



POM 12-001  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 4 October 2011

---

By Order of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service:

VADM Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA

---

TO: All Regular Corps Officers on Extended Active Duty

SUBJECT: 2011 Annual COER

1. This Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) establishes the guidelines for the 2011 Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER) in accordance with [CC25.1.1](#), "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report," and Personnel Policy Memorandum (PPM) [07-016](#), "Annual COER."
2. The Annual COER is a Web-based performance evaluation process accessed from the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) Web site at <http://dcp.psc.gov>.
  - a. All officers on extended active duty prior to 1 July 2011 are required to complete the 2011 Annual COER except as exempted (see Section 2.d.).
  - b. The 2011 Annual COER rating period extends from 1 October 2010 to 30 September 2011.
  - c. The Annual COER is defined as:
    - (1) An online COER covering an evaluation period starting prior to 1 July 2011 and ending 30 September 2011 (in some circumstances a Paper version of the COER may be used for this COER. Contact the COER Coordinator for guidance); or
    - (2) A paper version Transfer COER covering an evaluation period ending after 30 June 2011 (see section 8, "Other COER Types")
  - d. Officers exempt from completing the 2011 Annual COER include:
    - (1) Officers called to extended active duty on or after 1 July 2011;
    - (2) Officers who have separated or retired prior to 1 July 2011;
    - (3) Medical students enrolled at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS);

- (4) Junior and Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP) participants;
  - (5) The Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH);
  - (6) The Surgeon General (SG); and
  - (7) Non-career and career political appointees.
- f. The following deadlines are in effect, unless otherwise posted on the CCMIS Web site:
- (1) Online Annual COER is available to officers on 5 October 2011;
  - (2) Online Annual COER is due to the Rater by 19 October 2011;
  - (3) Online Annual COER is due to the Reviewing Official (RO) by 2 November 2011; and
  - (4) Online Annual or paper Annual COER is due to the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO) by 16 November 2011.
- g. The officer is responsible for the overall completion and submission of the COER to OCCO. If the COER is not submitted to OCCO by the prescribed deadline, the officer will not be eligible for promotion, nor will the officer be eligible to receive awards, details, or special pays.
- (1) In the event the officer is unable to submit the COER by the prescribed deadlines, the officer is responsible to arrange an alternative deadline with the Rater and RO which complies with the above final completion deadline.
  - (2) In the event the COER cannot be completed online, the 2011 Annual COER must be submitted to OCCO through the officer's Commissioned Corps Liaison on the prescribed paper version COER form.
3. Instructions for the Officer
- a. Confirm officer contact information and supervisor for rating period by reviewing the information in [Direct Access](#). Confirm Position/Billet Title by reviewing the information in the electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) which can be accessed in the "Secure Area" of the CCMIS. If there are errors in billet information, contact the Commissioned Corps Liaison for assistance.
  - b. To initiate the 2011 Annual COER, login to the officer's "Secure Area" by selecting "Officer, Liaison, and Leave Maintenance Clerk Activities" under the "Secure Area" tab of the CCMIS Web site. Select the "COERs 2011" Web-link on the left side of the screen in the "Select Activities" section.
    - (1) An officer should contact the CCMIS Help Desk if he/she does not know his/her user login or password. The CCMIS Help Desk can be reached via e-mail [CCHelpDesk@psc.gov](mailto:CCHelpDesk@psc.gov).
    - (2) If the officer, Rater or RO does not have Internet access, the officer is required to complete the 2011 Annual COER on the prescribed paper version COER form. Contact your [Liaison](#) for further assistance or e-mail [phscoers@hhs.gov](mailto:phscoers@hhs.gov).

- c. The Officer will select "Officer (My COER)" in the activity tree on the left side of the screen. This will expand the folder to reveal the following folders:
- Officer Information;
  - Enter Officer Comments;
  - Preview;
  - Release to Rater; and
  - Check COER Status.
- (1) To update e-mail and contact information, select "Officer Information" in the COERs application activity tree folder. Update contact information as necessary and select the "Update Information" button. The electronic application provides for an optional alternate phone and e-mail to ensure that the e-mail messages are received.
- e. Creating and Submitting Officer Comments
- (1) The officer will select "Enter Officer Comments". Three text boxes are provided to enter comments: 1) Description of duties and responsibilities; 2) Goals; and 3) Accomplishments. Text can be typed directly into each box, or text can be cut and pasted from a word processor into each box. An ASCII text application works best (e.g., Notepad).
- (2) The "Description of duties and responsibilities" box is limited to 5 lines or 400 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. Describe the main duties and responsibilities in the officer's job during the performance period. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
- (3) The "Goals" box is limited to 5 lines or 400 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. List work-related goals for the next performance period and long term career goals. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
- (4) The "Accomplishments" box has a limit of 21 lines or 1,680 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. List accomplishments related to the performance elements you will be rated on. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
- f. Select "Preview" to ensure the entered text fits on one page. If the text does not fit, edit the narrative until the text fits in the box.
- g. Rater is generally defined as the officer's immediate supervisor on the first Wednesday of October, regardless of the time he/she has supervised the officer. If the officer is detailed outside the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may designate the officer's Rater. If the Rater is not designated by the MOA/MOU, the Federal Supervisor named in the MOA/MOU shall be the Rater. If the identity of the Rater is unclear, the officer should immediately contact his/her Liaison officer for assistance/clarification.

The officer is required to transmit the COER to the Rater no later than 19 October 2011.

To send the COER to the Rater, select "Release to Rater." The officer will be asked if he/she wishes to "Use Last Year's Rater" or "Assign New Rater."

- (1) If the officer selects "Use Last Year's Rater," the officer will be asked to verify the Rater's contact information. *It is crucial that the e-mail listed for the Rater is correct.* If the information is correct, select "Assign." Upon confirmation that the Rater has been assigned, the officer may logoff by selecting "Exit COER."
- (2) If the officer selects "Assign New Rater," the officer will be asked "Is the New Rater a Commissioned Corps Officer?" If the officer's Rater is currently on active duty, retired or separated, select "Yes." If the Rater is a civilian or a member of another uniformed service, select "No." The officer will then be prompted to search for the Rater's name. The search results page will display the names that most closely match the Rater's name. Select the Rater's name from the list. If the Rater's name does not appear, select "New User." Follow the instructions for the creation of a new user account. *It is crucial that the e-mail listed for the Rater is correct.* Edit or add the information as necessary and select "Assign." Upon confirmation that the Rater has been assigned, the officer may logoff by selecting "Exit COER."

h. COER Status and Rater Resend

It is the responsibility of the officer to ensure his/her COER is assigned and transmitted to the Rater and [RO](#) by the prescribed deadlines in this POM. Furthermore, the officer is responsible to ensure the COER is completed and submitted to his/her eOPF.

- (1) To determine the status of the COER, the officer will login to the "Secure Area" of the CCMIS Web site. The officer will select the "COER 2011" web-link on the left side of the screen in the "Select Activities" section.
- (2) Select "Check COER Status" from the left side of the activity tree. This will provide the most current information on the status of the COER.
- (3) The officer should contact the Rater directly if he/she has not started the COER. The officer may also use the "Notify Rater Again" web-link on the left side of the screen. If the officer uses the "Notify Rater Again," ensure the Rater's e-mail is correct.

i. The officer will receive an e-mail notification indicating the Rater has completed their section, and the COER is ready for the officer to concur or disagree with the evaluation.

- (1) After discussing the COER ratings and comments with the Rater, and there are no changes, the officer may concur or disagree with the evaluation. This will release the COER to the RO.
- (2) If changes are required, both the officer and the Rater may modify their respective sections of the COER.

Note: The Rater must review any changes the officer makes to "Officer Comments" before the officer may concur or disagree with the evaluation.

- (3) If the officer disagrees with the evaluation, the officer may provide a Rebuttal (see Section 7 "Rebuttals and Other Rights"). The rebuttal is submitted after the electronic COER has been transmitted to the eOPF.

j. COER Completion

After the RO has completed his/her section, the officer will receive an e-mail indicating the COER is complete. The COER will be archived in the "COER Documents" section of the eOPF as the "2011 Annual COER." If the COER is not in the eOPF one week after receipt of the e-mail notification, contact [phscoers@hhs.gov](mailto:phscoers@hhs.gov). It is the responsibility of the officer to assure that the COER has been completed and transmitted to the eOPF.

4. Instructions for the Rater

a. Login to COER

The Rater will receive an e-mail notification indicating that an officer has submitted an online COER for rating. The e-mail will contain information and instructions on how to login to the online COER and how to access the officer's COER. The Rater shall ensure all officers under his/her supervision transmit the COER to the Rater no later than 19 October 2011.

- (1) Once the Rater has access to the online COER, the Rater will see an activity tree (series of folders) on the left side of the screen. To begin work on the officer's COER, select the officer's name. This will expand the folder to reveal the following folders:

- Enter Time Supervised;
- View Officer Comments;
- Score and Comment;
- Preview Scores;
- Summarize Performance;
- Preview Performance;
- Assign RO; and
- Release to Officer.

- (2) The Rater shall enter the period of time he/she has supervised the officer by selecting "Time Supervised." If the time supervised is greater than 6 months, the evaluation type is automatically set to a 2011 Detailed Evaluation. If the time supervised is less than 6 months, the Rater will be prompted to select either a Detailed Evaluation or a 2011 Narrative Evaluation. Click "Save."

- (3) The Rater shall review Officer Comments. To review Officer Comments, select "View Officer Comments." The Rater may ask the officer to modify Officer Comments.

Note: The officer will be unable to modify Officer Comments until the rating is completed, the RO is assigned, and the COER is "released to the officer."

- (4) The Rater shall evaluate the officer's performance and provide comments. If an officer has been on extended periods of sick leave or intermittent periods of sick leave, the officer shall be rated on his/her performance when present.
- (5) To begin the scoring process, select "Score and Comment" from the activity tree. The Rater is to score all 8 questions by filling in one circle per element.
- (6) The Rater will enter text in the box "Rater's Comments" which is located directly under the last (8th) question. Comments are required if this is a Detailed Evaluation. The comments should provide an overall description of the action(s) upon which the Rater based his/her ratings of the officer. The Rater shall explain the impact of the action and why it was important. Text can be typed directly into each text box, or text can be added by cutting and pasting from a word processor. The text is limited to 16 lines or 1,280 Courier New, 10 pitch characters which includes spaces and returns. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Select "Save" when finished. The text will appear as a box in the officer's eOPF.
  - (a) The Rater will then select "Summarize Performance."  
The Rater will indicate whether the performance is satisfactory, marginal or unsatisfactory and note strengths and areas for improvement.
  - (b) Select "Preview Performance" to ensure the text entered fits on one page. If the text does not fit, the text should be edited until it fits in the "Preview Performance" view. To edit the text, follow the steps outlined above. Save your work.
  - (c) In lieu of a signature, select the Signature (e-Sign) box.
- (7) The Rater shall assign the RO. The Rater is prohibited from acting as both the Rater and RO. To assign the RO, select "Assign Reviewing Official." The Rater will be asked if he/she wishes to "Use Last Year's Reviewing Official" or "Assign New Reviewing Official."
  - (a) If the Rater selects "Use Last Year's Reviewing Official," the Rater will be asked to verify the RO's contact information. *For timely submission of the COER, it is crucial that the Rater ensure the e-mail for the RO is correct.* Edit the information if it is not correct. If the information is correct, select "Assign".

Note: The RO will have an opportunity to review the COER after the officer concurs or disagrees; Assignment of the RO does not automatically send the COER to the RO. The officer must first concur/disagree with the evaluation before the RO can begin the review of the COER.
  - (b) If the Rater selects "Assign New Reviewing Official," the Rater will be asked "Is the New Reviewing Official a Commissioned Corps Officer?" If the RO is currently on active duty, retired or separated, select "Yes." If the RO is a civilian or other uniformed services member, select "No." The Rater will then be prompted to search for the RO's name. The search results page will display the names that most closely match the RO's name. Select the RO's name

from the list. If the RO's name does not appear, select "New User." Follow the instructions for the creation of a new user account. *It is crucial for timely submission of the COER that the Rater ensure the e-mail listed for the RO is correct.* Edit or add the information as necessary and select "Assign."

- (c) Upon assignment, the Rater will be asked if he/she wishes to release the COER to the officer to review the evaluation. Click "Release to Officer" to release the COER to the Officer for review.
- (d) The Rater may now logoff by selecting "Exit COER".

The COER must be released to the officer to allow sufficient time to review the evaluation and for the officer to transmit (i.e., concur or disagree) the COER to the RO no later than 2 November 2011.

b. Review and Discussion

The officer and Rater should formally discuss the evaluation before the officer concurs or disagrees with the evaluation. Both the officer and Rater may make changes to their respective portions of the COER. However, once the officer concurs/disagrees with the evaluation, no portion of the COER can be changed. The COER is then automatically forwarded to the RO.

c. Additional Rater Guidance

- (1) In the event an officer cannot meet the deadline, the officer is required to arrange an alternative deadline with the Rater and RO. The electronic COER must be completed and submitted to OCCO *no later than 16 November 2011.*
- (2) In the event the officer fails to release the COER to the Rater by 19 October 2011, the Rater shall initiate the 2011 Annual COER on the prescribed paper version COER form by following these instructions.
  - (a) The Rater will access the paper version COER form on the CCMIS Web site under the "Services" tab, followed by the "Official Forms" tab, followed by the "COER" tab of the following Web-link  
[http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx)
  - (b) The Rater will complete Section 1, Part II "Rater's Comments" and Section 3, "Performance Evaluation" of form PHS-838. The Rater may consider the officer's failure to submit the COER in a timely manner in rating the performance of the officer.
    - i. The Rater will provide the COER to the officer to review and sign. If the officer refuses to sign the COER, the Rater will note the failure to sign. The Rater must sign and forward the COER to the RO for concurrence and signature. The COER is then submitted through the Liaison to OCCO for inclusion in the officer's eOPF.

5. Instructions for the Reviewing Official

a. Login to the COER

b. The RO will receive an email notification indicating that the COER is ready for review and completion after the officer has concurred/disagreed with the COER. The e-mail will contain information and instructions on how to login to the online COER and how to access the officer's COER for the review. The RO shall ensure that all officers and Raters under his/her supervision transmit the COER for review no later than 2 November 2011.

(1) Once the RO has access to the online COER, the RO will see an activity tree (series of folders) on the left side of the screen. To begin the review of an officer's COER, select the officer's name. This will expand the folder to reveal the following folders:

- Rater Information;
- View Officer Comments;
- View Scores and Comments;
- Performance Summary; and
- Final Concur/Disagree.

(2) To review the Officer Comments, select "View Officer Comments."

(3) To review the scores and Rater comments, select "View Scores and Comments."

(4) To review the overall Officer Performance, select "Performance Summary." This will include officer's overall performance of job duties and the officer's strengths and areas for improvement.

(5) The RO will select "Final Concur/Disagree." The RO will select one of 4 options which include the following:

- I concur with this evaluation;
- Although this evaluation is reasonable, this rater is somewhat more demanding than average;
- Although this evaluation is reasonable, this rater is somewhat less demanding than average or;
- I disagree with this evaluation.

The RO will provide comments in a box below the selected response. Comments are required if the RO selects "I disagree with this evaluation". The text is limited to 3 lines or 240 Courier New, 10 pitch characters including spaces and returns. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Select "Submit" when finished. Click only once to avoid error.

(6) To logoff, select "Exit COER."

- (7) If the process is completed using the paper format, the paper COER must be delivered by the Reviewing Official to the liaison.

## 6. Instructions for Commissioned Corps Liaisons

### a. General Instructions for Liaisons

Liaisons are responsible to monitor the status of the 2011 electronic COER for their respective Operating Division (OPDIV), Staff Division (STAFFDIV) or non-HHS organization. Liaisons will have access to a suite of reporting tools through the electronic COER application. Liaisons are responsible to make follow-up inquiries with officers, Raters, and ROs for COERs that are not submitted or transmitted in a timely manner.

### b. Assignment of Rater and RO

- (1) In the event an officer is unable to identify a Rater, the Liaison is required to identify the most appropriate person to serve as the Rater.
- (2) In the event the Rater is unable to identify the RO, the Liaison is required to identify the most appropriate person to serve as the RO. In the event an RO cannot be identified or due to unique operational circumstances, the Liaison may act as the RO.

### c. Verification of paper COER documents

Liaisons are required to verify all paper COER documents and rebuttals prior to submission to OCCO. Liaisons are required to verify the following:

- (1) Completeness, appropriately filled-out, and it does not exceed the page limit requirements;
- (2) Each document requiring the officer's signature has an original "wet" signature;
- (3) No part of the COER or rebuttal may be faxed or otherwise electronically submitted. Faxed documents will not be processed; and
- (4) No additional attachments are included.

## 7. Rebuttals and Other Rights

- a. If an officer does not agree with a rating or comment on the COER, the officer may submit a rebuttal. Officers are reminded that a rebuttal does not substitute as a remedy for a formal grievance or other rights of due process. OCCO will not act on a rebuttal other than to include it in the eOPF adjacent to the associated COER.

- (1) The rebuttal is required to have the officer's name, rank, and serial number on the top of each page, and must be signed. The officer's rebuttal is limited to 5 narrative pages. No additional attachments will be included.
- (2) The officer is required to submit the Rebuttal through his/her Liaison for signature. The Liaison will also sign the Rebuttal and submit the Rebuttal to OCCO. Rebuttals that are not signed by both the officer and Liaison will not be accepted.

Note: Faxed or otherwise electronically submitted copies will not be accepted.

- (3) If an officer submits a rebuttal, the Liaison is required to sign and submit the original document to OCCO and send copies to the Rater and RO. If the Rater and RO wish, they may submit one combined response to the officer's rebuttal through the Liaison. The Rater and RO must limit the response to 5 narrative pages. The Rater and RO must submit their signed response to the Liaison. The Liaison is required to sign the response and then submit them to OCCO.
  - (4) Rebuttals submitted to OCCO after 31 December 2011 may not be available to the 2012 Promotions Boards.
  - (5) Rebuttals for all COER types are accepted for inclusion into the officer's eOPF within 90 days of the date the completed COER is placed into the officer's eOPF. The Rater and RO have 60 days from the date the officer's rebuttal is placed into the officer's eOPF.
- b. The officer may grieve the COER in accordance with Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [CC26.1.5](#).
  - c. The officer may file an equal opportunity (EO) complaint in accordance with CCI [CC26.1.6](#).
  - d. If the officer is not satisfied with the outcome(s) of the grievance or EO process, the officer may apply for relief through the Board for Correction of Public Health Service Records in accordance with CCI [CC29.9.5](#).
8. Other COER types
- a. Transfer COER

The officer may complete a Transfer COER at any point in the annual COER cycle to capture a period of time prior to a transfer/change in duty stations or the transfer/retirement of a supervisor. The Paper version COER is form PHS-838, and can be downloaded from the CCMIS Web site at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). For a Transfer COER, the Rater and RO must be from the officer's previous assignment. The COER must be signed by the Liaison at the previous assignment. The Paper version COER must be submitted to OCCO by the officer's previous Liaison.

Note: Faxed or otherwise electronically submitted copies will not be accepted.

b. Transfer COER as the Annual COER

If an officer or Rater transfers/retires on or after 1 July 2011, but before 1 October 2011, the officer is required to complete a Transfer COER on the prescribed paper version COER form that will automatically stand as the officer's 2011 Annual COER. The Paper COER document is form PHS-838 and can be downloaded from the CCMIS Web site at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). The Rater and RO must be from the officer's previous assignment. The COER must be signed by the Liaison at the previous assignment as well. The Paper COER must be submitted to OCCO by the officer's previous Liaison.

Note: Faxed or otherwise electronically submitted copies will not be accepted.

c. Interim COER

The officer and rater may complete an Interim COER at any point during the annual COER cycle for specific situations. The Rater may require an officer to complete an Interim COER to document performance. Other situations in which an Interim COER would be warranted include temporary duty assignments or for special pay requirements. The Interim COER must be completed on the paper COER document, PHS-838. The Rater and RO must sign the COER. The paper version COER PHS-838 is available on the CCMIS Website at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). The paper COER must be signed and delivered to OCCO by the officer's Liaison. OCCO will review the COER and determine if it should be placed in the eOPF. An Interim COER does not take the place of the Annual COER.

In other situations regarding COER type, the officer must contact the COER Coordinator at OCCO for guidance at [phscoers@hhs.gov](mailto:phscoers@hhs.gov)

Note: Faxed or otherwise electronically transmitted copies will not be accepted.

9. Performance Management Plans and Contracts

HHS has implemented the Performance Management Appraisal Program (PMAP) Department-wide for civilian employees in accordance with the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), the President's Management Agenda, and other Federal performance initiatives. The Corps does not require its officers to have a PMAP. However, organizations to which officers are assigned may require the officer to have one performed. When officers are required to have a performance plan by the organization to which they are assigned, it is for that Operating Division, Staff Division or non-HHS organization for internal use only. The PMAP will not be placed in the eOPF. The Annual COER is still required for the officer.

Note: A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is distinct from a PMAP and is indicated in cases of poor performance.

-signed-

Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA  
VADM, USPHS  
Surgeon General