



COMDTINST 1750.4E  
14 January 2013

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1750.4E

Subj: COAST GUARD OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

- Ref:
- (a) United States Coast Guard Regulations 1992, COMDTINST M5000.3 (series)
  - (b) Invitational Travel Orders, COMDTINST 12570.3 (series)
  - (c) Authority to Accept Certain Voluntary Services, 10 U.S.C. § 1588
  - (d) Employment of Relatives; Restrictions, 5 U.S.C § 3110
  - (e) Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual, COMDTINST M5350.4 (series)
  - (f) The Privacy Act; Records Maintained on Individuals, 5 U.S.C. § 552a
  - (g) Tort Claims Procedure, 28 U.S.C. Chapter 171
  - (h) Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, Public-Law 105-19
  - (i) Family Advocacy Program, COMDTINST 1750.7 (series)
  - (j) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program, COMDTINST M1754.10 (series)
  - (k) Coast Guard Morale, Well-Being and Recreation Manual, COMDTINST M1710.13 (series)
  - (l) Joint Federal Travel Regulation (JFTR), Appendix E
  - (m) United States Coast Guard Property Management Manual, COMDTINST M4500.5 (series)
  - (n) Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment and Services, COMDTINST 5375.1 (series)
  - (o) United States Coast Guard Postal Manual, COMDTINST M5110.1 (series)
  - (p) Public Affairs Manual, COMDTINST M5728.2 (series)

1. PURPOSE. To provide policy, program guidance, and assign responsibilities for the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program. References (a) through (p) apply.

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COMDTINST 1750.4E

2. ACTION. All unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, chiefs of headquarter staff elements, and reserve units shall comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4D is cancelled.
4. DISCUSSION.
  - a. The precursor to the Ombudsman Program, the Coast Guard Command Family Representative Program, was established in 1986. In accordance with reference (a), the commanding officer is responsible for the well-being of all personnel in the command. The morale and mission readiness of our personnel are directly related to the health and well-being of their families. The Ombudsman Program is a Coast Guard-wide program established to serve as a link between commands and families, to help ensure our families have the information necessary to meet the challenges of a military lifestyle. The Ombudsman Program assists commanding officers/officers-in-charge (COs/OICs) by providing a better understanding of the welfare of the command/unit's families and helping the units to better prepare families to meet emergency situations. Additionally, an ombudsman allows our members to better achieve mission readiness by helping to ensure their family members have access to available resources when issues or emergent situations arise.
  - b. The primary goal of the Ombudsman Program is for every member and their families to have access to an ombudsman. Access to an ombudsman is defined as either having an ombudsman assigned to a member's command, or having an ombudsman from another unit servicing the member's command.
  - c. An ombudsman is a volunteer who is, most often, the spouse of an active duty or reserve member. If a CO/OIC is unable to select the spouse of an active duty or reserve unit member for their command, there are procedures for requesting a waiver in enclosure (1). These procedures include the option to appoint a reservist or an Auxiliary member as an ombudsman.
  - d. Coast Guard Area, District, Sector, and Base commanders, and the Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy, shall appoint one or more ombudsmen.
  - e. Afloat units and deployable specialized forces are encouraged to appoint an ombudsman, due to the unique separation and stress experienced by members and families assigned to these units.
  - f. It may not be practical for small commands, having few family members, to appoint an ombudsman. COs/OICs that do not have an appointed ombudsman shall ensure that family members have access to another appointed ombudsman within their geographic area by sharing ombudsman services with another command, such as a Sector, Base, District, or Area. Such agreements must be with the concurrence of all commands and the ombudsmen involved, and should be specified in writing, including any agreed-upon provisions for support of the ombudsmen. Large commands should consider appointing additional ombudsmen to provide services for their larger population.

- g. Headquarters directorates, staffs, and commands should also consider assigning an ombudsman to ensure that their personnel and families benefit from the distribution of information on work-life and individual and family support programs through the ombudsman network.
- h. The Coast Guard Ombudsman Program was introduced on 26 March 1986. Each year, 26 March is designated as Coast Guard Ombudsman Appreciation Day to publicly recognize the dedicated service of these selfless volunteers. Commands are authorized to set aside any day they find appropriate to celebrate this event.
- i. The Ombudsman Code of Conduct, as delineated in this paragraph, is the essential foundation upon which an ombudsman's credibility is established and maintained. Violations of this code will not be tolerated. Each ombudsman shall:
  - (1) Support the command's mission,
  - (2) Respect the command and family members,
  - (3) Maintain confidentiality,
  - (4) Avoid conflicts of interest, and
  - (5) Maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

#### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Commandant (CG-00). The Commandant may designate, in writing, one or more Ombudsmen-at-Large (OAL) to represent all ombudsmen and report on active duty and reserve family concerns. The OALs will typically be the spouse of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOG) and Coast Guard Reserve Force Master Chief (CGRF-MC). Duties and responsibilities are specified in enclosure (2), and will be included in their designation letters.
- b. Commandant (CG-11). The Director of Health, Safety and Work-Life will promulgate policy and guidance regarding the Ombudsman Program.
- c. Commandant (CG-111). The Office of Work-Life is responsible for developing program policy; promoting program management efforts with the active duty, reserve, and Auxiliary forces; and for funding the approved activities of the OAL. In addition, CG-111 is responsible for supporting the initiation of collaborative efforts between Coast Guard units and DoD, and with other federal, state, and local agencies, including both public and private, to ensure maximum awareness of resources for family support services to our members and their families.
- d. Commandant (CG-1112). The Individual and Family Support Programs Division provides oversight for the Ombudsman Program.
- e. The Ombudsman Program Manager assigned to Commandant (CG-1112), will:
  - (1) Develop policy and guidance for program compliance.

- (2) Work in conjunction with the Regional Ombudsman Coordinators (ROCs), assigned to the two Area Commanders to administer the Ombudsman Program, with specific emphasis on supporting the Area Commanders' focus upon identifying and addressing family support issues within their areas of responsibility (AORs).
  - (3) Actively seek opportunities to exchange volunteer issues, trends, and programs among relevant offices within DoD and other federal, state, and local civilian volunteer components to maximize available support systems and avoid duplication of services.
  - (4) Collaborate with, and coordinate and share services, training, and resources with reserve and Auxiliary components supporting a total Coast Guard force.
  - (5) Publish and maintain the Ombudsman Program Training Manual and post additional guidance, procedures, training opportunities, and resources on the Ombudsman Program website at <http://www.uscg.mil/ombudsman/>.
  - (6) Ensure the Ombudsman Program effectively addresses family readiness issues and concerns Coast Guard-wide.
  - (7) Adequately resource the program to provide sufficient training supported through the HSWL SC to provide, materials, website maintenance, and marketing.
  - (8) Train, certify, and decertify ombudsman trainers.
  - (9) Develop a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan to educate commands, Coast Guardsmen, and their families about the Ombudsman Program.
  - (10) Establish and maintain an ombudsman website and automated Ombudsman Registry to collect metrics and workload data. Ensure all official information, announcements, and updates are posted for ombudsmen through the registry.
  - (11) Annually coordinate the Wanda Allen-Yearout Ombudsman of the Year ceremony.
  - (12) Establish and maintain an ombudsman locator for the general public, using among other means, the Ombudsman Registry.
- f. The ROCs assigned to their respective Area Commanders will:
- (1) Meet regularly with their respective Area Commander, Deputy Commander, and/or designated staff members, on a schedule acceptable to the Area Commander, to address Ombudsman Program service delivery and implementation issues and provide advice and counsel on work-life and other individual and family support programs.
  - (2) Ensure Ombudsman Program standardization through regular collaboration between Area ROCs, Commandant (CG-1112), and the HSWL SC.
  - (3) Assist Commandant (CG-1112) and HSWL SC in identifying policy, program implementation, and funding needs for this program.

- (4) Ensure Commandant (CG-1112) and HSWL SC are notified regarding any unresolved or recurring Ombudsman Program issues.
  - (5) Coordinate and schedule all trainings through the HSWL SC to ensure sufficient training is held to support requirements established by Commandant (CG-1112).
  - (6) Advocate for the support of the duties related to the Ombudsman Program, to include monitoring compliance, promoting awareness, providing program guidance, and compiling documents for reporting.
  - (7) Provide an informational trip report to the Area Commander and a copy to Commandant (CG-1112) after every ombudsman-related field visit.
- g. The HSWL SC provides direct oversight to the Health, Safety, and Work-Life Regional Practices (HSWL RPs) to ensure implementation of the Ombudsman Program in accordance with this Instruction. HSWL SC will:
- (1) Distribute program funding to HSWL RPs in accordance with existing budget models and local needs to provide sufficient training, materials, website maintenance, and marketing.
  - (2) Implement standard operating procedures as described in this Instruction and ensure policy and program updates are communicated to HSWL Regional Managers.
  - (3) Coordinate with Commandant (CG-1112) to develop and maintain standardized ombudsman training curricula and promote ombudsmen attendance at joint-service training programs.
- h. HSWL Regional Managers will:
- (1) Appoint in writing via a delegation letter, a staff member to perform the duties of Ombudsman Coordinator at each HSWL RP.
  - (2) Include these duties in the employee's Performance Plan and Evaluation Workplan.
  - (3) Ensure that copies of delegation letters are sent to the HSWL SC and the Ombudsman Program Manager.
- i. HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinators will:
- (1) Plan, manage, and implement the HSWL RP responsibilities for the Ombudsman Program. Additionally, other HSWL RP staff should provide advice and support to ombudsmen regarding interventions and approaches to be used with families.
  - (2) Facilitate, coordinate, and/or present the standardized ombudsman training at least quarterly in their area of responsibility. This includes:
    - (a) Advertising, providing classroom space, arranging for certified ombudsman trainers and furnishing students with a copy of the Ombudsman Training Manual;

- (b) Arranging for authorized guest speakers. Authorized speakers must train using approved Ombudsman Program curricula;
  - (c) Reporting non-completion of ombudsman training to the CO/OIC; and
  - (d) Coordinating with other HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinators for ombudsmen unable to attend training in their AOR. Every effort should be made to schedule the ombudsman for the next available training, if space is available, and if it is feasible to send the ombudsman to another training location. Commands are authorized to fund travel through Invitation Travel Orders (ITO) for ombudsmen to attend training; see reference (b).
- (3) Hold a District-wide meeting with ombudsmen annually to provide ombudsmen with program updates and any required Ombudsman Program approved training mandates. Commands are authorized to fund travel through ITOs for ombudsmen to attend. The cognizant Area ROC should also be invited to attend to monitor regional and programmatic issues.
  - (4) Maintain a current roster of ombudsmen in AOR, including reserve ombudsmen, and forward each update to the appropriate Area ROC, District Commander, chaplain, and command center. The roster shall reflect the assignments as listed in the Ombudsman Registry.
  - (5) Provide program support, guidance, resources, and policy clarification for ombudsman recognition to commands.
  - (6) Serve as an advisor and/or consultant to local ombudsmen, the District Ombudsman Community of Practice, and commands. An Ombudsman Community of Practice is a forum for ombudsmen. See enclosure (3) for additional information.
  - (7) If issues arise that appear to be negatively affecting the program and/or family members, the HSWL Regional Manager or Ombudsman Coordinator will notify the respective command.
  - (8) Ensure required Ombudsman Registry information for commands and ombudsmen in their AOR are current and accurate.
  - (9) Refer families to their ombudsman and provide general information about the Ombudsman Program.
  - (10) Assist geographically dispersed family members with accessing an ombudsman.
  - (11) Maintain an administrative record on each ombudsman in their AOR. Administrative records will be maintained in accordance with their HSWL RP records management standards and shall include at a minimum copies of the following forms:
    - (a) Appointment letter;

- (b) DD Form 2793, Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Non-Appropriated Fund Instrumentalities;
  - (c) Online CORE Training completion certificate;
  - (d) Ombudsman Training completion certificate;
  - (e) Invitational Travel Orders; and
  - (f) Application to Volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman, Form CG-6078 with signatures in block seven for the volunteer applicant and the HSWL RP Family Advocacy Specialist (FAS).
- (12) Provide assistance to the District Ombudsman Community of Practice, see enclosure (3), chairperson. This may include:
- (a) Logistical support, such as toll-free teleconference phone numbers;
  - (b) Suggested training topics and speakers;
  - (c) Information on local resources; and
  - (d) Minutes of all meetings, submitted to the District Commander submitted via the HSWL RP.
- j. Command Chaplains will:
- (1) Serve as a resource for ombudsmen and as a referral resource for families.
  - (2) Promote the use of the Ombudsman Program, when appropriate, to members and families.
- k. Coast Guard Area, District, Sector and Base commanders, and Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy will:
- (1) Appoint one or more ombudsmen for their staff. Appointed ombudsmen may serve in an advisory capacity reporting on matters affecting Coast Guardsmen and families within their AOR. Area and District ombudsmen may mentor other ombudsmen in their AOR; however, Area and District ombudsmen have no supervisory authority over fellow ombudsmen.
  - (2) Ensure that in situations where a unit within the AOR does not have an ombudsman, one of these appointed ombudsmen serves as ombudsman for family members until an ombudsman for the unit is appointed. Such agreements must be at the concurrence of all commands/units and ombudsmen involved and will be specified in writing to include any agreed-upon provisions for support of the combined Ombudsman Program as stipulated in enclosure (4).

- (3) Ensure appropriate support by providing funding and other resources necessary for the coordination and implementation of annual training throughout the AOR for appointed ombudsmen and program management training for COs/OICs.
  - (4) District Commanders will coordinate with HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinators and respective Area ROCs to ensure one or more District Ombudsman Community of Practices are established and appoint a chairperson for each. Additional information can be found in enclosure (3).
  - (5) Ensure that volunteers, not officially appointed, are not reimbursed for invitational travel or do not receive other reimbursement benefits under the Ombudsman Program. Coast Guard Area, District, Sector and Base commanders and the Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy, will ensure the following:
    - (a) Ombudsman Invitational Travel Orders (ITOs) have HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator concurrence;
    - (b) The ombudsman has an appointment letter; and
    - (c) ITO requirements are met per reference (b).
1. Commanding Officers/Officers-in-Charge will:
- (1) Establish and execute the Ombudsman Program in accordance with this Instruction.
  - (2) Ensure that command/unit family members have access to the services of an ombudsman.
  - (3) Appoint sufficient ombudsmen to provide required services.
    - (a) All ombudsmen must be appointed in accordance with reference (c). Guidance for COs/OICs on the selection and appointment of ombudsmen is available on the ombudsman website at <http://www.uscg.mil/ombudsman/>.
    - (b) Small commands/units having few family members may arrange with cognizant District, Sector or Base to share ombudsman services. Such agreements must be at the concurrence of all commands/units and ombudsmen involved and shall be specified in writing to include any agreed-upon provisions for support of the combined Ombudsman Program as stipulated in enclosure (4).
  - (4) Ensure the appointed ombudsman contact information is provided to the servicing HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator and the servicing Area ROC for inclusion in the Ombudsman Registry.
  - (5) Ensure the following requirements are met for appointing ombudsmen:
    - (a) Prospective ombudsman candidates must submit Application to Volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman, CG Form 6078, and COs/OICs shall inform prospective



ombudsmen that the information on page one of the application will be used for Family Advocacy Central Registry verification.

- (b) Family Advocacy Central Registry Check. Ombudsmen will not be appointed before notification that a Central Registry check has been completed. Commands shall initiate a family advocacy check by submitting the application to the servicing HSWL RP Family Advocacy Specialist. Potential ombudsmen with a previously substantiated case of child or spouse abuse shall not be appointed as an ombudsman.
  - (c) Term of the Ombudsman Appointment. The ombudsman's term of service automatically expires when the ombudsman's spouse transfers from the command, is discharged, or retires. A letter of resignation is also required whenever there is a change of command; however, the incoming CO/OIC may request the current ombudsman remain until a new ombudsman is appointed, or the CO/OIC may offer to reappoint the incumbent, provided that the incumbent is the spouse of an active duty or reserve unit member. Refer to enclosure (1) for waiver procedures and requirements, if necessary. Sample letters of resignation are available at <http://www.uscg.mil/ombudsman/>.
  - (d) Termination of Service for Cause. The CO/OIC should terminate the ombudsman appointment if the ombudsman violates the Ombudsman Code of Conduct in section 4.1, knowingly fails to execute their reportable duties, knowingly submits an unauthorized reimbursement claim, knowingly misuses command issued property, or if the CO/OIC considers the ombudsman's behavior is detrimental to the command and/or command families.
  - (e) Voluntary services from host-nation or third country citizens may be accepted if the responsible CO/OIC determines that acceptance of such voluntary services will not subject the Coast Guard to potential liability or unacceptable expenses. This includes payment of employment benefits for a volunteer because of host-nation labor and voluntary service laws, United States/host nation treaties, Status of Forces Agreement, or other agreements. COs/OICs should seek legal counsel for a review of the provision of voluntary services from host-nation and third-country citizens at overseas locations prior to appointment in the Ombudsman Program; for example, the spouse of an active duty member holding host nation or third country citizenship.
- (6) Ensure the appointed ombudsman is normally not the spouse or family member of the unit command cadre in accordance with reference (d). It is recommended that command cadre spouses and others in advocacy roles attend ombudsman training with the ombudsman if space is available and at no cost to the Ombudsman Program. This training provides important guidelines and direction in assisting the ombudsman. Command cadre spouses may function in a supportive and collaborative role with ombudsmen but will have no supervisory responsibilities over ombudsmen.
  - (7) Ensure updated command/unit information, ombudsman information and monthly worksheets are entered into the Ombudsman Registry.

- (8) In accordance with reference (e), when accepting ombudsman volunteer services, COs/OICs shall not discriminate based on race, creed, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, or disability when appointing an ombudsman.
- (9) Accept volunteer services from the ombudsman by completing DD Form 2793, Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Non-Appropriated Fund Instrumentalities. COs/OICs shall execute part II of this form (Appropriated Fund Activities). A copy of the signed DD Form 2793 will be given to the ombudsman, HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator, and the original shall be maintained in the command/unit administrative file.
- (10) Ensure the ombudsman receives adequate equipment, material, an ombudsman nametag, business cards, and funding support in accordance with enclosure (4).
- (11) Establish a funding line item to support their Ombudsman Program. Reference (c) authorizes the use of appropriated or non-appropriated funds in support of the Ombudsman Program. This includes reimbursement of expenses incurred during performance of official ombudsman duties, when appropriate and approved in advance by the CO/OIC. The CO/OIC and the ombudsman will discuss the budget and determine what support can be provided and what expenses will be reimbursed. The ombudsman, based on the authorized budget, must document his/her expenses and submit a Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, SF 1164 to the appropriate unit representative for reimbursement. Travel and training expenses must be paid by the command or reimbursed per enclosure (4). It is the responsibility of the CO/OIC to ensure the ombudsman is reimbursed for authorized expenses in a timely manner.
- (12) Ensure that all current and incoming personnel (including single personnel) and their family members know the name of and contact information for the ombudsman and are aware of the services the ombudsman provides.
- (13) Ensure ombudsmen are provided contact information for the Coast Guard Yellow Ribbon Program when reserve member(s) who deploy under Title 10 orders are required to have access to Yellow Ribbon events.
- (14) Ensure that the ombudsman receives required training outlined below and provide him or her with a copy of this Instruction, the Ombudsman Training Manual, and an appointment letter. Additional guidance and a sample appointment letter are available on the ombudsman website at <http://www.uscg.mil/ombudsman/>.
  - (a) Ombudsman training is required for all ombudsmen. COs/OICs shall coordinate with the servicing HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator to ensure their ombudsman attends training within three months of appointment. An ombudsman unable to attend training within their AOR will be referred to the servicing HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator to reschedule for the next available training or coordinate attendance at an approved alternate training;

- (b) Ombudsmen must complete the Ombudsman Online Core Training, initially within four weeks of receiving a Coast Guard Auxiliary Learning Management System (LMS) account; and again annually while serving as an ombudsman; and
  - (c) COs/OICs are authorized to issue Invitational Travel Orders (ITOs) for ombudsmen to attend ombudsman training in another AOR if it is in the best interest of the command.
- (15) Upon assuming the role of ombudsman, ensure the ombudsman receives a regularly updated command roster of unit personnel (active duty and reserve), family members' names, addresses, and phone numbers. Reference (f) provides for the release of command roster information to ombudsmen without the consent of the individuals listed when the ombudsman is acting in an official capacity. Ombudsmen are designated as routine users under Privacy Act guidelines. In accordance with reference (a), the CO/OIC is responsible for the well-being of all personnel in the command. An ombudsman holds official command status and serves as the CO/OIC's primary advisor for ensuring families have the information necessary to meet the challenges of the military lifestyle. It is critical that ombudsmen have access to the contact information of unit personnel and families to carry out these duties.
  - (16) Communicate regularly with the ombudsman and make a determination whether or not to assign a unit advisor to become the primary point of contact (POC) for the ombudsman (e.g., executive officer, executive petty officer, command chief). If a POC is assigned, decide what issues and events will be handled through the POC and which should go directly to the CO/OIC. However, responsibility for supervisory oversight of the ombudsman will always remain with the CO/OIC.
  - (17) Be knowledgeable about personal protections afforded to ombudsmen. An ombudsman, while providing services under this Instruction, shall be considered to be an employee of the government only for the purposes designated in reference (d) concerning compensation for disability or death of employees resulting from personal injury sustained while in the performance of their duty, and claims for damages or losses for property loss, personal injury, or death in accordance with reference (g). Ombudsmen are protected from personal liability; however, in accordance with reference (h), this does not prevent an ombudsman from being charged with a crime.
  - (18) Host appropriate functions that express gratitude and appreciation for their ombudsmen. Ombudsmen may be recognized at a unit luncheon, reception, all-hands meeting, ombudsman training, or other appropriate gatherings. Appreciation may be expressed in the form of a letter of recognition, a certificate of performance, special mention in a unit newsletter, a Swivel Shot submission, nomination for the Wanda Allen-Yearout Ombudsman of the Year Award, or through other appropriate acknowledgement of the services provided to unit families.
  - (19) Ensure appropriate roles for ombudsmen by asking the ombudsman to serve as consultants on boards or committees that provide support for the unit members and their families such as the Morale, Well-Being, and Recreation Committee or Housing Board,

by inviting ombudsmen to all-hands meetings, as appropriate, and by including ombudsmen in operational unit disaster plans and exercises.

(20) Ensure while acting in their official duty, ombudsmen do not:

- (a) Provide childcare;
- (b) Loan money;
- (c) Transport people in their privately owned vehicle;
- (d) Provide temporary boarding in their home; or
- (e) Plan or hold social functions.

m. Ombudsmen will:

- (1) Complete the Ombudsman Online Core Training, initially within four weeks of receiving a Coast Guard Auxiliary Learning Management System (LMS) account, and again annually while serving as an ombudsman.
- (2) Attend ombudsman training within three months of ombudsman appointment. If a former ombudsman is appointed, ombudsman training is optional unless more than three years has passed since last appointment.
  - (a) Coast Guard ombudsman training is the preferred training; however, it is recognized that due to the dispersed nature of Coast Guard units, attendance at a Coast Guard-specific training may be difficult; and
  - (b) Alternative training is available through the HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator, for example, attending ombudsman training provided by another service branch.
- (3) Serve as liaison between the command and families and report directly to the CO/OIC or the unit advisor/POC.
- (4) Communicate regularly with command and families. Contact families upon arrival to the command to introduce themselves and explain how they can be of service to the family. Communication may be in the form of electronic mail, newsletters, or other command approved forms of communication. Third party social media sites, including Facebook, must NEVER replace official sources of information. Additional guidance on social media is available in enclosure (5).
- (5) Obtain command approval on all official correspondence before printing, distributing, or mailing.
- (6) Maintain an up-to-date phone tree and email list to inform unit families of immediate unit information. All contact information contains personally identifiable information and

shall be safeguarded in accordance with reference (f) and the DHS Handbook for Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information.

- (7) Serve as a source of emergency and crisis information.
- (8) Collaborate with spouse clubs/associations on behalf of the command, but may not serve as a spouse club/association officer. Ombudsmen may participate in spouse clubs/associations in a personal capacity. An ombudsman is not permitted to use his/her title, position, or status to solicit any non-federal source for any cash or non-cash donations for a spouse club/association.
- (9) Provide information, resources, and referrals to families and explain that all services may not be available in the identified geographical location but may be made available through other civilian, federal, or military agencies. Ombudsmen should use the local unit and servicing HSWL RP Work-Life staff as the first option in their referral process and become knowledgeable about all programs offered from the servicing HSWL RP, chaplains, local DoD agencies, and other support agencies. Ombudsmen are authorized to receive and request support from the HSWL RP.
- (10) Coordinate services for families during mobilization or geographic separation. For any situation in which family members remain in one community while the member reports to another location for duty, the local ombudsman retains responsibility for local support services and the active duty command ombudsman assumes responsibility for official command communication with the member and their family members. This will ensure family members are receiving local resource information and official command information. Ombudsmen from both commands will share responsibility for those family members who do not accompany the member to the area of active duty assignment.
- (11) Work within the scope of responsibilities, functions, and duties of this Instruction and the appointing CO/OIC. Ombudsmen working outside the scope of their responsibilities are not covered by this Instruction and are considered a liability to the Coast Guard. The CO/OIC has the authority to address such a breach with the ombudsman through counseling or termination.
- (12) Complete the ombudsman worksheet and enter data monthly into the Ombudsman Registry. Data will include services provided and time spent performing ombudsman duties. No personal identifying information will be included in this report, only the number of referrals and services requested or used.
- (13) Compile information maintaining accurate and complete records on individual and family service agencies, military and civilian, to include telephone numbers, location and point-of-contact.
- (14) Participate in Yellow Ribbon reintegration and unit deployment events, when applicable.
- (15) Promote general awareness of family readiness planning to ensure family members are prepared to deal with the unique roles and responsibilities of service members.

- (16) Adhere to the strictest code of confidentiality to protect the privacy of individuals and maintain credibility of the Ombudsman Program in accordance with reference (f).
- (17) Inform the appropriate official or organization and the CO/OIC when reportable issues or life endangering situations come to their attention. Mandatory reporting is required for each of the following:
  - (a) Suspected child abuse and neglect;
  - (b) Alleged domestic abuse;
  - (c) Alleged sexual assault;
  - (d) Suspected and/or potential suicidal risks;
  - (e) Suspected and/or potential homicides, violence or life endangering situations; and
  - (f) Other issues identified by the CO/OIC as reportable.
- (18) Report to the HSWL RP Family Advocacy Specialist any incident or suspected incident of child abuse. Reference (i) requires all civilian and military personnel, volunteers, and persons under contract with the Coast Guard to immediately report any allegations, suspected instances of child abuse, and neglect to the servicing HSWL RP Family Advocacy Specialist.
- (19) Report all allegations of domestic abuse to the servicing HSWL RP Family Advocacy Specialist. As a guide, ombudsmen should consider domestic abuse to have been alleged if the spouse discloses to the ombudsman an incident of abuse, a third party (e.g., a child, neighbor, family member, etc.) discloses to the ombudsman that they witnessed domestic abuse, or the ombudsman has first-hand knowledge of an incident of domestic abuse.
- (20) Report all allegations of sexual assault to the servicing HSWL RP Employee Assistance Program Coordinator/Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (EAPC/SARC). As a guide, ombudsmen should consider sexual assault to have been alleged if an individual discloses to the ombudsman an incident of sexual assault, a third party discloses to the ombudsman that they witnessed a sexual assault, or the ombudsman has first-hand knowledge of an incident of sexual assault. The EAPC/SARC will take further action in accordance with current Coast Guard sexual assault requirements; see reference (j).
- (21) Immediately contact the proper authorities in cases of any potential homicides, suicides, violence, or life endangering situations, and immediately contact the CO/OIC.
- (22) Keep expense logs and receipts for reimbursement. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted in a timely manner to the command POC using a Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, SF 1164.
- (23) At the discretion of the CO/OIC, represent (as a consultant) the unit on boards, committees, or family outreach events that provide support for the unit and families.

- (24) Participate in the District Ombudsman Community of Practice see enclosure (3).
- (25) Avoid conflicts of interest in dealing with the command and family members. Criminal laws and regulations relating to conflicts of interest are described in Title 18 of the United States Code and the Joint Ethics Regulations (DOD 5500.7-R, August 1993).
- (26) Perform other official roles, functions, or duties assigned by the CO/OIC.
- (27) Submit a letter of resignation to the CO/OIC when the ombudsman's spouse transfers from the command, is discharged, or retires. A letter of resignation is also required whenever there is a change of command:
  - (a) Ombudsmen may be reappointed by the new CO/OIC or requested by the new CO/OIC to remain until a new ombudsman can be reappointed; and
  - (b) Upon resignation, the ombudsman will confer with the new CO/OIC or the command POC about turnover on unresolved issues to the incoming ombudsman. Ombudsman Program related documents will be destroyed per command procedures for handling Privacy Act-protected information. The command roster will be turned over to the new ombudsman. The ombudsman's email list will be deleted.
- (28) Never discriminate against members of the unit or families based on military paygrade, race, creed, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, or disability; see reference (e).
- (29) Never serve as a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) peer support person. It is recognized that ombudsmen have an important role in supporting families when there is a critical incident; however, their role involves establishing communication links between families and where families can receive services. It is not the role of an ombudsman to provide actual work-life services, such as CISM interventions.
- (30) In accordance with reference (j), ombudsmen may not serve as a victim advocate or attend victim advocacy training for sexual assault cases. Whenever possible, ombudsmen should be invited to attend the CO/OIC sexual assault prevention annual mandatory training.
- (31) Ombudsmen shall not develop or maintain records on individual family members beyond information and referrals to services and programs in accordance with reference (f).
- (32) Ombudsmen shall not solicit for cash or non-cash donations from any non-federal source for the Coast Guard or any Coast Guard person.
- (33) Ombudsmen shall not promote "for profit" business or entities.
- (34) In accordance with reference (c), ombudsmen shall not:
  - (a) Hold policy-making positions, supervise paid employees or military personnel, or perform inherently governmental functions, such as determining entitlements to

benefits, authorizing expenditures, or deciding rights and responsibilities of any party under Coast Guard requirements;

(b) Be used to displace paid employees or in lieu of filling authorized paid personnel positions; or

(c) Perform case management or counseling services, even if professionally trained in these areas.

6. MAJOR CHANGES. This Instruction is a complete revision and should be carefully reviewed in its entirety.
7. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Units and individuals may recommend changes by writing via the chain of command to: Commandant (CG-1112); U.S. Coast Guard; 2100 2ND ST SW STOP 7902; WASHINGTON, DC 20593-7902.
8. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Notice. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites. CGWeb: <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGDirectives/Welcome.htm> and CGPortal: <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/CG612>.
9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it had been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., NARA requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not have any significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.
10. ENVIROMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this directive and have been determined to be not applicable.
11. FORMS/REPORTS. The forms referenced in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or on the Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/forms>; CG Portal at <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/uscg/Refernces>; and Internet at <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGForms>.

D. A. NEPTUN /s/  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Assistant Commandant for Human Resources

- Encl: (1) Policy Waiver Request Procedures  
(2) Commandant Ombudsman-at-Large Duties  
(3) District Ombudsman Community of Practice  
(4) Program Support  
(5) Social Media Guidance for the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program



## **POLICY WAIVER REQUEST PROCEDURES**

It is Coast Guard policy to hold firmly to the requirement that persons appointed as a Coast Guard ombudsman be the spouses of active duty or reserve members of the unit. However, it is recognized that there are circumstances in which it is in the best interest of the unit to appoint another individual. This includes appointment of a reservist or an Auxiliary member as an ombudsman.

- A. To request a waiver from the eligibility requirements for an ombudsman appointment and other issues within the Ombudsman Program, the following applies:
1. The requesting CO/OIC will forward a letter by USPS First Class or electronic mail via the chain of command and the Area ROC, to the Ombudsman Program Manager at Commandant (CG-1112). The request should contain the reasons for the waiver and any extenuating circumstances that necessitate a waiver to the policy. The letter, including a point of contact with phone number and e-mail address, should be forwarded to Commandant (CG-1112); U.S. Coast Guard; 2100 2ND ST SW STOP 7902; WASHINGTON DC 20593-7902 for approval.
  2. The Ombudsman Program Manager, or appropriate Commandant (CG-1112) designee, will approve or deny waiver requests.
- B. Requests for waivers of the requirement that only spouses of active duty or reserve members of the unit be appointed as an ombudsman will be considered, if criteria are met. Waivers will be issued for the remainder of the CO's/OIC's assignment, unless otherwise specified. New waiver requests must be resubmitted upon CO/OIC change of command. Waivers may be requested for the following persons and the CO/OIC should address the candidate's ability to meet the requirements:
1. Parent/family member/significant other of unit members, reservists and Auxiliary members:
    - a. Lives in the vicinity of the unit or has a close connection with the unit;
    - b. Has experience as a recent (within five years) military member or family member;
    - c. Has demonstrated an interest in the unit and the ability to attend training and perform the duties of the role;
    - d. Application to unit demonstrates appropriate attributes, skills, and volunteer experience; and
    - e. Command demonstrates that other efforts to recruit spouse volunteers have not been successful.
  2. Waiver request criteria for a family member of retired service members of the unit: in addition to the above criteria, have current appointment as an ombudsman at the time of the service member's retirement.



### **COMMANDANT OMBUDSMAN-AT-LARGE DUTIES**

- A. The Commandant shall appoint, in writing, one or more Ombudsmen-at-Large (OAL) to represent all ombudsmen and report on active duty and reserve family concerns. The OALs will report directly to the Commandant, and are responsible for advising the Commandant on matters affecting Coast Guardsmen and their families. The OALs will write reports of any field visit and provide them to the Commandant as requested, with a copy provided to the Director of Health, Safety, and Work-Life (CG-11). Specific duties will be addressed in the letter of appointment and include but are not limited to:
1. Communicating regularly with the Ombudsman Program Manager concerning the Ombudsman Program;
  2. Serving as an advocate of the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program;
  3. Understanding Work-Life programs and providing vital, timely and responsive information to the Coast Guard community;
  4. Submitting an annual travel schedule reflective of visits to Coast Guard units, ombudsmen, and family members to the Ombudsman Program Manager for approval and funding;
  5. Attending training and/or meetings relevant to the role of an OAL and ensuring ITOs are approved prior to travel in accordance with reference (b); and
  6. Providing an informational trip report after any unit visit when requested by the Commandant and/or by the Ombudsman Program Manager via the Director of Health, Safety, and Work-Life (CG-11).
- B. The OALs may travel to Coast Guard units, meet with ombudsmen and family members, and attend meetings and conferences. During these visits, information important to the successful operation and improvement of the Ombudsman Program may be learned, and OALs are encouraged to share this information with the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program Manager per guidance from the Commandant.
- C. The OALs will be provided training and support. An OAL who is not currently familiar with the Ombudsman Program is encouraged to attend Coast Guard Ombudsman Training as soon as possible after appointment and other relevant trainings to ensure familiarization with the Ombudsman Program and other work-life programs.
- D. The term of service for an OAL automatically expires, and a letter of resignation is required, when their spouse retires from active duty or transfers. A letter of resignation is also required when a new Commandant is appointed. The new Commandant may request the OAL to remain until a replacement can be found or can reappoint the incumbent.



### **District Ombudsman Community of Practice**

- A. The District Ombudsman Community of Practice (CoP) is an important component of the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program. The CoP exists to support the appointed ombudsmen; it is not a policy-making or supervisory entity. The CoP is a forum for sharing and exchanging successful ombudsman practices and may serve as a venue for ongoing training. A District CoP may meet monthly, quarterly, or bi-annually. All ombudsmen within the district should attend to represent their unit and their families' interests. Command leadership (COs/OICs, XOs, CMC, chaplains, and their spouses) are also encouraged to attend. The CoP is a collaborative environment where ombudsmen within the district can collaborate, share information, provide peer support, and receive program and policy updates. Confidentiality must be maintained during these meetings. One or more CoPs may be established by the District Commander and functions only under their supervision and guidance. District Ombudsman CoPs may:
1. Serve as a resource for an ombudsman's professional growth through additional trainings;
  2. Provide peer mentoring and information sharing;
  3. Make recommendations about community matters affecting the well-being of Coast Guard families;
  4. Serve as a liaison for policy discussion and clarification by appropriate local authorities such as representatives of Morale, Well-Being, and Recreation, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, Child Care, etc; and
  5. Perform other functions as directed by the District Commander.
- B. Ombudsman CoPs are not policy making or supervisory bodies and shall not interfere with the operation of individual command/unit Ombudsman Programs. CoPs shall not interfere in the relationship between the ombudsman and the command. It can assist the ombudsman when problems arise by listening to and clarifying issues, and helping to develop alternatives to address those problems.
- C. Ombudsman CoPs are information-sharing groups and do not function as social clubs. CoPs shall not collect dues, or solicit or hold monies of any kind for the purpose of sponsoring CoP activities.
- D. The District Commander shall appoint in writing a CoP chairperson. The chairperson must be a current ombudsman whose spouse is an active duty or reserve member of a command within the district. The HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator may not serve as the chairperson but shall serve as an advisor. CoP chairperson duties include:
1. Presiding over all meetings;
  2. Providing information and support to all district ombudsmen;
  3. Working with the HSWL RP Ombudsman Coordinator to plan and schedule trainings; and
  4. Representing the district as a member of committees, boards or group meetings as requested by the District Commander.



## **PROGRAM SUPPORT**

- A. Funding. Every unit shall establish specific funding resources for support of the unit's Ombudsman Program. References (c) and (k) authorize use of appropriated and non-appropriated funds in support of the Ombudsman Program. The ombudsman, based on the authorized budget, must document their expenses and submit a Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, SF 1164, to the unit for reimbursement. When required, receipts must also be submitted.
- B. Reimbursable items. The ombudsman must be acting in an official capacity as directed by the CO/OIC, must have an appointment letter, and have signed the volunteer agreement to receive reimbursement for the following items:
1. Childcare. Reimbursement may not exceed the local rate of the Coast Guard Child Development Center (CDC). If Coast Guard-operated care is unavailable, reimbursement for childcare will be paid with available unit funds. COs/OICs are encouraged to establish caps of reimbursement based on local commercial child care market rates.
  2. Mileage, parking, and tolls. Mileage will be paid at the current government privately-owned vehicle rate. Mileage must be documented. Parking and tolls require receipts.
  3. Invitational Travel Orders (ITO). Reimbursement for expenses incurred during participation in training, conferences and other approved events is authorized. The travel must be approved in advance and reimbursement must be in accordance with reference (l). ITOs are authorized for ombudsmen only and must be completed as instructed in reference (b). Commands are not authorized to issue ITOs in support of the Ombudsman Program to persons not officially appointed as ombudsman. Other volunteers providing gratuitous services to the Ombudsman Program are not authorized reimbursement of expenses under this program.
  4. Communication equipment. Access to a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device; long distance calling cards or plans; or internet service, is authorized. Command pre-authorization and approval of equipment expenditures is required for reimbursements.
    - a. Command-owned equipment may be issued to the ombudsman at the discretion of the CO/OIC if they decide the Ombudsman Program will function more effectively. This equipment must be accounted for in accordance with references (m) and (n) and returned when the ombudsman resigns. The ombudsman must limit use of these items to the execution of official ombudsman duties only.
    - b. The issuance of communication equipment, telephone service, or other electronic equipment in the home of an ombudsman is at the discretion of the CO/OIC and should be discussed with a District legal officer or the Legal Service Center (LSC) before installation. Reference (c) allows for the installation of communication equipment in the private residences of persons who provide voluntary services. Installation of such equipment must not be done routinely and only after careful consideration and subsequent decision that to do so is necessary for the Ombudsman Program to function effectively.

Enclosure (4) to COMDTINST 1750.4E

5. **Incidental Expenses.** Incidental expenses in support of the Ombudsman Program may be paid for with appropriated or non-appropriated funds when incurred by the command only. This is at the discretion of the CO/OIC and can be used for individual ombudsman appreciation recognition. The command should consult with the unit morale officer. Cash awards are not authorized for ombudsmen.
  
- C. **Morale Funds.** Local unit morale funds may be authorized to support certain functions of the ombudsman. Local ombudsmen are encouraged to work closely with the unit morale unit officer and their command POC to identify needs, determine if they are eligible for morale fund support, and identify funding through morale fund budget process.
  
- D. **Other Support.** Administrative support such as, paper, envelopes, pens, copier service, use of government mail, and government vehicle transportation should be budgeted and may be provided from appropriated fund or non-appropriated funds, as command resources permit
  
- E. **Newsletter Expenses.** The unit will assume all costs for the production and delivery of an ombudsman newsletter, if a newsletter is produced. Newsletter content must be approved by the CO/OIC or designated POC prior to distribution. The command/unit is responsible for providing technical and administrative support, paper, printer access, and delivery costs (stamps/bulk mail, etc.). Newsletters must be sent the most economical means possible in accordance with reference (o).



### **Social Media Guidance for the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program**

- A. The Coast Guard's social media program presents unit commanding officers with a unique opportunity to leverage their unit ombudsman to communicate command messages to, and solicit feedback from Coast Guard families.
- B. By serving as a command-authorized administrator on an official unit Facebook page an ombudsman can act as a force multiplier and subject matter expert on issues of importance to Coast Guard dependents.
- C. All members of the Ombudsman Program shall follow all rules regarding Operations Security (OPSEC) and Information Security (INFOSEC) at all times.
- D. Members of the Ombudsman Program should understand the difference between official, unofficial, and personal use of social media for Coast Guard communication as outlined in reference (p).
  - 1. Official communication occurs when an ombudsman is speaking on behalf of the command. Example: Announcing a unit-sponsored town hall meeting to discuss a change in Veteran's Administration (VA) education benefits for military dependents via the unit's official Facebook page or on a nonofficial site.
  - 2. Unofficial communication occurs when an ombudsman is speaking about official duties but not on behalf of or at the behest of the command. Example: Leaving a comment on a non-official site correcting the record on a change in VA benefits for military dependents.
  - 3. Personal communication occurs when an ombudsman is speaking about the Coast Guard but not speaking about or in reference to official duties. Example: Leaving a comment on an official or non-official site/social network regarding his/her personal experiences with the VA education benefits program.
- E. As command representatives, all official and unofficial communication by members of the Ombudsman Program is governed by reference (p) and the public affairs posture of the commanding officer of the unit. The use of social media is discussed in Chapter 11 of reference (p).
- F. When engaging in official or unofficial communication on non-official sites the ombudsman is required to identify him/herself by name and position and must use approved Coast Guard disclaimers, located in Chapter 11 of reference (p). This is to avoid any perception of endorsement by the Coast Guard of third-party sites or tools.
- G. Reference (p) allows for one official Facebook page per unit. An ombudsman shall not create additional official or unofficial Facebook pages to communicate about or on behalf of the unit. An ombudsman may, however, represent the unit in an official or unofficial capacity on a non-official site.
- H. Reference (p) does not allow for an ombudsman to have a standalone Facebook page to discuss Coast Guard families or issues. A unit ombudsman should work with his/her command to:

Enclosure (5) to COMDTINST 1750.E

1. Engage as part of the command team on the unit's official Facebook page, or;
  2. Work with the unit to establish and serve as the administrator of an official Facebook page for the unit if one does not already exist to ensure information is being passed to Coast Guard families.
- I. At this time, Facebook is the only approved social media tool authorized for official online communication by the Coast Guard at the unit level. Units wishing to engage on social media tools not currently authorized (e.g. a unit blog, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, etc.) shall work with their servicing public affairs shop to seek a waiver.
- J. Third-party social media tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, etc.) are not authorized for the official release of Coast Guard information. All command information posted to Facebook must be released through an authorized source prior to dissemination via social media sites/networks. More information on the official release of information can be found in reference (p).