



CCI 321.01
EFFECTIVE DATE: 7 March 2025

By Order of the Acting Assistant Secretary for Health:

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SUBJECT: Billet Program

1. **PURPOSE:** This Instruction describes the objectives and purposes of the billet program for the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps (Corps) and prescribes responsibilities and procedures for maintaining the program.
2. **APPLICABILITY:** This policy and procedure applies to the determination and assignment of Corps officer billets by Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), Key Line Management Officials, Immediate Supervisors, and Agency Liaisons.
3. **AUTHORITY:** The authority to administer the PHS Commissioned Corps is prescribed in 42 U.S.C. 216. This authority has been delegated to the Surgeon General as part of the general authority to administer the PHS Commissioned Corps and is published at 53 Federal Register 5046-5047, February 19, 1988.
4. **PROONENT:** The proponent of this Instruction is the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). The responsibility of ensuring the day-to-day management of the Corps belongs to the Surgeon General (SG).
5. **SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES:** This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (CCIS). This issuance is a change to Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) 321.01 (formerly CC23.5.4), "Billet Program," and replaces the information from the previous Instruction of the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) and creates a standalone Instruction within the CCIS.

6. POLICY: For purposes of this Instruction, the billet is a document which describes the duties, level of responsibilities, and qualifications necessary to perform a specific assignment in the PHS Commissioned Corps. In this context, a billet is not the same as a position or authorized ceiling slot.

6-1. General Guidance.

- a. PHS has a management responsibility to ensure that programs are effectively and efficiently managed. Accomplishing this goal requires, among other things, sound personnel planning and administration and effective human resource utilization. One important factor in achieving good management in PHS is the availability of information about the duties, level of responsibilities, and qualification requirements of billets occupied by Corps officers. Billets aid in:
- (1) Evaluating the work described to determine the level of responsibility and difficulty of an assignment;
 - (2) Providing management with a uniform tool for identifying immediate and long-range human resource requirements according to Agency organizational lines, as an integral part of the management of the Commissioned Corps personnel system;
 - (3) Providing a source of aggregate data on the experience and other qualifications needed in the Commissioned Corps;
 - (4) Determining the specific requirements of a billet in order to select an officer or an applicant to fill that assignment, and to identify training which may be necessary for effective performance; and
 - (5) Planning for career development, including reassignments and training.
- b. The evaluation of billets is not intended to change the basic concept of rank-in-officer in the Commissioned Corps personnel system. Officers are compensated according to their grade. Grade is based on years of training and experience as evaluated under the promotion policy, and not on duties performed at a given time. The grade will continue to be vested in the individual officer. Inherent in the rank-in-officer concept, however, are the expectations that over the course of a career, an officer's duties and responsibilities will, on the average, conform to his/her grade and that with increased training and experience the officer will also assume increased responsibility.
- (1). Assignments. Assignments are made to meet the needs of the Service. Grades and duties should be consistent; however, flexibility in making assignments is a significant virtue of the rank-in-officer system. An officer's grade, therefore, generally should not be more than one grade above or below the grade of the assignment.
 - (2). Promotions. In considering an officer for promotion, the grade of the current assignment is not in itself a criterion. However, promotion boards evaluate the officer's expected performance at the next higher grade, and they are necessarily interested in the levels of work performed in the officer's career to date. (See Instruction 1, "Permanent Promotion Program," Instruction 2, "Temporary Grade Promotions," and Instruction 3, "Exceptional Capability Promotion," Subchapter CC23.4, of this Manual.)

- c. Agency Billet Evaluation Guide
 - (1) Each Agency and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health are required to prepare a Billet Evaluation Guide as a tool to assure that programs are effectively and efficiently managed. These guides are filed in CCHQ. Each guide will establish the level of responsibilities, procedures, and standards of adequacy for the review and evaluation of proposed non-standard billet descriptions for that Agency. The purpose of such a guide is to ensure that Commissioned Corps billet grades are consistent with those of civil service positions performing equivalent functions. For purposes of this Instruction, this procedure for ensuring consistency will be referred to as alignment.
 - (2) The Guide shall define the procedures for, and responsibilities of each participant in, the process of establishing billet descriptions as set forth in this Instruction.

Note: An officer's billet shall never be incorporated into his/her Official Personnel Folder.

6-2. Types of Billets

- a. Billets are classified as one of three types;
 - (1) Standard Categorical Billets that have been developed by the appropriate categorical Professional Advisory Committee (PAC);
 - (2) Agency-Specific Billets developed by the interested Agency; or
 - (3) Non-Standard Billets developed by the program as unique, one of a kind, that must be reviewed and certified (aligned) by the Agency's civil service personnel office using the Agency's Billet Evaluation Guide.
- b. For officers in non-clinical billets who perform part-time clinical duties in Federal facilities the following should be added to their billets:

"As directed and approved by his/her supervisors, the incumbent may perform clinical duties of his/her profession in Federal health care facilities. The requirement to perform such duty will be documented by the issuance of orders or by memoranda of assignment." Form HHS-520, "Request for Approval of Outside Activity," may be used as a memorandum of assignment.

Federal tort coverage does not pertain to officers who engage in clinical practice in a non-Federal site unless that practice is the regular duty assignment for the officer.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:

7-1. CCHQ is responsible for:

- a. Providing overall guidance and direction in the administration of the billet program;
- b. Reviewing, analyzing, approving or modifying, and processing billets;

- c. Evaluating the effectiveness of the operation of the program on a Corps-wide basis and making changes as they become necessary; and
 - d. Convening billet review boards as necessary. (See Section 8-1., below.)
 - 7-2. Key Line Management Officials. These officials are defined as the supervisors of the immediate supervisors of Corps officers and are responsible for applying the provisions of this Instruction within their respective organizations. This includes:
 - a. Determining the need to establish billets according to program needs and organizational lines and coordinating their development through the Agency Liaison/PAC; and
 - b. Ensuring that policies and requirements of this Instruction are carried out at each subordinate level.
 - 7-3. Immediate Supervisors. Immediate supervisors are responsible for:
 - a. Assuring that all officers under their supervision are on an appropriate billet consistent with program organizational lines; and
 - b. Certifying the accuracy of the billet.
 - 7-4. Agency Liaisons. Each Liaison shall maintain a complete master set of approved standard categorical billets, Agency-specific billets, and approved non-standard billets for his/her Agency. When an officer is selected for a standard categorical or Agency-specific billet, the Agency Liaison will take the following action on the form PHS-4392, "Billet Description."
 - a. Duplicate the master copy of the billet;
 - b. Complete Items 1, 6, and 10 thru 15;
 - c. Assure that the incumbent's immediate supervisor completes Item 16;
 - d. Send a copy of the cover sheet of the billet with supervisor's signature with the form PHS-1662, "Request for Personnel Action - Commissioned Officers," (see Exhibit IV) to CCHQ; and
 - e. Retain one copy for the Liaison.
- 8. PROCEDURES:
 - 8-1. Billet Review Boards.
 - a. Appeal Process.
 - (1) If an officer disagrees with the Agency's alignment, he/she may submit an appeal to the Agency's personnel office through the Agency Liaison. The officer must set forth the reason(s) for the request and provide available documentation to support the request.
 - (2) After the appeal is adjudicated by the Agency personnel office, if the officer still disagrees with the Agency's decision, he/she may request an appeal through the Director, CCHQ, with copies to the Agency Liaison. Upon receipt of a written request for an appeal, the Director, CCHQ, will

review the request and if the officer has not submitted substantial evidence to show cause for appeal, the Director, CCHQ, will inform the officer in writing within 30 days of the receipt of the request that no action is being taken.

- (3) If the Director, CCHQ, determines that the request shows merit (cause), he/she will convene a Billet Review Board.

b. Composition of Billet Review Boards.

- (1) Board members are appointed by the Director, CCHQ. The board will consist of four commissioned officers at Senior Grade or above, and one civil service employee Grade 14 or above. Each member of the board has a vote equal to that of any other.
- (2) The Director, CCHQ, will make every effort to assure that the board does not consist entirely of men or women or entirely of individuals of one race, but no board member will be selected solely on the basis of sex or race.
- (3) The Chairperson, who is the senior member, calls the board to order, governs the general conduct of the board, and directs the functions of the executive secretary assigned to the board.
- (4) The executive secretary is designated by the Director, CCHQ, and has no vote. He/she arranges the time and place of the meetings, presents information to the board, and prepares the board's recommendations.

c. Responsibilities.

- (1) The board has the responsibility for reviewing all requests related to billets placed before it.
- (2) The board shall make its recommendations to the Director, CCHQ.
- (3) If a board is convened in response to an officer's appeal, the board will review any documentation submitted by the officer making an appeal plus information from the personnel system found pertinent.
- (4) The Director, CCHQ, shall notify the officer of his/her decision within 30 days after the board has made its recommendations.

8-2. Documentation.

- a. Form PHS-4392 will be used in preparing billets.
- b. As new billets are developed and processed by one of the three groups, the completed form PHS-4392, "Billet Description," (See Exhibit A) must be submitted through appropriate channels to the Chief, Personnel Services Branch, CCHQ, for final processing. These billets, when approved, must be returned to the appropriate Agency Liaison.
- c. A billet number must appear in the upper right hand corner of the form. It shall contain seven characters. The two numeric characters at the left indicate the designated category required to fulfill the requirements of the billet. The two alpha characters identify the Agency. The three numeric characters to the right

indicate the billet type. (See Exhibit B, "Category, Group, Numeric Equivalents, Agencies and Alpha Equivalents and Corresponding Numeric Identification of Billets"). A billet grade and a numeric total will appear respectively in Items 2B and 2C.

8-3. Billet Processing.

- a. Standard Categorical Billets will be submitted to CCHQ by the PAC developing the new standard billet(s). The PAC chair will prepare a transmittal memorandum stating that the recommended billet(s) is (are) appropriate for commissioned officers and recommend a grade level for the billet(s) according to Exhibit C, "Civil Service/Commissioned Corps Grade Equivalents." CCHQ will review and ascertain conformity to other approved billets and established precepts, and process, and notify the PAC and Agencies of the availability of the billet(s) for use.
- b. Agency-Specific Billets will be submitted to CCHQ through the Agency Liaison. The Liaison will process the recommended billets with recommended billet grades through the civil service personnel office which will prepare a transmittal memorandum stating that the recommended billets are appropriate for commissioned officers. The civil service personnel office will approve the recommended grade level according to the Agency's Billet Evaluation Guide on file in CCHQ. CCHQ will review and ascertain conformity to other approved billets and established precepts. CCHQ will then process the billet and notify the Agency of the availability of the billet for use.
- c. Nonstandard Billets will be submitted to CCHQ through the Agency Liaison. These billets will be initiated by the program in consultation with the Liaison and CCHQ. These billets will be processed through the Agency civil service personnel office.
 - (1) All nonstandard billets should be submitted with all available documentation to support the recommended grade level.
 - (2) Nonstandard billets aligned using the Agency Billet Approval Plan MUST be submitted when a form PHS-1662 is submitted, placing an officer into a nonstandard billet.
- d. If assigning an officer to a standard or Agency-specific billet, a copy of the billet need NOT be submitted with the form PHS-1662. A copy of the PHS-4392 cover sheet with items 1, 5, 6, 10, 13, and 16 completed shall be submitted. However, item 12B on form PHS-1662 must be completed using the appropriate billet number and billet title.
- e. Officers on extended active duty who are assigned to long-term training sponsored by the Corps will be placed in a billet equivalent to the temporary grade the officer held when assigned to such training.
- f. All actions affecting the status of an officer shall be reported to CCHQ on the form PHS-1662. Forms submitted without adequate information for processing by CCHQ will be returned to the Agency Liaison for completion.
 - (1) All assignments to billets, including changes in assignment within an office, and action to place any officer into/out of flight status (non-flight crew members), will be reported to CCHQ on form PHS-1662. Personnel orders will be issued to document the officer's billet change.

- (2) Any minor modifications that do not substantively change a standard categorical or Agency-specific billet may also be amended by memorandum. The amendment shall be initiated by the program through appropriate Institute/Center/Division channels to CCHQ, through the Agency Liaison.
- (3) Any personnel action (call to active duty, transfer in/out) affecting the Research Officer Group (ROG), such as changing assignments (billets) in ROG, or changing tenure-track status on any member or prospective member of ROG, MUST be effected by use of form PHS-1662.
- (4) When an officer is first assigned to ROG the officer is required to sign a concurrence to his/her ROG assignment. This concurrence must also be countersigned by the officer's Division/Center/Institute Director. Furthermore, every Agency participating in ROG must conform to Instruction 1, Subchapter CC23.6, "[Research Officer Group](#)," of this Manual.
- (5) Separations. The number of the billet that the officer occupied will be entered by the officer's Administrative Officer in part C, Item 2 (PDN), on a copy of form PHS-1373, "Separation of Commissioned Officer."

8-4. Computer Coding.

- a. Information from the billet shall be entered into CCHQ's automated personnel information system. A billet file containing information about the billet is maintained to provide a source of data for statistical purposes, human resource planning, analysis and research, assignment planning, and other personnel activities.
- b. Each billet will be coded to identify its billet number; billet title; primary and secondary function, such as administrative, clinical, research, regulatory, etc. (see Instruction 6, Subchapter CC25.2, "Professional Growth and Development, of this Manual); supervisory designation; sensitivity code; total score; equivalent grade, and occupational series.

8-5 Privacy Act Provisions. Personnel records are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974. The applicable systems of records are 09-37-0002, "PHS Commissioned Corps General Personnel Records, HHS/OASH/OSG," and 09-37-0008, "PHS Commissioned Corps Unofficial Personnel Files and Other Station Files, HHS/OASH/OSG."

9. HISTORICAL NOTES: This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the CCIS. CCI 321.01 replaces the information from the previous Instruction of the CCPM (CC23.5.4) and creates a standalone Instruction within the eCCIS.

EXHIBIT A

Form PHS-4392, "Billet Description"

EXHIBIT B

Category, Group, Numeric Equivalents, Agencies and Alpha Equivalents
and Corresponding Numeric Identification of Billets

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Numeric Equivalents</u>
Medical	01
Dental	02
Nurse	03
Engineer	04
Scientist	05
Sanitarian	06
Veterinary	07
Pharmacy	08
Dietetics	09
Therapy	10
Health Services	11
Research Officer Group	12
Multidisciplinary	99

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Alpha Designation</u>
Office of the Secretary	OS	AA
Health Care Finance Administration	HCFA	FQ
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health	OASH	HA
Health Resources and Services Administration*	HRSA*	HB*
Centers for Disease Control	CDC	HC
Food and Drug Administration	FDA	HF
Indian Health Service	IHS	HG
Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration	ADAMHA	HM
National Institutes Of Health	NIH	HN
Agency for Health Care Policy & Research	ACHPR	HP
Environmental Protection Agency	EPA	PP
Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry	ATSDR	HT
*Includes BoP, USCG, NOAA		

<u>Billet Type</u>	<u>Corresponding Numeric Identification</u>
Standard Categorical Billet	000 through 185
Agency-Specific Billet	199 through 299
Nonstandard Billet	500 through 600

EXHIBIT C

Civil Service/Commissioned Corps Grade Equivalents

Civil Service Grade	Commissioned Officer Grade (see 2B on Form PHS-4392)	Billet Total* (see 2C on Form PHS-4392)
GS-7	0-2 LTJG	200
GS-9/11	0-3 LT	300
GS-12	0-4 LCDR	350 (Nonsupervisory) 370 (Supervisory)
GS-13	0-5 CDR	400 (Nonsupervisory) 450 (Supervisory)
GS-14/15	0-6 CAPT	500 (Nonsupervisory) 550 (Supervisory) 600 (Supervisory) 650 (Supervisory)
SES	0-7 RADM	700
	0-8 RADM	800
	0-9 VADM	900

*The Billet Total, item 2C on form PHS-4392, is a fixed number for each grade. This is a further effort at standardizing billets across categories and Agencies. For example, all nonsupervisory 0-5 billets have a total score of 400. The only place this number appears is on the billet. When a Promotion Information Report (PIR) is printed, only the equivalent grade 0-5 is printed, not the total score.