
Christopher Ekstrom, Ph.D.



Deputy Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy, Technical Director (OPNAV N2N6EB) Chief of Naval Operations

Dr. Ekstrom is the Deputy Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy for the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare. He also serves as the Technical Director to the Oceanographer. This programmatic and technical portfolio includes naval oceanography; meteorology; and Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT).

Dr. Ekstrom was promoted to Senior Leadership in May, 2018. Before coming to OPNAV, Dr. Ekstrom served as the Head of Requirements and R&D for Precise Time and Astrometry (N8/N9) at the U.S. Naval Observatory (USNO), leading planning and programming activities across all areas of precise time generation and dissemination as well as astrometric products that support DoD-wide missions.

Prior to serving as USNO N8/N9, Dr. Ekstrom led the Clock Development Division at USNO. Starting in 1996, he led the development of advanced atomic clocks for the Department of Defense Master Clock. The resulting clocks, called rubidium atomic fountains, are the most stable continuously operating clocks in the world.

Dr. Ekstrom received his Ph.D. in Experimental Atomic Physics from MIT in 1994 and his B.S. in Physics from the University of Washington in 1988. After graduate school, he held an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship performing research in Germany for two years, followed by a one-year appointment at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. He has been in the Civil Service for 22 years.

Dr. Ekstrom has received the Navy Meritorious Civilian Award, the AFCEA/USNI Copernicus Award, and the U.S. Naval Observatory Simon Newcomb Award. He holds DAWIA certifications in both Program Management and Science and Technical Management. Dr. Ekstrom has published more than 35 papers and proceedings in the areas of atomic physics, atom and quantum optics, and atomic clock development.