MILPERSMAN 1730-010

USE OF LAY LEADERS IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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References	(a) CoCI 5380.1
	(b) SECNAVINST 1730.7D
	(c) OPNAVINST 1730.1E
	(d) SECNAVINST 7010.6

1. **Policy**

   a. This article applies to lay leaders only. Reference (a) applies to civilian volunteers who provide religious services. Per reference (b), commanders will provide a command religious program (CRP) in support of religious requirements and preferences of authorized personnel. Pursuant to reference (c), commanders may appoint lay leaders to accommodate religious diversity inherent in the members of the command. Appointments will be made in writing for a specified period of time, normally 1 year, and may be renewable at the commanding officer's (CO) discretion. Only authorized personnel representing their own religious organization (RO) may be appointed.

   b. Lay-led religious services are integral to the CRP and subject to command supervision. In most cases, lay-led services constitute a temporary accommodation of specific religious requirements in operational, isolated, or unique settings which include, but are not limited to, deployments, recruit training commands, isolated duty stations, and military sealift ships when assigned chaplains are unable to provide or otherwise facilitate.

2. **Qualifications and Training**

    a. COs will appoint authorized personnel as lay leaders on the basis of volunteerism, high moral character, motivation, religious interest, and a letter of certification by the appointee's RO. COs will require lay leaders to be trained and supervised by a military chaplain.

    b. Religious program specialists will not be appointed as lay leaders, nor will religious program specialists lead religious services within the CRP.

3. **Terms of Appointment**

    a. Appointment of a lay leader responds to an identified requirement and conveys no ecclesiastical status or civilian credentials to the authorized member appointed.

    b. The appointment ends when the particular requirement precipitating the appointment has ceased (e.g., at the end of deployment or underway period), when the requirement can be met by a chaplain or contract civilian religious ministry professional (CRMP), when the lay leader is transferred, or at the CO's discretion. The CO may terminate the appointment when the conduct of the individual hinders the CRP and or in the interest of good order and discipline.

4. **Responsibilities**

    a. While supporting the religious requirements for which they were appointed (in a deployed setting) lay leaders should first seek the services of a local military chaplain or contract CRMP. If this is not possible or practical, lay leaders should seek to arrange transportation to an appropriate religious service in the vicinity of the command. Lacking these opportunities, lay leaders may provide a religious service for members of their RO, consistent with their lay status, and as authorized by their RO.

    b. Lay leaders may be appointed at shore commands when circumstances warrant. Such appointments might be made at recruit training commands or in isolated locations where chaplain or contract CRMP presence is impractical.

5. **Rites, Sacraments, and Ordinances**

    a. Military chaplains and contract CRMPs are ordinarily the only persons to provide rites, sacraments, and ordinances within the Department of the Navy.

    b. COs may permit lay leaders to provide specified religious rites, sacraments, or ordinances to their co-religionists if their RO permits them to do so. A statement of certification or approval by the RO to conduct the religious rite, sacrament, or ordinance must be provided by the lay leader. A military chaplain should be consulted.

6. **Offerings**

    a. Religious offerings will not be taken at lay-led services, except as authorized by the CO.

    b. Any monies collected will be part of the command religious offering fund and must be collected, accounted for, and disbursed per reference (d).