

## **CHAPTER VI**

### ***PROMOTIONS***

#### **601. PERFORMANCE -- THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

The key to success on the job and when being considered by promotion boards is sustained superior performance in a variety of challenging assignments. The same criteria that got the LDO, CWO or WO1 selected. The officer who continually strives for, and achieves, outstanding performance in all assignments can expect to have a satisfying and rewarding career.

This chapter provides useful technical information on the promotion system. Read it carefully and refer to it often as you progress in your officer career. For basic career planning, refer to Chapter VII, which describes the scope and general career path for each designator. Use it only as a starting point. Discuss your career with your CO, other officers, including senior LDOs or CWOs, and with your detailer. You must then make your own decisions based on all of these inputs and your personal considerations.

#### **602. COMPETITIVE CATEGORIES**

LDOs and CWOs compete for promotions within Revised Competitive Categories (RCC).

a. LDO Revised Competitive Categories are: Surface (61XX), Submarine/Nuclear (62XX), Aviation (63XX), General Line (64XX) and Staff (65XX).

b. CWO Revised Competitive Categories are: Surface (71XX), Submarine (72XX), Aviation (73XX), AVO (737X), General Line/Staff (74XX/75XX) and Information Warfare (78XX).

#### **603. OFFICER PRECEDENCE NUMBERS**

The Chief of Naval Personnel schedules appointments of all newly selected LDOs, CWOs and WO1s. Selectees are appointed according to this schedule and a "constructive percentile number" based on the rank order of selection by the board recommending their appointment.

Approximately one year after commissioning, precedence numbers (commonly referred to as "lineal numbers") are assigned to all ensigns. CWOs and WO1s are normally assigned precedence numbers within a few months after appointment. LDO, CWO and WO1 precedence numbers are based on the following criteria, in descending order:

- Grade
- Date of rank

- Percentile number
- Acceptance date (if other than date of rank)
- Date of birth
- Alphabetically

**604. CONTROL GRADES**

CWO5, Lieutenant Commander, Commander and Captain are "control grades" -- the number that the Navy can have in each of these grades is set by law and cannot be exceeded. As such, promotions into these grades are driven solely by vacancies -- the fewer vacancies, the fewer promotions. Control grade limitations directly affect flow points, described below in detail.

**605. PROMOTION GUIDELINES**

One purpose of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1981 was to establish a uniform promotion system within the Department of Defense (DoD). To comply, DoD developed certain guidelines regarding promotion "flow points." This guidance, combined with Navy policy regarding promotion opportunity (percent opportunity for selection), form the basis for annual promotion plans. Actual selection opportunity and flow points may vary in the annual promotion plan.

**RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES**

To Grade	PERCENT OPPORTUNITY	FLOW POINT (YRS COMM SVC)
O6	40-60%	21-23
O5	60-80%	15-17
O4	70-90%	9-11
O3	ALL FULLY QUALIFIED	4
O2	ALL FULLY QUALIFIED	2
CWO5	AS ANNOUNCED	*11-13 TYPICAL
CWO4	AS ANNOUNCED	*7
CWO3	ALL FULLY QUALIFIED	*3

\* = CWO time in grade (years)

WO1 to CWO2 - Refer to [SECNAVINST 1412.8 \(Series\)](#)

**606. PROMOTION FLOW POINTS**

Understanding promotion flow points and how they are derived are critical to LDO and CWO career planning. Changes in promotion flow points can very easily determine what an officer's "terminal grade" might be at retirement. As indicated above, control grade limitations dictate actual flow points; the individual has no control over flow point fluctuation.

A flow point is the point at which an officer is promoted to the next higher grade and is calculated from ENS date of rank for LDOs, and from CWO2 date of rank for CWOs. Under current law, LDO LCDRs and below (including CWO4s and below) must retire after thirty years combined enlisted and commissioned service. However, once promoted to CDR, the maximum tenure allowed by law for an LDO is 35 years total active naval service, or twice failing of selection for promotion to CAPT, whichever occurs first. An LDO CAPT can serve to 38 years total active naval service. And a CWO5 can serve to 33 years total active naval service.

The following illustrates how a change in flow points can affect an LDO's career progression. The example illustrated is that of an LDO with 13 years enlisted service at time of commissioning.

**CASE #1**

GRADE	ENS	LCDR	CDR	CAPT
FLOW POINT (FROM ENS)	0	10	16	22
-----**-----				
TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE	13	23	29 <b>30</b>	35

\*\* Mandatory retirement point for LDO LCDRs and below.

In this case, the LDO has an opportunity to make CDR before reaching 30 years total active service. If selected and promoted to CDR, it is possible for the individual to remain on active duty to 35 years total active naval service, with an opportunity for selection to captain prior to statutory retirement after 38 years total active naval service.

**CASE #2**

GRADE	ENS	LCDR	CDR	CAPT
FLOW POINT	0	11	17	N/A
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TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE	13	24	30	

In case #2, the flow points increased by two years, making it likely that the LDO will reach the 30 year mandatory retirement point before being considered for CDR. As a result, and assuming selection to each higher grade, the terminal grade changes from CAPT to LCDR. Remember, the above examples are based on an LDO being commissioned with 13 years enlisted service and flow points within DOPMA/DOD guidelines.

Time in grade required for promotion from CWO2 to CWO3 is currently 3 years. Promotion from CWO3 to CWO4 is currently 4 years. From CWO4 to CWO5,

time in grade is 4-6 years. Under the Warrant Officer Management Act (WOMA), they must have at least three years time in grade to "be considered" for promotion to the next higher grade. They must meet this prerequisite prior to the actual convening date of the board.

The following illustrates an example of how flow points can affect a CWO's career progression. The example illustrated is that of a CWO2 with 17 years enlisted service at time of commissioning.

**CWO Case**

GRADE	CWO2	CWO3	CWO4	CWO5
FLOW POINT (FROM CWO2)	0	3	7	13
TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE	17	20	24	30

In this case, the CWO has an opportunity to make CWO5 before reaching 30 years of active service. If selected and promoted to CWO5, it is possible for the individual to remain on active duty to 33 years total active naval service.

**607. ESTABLISHING PROMOTION ZONES**

Planning for each fiscal year promotion plan begins in September and finalizes in mid-December. Promotion zones for the upcoming fiscal year are announced annually (December) in an ALNAV with the subject of "**NOTICE OF CONVENING FY-XX PROMOTION SELECTION BOARDS**". Officers approaching selection board eligibility should make it a point to read this message to see whether or not they are in the promotion zone.

The promotion plan is initiated by the applicable officer community manager (i.e., LDO and CWO Community Manager) and is forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Naval Operations, and ultimately to the Secretary of the Navy for approval. At each level, the plan is carefully reviewed to ensure that promotions meet the needs of the service and that, whenever possible, promotion opportunity and flow points conform to DOPMA/DOD guidelines. Any deviation from guidelines require SECNAV approval.

Three principal factors combine to determine the number of authorized promotions and, therefore, the number of officers that may be placed in zone:

**a. The number of officers authorized for that grade within a given competitive category.** Officer authorizations are adjusted yearly to reflect changes in the size and shape of the Navy.

**b. Projected vacancies.** Projected vacancies are determined by

taking the number of officers currently filling authorized billets (or selected for and awaiting promotion to that grade), minus projected losses (retirements, re-designations, reversions and promotions to the next higher grade).

**c. Selection opportunity.** Promotion opportunity, expressed in percent, is applied to the number of authorized promotions, to determine the size of the promotion zone.

For example: If there are 63 vacancies for lieutenant commander and opportunity is 70%, the 90 most senior lieutenants in the same competitive category (regardless of designator) who have not yet been considered for promotion will be placed in zone (70% of 90 equals 63).

## **608. DEFINITIONS**

**"Promotion zone"**, or "in zone", consists of those officers who have not previously been considered for promotion for the next higher grade and who are eligible for promotion by virtue of their relative seniority within their competitive category, based on lineal number, which is explained in section 603 (above). The senior officer in the promotion zone is the "senior in zone", and the junior officer in that zone is the "junior in zone". The promotion zone is the foundation of the promotion plan described above.

**"Above zone"** refers to those officers who have previously been considered for promotion to the next higher grade by a selection board, but were not selected. Above zone selection opportunity is not limited by policy or law; however, each selection from above zone reduces the number that may be selected from in zone or below zone. "Senior eligible" refers to the senior officer eligible above zone.

**"Below zone"** refers to those officers who are junior to the junior officer listed in zone, but who have been determined to be eligible for promotion. Whenever possible, each officer is given two below zone or "early looks" before going "in zone" for promotion. Promotions from below zone are restricted to no more than 10 percent of the total authorized promotions. As in the case of above zone selections, each selection from below zone reduces the number that may be selected from in zone or above zone eligible.

## **609. YEAR GROUPS**

Year Group (YG) is the fiscal year (FY) in which the officer was commissioned. A common misperception is that year groups have a direct bearing on promotions. Many LDOs expect year groups to go into promotion zones as a whole, but that has not been the case for several years. A year group is simply a convenient way to refer to officers with original dates

of rank in the same fiscal year.

As indicated above, officers are placed in promotion zones based on **vacancies** and their relative seniority, instead of by year group. One of the community manager's top priorities is to maintain flow points and percent of opportunity within certain guidelines.

#### **610. PROMOTION SELECTION BOARDS**

LDO selection boards are convened under the authority of [10 U.S.C. 611\(a\)](#).

Active Duty CWO selection boards are convened under the authority of [10 U.S.C. 578](#), and for Reserve personnel, [10 U.S.C 12242](#).

Promotion selection boards are composed of senior-officers of experience, maturity and varied backgrounds from each competitive category being considered by that particular promotion selection board. Their task is to recommend for promotion the best qualified from among all eligible officers, above, below, and in-zone. The number of officers recommended for promotion may not exceed the number of officers approved by the secretary of the Navy in the annual promotion plan.

Through a letter called a "precept", the Secretary of the Navy instructs the board president regarding Navy requirements and stipulates that the proceedings shall not be disclosed except as authorized by the Secretary. This statement prevents external pressures from influencing the board's decisions. The promotion selection board is required only to submit its findings and recommendations and not the reasons for its decisions. The Secretary of the Navy also directs that promotion selection board members will not be assigned to counsel those officers who fail selection before the board in which they were members.

Upon completion of the tasks prescribed in the precept, each promotion selection board prepares a final report of its findings and recommendations. Each report must be signed by all board members and recorders, certifying that the board complied with all instructions contained in the precept, and as appropriate, other letters of guidance or instruction provided by the Secretary of the Navy.

For LDO control grades (LCDR - CAPT), once selections have been made, the board is provided with each community's merit reorder language and requirements. Board members are expected to use their experience and judgment after review of the records recommended for promotion to determine those records of particular merit. In a separate tank/vote, boards may merit reorder up to 15% of the selectees for each competitive category. Selected

officers identified for merit reorder will promote ahead of above zone selections. (Merit Reorder for CW05 is currently awaiting NDAA approval.)

While no record of the board's deliberations is retained, detailed records of the eligibility lists are retained. These lists are meticulously checked and rechecked to avoid errors. The fact that the records of the deliberations are not retained is also of interest to those individuals not selected, in that nothing enters their records indicating why they were not recommended for promotion. Recommendations of the board are then forwarded, in order, to:

- a. Chief of Naval Personnel
- b. Judge Advocate General of the Navy (for legal review)
- c. Chief of Naval Operations (currently NA)
- d. Secretary of the Navy
- e. Secretary of Defense

Promotion selection board recommendations for the promotion of officers to LDO and CWO grades are normally approved or disapproved by the Secretary of the Defense, acting for the President of the United States, and are announced by NAVADMIN. Recommendations for promotion to permanent grades are approved and announced by the Secretary of the Navy, then forwarded to the Secretary of Defense for transmittal to the President. The President forwards the approved list to the Senate for confirmation.

#### **611. COMMUNICATION WITH A SELECTION BOARD**

Each officer eligible for consideration for promotion by a selection board may communicate in writing with the selection board. Individuals may not appear in person before a promotion selection board. The written communication may call the board's attention to any matter that the officer considers important. Material submitted must be received 10 days prior to the board's convening date. Only the officer being considered for promotion may communicate directly with the selection board. Anyone else must submit information via the officer concerned.

The link to download a sample letter to the board and instructions on how to submit the letter are available on the MyNavyHR website at:

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Boards/Active-Duty-Officer/>

## **612. IF NOT SELECTED FOR PROMOTION**

The statutory procedures for promotion selection constitutes a competitive system that requires the selection of the best qualified from a group of generally outstanding officers. Any selection board, thus, considers a group of highly capable officers. This results in a certain number of individuals failing selection one or more times. Proper and timely counseling of these officers, if initiated by their own request, is required. The counseling officer will prepare a record for file indicating when and how the request was made (e-mail, telephone, personally, etc.), when and how the counseling was provided and the specific nature of the counseling. The counseling shall also consist of review the officer's record and indicating factors that may account for the officer not being competitive. Officers receiving counseling should be aware that no one actually on a selection board can state with certainty why one particular officer was not selected for promotion. The proceedings of selection boards are confidential, and as a matter of policy, record of the deliberations is not maintained.

If you did not select for promotion, you will continue to be looked at for promotion as an above zone eligible each year until promoted or your status in the Navy changes (e.g. retirement, resignation, release from active duty, lateral transfer, etc.) This applies to both in zone and above zone officers that do not select for promotion.

If you fail selection for the first time, contact your detailer immediately. Detailers have access to all necessary records and are able to compare you with your contemporaries in grade and specialty. They are the individuals most qualified and capable of providing this vital Failure of Selection (FOS) counseling. In most cases, he/she will be able to advise you of the most probable reason(s) for non-selection and offer advice on how you might "get well" before the next board.

If, despite your best efforts, you are still not selected, you'll receive a letter from PERS 80, advising you of your options and providing a point of contact. The rules vary depending on your present grade, so each case is handled individually. In general, LDOs below the grade of commander and CWOs who twice fail of selection to the next higher grade have until the first day of the seventh month following approval of the board's report to take the action outlined in the letter from PERS 80, be it retirement, reversion or discharge.

Active duty officers in the grades of Lieutenant Commander and below who have not been selected for promotion two or more times, and are within two years of qualifying for retirement on the first day of the seventh month following approval of a promotion board's results, will be retained until retirement eligible per [10 U.S.C. 632](#). This circumstance is informally known as "sanctuary."

Active duty Lieutenant and Lieutenant Junior Grade officers with prior enlisted service that have twice failed of selection for promotion to Lieutenant Commander or Lieutenant may be eligible to resign and re-enlist (informally called "reversion") in order to reach retirement eligibility. These officers must have at least 16 years, but less than 18 years of active military service on the date they would be separated, to be eligible for reversion. To verify your eligibility contact PERS-835, Officer Separations, at (901) 874-2085.

More information is available at: <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Boards/General-Board-Info/Status-Non-Select/>

**613. OBLIGATED SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Community-Management/Officer/Active-OCM/LDO-CWO/Retirement/>

Once promoted certain in-grade service requirements must be met to be eligible for retirement. The following minimum time in grade requirements are prescribed for voluntary and involuntary (statutory) retirements:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>VOLUNTARY</b>	<b>INVOLUNTARY</b>
ENS	*Six months	Six months
LTJG	*Six months	Six months
LT	*Two years	Six months
LCDR	Three years	Six months
CDR	Three years	Six months
CAPT	Three years	Six months
CWO2/3/4/5	*Two years	01 day

\* Must complete initial four year service obligation upon appointment to LDO/CWO status

Involuntary retirements are those mandatory retirements based on statutory limitations of law; e.g., CWO2/3/4, lieutenant commanders and below must retire after completion of 30 years total active service. (Selective Early Retirement (SER) is involuntary)

Voluntary retirements are all other retirements submitted by the member requesting a retirement date that is earlier than the individual's involuntary (statutory) retirement date.

Additional information on retirement laws is contained in Chapter VII.