

1. I had heard mention of the “18-3-18” concept. Why is the name changing already, from “18-3-18” to “PCO Pipeline”?

“18-3-18” was used to describe this initiative, which envisioned a nominal three month period for training and rest between the XO and CO Fleet up assignments (the “3” between the two “18” month tours). As the concept developed into an implementation plan, there were countless permutations considered – variables that would affect the length of the interim period. This initiative is specifically about the training and rest period between XO and CO tours. Since Officers are familiar with the term “pipeline” to refer to leave and training in preparation for an assignment, and since a Fleet-Up Officer becomes the PCO after they have been properly relieved as XO, PCO Pipeline is an appropriate and familiar term.

2. What is the new PCO Pipeline?

The PCO Pipeline is an improvement to the XO/CO Fleet Up construct. It provides the opportunity for the PCO to rest and prepare for Command, and allows a new XO time to get established under a seasoned CO. As executed today, Officers are afforded up to 30 days of leave (operations and schedule permitting) after they are relieved as XO. During this second stage, we are adding dedicated PCO training. It affords a PCO the opportunity to take 30 days of leave (if desired) or TDY with their ISIC or TYCOM Executive Agent (i.e. MIDPAC, RSO PACNORWEST or CNSS-14 if ISIC is not co-located in homeport) , and then attend three weeks of training to ensure compliance with standards and procedures for placement in command. Two of those weeks will be at SWOS while the third will focus on advanced warfighting and doctrine. Advanced warfighting training locations will notionally be: DDG PCOs – ATRC Dahlgren; LCS PCOs – LCSRON/LTF; LSD PCOs – SMWDC Det Little Creek, and starting in FY 17, MCM PCOs – SMWDC Det Point Loma. Ideally, PCOs will also return to CNSP or CNSL for a short TYCOM INDOC geared to PCOs. The intent is to provide XOs and COs with the tools, resources, and time needed to manage and lead with energy, competence, and confidence.

3. Why has the community decided to do this?

With initiatives like Distributed Lethality and advancements and investments in training resources, we have the ability to further develop our expertise as leaders and warfighters. Additionally, the intent is to provide XOs and COs with the tools, resources, and time needed to manage and lead with energy, competence, and confidence. The time between the XO and CO tours is an important one. This construct provides a notional pipeline to facilitate the transition from XO to CO. It formalizes this process and enables the XO to truly focus on being the XO for the entire tour, knowing they will have dedicated time to focus on assuming command and final preparations for their command tour. Further, the “standardized” break in between the two tours allows for reflection, introspection and ultimately enables an Officer to create a strategic roadmap for their command tour.

4. When does/did this process start?

It’s already started. The first PCO courses started in March 2016. By 1 October 2016, all PCOs will execute the full PCO Pipeline: 30 days of leave/TDY, attend PCO Course at SWOS Newport, advanced warfighting training, and TYCOM Indoc

5. What commands does this apply to?

All O5 fleet up ship commands: LCS, DDG, and LSD (with the exception of Special Mission). Additionally, MCMs will transition to this model in 2017.

6. What is expected of me - is there something I need to provide to SWOS, CSCS, and SMWDC before entering the PCO Pipeline?

Yes, you will receive a list of deliverables about 4 months before you start the PCO Pipeline (i.e. CSMP Information, ship's schedule, Standing and Battle Orders, READ-E1 message, INSURV and Safety Survey reports, etc). They are relatively simple, but focus at SWOS is on the ADCON responsibilities (man, train, equip) – with a vision toward advanced warfighting.

7. Has FITREP timing been taken into consideration for this process?

Absolutely. The sequencing of the reset and training will largely be driven by Change of Command timing – which includes FITREP considerations. PXOs will typically arrive to their ships at least three months prior to the CO's PRD – which will inherently make the PXO-XO-CO chain more elastic & flexible. If a Change of Command is expected to occur prior to the CO's PRD, then the ship & ISIC should notify PERS-41 as soon as practicable. Doing so will increase the chances that the PXO can arrive even earlier – without sacrificing enroute training. As always, early communication is a key to success!

8. What is the sequence of training? How flexible is the sequence? How is the sequence determined?

Typically, a PCO will be afforded an opportunity to take leave or TDY immediately after relief as XO. PCOs will then report to SWOS Newport for the PCO Course, proceed to advanced warfighting training, then return to CNSP or CNSL for a short TYCOM INDOC geared to PCOs. XOs should contact Placement & PERS-410B approximately 9 months into their XO tours to initiate a dialogue regarding the scheduling of their PCO Pipeline. This initial conversation is critical to setting expectations and laying groundwork for potential ISIC waivers (if required). As the relief date gets closer, the ISIC will play the most critical role in fine tuning the scheduling and training. See questions 10 through 12.

9. How is the training funded?

For ships in their homeport, PERS 41 will fund the training at SWOS, advanced warfighting location, and TYCOM. For ships on deployment, on patrol greater than 90 days or out of homeport, orders will be funded by the TYCOM to fly the Officer back to homeport to conduct coordination with the ISIC and/or local TYCOM Executive Agent (i.e. MIDPAC, RSO PACNORWEST or CNSS-14 if ISIC is not co-located in homeport), as well as return to CNSP or CNSL for a short PCO-focused TYCOM Indoc, before beginning leave or TDY. After that period, PERS will fund the travel to SWOS Newport and advanced warfighting location, and then back to the ship directly. If an Officer desires leave after the training, and their ship is still on deployment, they may take leave, but must take leave from their last training stop. PERS can only fund the travel from the last training back to the ship – wherever the ship is in the world.

10. Are there any differences in the PCO Pipeline between deployed and non-deployed ships?

Yes. For ships not on deployment, PCOs are afforded the opportunity for up to 30 days of leave or TDY and should receive three weeks of focused training. An ISIC may need to adjust a CO Projected Rotation Date due to operational requirements or FITREP management plans, which could prevent the PCO from

taking 30 days of leave/TDY or from receiving the full three weeks of training. In such cases, ISICs shall submit leave/TDY and or training waiver recommendations to the appropriate TYCOM as part of the Officer's Fleet-up Certification, or if timing does not support, an e-mail to the appropriate TYCOM N7 w/ Cc: to respective COS and PERS-41 will suffice. If approved, the TYCOM staff will notify PERS 41 and training commands.

For ships on deployment, on operational patrol of greater than 90 days duration, or away from homeport, the PCO, once relieved of duties as XO, will return to homeport to conduct coordination with the ISIC and/or local TYCOM Executive Agent (i.e. MIDPAC, RSO PACNORWEST or CNSS-14 if ISIC is not co-located in homeport) before beginning leave or TDY, then proceed to the formal schoolhouse training at SWOS and advanced warfighting location. Due to the importance of maintaining operational awareness and maximizing "water under the keel" experience, the policy above is amended as follows: a PCO is afforded 21 days leave or TDY and a two-week training period prior to returning to theater to meet their ship on deployment to assume command. As above, deviation from this policy requires TYCOM approval.

ISICs are reminded to coordinate CO change of command plans with operational commanders.

To summarize:

- IF NOT ON DEPLOYMENT: Goal is up to 30 days of leave or TDY and three weeks of training at SWOS and advanced warfighting location (readiness, leadership, advanced warfighting), plus short TYCOM INDOC

- IF DEPLOYED, ON A PATROL GREATER THAN 90 DAYS, OR AWAY FROM HOMEPORT: Goal is up to 21 days of leave or TDY and two weeks of training at SWOS and advanced warfighting location (shortened version of the three week course), plus short TYCOM INDOC

11. Who submits waivers to the "standard" sequence of reset and training? How are they submitted? Who approves them?

If above goals can't be met, then ISIC coordinate w/ PERS-41 to build an alternate plan. ISIC will submit waiver via the XO/CO Fleet-Up Certification endorsement letter. If timing does not support (i.e. things change after XO/CO Fleet-Up Certification is submitted), an e-mail to the appropriate TYCOM N7 w/ Cc: to respective COS and PERS-41 will suffice. It is expected that ISIC's will coordinate with their operational commanders before submitting.

12. What input does my ISIC provide for my training?

During the coordination phase, the ISIC has the opportunity to provide focus areas for the schoolhouses and for the PCO. In some cases, PCOs will have an intense operational period ahead of them. This is an opportunity for SWOS and CSCS/ SMWDC to look at deployed operations specifically. Additionally, SWOS will typically arrange a VTC with FDNF DESRONS and PHIBRONs as a part of the curriculum to provide an opportunity for the PCOs to hear directly from their future operational commanders. If the ISIC desires to send their PCOs out-of-area for non-standard meetings or training, they should utilize their TADTAR to fund that travel.

13. I really don't understand the leave policy, can you explain? Do I have to take 30 days of leave?

The Executive Officer job is hard. Command is even more demanding. Linking these two assignments back to back makes for an extremely challenging and potentially exhausting three years. PCO's are afforded up to 30 days of leave (if desired and if operations and schedule permit) after they are relieved as XO in order to get a mental and physical reset. We cannot compel people to take leave. For those Officers who do not want to take leave or who may not have leave days to take, that time can be spent TDY with their TYCOM Executive Agent (i.e. MIDPAC, RSO PACNORWEST or CNSS-14 if ISIC is not co-located in homeport) to continue to prepare for command.

14. Does this policy apply to Major Commanders?

No, the PCO Pipeline applies only to O5 Fleet up commands (LCS, LSD, DDG) with the exception of Special Mission. O4 Fleet up commands (MCM) will follow in 2017.