



CCI 351.01
EFFECTIVE DATE: 11 June 2024

By Order of the Assistant Secretary for Health:

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SUBJECT: Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER)

1. PURPOSE: This Instruction prescribes the policy for the evaluation of officers in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. The Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER) is a major source of information concerning each officer's performance and work record. It enables the USPHS Commissioned Corps to track and document an officer's assignments, duties, and proficiencies, as well as to evaluate their officership and leadership.
2. APPLICABILITY: This Instruction applies to all members of the Regular Corps and the Ready Reserve Corps, except for individuals listed in Section 6-3.
3. AUTHORITY:
 - 3-1. [42 U.S.C. § 202](#), "Administration and Supervision of Service"
 - 3-2. [42 U.S.C. § 216](#), "Regulations"
 - 3-3. [84 FR 1752](#), "Statement of Organization, Functions, and Delegations of Authority"
4. PROPONENT: The proponent of this Instruction is the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). The Surgeon General (SG) is responsible for providing supervision of activities relating to the day-to-day operations of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The Director, Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), provides overall management of USPHS Commissioned Corps personnel operations and processes.
5. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES: This is the fourth issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS) and replaces Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) 351.01, "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER)," dated 12 August 2020. Substantive changes include:
 - 5-1. Clarification of how terminal leave affects separating officers in Section 6-6.d.
 - 5-2. Clarification of "approved absences" for which the officer is not to be rated (in Section 7-4.).
 - 5-3. Addition of COSTEP officers in the exceptions section (6-3.e.).
 - 5-4. Improved definition of Liaison responsibilities in Sections 7-6. and 8-2.
 - 5-5. Removal of the requirement for retiring officers to complete a COER during their final year of service in Section 6-3. b.

- 5-6. Authorization for officers completing their end-of-year evaluations to begin their COER up to a month early in Section 6-6.b.

6. POLICY: Public Health Service (PHS) officers are evaluated annually on their performance and effectiveness.
- 6-1. For the purposes of this Instruction, the definitions throughout this instruction and Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) [821.73](#), "Annual COER," apply.
- 6-2. The COER is the primary tool used to identify an officer's accomplishments and areas in need of development.
- a. The COER serves as the evaluation instrument that becomes a part of the officer's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).
- b. An officer's Operating Division (OPDIV), Staff Division (STAFFDIV), or non-Health and Human Services (HHS) organization may require an officer to develop a different performance contract or evaluation for their use. The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not incorporate these non-COER evaluations in the eOPF, nor use them for promotion. All officers must complete a COER (except as outlined in Section 6-3.) even if their agency also requires a different evaluation system.
- c. The USPHS Commissioned Corps may use officers' COERs for decisions about retention ([CCI 341.02](#)), promotion ([CCI 331.01](#)), awards ([CCI 511.01](#)), special pays ([CCI 633.01](#)), involuntary termination ([CCI 382.03](#)), and other issues.
- 6-3. The USPHS Commissioned Corps requires Annual COERs of all members of the Regular Corps and the Ready Reserve Corps with the following exceptions:
- a. Officers called to active duty after 1 April of the Evaluation Year (the Evaluation Year is from 1 October to 30 September of the following year).
- b. Officers with an effective retirement date at any point during the Evaluation Year.
- c. Officers separating or entering a period of continuous terminal leave that extends to the effective date of their separation (excluding retirements) from the Regular Corps or Ready Reserve Corps prior to or on 1 April of the Evaluation Year.
- d. Full-time medical students enrolled at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) School of Medicine who are obtaining their qualifying medical degree.
- e. Those currently enrolled in the Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP), at either the Junior or Senior levels.
- f. The ASH.
- g. The SG.
- h. Non-career and career political appointees.
- Note: Officers excluded through Section 6-3. may choose to complete a COER even though it is not required.

- 6-4 Types of COERs. Annual and Interim are the two types of COERs (see POM 821.73).
- a. The online COER form will label a COER as Annual or Interim based on the evaluation time covered by the COER. If the COER covers at least six months of evaluation time during the Evaluation Year, it is an Annual COER. If the evaluation time is less than six months, it is an Interim COER. Officers may have multiple or no Interim COERs per Evaluation Year. The system will allow COER administrators to change an Interim COER to an Annual COER and vice versa to correct errors.
 - b. Officers can have only one Annual COER per Evaluation Year. In the event an officer does not have a period of evaluation equal to or greater than six months with one Rater, the COER that covers the longest period of time during the Evaluation Year becomes the Annual COER. If no single COER is the longest, the most recent of the equal length COERs will become the Annual COER.
 - c. Annual COER. The Annual COER is a Web-based process accessed from the Officer Secure Area in the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) at <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/> (and then login to Officer Secure Area).
 - (1) Near the end of each Evaluation Year, CCHQ provides an electronic notice to all PHS officers with instructions to complete and submit the online COER. Officers must fill out and submit their COER to their Rater via the online COER system as detailed in POM 821.73.
 - (2) The online COER system contains Section 1 (Administrative Data), completed by the officer and Rater (with comments from the Reviewing Official), and Section 2 (Officer's Comments), which is a required narrative that must be completed by the officer. Section 3 (Performance Evaluation) contains the Rater's evaluation, which includes scores on the officer as well as comments justifying the scores. Section 4 contains the Reviewing Official's Statement (ROS). Section 4 is only included in Annual COERs, and it is only required for officers seeking promotion.
 - (3) Annual COERs must include Sections 1, 2, and 3. The USPHS Commissioned Corps requires Reviewing Officials to complete Section 4 for officers who are eligible for promotion and makes it optional for other officers. In the event an officer does not have an evaluation period of six months or longer with one Rater during the Evaluation Year, Section 3 is optional for the officer's Annual COER.
 - d. Interim COER. An Interim COER is optional (except as specified below). The officer or the Rater may initiate an Interim COER to document performance for a period of less than six months during the Evaluation Year that is not covered by the Annual COER. However, the dates of the Interim COER can overlap with the dates of the Annual COER if done for the purposes of evaluating a temporary duty assignment (TDY), detail, deployment, or to document poor or declining performance.
 - (1) Raters may initiate (or require an officer to initiate) an Interim COER without the consent of the officer. In such circumstances, the USPHS Commissioned Corps requires the officer to complete their sections, even if the time period covered by the COER is less than six months. An officer's failure to complete an Interim COER that is designated as mandatory by a Rater will have the same consequences as failing to do an Annual COER.

- (2) Interim COERs require Sections 1 and 2 to be filled out. Section 3 of the Interim COER is optional (scores and comments of scores). Interim COERs have no Section 4.
 - (3) An officer who elects to perform an Interim COER may decide not to complete the COER at any time during the process unless the Rater decides that it is required.
- 6-5. Rebuttal. If the officer disagrees with the contents of the COER, the officer may submit a Rebuttal to information entered on the COER using the online COER system. The Rebuttal is a document from the officer placing their side of the story into the record or challenging content in the COER, including what was provided by the Reviewing Official. CCHQ adds the rebuttal to the officer's eOPF along with the COER (see Section 8-2.).
- 6-6. Time Frame.
 - a. Raters/supervisors should review and discuss the officer's performance with the officer on an ongoing basis throughout the Evaluation Year, which is October 1 - September 30.
 - b. Officers performing end-of-year Interim and Annual COERs may begin their COERs one month before the Evaluation Year ends (e.g., for the Evaluation Year starting 1 October 2023, and ending 30 September 2024, the officer may begin their end-of-year COER on or after 1 September 2024).
 - c. If the officer's Rater changes before the end of the Evaluation Year and the officer wishes to or is required to complete a COER, the officer must complete and submit it as specified in POM 821.73.
 - d. In cases of officers who begin continuous terminal leave after 1 April during a rating period, the final date of the period of evaluation should be the last day the officer was on duty and working before the period of terminal leave began.
 - e. The SG will establish deadlines for each step of the COER process in POM 821.73.
- 6-7. Rights of Officers.
 - a. Rebuttal. An officer may rebut a COER in accordance with Section 6-5. of this Instruction.
 - b. Redress. An officer who believes they were wronged by a rating or statement in the COER may file for Redress in accordance with [CCI 211.04](#), "Complaints and Redress." In this case, a Redress is a formal request for examination and necessary adjudication, as appropriate, to change the contents of a COER.
 - c. Equal Opportunity (EO). An officer who believes that their COER ratings or comments are due to discrimination (i.e., race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information) may file an Equal Opportunity complaint in accordance with [CCI 211.03](#), "Equal Opportunity Complaints."
 - d. Board for Correction. Officers may apply to the Board for Correction of Commissioned Corps Records if they believe there is an error or injustice in their COER, in accordance with Commissioned Corps Directive (CCD) [129.01](#), "Board for Correction." However, officers must first exhaust other available remedies

(i.e., file for redress and/or EO Complaint, if applicable) before filing an application to the Board.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 7-1. The ASH is responsible for establishing policies related to the COER.
- 7-2. The SG is responsible for providing supervision of activities relating to the day-to-day operations of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The SG is responsible for establishing POMs through the eCCIS. The POM establishes the instructions, guidelines, and deadlines for the COER.
- 7-3. Officers. Each officer is responsible for:
 - a. Initiating the Annual COER submission process, including confirmation of the position and completing the officer comments.
 - b. Completing their COER when required by policy or by the Rater.
 - c. Updating contact information as necessary.
 - d. Submitting the COER to the Rater within the specified time frame (see POM 821.73).
 - e. Completing the Officer Concurrence stage of the COER, even if the officer disagrees with a Rater or Reviewing Official. If the officer does not concur with their rating, they can click 'disagree'.
 - f. Reviewing their eOPF on an ongoing basis to ensure that its contents are up to date and accurate. The officer is responsible for reporting any discrepancies and errors in their eOPF in accordance with guidelines and communications from the SG and/or CCHQ.
- 7-4. Rater. The Rater is the officer's direct supervisor of record for performance at the officer's assigned HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV or non-HHS organization. The Rater should provide input based upon observed job performance, excluding periods of prolonged approved absences such as for an extensive illness (except for a TDY less than six months in length as per POM 821.73). The USPHS Commissioned Corps expects the Rater to discuss the Annual COER with the officer in a formal manner at least once annually and more frequently if appropriate. The Rater is responsible for:
 - a. Using documented counseling sessions, if applicable, in preparing the COER.
 - b. Reviewing any comments submitted by the officer.
 - c. Reviewing position descriptions for accuracy.
 - d. Updating their contact information, as necessary.
 - e. Evaluating the officer's performance using the full scale of the instrument to objectively rate the officer for the evaluative period.
 - f. Submitting the document to the Reviewing Official within the specified time frame (see POM 821.73).

- g. In addition, a Rater may require an officer to complete a COER, except for periods of approved extended absences, even if the officer is excluded through Section 6-3.
 - h. If applicable, initiating an Interim COER as stated in 6-4.d.(1).
- 7-5. Reviewing Official. The Reviewing Official (RO) is the Rater's supervisor of record for performance at the officer's assigned HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV or non-HHS organization. The Reviewing Official is responsible for:
- a. Assisting to ensure that all officers and Raters submit the COER within the specified time frame (see POM 821.73);
 - b. Reviewing the COER for completeness and content and providing concurrence (including Reviewing Official comments);
 - c. Finishing the review and submitting the COER within their specified time frame (see POM 821.73);
 - d. Writing the Reviewing Official's Statement (Section 4) when an officer is up for promotion and/or the officer requests it; and
 - e. Updating their contact information, as necessary.
- 7-6. Liaisons. The Liaison is responsible for:
- a. Monitoring the status of the COER for all officers within their OPDIV, STAFFDIV, or non-HHS organization;
 - b. Assigning the most appropriate Rater and/or Reviewing Official, with input from the officer's supervisors and others in the officer's chain of command if, due to unique circumstances, a Rater and/or Reviewing Official is not immediately obvious;
 - c. Processing Rebuttals of COERs by an officer and any Response to that Rebuttal by the Rater or the Rater and the RO (see Section 8-2.b.);
 - d. Verifying the completeness of COER submissions under their jurisdiction; and
 - e. Ensuring the punctual return of COER submissions to CCHQ (see POM 821.73).
8. PROCEDURES:
- 8-1 Determining the COER Start Date for Extended Absences.
- a. In instances where an officer had a single supervisor but had an extended approved absence during that Evaluation Year, the COER would begin at the beginning of the Evaluation Year (or when the officer returned to work if absent at the start of the Evaluation Year) and end at the end of the evaluation year (or the last day of the Evaluation Year when the officer was at the duty station before the absence began). If the amount of time spent at work was less than six months, the Rater may complete a narrative Annual COER, instead of a detailed COER.
 - b. In instances where the officer had multiple supervisors and an extended absence during that Evaluation Year, the Rater with the most time supervising the officer (not including prolonged approved absences for either Rater) will be the Rater to complete the Annual COER (i.e. the Rater with the most "in-person" time). In this

case the COER would begin when the Rater began supervising the officer (or the start of the Evaluation Year or when the officer returned from prolonged approved absence) and end when the Rater changed (or at the end of the evaluation year or when they began approved absence).

- 8-2 Rebuttal. Liaisons review the officer's Rebuttal and can reject it (based on the criteria in Section 7. of POM 821.73).
- a. If the Liaison accepts the Rebuttal, the system will include it in the officer's eOPF within the corresponding COER document. Otherwise, the Liaison will send the Rebuttal back to the officer for modifications.
 - b. The Rater and Reviewing Official may submit a Response to the officer's Rebuttal through the online COER system, and the Liaison can then approve the Response or send it back. Once approved, their Response becomes part of the officer's eOPF.
- 8-3 Confidentiality.
- a. Completed COERs become a part of the officer's eOPF and must be handled and transmitted as confidential information.
 - b. COERs may be disclosed as specified in [CCI 312.01](#), "Official Personnel Folder," to individuals who have an official need to know in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and as outlined in the System of Records Notice (SORN) 09-40-0001, "Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps General Personnel Records" or if given permission by the officer.
9. HISTORICAL NOTES: This is the fourth issuance of this Instruction within the eCCIS.
- 9-1. CCI 351.01, "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report," dated 12 August 2020.
 - 9-2. Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) CC25.1.1, "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report," dated 9 November 2010.
 - 9-3. CCPM CC25.1.1, "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report," dated 15 1987.