



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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OPNAVINST 1742.1C
N4
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1742.1C

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: NAVY VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Ref: (a) DoD Instruction 1000.04 of 13 September 2012

Encl: (1) Self-Assessment Checklist for VAOs

1. Purpose

a. To establish policy and assign responsibilities for the Navy Voting Assistance Program (NVAP), per reference (a). This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

b. Significant changes include the establishment of digital delivery as the primary means for distributing voting forms; updated responsibilities for program review; new criteria for the designation of voting assistance officers (VAO); the requirement that every VAO register for and report quarterly voter assistance metrics in the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) portal; and the requirement for commanders, commanding officers, and officers in charge to comment on unit VAO performance within the VAO's evaluation or fitness report.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1742.1B.

3. Responsibilities

a. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Director, Shore Readiness Division (OPNAV (N46)) must:

(1) Develop policy and strategic plans to ensure proper operation, resourcing, and management of the NVAP.

(2) Prepare NVAP requirements to support programming of resources throughout the 5-year defense plan.

(3) Oversee the activities of the program manager for the NVAP to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying Chief of Naval Operations and end user requirements. Monitor compliance with policy and progress toward meeting strategic plans.

b. Commander, Navy Installations Command, is designated as the Navy's senior service voting representative responsible for execution of NVAP policy and must:

(1) Manage, maintain, oversee, and operate the NVAP, related services, facilities, and equipment to include the Voting Information Management System (VIMS), the Navy's online database through which VAOs manage their respective programs.

(2) Prepare NVAP requirements to support programming of installation operations and maintenance resources throughout the 5-year defense plan.

(3) Provide written operational guidance and staff training that stresses stewardship, fiscal and program accountability, use of technology, and customer satisfaction.

(4) Conduct and evaluate customer and employee surveys, collate information, recommend solutions to issues, and develop service improvement programs.

(5) Formulate and recommend to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Readiness and Logistics (CNO N4) changes to the NVAP policy and criteria, and standards for plans and maintenance of the program.

(6) The senior service voting representative must designate a service voting action officer, preferably a civilian employee (General Schedule (GS)-12 or higher) who manages the NVAP as their primary duty. If the designated service voting action officer is a military member, this person should be of pay grade O-4 (if an officer) or E-8 (if enlisted), or higher.

c. The senior voting action officer must:

(1) Serve as the senior service voting representative's direct representative on voting matters.

(2) Administer and manage all aspects of the NVAP.

(3) Coordinate voting assistance efforts with the FVAP, Navy region VAOs, installation VAOs, other echelon 2 VAOs, and other stakeholders.

(4) Develop, publish, and execute a Navy voting action plan and a communications plan for Federal election years (even-numbered years) to coordinate all aspects of the Navy's voting assistance effort.

(5) Assist FVAP and the Naval Inspector General in conducting official surveys and preparing reports per reference (a).

(6) Maintain a list of current installation voter assistance offices including installation VAO location, address(es), phone number(s), and email address(es).

(7) Maintain current VAO contact information within the VIMS.

(8) Monitor program compliance of all subordinate commands to include ensuring that all subordinate VAOs maintain an account in the FVAP online portal and report voter assistance metrics via this system on a quarterly basis.

d. Naval Inspector General must use enclosure (1) to annually review the voting assistance programs at various levels of command to ensure compliance and submit a report to the Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General by 31 January of the following year, per reference (a).

e. Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command, must coordinate with the senior service voting representative to maintain a contingency absentee voting program for reserve units and activated and deployed personnel.

f. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, must ensure all personnel assigned to recruitment offices are familiar with this instruction and reference (a) and are trained to provide voter registration assistance. Recruitment offices must:

(1) Provide citizens with the National Mail Voter Registration Form per reference (a) and transmit completed forms within 5 calendar days to the appropriate election official.

(2) Maintain reporting metrics in the manner prescribed by FVAP and maintain them on file for 2 years.

g. Commanding Officer, Recruit Training Command, must:

(1) Ensure recruits receive one training period dedicated to voting rights and responsibilities and absentee voting procedures, as specified by the service voting action officer.

(2) Ensure each recruit, prior to graduation, has the opportunity to register to vote and to notify their local election official of their pending change of mailing address by completing the SF 76 Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). SF 76 may be filled out electronically and printed for mailing or a hard copy form provided by Recruit Training Command may be completed and mailed.

(3) Ensure that every recruit undergoing training during a Federal election year is provided the opportunity to register to vote and request an absentee ballot by completing the SF 76. This must be accomplished as early as possible when a recruit arrives at Recruit Training Command to allow the maximum amount of time possible for processing of absentee voting materials.

h. Echelon 2 commands must designate an echelon 2 VAO in writing. Echelon 2 VAOs should be civilian employees (GS-12 or higher), when possible, or a military member of pay grade O-4 or E-8 or higher. Echelon 2 VAOs must:

(1) Complete FVAP training before assuming duties and maintain a record of training and continuity documentation as outlined on the FVAP Web site at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(2) Serve as the principal point of contact for the voting assistance program within the echelon 2 command and all subordinate commands.

(3) Ensure program compliance of all subordinate commands by maintaining current VAO contact information within

the VIMS, and ensuring those subordinate units VAOs are submitting voter assistance metrics via the FVAP portal on a quarterly basis as prescribed by the service voting action officer.

(4) Ensure voting program compliance is assessed during inspector general reviews within the echelon. Results of each inspection must be forwarded to the Naval Inspector General and service voting action officer, not later than 15 December of each year. Enclosure (1) is a recommended checklist of the minimum criteria that must be assessed. The Naval Inspector General may direct an alternative inspection format, as necessary. Inspections must be conducted by the internal inspector general, in conjunction with other scheduled inspections.

(5) Attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop during even-numbered years with elections for Federal office. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, training must be attended at a nearby installation. VAOs at remote locations can access the FVAP Web site for training.

(6) If a unit VAO is not separately assigned within the echelon 2 headquarters command, the echelon 2 VAO must carry out the duties outlined in subparagraph 3i.

i. Region commanders must designate a region VAO in writing. Region VAOs should be a civilian employee (GS-12 or higher), when possible, or a military member of pay grade O-4 or E-8 or higher. Region VAOs must:

(1) Complete FVAP training before assuming duties as region VAO and during even-numbered years. Maintain a record of training and continuity documentation, as outlined at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(2) Serve as the principal point of contact for the voting assistance program of their command and all subordinate commands, in particular, installations, and installation voter assistance offices.

(3) Ensure program compliance of all subordinate commands by maintaining current VAO contact information within

the VIMS, and ensuring those subordinate units' VAOs are submitting voter assistance metrics via the FVAP portal on a quarterly basis.

(4) Ensure region Web sites have active links to the FVAP Web site: <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(5) Ensure installation voter assistance offices within their region are operating as required by this instruction and by reference (a). This includes:

(a) Reviewing all installation voter assistance office deliverables for correctness, when requested by the service voting action officer, before they are submitted to the service voting action officer.

(b) Ensuring installation voter assistance offices actively promote key voter awareness initiatives including Armed Forces Voters Week, Absentee Voting Week, and others as outlined in both the FVAP and Navy voting action plans.

(6) Attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop during Federal election (even-numbered) years. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, attend training at a nearby installation. VAOs at remote locations can access the FVAP Web site for training.

(7) If a unit VAO is not separately assigned within the region headquarters command, the region VAO must carry out the duties outlined in subparagraph 3i(1).

j. Installation commanding officers must appoint an installation VAO in writing. The installation VAO should be a civilian employee (GS-12 or higher), when possible, or a military member of pay grade O-4 or E-8 or higher and must:

(1) Complete installation VAO training at <http://www.fvap.gov> before assuming duties as installation VAO and maintain a record of training and installation VAO continuity documentation in a local program binder as outlined at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(2) Report directly to the installation commanding officer concerning the effectiveness and status of the installation voting assistance program.

(3) Establish, maintain, operate, and be responsible for the installation voter assistance office. Commands must co-locate installation voter assistance offices with an existing high-traffic office and advertise the location well. The installation voter assistance office must be staffed during fixed hours with a trained VAO per reference (a). The installation voter assistance office must:

(a) Provide voter assistance and act as a voter registration agency per reference (a).

(b) Be included in personnel check-in and check-out activities. This requirement must be listed on personnel check-in and check-out forms.

(c) Provide voter assistance to military personnel both before and after deployments of 6 months or longer.

(d) Assist voters with the absentee voting process per reference (a), to include completion of the SF 76, SF 186 Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), or National Mail Voter Registration Form, as applicable.

(e) Report voter assistance metrics on a quarterly basis via the FVAP portal as prescribed by the senior voting action officer.

(4) Ensure that the installation Web site has a link to the FVAP Web site: <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(5) Maintain current contact information (name, e-mail, address, office location, and contact phone numbers) on file with the service voting action officer and in VIMS, and alert the service voting action officer any time a personnel change occurs.

(6) Maintain a primary contact phone number for the installation voter assistance office with voicemail that

identifies the installation voter assistance office, lists hours of operation, and indicates expected timeframe for a return call.

(7) Work with FVAP and the service VAO to coordinate and plan local voting assistance workshops during even-numbered years with elections for Federal office. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, the installation VAO must attend training at a nearby installation and help the host installation advertise the training. Installation VAOs at remote locations can access the FVAP Web site for training, or contact the service voting action officer for more options.

(8) If a unit VAO is not separately assigned within the installation headquarters command, the installation VAO must carry out the duties outlined in subparagraph 3j(1).

(9) Per section 1566f of title 10, United States Code, VAOs must indicate performance of their duties in the comments section or collateral duty block of their evaluation or fitness report.

k. All commanders, commanding officers, and officers in charge of commands with 25 or more permanently assigned personnel must:

(1) Designate a unit VAO, in writing, preferably an O-2 or higher officer, or a chief petty officer, E-7 or higher. An assistant VAO must be designated as necessary, according to command size. Commands with less than 25 permanently assigned personnel must receive voting assistance via their immediate superior in command or their installation voter assistance office. They may also choose to assign a VAO and maintain a command level voting assistance program.

(2) Encourage eligible voters in the command to participate in elections at the Federal, State, and local level.

(3) Ensure all voters are given an opportunity to register and vote in any election for which they are eligible, unless precluded by military necessity.

(4) Ensure voting assistance is provided in such a manner as to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and secrecy of the ballot.

(5) Take all necessary steps to prevent fraud and to protect voters against any coercion, to include:

(a) Navy members must not attempt to influence any other member to vote or not to vote, or require any member to march to any polling place or place of voting. Nothing in this instruction prohibits free discussion about political issues or candidates for public office.

(b) No person may poll any voter in the Department of the Navy before or after they vote, beyond official surveys authorized by reference (a).

1. Unit VAOs must:

(1) Complete VAO training at <http://www.fvap.gov> prior to assuming the duties as VAO. Training records must be maintained on file in the VAO continuity documentation in a local program binder as outlined at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(2) Administer the command voting assistance program and serve as the main point of contact for voting assistance, per reference (a).

(3) Provide all personnel with information concerning absentee voter registration, ballot requests, absentee ballot submission information, and deadlines.

(4) Publicize elections and increase voter awareness throughout the command by utilizing information workshops, plan of the day notes, posters, site TV, or any other medium available.

(5) Actively support Navy and DoD voting promotions, such as Armed Forces Voters Week.

(6) Maintain liaison with the command ombudsman for the purpose of sharing voting information and forms and materials with voting-age family members.

(7) Report voter assistance metrics on a quarterly basis via the FVAP portal as prescribed by the service voting action officer.

(8) Quarterly, and when information changes, update VIMS or other electronic record keeping systems, as designated by the service voting action officer.

(9) Distribute, by hand or electronically, the SF 76 to mustering personnel and the command ombudsman by the dates outlined in subparagraphs 31(9)(a) and 31(9)(b). Completion of this requirement must be documented in VIMS and maintained on file. The command record may not include names or identifying information of any individual.

(a) 15 January of each calendar year

(b) 15 August of even-numbered years

(10) Ensure absentee voting training is included on pre-deployment checklists and procedures for all hands.

(11) Ensure command indoctrination and check-in and check-out lists include the VAO and that all hands receive annual absentee voting training. All-hands training documentation must be maintained on file.

(12) Administer oaths as outlined in reference (a).

(13) At the conclusion of each election year (even-numbered years), review program effectiveness by using enclosure (1), and forward the evaluation and detailed corrective action taken to the commanding officer or officer in charge for review. Maintain the evaluation on file for 3 years.

(14) Maintain an up-to-date file of voting references and forms and continually review resources for VAOs listed at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

(15) Assist in conducting official surveys as directed by the service voting action officer.

(16) Monitor the voting programs of reporting subordinates and provide support, as needed.

(17) Attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop during even-numbered years with elections for Federal office at their local installation. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, attend training at a nearby installation. VAOs at remote locations can access the FVAP Web site for training.

(18) Per section 1566(f) of title 10, United States Code, VAOs must indicate performance of their duties in the comments section or collateral duty block of their evaluation or fitness report.

4. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

5. Forms and Information Management Control

a. Forms

(1) SF 76 Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), S/N 7540-00-634-5053, and the SF 186 Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), S/N 7540-01-218-4384, are available for download from <http://www.fvap.gov>. Stocked forms can be ordered on General Services Administration (GSA) Global Supply Web site at <http://www.gsa.gov/globalsupply>, or by calling GSA Global Supply customer assistance at 800-525-8027 and selecting option 3 on the phone menu.

(2) National Mail Voter Registration Form is available for download from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission Web site, http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/register_to_vote.aspx.

b. Information Management Control

(1) Data collections contained in subparagraphs 3h(3) and 3i(3) has been assigned OPNAV RCS 1742-1.

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(2) Data collection contained in subparagraph 3j(3)(e) falls under DD-P&R(Q)2346.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. H. Cullom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

P. H. CULLOM
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
(Fleet Readiness and Logistics)

Distribution:

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SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR VAOs

1. All VAOs

- a. Is the VAO of the appropriate rank or grade?
- b. Is the VAO designated in writing?
- c. Does the VAO have electronic or hardcopies of:
 - (1) The current Voting Assistance Guide?
 - (2) SF 76 Federal Post Card Application?
 - (3) SF 186 Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot?
- d. Has the VAO registered current command information in the VIMS, or similar database, and has the VAO ensured that contact information is current and correct for subordinate commands?
- e. Has the VAO completed training prior to designation and on even numbered years at FVAP workshops (if available)?
- f. Did the VAO develop a comprehensive command-wide voting awareness and assistance program (for example: plan of the day notes, posters, brochures, or other creative outreach media)?
- g. Did the VAO ensure and track that all Service members received at least one training period devoted to absentee registration and voting annually?
- h. Is the VAO included on the command check-in and check-out sheet and command indoctrination?
- i. Does the VAO have a continuity folder or program binder that includes program instructions and references, training records, FVAP and NVAP directives, and other pertinent information as recommended on the FVAP Web site?
- j. Did the command establish a well-advertised and fixed location where absentee voting materials and assistance is available?

k. Does the continuity folder include records of electronic or in-hand delivery of the SF 76 to all Service members, their family members, and DoD employees within the command?

l. Does the VAO conduct a program review using this form or other suitable checklist at the conclusion of each election year (even-numbered years) and forward the evaluation and detailed corrective action taken to the commanding officer or officer in charge? Are reviews maintained on file for 3 years?

m. Does the VAO have adequate time to perform duties?

n. Does the VAO ensure that quarterly reports are filed on the FVAP portal denoting numbers of personnel assisted within their command?

o. Does the VAO ensure that performance of his or her duties is indicated in the collateral duty or comments section of his or her evaluation or fitness report?

2. Additional Installation VAO

a. Does the installation VAO maintain current contact information (phone number, office location description, address, and email address) with FVAP and the service voting action officer?

b. Does the installation voter assistance office primary phone number include voicemail that identifies the installation voter assistance office, lists hours of operation, and indicates a timeframe for a return call?

c. Does the installation VAO maintain a file of previous quarterly reports?

d. Is the installation voting assistance office in a well-advertised and fixed location?

e. Does the installation VAO have a comprehensive system in place to advertise the installation voter assistance office across the installation (examples include posters, base newspaper notes, installation-wide emails, advertising at high traffic areas such as gyms or galleys, posting of banners, etc.)?

f. Does the installation Web site include a link to the FVAP Web site?

g. Does the installation VAO ensure a VAO was assigned to all local and tenant commands and geographically separated units?

3. Additional Region VAO

a. Does the region VAO actively monitor cognizant installation VAOs and installation voter assistance offices, to ensure program compliance?

b. Did the region VAO work with the inspector general via Commander, Navy Installations Command, headquarters to ensure that NVAP compliance is assessed during routine inspections?

4. Additional Echelon 2 VAO

a. Does the echelon 2 VAO ensure that VAOs at all subordinate commands maintain current contact information in VIMS?

b. Does the echelon 2 VAO ensure voting program compliance of subordinate commands?