

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES

PERSONNEL OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM



POM 12-008  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 20 August 2012

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By Order of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service:

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TO: All Regular Corps Officers on Extended Active Duty

SUBJECT: 2012 Annual COER

1. This Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) establishes the guidelines for the 2012 Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER) in accordance with [CC25.1.1](#), "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report," and Personnel Policy Memorandum (PPM) [07-016](#), "Annual COER."
2. The Annual COER is a Web-based performance evaluation process accessed from the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) Web site at <http://dcp.psc.gov>.
  - a. All officers on extended active duty prior to 1 July 2012 are required to complete the 2012 Annual COER except as exempted (see Section 2.d.).
  - b. The 2012 Annual COER rating period extends from 1 October 2011 to 30 September 2012.
  - c. The Annual COER is defined as:
    - (1) An evaluation period starting prior to 1 July 2012 and ending 30 September 2012 (in some circumstances a paper version of the COER may be used for this COER. Contact the COER Coordinator for guidance); or
    - (2) A paper version Transfer COER covering an evaluation period ending after 30 June 2012 (see section 8, "Other COER Types)
  - d. Officers exempt from completing the 2012 Annual COER include:
    - (1) Officers called to extended active duty on or after 1 July 2012;
    - (2) Officers who have separated or retired prior to 1 July 2012;
    - (3) Medical students enrolled at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS);

- (4) Junior and Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP) participants;
    - (5) The Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH);
    - (6) The Surgeon General (SG); and
    - (7) Non-career and career political appointees.
  - e. The following deadlines are in effect, unless otherwise posted on the CCMIS Web site:
    - (1) Online Annual COER is available to officers on 3 October 2012;
    - (2) Online Annual COER is due to the Rater by 17 October 2012;
    - (3) Online Annual COER is due to the Reviewing Official (RO) by 31 October 2012; and
    - (4) Online or paper Annual COER is due to the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) by 14 November 2012.
  - f. The officer is responsible for the overall completion and submission of the COER to DCCPR. If the COER is not submitted to DCCPR by the prescribed deadline, it may nullify or delay promotions, awards, details, or special pays.
    - (1) In the event the officer is unable to submit the COER by the prescribed deadlines, the officer is responsible to arrange an alternative deadline with the Rater and RO which complies with the above final completion deadline.
    - (2) In the event the COER cannot be completed online because the system is no longer available, the 2012 Annual COER must be submitted to DCCPR through the officer's Commissioned Corps Liaison on the prescribed paper version of the COER form. The form is available on the CCMIS Web site under the [Official Forms](#) link of the Services menu or from the [COER webpage](#).
3. Instructions for the Officer.
  - a. Confirm officer contact information and supervisor for rating period by reviewing the information in [Direct Access](#) and making necessary changes.
  - b. Login to the officer's "Secure Area" by selecting "Officer, Liaison, and Leave Maintenance Clerk Activities" under the "Secure Area" tab of the CCMIS Web site to initiate the 2012 Annual COER. Select "COERs 2012" on the left side of the screen in the "Select Activity" section.
    - (1) Contact the CCMIS Help Desk if you do not know your user login or password. The CCMIS Help Desk via e-mail at [CCHelpDesk@psc.gov](mailto:CCHelpDesk@psc.gov).
    - (2) Complete the 2012 Annual COER on the prescribed paper version COER form. If the officer, Rater or your Rating Official does not have Internet access, contact the agency [Liaison](#) for approval to use the paper COER form.

- c. Select "Officer (My COER)" in the activity tree on the left side of the screen revealing the following folders:
- Officer Information;
  - Enter Officer Comments;
  - Preview;
  - Release to Rater; and
  - Check COER Status.
- d. Select "Officer Information" in the COERs application activity tree folder to update e-mail and contact information. Update contact information as necessary and select the "Update Information" button. The electronic application provides for an optional alternate phone and e-mail to ensure that you receive the e-mail messages.
- e. Creating and Submitting Officer Comments.
- (1) Select "Enter Officer Comments". The program provides three text boxes to enter comments: 1) Description of duties and responsibilities; 2) Goals; and 3) Accomplishments. You can type text directly into each box, or you can cut and paste text from a word processor into each box. An ASCII text application works best (e.g., Notepad). Avoid the use of "bullets" to itemize text because it will prevent the comments from saving properly. Consider using alternatives such as numbers or the asterisk (\*) character.
  - (2) The "Description of duties and responsibilities" box is limited to 5 lines or 400 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. Describe the main duties and responsibilities in the officer's job during the performance period. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
  - (3) The "Goals" box is limited to 5 lines or 400 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. List work-related goals for the next performance period and long term career goals. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
  - (4) The "Accomplishments" box has a limit of 21 lines or 1,680 Courier New, 10 pitch characters, including spaces and returns. List accomplishments related to the 8 performance elements you will be rated on. [Refer](#) to the [Performance Elements](#) section of the COER website to review the 8 elements. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Click "Save" when finished.
- f. Select "Preview" to ensure the entered text fits on one page. If the text does not fit, edit the narrative until the text fits in the box.
- g. Rater is generally defined as the officer's immediate supervisor on the first Wednesday of October, regardless of the time he/she has supervised the officer. If the officer is detailed outside the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may designate the officer's Rater. If the Rater is not designated by the MOA/MOU, the Federal Supervisor named in the MOA/MOU

shall be the Rater. If the identity of the Rater is unclear, the officer should immediately contact his/her Liaison office for assistance/clarification.

(1) Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY).

The immediate agency supervisor (Rater) will complete the COER with input from the TDY supervisor for a TDY that was completed on after 1 July 2012. This evaluation will stand as the officer's Annual COER for the year.

(2) The TDY supervisor (Rater) may complete an Interim COER on the paper format when the TDY is completed prior to 1 July 2012.

h. Transmit the COER to the Rater no later than 17 October 2012.

To send the COER to the Rater, select "Release to Rater." You will be asked if you wish to "Use Last Year's Rater" or "Assign New Rater."

(1) If you select "Use Last Year's Rater," you will be asked to verify the Rater's contact information. It is crucial that the e-mail listed for the Rater is correct. If the information is correct, select "Assign." Upon confirmation that the Rater has been assigned, you may logoff by selecting "Exit COER."

(2) If you select "Assign New Rater," you will be asked "Is the New Rater a Commissioned Corps Officer?" If the officer's Rater is currently on active duty, retired or separated, select "Yes." If the Rater is a civilian or a member of another uniformed service, select "No." Search for the Rater's name. The search results page will display the names that most closely match the Rater's name. Select the Rater's name from the list. If the Rater's name does not appear, select "New User." Follow the instructions for the creation of a new user account. It is crucial that the e-mail listed for the Rater is correct. Edit or add the information as necessary and select "Assign." Upon confirmation that the Rater has been assigned, the officer may logoff by selecting "Exit COER."

i. COER Status and Rater Resend.

It is the responsibility of the officer to ensure his/her COER is assigned and transmitted to the Rater and [RO](#) by the prescribed deadlines in this POM. Furthermore, the officer is responsible to ensure the COER is completed and submitted to his/her eOPF.

(1) To determine the status of the COER, the officer will login to the "Secure Area" of the CCMIS Web site. Select "COERs 2012" on the left side of the screen in the "Select Activities" section.

(2) Select "Check COER Status" from the left side of the activity tree. This will provide the most current information on the status of the COER.

(3) The officer should contact the Rater directly if he/she has not started the COER. The officer may also use the "Notify Rater Again" web-link on the left side of the screen. If the officer uses the "Notify Rater Again," ensure the Rater's e-mail is correct.

j. The officer will receive an e-mail notification indicating the Rater has completed their section, and the COER is ready for the officer to concur or disagree with the evaluation.

- (1) After discussing the COER ratings and comments with the Rater, and there are no changes, the officer may concur or disagree with the evaluation. This will release the COER to the RO.
- (2) If changes are required, both the officer and the Rater may modify their respective sections of the COER.

Note: The Rater must review any changes the officer makes to “Officer Comments” before the officer may concur or disagree with the evaluation.

- (3) If the officer disagrees with the evaluation, the officer may provide a Rebuttal (see Section 7 “Rebuttals and Other Rights”). The rebuttal is submitted after the electronic COER has been transmitted to the eOPF.

k. COER Completion.

After the RO has completed his/her section, the officer will receive an e-mail indicating the COER is complete. The COER will be archived in the “COER Documents” section of the eOPF with the following attributes:

- Document Type: ANNUAL
- COER Type: COER
- Document Date: 30 Sep 2012

If the COER is not in the eOPF one week after receipt of the e-mail notification, contact [phscoers@hhs.gov](mailto:phscoers@hhs.gov). It is the responsibility of the officer to assure that the COER has been completed and transmitted to the eOPF.

4. Instructions for the Rater.

a. Login to COER.

The Rater will receive an e-mail notification indicating that an officer has submitted an online COER for rating. The e-mail will contain information and instructions on how to login to the online COER and how to access the officer’s COER. The Rater is required to register once as a guest user each COER cycle. The Rater shall ensure all officers under his/her supervision transmit the COER to the Rater no later than 17 October 2012.

- (1) Once the Rater has access to the online COER, the Rater will see an activity tree (series of folders) on the left side of the screen. To begin work on the officer’s COER, select the officer’s name. This will expand the folder to reveal the following folders:

- Enter Time Supervised;
- View Officer Comments;
- Score and Comment;
- Preview Scores;
- Summarize Performance;
- Preview Performance;
- Assign RO; and

- Release to Officer

- (2) Enter the period of time he/she has supervised the officer by selecting "Time Supervised." If the time supervised is greater than 6 months, the evaluation type is automatically set to a 2012 [Detailed Evaluation](#). If the time supervised is less than 6 months, the Rater will be prompted to select either a Detailed Evaluation or a 2012 [Narrative Evaluation](#). Click "Save."
- (3) Review Officer Comments. Select "View Officer Comments." The Rater may ask the officer to modify Officer Comments.

Note: The officer will be unable to modify Officer Comments until the rating is completed, the RO is assigned, and the COER is "released to the officer."

- (4) Evaluate the officer's performance and provide comments. If an officer has been on extended periods of sick leave or intermittent periods of sick leave, the officer shall be rated on his/her performance when present.
- (5) Select "Score and Comment" from the activity tree. Score all 8 questions by filling in one circle per element.
- (6) Enter text in the box "Rater's Comments" which is located directly under the last (8th) question. Comments are required if this is a Detailed Evaluation. The comments should provide an overall description of the action(s)/behavior upon which the Rater based his/her ratings of the officer. Avoid the use of the % key in the Rater Comment box because it will prevent the comments from saving properly. Explain the impact of the action and why it was important. Text can be typed directly into each text box, or text can be added by cutting and pasting from a word processor. The text is limited to 16 lines or 1,280 Courier New, 10 pitch characters which includes spaces and returns. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Select "Save" when finished.
  - (a) Select "Summarize Performance." Indicate whether the performance is satisfactory, marginal, or unsatisfactory and note strengths and areas for improvement.
  - (b) Select "Preview Performance" to ensure the text entered fits on one page. If the text does not fit, the text should be edited until it fits in the "Preview Performance" view. To edit the text, follow the steps outlined above. Save your work.
  - (c) In lieu of a signature, select the Signature (e-Sign) box.
- (7) Assign the RO. The Rater is prohibited from acting as both the Rater and RO. Select "Assign Reviewing Official." The Rater will be asked if he/she wishes to "Use Last Year's Reviewing Official" or "Assign New Reviewing Official."
  - (a) If you select "Use Last Year's Reviewing Official," you will be asked to verify the RO's contact information. *For timely submission of the COER*, it is crucial that the Rater ensures the

e-mail for the RO is correct. Edit the information if it is not correct. If the information is correct, select "Assign".

Note: The RO will have an opportunity to review the COER after the officer concurs or disagrees; Assignment of the RO does not automatically send the COER to the RO. The officer must first concur/disagree with the evaluation before the RO can begin the review of the COER.

- (b) If you select "Assign New Reviewing Official," you will be asked "Is the New Reviewing Official a Commissioned Corps Officer?" If the RO is currently on active duty, retired or separated, select "Yes." If the RO is a civilian or other uniformed services member, select "No." You will be prompted to search for the RO's name. The search results page will display the names that most closely match the RO's name. Select the RO's name from the list. If the RO's name does not appear, select "New User." Follow the instructions for the creation of a new user account. It is crucial for timely submission of the COER that the Rater ensures the e-mail listed for the RO is correct. Edit or add the information as necessary and select "Assign."
- (c) Upon assignment, you will be asked if you wish to release the COER to the officer to review the evaluation. Click "Release to Officer" to release the COER to the Officer for review.
- (d) Logoff by selecting "Exit COER".

The COER must be released to the officer to allow sufficient time to review the evaluation and for the officer to transmit (i.e., concur or disagree) the COER to the RO no later than 31 October 2012.

b. Review and Discussion.

The officer and Rater should formally discuss the evaluation before the officer concurs or disagrees with the evaluation. Both the officer and Rater may make changes to their respective portions of the COER, but not at the same time.

If the officer makes changes to their Officer Comments they will have to release the COER to the Rater again for review. If the Rater makes changes to the ratings or comments they will save their work, next, select "Summarize Performance and re-check the e-signature box, save the changes, and then release the COER back to the officer for review.

Once the officer concurs/disagrees with the evaluation, no portion of the COER can be changed. The COER is then automatically forwarded to the RO.

c. Additional Rater Guidance.

- (1) In the event an officer cannot meet the deadline, the officer is required to arrange an alternative deadline with the Rater and RO. The electronic COER must be completed and submitted to DCCPR *no later than 14 November 2012*.

- (2) In the event the officer fails to release the COER to the Rater by 17 October 2012, the Rater shall initiate the 2012 Annual COER on the prescribed paper version COER form by following these instructions.
  - (a) The Rater will access the [paper version COER](#) form by clicking "Official Forms" under the Services menu of the CCMIS Web site.
  - (b) Complete Section 1, Part II "Rater's Comments" and Section 3, "Performance Evaluation" of form [PHS-838](#). The Rater may consider the officer's failure to submit the COER in a timely manner in rating the performance of the officer.

Provide the COER to the officer to review and sign. If the officer refuses to sign the COER, the Rater will note the failure to sign. The Rater must sign and forward the COER to the RO for concurrence and signature. The COER is then submitted through the Liaison to DCCPR for inclusion in the officer's eOPF.

5. Instructions for the Reviewing Official.

- a. Login to the COER.
- b. The RO will receive an email notification indicating that the COER is ready for review and completion after the officer has concurred/disagreed with the COER. The e-mail will contain information and instructions on how to login to the online COER and how to access the officer's COER for the review. The RO is required to register once as a guest user each COER cycle. Ensure that all officers and Raters under his/her supervision transmit the COER for review no later than 31 October 2012.
  - (1) Once the RO has access to the online COER, the RO will see an activity tree (series of folders) on the left side of the screen. To begin the review of an officer's COER, select the officer's name. This will expand the folder to reveal the following folders:
    - Rater Information;
    - View Officer Comments;
    - View Scores and Comments;
    - Performance Summary; and
    - Final Concur/Disagree.
  - (2) Select "View Officer Comments" to review the Officer Comments,
  - (3) Select "View Score and Comments" to review the scores and Rater comments.
  - (4) Select "Performance Summary" to review the overall Officer Performance. This will include officer's overall performance of job duties and the officer's strengths and areas for improvement.
  - (5) Select "Final Concur/Disagree." Select one of 4 options which include:
    - I concur with this evaluation;

- Although this evaluation is reasonable, this rater is somewhat more demanding than average;
- Although this evaluation is reasonable, this rater is somewhat less demanding than average or;
- I disagree with this evaluation.

Provide comments in a text box below the selected response. Comments are required if selecting "I disagree with this evaluation." The text is limited to 3 lines or 240 Courier New, 10 pitch characters including spaces and returns. Located at the bottom of the box is a text character counter displaying the used/available text space. Select "Submit" when finished. Click only once to avoid error.

- (6) Select "Exit COER" to log off.
- (7) If the process is completed using the paper format, the paper COER must be delivered by the Reviewing Official to the Commissioned Corps Liaison.

6. Instructions for Commissioned Corps Liaisons.

a. General Instructions for Liaisons. Liaisons are responsible for monitoring the status of the 2012 electronic COER for their respective Operating Division (OPDIV), Staff Division (STAFFDIV) or non-HHS organization. Liaisons will have access to a suite of reporting tools through the electronic COER application. Liaisons are responsible for making follow-up inquiries with officers, Raters, and ROs for COERs that are not submitted or transmitted in a timely manner.

b. Assignment of Rater and RO.

- (1) In the event an officer is unable to identify a Rater, the Liaison is required to identify the most appropriate person to serve as the Rater.
- (2) In the event the Rater is unable to identify the RO, the Liaison is required to identify the most appropriate person to serve as the RO. In the event an RO cannot be identified or due to unique operational circumstances, the Liaison may act as the RO.

c. Verification of paper COER documents.

Liaisons are required to verify all paper COER documents and rebuttals prior to submission to DCCPR. Liaisons are required to verify:

- (1) The document is appropriately filled-out, and does not exceed the page limit requirements;
- (2) Each document requiring the officer's signature.
- (3) The COER or rebuttal may be electronically submitted to the liaison. The COER must have a liaison's original "wet" signature when submitted to DCCPR.
- (4) No additional attachments are included.

7. Rebuttals and Other Rights.

a. If an officer does not agree with a rating or comment on the COER, the officer may submit a rebuttal to their agency Liaison. There is no prescribed form for a rebuttal. Officers should type their rebuttal on a blank document. Officers are reminded that a rebuttal does not substitute as a remedy for a formal grievance or other rights of due process. DCCPR will not act on a rebuttal other than to include it in the eOPF adjacent to the associated COER. In some instances, after reviewing the documents, DCCPR may return the Rebuttal to the agency Liaison for modifications by the officer if it does not adhere to the guidelines.

- (1) The rebuttal is required to have the officer's name, rank, and serial number on the top of each page, and must be signed. The officer's rebuttal is limited to 5 narrative pages. It is recommended that this document be a professionally written explanation that clearly identifies and itemizes to which areas of the evaluation the officer does not agree. The rebuttal must only reflect comments or responses to the text and or scoring in the evaluation itself. Narrative comments that address personnel issues will not be accepted. Additional attachments such as email attachments or letters of recommendation will not be included in the rebuttal.
- (2) The officer is required to submit the rebuttal through his/her Liaison for signature. The Liaison will also sign the rebuttal and submit the rebuttal to DCCPR. Rebuttals that are not signed by both the officer and Liaison will not be accepted and will be returned to the agency Liaison.

Note: Electronically submitted copies are permitted when sent directly to the Liaison. The document must have a Liaison's original "wet" signature.

- (3) If an officer submits a rebuttal, the Liaison is required to review, sign and submit the original document to DCCPR and send copies to the Rater and RO. The Liaison has the right to return the rebuttal to the officer if the officer includes comments that address personnel issues outside of the evaluation and/or scoring. Either the Rater or RO may then respond to the officer's rebuttal, or if the Rater and RO wish, they may submit one combined response to the officer's rebuttal through the Liaison. The Rater and/or RO must limit the response to 5 narrative pages. The Rater and/or RO must submit their signed response to the Liaison. The Liaison is required to sign the response and submit it along with the rebuttal to DCCPR.
- (4) Rebuttals submitted to DCCPR after 31 December 2012 may not be available to the 2013 Promotions Boards.
- (5) Rebuttals for all COER types are accepted for inclusion into the officer's eOPF up to 90 days of the date the completed COER is placed into the officer's eOPF. The Rater and RO have up to 60 days from the date the officer's rebuttal is placed into the officer's eOPF to submit their response. Rebuttals received after the prescribed deadlines will not be accepted by DCCPR.

b. The officer may grieve the COER in accordance with Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [CC26.1.5](#).

- c. If the officer is not satisfied with the outcome(s) of the grievance, the officer may apply for relief through the Board for Correction of Public Health Service Records in accordance with CCI [CC29.9.5](#).

8. Other COER types.

- a. Transfer COER.

The officer may complete a Transfer COER at any point in the annual COER cycle to capture a period of time prior to a transfer/change in duty stations or the transfer/retirement of a supervisor. The Paper version COER is form PHS-838, and can be downloaded from the CCMIS Web site at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). The Transfer COER may be a Detailed or Narrative format based on length of the rating period. (Review COER webpage for details.) For a Transfer COER, the Rater and RO must be from the officer's previous assignment. The COER must be signed and submitted to DCCPR by the Liaison at the previous assignment.

Note: The Transfer COER may be electronically submitted to the Liaison. The document must have a Liaison's original "wet" signature when submitted to DCCPR.

- b. Transfer COER as the Annual COER.

If an officer or Rater transfers/retires on or after 1 July 2012, but before 1 October 2012, the officer is required to complete a Transfer COER on the prescribed paper version COER form that will automatically stand as the officer's 2012 Annual COER. The Paper COER document is form PHS-838 and can be downloaded from the CCMIS Web site at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). The Rater and RO must be from the officer's previous assignment. The Liaison at the previous assignment must sign and submit the COER to DCCPR.

Note: The Transfer COER as the Annual COER may be electronically submitted to the Liaison. The document must have a Liaison's original "wet" signature when submitted to DCCPR.

- c. Interim COER.

The officer and Rater may complete an Interim COER at any point during the annual COER cycle for specific situations. The period covered by the report must be 30 days or greater. It is recommended that the COER type be a [Narrative COER](#). The Rater may require an officer to complete an Interim COER to document performance. Other situations in which an Interim COER would be warranted include temporary duty assignments or for special pay requirements. The Interim COER must be completed on the paper COER document, PHS-838. It is available on the CCMIS Web site at [http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance\\_forms.aspx](http://dcp.psc.gov/Performance_forms.aspx). The Rater and Ro must sign the COER. The paper COER must be signed and delivered to DCCPR by the officer's Liaison. DCCPR will review the COER and determine if it should be placed in the eOPF. An Interim COER does not take the place of the Annual COER.

In other situations regarding COER type, the officer must contact the COER Coordinator at DCCPR for guidance at [phscoers@hhs.gov](mailto:phscoers@hhs.gov)

Note: The Interim COER may be electronically submitted to the liaison. The document must have a Liaison's original "wet" signature when submitted to DCCPR.

9. Performance Management Plans and Contracts.

HHS has implemented the Performance Management Appraisal Program (PMAP) Department-wide for civilian employees in accordance with the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), the President's Management Agenda, and other Federal performance initiatives. The Corps does not require its officers to have a PMAP. However, organizations to which officers are assigned may require the officer to have one performed. When officers are required to have a performance plan by the organization to which they are assigned, it is for that Operating Division's, Staff Division's or non-HHS organization's for internal use only. The PMAP will not be placed in the eOPF. The Annual COER is still required for the officer.

Note: A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is distinct from a PMAP and is utilized in cases of poor performance.

-signed-

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