

Surface Limited Duty Officer/Chief Warrant Officer

Fact Book: An Informal Guide



**Prepared by: Surface LDO/CWO Assignments Branch (PERS-414)
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Disclaimer: This guide is a ready reference document concerning the “care and feeding” of Surface LDOs and CWOs. It is targeted primarily at Officers who lead or work with Surface LDOs and CWOs, providing community and career information that may assist in mentoring and counseling these officers. This guide is not exhaustive; it is an introduction, a primer. Authoritative laws and directives specific to the LDO and CWO community may be found by exploring the hyperlink addresses provided at the end of the guide.

Surface Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Fact Book: An Informal Guide

For every 10 Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) on active duty there are three Surface Limited Duty Officers (LDOs) and Chief Warrant Officers (CWOs). Surface LDOs and CWOs serve alongside their SWO brothers and sisters in nearly every ship, employing knowledge and experience gained through years of enlisted and commissioned service. They also serve on Surface Staffs and support activities such as Expeditionary Strike Groups, Afloat Training Groups, the Board of Inspection and Survey, and more. By filling leadership roles that call for a particular level of technical expertise, Surface LDOs and CWOs provide critical support to the Surface Warfare Enterprise (SWE).

The LDO/CWO Community

Navy-wide, LDOs and CWOs represent 10 percent of the Navy's total officer end strength, divided among the Surface, Aviation, Submarine, restricted line, and staff communities. Currently, 43% of the LDO and CWO community falls under the SWE.



While LDOs and CWOs share common characteristics, and are somewhat interchangeable at the lower ranks, there are also important differences. LDOs commission earlier (8-14 years enlisted service); CWOs commission later (14-20 years enlisted service). Every CWO has served in the Goat Locker; some LDOs commission from E6 without putting on Chief. More importantly, LDOs are commissioned with the idea that they will develop into Department Heads, and future Commanding Officers. The CWO program, on the other hand, typically employs and reemploys officers' technical expertise in repeat division officer tours. Less than five percent of CWOs make it to the highest grade of CWO5 and go on to fill key technical leadership and advisory roles throughout the Navy.

LDO and CWO Careers

Immediately following commissioning, all LDOs and CWOs attend the 4-week LDO/CWO Indoctrination Course at Officer Training Command in Newport, Rhode Island. From there they report to their first officer duty station (some will have additional training

en route). From that point on, LDO and CWO careers are similar to those of the other officer communities, though their career paths vary significantly by designator. LDOs and CWOs are expected to earn the appropriate qualifications; they receive FITREPs on the same occasions as other officers; they are considered by statutory promotion and administrative screening selection boards; they are expected to take jobs of increasing authority and responsibility; they acquire advanced education; and, eventually, they retire.

Appendix 1 provides a general idea of the career paths for each Surface LDO and CWO designator, as well as information on billet distribution by location and type duty, qualifications, and administrative screening opportunities.

Qualifications

While there is no deadline for attainment, all Surface LDOs and CWOs are expected to qualify SWO during their first assignment in an authorized platform. In those rare cases where officers fail to attain their SWO qualification when given the opportunity, the penalty for non-attainment is likely non-selection for promotion to O4/CWO4 and limited assignment opportunities.

All qualifications are valued, and officers who make the effort to earn qualifications outside their normal career path traditionally set themselves apart from their peers. See appendix 1 for designator specific qualification guidance.



Fitness Reports

LDOs and CWOs receive FITREPs on the same occasions as all other officers (annual, change of reporting senior, detachment of individual, etc.). Line LDOs (61XX-64XX) are grouped together in the same promotion summary group; staff LDOs (65XX) are grouped together; and all CWOs (7XXX) are grouped together. Because LDOs and CWOs are often alone in a summary group, soft breakouts are significant and are strongly encouraged when warranted. Also, timely recommendations for career milestones should be included when warranted, particularly department head (O1-O3), commander command (O4-O5), and major command (O5-O6).

Statutory Boards

LDO and CWO promotion boards operate just like other line and staff boards (the LDO O4, O5, and O6 boards are held in conjunction with the line and staff boards for the same grades). Like unrestricted line officers (URLs), all line LDOs are considered together for promotion, without regard to designator; all CWOs are considered together, as well. For LDOs, flow points are similar to the URL, while selection opportunities tend to be a bit lower. Both flow points and opportunity fluctuate slightly from year to year.



Rank	Typical Flow Point	Typical Selection Opportunity
CAPT	22 years	40 %
CDR	16 years	60 %
LCDR	10 years	75 %
LT	4 years	All fully qualified
LTJG	2 years	All fully qualified
CWO5	12 years	40%
CWO4	7 years	75%
CWO3	3 years	All fully qualified

Administrative Boards

Surface LDOs (less 641X and 649X) are screened for Department Head after 3-4 years of commissioned service. To be eligible for consideration, they must have completed their SWO qualification and be recommended for Department Head (or higher milestone) in a fitness report. For deserving officers who haven't yet screened Department Head, reporting seniors should include "DEPT HEAD" in block 40 of the FITREP. Officers may receive up to three looks for Department Head.

The second administrative screening—applying to all Surface LDOs—is for Commander Command. To be eligible for consideration, officers must be selected for or promoted to Commander and must have completed the Surface LDO Command Ashore Qualification (COMNAVSURFPAC/COMNAVSURFLANTINST 1412.3A), which earns the "2D1" Additional Qualification Designator (AQD).

Officers may receive up to two looks for Commander Command. Screened officers enter the Surface LDO Command Bank; due to limited command opportunities, there is no guarantee they will actually serve in command (most do not). There are 13 Surface LDO Commander Command billets, and screened LDOs also periodically fill 1110 or 1050 command positions when called upon.

The third and final administrative screening is for Major Command. To be eligible for consideration, officers must be selected for or promoted to Captain and must have successfully screened for Commander Command (they do not need to have actually served in Commander Command). Officers may receive up to three looks for Major Command. As with Commander Command, screened officers go into a bank and are not guaranteed an opportunity to serve in Major Command. There are zero Surface LDO Major Commands, but screened LDOs periodically fill 1110 or 1050 shore Major Command positions when called upon.

LDO administrative boards are held in conjunction with the associated SWO administrative board.

Detailing

As with SWOs, individual LDOs and CWOs work with their detailers while their commands work with the appropriate placement officer. Within PERS-41, “The Fantail” details Surface LDOs and CWOs:

PERS-414	Branch Head	O6s and O5s, all designators	901-874-3885
PERS-414A	Admin/Security	6410/7411/6490/7491	901-874-2329
PERS-414B	Deck/Operations	6110/7111/6120/7121	901-874-3906
PERS-414C	Engineers	6130/7131	901-874-3887
PERS-414D	Ordnance/Electronics	6160/7161/6180/7181	901-874-3907
PERS-414S	Admin Support	All designators	901-874-3905

Other LDO/CWO detailers:

PERS 415	Special Warfare	6150/7150/7170	901-874-2549
PERS-416	EOD	6480/7481	901-874-3911
PERS-471	Info Professional	6420/7421	901-874-4208
PERS-4014	Band Master	6430	901-874-4312
PERS-4412	Supply	6510/7520	901-874-4613
PERS-472B	Information Warfare	6440/7441/7431	901-874-3993

Surface LDOs and CWOs can expect to complete their first two officer tours at sea. After that, a sea-shore-sea-shore rotation is common, though the needs of the Navy, individual homeport preferences, or an officer's performance may well require additional back-to-back sea tours. LDO and CWO career paths are more flexible than URL career paths, but to remain competitive, officers must complete the appropriate milestone tours. Those milestone tours vary widely among designators, and change over time, so it is vital that officers communicate frequently and openly with their detailers.

Education

There are no educational requirements for selection to LDO or CWO, or for promotion once commissioned. However, the percentage of LDOs and CWOs with a college degree is steadily increasing. Higher education and joint professional military education are value added to professional development, but they are not required.

Retirements

There are many nuances associated with LDO and CWO retirements, which are best referred to detailers and/or the Navy Personnel Command Officer Retirements Branch (PERS-835) at pers_835_retirements@navy.mil. In general, LDOs must serve 10 years commissioned service prior to retirement; CWOs must serve 6 years. LDO Lieutenants and Lieutenant Commanders must retire when they reach 30 years total service; Commanders at 35 years; and Captains at 38 years. CWO4 and below retire when they reach 30 years total service; CWO5s at 33 years. An LDO or CWO who twice fails of selection (FOS), at any grade below CAPT/CWO5, will be retired.

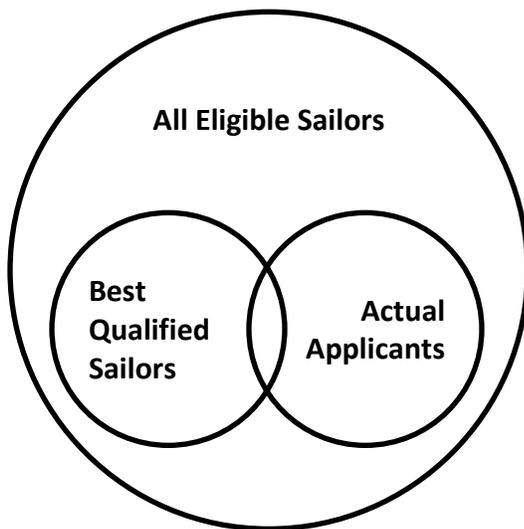
In past years, Sailors were accepted into the LDO program with up to 16 years active service. Sailors who commission with more than 14 years of service often do not have an opportunity to compete for Commander because they reach 30 years of total service and must retire before getting an in zone look. To prevent that from happening, the rule has been changed so that Sailors may now have no more than 14 years of service to apply for LDO.

LDO/CWO Application Process

Commanding Officers may sometimes dream of handpicking key members of their wardroom. They know that the success of their command, in peace or war, rests on the shoulders of its officers. Within the collective SWE wardroom, LDOs and CWOs play a

significant role, a role commensurate with their large numbers (2,500 billets/officers). Clearly, the health of that component of the SWE wardroom is of vital interest to us all.

How do we maintain and enhance the health of the Surface LDO/CWO community over time? Simple: Commission the most highly qualified Chiefs and First Class Petty Officers into their ranks. How do we do that? The answer to that question is not so simple. Consider the following diagram:



The large, outer circle represents all of the Surface Sailors who meet LDO/CWO program eligibility requirements. The inner circle at left represents those eligible Sailors who are best qualified to serve as LDOs and CWOs. The inner circle at right represents those Sailors who actually apply for the LDO/CWO program. Some of our best qualified Sailors actually apply, many do not; some of the actual applicants are among our best qualified Sailors, many are not. The January In-Service Procurement board can choose only from among those who actually apply. There are pre-determined quotas for each of the LDO/CWO designators, and while all selectees

must meet the “fully qualified” standard, the quality of that year’s commissioning class ultimately depends upon the quality of the applicant pool.

While it is impossible to precisely quantify the number of Sailors in the two inner rings, or the degree of overlap, there is no question that there is room for improvement. Improvement means shoving the left hand circle (best qualified) deeper into the right hand circle (actually apply). That requires leaders who aggressively identify those best qualified Sailors, ensure they are familiar with the program, and encourage them to apply.

There may be many reasons highly qualified Sailors do not apply for LDO or CWO: lack of knowledge or misunderstandings about the program; uncertainties about life in the wardroom; the familiarity and bonds of the Goat Locker; lack of confidence; etc. Many if not all of those restraints can be addressed through focused, 1-on-1 interactions with the Sailors.

Traditionally, the LDO/CWO community has stressed that its members “recruit your relief.” That approach is appropriate and necessary, but not sufficient. Direct command

leadership involvement in the recruiting process, particularly at the individual deckplate level, can have a major impact on the quality of future year LDOs and CWOs. LDOs and CWOs do and should own the program, but they always benefit from the support of other officers who are impacted by its effectiveness.

To assist commands who may not have an established program, PERS-414 has developed a *Surface LDO/CWO Application Season Starter Kit*. An excerpt from that Starter Kit is provided as appendix 2. Contact the Surface LDO/CWO Assignments Branch Head for the complete kit.

Links

Surface LDO/CWO Assignments Branch (<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/surfacewarfare/ldocwo/Pages/default2.aspx>)

LDO/CWO Officer Community Manager (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/communitymanagers/ldo_cwo/Pages/default.aspx)

PERS-8 LDO/CWO In-Service Procurement Board (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/administrative/ldo_cwo/Pages/default.aspx)

Surface Deck LDO – 6110

ENS	LTJG	LT		LCDR			CDR/CAPT
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	
CVN, LHD, LSD, LHA, LPD, LCC BOSUN OR AFL ACU; BMU		Port Services ATG CSCS DET CNIC EWTGPAC NAVSTA	CVN FL ACU OIC INSURV	Port Services ATG CSCS DET CNIC EWTGPAC NAVSTA	INSURV		Major Command XO Port Services Officer MIDLANT Port Operations Safety Center

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, Command Ashore (O4)

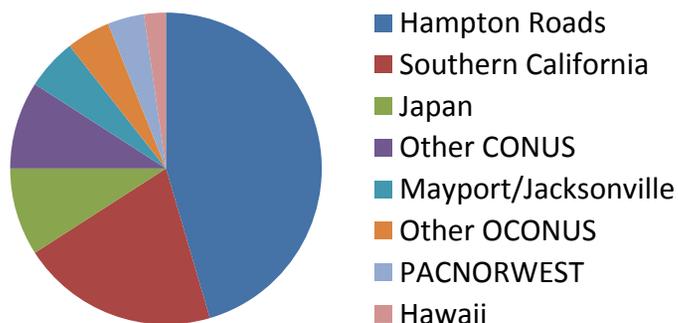
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): EOOW, TAO

Screening: Department Head (SWO pin and DH recommendation required)

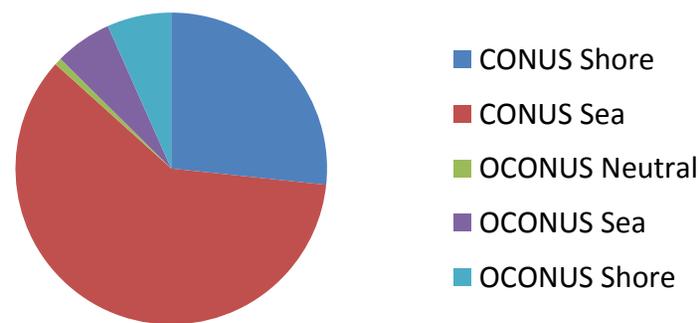
Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Operations LDO – 6120

ENS	LTJG	LT		LCDR		CDR/CAPT
Sea		Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG CICO/ADO NIOC NGLO (MARDIV; PHIBRON)		ATG CSCS LCSRON TTG (P/L) FACSFAC (SD/VA) NSWU CUS/NOFP	CVN, CG CCSG (JICO) SURTASS SMC	FLEET (JICO) SSC OIC TTG (P/L) NSWU	CVN, LHA, LHD CCSG (JICO)	COMOPTEVFOR NSMWDC C5F (JICO) C6F CUS

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, TAO, Command Ashore (O4)

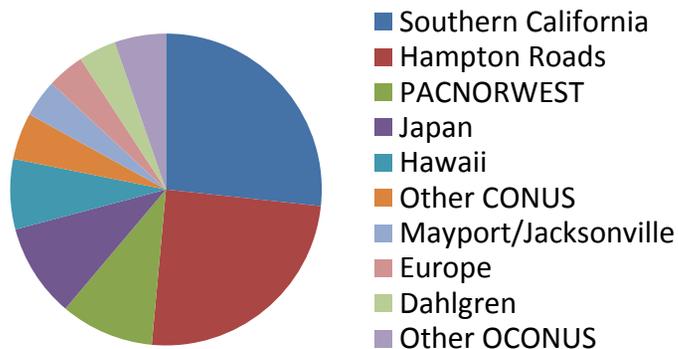
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): BMD, STAO, BWC, EOOW, ICO/JICO

Screening: Department Head (SWO pin and DH recommendation required)

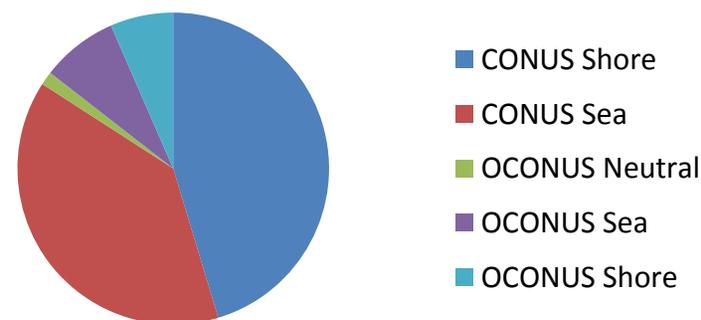
Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Engineer LDO – 6130

ENS	LTJG	LT			LCDR		CDR/CAPT	
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD DCA CVN RDIV/QAO LHD/LHA Boilers	PC CHENG DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD CVN LHD/LHA	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS SBT LCS Training	MCM LSD/LPD LHD/LHA ELO/MPO LCS CHENG	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS Staff	LSD/LPD CHENG LHA/D MPA CVN 3MO	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS ESG Staff	Big Deck CHENG	RMC ESG SURFLANT/PAC Staff Other SWE Support

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, EOOW (multiple plants), Command Ashore (O4)

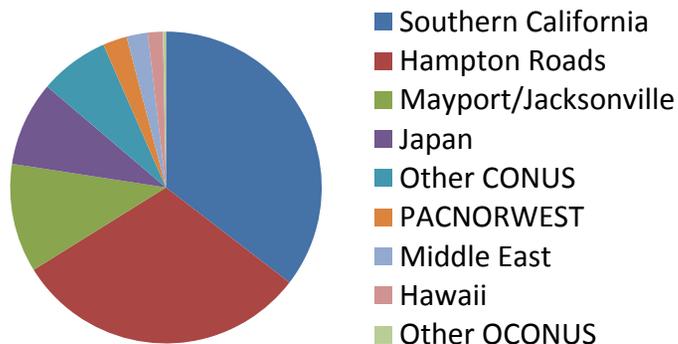
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO

Screening: Department Head (SWO pin and DH recommendation required)

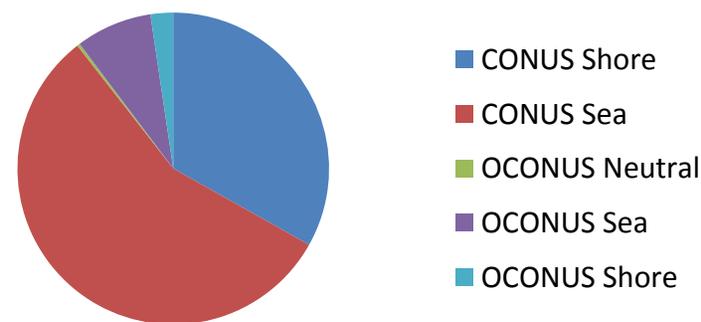
Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Ordnance LDO – 6160

ENS	LTJG	LT			LCDR		CDR/CAPT
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Shore
DDG STO CVN WEPS DIV CVN FCO	DDG STO CVN WEPS CVN FCO NAVELSG NSWG COMOMAG	NMC CSCS DET RTC ATG NOSS COMLOG	CG STO CVN WEPS CVN 3M	NMC CSCS USFFC COMLOG NOLSC NSWDC	CVN 3M INSURV LHD WEPS	NMC CSCS USFFC COMLOG NOLSC NSWDC	NMC CO COMOMAG CO OPNAV AEGIS ASHORE <i>(Periodically provided opportunity to fill CVN O5 positions of CSO (6180) and Gun Boss (6360)).</i>

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, TAO, Command Ashore (O4)

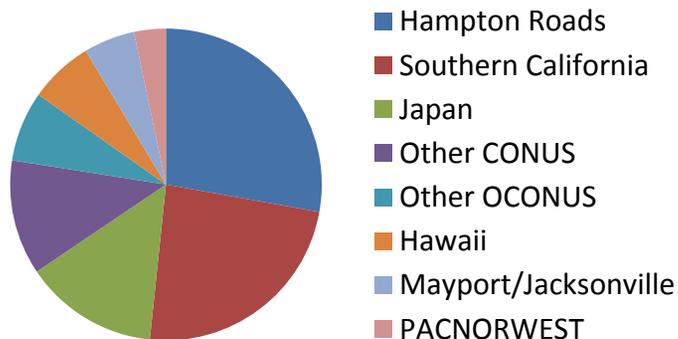
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): BMD, EOOW

Screening: Department Head (SWO pin and DH recommendation required)

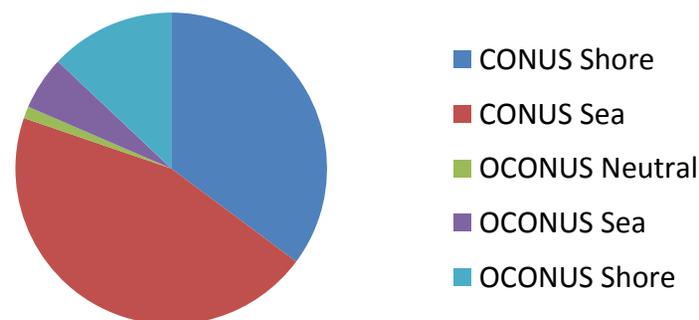
Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Electronics LDO – 6180

ENS	LTJG	LT			LCDR		CDR/CAPT	
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
CVN ELX MTL LSD ELX MTL LPD ELX MTL DDG ELX MTL	CVN ELX MTL LSD ELX MTL LPD ELX MTL DDG ELX MTL	SOCPAC LCSRON CSCS ATG NCTAMS NOPF / NAS	CCSG STAFF PHIBRON CVN EMO CG ELX MTL	SOCPAC LCSRON CSCS ATG NCTAMS NOPF / NAS	INSURV CVN CSMO LHA ELX MTL	JCU White House NETWARCOM NCTAMS NAVCENT SURFPAC	CVN CSO	SRF-STF MTL NAVINGEN COMNAVAIRPAC CSCS-CO TSC- DH

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, TAO, Command Ashore (O4)

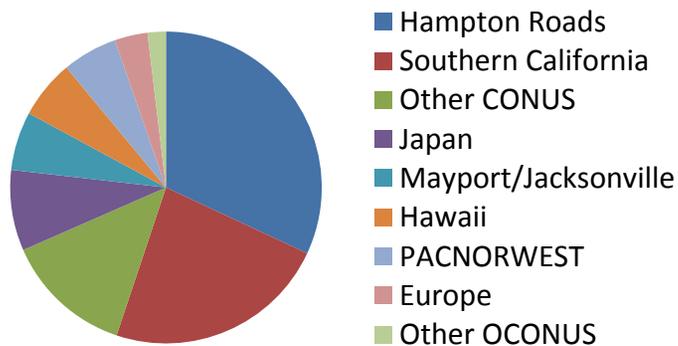
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): EOOW, IDWO

Screening: Department Head (SWO pin and DH recommendation required)

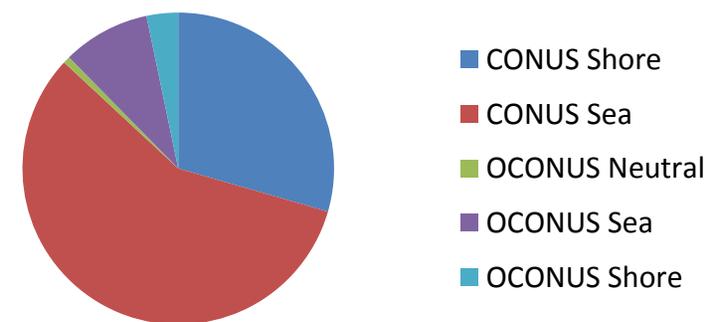
Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Administration LDO – 6410

ENS	LTJG	LT		LCDR			CDR/CAPT
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Shore
CVN Divo	Staff OP Sup	Flag Sec Staff Misc Fleet Support PSD OIC SV1	AS DH LHA DH LHD DH CAG	Flag Sec Staff Misc Fleet Support PSD OIC Sub Support	CVN DH	Flag Sec Staff PSD OIC Sub Support	Command Flag Sec Staff

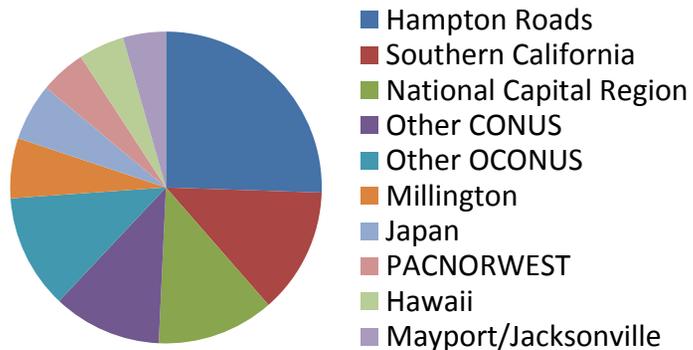
Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, Command Ashore (O4)

Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO, EOOW

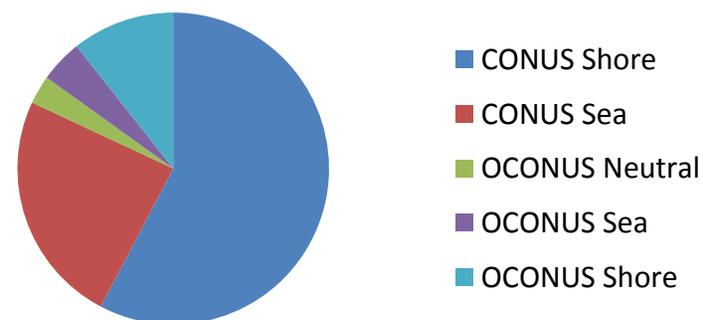
Screening: Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Security LDO – 6490

ENS	LTJG	LT		LCDR			CDR/CAPT	
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
CVN DIVO DESRON	SWF Installation NCIS	LHD DH LHA DH	SWF Installation RIVRON Staff	CVN DH	Staff XO Installation	Staff XO Installation	Staff	

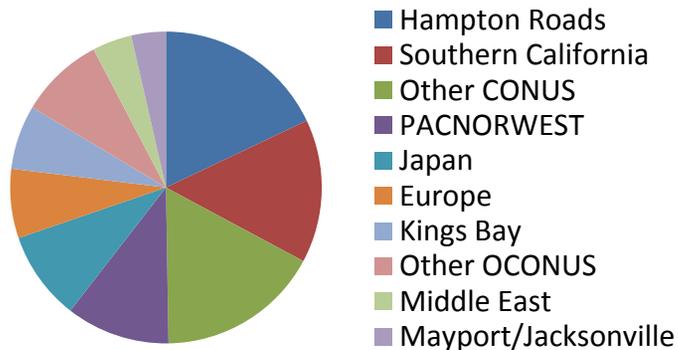
Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, Command Ashore (O4)

Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO, EOOW

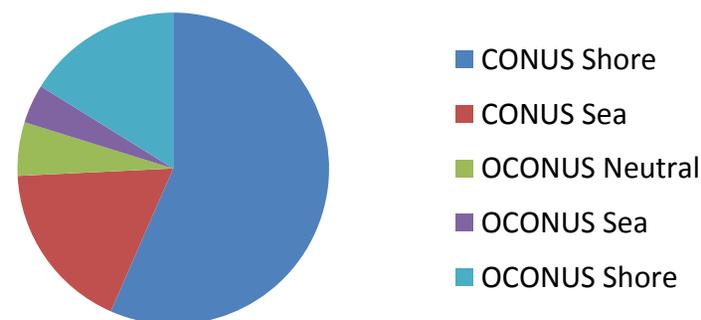
Screening: Commander Command (Command Ashore AQD and selection to O5 required)

Major Command (screening for Commander Command and selection to O6 required)

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Deck CWO – 7111

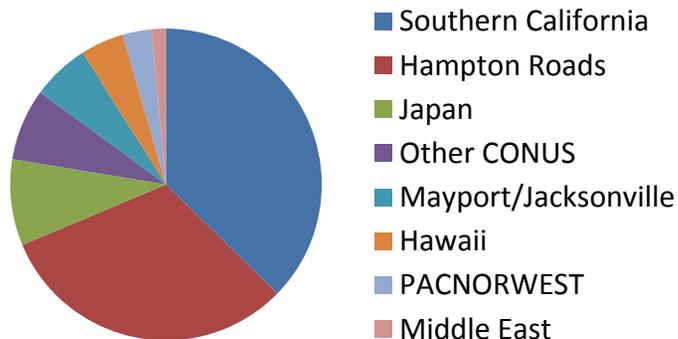
CWO2	CWO3		CWO4		CWO5	
Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea
CVN, LHD, LSD, LHA, LPD BOSUN PHIBCB ACU BMU	PORT SVCS ATG NAVSTA	CVN, LHD, LSD, LHA, LPD BOS'N PHIBCB ACU BMU	CSCS DET ATG BMU	ACU BMU	RTC GL	INSURV BMU ACU 5

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO

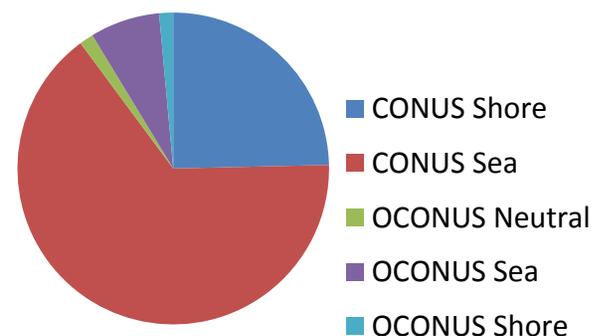
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO, EOOW

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Operations CWO – 7121

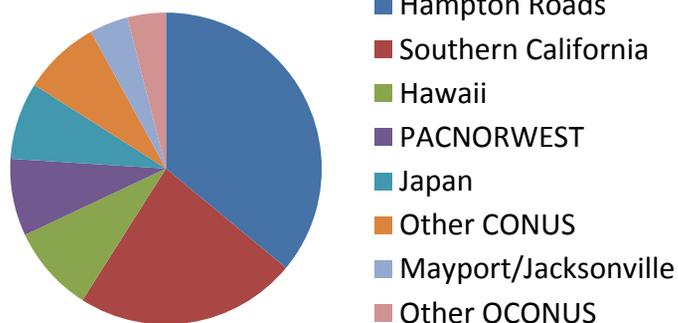
CWO2	CWO3		CWO4		CWO5
Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG NIOC NGLO (MARDIV; PHIBRON)	ATG PH TTG (P/L) SSC CUS/NOPF	DDG SURTASS SMC NIOC NGLO (MARDIV; PHIBRON)	ATG PH TTG (P/L) SSC CUS/NOPF Naval Academy	CG NSWU	CSCS ATG PH TTG (P/L) SSC CUS/NOPF Naval Academy

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, TAO

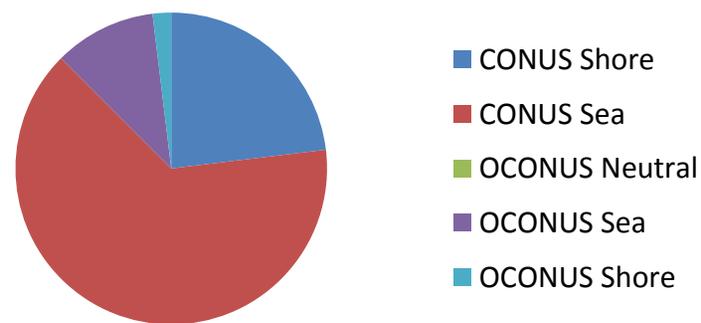
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): BMD, ICO, EOOW

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Engineering CWO – 7131

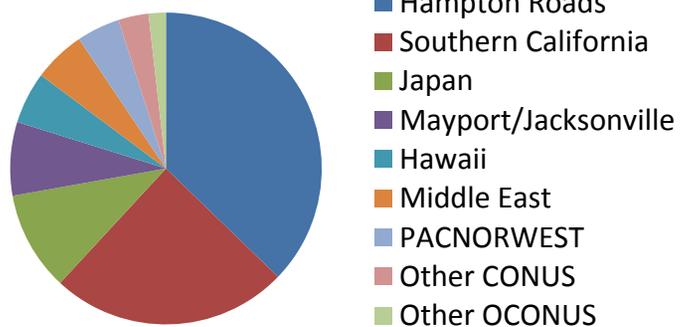
CWO2		CWO3			CWO4			CWO5
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD DCA CVN RDIV/QAO LHD/LHA Boilers	PC CHENG DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD CVN LHD/LHA	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS SBT	PC CHENG DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD CVN LHD/LHA	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS Staff	PC CHENG DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD CVN LHD/LHA	INSURV ATG RMC SWOS ESG Staff	PC CHENG DDG MPA CG AUXO LPD/LSD CVN LHD/LHA	TSC Staff RTC Staff TYCOM Staff RMC

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, EOOW (multiple plants)

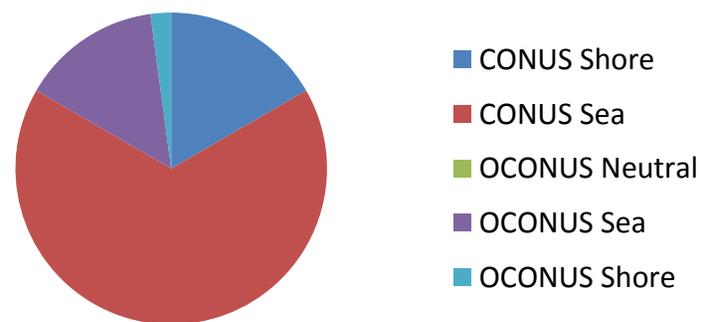
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Ordnance CWO – 7161

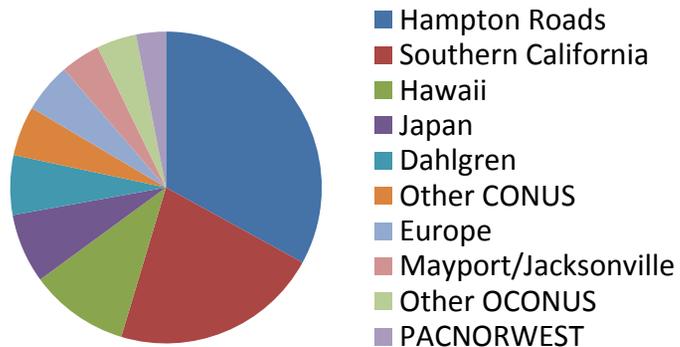
CWO2		CWO3			CWO4			CWO5
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG STO CVN FCO CVN WEPS	CG STO CVN FCO CVN WEPS	SBT ATG NMC CSCS	CG STO DDG STO CVN FCO CVN WEPS	AMMOLANT NOLSC NMC DEVGRU	CG STO DDG STO CVN FCO CVN WEPS	AMMOLANT NOLSC NMC DEVGRU	CG STO DDG STO CVN FCO CVN WEPS	AMMO LANT AMMO PAC INSURV

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO, TAO, AAWC, BMD

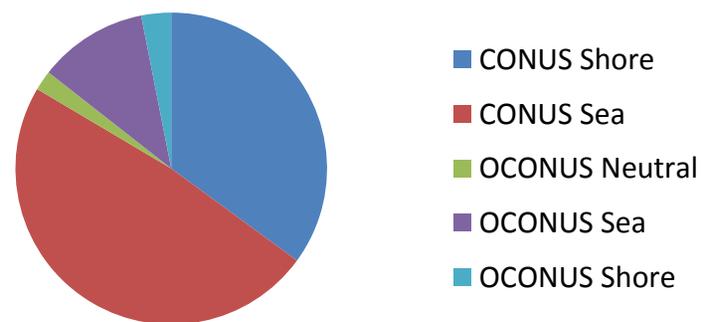
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): BMD, EOOW

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Surface Electronics CWO - 7181

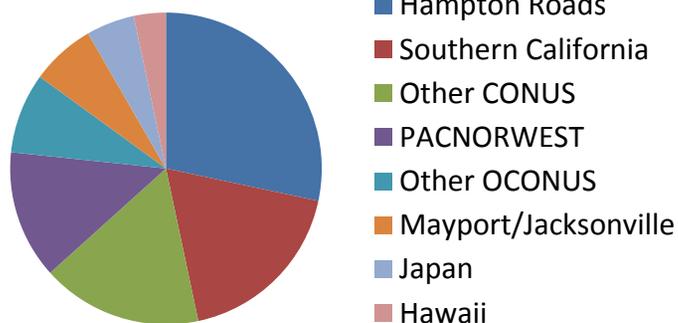
CWO2		CWO3			CWO4			CWO5
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
DDG/CVN/LCC SHP ELX MTL	CG/DDG/CVN SHP ELX MTL	NAS NCTS SBT ATG	CG /CVN SHP ELX MTL	FASFAC FLTASW TACTRAGRU NCTAMS	CG /CVN SHP ELX MTL	FASFAC FLTASW TACTRAGRU NCTAMS	CG /CVN SHP ELX MTL	SERCC-OIC Ashore CWO OCM INSURV

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SWO

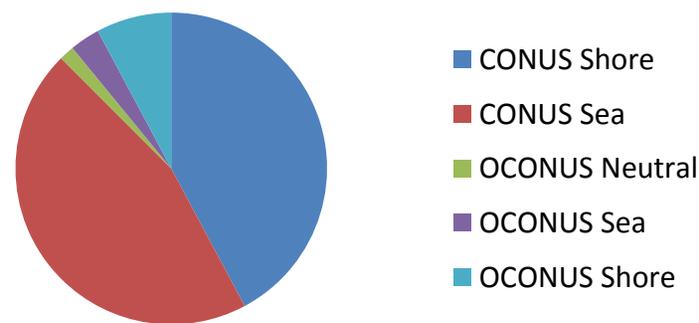
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): TAO, EOOW, IDWO

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Administration CWO – 7411

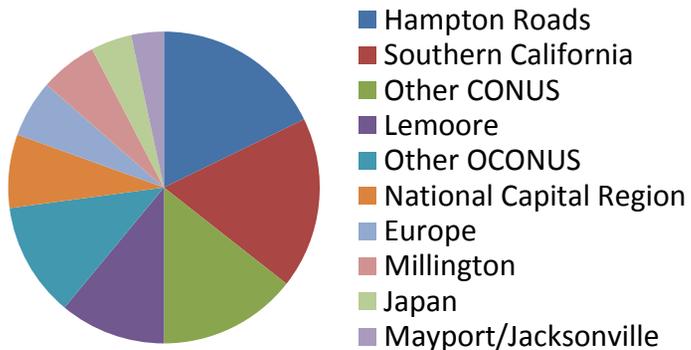
CWO2		CWO3		CWO4		CWO5
Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Shore
VFA Squadron Helo Squadron Seabee Bn	Staff Installation Embassy Shore Squadron Misc Fleet Support	VFA Squadron Helo Squadron Seabee Bn	Staff Installation Embassy Shore Squadron Misc Fleet Support	VFA Squadron Helo Squadron Seabee Bn	Staff Installation Misc Fleet Support	Staff Installation

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): SCW

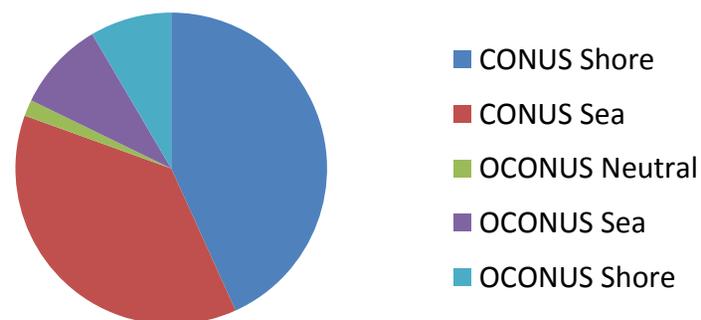
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): None

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



Security CWO – 7491

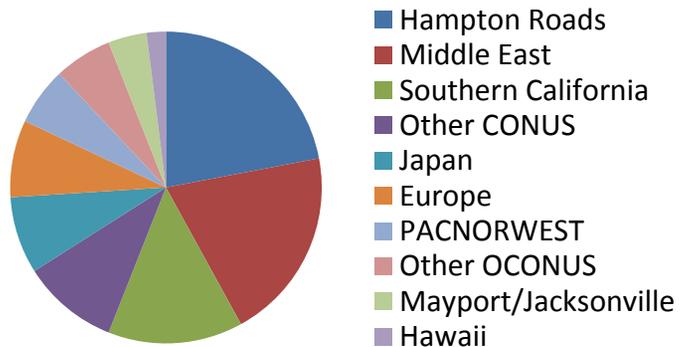
CWO2		CWO3			CWO4			CWO5
Sea	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore	Sea	Shore
Installation NCIS Staff								

Expected Qualifications (given the opportunity): None

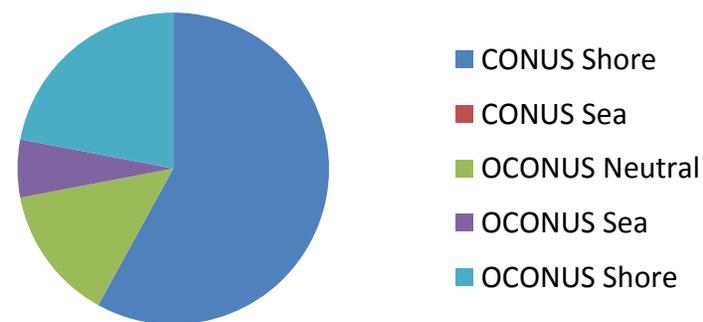
Bonus Qualification(s) (given the opportunity): None

Screening: There are no administrative screenings for Surface CWOs

Billet Geographic Distribution



Type Duty Distribution



This is an excerpt from the "Surface LDO/CWO Application Season Starter Kit." For the complete kit, contact the Surface LDO/CWO Assignments Branch (PERS-414).

Start Here

The application process for the Limited Duty Officer (LDO)/Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) program is governed by Chapter 7 of OPNAVINST 1420.1B, NAVADMIN 281/12, and an annual NAVADMIN (normally released in June or July). Commands implement that direction in the manner that best fits their circumstances, but in brief it works like this: (1) Sailors prepare applications; (2) commands screen, rank, and endorse applications; and (3) the In-Service Procurement (ISP) board makes selections.

This guide and the associated files contain all the information necessary for a command to plan and execute an effective application program, from recruiting to package submission. It is designed for commands that may not have an established program in place; it is not intended to replace programs that are already on track. While a command-appointed coordinator should manage all aspects of the program, CO and XO involvement at key points is essential to success. The coordinator will typically be the command's senior LDO or CWO.

The command-level LDO/CWO application process is important to the Navy. More than 10% of active duty Navy officers are LDOs and CWOs; the quality of that large contingent of officers depends on the quality of the applicant pool presented to the ISP board each January. The quality of the applicant pool depends on the quality of command programs Navy-wide. With rare exceptions, the ISP fills all of its quotas each year: The larger and stronger the applicant pool, the better quality the last candidate picked in each designator will be.

Which enlisted Sailors in your command could excel as an LDO or CWO? Are they applying for the program? If not, why not? Could they be persuaded to apply? Upon commissioning, the Sailors selected through this program will immediately be placed in positions of authority over Sailors up to the grade of Master Chief, and eventually authority over other officers – they must be the best of the best.

Major Program Elements

Appoint Program Coordinator – this should normally be the senior LDO or CWO aboard. While the Coordinator is entitled to the assistance of leadership throughout the command, they are personally responsible for the effective, successful execution of the program.

Publish Command Guidance (1420 notice) – to keep the process on track throughout, a plan of action and milestones should be published to ensure all the pieces are completed and in the proper order.

Conduct Applicants Brief – all interested Sailors, even those who aren't yet eligible for the program, should be introduced to the LDO/CWO program at an organized brief led by the most knowledgeable person aboard. All of the command's LDOs and CWOs should attend, as well.

Applications Submitted to Coordinator – Sailors submit their completed applications, along with all required enclosures to the Coordinator. Typically, department heads will sign off on applications for Sailors who get to this point (command policy).

Interview Appraisal Boards – the Coordinator arranges panels of 3-5 officers to conduct interviews with applicants. Board members then prepare a NAVCRUIT 1131/5 that becomes a part of the official application package. Board members must meet the requirements of OPNAVINST 1420.1B, and must possess a mature and judicial temperament.

Applicant Ranking – all applicants for the program within a command must be ranked, top to bottom. This process can be handled just like CPO or officer FITREP ranking, bearing in mind that the program is interested in the “whole Sailor” and not merely what they have accomplished during their time aboard the command (which may be brief). For this reason, the applicants' Performance Summary Record and recent performance evaluations should be reviewed, in addition to their application.

Command Endorsements – a key element of each application package is the commanding officer's (CO) endorsement. This is the CO's opportunity to communicate their assessment of the officer's potential directly to the board. If the CO assesses the Sailor is not ready, the package should not be submitted.

Package Submission – packages must be submitted to Navy Personnel Command, postmarked no later than 1 October.

Addenda Submission – Sailors may submit additional material to the board after their package has been submitted. In particular, E6 applicants must submit their November periodic performance evaluations.

In addition to reviewing OPNAVINST 1401.1B and the relevant NAVADMINs, Coordinators must visit the In-Service Procurement Board website for the latest guidance: .

The Coordinator can save the following documents to a folder accessible by applicants and others having a role in the program.

File Name	Description
A – Start Here.docx	This document.
B – OPNAVINST 1420-1B.pdf	The governing instruction for all enlisted-to-officer programs. The LDO/CWO program is covered in Chapter 7 and Appendix F.
C – Advance Change NAVADMIN.txt	NAVADMIN 281-12. Published significant changes to OPNAVINST 1420.1B.
D – FY17 NAVADMIN.txt	NAVADMIN 156-15. Annual NAVADMIN for the FY17 In-Service Procurement Board (a NAVADMIN is issued every summer to provide timely guidance for submission of applications to the following January’s In-Service Procurement Board).
E – Application.pdf	OPNAV Form 1420/1. Application for the LDO/CWO program.
F – Interview Appraisal Sheet.pdf	NAVCRUIT Form 1131/5. The form completed by each member of the Interview Appraisal Board, which becomes a part of the application package. Completed copies are typically given to applicants after their package is submitted, as part of a complete copy of the submission.
G – UNDERWAYNOTE 1420.doc	Template for a command notice laying out the plan of action and milestones for the application process. All aspects of this sample notice can be tweaked to fit command circumstances.
H – Application Instructions.docx	FY17 instructions for applicants on completing their applications (from NPC In-Service Procurement website).
I – Helpful Hints for Applicants.docx	More FY17 tips for applicants on completing their applications (from NPC In-Service Procurement website).
J – Eligibility Checklist.docx	Official FY17 checklist, which must be submitted to NPC along with each application (from NPC In-Service Procurement website).
K – Mailing Instructions.docx	Guidance for mailing FY17 applications to NPC (from NPC In-Service Procurement website).
L – FY16 Quota Letter.pdf	Letter from convening authority to the FY16 In-Service Procurement Board laying out the LDO and CWO quotas for each designator. As well, it includes the discrete requirements for each designator describing the candidates that are most likely to succeed as LDOs and CWOs.
M – Applicants Brief.pptx	Official brief prepared by the LDO/CWO Officer Community Manager. Should be presented by the most senior, knowledgeable, enthusiastic officer available.

LDO/CWO Application Process Resources:

Surface LDO/CWO Assignments Branch (<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/surfacewarfare/ldocwo/Pages/default2.aspx>)

PERS-8 LDO/CWO In-Service Procurement Board (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/administrative/ldo_cwo/Pages/default.aspx)

LDO/CWO Officer Community Manager (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/communitymanagers/ldo_cwo/Pages/default.aspx)