

BILLETS COLLECTION SYSTEM TUTORIAL FOR REVIEWING OFFICIALS (TEXT VERSION)

Greetings to all reviewing officials of Commissioned Corps officers. I am pleased to provide this tutorial for reviewing officials, who will be completing second-level reviews of new billets created by Corps Officers, as part of the transformation of the USPHS Commissioned Corps billets system. I thank you for your interest.

By now, you may or may not have heard about the transformation of the Commissioned Corps and, more specifically, about the transformation of our billets system. For those of you in the civilian sector, billets are the Commissioned Corps equivalent to Civil Service position descriptions. The Corps billets transformation process will result in the creation of unique billets for all non-flag positions (GS-15 equivalent and below) in the Corps. This will be a monumental effort to create over 6,000 billets.

To the greatest extent possible, this tutorial will attempt to explain and define Commissioned Corps concepts for civilian reviewing officials. For additional detail on the Corps, civilian reviewing officials are strongly encouraged to review “Resources for Supervisors of U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officers: Working Together Toward a Common Goal”. Although this product is geared towards supervisors, the concepts apply to reviewing officials, also. It is available at: www.usphs.gov/Supervisor. Resources in this section are designed to:

- promote a productive working relationship between Corps officers and civilian personnel;
- provide information to minimize the administrative burden on supervisors while streamlining Corps human resource actions and activities; and
- provide supervisors with the tools to collaborate successfully with and manage Corps officers.

Included in this section is a general overview of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, a booklet containing answers to frequently asked questions, and contact information if you have additional questions.

The goals of billets transformation are twofold. In the short-term, we will create unique, position-specific billets for all positions currently encumbered by Commissioned Officers. In the long-term, we will create unique, position-specific billets for all positions that could *possibly* be encumbered by Commissioned Officers.

The benefits of billets transformation are numerous. Overall, the result will be enhanced force management of the Corps. Enhanced force management will enable the Corps to monitor vacancies and skills shortages more effectively and also be more efficient in recruitment efforts. More specifically, the benefits for officers will be clarity and specificity of responsibilities, creation of objectively graded billets, provision of real-time vacancy monitoring, with the overall result of enhanced career development. For

agencies and supervisors, the new billets will allow real-time identification of officers for positions and electronic referral of qualified candidates.

I will now describe some of the attributes of the new billets that will be created under billets transformation.

- Billets will now reflect positions, and not officer capabilities. This is probably the greatest departure from the current billets system. In the current system, billets are often edited to meet changing capabilities and responsibilities of officers. In the new system, billets will only be edited to reflect changing responsibilities of positions. Officer capabilities will be captured in the new electronic officer profiles;
- The new billets will be electronically linked to these officer profiles;
- Billets will contain standard components (developed by professional category leadership) which generically describe essential duties;
- They will also contain position-specific components (initially described by the officer, then reviewed by supervisors and reviewing officials) which will provide precise duty station information;
- New billets will describe requirements for the position as well as additional desired qualifications (not necessarily required); and
- Billets have a designated *estimated* length of tour. This designation will not be a requirement, only an estimation.

The only feasible way to create over 6,000 new billets is to request the officers currently encumbering those billets to start the process. We understand that this is not the perfect scenario and that this process can introduce bias. We have integrated several checks and balances into the process, but it is still critical that each officer exercise integrity when initiating the billet which describes his or her position. Officers will be reminded that they will be initiating billets to describe the minimum qualifications for the positions they currently encumber. These new billets must not reflect the officer's capabilities but must reflect the minimum qualifications, duties, and responsibilities for the position. The officer should initiate the billet with the frame of reference that, "if I left this position tomorrow, what minimum qualifications, duties, and responsibilities would be required of the officer who backfilled this position?"

There are several steps in the process to create billets.

1. The first step in this process is the officer initiation of a new billet;
2. The second step in the process will be when the supervisor reviews the billet and makes edits (in coordination with the officer), as necessary;
3. The third step, which is the subject of this tutorial, will be where the reviewing official (or Agency Liaison, in some cases) reviews the billet and makes edits (in coordination with the supervisor), as necessary. These first three steps mimic the process for the current Commissioned Officers Effectiveness Report process which, as a reviewing official for a Commissioned Officer, you have likely participated in the past;

4. The fourth step of the process is where Agency Liaisons and Commissioned Corps Professional Advisory Committees (PACs) reviews summary reports of all billets (that have been initiated by officers and reviewed by supervisors and reviewing officials) and identify billets which seem to be out of the norm. As stated, Agency Liaisons and PACs will not be reviewing each individual billet. They will review summary reports to identify billet outliers and anomalies. Then, if necessary, edits will be completed in coordination with reviewing officials; and
5. Finally, the last step in the process will be where the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO) will complete a final review of the summary report and make final approvals.

Our goal is to start the billet initiation process in late fall of calendar year 2009. The process will be implemented in phases representing two or more professional categories (e.g. Nurse and Therapist) representing approximately 1,000 to 1,700 officers at a time. Multidisciplinary billets (billets which could be filled by an officer from two or more professional categories—for example, a Project Officer billet) will be the last type of billets to be addressed in this implementation schedule. The entire billets creation process will not be complete until mid calendar year 2010. And, the newly created billets, from the process initiated in calendar year 2009, will not be made official until later in 2010. Until all billets have been created and we are reasonably certain that a quality product has resulted, no billets will made official.

The first step of officer responsibilities for billets initiation will be standard billets selection. To give you a better understanding of this process, as a reviewing official, I will provide you with background information regarding officer responsibilities.

In the first step of the billet initiation process, officers identified as belonging to the current implementation phase (for example, nurses in nursing-specific billets) will receive an automated email requesting them to participate in the process. This email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to a specific officer. The email will provide specific instructions on how to complete this portion of the process, and it will include contact information to request assistance.

To Originating Officer to Select Standard Billet

Dear Officer:

The purpose of this response is to elicit your mandatory participation in the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project. You are requested to give this request your immediate attention. By now, you should have been made aware of this project and taken the opportunity to participate in the online billets transformation tutorial.

As a Commissioned Officer, you will be taking the initial step towards developing a new billet to describe the position that you currently encumber. Specific instructions for the initial step of this project can be found below (“INSTRUCTIONS”).

Overhaul of the Corps billets system is a monumental task, but it is one that can be achieved in a logical, step-by-step fashion. Over the past three years, tremendous effort has been expended by Agencies and the professional categories of the Corps to bring us to where we are today. The categories have created several hundred category-specific standard billets and Agencies have assisted in the creation of multidisciplinary billets, all of which will be used as templates to create position-specific billets.

The plan to create position-specific billets begins with you, the officer, and your selection of one of the standard billet templates, which most closely matches the duties and responsibilities of your current position, followed by the your addition of position-specific information to the billet (almost exclusively in the form of drop-down selections). This draft billet will then be reviewed and potentially edited by your supervisor, reviewing official, Agency liaison, and professional category. The final product will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations.

INSTRUCTIONS:

*Attached to this email, you will find a standard billet selection spreadsheet. Right click on this document and save it to your desktop. Then open this document, read over the descriptions of the potential standard billets, click on the arrow beside the yellow box, and then click on the appropriate billet title. You are strongly encourage to engage your supervisor, in this step of the process, to ensure appropriate standard billet title selection. Once you have made this selection, save the document, “reply” to the original email that you received, attach the edited document, and send the email. **Please keep in mind that you are describing your current position, not your professional capabilities. Select a billet that describes the duties and responsibilities that would be required of your successor if you were to leave your current position tomorrow.** Shortly after you complete this first step in the process, you will receive a second email with an attachment and additional instructions.*

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Thank you for your participation!

Attached to this initial email will be a document which lists all of the standard billet titles relevant to the position the officer encumbers. (***Please open the Excel document titled “BCS Sample Standard Billet Selection”.***) In this example, a Nurse in a Nurse billet will receive a listing of all Nurse category standard billet titles. As you scroll down this spreadsheet, you will see that there are 21 standard billet titles. Included with each of these titles is a short description of standard duties associated with the title. The officer will scroll to the top of the page, click on the box beside “Select your standard billet title”, then click on the down-arrow to reveal the 21 standard billet title choices. Officers are strongly encouraged to engage their supervisors, in this step of the process, to ensure appropriate standard billet title selection. The officer will then click on the standard billet title, from the dropdown menu, which most closely approximates the duties and responsibilities of the position he/she encumbers. After saving this edited document, the officer will then reply to the email solicitation he/she received and attach the document containing the selected standard billet title selection.

Shortly thereafter, the officer will receive a second email. This email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to a specific officer. Attached to this email will be the standard billet reflecting the title that the officer selected in the previous process, specific instructions on how to complete this part of the process, and contact information to request assistance.

To Originating Officer to Provide Position-Specific Information

Dear Officer:

In response to your completion of the first step of the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project, attached you will find the standard billet that you selected in this first step. Please right click on this document and save it to your desktop, and then open it.

The document contains three tabs. At the bottom of the page, you will see tabs titled “Billet Form”, “Instructions”, and “FAQ”. The “Billet Form” tab is where you will add position-specific information to the standard billet to describe the position you encumber. The “Instructions” will guide you through this process, and the “FAQ” will answer some frequently asked questions regarding the billets collection process. You are strongly encouraged to review and use all of the instructions. Doing so will eliminate most document creation errors.

The white boxes are the only fields in the document which can be changed. The other fields have been fixed by representatives of the professional categories or, in the case of

multidisciplinary billets, with the assistance of Agency representatives. Any field that has an asterisk () beside it is a required field. You must submit information for that field. If you do not, the document will be returned to you for correction. Fields without asterisks are discretionary. Only enter information in those fields if you believe it is warranted. Except for the field titled “Additional Duties for this Specific Position” (Section 3 of 12, “Descriptions of Duties”), all information is entered into this document via drop-down menus which contain attribute options. When you click on the “down arrow” beside any white box (with the exception of the “Additional Duties...” box previously described), a list of potential selections will appear. Click on the appropriate selection for each row. **Please keep in mind that you are describing your current position, not your professional capabilities. Complete this document by describing and selecting duties and responsibilities that would be required of your successor if you were to leave your current position tomorrow.***

Once you complete the document, save it, “reply” to the original email that you received, attach the edited document, and send the email. The system administrator will check your document to ensure that it has been properly completed. If not, it will be returned to you for corrections. If so, it will be forwarded to your supervisor for review. If your supervisor disagrees with any of your selections, he/she will contact you to discuss possible changes. If he/she agrees with your selections, the document will then be forwarded to your reviewing official, Agency liaison, and PAC representative for review. If any of those individuals disagree with any of your selections, you will be contacted to discuss possible changes. Following all of these review steps, the document will be forwarded to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations for approval.

It is anticipated that none of the newly created billets, under the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project, will become “official” until CY 2010. All members of the Corps will be clearly notified as to how and when this will occur.

Your assistance in this process is invaluable and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact:

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When the officer opens the standard billet document (that was attached to the second email), he/she will see that this document contains 10 sections. ***(Please open the Excel document titled “BCS Sample Standard Billet – Clinical Nurse Manager”.)*** Only the

white boxes of these sections can be edited by the officer. The other rows have been pre-populated with information specific to the officer encumbering the position, agency geographic information, and fixed standard billet base requirements which have been pre-determined by professional category leadership (the blue rows).

There is only one “free text” box in the document. This is the “Additional Duties” row in section 3.

All other white boxes contain drop-down selections. When an officer clicks on any one of these rows, a drop-down menu of selections will become visible. If you click on the “Physical Demands” box, in Section 2 of 10, then click on the down arrow beside that box, it will show the three possible attributes that can be associated with the “Physical Demands” topic.

Row titles containing asterisks are required fields. Selections must be made for the attributes reflected by these rows. For example, “Physical Demands” was one of those rows containing an asterisk.

Row titles which do not contain asterisks are optional. It is at the officer’s discretion whether to make selections for these attributes. The following is an example of an optional attribute. Scroll down to Section 6 of 10. In this case, the Nurse category has determined, during standard billet development, that all Clinical Nurse Manager positions must have relevant training in Management/Leadership and must have 4 years of Medical-Surgical experience. These items are in blue boxes. For the billet developed for this specific, fictional location, let’s also assume that we want to add additional preferred experience of 2 years in Case Management. To make this selection, click in the white box, in Section 6, titled “Experience Preferred”, then click on the down arrow and select “Case Management”. Next, click on the “Years of experience preferred” box directly below that, then click on the down arrow and select “2 years”. Please note two things. The first is that you were not required, as part of the process, to add anything to Section 6 because there was no asterisk beside the boxes in this section. Secondly, you made the “Case Management” selection a preferred attribute for this billet, but not a requirement.

The officer will notice that there are three tabs at the bottom of the document. The first tab is the “Billet Form”; which is the tab in the document that we have been working on to this point. The second tab is “Instructions”; by clicking on this tab, the officer will find section-by-section instructions on how to complete the Billet Form (listed by the same section numbers and titles found on the Billet Form). Click on the “Instructions” tab and scroll down the page. You will see that these are very detailed instructions on how to complete the Billet Form.

The third tab, FAQ or Frequently Asked Questions, contains answers to several FAQs about the billet initiation process. Included in this section are answers to questions regarding grades that will be calculated for these new billets and a Commissioned Corps/Civil Service grades equivalency chart. Click on the FAQ tab to view this information.

Now, click the Billet Form tab. In Section 1, of the Billet Form, you will note that the officer is required to identify his/her supervisor, by name and work email address. There are two boxes for this information.

After the officer completes the Billet Form, he/she will reply to the email that contained the standard billet document (the second email that was received) and attach the document which he/she just completed. This information will be used, by the billet system operator, to forward the officer initiated document to the initiating officer's supervisor for review. Officers WILL NOT directly forward initiated billets directly to their supervisors. The billet system operator will review documents, first, for completeness, and will then take the action of forwarding them to supervisors for review.

Once the Billet Form (which was previously completed by an officer) has been error checked by the billets system operator, the designated supervisor, will receive an automated email requesting him/her to review the officer-initiated billet form. The email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to a specific supervisor. The email will provide specific instructions on how to complete this portion of the review process, and it will include contact information to request assistance. In order to keep the billets transformation process moving forward expeditiously, supervisor response to the review request is required within 30 days. After 30 days, the assumption will be made that the supervisor did not have issues with the officer-initiated Billet Form.

To Supervisor to Review Billet

Dear Mam/Sir:

As the supervisor to a Commissioned Corps officer, your review and editing (if necessary) of the attached billet is requested. The USPHS Commissioned Corps has initiated the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project. By now, you should have been made aware of this project and taken the opportunity to participate in the online billets transformation tutorial.

That attached billet was completed by the officer listed on the document to describe the duties and responsibilities of the position he/she currently encumbers. **The subject officer was specifically requested to complete this document by describing his/her position, not his/her professional capabilities. The officer was asked to complete this document by describing and selecting duties and responsibilities that would be required of his/her successor if he/she were to leave his/her current position tomorrow.**

To begin your review, please right click on the attached document, save it to your desktop, and then open it.

The document contains three tabs. At the bottom of the page, you will see tabs titled “Billet Form”, “Instructions”, and “FAQ”. The “Billet Form” is where the officer added position-specific information to the standard billet to describe the position he/she encumbers. The “Instructions” were provided to guide the officer through this process, and the “FAQ” were provided to answer some frequently asked questions regarding the billets collection process. You are strongly encouraged to review and use all of the instructions during your review. Doing so will eliminate most document errors.

The white boxes were the only fields in the document which the officer could change. The other fields were fixed by representatives of Commissioned Corps professional categories or, in the case of multidisciplinary billets, with input from Agency representatives. Any field that has an asterisk (*) beside it was a required field. The officer was required to submit information for that field. Fields without asterisks were discretionary. The officer was instructed to only enter information in those fields if he/she believed it is warranted. Except for the field titled “Additional Duties for this Specific Position” (Section 3 of 12, “Descriptions of Duties”), all information was entered into this document via drop-down menus which contain attribute options. When the officer clicked on the down arrow beside any white box (with the exception of the “Additional Duties...” box previously described), a list of potential selections appeared. The officer was instructed to click on the appropriate selection for each row.

Your task is to review the “white box” information submitted by the officer for accuracy. If you disagree with any of this information, you should contact the officer to discuss possible changes. If you both agree to changes, make the changes within the document. If you can not resolve information differences, contact CAPT Bailey using the information provided at the end of this email.

Once you have completed your review of the document and made any changes, save it, “reply” to the original email that you received, attach the edited document, and send the email. The system administrator will check this document to ensure that it has been properly completed. If not, it will be returned to you for corrections. If so, it will be forwarded to the reviewing official for review. If the reviewing official disagrees with any aspect of the document, he/she will contact you to discuss possible changes. If he/she agrees with the submitted document, it will become a component of a summary document and be forwarded to your Agency liaison and the appropriate Commissioned Corps professional category for review. If either of these entities disagrees with the document, you will be contacted to discuss possible changes. Following all of these review steps, the document will be forwarded to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations for approval.

It is anticipated that none of the newly created billets, under the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project, will become “official” until CY 2010. All members of the Corps will be clearly notified as to how and when this will occur.

Your assistance in this process is invaluable and greatly appreciated, and we sincerely want your input into the process. However, in order to keep the Project

moving forward expeditiously, your response to this request is required within 30 days. If you do not respond within 30 days, it will be assumed that you have no issues with the officer-initiated billet and it will be forwarded on for the next level of review.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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When the supervisor opens the officer-initiated billet document (that was attached to the review-request email solicitation), he/she will see both the fixed standard billet base requirements (information contained in the blue rows) and the officer initiated position attributes (information contained in the white rows). ***(Please open the Excel document titled “BCS Sample Standard Billet – Clinical Nurse Manager” (Supervisor Review))***. If there are white rows that are blank, the officer was not required to make attribute selections for those rows. The supervisor will also see the “Position Grade” that resulted from the officer’s contributions to the billet development. This can be found in Section 1 of 10. The supervisor will also note the same Instructions and FAQ tabs at the bottom of the form provided for review.

The supervisor is requested to review the officer’s “white box” attribute entries for accuracy. If the supervisor agrees with these entries, he/she will do three things. First, enter the reviewing official’s name and work email address in Section 1 of 10. This individual is typically the supervisor of the initiating officer’s supervisor (the same individual who acts as reviewing official for the officer’s Commissioned Officers’ Effectiveness Report (COER)). In Indian Health Service detail positions, the reviewing official is oftentimes a federal employee. Second, electronically save the document. Third, reply to the email that contained the officer-initiated billet and attach the document which you reviewed. This information will be used, by the billets system operator, to forward the supervisor-reviewed document to the reviewing official for secondary review. Supervisors WILL NOT directly forward the billet document directly to the designated reviewing official. The billet system operator must first review the billet, for completeness, and only after this review will it be forwarded it to the reviewing official for review.

If the supervisor does not agree with the officer’s “white box” attribute entries, he/she is requested to contact the officer, discuss his/her concerns, and reach a mutually agreeable

decision regarding potential changes to these entries. This “mutually agreeable” route is strongly encouraged, but if agreement can not be reached, the supervisor should contact the billets transformation contact for assistance. Once changes have been completed, the supervisor should follow steps one, two, and three, which were previously discussed—that is, enter the reviewing official’s name and work email address, save the document, and reply to the solicitation email with the edited document attached.

Once the Billet Form (which was previously completed by an officer and reviewed by the officer’s respective supervisor) has been error checked by the billets system operator, the designated reviewing official will receive an automated email requesting him/her to review the officer-initiated and supervisor-reviewed billet form. The email will look very similar to the text you see, below, with the exception that it will be addressed to a specific reviewing official. The email will provide specific instructions on how to complete this portion of the review process, and it will include contact information to request assistance. In order to keep the billets transformation process moving forward expeditiously, reviewing official responses to the review requests will be required within 30 days. After 30 days, the assumption will be made that the reviewing official did not have issues with the officer-initiated Billet Form.

To Reviewing Official to Review Billet

Dear Mam/Sir:

As the reviewing official to a Commissioned Corps officer, your review and editing (if necessary) of the attached billet is requested. The USPHS Commissioned Corps has initiated the Commissioned Corps Billets Transformation Project. By now, you should have been made aware of this project and taken the opportunity to participate in the online billets transformation tutorial.

The attached billet was completed by the officer listed on the document to describe the duties and responsibilities of the position he/she currently encumbers. It was then reviewed, and possibly edited, by the officer’s supervisor (also listed on the document) in conjunction with the initiating officer. **The subject officer was specifically requested to complete this document by describing his/her position, not his/her professional capabilities. The officer was asked to complete this document by describing and selecting duties and responsibilities that would be required of his/her successor if he/she were to leave his/her current position tomorrow.**

To begin your review, please right click on the attached document, save it to your desktop, and then open it.

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Your task is to review the “white box” information submitted by the officer, and reviewed by the officer’s supervisor, for accuracy. If you disagree with any of this information, you should contact the officer’s supervisor to discuss possible changes. The supervisor will contact the officer, as necessary, to share your concerns. If you and the supervisor both agree to changes, make the changes within the document. If you can not resolve information differences, contact CAPT Bailey using the information provided at the end of this email.

Once you have completed your review of the document and made any changes, save it, “reply” to the original email that you received, attach the edited document, and send the email. The system administrator will check this document to ensure that it has been properly completed. If not, it will be returned to you for corrections. If so, it will become a component of a summary document and forwarded to your Agency liaison and the appropriate Commissioned Corps professional category for review. If either of these entities disagrees with any aspect of the document, you will be contacted to discuss possible changes. Following all of these review steps, the document will be forwarded to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations for approval.

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When the reviewing official opens the officer-initiated and supervisor-reviewed billet document (that was attached to the review-request email solicitation), he/she will see both the fixed standard billet base requirements (information contained in the blue rows) and the officer-initiated, supervisor-reviewed position attributes (information contained in the white rows). (*Please open the Excel document titled “BCS Sample Standard Billet – Clinical Nurse Manager” (Reviewing Official Review)*). The reviewing official will also see the “Position Grade” that resulted from the supervisor-reviewed officer’s contributions to the billet development, still found in Section 1 of 10. The reviewing official will also note that the same, previously described, Instructions and FAQ tabs are located at the bottom of the form for use and review.

The reviewing official, like the supervisor, is requested to review the officer’s “white box” attribute entries for accuracy. If the reviewing official agrees with these entries, he/she will do two things. First, electronically save the document. Second, reply to the email that contained the officer-initiated and supervisor-reviewed billet and attach the document which was reviewed. The document forwarded by the reviewing official will be used, by the billets system operator, to generate summary billets reports for review by Agency Commissioned Corps liaisons and Commissioned Corps Professional Advisory Committee representatives.

If the reviewing official does not agree with “white box” attribute entries that were initiated by the officer and reviewed by the officer’s supervisor, he/she is requested to contact the supervisor, discuss his/her concerns, and reach a mutually agreeable decision regarding potential changes to these entries. This “mutually agreeable” route is strongly encouraged, but if agreement can not be reached, the reviewing official should contact the billets transformation contact for assistance. Once changes have been completed, the reviewing official should follow steps one and two, which were previously discussed—that is, save the document, and reply to the solicitation email with the edited document attached.

This concludes the action requested of reviewing officials to review billets. The entire process should take no more than one-half hour of your time. By completing the billet

review process, you are providing a tremendous service to the Corps as we transform our billets system to support effective and efficient force management. Thank you!