



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 2880.1

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: U.S. NAVY POLICY FOR ASSIGNMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND  
OPERATIONAL USE OF THE VARIABLE MESSAGE FORMAT UNIT  
REFERENCE NUMBERS

Ref: (a) MIL-STD-6017B, DoD Interface Standard, Variable  
Message Format (VMF), 30 October 2009  
(b) MIL-STD-2525C, Common Warfighting Symbology,  
17 November 2008  
(c) DoD CIO memo, DoD Net-Centric Data Strategy, 09 May  
2003  
(d) CJCSI 3156.01

1. Purpose. To provide the U.S. Navy policy regarding the assignment, management, and operational use of unit reference numbers (URNs).

2. Applicability. This policy applies to all U.S. Navy organizations responsible for the use or input of URN as defined by the variable message format (VMF) standard. Other agencies that utilize U.S. Navy systems or interface with U.S. Navy systems or applications and that may employ URNs are required to formalize a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. Navy to assign sponsorship and accept this policy for URN management.

3. Background. Per reference (a), URNs are used by units in a VMF interface to uniquely identify friendly military units, broadcast networks, and multicast groups. URNs facilitate the exchange of messaging and situational awareness information, particularly in low bandwidth tactical environments. URN information provides the foundation for address book information used in systems such as command and control personal computer, blue force tracker (BFT), and the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS). Use of URNs in VMF messaging enhances command and control, digitally aided close air support, the common tactical picture, and the common operational picture.

4. Policy. This policy complements the provisions of the VMF message standard and is not intended to interfere with development and or maintenance of that standard. This policy addresses assignment and management of URNs for U.S. Navy assets.

a. URN Assignments

(1) Navy Cyber Forces (NAVCYBERFOR) is designated as the Navy URN manager. As such, NAVCYBERFOR is the command responsible for:

(a) Assigning, maintaining, and managing permanent Navy URNs.

(b) Allocating spare URNs (emergency only).

(2) NAVCYBERFOR is the Navy point of contact for all URN related information. Additionally, NAVCYBERFOR will develop abbreviated names and symbology codes that will be located on the Navy database maintained at NAVCYBERFOR, Joint Expedition Base Little Creek/Fort Story, Virginia Beach, VA.

(3) The Navy URN manager permanently assigns URNs explicitly to the following entities:

(a) Line numbers (down to selected individual billet) and associated multiples thereof from the effective Standard Navy Distribution List.

(b) Operational units identified as requiring URNs for tactical interoperability, (e.g., ships, aircraft squadrons, fleet operating forces, and forward deployed commands).

(c) Platforms with integrated devices operating over VMF that cannot be uniquely identified by paragraph 4a(3)(a) or 4a(3)(b) above (e.g., F/A-18).

(4) The Navy URN manager allocates blocks of URNs based on the size and mission of the unit:

(a) Air squadrons are assigned URN blocks based on the number of aircraft authorized per unit.

(b) Ships or boats that expect to be a participant in VMF networks will be assigned a block of URNs (e.g., guided missile destroyer (DDG) (AFATDS), landing helicopter dock (LHD), landing helicopter assault (LHA), landing ship dock (LSD), landing platform dock (LPD), and riverine).

(c) Construction and special operation forces that expect to be a participant in VMF nets will be assigned a block of URNs (e.g., Seabees; explosive ordnance disposal; sea, air, land; civil affairs units).

(d) Navy personnel billeted with U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) commands will be assigned USMC URNs (e.g., chaplains, corpsmen, naval gunfire liaison officers).

(e) The individual blocks of URNs are further configured where the first URN is selected to represent the unit's commander, commanding officer or officer in charge, provided a symbol per reference (b) can be determined.

(f) The remaining URNs of that block are considered spares and assignment will be determined on an as needed basis.

(g) BFT assignments will be managed through NAVCYBERFOR, with fleet input.

(5) Use of "generic" or "default" URNs is prohibited. System administrators and others with responsibility for management of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems shall ensure devices are loaded with appropriately assigned URNs.

b. URN Management

(1) The U.S. Navy URN manager will maintain a centralized repository for all U.S. Navy URNs. Through coordination, the repository will be updated as permanent until changes are published. NAVCYBERFOR will synchronize to the central URN repository with the joint repository once it is established. In keeping with reference (c), the Navy central URN repository will develop a Web interface and structured query language capability, enabling authorized users to extract URN information as required. It will contain the six mandatory fields stipulated in the VMF standard per reference (a).

(2) NAVCYBERFOR will publish the policies and procedures for updating, utilizing and accessing the Navy central URN repository as described in reference (d).

(3) Each Navy unit will manage assignment of spare URNs from their allocated blocks subject to guidance from fleet commanders.

(4) NAVCYBERFOR will appoint a U.S. Navy representative to the URN Joint Configuration Control Board.

(5) The URN is accessible via a portal on the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command Charleston Tactical Mobile (TacMobile) SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network Web site. Users can access the URN via the following Uniform Resource Locator: [http://tacmobile.spawar.navy.smil.mil/urn\\_repository/](http://tacmobile.spawar.navy.smil.mil/urn_repository/). Any user with access to the TacMobile Web site may access and download URN information. To request an account, access the TacMobile Nonsecure Internet Protocol Web site at <https://tacmobile.spawar.navy.mil/>. Click on the "TacMobile Web Account" link and fill out the account request form.

5. URN Dissemination. The U.S. Navy URN manager is responsible for coordination with U.S. Navy units and other combatant commanders, services and agencies in order to develop unified operational dissemination procedures.

6. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, shall be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of November 2007.



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