

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES

PERSONNEL OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM



EFFECTIVE DATE: **POM 08-004**  
**07 May 2008**

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

**RADM Steven K. Galson, Acting Surgeon General**

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**TO:** All Regular and Reserve Corps Officers on Active Duty

**SUBJECT:** Conduct With Other Uniformed Services

1. The purpose of this Personnel Operations Memorandum is to provide guidance to all Commissioned Corps (Corps) officers on active duty with the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) while deployed or within the jurisdiction of any other uniformed service.
2. All uniformed services maintain command and control over their operational elements, including service members' behavior and conduct. This command and control is critical to maintaining order, safety, immediate focus, and response to assure effectiveness of their missions. For the military uniformed services, this formal and regimented command and control is codified in the [Uniform Code of Military Justice \(UCMJ\)](#). The UCMJ enforces the rules of behavior and interpersonal relationships of and between service members with the force of law. Corps officers may be detailed to a military uniformed service and placed under the jurisdiction of the UCMJ of that service.
3. Corps officers may at times be visiting or operating in the jurisdiction of the chain of command of another uniformed service (Coast Guard, Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). This may include but is not limited to:
  - a. A permanent duty assignment to a billet of another uniformed service;
  - b. A temporary duty assignment on a joint mission and/or embedded in the chain of command of another uniformed service; and
  - c. A temporary visit to an office or installation of another uniformed service to receive entitlements, benefits or privileges.
4. During deployments and training missions, the PHS Officer-in-Charge (OIC) is responsible for providing the primary command interface between Corps officers and a selected command. The OIC administers, manages, and directs units of PHS deployments and coordinates the overall operational/logistics issues as they relate to personnel accountability and management of PHS detachments during Humanitarian Assistance and training missions. While managing strategic and operational goals for

PHS mission/training objectives, the OIC oversees activity and personnel records, and provides continuity for sequential detachments for the duration of multi-month missions.

5. The term fraternization traditionally is used to identify personal relationships that contravene the customary bounds of acceptable senior-subordinate relationships. Although fraternization has most commonly been applied to officer-enlisted relationships, it also includes improper relationships, or the appearance of such relationships, between officers, as well as between enlisted members, regardless of the service affiliation, including foreign military services. Proper social interaction among seniors and subordinates is encouraged as it enhances unit morale and esprit de corps. However, unduly familiar personal relationships (or the appearance thereof) between seniors and subordinates are contrary to custom, because they undermine the respect for authority and the chain of command. Such relationships are forbidden.
6. When deployed the following guidelines must be observed:
  - a. An officer shall complete and comply with all required pre-deployment training provided by Office of the Surgeon General or its designee to include, but not limited to, expected rules of behavior and standards of conduct;
  - b. An officer shall understand and strictly adhere to the chain of command;
  - c. An officer must not fraternize;
  - d. An officer must respond to all uniformed service personnel with appropriate military customs and courtesies, such as addressing all officers and enlisted personnel with the proper title and respect. Senior officers may be addressed as "Sir" or "Ma'am". Officers and enlisted personnel may be referred to by rank with last name, for example, "LT Smith or Petty Officer Jones;"
  - e. When a Corps officer is advised of the expected behavior and protocols of another uniformed service with whom the officer is deployed, or when visiting a military base/post, the Corps officer shall respect the traditions and comply with the expected behavior and protocols of that uniformed service;
  - f. Contempt and disrespect for expected behaviors and protocols, traditions, or ranking officers in words, tone, actions and expressions shall not be tolerated and shall be reported to the PHS OIC;
  - g. Corps officers must be cognizant of the actions of uniformed service personnel around them, and employ good judgment in determining their own conduct. If an officer is unsure of the proper conduct for a particular situation, they must seek guidance regarding proper conduct from the PHS OIC;
  - h. While deployed, an officer's professional judgment must remain unimpaired. Therefore, an officer shall not consume alcohol or other intoxicating substances without the expressed permission of the PHS OIC. The PHS OIC shall issue such permission only if the consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating substances is a part of a joint uniformed service function such as a picnic or banquet. The PHS OIC shall limit the amount and location of such consumption; and
  - i. Violation of PHS Commissioned Corps Directives (CCDs) or Commissioned Corps Instructions (CCIs) while deployed may result in disciplinary or administrative actions including any or all of the following:

- (1) Relieved of duty;
  - (2) Reassigned to another duty;
  - (3) Confined to quarters;
  - (4) Released from deployment and returned to permanent duty station; or
  - (5) Disciplined in another way, including separation from the Corps.
7. Misconduct while deployed or within the jurisdiction of another uniformed service may result in the loss of future deployment privileges and/or use of military facilities.

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