TO: All Active Duty Corps Officers of the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (Corps)

SUBJECT: Readiness Compliance

1. This Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) outlines the enforcement of the Corps' basic force readiness standards, as established by the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH); and specifies the progressive action(s) that may occur if a Corps officer, absent a waiver under policy established by the ASH, fails to maintain continual compliance with the basic level of force readiness requirements in accordance with Commissioned Corps Directive (CCD) 111.03, “Conditions of Service,” CCD 121.02, “Deployment and Readiness,” Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) 241.01, “Readiness and Duty Requirements,” and CCI 633.01, “Special Pays.”

2. Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) performs basic level of force readiness checks for the entirety of the Corps on the first day of each month.

   a. Absent an approved waiver, officers who fail to meet or maintain the basic level of force readiness (“readiness requirements”) will be marked as “Not Qualified,” and is:

      (1) Non-deployable by the Corps;

      (2) Not eligible for promotion in accordance with CCI 331.01, “Permanent Grade Promotions,” and CCI 332.01, “Temporary Promotions;”

      (3) Not eligible for individual, unit, or service awards nor eligible for campaign medals, badges, or insignia under CCI 511.01, “Awards Program;”

      (4) Not eligible for appointment to a group, committee, or board chartered or convened by the Office of the Surgeon General; and

      (5) Not eligible to enter into a special pay agreement (see CCI 633.01).

   b. An officer marked as “Not Qualified” will have until the day before the first day of the subsequent month to meet and maintain the basic level of force readiness. An
officer who fails to meet or maintain the basic level of force readiness by the first day of the subsequent month he/she is marked as “Not Qualified” will continue to be marked as “Not Qualified.”

c. If an officer believes there is an error regarding the determination of his or her readiness compliance, or if he/she has unusual or extenuating circumstances that will not allow him/her to correct and/or update his/her basic force readiness status, he/she should submit a Readiness Assistance Form via the Officer Secure Area on CCMIS. If the officer’s claim is substantiated, the Readiness and Deployment Branch (RDB), CCHQ, will review and correct the officer’s record as appropriate; however, retroactive changes are not authorized if the officer failed to update his/her readiness information with CCHQ before the officer’s readiness status was checked on the first of the month in question.

d. Weight Compliance. POM 821.66, “Retention Weight Standards,” outlines the implementation and enforcement of the Corps’ Retention Weight Standards (see also CCI 241.01).

(1) Officers who are not in compliance with the Retention Weight Standards are required to submit, in addition to their Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT), a quarterly report to RDB by the first week of January, April, July, and October until he/she reaches compliance with Retention Weight Standards. The required quarterly reports must be submitted to RDB on Form PHS-7044-1, “Verified Weight Report.”

(2) Effective 1 January 2020, an officer who fails to submit a completed Form PHS-7044-1 as required in POM 821.66 will be marked as “Not Qualified.” Such officers will be marked as “Not Qualified” for each subsequent month that he/she fails to submit a completed Form PHS-7044-1 until he/she complies with the required submission.

(3) Effective 1 January 2020, an officer will be marked as “Not Qualified” if he/she fails to meet the retention weight standard during the previous 12 months and failed to demonstrate acceptable progress towards meeting the standard. The Director, CCHQ, may refer such officers to an Involuntary Termination Board (ITB), Administrative Separation Board, Involuntary Retirement Board (IRB), Medical Review Board, or other involuntary separation process after a review by Medical Affairs Branch (MAB), CCHQ, who will determine whether the officer has an underlying medical condition that prevents him/her from meeting the retention weight standard. In accordance with POM 821.66, acceptable progress for weight loss is approximately 3.5% baseline body weight per quarter, or approximately 15% baseline body weight loss per year.

3. Non-Compliance. Any Corps officer who fails to maintain continual compliance with the basic level of force readiness requirements will be subject to the following actions:

a. At the point of failing to meet or maintain the basic level of force readiness (i.e., on the date the officer is marked as “Not Qualified”), the officer, his/her immediate supervisor, and Commissioned Corps Agency Liaison (Liaison) will be notified by RDB.

b. At “Not Qualified,” plus one month (i.e., “Not Qualified” on the first day of two consecutive months), the officer, his/her immediate supervisor, and Liaison will again be notified by RDB. The Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will issue the
officer a Letter of Counseling (LOC) which will also be forwarded to the officer’s immediate supervisor and Liaison.

c. At “Not Qualified,” plus two months (i.e., “Not Qualified” on the first day of three consecutive months), the officer, his/her immediate supervisor, and Liaison will be notified by RDB. The Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will issue the officer a Letter of Reprimand (LOR) which will be active for a period of 2 years. The LOR will be shared with the officer’s immediate supervisor and Liaison. During the period of the active LOR, the officer will not be eligible for awards, promotions, deployments, and possibly special pays (i.e., upon approval of a board’s recommendation in accordance with CCI 633.01).

d. At “Not Qualified,” plus three months (i.e., “Not Qualified” on the first day of four consecutive months), the officer, his/her immediate supervisor, and Liaison will be notified by RDB. The officer will be sent forward to the appropriate separation process. The appropriate process may include a probationary separation, an IRB, ITB, or a Board of Inquiry (BOI). (see CCD 111.02, “Disciplinary Actions,” CCD 123.01, “Involuntary Separation,” and CCI 385.01, “Involuntary Retirement (20 Years)”)

4. Non-Consecutive Non-Compliance. Any Corps officer who fails to maintain basic level of force readiness standards and is marked as “Not Qualified” for 5 or more months in a 24-month period will be subject to the following:

a. Upon being marked as “Not Qualified” for the third time, the Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will issue the officer an LOC which will also be forwarded to the officer’s immediate supervisor and Liaison.

b. Upon being marked as “Not Qualified” for the fourth time, the Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will issue the officer an LOR which will be active for a period of 2 years. The LOR will be shared with the officer’s immediate supervisor and Liaison. During the period of the active LOR, the officer will not be eligible for awards, promotions, deployments, and possibly special pays.

c. Upon being marked as “Not Qualified” for the fifth time, the officer will be sent forward to the appropriate separation process (e.g., probation, IRB, ITB, or BOI).

5. A Corps officer who has an approved medical or administrative waiver for one or more basic readiness requirements will not be identified as “Not Qualified” for the duration of the approved waiver, however, the officer is required to continuously meet and maintain the remaining requirements for meeting the basic level of force readiness.

6. This POM is not retroactive; therefore any adverse action that has already occurred or is active will not be subject to review or change in previously adjudicated decisions.

7. This POM will remain in effect until rescinded.

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