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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1742.1D

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: NAVY VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Ref: (a) DoD Instruction 1000.04 of 12 November 2019

Encl: (1) Self-Assessment Checklist for Voting Assistance Officers

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 requirements to track voting assistance data in the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Web portal replacing the Voter Information Management System; removal of annual military voter training requirement; changes to duties of the Service Voting Action Officer (SVAO) and voting assistance officer (VAO) at all levels; and revisions to enclosure (1), which contains VAO self-assessment guidance.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1742.1C.

3. Responsibilities

a. Director, Installations Division (OPNAV N4I) must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3a(1) through 3a(3).

(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 (CNIC), is designated as the Navy's Senior Service Voting Representative (SSVR) responsible for execution of NVAP policy and must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3b(1) through 3b(6).

(1) Manage, maintain, oversee, and operate the NVAP, related services, facilities, and equipment.

(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 stress 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, Installations and Logistics (CNO N4) changes to the NVAP policy and criteria and standards for plans and maintenance of the program.

(6) Designate an SVAO, preferably a civilian employee (General Schedule-12 or senior) who manages the NVAP as their primary duty. If the designated SVAO is a military member, this person should be of pay grade O-4 (if an officer) or E-8 (if enlisted), or senior.

c. The SVAO must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3b(1) through 3c(10).

(1) Serve as the SSVR's direct representative on voting matters and administer and manage all aspects of the NVAP.

(2) Ensure Navy-wide means to effectively and expeditiously communicate with and disseminate voting information to commanders, installation voting assistance (IVA) officers (IVAO), and U.S. citizens who are members of the Military Services and their eligible family members, and U.S. citizens overseas, including Department of Defense (DoD) civilian members of the DoD Component and their eligible family members.

(3) 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 and advertise Armed Forces Voter's Week and Absentee Voting Week to encourage voter outreach events and voter awareness.

(4) Publicize and distribute information awareness briefs, as prescribed by FVAP, to all VAOs to educate all eligible voters on absentee registration and voting procedures.

(5) Develop a Service-wide plan to deliver the Federal Post Card Application (Standard Form 76 (SF 76)) directly to all eligible voters, including eligible family members when practicable, electronically or via hard copy by 15 January of each year and by 15 July of even-numbered years.

(6) Ensure distribution of materials and informational resources to IVAOs, IVA offices, and VAOs. Establish recognizable voting e-mail addresses to contact all Navy IVA offices worldwide (e.g., vote@[installation].navy.mil or similar).

(7) Assist FVAP and the Office of the Naval Inspector General (NAVINSGEN) in conducting official surveys and preparing reports per reference (a).

(8) Maintain a list of current IVAOs, including IVAO location, address(es), phone number(s), and e-mail address(es).

(9) Maintain current VAO contact information within the FVAP Web portal.

(10) Monitor program compliance of all Navy commands to include ensuring that all VAOs maintain an account in the FVAP Web portal and report voter assistance metrics via this system on a quarterly basis. This includes all IVAOs, unit VAOs, and recruiting commands.

d. NAVINSGEN must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3d(1) and 3d(2).

(1) Ensure that the voting assistance program is reviewed during command inspections and area assessment visits to include evaluating efforts in managing compliance of subordinate commands.

(2) Use enclosure (1) to annually review the voting assistance programs at various levels of command to ensure compliance and submit a report to the DoD Office of Inspector General (DODOIG) by 1 December of the calendar year, per reference (a).

e. Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command (COMNAVRESFORCOM), must coordinate with the SSVR and SVAO to maintain a contingency absentee voting program for reserve units and activated and deployed personnel.

f. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (COMNAVCRUITCOM), 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 adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3f(1) and 3f(2).

(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 electronically in the FVAP Web portal and hard copy as prescribed by FVAP and maintain records on file for 2 years.

g. COMNAVCRUITCOM, must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3g(1) through 3g(3).

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

(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. The SF 76 may be filled out electronically and printed for mailing, or a hard copy form provided by COMNAVCRUITCOM 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 COMNAVCRUITCOM 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 must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3h(1) through 3h(4).

(1) Complete FVAP VAO training at <https://www.fvap.gov/portal/login/welcome.html> within 30 days of assuming the duties as echelon 2 VAO. Training records must be maintained on file in the VAO continuity documentation in a local program binder as outlined in <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 voting program compliance is assessed during inspector general reviews and command inspections within the echelon.

(4) 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 3m.

i. Region commanders must designate an officer, senior enlisted (E-7 or senior), or civilian employee of appropriate grade as a region VAO in writing. Region VAOs must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3i(1) through 3i(7).

(1) Complete FVAP VAO training at <https://www.fvap.gov/portal/login/welcome.html> within 30 days of assuming the duties as the region 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) Serve as the principal point of contact for the voting assistance program of their command and all subordinate commands, in particular, installations, and IVAOs.

(3) Ensure program compliance of all subordinate commands by maintaining current VAO contact information and submit voter assistance metrics via the FVAP Web portal on a quarterly basis.

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

(5) Ensure IVAOs within their region are operating as required by this instruction and by reference (a). This includes subparagraphs 3i(5)(a) through 3i(5)(c).

(a) Reviewing all IVAO deliverables for correctness, when requested by the SVAO, before they are submitted to the SVAO.

(b) Ensuring IVAOs 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.

(c) Ensuring IVAOs maintain current contact information in the FVAP Web portal and submit metrics to the FVAP Web portal quarterly.

(6) During election years (even-numbered years), attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop at a local installation. VAOs may attend workshops at Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps installations. VAOs at remote locations may access the FVAP website 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 3m.

j. All installation commanding officers must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraph 3j(1) through 3j(5).

(1) Designate an officer, senior enlisted (E-7 or senior), or civilian employee of appropriate grade as an IVAO in writing.

(2) Ensure voting information and outreach, (e.g., naval messages and public service announcements) are included in installation public affairs efforts during election years (even-numbered years).

(3) Establish an IVA office within the installation headquarters organization, even if geographically located in another building.

(a) Ensure the IVA office is in a well-advertised, fixed location (be as consistent as possible throughout the Service concerned) and physically co-located with an existing office that receives extensive visits by eligible voters.

(b) Establish satellite offices under the primary IVA office as warranted.

(4) Ensure the IVA office is open during the hours the installation office is open and adequately staffed with trained personnel to provide direct assistance in registration and voting procedures, including the assistance required under chapter 205 of Title 52, U.S. Code.

(a) Ensure access to an answering machine and voicemail, except where 24-hour telephone coverage is available.

(b) Ensure e-mails and voicemails received by the IVA office are returned within 3 business days of receipt, but within 24 hours if less than 45 days prior to a general election.

(5) Inform eligible voters of the information and voter registration assistance at offices and the time, location, and manner in which an eligible voter may use assistance.

k. IVAOs must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3k(1) through 3k(15).

(1) Complete IVAO training at <http://www.fvap.gov> before assuming duties as IVAO and maintain a record of training and IVAO 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 IVA program.

(3) Maintain, operate, and be responsible for the IVA office. Commands must co-locate installation voter assistance offices with an existing high-traffic office and advertise the location well. The IVA office must be staffed during fixed hours with a trained VAO per reference (a). The IVA office must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3k(3)(a) through 3k(3)(e).

(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, the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (SF 186), or the National Mail Voter Registration Form, as applicable.

(e) Report voter assistance metrics on a quarterly basis via the FVAP Web portal as prescribed by the SVAO.

(4) Use installation communications to ensure awareness of availability of voting programs. Establish a VAO network and communications capability to quickly disseminate voting information throughout the installation.

(5) Notify installation personnel of the date absentee ballots must be mailed to State and local election officials before a general election for Federal offices and of general Military Postal Service Agency mail delivery deadlines.

(6) Engage, as practicable, appropriate local election official assistance for a voter registration drive or similar event on an installation and refrain from discussing voting policy matters with State and local government officials.

(7) Ensure that all Service members (including activated National Guard and Reserve personnel) have access to absentee registration and voting procedures.

(8) Support Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week events established under the applicable FVAP and Navy voting action plans.

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

(10) Maintain current contact information (name, e-mail, address, office location, and contact phone numbers) on file with the SVAO and on the FVAP Web portal and alert the SVAO any time a change in personnel or office location occurs.

(11) Maintain a primary contact phone number for the IVAO with voicemail that identifies the IVAO, lists hours of operation, and indicates expected timeframe for a return call.

(12) Work with FVAP and the SVAO to coordinate and plan local voting assistance workshops. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, the IVAO must attend training at a nearby installation and help the host installation advertise the training. IVAOs at remote locations can access the FVAP website for training or contact the SVAO for more options.

(13) Report voter assistance metrics on a quarterly basis via the FVAP Web portal per reference (a) and as prescribed by the SVAO.

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

(15) Per section 1566(f) of Title 10, U.S. Code, VAOs must indicate performance of their duties in the comments section or collateral duty block of their evaluation or fitness report. This requirement may be satisfied by listing VAOs as a collateral duty.

1. All commanders, commanding officers, and officers in charge of commands with 25 or more permanently assigned personnel must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraph 3l(1) through 3l(5).

(1) Designate an officer, petty officer (E-5 or senior), or civilian employee of appropriate grade as a unit VAO, in writing. Commands with fewer than 25 permanently assigned personnel must either assign a VAO and maintain a command-level voting assistance program or receive voting assistance from their immediate superior in command or their IVA office.

(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 the secrecy of the ballot.

(5) Take all necessary steps to prevent fraud and protect voters against any coercion from outside sources.

(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).

m. Unit VAOs must adhere to the responsibilities listed in subparagraphs 3m(1) through 3m(6).

(1) Complete training as prescribed by FVAP.

(2) Notify all unit members, through command check-in processes or other appropriate means, that the SF 76 and other voting resources are available electronically on www.fvap.gov.

(3) Maintain and submit voting program metrics as prescribed by FVAP.

(4) Provide adequate resources and assistance to individuals seeking voting assistance during Federal elections.

(5) Upon request from an IVAO for support, coordinate the request for support with the unit VAO's chain of command.

(6) Per section 1566(f) of Title 10, U.S. Code, VAOs must indicate performance of their duties in the comments section or collateral duty block of their evaluation or fitness report. This requirement may be satisfied by listing VAO as a collateral duty.

4. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at: <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact the local records manager or the OPNAV Records Management Program (DNS-16).

5. Forms and Information Management Control

a. Forms

(1) The SF 76, S/N 7540-00-634-5053, and the SF 186, S/N 7540-01-218-4384, are available for download from <http://www.fvap.gov>. Stocked forms can be ordered by accessing the General Services Administration (GSA) Global Supply website 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) The National Mail Voter Registration Form is available for download from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission website, <https://www.eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form>.

b. Information Management Control. Data collections contained in subparagraphs 3h(3) and 3i(3) have been assigned OPNAV RCS 1742-1.

6. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, OPNAV N4I will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.



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Releasability and distribution:

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SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

1. All VAOs

- a. Is the VAO designated in writing?
- b. Has the VAO registered current command information in the FVAP Web portal, or similar database, and has the VAO ensured that contact information is current and correct for subordinate commands?
- c. Has the VAO completed training?
- d. Is the VAO included on the command check-in sheet?
- e. 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 website?
- f. Did the command establish a well-advertised and fixed location, either in the working space or online, where absentee voting materials and assistance are available?
- g. Does the VAO have adequate time to perform their duties?
- h. Does the VAO ensure that quarterly reports are filed on the FVAP Web portal denoting numbers of personnel assisted within their command?
- i. Does the VAO ensure that performance of their duties is indicated in the collateral duty or comments section of their evaluation or fitness report?

2. Additional IVAOs

- a. Is there a standard e-mail address of the form vote@[installation].navy.mil, vote.[installation]@navy.mil, or similar format? Does the VAO reply to e-mails sent to this address within 72 hours?
- b. Does the IVAO maintain current contact information (phone number, office location description, address, and e-mail address) with FVAP and the SVAO?
- c. Is the IVA office e-mail and primary phone number voicemail returned within 3 business days of receipt, but within 24 hours if less than 45 days prior to a general election?
- d. Does the IVAO maintain a file of previous quarterly reports?

e. Is the IVA office in a well-advertised and fixed location?

f. Does the IVAO have a system in place to advertise the IVA office across the installation (examples include posters, base newspaper notes, installation-wide e-mails, advertising at high traffic areas such as gyms or galleys, and posting of banners)?

g. Does the installation website include a link to the FVAP website?

3. Additional Region VAOs

a. Does the region VAO actively monitor cognizant IVAOs and IVA offices, to ensure program compliance?

b. Did the region VAO work with NAVINSGEN via CNIC headquarters to ensure that NVAP compliance is assessed during routine inspections?