



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER

9010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-9010

MAY 30 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES OFFICE
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence

This memorandum disseminates the current DoD Order of Precedence (attached). This Order of Precedence list is used to determine the order of precedence for the following:

- (1) official visit activities;
- (2) assignment of government quarters;
- (3) seating arrangements and similar requirements at official functions, aboard government aircraft, and other activities requiring precedence decisions; and
- (4) for other administrative matters as prescribed in DoD issuances.

Request for changes to this list should include detail justification and forwarded through the organizational chain of command to: Director of Administration, Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer, ATTN: Order of Precedence, 9010 Defense Pentagon Room 3E971, Washington, DC 20301-9010, phone (703) 692-7138.

The Director of Administration is the approval authority for changes to the list.

Michael L. Rhodes
Director

Attachment:
As stated

Attachment

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (see notes 1, 2, 3, and 4)

CODE 2

Secretary of Defense
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Secretary of the Army
Secretary of the Navy
Secretary of the Air Force
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see note 5)
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (precedes Secretaries of the Military Departments with regard to all matters for which he or she has responsibility by law or by directive of the Secretary of Defense)
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
Deputy Chief Management Officer
Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see note 5)
Chief of Staff, Army; Commandant of the Marine Corps; Chief of Naval Operations; Chief of Staff, Air Force; and Chief, National Guard Bureau (see notes 5 and 6)
Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 5)
Combatant Commanders (see note 7)
General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, and Chief Information Officer of the Department of Defense (see notes 6 and 8)

CODE 3

Under Secretaries of the Department of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
Principal Deputy Under Secretaries of Defense (see notes 6 and 8)
Assistant Secretaries of Defense (see notes 6, 8, and 9)
Vice Chief of Staff, Army; Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; Vice Chief of Naval Operations; and Vice Chief of Staff, Air Force (see notes 5 and 6)
Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau (see note 5)
Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 5)
Assistant Secretaries and General Counsels of the Department of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
Generals and Admirals (4-star) (see note 5)
Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces
Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces (see note 6)
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
Chief of Staff for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense
Deputy Chief of Staff for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
Director of Net Assessment
Director, Strategic Capabilities Office
Defense Advisor U.S. Mission NATO, Secretary of Defense Representative to Europe

CODE 4

Directors of Defense Agencies (see note 10)
Directors of DoD Field Activities (see note 11)
Assistant Deputy Chief Management Officer
Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Principal Deputy Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Principal Deputy Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Principal Deputy

Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer, DoD
 (see notes 6 and 8)
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense (see notes 6 and 9)
 Principal Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
 Designated Senior Career Reserved Position for the DoD (see note 12)
 Deputy Chief Financial Officers, Deputy Comptrollers, Directors of Defense Intelligence within the Office of the
 Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSD(I)), Directors of Deputy Chief Management Officer
 Directorates, Designated Senior Career Officials of the Under Secretaries of Defense (see note 6)
 The Special Assistants to the Secretary of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
 Administrative Assistants to Secretaries of the Army and Air Force and Department of the Navy Assistant for
 Administration (see note 6)
 Deputy Under Secretaries of the Department of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
 Deputy General Counsels of the Department of Defense, Deputy Director for Cost Assessment, Deputy Director
 for Program Evaluation, Deputy Inspectors General of the Department of Defense, Deputy Directors of
 Operational Test and Evaluation, Deputy Chief Information Officers of the Department of Defense (see note 6)
 Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense and Deputy Assistants to the Secretary of Defense (see note 6)
 Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Service Senior Enlisted Advisors; and Senior
 Enlisted Advisor to the National Guard Bureau (see notes 6 and 13)
 Director, Office of Military Commissions/Convening Authority
 Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals (3-star) (see note 5)
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Principal Deputy General Counsels of the Department of the Army,
 Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
 Chairman, U.S. Section of the Permanent Joint Board of Defense, U.S.-Canada
 Deputy Defense Advisor, U.S. Mission NATO
 Secretary of Defense Representatives to International Negotiations (e.g., The SECDEF Representative to Post-
 START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty))
 The Auditors General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 6)
 Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 3 positions (see notes 6 and 14)

CODE 5

Major Generals and Rear Admirals (2-star) (see note 5)
 Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Deputy General Counsels of the Army, Navy, and Air Force
 Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 2 positions (see notes 6 and 14)

CODE 6

Brigadier Generals and Rear Admirals (Lower Half) (1-star) (see note 5)
 Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 1 positions (see notes 6 and 14)
 Personnel in Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL)
 positions, or equivalents (see notes 6 and 15)
 Appointees as Highly Qualified Experts (HQE) (see notes 6 and 16)

Background and methodology:

1. The first international instrument to codify aspects of diplomatic law was the agreement adopted by the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, which simplified the complex rules on the classes of heads of diplomatic missions and established that precedence among heads of missions should be determined by date of arrival at post. Until then, precedence – which guaranteed direct access to the receiving sovereign as well as ceremonial honors – had caused numerous and bitter disputes. The Congress of Vienna provided a complete framework for the establishment, maintenance, and termination of diplomatic relations on a basis of consent among independent sovereign states. It specified the functions of diplomatic missions, the formal rules regulating appointments, declarations of persona non grata of a diplomat who has in some way given offense, and precedence among heads of mission (United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/vcdr/vcdr_e.pdf)

Precedence is still determined by these basic agreements. These principles resulted in the official precedence used today in all foreign capitals, including Washington, D.C. In our country, the President of the United States determines precedence for U.S. officials. In the past, Presidents have occasionally changed the order of precedence. For example, President Kennedy elevated the Speaker of the House of Representatives ahead of the Chief Justice of the United States; and, although this ranking has been maintained since, there are other examples where a new administration has "demoted" positions previously elevated by its predecessor(s). Within DoD, this is not at all unusual. In light of the dynamics of change, the Office of the Chief of Protocol of the United States, which resides in the Department of State, has not distributed an official order of precedence for the United States for many years (Office of the Chief of Protocol of the United States, <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/>). Despite established principles, there are many situations which can alter the order of precedence for a specific event. In the past, lists have been developed and distributed most often for specific events. For example, the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee normally published "The White House Order of Precedence" for every President's inauguration. Some states have developed handbooks or pamphlets of lists for their use in events within their particular state. Virginia produced such a pamphlet and an associated list. The Department of Defense last distributed its precedence list in 2014. In recent years, the Military Departments have also produced lists. All these lists inform, but none match exactly.

When dealing with the United States precedence, there are several general rules which always hold true and which may differ from what one would assume the order of precedence to be. First, no one outranks a governor in his own state except the President or Vice President of the United States. Secondly, no one outranks a mayor in his own city or town or the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in his own county except the Governor of the state or the President or Vice President of the United States.

Also, it is important to remember that, for purposes such as seating, the spouses of officials assume the rank of their spouses. They do not have their own rank unless they also hold an office. One exception to this is widows of former Presidents who do have official standing. At a public dinner to which the President of the United States has been invited and sends his or her spouse as representative, that representative is accorded the same rank as the President. This could also be true of governors in their own state, but not other Federal or state government officials (Office of the Chief of Protocol of the United States, <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/>).

The methodology used in ordering officials for this list begins with the United States Code, statutory prescription on precedence; well-established, widely-accepted principles, procedures, and traditions; inputs from Component administrative assistants, personnel and protocol officials provided through Department-wide coordination; and then, as necessary, the discretionary authority delegated by the Secretary of Defense to the Director of Administration within the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer. Historical published lists may be found at the following web site:
<http://dcmo.defense.gov/About/Organization/OPDS/OPDSLlibrary/OPDSOrderPrec.aspx>

2. For DoD Component specific functions and activities, when appropriate to do so, the DoD Component may adjust the established order of precedence as necessary. However, that precedence may not be recognized outside of that DoD Component. Contact the appropriate Protocol Office for further information and guidance.
3. Should an official serve as “Acting” under the provisions of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, as amended, (5 U.S.C. §§ 3345-3349d), that official will be afforded the protocol level for the position in which he or she is serving while so “Acting.”
4. Except as noted herein, the provisions of this memorandum are not applicable to former civilian officials of the Department as they do not retain the precedence associated with their position upon departure from that position. In recognition of their past service in the Department, courtesies and recognition may be extended to them as appropriate. Precedence is retained, however, by former Secretaries of Defense due to their status as Presidential cabinet members, and by retired members of the military since they retain the grade in which they were retired.
5. Retired military officers take precedence immediately after active-duty officers of the same position (or grade if the officer did not serve in a position that is explicitly listed) by the initial date of appointment to the position (or grade). The positions for which this rule applies include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chiefs of Staff of the Military Services, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Combatant Commanders, the Vice Chiefs of Staff of the Military Services, and Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard. Precedence for retired military officers will be immediately after the highest position on the list in which an individual served, except for a retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Retired Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence immediately preceding the current Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and after the current Under Secretaries and Deputy Chief Management Officer). For example, retired Vice Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence immediately after the current Vice Chairman; retired Combatant Commanders take precedence immediately after the current Combatant Commanders; and retired four-star officers take precedence immediately after existing four-star officers (if a four-star officer did not serve in a position explicitly listed).
6. When a number of positions are grouped on the same line, precedence is established by the date of appointment, except for positions in the last line of Code 2. They shall take precedence in the following order: General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, and Chief Information Officer of the Department of Defense.
7. Precedence is established by the date of appointment as a Combatant Commander. However, if a Combatant Commander was previously appointed as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Service Chief, or to a previous Combatant Commander position, then the initial date of appointment to the previously held position will be used. Retired Combatant Commanders take precedence with but immediately after active-duty Commanders by the initial date of appointment.
8. Under the provisions of Section 901 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, Public Law 111-383, sections 131, 137a, and 138 of title 10 United States Code, were amended to direct the relative precedence of the General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Principal Deputy Under Secretaries of Defense, and Assistant Secretaries of Defense.
9. The current designations of Assistant Secretaries of Defense are (listed alphabetically): Acquisition; Asian and Pacific Security Affairs; Energy, Installation and Environment; Health Affairs; Homeland Defense and Global Security; International Security Affairs; Legislative Affairs; Logistics and Materiel Readiness;

Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs; Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Readiness; Research and Engineering; Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict; and Strategy, Plans and Capabilities.

10. Precedence for Directors and the Principal Deputy Directors of Defense Agencies is determined by the establishment date of the organization. Questions regarding the rationale for the methodology and historical data may be addressed to the Directorate for Administration within the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer.
 - a. The Defense Agencies are listed alphabetically as follows: Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), 1958; Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), 1990; Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), 1965; Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), 2000; Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), 1990; Defense Health Agency (DHA), 2013; Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), 1960; Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1961; Defense Legal Services Agency (DLSA), 1981; Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), 1961; Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), 2015; Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), 1971; Defense Security Service (DSS), 1972; Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), 1959; Missile Defense Agency (MDA), 1984; National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), 1972; National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), 1961; National Security Agency (NSA)/Central Security Service (CSS), 1952; Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA), 2002.
 - b. The Defense Agencies, in order by date of establishment, are as follows: NSA/CSS, 1952; DARPA, 1958; DTRA, 1959; DISA, 1960; DIA, 1961; DLA, 1961; NRO, 1961; DCAA, 1965; DSCA, 1971; NGA, 1972; DSS, 1972; DLSA, 1981; MDA, 1984; DeCA, 1990; DFAS, 1990; DCMA, 2000; PFPA, 2002; DHA, 2013; DPAA, 2015.
11. Precedence for Directors and Principal Deputy Directors of the DoD Field Activities is determined by the establishment date of the organization as a DoD Field Activity. Questions regarding the rationale for the methodology and historical data may be addressed to the Directorate for Administration within the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer.
 - a. The DoD Field Activities are listed alphabetically as follows: Defense Media Activity (DMA), 1977; Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), 2004; Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA), 1985; DoD Education Activity (DoDEA), 1974; DoD Human Resources Activity (DoDHRA), 1993; DoD Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), 2004; Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), 1978; and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), 1977.
 - b. The DoD Field Activities, in order by date of establishment, are as follows: DoDEA, 1974; DMA, 1977; WHS, 1977; OEA, 1978; DTSA, 1985; DoDHRA, 1993; TRMC, 2004; DTIC, 2004.
12. The current Designated Senior Career Reserved position for the Department of Defense is the Director of Administration within the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO), consistent with guidance and direction from the Secretary of Defense in his memorandum of December 4, 2013, and with the direction and delegation of authority provided by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in his memorandum of July 11, 2014.
13. Code 4 precedence applies only to the currently serving Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the currently serving Service Senior Enlisted Advisors and the currently serving Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau. After the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the order of precedence within the remaining Senior Enlisted Advisors is in order by date of appointment. Retired senior enlisted advisors should be placed in front of other retired members of the same grade (E 9). While the Coast Guard normally resides in the Department of Homeland Security and the Commandant of the Coast Guard is not a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Coast Guard is a military service and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard is listed in titles 5, 10 and 37 United States Code along with the other Service Senior Enlisted Advisors. Accordingly, the currently serving Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard should be afforded precedence behind the Senior Enlisted Advisors to the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff/Services.

14. Based on USD (P&R) memorandum dated April 28, 2008, subject: “Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) – Senior Executive Service Tier Policy for Career and Non-Career Senior Executive Service Members,” a common 3-tier structure was implemented for members of the DoD Senior Executive Service (SES). The Military Departments, the OSD, and some Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities have identified the positions that fall into each tier, although tier determinations across the entire Department using a common architecture has not been completely implemented. The applicability of the policy in the referenced DTM may be administratively extended to the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) by the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

In general, precedence for members of the SES is established by the tier in which the position is categorized. SL, ST, and DISL professional positions are not included in the SES Tier structure (see note 15). It is not possible to identify and list the title for each SES and DISES position within the Department on this order of precedence list. To the extent possible, this update reflects the principal positions held by members of the SES/DISES. The principal factor for determining the precedence for SES/DISES whose positions are not specified on the order of precedence is the placement of the position in an organization’s hierarchy and the tier level assigned to each of those positions (SES only).

If an SES’s position is within the same code as that of the SES’s supervisor, whether that supervisor is a military officer or civilian, the supervisor always takes precedence over the subordinate.

SES tier information for their respective positions will be maintained by and be available from each Military Department and by the Directorate for Administration within the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer for the OSD, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities. For DISES members, that information can be obtained from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

15. SL, ST, and DISL personnel (or equivalents, such as those senior executives who occupy Nonappropriated Fund positions) serve in positions that are classified above the GS-15 level. Although they are not members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) or Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES), the level of duties and responsibilities of SL/ST/DISL personnel warrant that they should be recognized as serving, at a minimum, at the Code 6 level. It is not possible to identify and list the title for each SL/ST/DISL position within the Department on this order of precedence list. The principal factor for determining whether the precedence for an SL/ST/DISL member should be in a higher code is dependent on that member’s position within his or her organization’s hierarchy.
16. Under the authority of 5 U.S.C. § 9903, the Department of Defense has the ability to attract and hire eminent experts from outside the civil service and uniformed services with state-of-the-art knowledge in fields of critical importance to the Department. The individuals who are hired under this authority are referred to as HQEs. Due to the level of duties and responsibilities of HQE, they should be recognized as serving, at a minimum, at the Code 6 level.
17. Precedence for those detailed to the Department under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) will be based on the position to which assigned. For example, an IPA assigned the position of a Director of a DoD Field Activity would be in Code 4 (Directors of DoD Field Activities are listed in Code 4); an IPA assigned to a Tier 1 SES position would be afforded Code 6 status. If an IPA is assigned to an executive level position not listed on the DoD Order of Precedence, and the component/Military Department wants that person to be at a specified precedence level, then there are two courses of action:
 - a. Send a request with supporting justification to the proponent for the precedence list (see cover memo for details), or
 - b. If arranged by a Military Department, the Military Department can set its own level of precedence (see notes 1 and 2). However, that precedence may not be recognized at the DoD or any other level outside of the Military Department.