

COMMANDANT'S GUIDANCE TO PY25 OFFICER SELECTION BOARDS AND PANELS

BACKGROUND:

The American public depends on the Coast Guard for our Nation's safety, security, and prosperity. We need an officer corps with the leadership and character to achieve mission excellence and ensure the trust of the public we serve and our Coast Guard workforce. Our leaders – at every level – must excel in their performance of duties, while also connecting the full potential of each individual to our greater purpose as a Service.

While boards and panels should apply the same rigor in selection, they may serve different purposes. Selection boards should focus on the general characteristics of an officer who can lead at the next level and continue our Service's tradition of leadership and excellence. Assignment and selection panels may tailor their consideration of skills and career paths to the purpose of the panel and strategic aims of the Service.

GUIDANCE:

Leadership and character are the foundation of officer performance at all levels. Value those officers who build trust and act with courage to create a culture intolerant of harm.

Coast Guard officers lead themselves first, by living our Core Values of *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty*. They deliberately model those values in action every day, making their positive example inspiring for others. And they lead others to align to those values, creating a climate intolerant of words or behaviors that harm individuals or teams. They have a habit of continuous learning and self-development, honing their proficiency in leadership and in their assigned duties. They also build a broad understanding of the Coast Guard and the world we operate in through self-study and higher education.

Officers persistently care for their own health and wellness and inspire the same in others. They possess the emotional intelligence necessary to recognize how their words and actions affect others. That recognition is grounded in the understanding that every individual is unique. Officers should value others' experiences, perspectives, and ideas. All leaders have an obligation to foster the culture and climate that every Coast Guard member deserves. They demonstrate the courage to hold accountable those who fail to adhere to our Core Values.

Officers are inspirational, connecting with crews and individuals to help them achieve personal and organizational goals beyond what they thought possible, while taking the very best care of them. They make decisions and give clear direction on specific matters but strive to engage people and create the foundation of strong relationships built over time. Officers are leaders who provide the clarity necessary to successfully complete tasks and who help people understand why the assigned tasks are important. They can see through fog and ambiguity and communicate a vision for the future. Officers must successfully engage with partners, stakeholders, and the public to accomplish our missions and build trust.

Officers achieve the best team performance by valuing and actively soliciting the experiences, insights, thoughts, and views of every individual. They bring every team member into mission execution, build a sense of camaraderie, and provide a strong sense of belonging. All officers skillfully apply the tools of our talent management system to support our people and families, uphold the standards of our organization, and achieve mission excellence.

Officers demonstrate both followership and leadership up and down the chain of command. They understand organizational goals, align their own work to these goals, and help others understand the bigger picture. They are humble.

Officers empower innovation and recognize when their subordinates have great ideas worthy of pursuit. Demonstrating a bias for action, they have the courage to adapt to a changing world, articulating their ideas to superiors or subordinates with equal skill.

As the Service transforms our talent management system, a cohort of officers will be the first to take career risk by utilizing innovative personnel policies. Boards and panels must recognize officers who forge new ways to serve and are demonstrating leadership and commitment to organizational change. For example, as the Service provides greater opportunities for geographic stability, boards and panels should select those officers who best demonstrate leadership, sustained exceptional performance, and character in assignments of increasing responsibility, regardless of the location of those assignments.

Value the leadership potential of an officer over any specific career path and strive to capture the full range of talent in our Service, particularly for strong performers who may have followed a non-traditional route to the position or rank under consideration.

CWO:

Appoint candidates who are masters of their occupational specialty, who have displayed superb leadership and managerial acumen, as well as adherence to our Core Values. Those selected should display enthusiasm for pursuing new challenges and experiences in the Service and demonstrate attributes that will enable rapid assimilation into our officer corps.

Promote or retain those to the next highest grade who have successfully enculturated themselves and have shown the ability to lead, work collaboratively, get results, and make a difference. Chief Warrant Officers and new appointees should have strong mentorship skills, professional competence, and interpersonal aptitude as they play a pivotal role in the development of our junior officer and enlisted workforces.

O-3 and O-4:

Promote results-oriented officers who have built and honed proficiency in a primary specialty, professional knowledge in their assigned duties, and demonstrate significant leadership potential. Junior officers should vigorously pursue proficiency by acquiring, practicing, and maturing primary specialty skills through frontline operational experience or delivery of mission support.

Junior officers will make mistakes of inexperience as part of the learning process in our fast-paced and demanding operating environment. Evaluate errors against their impact, the underlying conduct and/or behavior, and Service standards. Consider subsequent conduct that positively reflects lessons learned and demonstrates the officer's potential to serve in a position of increased responsibility. However, mistakes that reveal a lack of consideration for our Core Values should be evaluated with less forgiveness than operational mistakes of inexperience.

Officers approaching mid-grade rank should broaden their developmental focus or perspective beyond their assigned billet or primary specialty. Look for officers with intellectual energy and perspective who advance the Service's strategic priorities, such as you might find in impactful programmatic positions, special assignments, or joint/interagency tours. You should value the investment our Service makes in officers selected for advanced education or significant professional training (e.g., naval flight training, fellowships, and post-graduate school) which reflect the potential for future leadership the Service has already identified in these officers. Similarly, military justice is a core practice area for judge advocates. Among Judge Advocates, Boards and Panels should equally value those with litigation experience that includes trial, defense, special victims, and appellate counsel, as those skills are important to the Service. Officers who achieve professional certifications or licenses relevant to the Coast Guard should also be valued.

O-5 and O-6:

Officers competing for selection to O-5 or O-6 are expected to have broad skills and perspectives. These officers must create and guide diverse teams to solve complex or ambiguous problems. Promote officers with a sustained record of exceptional performance, particularly in command cadre or equivalent assignments that demand significant levels of trust, responsibility, discretion, and decision-making. Selected officers must be capable of delivering mission excellence in positions of significant leadership or responsibility that include internal and external representation of our Service, and strategic planning for the future. Select those officers who maintain high standards of performance while fostering positive work environments. Among Judge Advocates, the board should equally value those who have succeeded in litigation, judicial roles, and military justice administration, as those skills are important to the Service.

The Service will be challenged to meet new and emerging mission demands. Senior officers will be called on to find new ways to meet our commitments to customers and stakeholders. Promote senior officers who demonstrate the ability to deliver superior results while managing operational, readiness, political, legal, and fiscal risk across the full spectrum of Coast Guard activities. Tailor this factor in evaluating officers who demonstrate analogous ability in specialized career paths that are essential to support and execute our missions. We must be guided by officers with a strategic view and the ability to develop effective and innovative solutions, working closely with peers in the Service and our joint, interagency, or maritime stakeholders, and political entities to accomplish our missions. The evolving demands on our Service will require senior officers who are effective change agents that can translate strategic intent into the collective actions necessary to achieve our shared goals.

O-6 CONTINUATION AND SELECTION TO FLAG RANK:

The Coast Guard Flag Officer corps must be comprised of our very best leaders with the ability to set a strategic vision and guide our organization during the most demanding and dynamic of times. Select those few officers who display innovation, entrepreneurship, independence of thought, and the ability to lead teams to achieve substantive results. These traits are indicative of officers who can solve complex problems and move our organization forward in an increasingly dynamic environment. We need senior officers with a proven record of creating a work environment that encourages innovation and prudent risk taking. We need senior officers who lead with a collaborative spirit within, outside, and across the Service.

The strongest candidates for flag selection will have distinguished careers that include successful command or equivalent assignments that involve professional risk, demand similar trust, responsibility, decision-making, and proven results. At this senior level, these officers must demonstrate the ability to gain and leverage knowledge, and effectively lead in areas outside of their career experiences, relying on subordinate subject matter experts and delegation when prudent. Candidates must be able to articulate a clear understanding of the Coast Guard's relevance to the Nation and the maritime community, and they should be ready to lead the Service through complex challenges requiring an optimal blend of keen intellect, political savvy, exceptional communications skills, and agile execution. The best officers will also be those who have the clear potential to build and lead a diverse and inclusive Coast Guard.

Flag nominees are highly respected by their peers, those they lead, and external stakeholders. They possess unassailable character and integrity that will allow them to lead by example. They successfully balance humility with confidence. The Coast Guard needs Flag officers who take an enterprise view and act as catalysts for constructive change. Promote candidates who demonstrate the courage to make difficult decisions to ensure the Coast Guard's long-term success and can balance those choices with near term imperatives. Select officers who are truly dedicated to shaping a total workforce that is ready to meet emerging challenges and nurture the next generation of Coast Guard leadership.

Flag nominees must have keen political acumen and the ability to strengthen relationships and partnerships with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense/Joint Force, the federal/state/local/tribal government interagency construct, the international community, and the private sector.

O-6s selected for continuation or retention should demonstrate these attributes and qualities needed in our flag corps. Their records must reflect a sustained record of exceptional performance, including successful command or equivalent assignments that involve professional risk, demand similar trust, responsibility, decision-making, and proven results. Given the competitiveness of O-6 continuation, only select those Captains with the clear drive and passion to continue to serve with distinction.

RESERVE:

Reserve officers are leaders in our total workforce; the background and guidance in this document should be equally applied to Reserve officers and to Active Duty Promotion List (ADPL) and Inactive Duty Promotion List (IDPL) boards and panels alike. The Reserve Component (RC) is a national contingency-based asset trained to meet our statutory mobilization requirements for Defense Readiness, Ports, Waterways & Coastal Security (PWCS), Incident Management/Response & Mission Support. When not mobilized, our reserve officers augment the Active Component to maintain proficiency, support on-going Service needs, and enhance standard operations. Promote Reservists who both possess the skills required of their PAL position and who have also taken the extra steps necessary to attain higher levels of proficiency in key contingency response mission areas, to include ICS qualifications. Reserve officers shall demonstrate the same general characteristics of performance, professionalism, leadership, and education as their active-duty counterparts. Promote Reservists who have demonstrated the ability to achieve superior training and readiness results for those they lead.

Like their Active Duty counterparts, senior officers shall be experts, mid-grade officers and CWOs shall be competent technical specialists, and junior officers shall be dynamically developing apprentices. Officers shifting from the mid to senior grades require greater emphasis on leadership, depth and diversity of experience necessary to effectively work with the various federal, state, and local organizations they will encounter during a contingency response. Depth and diversity of experience may be obtained through assignments, mobilizations, training, and education.

It is critical that Reservists make efficient use of drill time to ensure our workforce is ready. Of those Reservists eligible for retention, consider the amount of time in grade each officer has had to demonstrate their potential. However, due to the extremely competitive nature of Reserve retention boards, time in grade cannot be the sole criteria because the Service can only afford to retain those Reservists with the proven skills and leadership abilities to meet mobilization requirements.

RESERVE COMPONENT MANAGERS (RCM):

Reserve Component Manager (RCM) officers are reserve officers serving in full-time support positions to organize, administer, recruit, instruct and train the Coast Guard Reserve Component (RC). The background, guidance, and core values expectations in this document shall be equally applied to RCM officers and their boards and panels. When designating future RCM officers, select those who possess skills that support and strengthen the RC; for RCM permanency, select those RCM officers whose service positively impacts the RC and improves the readiness of our Reservists to train and deploy. RCM officers have diverse backgrounds, experience, and appropriately related skills in human resource management, finance, data analysis, and emergency management. The board should give due consideration to the level of competency and experience an officer has as reflected in the relevant CG-RCM10 officer specialty code. Promote RCM officers who demonstrate superior RC support, elevate the Coast Guard Reserve program, and enhance the RCM Corps' value to the Coast Guard.

CONCLUSION:

Our people are the Coast Guard's greatest strength – and our Core Values are their foundation. You bear a sacred trust for both the future of our Service and those officers under consideration. Thank you for undertaking this critically important responsibility.



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