



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 1120.9A  
N131  
7 Dec 2017

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1120.9A

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS IN THE CHAPLAIN CORPS OF THE NAVY

Ref: (a) DoD Instruction 1304.28 of 11 June 2004  
(b) DoD Instruction 1310.02 of 26 March 2015  
(c) DoD Instruction 1300.04 of 25 July 2017  
(d) SECNAVINST 1000.7F  
(e) DoD Directive 1304.19 of 11 June 2004  
(f) DoD Instruction 1312.03 of 22 November 2013  
(g) OPNAVINST 1210.5A  
(h) SECNAVINST 1420.1B  
(i) SECNAVINST 5351.1  
(j) SECNAVINST 1730.7D

Encl: (1) Qualifications and Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers in the Chaplain Corps  
(2) Chaplain Candidate Program

1. Purpose. To delineate policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the appointment and recall of officers to the Navy Chaplain Corps (CHC), for the appointment of Chaplain Candidate Program officers, and for the management of the Chaplain Candidate Program under references (a) through (f).

a. This revision updates qualifications and guidelines for the appointment of officers in the CHC, enclosure (1), and the management of the Chaplain Candidate Program, enclosure (2).

b. This is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1120.9.

3. Applicability. This instruction applies to all appointments in the Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) to the CHC and Chaplain Candidate Program, to include: Reserve officers transferred to the AC, Reserve officers recalled voluntarily to the active-duty list (ADL), AC officers transferred to the RC, and transfers from other uniformed services in line with references (c) through (g).

4. Policy. The Department of the Navy (DON) will maintain authorized strength and grade levels in the CHC to support the annual submission of the 5-year promotion plan required by paragraph 6 of reference (h).

a. The requirements of Professional Naval Chaplaincy (PNC) guide the selection of applicants for appointment as chaplains and chaplain candidate officers (reference (i)). The Chief of Chaplains (CNO (N097)) recommends the best and fully qualified applicants to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education (CNO (N1)). This recommendation is based on the applicant's willingness to function in the diverse and pluralistic environment of the military and his or her ability to deliver the CHC's core capabilities (reference (j)). Applicants recommended for appointment must meet the professional and educational qualifications required by this instruction and references (a) and (e).

b. CNO (N097), in conjunction with Commander, Navy Reserve Forces (COMNAVRESFOR), will maintain a pool of chaplain candidate officers to serve as a source for CHC accessions.

c. Sources of newly appointed CHC officers include: the Chaplain Candidate Program, the direct appointment of qualified civilian religious ministry professionals (RMP), inter-Service transfer of chaplains from other Military Services, and, in the case of appointment to the RC, transfer of officers from the ADL who have completed their initial obligated service.

d. Requirements for CHC officers on the ADL in controlled pay grades that cannot be met by promotion may be supplemented by retired and recalled officers retained via an age waiver as well as the voluntary recall to active duty of CHC officers from the RC.

#### 5. Action

a. The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), or delegated authority, may approve entry grade credit, entry grades, and dates of rank in compliance with this instruction.

b. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (COMNAVCRUITCOM) will assign a chaplain's grade and date of rank based on the criteria established in this instruction, subject to the approval of the SECNAV or delegated authority.

c. CNO (N097) will:

(1) develop an annual accession plan, in conjunction with Bureau of Naval Personnel, AC CHC Officer Community Manager (BUPERS-316), to support authorized strength in the CHC;

(2) verify professional qualifications;

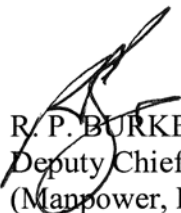
(3) notify CNO (N1) when an ecclesiastical endorser withdraws its endorsement of a chaplain;

(4) notify CNO (N1) of a chaplain's new ecclesiastical endorsement and certification of professional qualification; and

(5) recommend to CNO (N1) a chaplain's continuance based on needs of the Navy.

6. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

7. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, Director, Military Personnel Plans and Policy (OPNAV (N13)) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense (DoD), SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.



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Releasability and distribution:

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QUALIFICATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE  
APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS IN THE CHAPLAIN CORPS

1. Eligibility. Applicants must meet the requirements for appointment as a CHC officer in either the AC or RC as directed by references (a) and (b).
  - a. Citizenship. Be a citizen of the United States according to Title 10, U.S. Code, section 532.
  - b. Entry Age. Be commissioned before their 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Waiver criteria for this requirement are contained in paragraph 2.
  - c. Moral Character. Be of good moral character and of unquestioned loyalty to the United States as determined by interview and investigation.
  - d. Drug and Alcohol Abuse. As directed by SECNAVINST 5300.28E, individuals who are chemically dependent, who abuse drugs or alcohol, whose pre-Service abuse of drugs or alcohol indicates a proclivity for continued abuse, or who have a record of any drug trafficking offenses, are not eligible for appointment as CHC officers.
  - e. Physical Standards. Meet the physical standards for service on active duty as delineated by NAVMED P-117. CNO (N1) may grant waivers for physical defects.
  - f. Moral Assent. Applicants must affirm that, if appointed, they will abide by applicable laws and all applicable regulations, directives, and instructions of the DoD and the DON. This includes a willingness to function in a pluralistic environment and to support, both directly and indirectly, the free exercise of religion by all members of the Naval Service, their family members, and other authorized persons (references (i) and (j)).
  - g. Professional Qualifications
    - (1) Be fully qualified RMPs as directed by reference (a).
    - (2) Receive an endorsement from a DoD listed religious organization (RO) or an endorsement from an RO seeking qualification as an endorsing body.
    - (3) Complete a minimum of 2 years of full-time religious leadership experience following the completion of educational requirements, providing a broad range of ministry as an RMP in the endorsing RO.
    - (4) Have the ecclesiastical authority to represent the endorsing RO as an RMP and to conduct its religious services within the DON as defined by reference (j).

(5) Possess a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours from an accredited college or university, as defined in reference (a). The recommended cumulative grade point average (GPA) is at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent).

(6) Possess a post-baccalaureate graduate degree in theological or related studies of not less than 72 semester hours from an accredited college or university, as defined in reference (a). At least two thirds of these hours must be earned in residence. The recommended cumulative GPA is at least a 3.4 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent).

2. Waivers to Requirements. Waivers to the eligibility requirements will be adjudicated by CNO (N1), with recommendation from CNO (N097).

a. Age Waivers. Applicants unable to complete 20 years active commissioned service by age 62 must acknowledge in writing that they may be ineligible for full retirement benefits.

(1) Active and Reserve applicants must be eligible to commission before their 58th birthday. COMNAVCRUITCOM is granted waiver authority for applicants between ages 47 and 57. Waivers cannot be sub-delegated below the flag level and COMNAVCRUITCOM will maintain on file written justification for each waiver granted.

(2) On a case-by-case basis, CNO (N1) may approve applicants age 58 or older if the applicants can complete 3 full years of service prior to age 62.

b. Coordination. AC waiver requests will be coordinated through BUPERS-316. RC waiver requests will be coordinated through the RC CHC Officer Community Manager (BUPERS-318).

3. Guidelines for Review of Professional Qualifications. An applicant's professional qualifications for appointment in the CHC, Chaplain Candidate Program, and transfers between AC and RCs must be verified by CNO (N097) with the assistance of the Chaplain Appointment and Retention Eligibility Advisory Group. This applies to applicants for direct appointments to AC or RCs, voluntary recall from the RC to the ADL, inter-Service transfers, and superseding applications from chaplain candidate officers to ACs or RCs.

4. Entry Grade Credit

a. Entry grade and date of rank upon appointment in the CHC will be based on the number of years of entry grade credit awarded for prior active commissioned service, advanced education, and professional experience under reference (f). Credit will be granted subject to the computation rules in subparagraph 4b and as specified in table 1.

TABLE 1. ENTRY GRADE CREDIT

Qualification	Credit
1. Commissioned service in any of the uniformed services on active duty or in an active status.	1 year
2. Successful completion of a post-baccalaureate graduate degree in theological or related studies (reference (a)).	3 years
3. Seven or more years of full-time practical experience in ministry following the completion of the educational requirements (reference (a)). To be credited, the applicant must have accrued the experience as a fully qualified RMP of an RO. The experience may include pastoral ministry, religious education, or other forms of full-time religious vocation.	1/2 year for each year of experience not to exceed 1 year of credit
4. Normally, the DON will not grant entry grade credit for special experience or unique qualifications. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)), considering the recommendations and supporting justification of CNO (N1), may waive this limitation on a case-by-case basis when there is a requirement that cannot be met within the guidelines of this instruction.	1/2 year for each year of experience not to exceed 3 year of credit

b. Limits and computation of entry grade credit are contained in subparagraphs 4b(1) through 4b(8).

(1) A period of time or a qualification will be counted only once.

(2) Qualifying periods of less than 1 full year will be proportionally credited to the nearest day.

(3) Credit will not be awarded for service as a warrant officer.

(4) Graduates of the Service academies will not be awarded credit for any service performed or education, training, or experience obtained before graduation.

(5) Entry grade credit will not normally be awarded for education, training, or experience obtained while on active duty or in the RC in an active status. If the officer completes advanced education specified in reference (a) for initial appointment in less than the normal number of years, the officer may be given constructive credit for the difference between the normal number of years and the actual number of years taken. Detailed guidance is furnished in Title 10, U.S. Code, sections 533 and 12207.

(6) Total entry grade credit will normally be limited to 6 years. The ASN (M&RA), considering the recommendations and supporting justification of CNO (N1), may waive this limit on a case-by-case basis.

(7) CHC officers recalled from the RC are not entitled to additional entry grade credit. Officers will be recalled in the rank held in the RC.

(8) Total entry grade credit must be no more than that required for the grade of lieutenant commander. This limit may be waived by the SECNAV if there are significant reasons to appoint a person in a higher grade. As stated in reference (f), this credit is not applicable to the appointment of a Reserve commissioned officer as a regular commissioned officer under Title 10, U.S. Code, section 533(f).

## 5. Appointments

a. Entry Grade. Prospective CHC officers will be appointed in a grade based on entry grade credit. Entry grade and date of rank of CHC officers transferred from other Services into the CHC will be determined under references (c) and (d).

b. Date of Rank. The date of rank is the date of appointment. When entry grade credit exceeds the minimum for appointment in a given grade, but is less than that necessary for the next higher grade, the excess credit adjusts the date of rank within grade. The appointee's excess entry grade credit will be compared with the time in grade of CHC officers on the ADL in the same grade. The date of rank upon appointment will be the same as that of the CHC officer on the ADL in the same grade with time in grade most equal to, but not less than, the appointee's excess entry grade credit.

### c. Assignment of Precedence

(1) AC appointees will be placed on the ADL under the provisions of OPNAVINST 1427.2. All appointees whose placement on the ADL would render them eligible for consideration in zone or above zone for promotion by an active duty promotion selection board must be counseled regarding the option to defer eligibility for consideration for promotion under reference (j) and acknowledge such counsel in writing.

(2) RC appointees will be placed on the Reserve active-status list under the provisions of OPNAVINST 1427.1B.

## 6. Accession Training Requirements

a. All CHC officers directly appointed to the AC will complete Officer Development School and PNC Basic Leadership Course prior to reporting to their first duty station.

b. All CHC officers directly appointed to the RC will complete accession training prescribed by COMNAVRESFOR and CNO (N097).

(1) RC Direct Commission Indoctrination Course must be completed during the first year of Reserve affiliation.

(2) PNC-Basic Leadership Course phases 1, 2, and 3 must be completed within 2 years of Reserve affiliation.

(3) RC chaplains who have not completed both Direct Commission Indoctrination Course and PNC-Basic Leadership Course phases 1, 2, and 3 will only be assigned to the operational support unit at their local Navy operational support center.

7. Chaplain Candidate Officer. Chaplain candidate officers applying to supersede as CHC officers, AC or RC, must meet the requirements as defined in this enclosure.

8. Delayed Commissioning. CNO (N1), upon the recommendation of COMNAVCRUITCOM, may authorize delayed commissioning when a later time is requested by the applicant.

9. Removal and Non-Participation

a. CHC Officers

(1) CHC officers who fail to meet accession training requirements defined in paragraph 6, or fail to adapt to the standards of PNC, as determined by the commanding officer of the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, will be relieved of any statutory service obligation and active duty obligation incurred as a result of accepting an appointment into the CHC and will be separated for cause, as directed by SECNAVINST 1920.6C.

(a) Service obligations incurred prior to accepting an appointment into the CHC are covered in SECNAVINST 1920.6C.

(b) CNO (N1) may recommend, with supporting justification, retention and transfer to another competitive category when that action would be in the best interest of the Navy.

(2) CNO (N1) will remove CHC officers from the CHC if their ecclesiastical endorsing agent withdraws their endorsement (reference (a)).

(3) CNO (N1) will remove CHC officers from the CHC if they are convicted of a terrorism-related offense or other offense threatening national security or if their names appear on the annual State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organizations List or the Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List in line with reference (a).



b. Endorsing Agents and ROs

(1) Ecclesiastical endorsing agents or ROs will lose the ability to endorse chaplains until disposition of charges are complete if:

(a) indicted for terrorism-related offenses or other offenses threatening national security; or

(b) they appear on the annual State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organizations List or the Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List.

(2) CNO (N1) will prohibit ecclesiastical endorsing agents or ROs convicted of terrorism-related offenses or other offenses threatening national security from participating in the Navy Chaplain Candidate Program.

(3) The removal from or rejection for participation in the Navy Chaplain Candidate Program of an RO revokes all ecclesiastical endorsements by that RO, including currently endorsed chaplains.

CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE PROGRAM

1. Purpose. To familiarize graduate students of religion with PNC and to aid in meeting future year CHC accession requirements. CNO (N1) will maintain a Navy Chaplain Candidate Program (reference (a)).

2. Eligibility

a. Receive approval from a DoD listed RO or an endorsement from an RO seeking qualification as an endorsing body under reference (a).

b. Possess a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours from an accredited college or university with a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent.

c. Matriculate to a residential, graduate-level, degree-granting theological or related religious studies program in a qualifying educational institution as set forth in reference (a), obtaining at least two thirds of the required academic credits as a resident student at the institution.

d. Complete educational, ecclesiastical, and professional experience requirements for an original appointment as a CHC officer prior to reaching the age limitation for such an appointment in line with enclosure (1).

e. Meet all other DON appointment eligibility criteria.

f. Maintain a satisfactory standing under the standards of the graduate school in which enrolled and in any training program prescribed by the candidate's RO.

3. Appointment. Candidates selected for the program will be appointed as an ensign, Navy Reserve, unrestricted line-prospective staff corps, designator 1945. During the period of their professional studies, and while gaining requisite professional post-graduate experience, candidates will:

a. serve without pay or allowances while in a student status, except during periods of active duty for training (ADT) for Chaplain Candidate Program on-the-job training (OJT);

b. maintain a cumulative post-baccalaureate GPA of at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent (please note: the recommended cumulative post-baccalaureate GPA is 3.4 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent);

c. show progress towards gaining at least 2 years of religious leadership experience in their RO;

d. complete required officer accession training and chaplain candidate officer orientation program prior to first ADT or OJT; and

e. complete, at a minimum, one ADT or OJT assigned by the Chaplain Candidate Program manager and all other training requirements as directed by CNO (N097).

4. Disenrollment. Chaplain candidate officers may be separated from the RC under circumstances as outlined in SECNAVINST 1920.6C.

a. Withdrawal of approval by the chaplain candidate officer's RO. If approval is withdrawn, the Chaplain Candidate Program officer has 30 days from the date of notification to respond to CNO (N097) regarding their status. Failure to respond or obtain another RO approval in a timely fashion will result in disenrollment.

b. Failure to maintain a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent.

c. Discontinuing professional training or withdrawal from school for more than 1 year.

d. Failure to obtain a qualifying degree.

e. Failure to supersede before coming into zone for lieutenant commander.

f. Failure to attend and successfully complete required officer accession training and the chaplain candidate officer orientation program.

g. Violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice or State or Federal criminal statutes.

h. Failure to conform to prescribed standards of dress, weight, personal appearance, or military deportment while on ADT or OJT.

5. ADT. ADT or OJT is an integral part of the Chaplain Candidate Program.

a. The Chaplain Candidate Program manager is responsible for assigning all ADT or OJT.

b. Chaplain candidate officers on ADT or OJT must be under the supervision of a chaplain.

c. Assignments must involve tasks in religious ministry programs consistent with the level of training of the chaplain candidate officer.

d. Chaplain candidate officers are not authorized to serve as or in place of chaplains.

6. Superseding Appointment in the CHC. Upon completion of their post-baccalaureate degree and followed by 2 years of religious leadership experience in their RO religious training, chaplain candidate officers may seek appointment as CHC officers, either AC or RC, under enclosure (1).

a. Chaplain candidate officers must complete all initial training in line with enclosure (1) to be considered for appointment.

b. Chaplain candidate officers who are not offered a superseding commission, elect not to apply for a superseding commission, or decline acceptance of one when offered, will be disenrolled from the Chaplain Candidate Program and discharged from the Navy Reserve.

7. Wearing of CHC Insignia. Chaplain candidate officers are not authorized to wear CHC insignia. When permitted by uniform regulations, chaplain candidate officers will wear a name tag indicating their status as chaplain candidates.

8. The Chaplain Candidate Program Manager. Under the direction of COMNAVCRUITCOM, the Chaplain Candidate Program manager will:

a. maintain contact with the chaplain candidate officer until the officer either accepts a superseding appointment or is discharged from the Navy;

b. monitor the educational progress of chaplain candidate officers;

c. coordinate the chaplain candidate officer orientation program;

d. coordinate and assign ADT or OJT assignments for chaplain candidate officers; and

e. provide administrative support for chaplain candidate officers.