



# Department of Defense

## DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 1304.20  
July 28, 2005

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USD(P&R)

SUBJECT: Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS)

References: (a) DoD Directive 1304.20, "Enlisted Personnel Management System,"  
December 19, 1984 (hereby canceled)  
(b) DoD Directive 5124.2, "Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and  
Readiness (USD(P&R))," October 31, 1994

### 1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive:

1.1. Reissues reference (a).

1.2. Updates policies and responsibilities regarding enlisted personnel management policies and data collection by:

1.2.1. Establishing the DoD objectives for Military Service enlisted personnel management.

1.2.2. Specifying the minimum essential elements of a personnel management system.

1.2.3. Establishing requirements for a Military Service Enlisted Personnel Management Plan (EPMP).

1.2.4. Setting constraints on Force Programs.

### 2. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments (including the U.S. Coast Guard when it is not operating as a Military Service of the Department of the Navy by agreement with the Department of Homeland Security). The term "Military Services," as used herein, refers to the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS). The process by which enlisted personnel are professionally trained to satisfy force structure authorizations. It provides the context and framework for enlisted personnel management actions.

3.2. Enlisted Personnel Management Plan (EPMP). Resourced or programmed personnel management actions the Military Services intend to take for achieving the desired average grade and experience mix in the Service aggregate and occupational groups.

### 4. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

4.1. An experienced group of mid- and senior-grade enlisted leaders is vital to organizational performance; therefore, grade and experience pyramids shall be carefully aligned.

4.1.1. The OSD oversight of the personnel force structures of the Military Services shall focus on general alignment across occupational groups.

4.1.2. The personnel force structure design is a responsibility of the Military Services, subject to oversight in paragraph 5.1., to ensure resource plans support those structures.

4.1.3. Experience (time-in-service (TIS)) at promotion shall be the key indicator of the alignment of grade and experience pyramids.

4.1.4. The Military Services shall define desired promotion timing objectives for grades E-5 through E-7. In normal years the average experience at promotion shall be within 1 year (above or below) the desired promotion timing. The desired promotion timing shall not change unless the Service institutes a major shift in enlisted personnel management.

4.2. The EPMS attain the following goals:

4.2.1. Satisfy authorizations for enlisted personnel, while ensuring the Military Services have the desired grade and experience mix, balanced across occupational groups.

4.2.2. Provide visible, relatively stable career progression opportunities over the long term.

4.2.3. Recruit and retain the desired number and quality of military personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience.

4.2.4. Ensure a self-sustaining force with relatively stable career content.

4.2.5. As a priority, maintain manning levels in designated critical skills.

4.2.6. Support the most efficient allocation of DoD human resources.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Under the authority of DoD Directive 5124.2 (reference (b)), the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall manage the EPMS.

5.2. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall implement the EPMS.

6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.



Gordon England  
Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense