emphasizes a unity of effort, and to never apologize for doing your job.

2. <u>Responsiveness</u>. Always include a point of contact, return telephone number, and email address when your correspondence is likely to prompt a reply or inquiry. Respond to every question in incoming letters, and address any untruths, misstatements, or inflammatory comments.

3. <u>Accuracy</u>. It is vital that responses contain the most up to date and accurate information. If metrics are included, they must be verifiable with a point of contact and date of origination. All content should be free of typographical errors and formatted correctly.

4. <u>Spelling and Corrections</u>. Webster's Third New International Dictionary provides correct spelling not otherwise appearing as standard preference in the GPO Style Manual. In some circumstances, spelling may also be required to vary from standard American English to British English (i.e., United Nations and other specialized global forums). Good judgment of the writer should be used in these circumstances, and should be documented on the Digest, Form CG-4229, or routing form used to avoid repeated corrections. For correspondence products developed for use within the United Nations, beyond routine correspondence, the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (12th Edition), is the current United Nations standard for spelling within the intergovernmental organization, and its specialized agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Appendix A of this Instruction provides writing resources including where to borrow a dictionary.

5. <u>Use of *Italic*</u>. Italic is used to differentiate or to give greater prominence to words and phrases. Overuse is to be avoided. The names of aircraft, vessels, and manned spacecraft are italicized. The prefix is never in italic, nor are related industry brand names. For example, the tall ship *Eagle* or CGC *Eagle* is correct. Variations may occur, such as providing the class and hull number. For example, the Fast Response Cutter CGC *Benjamin Bottoms* (WPC 1132).

6. <u>Hyphenation and Separation of Words</u>. Use hyphens sparingly and never hyphenate a word at the end of a page. Avoid separating words in close association such as a person's name, abbreviated titles, and dates. If a full name must be split, do so after the first name, when there is no initial, or after the initial. Never split the name of a vessel.

7. <u>Spacing</u>. Between sentences one or two spaces may be used after the period, as long as it is consistent throughout the document. Paragraphs are typically left justified and single spaced. A space (1 line) is placed between each paragraph. If providing a hyperlink at the end of a sentence, it is best to leave an extra space before the period so the punctuation does not become part of the hyperlink and the reader may easily link to it. For example, visit the Coast Guard official website at www.uscg.mil/ .

8. <u>Paragraphs and Subparagraphs for CIs and Lengthy Reports</u>. Paragraphs and subparagraphs may be arranged as the example illustrates below this paragraph. Variations of report format may occur based on the needs of the requestor. CI's begin with a chapter after the table of contents or introduction (if applicable) and is followed by a section letter beginning with A. Note that general correspondence will have slightly different outlines without the chapter or section, see Chapter 2 for memoranda guidance.

   Example:

   A. The number of levels and the width of the column determine alignment and indentation. For Instructions, chapters are followed by sections (A., B., C., etc.). (Note the text starts on space 5).

      1. A set space following the identifier aids alignment. Correspondence begins with number 1 followed by a period and double space as the first paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs are numbered sequentially. Similarly for Instructions. (Note the text starts on space 5).

         a. Usually, typefaces and sizes are chosen to agree with the hierarchy of the head breakdowns. Subparagraphs are formatted to ensure the first item of the subparagraph is aligned with the first letter of the first paragraph. (Note the text starts on space 5)

            (1) Align runover lines with the first word which follows the number or letter aids in readability. All Correspondence and Instructions follow the same formatting starting with this subparagraph all the way down to (aa).

               (a) It is important to vary (alternate) the use of letters and numbers in any outline.

                  (i) The lowercase Roman numerals (i), (ii), etc. may be used as parts of the outline or to identify subparts of any previous parts.

                     (aa) When absolutely necessary, double (or triple) lowercase letters may be used.

9. <u>Date Stamps</u>. Type or stamp the date on the same day that correspondence is signed. The format for a memorandum is typically: 4 January 2034 or 4 Jan 2034. However, some date stamps may read JAN 04 2034, or 04 JAN 2034, which is also acceptable. The format for letters is January 4, 2034. If using a date within the content of correspondence, use the format 4 January 2034. The year may be omitted if it is understood (i.e., our meeting on 4 January).

10. <u>Expressing Clock Time</u>. Time is typically expressed representing either a 12 hour clock (civilian time) or a 24 hour clock (military time) based on the full 24 hours in a day. The preference in general correspondence is to use the 24 hour clock to avoid confusion across time zones. Military time must be expressed in the memorandum as a group of four digits, from 0001 to 2400, based on the 24 hour clock system. Civilian time is used when writing letters and must be expressed as ante meridiem (a.m.) or post meridiem (p.m.), meaning before and after midday, as in this example: 1 a.m. (not 1:00 a.m.). By convention 12 a.m. denotes 12 midnight and 12 p.m. denotes 12 noon. The O'clock expression is not used. Some technology and office tracking systems may default to the 12 hour clock, and the user should use sound judgment to reconcile the differences.

11. <u>Electronic, Original Handwritten, and S-Signatures</u>. A digital signature is a technology that provides a valid method of electronic signature. A digital signature means the owner of a private signing key uses that key to create a unique mark (the signature) on an electronic document or file. An original handwritten signature is also known as a "wet" signature because ink was once required to dry. An S-signature is made by non-handwritten means through electronically or by typing and is placed in between two forward slash keystrokes. Chapter 5 in this Instruction provides discussion on electronic signature including the basic S-signature. Note that other electronic signature formats maybe used when authorized such as for recruiting purposes when the signatory does not possess a common access card. This type of signature may be considered a qualified electronic signature which requires face-to-face identity verification (in-person or virtual) and is considered an equivalent of a handwritten signature.

12. <u>The Plain Writing Act of 2010</u>. The Act's purpose, per Reference (a), is to improve the effectiveness and accountability of Federal agencies to the public by promoting clear Government communications that the public can understand and use. This Act emphasizes writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and consistent with other best practices appropriate to the subject and intended audience. Therefore, the Coast Guard writer should avoid jargon, redundancy, ambiguity, and obscurity. In addition, DHS encourages every employee to have a basic understanding of plain language and its benefit. The DHS plain writing website is available at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/offices/esec . The Coast Guard writer should use their best judgment based on what is being written with an emphasis on plain language and their final audience. Appendix A of this Instruction provides writing resources.

13. <u>Accessible Systems and Technology Program, Section 508</u>. All Federal agencies are responsible for ensuring their information and services are accessible to persons with disabilities, as defined in 29 U.S.C.A. § 701. This includes information technology tools and electronic technology content, such as documents, web pages, presentations, social media content, blogs, and certain emails. The United States Access Board is responsible for developing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) accessibility standards in accordance with Reference (a) and (b). In January 2017, the U.S. Access Board issued revised guidelines and standards which may be reviewed at access-board.gov/ict/. The details are too vast to list in this Instruction, however correspondence writers need to consider accessibility of their electronic products. Importantly, GSA provides a government-wide IT Accessible Program and provides support on how to

create written products and test for accessibility. This support site is available at Section508.gov/create and an overview may be read at Section508.gov . Note that Section 508 accessibility does not apply to hard copy printed correspondence. Images and decorative characters in electronic content that add little value should be avoided. If an image is used, and the correspondence is sent electronically, it must be tagged with alternative text describing the image to ensure accessibility. Further guidance on how to comply with Reference (b) may be obtained from the Coast Guard's Office of Accessible Systems and Technology Program (CG-612), at Section.508@uscg.mil .

14. <u>Enclosure Term Preference</u>. The Coast Guard uses "enclosure" to supplement additional material sent with correspondence either in paper or electronic format. DHS uses the term "attachment" in its reference material. Note, an "Appendix" is typically used for Instructions. An enclosure is separate from the primary correspondence, and reflects the "act" of enclosing a separate artifact of relevance (i.e., other document, award, or tangible item) to the primary correspondence (i.e., memorandum or letter).

B. Copies, Stationery, Addressing, and Mailing

1. <u>Copies, Files, and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995</u>. To maximize utility, when practical and not prohibited, use both sides of the paper for copies. Official correspondence electronically sent to the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) must be single sided. Limit color copies to final prints to save on color toner and paper. Specifically, minimize the cost to the Federal Government of creating, collecting, maintaining, using, disseminating, and disposing of print information. Centralize copies whenever possible to eliminate redundancy. The originator has an obligation to keep the original file in accordance with the Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series) for guidance. Avoid redundancy when correspondence is forwarded for signature especially when correspondence is short, routine, and self-explanatory. Be sure to limit information and courtesy copies to include only those with a genuine need to know. Note that the Coast Guard legal department must comply with legal and court-mandated procedural rules and regulations which do not always match the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. This is especially true in the amount of copies that have to be served to the court and other parties regardless of whether the correspondence is short or self-explanatory.

2. <u>Stationery</u>. The Coast Guard defines stationery as paper stock used for official letterhead, which includes return addressed envelopes. Standard software allows Coast Guard writers to format stationery in electronic form. Customized print stationery orders may be placed through the Government Publishing Office (GPO) Regional Publishing Procurement Office (RPPO) for Flag Officer and Senior Executive Service (SES), commanding officers of Headquarter units, Activities Europe, and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard and others authorized in accordance with Printing of Executive Stationery for Routine Use, Official Ceremonies, and Special Events, COMDTINST 5603.1 (series). Contact a Printing Specialist within Directives and Publications Division (CG-612) at HQS-SMB-P-G@uscg.mil for stationery ordering assistance.

3. Addressing. Addressing correspondence and envelopes will be prepared as prescribed in the Mail Management Program Policy, COMDTINST 5110.1 (series). Validate the address and use staff codes whenever possible. Choosing the correct size envelope or mailer is important as excessive packaging can lead to increased cost.

    a. Format addresses on envelopes with a uniform left margin and a maximum of 47 characters and spaces per line. Center the address and single space each line, blocked one below the other. Do not indent lines. Leave at least a ½ inch margin from the left and right edges of the envelope and at least ⅝ inch from the bottom of the envelope. Include all required information within addressee and return addressee areas. Do not type in the margins or clear area.

    b. Font for envelopes must be block style and not stylized. Use Times New Roman, Courier, Calibri, or similar new Sans serif. Return addresses may be either preprinted in similar style, affixed with a label, printed, or stamped in blue or black ink, with preference of blue ink for Coast Guard standardization. Handwritten addresses are unacceptable.

4. Official Mail Address Format. All official mail must have a complete and proper return address. Official mail return addresses must notate in bold "DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY" in the upper left corner, directly above the return address and also notate "OFFICIAL BUSINESS" in the upper left corner, directly below the return address. Do not overlap the return address in the delivery address area. Be careful not to slant the address, as the lines must be parallel to the top and bottom edges of the envelope. Avoid punctuation except for the hyphen in the staff symbol and zip code. Limit address to a maximum of 5 lines. See Mail Management Program Policy, COMDTINST 5110.1 (series) for more specific examples.

    Return address "from" sample:

    DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
    LINE 1
    LINE 2
    LINE 3
    LINE 4
    LINE 5 (must be CITY, STATE, and ZIP CODE +4)
    OFFICIAL BUSINESS

    Delivery address "to" sample:

    LINE 1 INFORMATION
    LINE 2 ATTENTION (OFFICIAL TITLE/NAME)
    LINE 3 DELIVERY ADDRESS LINE 1 (STREET)
    LINE 4 DELIVERY
    LINE 5 (must be CITY, STATE, and ZIP CODE+4)

5. Window Envelopes. Unless for specialized use or mass mailing, the use of a window envelope is typically discouraged. Do not use window envelopes for sensitive mail or a content of a personal nature. High level officials should not receive window envelopes.

6. <u>Envelopes and Mailers</u>. Use envelopes or mailers slightly larger than the material being mailed and of sufficient strength to protect the contents during mail handling and delivery. Use number 10 standard letter size envelopes whenever possible. With a size of 4 ½ x 9 ½ inches, a standard paper size 8 ½ x 11 inches may be folded in thirds. Generally, documents with four or less pages should be folded and mailed in a letter size envelope. To qualify as First-Class Mail®, envelopes must be at least 3 ½ inches by 5 inches (3 ½ inches by 5 ½ inches for international), and no larger than 6 ⅛ inches by 11 ½ inches and less than ¼ inch in thickness. Use large envelopes for mailings that cannot be folded (i.e., photographs, certificates, negatives, and bulk material, etc.). Note that envelopes larger than 12 inches by 15 inches exceed the flat rate and the cost is significantly higher.

7. <u>Mailing and Stewardship</u>. Consolidate outgoing mail whenever possible and avoid excessive packaging. All mail generated on the same day and destined for the same unit/location shall be placed together inside an appropriate mailer such as a large envelope or flat rate box and sent via USPS or commercial carrier (FedEx/UPS, etc.) endorsed "Consolidated Mail." The receiving mailroom will open and sort the contents for unit/location delivery.

8. <u>Internal Mail</u>. An official U.S. Government messenger envelope (Optional Form 65B) is used to send mail and packages between offices/units located within the same geographical area, building, and/or base through a centralized mail center. Enter the appropriate address including a suite, room, STOP, or office number, if available. Appropriate mailing label standards remain the same for the contents. Those who have a Standard Workstation account must keep their current location and status updated on the Global Address List (GAL) to avoid misrouting. Check with your local mailroom for options on this service, often referred to as guard mail.

9. <u>Forms of Address, Salutation, and Complimentary Close on Letters</u>. The DHS Executive Correspondence Handbook (series) style and usage guidelines provide some examples of models of address and salutation. Appendix B of this Instruction provides examples of Coast Guard models of address and salutation. A comprehensive source for DoD models of address is found in the United States Air Force Handbook AFH33-337, titled Tongue and Quill which is found at the Air Force E-Publishing website e-publishing.af.mil/ and in Appendix A. The Coast Guard style preference is to spell out military models of address fully, such as Dear Commander Lee, or Dear Petty Officer Gonzalez. For civilians if a title is not known, then using Mr., Ms., or Mx. such as Dear Mr. Nguyen, Dear Ms. Williams, or Dear Mx. Smith should be used. Mx. is the most accepted gender-neutral title and should be used if a preference is unknown. If a title is known, the title should be used, for example Dear Mr. Ambassador Kim, or Dear Dr. Crawford. If a person specifically refers to themselves as Mrs., this may be used, otherwise the preference is Ms. To address girls under the age of 12 use Ms. or Miss, and to address boys under the age of 12, use Mr. If the name or gender is unknown, use a professional or organizational title, such as Dear Director of Health and Safety. If it is known that the recipient does not prefer any of these titles, begin the greeting by using the individual's first name, middle initial, and last name (i.e., Dear Calypso N. Seabrook).

C. Coast Guard Correspondence Policy.

1. Coordination. Correspond through your formal chain of command. This is especially important on substantive matters such as command decisions, policy issues, and other official correspondence. Such routing keeps intermediate commands informed and allows them to comment or approve. The coordination process may vary depending on the unit's formally established routing practice, such as Microsoft SharePoint or other formalized processes. Authorized subordinates of different units may correspond directly with each other on purely routine matters. Clearly identify primary points of contact on coordination and local practice. Chapter 4 provides more details on policy for coordinating correspondence with the relevant stakeholders in the Coast Guard.

2. Memorandum. Use a memorandum within the Coast Guard or with other federal agencies. Do not use the memorandum format when corresponding with the families of military personnel, private business, or the public. The use of the word memoranda is plural, and therefore an abbreviation of memos is frequently made. Memorandum is singular. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) may be placed in memorandum format. Chapter 2 provides more details on the policy for drafting and using a memorandum.

3. A Memorandum for the Record. A Memorandum for the Record is the same as a standard memorandum, except the writer must change the subject line to "A Memorandum for the Record." Use this format to document decisions or policy that is agreed upon during a conversation that is not documented elsewhere. If there is a note taker or transcript documenting the decision, it is unnecessary to create this correspondence artifact unless requested. It is best to exchange this memorandum between the agreeing parties and record the interaction. The writer may consider outlining each paragraph in order of purpose, problem, scope, agreement or understanding, and effective date. However, it is at the discretion of the writer.

4. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). A Memorandum must not be confused with an MOU or MOA. Originating offices of an MOU/MOA must ensure all interested program offices and the servicing legal office have reviewed. The writer must determine whether it would be appropriate for the Commandant to sign as a matter of protocol, even if the authority to sign has been delegated to an Assistant Commandant or other command. Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement, COMDTINST 5216.18 (series) provides more details on policy guidance with examples.

5. White Paper/Issue Paper. This correspondence is an authoritative issue paper used by many governments around the world and is often used by U.S. agencies. The white paper derives its name from the white paper stock cover on the issue paper. It typically includes research, data, and discussion in the form of a report or guide to help integrated product teams or decision makers understand an issue, solve a problem, and/or make a decision. The Coast Guard writer must be cautious not to plagiarize, especially be vigilant when using search engines that are reliant on artificial intelligence that may originate from copyright materials. As white papers in the Coast Guard are typically internal communications, they may be enclosed to, or placed in a memorandum when routing.

6. <u>Staff Study</u>. Staff Studies are often written as a report and placed in official memorandum form. The purpose of a Staff Study is to engage in a process of critical thinking and problem solving, to analyze a problem, draw a conclusion, and to make a recommendation(s). This is an accepted format for problem-solutions for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The format is typically organized in the following order: Problem; Facts Bearing on the Problem; Discussion; Conclusion; and Action Recommendation. Requestors may have alternative organization requirements. Additional structure and details may be found in United States Air Force Handbook AFH33-337, Tongue and Quill available at e-publishing.af.mil/ .

7. <u>Business Letter</u>. The business format will continue to be used with industry, local/state governments, and private citizens. A letter may also be used to address individuals when a personal tone is appropriate, such as in letters of commendation or condolence. Chapter 3 provides more details on policy for the letter.

8. <u>Award Letters, Formats, and Forms</u>. Both the Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual, COMDTINST M1650.25 (series) and Coast Guard Civilian Awards Manual, COMDTINST M12451.1 (series) provide detailed guidance. Some awards are issued on specific forms, the writer should refer to the award authority for further guidance.

9. <u>Email and General Messages</u>. General Messages may be used to communicate administrative information, which is defined as messages related to the organization of service forces, personnel management, unit logistics, individual and unit training, discipline, program changes, and other matters that are not operational. Other mechanisms to communicate this information include large official email distributions.

10. <u>Email Transmission and Etiquette</u>. Correspondence must reflect professionalism even when delivering course corrections and/or providing feedback to correct deficiencies. Effective communication in the workplace should encourage a culture of respect. Maintaining a professional email tone is essential. An individual who is assigned an official Coast Guard email address must utilize it properly. This means being respectful in correspondence with others, even when discussing controversial or conflicting content. Email fonts and contrasts must be easily readable in standardized dark ink. Drafters must use 11 or 12 font size, however size 12 is preferred. Quotes on signature footers must be kept at a minimum, remain professional, and not contain hyperlinks to non-government sponsored internet sites, including commercial vendors. The Coast Guard writer must be considerate of who they copy on emails and consider need-to-know and relevance to the receiver of the email. Blind copies may be occasionally necessary but should be generally avoided. Lengthier emails, as a best practice, should contain a Bottom-Line-Up-Front (BLUF) summary. Before sending, the Coast Guard writer should double check their email draft to ensure that the content is concise and that both spelling and grammar are correct. If the email content contains a heightened level of emotion, especially anger, the Coast Guard writer should not send without first pausing to reconsider the content, and then recraft at a later time after heightened emotions have reduced. Be considerate and respectful including in both salutations and complimentary closings.

11. <u>Electronic Meetings and Messaging</u>. Day-to-day business is often conducted through virtual platforms such as Microsoft TEAMS. Messages sent through Microsoft TEAMS must remain respectful. Many meetings are subject to transcriptions, and some may be recorded. Meeting hosts should announce at the start of the meeting if the meeting is going to be recorded. Attendees should assume a transcript will be created unless otherwise noted. This is often the case for accessibility needs or general documentation of discussions and decisions. When scheduling a meeting with a large number of attendees, hosts must consider accessibility.

12. <u>Standard Subject Identification Codes and Serial Numbers</u>. The Standard Subject Identification Codes (SSIC) provides guidance on the four- and five-digit numbers that represent common Coast Guard subjects. Place an SSIC (known as a file number) on each page of a memorandum or letter. Find the SSIC that closely represents your subject. Be sure to file all correspondence by SSIC and date, in chronological order for the calendar year. The use of DoD SSIC codes must be discontinued, as the Coast Guard has its own code structure, as published by Commandant (CG-611). A copy of the SSIC list may be located on Microsoft SharePoint with Commandant (CG-611) or on Microsoft Pixel dashboard Directives Library "CG Pubs Search" dropdown "Other Publications" – type keyword "Publication SSIC List." The Coast Guard has additional SSIC codes that DoD does not use.

13. <u>Samples, Forms, Templates, and Command Long Titles and Abbreviations</u>. The Coast Guard has specifically created "easy edit" templates for each correspondence type contained in this Instruction. Appendix C provides a listing of correspondence samples. A copy of the easy edit templates may be located on Microsoft SharePoint with Commandant (CG-612) or on Microsoft Pixel dashboard Directives Library "CG Pubs Search" dropdown "Other Publications" – type keyword "template" and select the appropriate easy edit template. Appendix D contains a list of correspondence related forms. Note that forms are designed in Arial font to align with DHS direction. Appendix E contains a list of the long titles and abbreviations for commands/units.

14. <u>Paper</u>. The Coast Guard uses business standard size 8½ x 11 inches white bond paper. Other sizes may be used, such as legal size 8½ x 14 inches, and other GPO authorized and/or specialized stationery.

15. <u>Type Fonts and Sizes</u>. Use 12 font point size "Times New Roman" for official correspondence, unless authorized by another authority. Avoid unusual style types in official correspondence, as it gives an unprofessional appearance. While there are many types of typography and design choices, it is best to align to foundational principles of readability for both paper and web content. When creating official correspondence, use type fonts and sizes that make correspondence easy to read and understand, and use standardized software to improve accessibility compliance. For emails use Times New Roman, Courier, Calibri, or similar new Sans serif (Aptos is a San serif font introduced in 2023 and expected to be incorporated into Microsoft products to replace Calibri).

16. <u>Margins</u>. For correspondence on standard size paper, allow 1 inch top, bottom, left, and right margins on each page. Do not right justify, center justify, full justify, or use proportional spacing.

17. <u>Print and Electronic Ink</u>. Black ink on white paper is the preferred choice for official business content. Date stamps, when applicable, should be in black. Electronic content shall ensure color contrast meets Section 508 standards.

D. Department-Level Correspondence Policy and Templates

1. <u>Department-Level Correspondence Formats</u>. The Coast Guard works with the DHS Office of the Executive Secretary (ESEC) component liaison to receive and submit necessary Department-level correspondence. This includes Briefing Books and Interagency Coordination, Administrative, Budget and Logistics Matters, and content for Congressional Actions. There are many points of contact for the differing and specialized correspondence needs which can be found in the DHS Executive Correspondence Handbook (series) at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/offices/ESEC .

2. <u>Controlled DHS Executive Level Correspondence</u>. In support of controlled correspondence, specific offices within each component, including the Coast Guard, are designated to manage their agencies' individual correspondence process and serve as the primary point of contact for Department-wide coordination and clearance needs. The ESEC manages letters and other documents addressed to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. The ESEC determines the parameters of the correspondence, including the DHS component lead, which components need to clear the response, the appropriate signing official, and the priority and urgency of the response. The ESEC reserves the right to decrease the number of days allotted or request a response be expedited. High priority correspondence has a 10 business day turn around, while routine and general public correspondence has a 15 business day turn around. The Coast Guard adheres to this timeline. Guidance on Department-level coordination and clearance, responses, interim responses, thank you notes, enclosures post-engagement letters, congratulatory and employee recognition letters may be found in the DHS ESEC Executive Correspondence Handbook (series) at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/offices/ESEC .

3. <u>Department-Level Memoranda (or memo)</u>. Memoranda generated by a Component and intended for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Chief of Staff's review or approval generally fall into three categories: Action memo (seeking decision or action), Cover memo (summary or background of primary document), and Information memo (Coast Guard to DHS ESEC communication).

4. <u>Templates for Department-Level Memoranda</u>. The ESEC has created specific templates for each memo type containing important completion instructions and formatting requirements. These templates are internally available at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/offices/ESEC .

5. <u>Templates for Department-Level Congressional Reports</u>. Congressional Reports have specialized guidelines. A Congressional Report template is provided in the ESEC handbook in hyperlink under the Congressional Reports Guidance and is downloadable at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/offices/esec . The Coast Guard writer should work with their assigned point of contact for specific instructions and may seek additional advisement from the Coast Guard Office of Congressional Affairs (CG-0921) as applicable at HQS-DG-HouseofReps@uscg.mil or HQS-DG-Senate@uscg.mil.

CHAPTER 2 THE MEMORANDUM

A. Memorandum Use in the Coast Guard

1. <u>The Coast Guard Memorandum</u>. Official correspondence utilized to communicate both within the Coast Guard and within the framework of the Federal Government. The Coast Guard has a partially customizable memorandum header image similar to letterhead, and the memorandum should not be sent without this header image. See Chapter 1, Section C, paragraph 13 for template instructions. The title memorandum is in Times New Roman font size 16.

2. <u>Memorandum Stationery</u>. A memorandum must use official electronic or print stationery titled *Memorandum*. This memorandum letterhead is predominantly electronically generated and drafted from a template. Contact the Printing Specialist within CG-612 Directives and Publications Division at HQS-SMB-P-G@uscg.mil if printed stationery assistance is needed.

3. <u>Dates</u>. Every memorandum must include a date. The date may be a stamp operated by hand or typed in. Place the date below the SSIC on the actual date the memorandum was signed by the final signatory in the routing chain. Sometimes dates will be added by a signatory during the routing process and penned beside the signature. This often occurs in longer routing chains including with endorsements. This is not a requirement, rather an allowable preference indicating the time between signatures.

4. <u>SSIC on First, and Subsequent Pages</u>. Place an SSIC on each page of the memorandum. If a memo is two or more pages, the subject line, the date, and the SSIC need to appear on all pages. The SSIC list may be found in the Directives Library under "Other Publications."

5. <u>Serial Numbers</u>. A serial number may be locally generated if needed for high volume correspondence and tracking. When there is a local serial number, this number is typed or stamped either immediately above the SSIC, to the right of the SSIC with a forward slash (SSIC/serial number), or underneath but before the date stamp. This is typically a unit preference.

6. <u>From and Signature Line</u>. Every memorandum must have a "From" line. Use the signer's name or the commanding officer's abbreviated title and staff symbol as appropriate. Occasionally, a memorandum will be sent from multiple people concurrently (such as from DCO and DCMS). In this case, a space (one line) separates the names and titles of the senders. Capitalization or upper/lowercase of the name is authorized. The Unit/title must be capitalized. The signing official will sign on the "From" line. The rank may be used; however, very long names can be problematic with limited spacing. The Coast Guard writer should use their judgment and remain consistent within the memorandum.

7. <u>Paragraphs and Subparagraphs for Memoranda</u>. Each first level basic paragraph is numbered. 1., 2., 3., and so on. If there is a single paragraph, numbering is optional. Use a wrap text for each first level basic paragraph. Wrap text allows text to wrap to the next

line within a document when it reaches the edge of the page or cell. Subparagraphs are listed as a., b. c., and so on. Subparagraphs are not wrapped text, instead they are tabbed out (5 spaces). Bullets are authorized for subparagraphs. Consistency is key, therefore do not use numbers, letters and/or bullets on the same level. This would not be acceptable. For reference, typical level alignment is 1., a., (1), (a), (ii), (aa.), and finally (aaa). Be concise and minimize the use of several tier levels as this creates complicated correspondence. Note, two subparagraphs or two bullets are required when used, otherwise the content should become a first level basic paragraph.

8. <u>Signing a Memorandum "for."</u> If signing "for" another Coast Guard member, the word "for" in lower case shall be penned to the left of the signature line and signed. If using a template for digital signing, follow the template prompts, which may place the "for" and an electronic signature box to the slight right of the "From" line. Both are acceptable.

9. <u>To Line</u>. Address correspondence to the office or commanding officer of a unit unless the memorandum is being sent directly to an individual. A memorandum may be addressed to "All Personnel (name unit)." This may be appropriate when issuing a unit SOP.

10. <u>Thru Lines External to Command/Unit</u>. Use a "Thru" line when one or more offices or units outside your own must see a memo before it reaches the addressee. List commanding officers in the "Thru" line. The routing order is numbered. When going up a chain of command, list the next higher command from your own first. When going down a chain of command, list the next lowest command.

11. <u>Thru Lines Internal to Command/Unit</u>. "Thru" line may be used when writing an internal command memo requiring chain of command visibility.

12. <u>Subject Line</u>. A concise subject line is written in capital letters and is typically 10 words or less. The exact subject line is repeated on subsequent pages in the header.

13. <u>References</u>. Unless required by your office, avoid unnecessary or complicated references. Avoid using obsolete relics, such as the abbreviation NOTAL, which stands for "not to," or "nor required by." A memorandum may list the most important references in the last communication or no reference at all. When the Coast Guard writer responds to an earlier communication, the writer need not list the same references in the opening. Instead, the writer should proceed to the main point.

14. <u>Reply to the Attention of</u>. If a primary point of contact differs from the Coast Guard signature on the memorandum, include a point of contact name and phone number. This may seem redundant, however adding a technical specialist or program manager may be appropriate depending on the content of the memorandum. Delete this section if not used.

15. <u>Consistency</u>. A Coast Guard writer should be consistent in style and format in all correspondence-writing, including the memorandum. For example, the way staff symbols, and/or titles are written in the "To," "From," and "Thru" lines should be consistent.

16. <u>Pen and Ink Changes</u>. Where practicable a memorandum should be error free. Internal correspondence should not include more than two pen and ink changes unless the memorandum is routed for input from another authority within the Coast Guard. Memoranda to other agencies should not include pen and ink changes.

17. <u>Ending the Memo</u>. Place the # symbol centered two lines below the last paragraph on the third line to indicate the end of the memorandum. For Copy and or Distro ensure two line gap before and after the # symbol.

18. <u>Second and Subsequent Pages of the Memo</u>. Enter a page number centered at the bottom footer.

B. Decision Memorandum.

1. <u>Creating a Decision Memorandum</u>. When requesting a decision from a single addressee, it is appropriate to type a decision block two lines below the last paragraph, but before the closing symbol "#" of the memo under the body of the memo. If the decision maker is not a commanding officer or higher, indicate the decision authority by position title. Below is a suggested format, however, "other" may be omitted. There must be two line spaces between "Other" and the closing symbol such that the closing symbol is placed on the third line. If space is limited, it is appropriate to have less spaces for practicality.

    Example:

    _____ Approve
    _____ Disapprove
    _____ Other

                                #

C. Endorsements within a Memorandum.

1. <u>Endorsement(s) to Memorandum</u>. An endorsement is used to comment on a memorandum in routing, based on the original memorandum, or is used to comment on any subsequent endorsement during the clearance/routing process. Because of changes made in routing, the order of any remaining "Thru" addressees could also be altered, and more may be added.

2. <u>Same Page Endorsement</u>. An endorsement should be completed on the same page as the original, if possible. However, technology security features may not make this possible. If this is not possible, start a new page endorsement. If two or more "Thru" addressees remain, re-number the addressees in parentheses on the endorsement (1), (2), for example.

3. <u>New Page Endorsement</u>. When technical challenges emerge, or additional content is likely to be added exceeding the original page, starting a new page for an endorsement is acceptable. The writer's judgment should be used. Every new page endorsement must start with clean stationery (no memorandum heading) and repeat the SSIC just above the

date. Identify the basic memo in the endorsement-number line and use the exact subject line already used. Similar to the same page endorsement if two or more "Thru" addresses remain, re-number them in parenthesis.

4. <u>Endorsed as Approved without Comment</u>. An endorser must sign and date the "Thru" line if the endorsement package is being forwarded without comment. Approval is implied. Any "Thru" addressees will count as signatures. Send copies to the action addressee and to all "Thru" addresses who have yet to endorse the memo.

5. <u>Providing Copies during Endorsement</u>. Copies are to be provided for any earlier "Thru" addressees, if requested, and to any earlier information addressee only if the endorsement is significant, as described in this paragraph. Add these addressees to the "Copy" line. Routine endorsements include "forwarded," "forwarded for consideration," and "forwarded recommending approval." Significant endorsements include "forwarded recommending disapproval," "readdressed and forwarded," and those with substantive legal or programmatic comments. Copies may be provided for any information addressees the Coast Guard writer chooses to add. Include these in the "Copy" line. To the right of each of these addressees, type the word "Complete" to show that the endorsement includes copies of the standard memo, enclosures, and prior endorsements. Always provide a copy for the originator of the standard memo and a copy for file.

6. <u>References in Endorsements</u>. Include only important references and do not duplicate references already in the original memorandum. If adding additional references, continue ordering in alphabetical sequence from the original memorandum.

7. <u>Enclosures in Endorsements</u>. On the enclosure line, do not repeat any enclosures shown in the standard memorandum or prior endorsements. Send any enclosure you may add to the action addressee. The enclosure's importance will determine whether others before your endorsement should receive it. Check with the originator to determine if they have the enclosure or need a copy (it may be a standardized enclosure, and/or not practical to send).

CHAPTER 3 THE BUSINESS LETTER

A. Business Letter Use in the Coast Guard.

1. <u>The Business Letter</u>. Use the business letter to correspond with non-Federal entities including individuals and businesses. Occasionally, a business letter may be used for correspondence within Federal entities when a memorandum would not be appropriate – such as a condolence or congratulatory letter.

2. <u>Short Business Letters</u>. A short letter is typically no more than 8 lines and contains less than 100 words. It should be left justified, double spaced (2 lines) within paragraph(s), and 1 to 2 paragraphs with complimentary closing. It should be placed on the page with greater attention to visual appeal, side margins may be adjusted for custom text up to 2 inch side margins.

3. <u>Letter Stationery</u>. Every official business letter must begin with an official Coast Guard letterhead to show the letter originates from the Coast Guard. This letterhead is predominantly electronically generated, drafted from a template, or may be in print format. Contact the Printing Specialist within CG-612 Directives and Publications Division at HQS-SMB-P-G@uscg.mil if printed stationery assistance is needed.

4. <u>Letter Dates</u>. Expressed in month-day-year. January 4, 2034. A comma separates the numbers.

5. <u>References</u>. References may refer to earlier communications, typically referred to within the body of the letter. However, if references are used, they may alternatively be labeled using the same conventions as in a memo.

6. <u>Text</u>. Left justified, single line space (1 line) within paragraphs and avoid indenting or numbering primary paragraphs. Depending on the nature of the letter, sub paragraphs may be indented with letter and numbering in basic paragraph format.

7. <u>Letter Addressee</u>. If writing to a company, address the company with an attention line "Attn:" on the inside address.

8. <u>Salutation</u>. Make the salutation align with the first line of the address. In a rare case, if the Coast Guard writer does not know the name of the individual who will be receiving the correspondence, use a collective salutation. While "Dear Sir or Madam:" may still be used, consider a more modern approach such as "Dear [Applicant, Candidate, Colleague, Recreational Boater, etc.]." The Coast Guard writer should use their best judgment.

9. <u>Complimentary Letter Close</u>. Use the capitalized word "Sincerely" for the complimentary close. This should be placed on the second line below the text, ¼ inch to the right of the center point on the page.

10. <u>Enclosures</u>. If the business letter has an enclosure, briefly mention the enclosure within the text and indicate the number of enclosures below such as "3 Enclosures." The Coast Guard writer may also choose to list each enclosure with a description such as Enclosure (1) Title of enclosure. Either format may be used.

11. <u>Copy Block</u>. A "Copy" block may be used in a business letter. Include the address of the person who is copied.

12. <u>Blind Copy Block</u>. A "Blind Copy" block is for internal distribution and for the original file copy only. Do not list a "Blind Copy" on the actual letter sent.

13. <u>Mail Window Letter</u>. This letter is almost the same as a business letter, but the format allows for mailing in a clear number 10 envelope window. The placement of the addresses may need to be slightly modified, must take no more than 4 lines, must not extend past the middle of the page, and not be sensitive or personal in nature. The address must appear in the window regardless of how the letter might shift during mailing. The U.S. Postal Service provides various window size requirements. Please visit www.USPS.gov for additional information.

B. The Flag Letter.

1. <u>The Flag Letter</u>. The Flag Letter is issued by Coast Guard Admirals and Senior Executives. It is typically written on specialty stationery with 1 inch margins on all sides. The exact format of the Flag Letter is at the discretion of Admirals or Senior Executive Service leaders. Considering the significance placed on these letters by recipients, the overall appearance should be suitable for presentation or framing.

    a. <u>Format</u>. This letter should be single spaced, unless it is less than 9 lines, then it should be double spaced for visual appeal. Date upon signature, and indent paragraphs with tabs. Tradition has placed this in 10 point Courier font. However, Times New Roman 10 to 12 point font or similar may also be used. Signature blocks are in all capitals. Enclosures are uncommon but may be used and are justified left with the margin, two lines below the signature block. Only use a blind copy block for a file record if needed. Do not place a blind copy block on the letter itself.

    b. <u>Administrative Remarks</u>. Any military member receiving a Flag letter should have the Flag Letter content submitted into an Administrative Remark. This action is authorized by this Instruction. Also, see Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307, COMDTINST 1000.14 (series).

C. Letters Prepared for DHS and Other Branches of Government.

1. <u>Letters prepared for DHS</u>. DHS issues guidance and templates, updated as DHS leadership preferences or congressional requirements change. For the latest templates, please see the DHS Executive Correspondence Handbook (series) and associated templates available at dhsconnect.dhs.gov/offices/ESEC .

2. <u>Congressional Letters</u>. The Coast Guard writer may seek advisement from the Coast Guard Office of Congressional and Governmental Congressional Affairs (CG-0921) at HQS-DG-HouseofReps@uscg.mil or HQS-DG-Senate@uscg.mil.

CHAPTER 4 COORDINATION

A. Coordination Policy for the Originator and Coordinator.

1. Originator. The originator is located in the office where the correspondence is created and coordinates by obtaining an agreement among offices that have a substantial interest in a proposed correspondence action and/or document. An important responsibility of the originator is to resolve major differences among stakeholders as early as possible. To coordinate effectively, the originator must decide who the stakeholders should be before the originating correspondence is signed with consideration for the impact of the correspondence and the final audience. The Coast Guard Organizational Manual, COMDTINST M5400.7 (series) can assist with identifying functional responsibilities, however, due to organizational changes, additional research may be necessary to identify both offices and individuals with equity.

2. Coordinator. The primary responsibility of the coordinator is to compile all comments from each stakeholder. This coordination may occur through concurrent, sequential, and conference clearance processes, and can be sent electronically or physically. Routing Slip Form CGHQ-6046 may be useful. Microsoft SharePoint is often also used to facilitate coordination.

3. Concurrent Clearance. Typically, the fastest way to obtain clearance is to utilize Microsoft SharePoint or a similar clearance method commonly referred to as a Task Management System (TMS) where the document is sent to all stakeholders at one time with a suspense date. A Concurrent Clearance Form, CG-4590 may be useful to the Coast Guard writer. If coordinating concurrently, be sure to consolidate comments into a matrix listing. Comments are typically identified by reviewers as being administrative (A), substantive (S), or critical (C). All comments must be reviewed, considered, and incorporated where applicable. Substantive comments should be adjudicated, while critical comments must be adjudicated. Any unresolved critical comments must be provided to the higher signature authority, such as the commanding officer for final adjudication. Consult with the servicing legal office or other subject matter expert as needed, as some content may not be changed or waived by law. If during the concurrent clearance process the critical or substantive comments change the content substantively, a second concurrent clearance may be required.

4. Sequential Clearance. This correspondence clearance process is typically used for an individual to review correspondence in sequence, often "up the chain" for final decision or signature. When routing chains are short, sequential clearance is practical, as each input is reviewed and adjudicated one at a time. At times this type of coordination is placed in a physical folder with a paper routing slip, however the increased use of electronic signatures in TMS makes electronic routing of the sequence faster and may be required by the respective routing chain.

5. Conference Clearance. When the usual methods of coordination are not sufficient and differences remain unresolved, an option is to gather coordinators for a meeting and seek resolution. This is called conference clearance. This may be conducted in person or

virtually. If major changes result from the meeting, the coordinator will need to assess if part or all of the document(s) must undergo further clearance with those who originally reviewed the document and were not part of the conference.

6. General Correspondence Controls. Impose realistic due dates. Request a response only when there is a compelling reason to receive a reply by that date. When choosing the due dates, allow for enough time for routing inside the chain of command, review by the command, and time to reach the addressee factoring in distance or location. Due dates may need to be extended for mobile units, overseas activities, and during holidays or other conditions such as a state of emergency. Include time for the responding office to gather information and prepare and return a response through mail screening.

7. A Tracer. A tracer may be created to track missing or time sensitive late correspondence. If practicable, first contact the command that originally sent the correspondence. First contact the command by phone or email then forward a copy of the original correspondence by either email or hardcopy with the term and date "TRACER, 04 Jul 2034."

8. Other Coordination. Be vigilant that there may be a separate clearance process for some Coast Guard content outside of correspondence including, but not limited to, regulations, policy guidance and documents, and Navigational and Vessel Inspection Circulars (NVIC).

CHAPTER 5 POLICY ON SIGNATURE

A. Electronic Signature.

1. <u>Digital Signature Technology</u>. A digital signature is a technology that provides a valid method of electronic signature. Digital signature(s) means the owner of a private signing key uses that key to create a unique mark on an electronic document or file. The recipient employs the owner's public key to validate that the electronic signature was generated with the associated private key. This verifies the document was not altered. There are some cases when an electronic signature is not authorized, not suitable, or impractical and therefore, the traditional physical signature(s) must be signed in dark ink. Blue or black ink is equally acceptable for correspondence only. Some documents, such as Coast Guard regulations, must follow e-signature guidelines from the Office of the Federal Register. Digital Signature guidance may be found in U.S. Coast Guard Cybersecurity Manual, COMDTINST M5500.13 FOUO (series).

2. <u>Use of Digital Signatures</u>. In addition to the digital signing of documents other than Federal Register publications, email messages requiring message integrity or nonrepudiation should be digitally signed. Note, this policy may not apply to emails and documents that relate to regulatory and other legal matters. Nonrepudiation provides assurance that a sender of data, or in this case an email, is provided with proof of delivery, and the recipient is provided proof of the sender's identity, so that neither can deny having processed the data in question. An email containing an attachment or embedded active content should be digitally signed. Digital Signatures are now automatic in DoD365.

3. <u>Other Accepted Electronic Signatures</u>. A qualified electronic signature may be accepted in certain circumstances. This type of signature requires face-to-face identity verification (in-person or virtual) and is considered an equivalent of a handwritten signature. As there are different requirements for signatures, be sure to consult with the originator and/or legal representative before adopting new electronic signature formats.

B. S-signature.

1. <u>The S-signature</u>. The S-signature is made by non-handwritten means through electronically or mechanically typed and is primarily used in the Coast Guard for electronic messages, directives, and other openly published documents. The S-signature may be used in general email correspondence where creating a signature may be more difficult. Similar to considerations with an electronic signature, the Coast Guard writer must be vigilant and identify which type of signature is most appropriate and/or required. This signature may not be used for rulemaking or Federal Register publications. It may not be appropriate for other legal documents either. An S-signature should look similar to this sample: /King C. Neptune/. Note the required forward slash before and after the typed name. The Coast Guard S-signature must include a legal name, and not be representational or hidden. If the individual holds a title, it is appropriate to include it directly beneath the S-signature. Precedence for use by government was set by the Patent and Trademark Office under 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1.4, Nature of Correspondence and Signature Requirements. Prior to 2020, the format previously

designated for the S-signature was Name /s/. That format is obsolete. The Coast Guard writer should use the new format.

C. Delegation of Signature Authority and Format.

1. Delegation of Signature Authority Format. If authorized, certain signature authorities within the Coast Guard may be delegated. However, final agency action or decision-making authority should remain with a commanding officer of the U.S. Coast Guard. Consult with the Office of General Law (CG-LGL) and the Office of Regulations and Administrative Law (CG-LRA) regarding subsequent delegations of authorities. All delegations of signature authority must be made in writing, to position and title rather than in name alone, and include a description of the types of documents authorized. The commanding officer must sign the delegation memorandum.

2. Limitations to Signature Authority Delegation. A commanding officer may not delegate signature authority for documents that establish policy, make changes to the activities, missions, or efficiency, and are addressed to higher authority, deal with matters under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), or are required by law or regulation (e.g., ship's logs). Note, as a point of clarification this does not limit the functional duties otherwise required, such as an executive officer or operations officer as appropriate.

3. Subsequent Delegation. Unless otherwise restricted by law or policy, authorized subordinates may delegate signature authority to the lowest responsible position related to the function involved. However, scope of this authority must be articulated by the commanding officer. Final agency action or decision-making authority should remain with a commanding officer of the U.S. Coast Guard. Consult with the Office of General Law (CG-LGL) and the Office of Regulations and Administrative Law (CG-LRA) regarding subsequent delegations of authorities.

4. Signature Authority by Subordinates within a Command. Subordinates may sign correspondence that falls within their area of responsibility unless a signature of a higher official is required. If in doubt, obtain authorization before signing. When subordinates sign an official letter, such as a business letter, under this delegated authority, they shall sign "By direction." Only a few select senior staff members are authorized to sign over their commanding officer's title.

5. Delegation Signature Memorandum and Letter "Acting." Utilize "Acting" when the signer has been formally appointed to temporarily replace either the commanding officer or a subordinate who signs a letter by title. For both the memorandum and the letter, the signature block contains the information of the person signing, and the "Acting" title is inserted. Please note that either a wet or electronic signature may be used, but not at the same time.

   Sample - Signature *memorandum* for an individual signing in an *"Acting"* capacity.

   Electronic Signature Block (and/or)

Wet Signature of person signing
FIRST (or first initial) M. LAST (UPPER or Upper L. Case), (rank/grade)
Acting Title or STAFF SYMBOL (UPPER or Upper L. Case for Title)

Sample - Signature *letter* for an individual signing in an *"Acting"* capacity.

Sincerely,

[Wet or Electronic Signature]

First M. Last
FIRST (or first initial) M. LAST
Military grade or SES
Acting, Job title
U.S. Coast Guard

6. Delegation Signature Memorandum "for" and Letter "By direction." When a delay might result in a missed urgent deadline, sign a memorandum "for" an absent official. Sign a letter "By direction" when designated formally to do so. Add the word "for" before the typed name of the intended signing official. Note this may be penned in dark ink if wet signed rather than electronically signed. The absent officials' name remains in the signature block, the person signing signs their own signature. Please note that either a wet or electronic signature may be used, but not at the same time.

Sample – Signature *letter* for an individual signing in a *"for"* capacity.

for: Electronic Signature of person signing
Wet Signature of person signing
for FIRST (or first initial) M. LAST (UPPER or Upper L. Case), (rank/grade)
STAFF SYMBOL such as COMDT (CG-6)

Sample signature *letter "By direction"* as designated. Where an electronic signature may be used, it may be more personable and sometimes more appropriate for a wet signature on an external letter. Judgment of the Coast Guard writer should be used.

Sincerely,

[Wet or Electronic Signature]

First M. Last
FIRST (or first initial) M. LAST
Military grade or SES
Job title
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

CHAPTER 6 RECORDS MANAGEMENT, PRIVACY, AND CYBERSECURITY

A. Records Management Guidance.

1. Records Management. Records Management is a program outlining policy and procedures applied to all government information, allowing end users the ability to identify, save, and remove or retire information according to federal statute. All correspondence is required by the Federal Records Act of 1950 (as amended), Reference (d), to be identified as records. The correspondence writer can review the Records & Information Management Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series) for more information on Coast Guard recordkeeping requirements.

2. Record Keeping. Coast Guard writers must ensure that all products carry the appropriate records management identification code(s). Federal record keeping requirements are derived from these identification code(s), known as SSIC. See Chapter 1. Correspondence Management, Section C, paragraph 12 of this Instruction. Contact a Records Management Specialist within CG-611 Records Management Division at HQS-SMB-CG-611-Records@uscg.mil for further clarification.

B. Privacy.

1. Privacy. The Coast Guard writer should be cautious not to erode privacy protections and must protect personally identifiable information (PII) at all times. For example, if correspondence containing PII is approved to be sent to a personal email (such as for Coast Guard Auxiliary), or emailed outside of the .mil domain, the correspondence must be protected through either password or encryption and digital signature. Note that digital signatures must also be used when sending Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), unit Critical Information List (CIL), and/or protected Privacy-related information not releasable to the public. Additional guidance may be found in the mandated *Privacy at DHS: Protecting Personal Information* training, and in U.S. Coast Guard Cybersecurity Manual, COMDTINST M5500.13 FOUO (series) and The Coast Guard Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.3 (series).

C. Cybersecurity.

1. Security Considerations. The Coast Guard writer must verify who they are sending correspondence to both inside and outside the organization. Digital signatures assist the Coast Guard writer in ensuring the originator is the actual author, is the originating source, and that the email or attachments were not altered in transit. Email addresses should be verified. Group distributions should be used sparingly, and members validated regularly for currency and need-to-know. Notify the group owner if a distribution is no longer necessary. Emails sent to incorrect addresses may result in unintended consequences and reflect poorly upon the Coast Guard. Additional guidance may be found in U.S. Coast Guard Cybersecurity Manual, COMDTINST M5500.13 FOUO (series).

Appendix A. Resources for the Coast Guard Correspondence Writer

DHS Virtual Library

DHS Librarians have worked to develop new connections, facilitating a culture of sharing. The library services team will continue to serve as a hub, connecting people with knowledge.

DHS Connect dhsconnect.dhs.gov/
Go to the employees tab, to the library drop down menu, search your books or journals.

U.S. Department of State, Protocol Reference 2024
Available at: state.gov/protocol-reference/

Protocol: 25th Anniversary Edition: The Complete Handbook of Diplomatic Official and Social Usage, 2002. United States. Book by M.J. McCaffree, P. Innis and R. Sand (in DHS library).

Style Manual: An Official Guide to the Form and Style of Federal Government Publishing / U.S. Government Publishing Office 2016. 31st edition.
Available at: govinfo.gov/gpo-style-manual

The *Tongue and Quill*. 2015, Rev. 2022. AF Handbook 33-337.
Available at e-publishing.af.mil/ .

Dictionaries

Dictionary by Merriam-Webster.com. 2020 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.
Available at merriam-webster.com/ .

American Dictionary. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged.* Merriam-Webster. (1961, revised). Available at DHS Virtual Library and Coast Guard Headquarters Law Library.

British Dictionary and the United Nations Standard. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary.* 2011 12th edition. Available at DHS Virtual Library and Coast Guard Headquarters Law Library.

Plain Language and Grammar Websites

Plainlanguage.gov, 2024. Official website of the United States Government and is augmented by non-profit organizations and professional groups to support plain language writing. Several open source dictionaries, thesaurus, and grammar sites are available at plainlanguage.gov/ .

The United States Congress, Washington D.C.

Library of Congress, 2020. This is an official website of the United States Government. There are many historical sources, including historical correspondence available at loc.gov/collections .
Coast Guard writers may gain local access with a user registration.

Appendix B. Coast Guard Models of Address

Addressee as listed under the "Title" header below. The address for a letter/envelope includes full rank/rate, full name and service abbreviation, followed by the mailing address. Salutation includes Dear Full Title (Last Name), and complimentary close of sincerely. Use of other official titles such as Officer Candidate and Cadet Ranks are also permissible.

Coast Guard Military Service Rates and Ranks

Paygrade	*Title*	*Abbreviation*

Enlisted Rates of the Coast Guard

E-1	Seaman Recruit	(SR)
E-2	Seaman Apprentice or Fireman Apprentice	(SA) (FA)
E-3	Seaman or Fireman	(SN) (FN)
E-4	Petty Officer Third Class	(PO3)
E-5	Petty Officer Second Class	(PO2)
E-6	Petty Officer First Class	(PO1)
E-7	Chief Petty Officer	(CPO)
E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer	(SCPO)
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer	(MCPO)

Most Senior Enlisted Position Titles

E-9	Command Master Chief Petty Officer	(CMC)
E-9	Coast Guard Reserve Forces Master Chief	(CGRF-MC)
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard	(MCPOCG)
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve	(MCPO-CGR)

Warrant Officer Ranks

W-1	Chief Warrant Officer (rank not currently in use)	(CWO)
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2	(CWO2)
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3	(CWO3)
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4	(CWO4)

Officer Ranks

O-1	Ensign	(ENS)
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	(LTJG)
O-3	Lieutenant	(LT)
O-4	Lieutenant Commander	(LCDR)
O-5	Commander	(CDR)
O-6	Captain	(CAPT)
O-7	Rear Admiral (Lower Half)	(RDML)
O-8	Rear Admiral (Upper Half)	(RADM)
O-9	Vice Admiral	(VADM)
O-10	Admiral	(ADM)

Appendix C. Sample Memoranda and Letters (Including Easy Edit Formats)

(Retrieve the latest editable version internally through the Pixel Dashboard "Links." Navigate to Directives Library titled "CG Pubs Search." Select the "Other Publications" dropdown and type template. Download the Easy Edit versions for use.)

<u>Sample Memoranda</u>
Blank Memorandum
How to Prepare a Memorandum
Blank Memorandum for the Record
How to Prepare Endorsements (Same/New Page)
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Memorandum

<u>Sample Letters</u>
Blank Business Letter
How to Prepare a Business Letter
Blank Flag Letter

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[May be customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
dd Mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

[Wet or Electronic Signature Here]
From: First Name MI. Last Name   Reply to Staff Symbol
       Staff Symbol   Attn of: Name of Point of Contact
                                       Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

To: Name or Staff Symbol
Thru: [Enter Name or Staff Symbol]

Subj: [ENTER SUBJECT]

Ref: (a) [Optional Reference]

1. Start typing. Yes, numbering the paragraphs is required unless there is only one paragraph.

2. Ensure two lines separate the MEMORANDUM (Times New Roman, size 16 font) and "From" line.

3. Ensure two lines separate the last sentence of the paragraph and the "#" placed on the third line.

4. Ensure two lines separate the "#" and "Enclosure."

#

Enclosure: (1) [Optional Enclosure]

Dist: [Optional Distribution]

Copy: [Optional Copy]

Blind Copy: [Optional Blind Copy – Internal to Coast Guard only]

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC/Optional Serial #
dd Mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

(Wet or Electronic Signature here)
From: First Name MI. Last Name   Reply to Staff Symbol
        Staff Symbol   Attn of: Name of Point of Contact
                                                Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

To: First Name MI. Last Name or
        Staff Symbol
Thru: First Name MI. Last Name or
        Staff Symbol

Subj: HOW TO PREPARE/WRITE A MEMORANDUM

Ref: (a) Correspondence Manual, COMDTINST 5216.6 (series)

1. The memorandum is for official correspondence internal to the Coast Guard and other federal agencies unless a different format is called for. Use names, titles, or staff symbols in the "From, To, and Thru" lines. The "Reply to Attn of" may be used for the primary contact if not the sender. Delete if not in use. "Thru" addressees may approve by placing their initials or signature and date (optional) beside or slightly above the "Thru" line.

2. The Coast Guard writer must sign their name above the "From" line. For digital signature, place the signature box above the characters in last name. If signing "for" another individual, this needs to be indicated by writing "for" to the left of your signature box.

3. The date is directly below the SSIC. If the memorandum is two or more pages, the "Subj" line would appear on the same line as the SSIC (see next page of this memorandum for format). If a serial number is used, place it only on the first page in the preferred format.

4. Your content should be written in paragraph wrapped text form and each paragraph numbered. After your content, including decision block is written, place "#" two lines below (on the third line) the last paragraph to indicate the end of the memorandum. The "Copy:" block, if applicable, appears on all copies. The "Blind Copy" block only appears on the file copies remaining within the unit.

    a. Subparagraphs numbering must align the first letter with the start of the first sentence from the preceding paragraph. This is illustrated here.

    b. Subsequent subparagraphs are sequentially numbered and aligned accordingly.

Subj: HOW TO PREPARE/WRITE A MEMORANDUM   SSIC
                                                  dd Mmm yyyy

       (1) A subparagraph to a subparagraph must be numbered differently from the main subparagraph as in this example. The hanging indent must also align with the first letter of the subparagraph as indicated here.

       (2) The Coast Guard writer may occasionally vary the numbering scheme (i.e., the originator is asking for a different template style, a local memo containing long lists).

         (a) The key to the numbering scheme is consistency throughout the memorandum.

         (b) Bulletized points are at times acceptable. However, bullets are not numbered. Rather, a preferred simple bullet symbol should be used. Avoid stylized bullets.

- This symbol for bullets may be used.
- Short lists support single-space bullets and do not need a semicolon.
    - The key is consistency throughout.
    - You must have two bullets for a list.

5. For multiple addresses, a "Distribution" line may be substituted for the "To" line. Change the "To" line to read "Distribution." Next, at the bottom of the memo on the second line directly below "Enclosure," place "Dist." When enclosures are not used, place "Dist" on the second line below "#."

<div align="center">#</div>

Enclosure: (1) Listed in order of appearance in the memo
           (2) Artifact is not listed in the reference section
           (3) Label enclosures to correspond with numbering when practical

Dist: Used for multiple addresses only
      Replace "To" line with "Distribution"
      List all addressees

Copy: Optional and appears on all copies if used
      Short Title of Information Addressee
      Short Title of Second Information Addressee
      Distribution List (for multi-page copy distribution)

Blind Copy: Used only if applicable
         Appears only on the file copies remaining within the unit

[insert page number in footer, centered, for pages 2 or more starting on the second page]

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[Maybe customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
dd Mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

(Wet or Electronic Signature here)

From: First Name MI. Last Name
        Staff Symbol

Reply to Staff Symbol
Attn of: Name of Point of Contact
          Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

To: First Name MI. Last Name or
        Staff Symbol

Thru: First Name MI. Last Name or
        Staff Symbol

Subj: MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Ref: (a) [Optional Reference]

1. Start typing here. The subject must reflect MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD. The subject line may be customized further to include the more specific topic such as memorandum for the record on "X" decision. Ensure two lines separate the last sentence of the paragraph and the "#."

<div align="center">#</div>

Enclosure: (1) [Optional Enclosure]

Dist: [Optional Distribution]

Copy: [Optional Copy]

Blind Copy: [Optional Blind Copy]

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[Maybe customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
dd Mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

(Wet or Electronic Signature here)

From: First Name MI. Last Name or Command   Reply to   Staff Symbol
       Staff Symbol or Unit   Attn of: Name of Point of Contact
                                                              Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

To: First Name MI. Last Name or Command
       Staff Symbol or Unit

Thru: (1) An individual or command (use judgement)
       (2) (Additional as needed)

Subj: HOW TO PREPARE ENDORSEMENTS

Ref: (a) [Optional Reference]

1. A same page endorsement is the preferred method. Many endorsements forward without comment through the addressee because comments are optional. Sometimes a written endorsement is required. Contact the originator for further guidance if needed.

2. For the "Thru" line, renumber addressees in parentheses as described above. Ensure two blanks lines are used to separate between this last sentence and the "#".

#

(start on third line SSIC is not repeated)   dd Mmm yyyy

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

(Wet or Electronic Signature here)
From: First Initial MI. Last Name
       Staff Symbol

To: First Name MI. Last Name or Staff Symbol
Thru: First Name MI. Last Name or Staff Symbol

1. This section begins the first endorsement statement. Keep on the same page if the endorsement will fit on one page and the endorsement is likely to be signed without revisions

#

Subj: HOW TO PREPARE ENDORSEMENT   SSIC
                                              dd Mmm yyyy

SECOND ENDORSEMENT

(Wet or Electronic Signature here)
From: First Initial MI. Last Name or Command
        Staff Symbol or Command

To: First Name MI. Last Name or Command
        Staff Symbol or Unit

Ref: (a) [Optional reference typically unnecessary on an endorsement]

1. This section begins the new page endorsement statement. Start a new page if the answer all questions below is no:

      a. Is the latest communication less than a page?

      b. Will all of the second endorsement fit on that page?

      c. Is the endorsement sure to be signed without a revision?

2. Use standard 8 ½ x 11 paper for all pages of new page endorsement. Include "Subj" on each page. Every page must be numbered starting with the second page, centered, as indicated in the footer below.

4. Use staff symbols only when appropriate. The endorser must sign and date the "Thru" line if the endorsement package is forwarded without comment, approval is implied.

                                    #

Copy: [When substantive content is added, include prior endorsers.]

                                    2

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[Maybe customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
dd Mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

(Wet or S-signature here)

From: First Name MI. Last Name, Rank/Rate (as applicable)   Expiration [NTE 10 yrs]
      Title and/or Staff Symbol   dd Mmm yyyy

To: Unit/Specific internal audience
    Staff Symbol (as applicable)

Subj: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR [NAME THE TOPIC, THIS
MAY EXTEND TO TWO LINES]

Ref: (a) [Optional Reference]

1. <u>SOP Format Guidance</u>. The subject must reflect STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE.
A cover may be placed on the SOP at unit discretion. The second page should state: This Page
Intentionally Left Blank (all caps). Ensure two lines separate the last sentence of the paragraph
and the "#." The standard fields of Enclosure, Distribution, or Copy may be used if needed.

2. <u>SOP Content</u>. The content of the SOP may be customized and expiration date not exceeding
10 years of issuance must be placed within the SOP with a mandatory review to be conducted at
5 years using form CG-5215A, Directives, Publications, and Forms Validation. The reviews
must be administratively retained locally for audit purposes. Cancelled SOPs must be retained
for audit purposes. Follow record retention schedule as appropriate.

3. <u>Other Notes</u>. An SOP must not look like a Commandant Instruction in format. The purpose
of an SOP is to provide procedural guidance which is ultimately based on organizational policy.
For example, there may be an annual policy requirement to fulfill. However, the policy does not
address unique command procedures, and this SOP format is appropriate to clarify these
procedures. The SOP must be promulgated to those in the To line. Newly reporting personnel
may need to review applicable SOPs. Therefore, it is important to keep these SOPs current and
cancel using CG-5215A when obsolete.

#

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[May be customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
[Optional Serial #]
Full month dd, yyyy

[Enter Recipient Address, this is a blank Business Letter template]

Dear Sir or Madam:

Start typing here. No indents.

Second paragraph. No indents.

Third paragraph. No indents. Two lines separating between last sentence of the paragraph and closing, centered. Closing is ¼ inch right of center.

                       Sincerely,

                       [FI. MI. LAST NAME]
                       [Enter Title]
                       U.S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: (1)[Optional Enclosure]

Copy: [Optional Copy]

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Commandant
United States Coast Guard
[May be customized to reflect local
unit]

Unit Street Address
Mail Stop XXXX
City, State Zip Code
Staff Symbol: CG-XXXX
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: officialemail@uscg.mil

SSIC
[Optional Serial #]
Full month dd, yyyy

[Enter Recipient Address for Business Letter]

Dear Sir or Madam:

Start typing here. No indents.

Second paragraph. No indents.

Third paragraph. No indents. Two lines separating between the last sentence of the paragraph and closing, centered. Closing is ¼ inch right of center.

                Sincerely,

                [FI. MI. LAST NAME]
                [Enter Title]
                U.S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: (1) [Optional Enclosure]

Copy: [Optional Copy]

[Symbol/Flag Design]   [Custom Letterhead for FLAG/SES/MCPOCG and Others Authorized Stationery]

[1 line]
[Centered Date Stamp-Optional Placement]

[Full Month dd, yyyy]

Dear Sir or Madam: [Start 2 inches from top on custom stationery, 3 on standard] [1 line]
     [Start typing here. Indent each paragraph throughout the letter. Typically a minimum of 2 paragraphs.]

[2 lines, more if necessary for visual appeal]
Sincerely,

[ENTER SIGNATURE ALL CAPS]
[Enter Title lowercase]
[2 lines]
Enclosure: (1) [Optional Enclosure]
[1 line between Enclosure and Address, or 2 lines between title and Optional Address if selected]
[Optional To Address]

[Custom stationery is typically 7 inch width x 8.5 inch length, margins should be set 2 inches all around when using full size 8 ½ x 11 inch paper and templates]
[Address typically part of customized stationary at top]

Appendix D. List of Correspondence Forms

(Retrieve the latest editable version internally through the Pixel Dashboard "Links." Navigate to Directives Library titled CG Pubs Search. Select the Forms dropdown and type the form number.)

Digest Form CG-4229
Concurrent Clearance Form CG-4590
Directives, Publications, and Forms Validation Form CG-5215A
Routing Slip Form CGHQ-6046

Appendix E. Command Long Titles and Abbreviations

Retrieve the latest version internally through the Pixel Dashboard "Links." Navigate to Directives Library titled CG Pubs Search. Select the "Other Publications" dropdown and type in the search box "Command Long Titles".