



DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
1950 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1950

28 OCT 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2025 DoW Order of Precedence

This memorandum updates and reissues the DoW Order of Precedence (OoP) (attached) in alignment with Executive Order 14347, "Restoring the United States Department of War," September 5, 2025. The DoW OoP is based upon the U.S. OoP and requirements in the United States Code. The DoW OoP lists the precedence for full-time personnel of the Department that are Presidentially Appointed, Senate-confirmed officials; General Officers or Flag Officers; Civilian Senior Executives; and select other specific senior leader positions for the following purposes, as appropriate:

- 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 DoW issuances.

The DoW OoP should not be confused with or substituted for military rank or the Order of Succession to the Secretary of War, the latter of which is prescribed by Executive Order 13963. Precedence in the United States is rooted in the long-held traditions established at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which formalized international diplomatic law. Countries around the world, including the United States, employ the guidelines set more than 200 years ago to ensure guests of the United States receive the proper respect and honors due the guest, position, and his/her respective government. Precedence ensures the standards of reciprocity are cultivated and maintained. Simply put, how DoW guests are treated will be directly reflected in how our representatives will be treated externally and abroad.

Additional changes in titles and/or designations will be handled in the next update. Organizations with "Defense" in their titles (e.g., Defense Agencies and DoW Field Activities, i.e., organizations established pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 191) shall continue to be reflected in this document with the use of the word "Defense".

The point of contact for this memorandum is Mr. Jeffrey Eanes, who is available at [jeffrey.w.eanes.civ@mail.mil](mailto:jeffrey.w.eanes.civ@mail.mil) or (703) 692-3298.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Salesses". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert G. Salesses

Attachment:

As stated

DEPARTMENT OF WAR  
ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

CODE 2

Secretary of War  
Deputy Secretary of War  
Secretary of the Army  
Secretary of the Navy  
Secretary of the Air Force  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see note 1)  
Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (see note 2)  
Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (see note 3)  
Under Secretary of War for Policy  
Under Secretary of War (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer of the Department of War  
Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness  
Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security  
Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see note 1)  
Chief of Staff of the Army, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Chief of Space Operations (see notes 1 and 4)  
Chief of the National Guard Bureau (see note 1)  
Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 1)  
Combatant Commanders (see note 5)  
General Counsel of the Department of War  
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 War  
Direct Reporting Program Managers (Generals and Admirals) (see notes 4 and 6)

CODE 3

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 4)  
Under Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)  
Deputy Under Secretaries of War (see notes 4)  
Assistant Secretaries of War (see notes 4 and 7)  
Chief of Staff to the Secretary of War  
Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Vice Chief of Space Operations (see notes 1 and 4)  
Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau (see note 1)  
Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 1)  
Assistant Secretaries and General Counsels of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)  
Generals and Admirals (4-star) (see notes 1, 4, and 8)  
Directors of the National Security Agency and National Reconnaissance Office (see note 4)  
Inspectors General of the National Security Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office (see note 4)  
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction  
Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of War  
Assistant to the Secretary of War for Public Affairs  
Director of Administration and Management  
Director of the Defense Innovation Unit

### CODE 3 (Continued)

Director of the Strategic Capabilities Office

Special Assistants to the Secretary of War (see notes 4 and 9)

Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of War

Deputy Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of War

Defense Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO and Senior Civilian Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Europe

Direct Reporting Program Managers (Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals) (see notes 4 and 10)

### CODE 4

Directors of Defense Agencies (see note 11)

Directors of Department of War Field Activities (see notes 12)

Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Department of War, 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, and Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer of the Department of War (see notes 4)

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries of War (see notes 4 and 7)

Principal Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of War for Public Affairs; Deputy Director of Administration and Management; and Deputy Director of the Strategic Capabilities Office (see note 4)

Deputy Chief Financial Officers, Deputy Comptrollers, Directors of Defense Intelligence within the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security, and Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer (see note 4)

Deputy Under Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)

Deputy General Counsels of the Department of War, 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, and Deputy Chief Information Officers of the Department of War (see note 4)

Deputy Assistant Secretaries of War, Deputy Assistants to the Secretary of War, and Deputy Directors of the Defense Innovation Unit (see note 4)

Senior Advisors to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of War (see note 4 and 13)

Senior Enlisted Advisors to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 14)

Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals (3-star) (see notes 1 and 4)

Senior Enlisted Advisors to the Combatant Commanders (see note 15)

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries and Principal Deputy General Counsels of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)

The Auditors General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)

Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 3 positions (see notes 4 and 16)

### CODE 5

Major Generals and Rear Admirals (2-star) (see notes 1 and 4)

Deputy Assistant Secretaries/Deputy General Counsels of the Army, Navy, and Air Force (see note 4)

Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 2 positions (see notes 4 and 16)

### CODE 6

Brigadier Generals and Rear Admirals (Lower Half) (1-star) (see notes 1 and 4)

Members of the Senior Executive Service in Tier 1 positions (see notes 4 and 16)

Personnel in Senior Executive Service-equivalent positions (see notes 4 and 17)

## **History:**

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](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 and 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 (OoP). 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 the Department of War (DoW), changes address emerging statutory and policy considerations. Despite established lists, there are many situations which can alter the OoP for a specific event. In the past, alternate lists have frequently been developed and distributed for specific events. For example, the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee normally publishes “The White House Order of Precedence” at each Presidential inauguration. Some States have developed handbooks or pamphlets of lists for their use in events within their particular state. For example, Virginia produced “A Guide to Virginia Protocol and Traditions” (<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/constituent-services/Virginia-Flag-Protocol-Guide.pdf>). All these lists inform, but none matches exactly.

## **United States Order of Precedence:**

The Office of the Chief of Protocol of the United States, which resides in the Department of State, maintains the official OoP for the United States (Office of the Chief of Protocol, <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/secretary-of-state/office-of-the-chief-of-protocol/>). When dealing with precedence in the United States, there are several general rules which always hold true and which may differ from what one would assume the OoP to be. First, no one outranks a governor in his/her own state except the President or Vice President of the United States. Additionally, no one outranks a mayor in his/her own city or town or the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in his/her own county except the Governor of the state or the President or Vice President of the United States. Second, for purposes such as seating at official ceremonies, the spouses of officials assume the rank of their spouses when attending with that official. Spouses do not individually have precedence unless they also hold an office or position to which precedence is ascribed. There are two exceptions to this rule for the spouse and widows/widowers of Presidents. At a public dinner to which the sitting President of the United States has been invited and sends his or her spouse as representative, the spouse is accorded the same rank as the President. Similarly, widows/widowers of former Presidents are given precedence by the order of their spouse’s Presidency.

Should an official serve as “Acting” in a position, that official will be afforded the protocol level for the position in which he or she is so serving (“Acting”). When more than one official of the same group is present at the same event, the “Acting” official(s) should be ranked with, but after all others within that group.

## **Methodology:**

The precedence of officials within DoW is based upon law and the U.S. Order of Precedence. Specific precedence for certain officials is only ascribed to those officials that are in a position to which appointment is required to be made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate (PAS); designated as Principal Staff Assistants; the Principal Deputies to, and the “first tier” of officials reporting to, the officials above; or have roles that require frequent interaction with foreign officials. All others are afforded precedence by military rank or Senior Executive Service (SES) tier only. DoW precedence is only provided for individuals who are PAS, SES, or General Officer/Flag Officer (GOFO) level or an individual who is “Acting” in a position identified on this list. The Secretaries of the Military Departments may identify for internal purposes precedence that goes lower than the positions identified in the DoW OoP as long as it remains consistent with U.S. and DoW OoP.

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 or War 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. Precedence for those detailed to the Department under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) will be based upon the position to which assigned. For example, an IPA assigned the position of a Director of a DoD Field Activity would be afforded Code 4 status; an IPA assigned to a Tier 1 SES position would be afforded Code 6 status.

## **Notes:**

1. 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). 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). For example, retired Vice Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence immediately after the current Vice Chairman and retired four-star officers take precedence immediately after existing four-star officers (if the retired four-star officer did not serve in a higher position explicitly listed).
2. The Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering takes precedence after the Secretary and Deputy Secretary with regard to all matters for which the Under Secretary has responsibility by the direction of the Secretary or by law.
3. The Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment takes precedence after the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering with regard to all matters for which the Under Secretary has responsibility by the direction of the Secretary or by law.
4. When a number of positions are grouped on the same line, precedence is established by the date of appointment to the position in that group.
5. Precedence among Combatant Commanders is established by the date of assumption of command 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, Military Service Chief, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, 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 assumption of command to a Combatant Commander position.

6. This category includes Generals and Admirals (4-star) that are appointed by the President, after confirmation by the Senate, into a Direct Reporting Program Manager position. Once retired, these officials will take precedence immediately after active-duty Generals and Admirals (O-10s) by the initial date of appointment to the position (if the officer did not serve in a position that is explicitly listed in a higher position).
7. The current designations of Assistant Secretaries of War (ASWs) are (listed alphabetically): Acquisition; Critical Technologies; Cyber Policy; Energy, Installations, and Environment; Health Affairs; Homeland Defense and Americas Security Affairs; Indo-Pacific Security Affairs; Industrial Base Policy; International Security Affairs; Legislative Affairs (LA); Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Mission Capabilities; Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs; Readiness; Science and Technology; Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SOLIC); Space Policy; Strategy, Plans and Forces; and Sustainment. The ASW(LA) and ASW(SOLIC) takes precedence, in that order, before all other ASWs regardless of date of appointment. Principal Deputy ASWs (PDASWs) take precedence among each other by date of appointment. When attending events with their ASWs, the PDASWs may be assigned precedence among each other by the order of their ASWs.
8. Medal of Honor (MoH) Recipients, while wearing the MoH, may be afforded precedence immediately after retired Generals and Admirals (4-star). MoH Recipients take precedence among themselves following a non-rank-based criteria (e.g., alphabetical order by last name, date of event for which MoH was awarded, or age) consistent with the event or ceremony.
9. This category includes the Special Assistants to the Secretary of War (SATSW) at the SES or GOFO level, regardless of rank or tiering, that report directly to the Secretary of War (e.g., SATSW for White House Liaison or SATSW for Protocol).
10. This category includes Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals (3-star) that are appointed by the President, after confirmation by the Senate, into a Direct Reporting Program Manager position. Once retired, these officials will take precedence immediately after active-duty Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals (O-9s) by the initial date of appointment to the position (if the officer did not serve in a position that is explicitly listed in a higher position).
11. The Directors of the Defense Agencies established pursuant to Section 191 of Title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 191) take precedence in the order of the date of establishment of their organization (earliest establishment is first/highest). As PAS officials, if not filled by military officers, the Director of the National Security Agency/Chief of the Central Security Service (est. 1952) and Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (est. 1961) take precedence in Code 3.
  - a. The Defense Agencies, listed **alphabetically**, are 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 Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA), 1972; 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 Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), 1959; Missile Defense Agency (MDA), 1984; National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), 1972; Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA), 2002.
  - b. The Defense Agencies, by date of **establishment**, are as follows: DARPA, 1958; DTRA, 1959; DISA, 1960; DIA, 1961; DLA, 1961; DCAA, 1965; DSCA, 1971; NGA, 1972; DCSA, 1972;

DLSA, 1981; MDA, 1984; DeCA, 1990; DFAS, 1990; DCMA, 2000; PFPA, 2002; DHA, 2013; DPAA, 2015.

12. The Directors and Administrators of the DoW Field Activities established pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 191 take precedence in the order of the date of establishment of their organization (earliest establishment is first/highest)
  - a. The DoW Field Activities, listed **alphabetically**, are 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 Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC), 1978; and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), 1977.
  - b. The DoW Field Activities, by date of **establishment**, are as follows: DoDEA, 1974; DMA, 1977; WHS, 1977; OLDCC, 1978; DTSA, 1985; DoDHRA, 1993; TRMC, 2004; DTIC, 2004.
13. This category includes the Senior Advisors to, or other individuals in the Immediate Office that report directly to, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary that are at the SES or GOFO level (e.g., Senior Military Assistant (SMA) to the Secretary of War). The SMA to the Secretary of War always takes precedence before the SMA to the Deputy Secretary of War.
14. The Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff takes precedence before the other SSEAs to the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Sergeant Major of the Army, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the United States Space Force, and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau take precedence by date of appointment as a SEA to a member of the JCS. The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard takes precedence after the SEAs to the members of the JCS. When participating in some National-level events and ceremonies, the SEAs to the members of the JCS and the Commandant of the Coast Guard may be afforded the precedence of their Principal, if the Principal is in attendance.
15. The SEAs to the Combatant Commanders take precedence by date of appointment as a SEA to a Combatant Commander. When participating in some National-level events and ceremonies, the SEAs to the Combatant Commanders may be afforded the precedence of their Principal, if the Principal is in attendance.
16. The Department of War uses a three-tier structure as a means of ensuring comparability and transparency in executive positions and compensation management across the department. The tier structure is built upon the foundational principle that executive positions vary in terms of impact on mission, level of complexity, span of control, inherent authority, scope and breadth of responsibility, and influence in joint, national security matters. The tier structure is a tool to promote a common understanding of position differences, a common perspective about the relationship of these differences in mission outcomes, and a common language to identify these differences. Unless explicitly identified in a position higher on this list, SES or Defense Intelligence SES (DISES) individuals take precedence based upon tiering. If an individual's position is within the same code as that of the individual's supervisor, whether that supervisor is a military officer or civilian, the supervisor always takes precedence before the subordinate.
17. This category includes Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL), Highly Qualified Experts (HQE) appointed pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 9903, senior executives who occupy Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) positions, experts in science and engineering appointed pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 4092, or equivalent positions under appointment authorities that authorize pay in excess of the General Schedule (GS) 15 level.