

# Pay & Personnel Newsletter

United States Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Center

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**About the PPC Customer Newsletter:** An authorized publication, the PPC Customer Newsletter is published under the direction of the U.S. Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Center. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Homeland Security or the U.S. Coast Guard. The PPC Customer Newsletter shall not be considered an authority for any official action and is non-record material. The PPC Customer Newsletter is published quarterly. Articles are solicited from all readers.

**How to submit an article:** Articles for the PPC Customer Newsletter may be submitted by e-mail to [the Procedures & Development branch e-mail address "PPC-PF-PD"](mailto:PPC-PF-PD).

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## Advancement Cutoffs for May and November 2017 Servicewide Exam Participants

1. [All Coast Guard Enlisted \(ALCGENL\) message 015/18 announces the initial cutoffs for advancement for the November 2017 Servicewide exam.](#)
2. [All Coast Guard Enlisted \(ALCGENL\) message 014/18 announces revised cutoffs for advancement for the May 2018 Servicewide exam.](#)

*Congratulations to those who are now above the cut for advancement!*

As a reminder, "Commanding Officers shall ensure basic eligibility and rating specific advancement requirements are still met per Enlisted Accessions, Evaluations, and Advancements, COMDTINST M1000.2 (series). When removing members from the SWE advancement eligibility list(s) due to not meeting these requirements, the CO shall advise PPC (ADV) by e-mail via AOIX at CMD-SMD-CG-PPC with CG PSC as information addressee at CMD-SMD-CG-PSC.

Additional guidance is available at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/psc/psc-epm/SitePages/Advancements.aspx>."

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## CGHR: On the Radar Screen, 9 January

Welcome to the latest issue of CGHR: On the Radar Screen. You can access the newsletter when (and how) it's convenient for you – from work, from home, your smartphone, or your tablet. CGHR is your calendar for upcoming training and professional development events, as well as time-sensitive news.

You can read CGHR in its entirety by going to <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our->

[Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/CGHR/1-9-18-CGHR/](#)

If you have trouble accessing any of the newsletter links from your Coast Guard workstation, forward this email so you can read CGHR at home (or share with your family).

In this issue, you will find:

- On the Horizon
- Articles and Resources
- Recent Flag Voices
- Coast Guard All Hands and Compass Blogs
- Recent Messages
- Defender Newsletter, October 2017
- Infographic

Earlier issues of CGHR can be accessed at <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/CGHR>

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## Defense Travel Management Office Allowances and Regulations Update

The Defense Travel Management Office has updated the following information for 01 January 2018:

[Basic Allowance for Housing \(BAH\)](#)  
[CONUS Cost of Living Allowance](#)  
[Dislocation Allowance Rates \(DLA\)](#)  
[OCONUS Non-Foreign and Foreign Per Diem Rates](#)  
[Overseas Housing Allowances \(OHA\)](#)  
[Overseas Cost of Living Allowances \(COLA\)](#)  
[Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\) and Appendices](#)  
[POV Mileage Rates](#)

To access this information, visit the [DTMO Website](#).

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## Direct Access Competency Dictionary Update

The [Direct Access Competency Dictionary \(file in MS Excel format\)](#) (a spreadsheet which shows all authorized competency codes and descriptions) has been updated by Commandant (CG-1B-1).

Changes made since last update (02 Jan 2018) are hi-lighted in blue text on the spreadsheet.

- 09 Competencies created
- 01 Competencies modified
- 00 Competencies inactivated

The OSC tab has been updated with the OSC hyperlinked to the OPM-3 portal website.

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## Blended Retirement System (BRS): Answering the “How Do I Opt-In?” Question

*Written by Chief Petty Officer Timothy Hoagland, Blended Retirement Integrated Project Team member*

After months of preparation, the Blended Retirement System (BRS) Opt-In Period is about to make its year-long debut! Beginning on Jan. 1, 2018, over 30,000 active duty and Reserve members will have the choice to opt-in to the BRS. Prior to choosing to opt-in in Direct Access, eligible members should complete the [BRS Opt-in course](#) (available on Joint Knowledge Online) and then self-certify their completion in the Coast Guard’s [Learning Management System](#).

After completing the Opt-in course and consulting other resources such as the [BRS Comparison Calculator](#), follow the steps below to opt-in to the BRS. Keep in mind that the decision to opt-in to the BRS is irrevocable, meaning it cannot be changed, once made. While the Coast Guard has no preference in member retirement system elections, it is vitally

important for individuals to make the decision that is right for them and their families.

### How to Opt-In to the BRS:

- 1) Login to Direct Access.
- 2) Click on “Employee Tasks.”
- 3) Click on “My BRS Elections.”
- 4) Read and answer all three questions using the “yes / no” drop-down boxes. You must answer “yes” to all three questions for your opt-in enrollment to proceed.
- 5) Once all questions are answered, click “Submit.”
- 6) You will be sent to a confirmation screen. Click “Ok.”
- 7) PPC will verify your eligibility to opt-in and send you an email confirming your enrollment in the BRS.

A Coast Guard-specific [How to Opt-In to BRS Using Direct Access Video](#), a [PPC Opt-In User Guide](#), and many more great resources and materials can be found on the Coast Guard’s BRS [website](#).

For members opting-in to the BRS, government automatic and matching contributions will begin the pay period after opting-in to the BRS, which may not be your next paycheck. Because military pay periods are monthly, if a member elects the BRS on Jan. 1, 2018, the enrollee can expect to see Government automatic and matching contributions to reflect on their mid-month Leave and Earnings Statement in February 2018 (the next pay period).

Even though the Opt-In Period covers all of calendar year 2018, if the BRS is the right retirement system for you, consider opting in sooner rather than later to take full advantage of the government automatic and matching contributions. A member who decides to enroll in the BRS in July rather than January would miss up to six months of government-matching contributions.

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If you desire to remain in the legacy “High-3” retirement system, you do not have to take any action in Direct Access or elsewhere. No opt-in eligible members will be automatically moved to the BRS unless they physically opt-in via Direct Access (instructions above).

## BRS Opt-Ins Processed by PPC (January 2018)

The Opt-In window for the Blended Retirement System (BRS) runs through 2018.

As of 31 January 2018, PPC has received **2,536** BRS Opt-In elections.

Component	BRS Eligible	Opt-Ins	Percentage
Active	25,460	2,275	8.9%
Reserve	6,367	261	4.1%
Total	31,827	2,536	7.9%

Visit [WWW.DCMS.USCG.MIL/BRS](http://WWW.DCMS.USCG.MIL/BRS) for BRS Opt-In Resources

### Continuation Pay Elections

This table shows the status of continuation pay elections.

Month 2018	Eligible	Pending Payment (Returned forms)	Paid	Declined
Jan	6	0	6	
Feb	6	5		
Mar	4	2		
Apr	1	1		

## Learning Opportunity: Enlisted Evaluation System (EES)

18 DEC 17

BT

UNCLAS //N01616//

ALCGPSC 153/17

SUBJ: SITREP 1-HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY-REVISION TO THE ENLISTED EVALUATION SYSTEM

- A. [Enlisted Accessions, Evaluations, and Advancements, COMDTINST M1000.2A](#)
- B. [CG Flag Voice 478 of 02 OCT 17](#)
- C. [ALCGPSC 131/17 RELEASE OF NEW ENLISTED EVALUATION PERFORMANCE STANDARDS](#)

1. Reference (a) announced the release of the new standards and major changes to the Enlisted Evaluation System (EES), which will go into effect 01MAR2018. This message announces the availability of outreach opportunities to support field units as they implement the new EES.
2. From 15JAN2018-30MAR2018, all Coast Guard units will have the opportunity to receive training on the new EES. To ensure all personnel are provided the opportunity to become familiar with the new EES, PSC-EPM will make available multiple opportunities to accommodate demands for both formal and informal briefings. Units will have two options for outreach:
  - A. Unit led training. A comprehensive briefing packet and materials will be provided to units to conduct EES training at their discretion. Briefing materials will be posted to the EES Portal and Internet sites NLT 15JAN2018.
  - B. Designated staff from PSC-EPM will conduct individual unit briefings via webinar, teleconference, or video teleconference to discuss the new EES policies and procedures

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and address specific command concerns and questions. A schedule listing available time slots is posted on the EES portal. Unit POCs contact PSC-EPM at ARL-SMB-CGPSC-EPM-Evaluations@uscg.mil to reserve a time slot. Units deployed during this time period are encouraged to contact PSC-EPM as soon as possible to coordinate a briefing outside of the published windows.

3. The new competencies and FAQs are available for all members to view at the following websites:  
EES Portal: <http://cglink.uscg.mil/bdf9a38f>  
EES Internet: <http://cglink.uscg.mil/7abcb082>
  4. For general questions or concerns regarding the new EES, please forward all inquiries to the following email Portal address: [ARL-SMB-CGPSC-EPM-Evaluations@uscg.mil](mailto:ARL-SMB-CGPSC-EPM-Evaluations@uscg.mil). All personnel with inquiries are highly encouraged to review the FAQ guidance posted on both the Internet and Intranet sites prior to submitting their inquiries.
  5. Released by: CAPT M. W. Sibley, Acting, Commander, Personnel Service Center. The Service Center for Our Most Important Resource - Our People.
  6. Internet release authorized.
- 

### Direct Access Guides Updated in January 2018

- The [Understanding Job Data guide](#) has been updated to reflect that Direct Access is programmed to only build two Job Data rows for any calendar day.
  - For example, a Cost of Living Job Data row is built on 1 January each year to record the new pay rates. If a Reserve member's active duty orders end on 31 December, DA

creates the Reserve Order End Job Data row also effective 1 January. The COLA row will have Effective Sequence "0" and the ROE Job Data row will have an Effective Sequence of "1". This member is scheduled for back-to-back active duty orders also effective 1 January.

- The [Self Service for Command Processing IDT Requests](#) user guide has been updated. This guide provides the procedures for Commands to Authorize, Update or Approve Reserve member's IDT drill requests in Direct Access.
- The [SPO User Guide for Amending Reserve Active Duty Orders](#) has been updated to that the Amend Order mode should not be used if amending the Actual Begin Date for orders in an En route status. In these cases, the orders should be cancelled and reissued.
- The [SPO User Guide for Canceling Reserve Active Duty Orders](#) has been updated to include this additional information:
  - Orders in Proposed status can be canceled without routing through an approval process.
  - All other orders can be canceled and must be routed for approval.
  - When orders in an En route status are canceled, the Pay Group will automatically change to CG RSV, which will terminate any AD pay or allowances.
  - All leave associated with a canceled order will be canceled.
  - SPOs MUST contact the order issuing authority when cancelling any orders.

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- If the Actual Begin Date need to be changed and the orders are in an en route status, they must be cancelled and reissued.
- **Entering Rating Competency for Servicewide Exam Eligibility** - If you need to enter the rating competency in DA for SWE purposes, select the appropriate rate/rating with "Content Group Type" of "Knowledge". *Do not overwrite an existing competency, add a new one. Overwriting an existing competency may cause Direct Access to show the member as ineligible for advancement.*

Look Up Competency

Content Type: COMPETENCY

Content Item ID:

Description:

Content Group Type:

Content Group:

[Basic Lookup](#)

### Search Results

View 100 First 1-10 of 10

Content Item ID	Description	Content Group Type	Cont
AMT1	AMT1 ERATS	COMP TYPE	ERA
AMT1	AMT1 ERATS	KNOWLEDGE	ERA
AMT2	AMT2 ERATS	COMP TYPE	ERA
AMT2	AMT2 ERATS	KNOWLEDGE	ERA
AMTC	AMTC ERATS	COMP TYPE	ERA
AMTC	AMTC ERATS	KNOWLEDGE	ERA
AMTCM	AMTCM ERATS	COMP TYPE	ERA
AMTCM	AMTCM ERATS	KNOWLEDGE	ERA
AMTCS	AMTCS ERATS	COMP TYPE	ERA
AMTCS	AMTCS ERATS	KNOWLEDGE	ERA

The following user guides have been updated:

- [View my CWO Profile Letter](#)
- [View my SWE Personal Data Extract](#)
- [Dependent Accountability Report](#)

- [Career Sea Pay Premium](#)
- [Self Service for Command Processing IDT Requests](#)
- The [SPO User Guide for Processing Reserve Active Duty Orders](#) has been updated.
- The [SPO User Guide for Pay Corrections Actions Requests](#) has been updated.
- The [Self-Service for Commands Processing Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Requests in Direct Access User Guide](#) has been added. This guide provides the procedures for Commands to Authorize, Update or Approve Reserve member's IDT drill requests in Direct Access.
- The [SPO User Guide for Advance/Reduce One Member](#) has been updated.
- The [SPO User Guide for Viewing Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Drill Pay Calculations](#) has been updated to reflect recent system changes.
- The [PCS Entitlements Auto Start/Stop SPO User Guide](#) and the [Starting OUTCONUS COLA SPO User Guide](#) have been updated.

The following PCS guides have been updated to reflect that the practice of "same-day PCS" for active duty members is discontinued:

- [PCS Orders](#)
- [PCS Orders-Departing](#)
- [PCS Orders-Reporting](#)

- A [Self-Service User Guide for Viewing a SWE Profile Letter](#) has been added
- A [Self-Service User Guide for Viewing a CWO Personal Data Extract \(PDE\)](#) has been added.



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- The [Self-Service for Commands User Guide for Viewing a Member's SWE Profile Letter](#) has been updated.
- The [Servicewide Exam Profile Letter by Department Self-Service for Commands User Guide](#) has been updated.
- The [Approving Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) SPO User Guide](#) has been updated.
- The [Scheduling Inactive Duty for Training \(IDT\) Self-Service for Commands User Guide](#) has been updated.
- [Starting OUTCONUS COLA](#)
- [Starting OHA](#)

## 2018 Critical Housing Areas Announced

02 Feb 18

UNCLAS //N11101//

ALCGPSC 017/18

SUBJ: 2018 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CRITICAL HOUSING AREAS (CHA)

A. Critical Housing Areas, COMDTINST 11101.15

B. Joint Travel Regulations

1. This ALCGPSC announces the Military Housing Areas (MHA) and zip codes meeting the eligibility criteria for continued designation as a CHA. This ALCGPSC applies to all areas in the continental United States where dependents are authorized to accompany service members.

2. The following is a list of MHAs and zip codes designated as Coast Guard CHAs:

- A. Abbeville, LA (Zip Code 70511)
- B. Baton Rouge, LA (Zip Code 70809)
- C. Brownsville, TX (MHA TX281)
- D. Coastal Maine (MHA ME141)
- E. Demopolis, AL (Zip Code 36732)
- F. Freeport, TX (Zip Code 77541)
- G. Greenville, MS (Zip Code 38701)
- H. Hatteras Inlet, NC (Station) (Zip Code 27943)
- I. Keokuk, IA (Zip Code 52632)
- J. Lake Charles, LA (MHA LA370)

- K. Menemsha, MA (Station) (MHA MA151)
  - L. Port O'Connor, TX (Zip Code 77982)
  - M. Provincetown, MA (Station) (Zip Code 02657)
  - N. Southwest Harbor, ME (Zip Code 04679)
  - O. Venice, LA (Zip Code 70091)
  - P. Victoria, TX (Zip Code 77904)
  - Q. Yankeetown, FL (Station) (Zip Code 34498)
3. IAW Ref A, members with dependents issued PCS orders to a CHA designated unit, or a nit located in a CHA designated MHA, and who have no intention of relocating their dependents to that unit, may submit a Housing Allowance Protection Worksheet (CG-2025A) to CG PSC-PSD-fs requesting housing allowances based on a location other than their new Permanent Duty Station (PDS). Members authorized a housing allowance based on the payment of child support are not eligible to submit a CG-2025A under the CHA policy.
4. IAW paragraphs 051301 and 051306 of Ref B, travel and shipment of Household Goods (HHG) costs exceeding the maximum allowed for travel of dependents and shipment of HHG from the last PDS to the new PDS will be at the member's expense. IAW paragraph 050408 of Ref B, dependent travel and HHG transportation costs associated with future PCS orders will be based upon the member's PDS, vice the authorized CHA Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) location of dependents.
5. Members must provide their Servicing Personnel Office with an approved BAH Protection Worksheet from CG PSC-PSD-fs in order to change BAH and Cost of Living (COLA) entitlements.
6. PSC-PSD-FS POCs: YNCS Amarilys Elias (202) 795-6638 and Mr. Wayne Canfield (510) 437-5796.
7. Released by: CAPT M.W. Sibley, Commander (Acting), Personnel Service Center. The Service Center for Our Most Important Resource – Our People.
8. Internet release is authorized.

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## New Features of TRICARE Website

The TRICARE website is your first stop when you have questions about your benefit. At the start of the New Year, we introduced some redesigned features on the TRICARE website that make it easier for you to take command of your health. Beyond the new look and feel of the website, new features and tools will now help you find what you're looking for quicker. Check out these improvements to the TRICARE website:

1. **Find Information Faster.** Need to compare TRICARE plans, find a doctor or find a phone number? Three new search wizards on the [home page](#) have been optimized to make sure you'll answer fewer questions and get to your results faster. Use the [Find a TRICARE Plan](#), [Find a Doctor](#) and [Find a Phone Number](#) tools to see what plans you qualify for, locate a nearby provider or get contact information.
2. **Understand Your Benefit.** TRICARE is changing, so the TRICARE website is better organized to help you quickly understand your benefit. Use the TRICARE website to know [what's covered](#) or what a [qualifying life event](#) is. Need to submit a claim or file a form? You'll find "Forms and Claims" in the top navigation bar.
3. **Access TRICARE On-the-Go.** According to Pew Research Center, half of smartphone users use their phone to look up health information, and 62 percent used their smartphone to look up a health condition. With that in mind, the TRICARE website has been improved for viewing on mobile devices.

And while you're here, now is the perfect time to tackle that to-do list: [schedule your next appointment](#), [change your primary care manager](#), [review costs](#) and much more. Take

command of your health and your health care in 2018.

## January 2018 Government Travel Charge Card Newsletter

Below you will find the link to the January 2018 GTCC newsletter. Please share this information as widely as possible with your travelers, respective commands, P&A shops, SPOs, and AOs as it includes important information that may impact travel cards and travel arrangements.

<http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/CG-1/psc/bops/GovTrvl/January 2018 GTCC Newsletter.pdf>

This month's edition contains the following useful travel and travel card information:

- GTCC Bank Transition
- Estimating Airfare
- Temp Limit Increases
- Generating PaymentNet Reports
- Plus much more good to know information.

We have moved in to Volume VIII, generating this useful newsletter for eight years. You can check out past articles by searching the newsletter index found at

<http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/CG-1/psc/bops/GovTrvl/GTCC-TEMP/GTCC Newsletter Index.xlsx>

Ms. Carlene Curry  
Government Travel Charge Card  
Program Coordinator  
Commander (PSC-BOPS-R)  
Personnel Service Center  
<http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/govtrvl/>



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## Direct Access and Web-TPAX Status Updates Posted on CG Portal

You can now check on the status of Direct Access (DA) and Web-TPAX on our Portal site: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/ppc/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Status changes will only be made during normal working hours (CST).

When either system has an unscheduled outage, we usually do not have an estimated time for it to be available. If we mark either system as unavailable, that lets you know that we are currently working with the programmers to get the system up as fast as possible. If we are notified that either system will be down for an extended period, we will let everyone know (via email).

If we mark either program "Unavailable", this means that it is either partially (it keeps kicking you out or not letting you on) or completely unavailable.

## PAY & PERSONNEL CENTER (PPC)

*We are the premier military pay & personnel res service to our nation's guardians.*

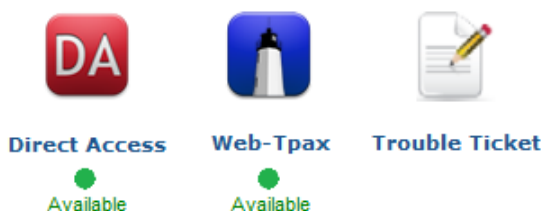


Fig 1, PPC's CG Portal Page Showing Status

## New Servicewide Examination Process and Procedure Guide

PPC's Advancements, Evaluations, Service Validation and Personnel Data Corrections (ADV) branch is released a new [Servicewide Examination \(SWE\) Guide](#).

The [Servicewide Examination \(SWE\) Guide](#) provides detailed descriptions on how a SWE works along with what processes and procedures are required to be followed by members and their commands to ensure a successful SWE cycle.

The [Servicewide Examination \(SWE\) Guide](#) covers the following topics:

- The SWE Process
- SWE Responsibilities
- Sequence of SWE Cycle Events
- PDE Description
- PDE Verification
- Profile Letter Description
- Profile Letter Verification
- SWE Waivers
- Change of CO's Recommendation
- Substitute Exams
- SWE Officer Procedures

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## May 2018 Servicewide Examination (SWE) Competition Announcement

[All Coast Guard Enlisted \(ALCGENL\) message 004/18](#) announces the May 2018 SWE competition for all ratings, except MU, for advancement to pay grades E-5 through E-9. In addition to the message, PPC (ADV) has posted the [SWE Eligibility Requirements for the May 2018 competition](#)

1. Commanding Officers (CO) must ensure dissemination of the message and eligibility requirements to all active duty enlisted members in their AOR. Members planning to participate in the SWE need to be aware of these requirements, as well as their responsibility to confirm they are met. Failure to review and follow the guidelines of the message will not justify a waiver of its requirements. Units, SWE Officers, Education Services Officers and affected members shall familiarize themselves with the contents of the message and references thereto.
2. The May 2018 SWE is not waived for any rating.
3. Please ensure this information is forwarded to members participating for May 18 SWE. Remind those in your AOR that the SWE Message is required reading for all SWE candidates. Also, 1FEB18 is the SWE Eligibility Date (SED) and the last date SWE candidates may complete their eligibility requirements. Backdated entry of those requirements may be completed in TMT and DA up to the 1APR18 PDE correction deadline date however, it's highly recommended that all completed requirements be entered into TMT and DA on/prior to the 1FEB18 deadline so that the initial PDE released in early February reflects the members correct eligibility status. This will prevent the requirement of

correcting records after 1FEB18 and having to request PDE updates during the correction period. Late EER's continues to be our number one reason for "not eligible" PDE's.

4. PPCINST M1418.1E (SWE Guide) has been cancelled. It was recently replaced by the new PPC Publication "[SWE Guide](#)" which contains updated information concerning the SWE process.

PPC (ADV) is the single point of contact for all SWE inquiries/waivers. They can be reached at (785) 339-2200 or e-mail at [PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil](mailto:PPC-DG-CustomerCare@uscg.mil).

## February 2018 Enlisted Advancement Authorizations

[All Coast Guard Reserve \(ALCGRSV\) message 002/18](#) (CG Portal Link) announces reserve enlisted advancements authorized effective 1 February 2018.

[All Coast Guard Enlisted \(ALCGENL\) message 003/18](#) announces enlisted advancements authorized effective 1 February 2018.

Commanding Officers **must** determine if pre-advancement eligibility requirements have or have not been met, especially with regards to EPME EPQ standards. Per [ACN 004/17](#) (CG Portal Link), EPME EPQ standard CG-EPME (May/2017) must have been completed not later than 01 December 2017 and validated prior to the effective date of advancement. COs must notify PPC (ADV) via Admin OIX message, with a copy to PSC (EPM-1), to remove the member from the SWE advancement eligibility list prior to the advancement. Guidance is available in the [Involuntary Withholding or Removal from SWE List Guide](#) linked from the [EPM-1 Advancement Portal Page](#):

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## SPO Consolidation Update: SPO at Air Station Traverse City Closed

The SPO at AIRSTA TRAVERSE CITY (000211) has been disestablished in DA. Below departments have been reassigned to the SPO at Base Cleveland (042191).

SPOAssignmentList			
Dept ID	Descr	Status	Parent Dept ID
000211	AIRSTA TRAVERSE CITY	A	000211
006253	AIRFAC WAUKEGAN	A	000211
006337	AV STUDENT ENG - TRAVERSE CITY	A	000211
006827	NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLL	A	000211
007241	MUSKEGON COMM COLL	A	000211
010342	AIRSTA TRAVERSE CITY HSWL DEPT	A	000211
010727	DD-AIRSTA TRAVERSE CITY MI	A	000211
010835	NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLL	A	000211

Please refer to the SPO Contact List page at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/ppc/Pages/SPO%20Contact%20List.aspx> for SPO contact information and previously issued updates.

Ensure all communications regarding the shifting of SPO records are routed through PSC-BOPS-R. The POC is Emily Jennings.

## Updated 2018 Withholding Tables Now Available; Taxpayers Could See Paycheck Changes by February

The Internal Revenue Service today released [Notice 1036](#), which updates the income-tax withholding tables for 2018 reflecting changes made by the tax reform legislation enacted last month. This is the first in a series of steps that IRS will take to help improve the accuracy of withholding following major changes made by the new tax law.

The updated withholding information, [posted today on IRS.gov](#), shows the new rates for employers to use during 2018. Employers should begin using the 2018 withholding tables as soon as possible, but not later than Feb. 15, 2018. They should continue to use the 2017 withholding tables until implementing the 2018 withholding tables.

Many employees will begin to see increases in their paychecks to reflect the new law in February. The time it will take for employees to see the changes in their paychecks will vary depending on how quickly the new tables are implemented by their employers and how often they are paid — generally weekly, biweekly or monthly.

The new withholding tables are designed to work with the Forms W-4 that workers have already filed with their employers to claim withholding allowances. This will minimize burden on taxpayers and employers. Employees do not have to do anything at this time.

“The IRS appreciates the help from the payroll community working with us on these important changes,” said Acting IRS Commissioner David Kautter. “Payroll withholding can be complicated, and the needs of taxpayers vary based on their personal financial situation. In the weeks ahead, the IRS will be providing more

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information to help people understand and review these changes."

The new law makes a number of changes for 2018 that affect individual taxpayers. The new tables reflect the increase in the standard deduction, repeal of personal exemptions and changes in tax rates and brackets.

For people with simpler tax situations, the new tables are designed to produce the correct amount of tax withholding. The revisions are also aimed at avoiding over- and under-withholding of tax as much as possible.

To help people determine their withholding, the IRS is revising the withholding tax calculator on IRS.gov. The IRS anticipates this calculator should be available by the end of February. Taxpayers are encouraged to use the calculator to adjust their withholding once it is released.

The IRS is also working on revising the Form W-4. Form W-4 and the revised calculator will reflect additional changes in the new law, such as changes in available itemized deductions, increases in the child tax credit, the new dependent credit and repeal of dependent exemptions.

The calculator and new Form W-4 can be used by employees who wish to update their withholding in response to the new law or changes in their personal circumstances in 2018, and by workers starting a new job. Until a new Form W-4 is issued, employees and employers should continue to use the 2017 Form W-4.

In addition, the IRS will help educate taxpayers about the new withholding guidelines and the calculator. The effort will be designed to help workers ensure that they are not having too much or too little withholding taken out of their pay.

For 2019, the IRS anticipates making further changes involving withholding. The IRS will work with the business and payroll community to

encourage workers to file new Forms W-4 next year and share information on changes in the new tax law that impact withholding.

More information is available in the [Withholding Tables Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### Known Issue: Direct Access TDY Orders for Class "C" Schools

ETQC TRAINING ADVISORY 003-18 FY 2018 'C' SCHOOL ORDER NOTES

1. FY 2018 'C' school orders issued after January 1, 2018 contain inaccurate information, within the order notes, pertaining to designated EUMs.
2. Unit Training Officers should advise all members who received 'C' orders after January 1, 2018 to see their unit Admin Officers or Servicing Personnel Offices (SPO) to have their orders re-printed before filing travel claims in TPAX.
3. Please disseminate to subordinate commands, all unit Training Officers and Servicing Personnel Offices (SPO).
4. ETQC Customer Service Line Phone Number: 757-366-6583.
5. CG ETQC POC: LTJG Amanda L. Breeden, [Amanda.L.Breeden@uscg.mil](mailto:Amanda.L.Breeden@uscg.mil), 757- 366-6581.
6. Internet release is authorized.

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## Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Allotments

Although Direct Access has a voluntary deduction type for CFC contributions, Coast Guard Servicing Personnel Offices (SPOs) must not enter these types of deductions. CFC contributions are non handled via the Online Pledge System (<https://cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome>). Refer to [ALCOAST message 340/17](#) for more information.

## PCS Orders - Depart/Report Same Date

When processing PCS orders, *for Active Duty members*, in DA, do not depart and report a member on the same date (Seq Nbr 1 and Seq Nbr 99 must be different dates). Doing so causes pay issues in DA, two of the more common errors being Career Sea Pay and CG SMR. If an active duty member is transferring to a co-located unit, depart member on one date, and report member in the following day. Departure date must be last day of duty at PDS. The "Delay in Route" needs to be "Actual Day of Report".

If an active duty member receive orders to "Proceed Immediately", depart the member on date member received orders and report them in the following date. CG-1331 will update COMDTINST M1000.8 in a future update.

This does NOT apply to Reserve PCS, Extension and Fleet-Up orders.

## Resources to Help You Understand Your TRICARE Benefit

Do you have questions about your TRICARE medical and dental benefit? The [TRICARE publications webpage](#) can help you find the answers.

You can view, print or download TRICARE handbooks, newsletters and other educational materials. Select categories from the sub-headings or use the search field to search all publications. You'll find products ranging from broad topics like the TRICARE Plans Overview to detailed topics like the Maternity Care Brochure. Products are continuously updated and added. If you have suggestions for new products or feedback on existing products, we would love to hear from you. Fill out the [publications survey](#) so we can better serve you!

**This is your benefit.** Learn more about [the 2018 changes](#), visit the [publications page](#) at [www.tricare.mil/publications](http://www.tricare.mil/publications) and take command of your health!

## 2018 Tax Filing Season Begins Jan. 29, Tax Returns Due April 17

The Internal Revenue Service announced today that the nation's tax season will begin Monday, Jan. 29, 2018 and reminded taxpayers claiming certain tax credits that refunds won't be available before late February.

The IRS will begin accepting tax returns on Jan. 29, with nearly 155 million individual tax returns expected to be filed in 2018. The nation's tax deadline will be April 17 this year – so taxpayers will have two additional days to file beyond April 15.

Many software companies and tax professionals will be accepting tax returns before Jan. 29 and

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then will submit the returns when IRS systems open. Although the IRS will begin accepting both electronic and paper tax returns Jan. 29, paper returns will begin processing later in mid-February as system updates continue. The IRS strongly encourages people to file their tax returns electronically for faster refunds.

The IRS set the Jan. 29 opening date to ensure the security and readiness of key tax processing systems in advance of the opening and to assess the potential impact of tax legislation on 2017 tax returns.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that, by law, the IRS cannot issue refunds claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) before mid-February. While the IRS will process those returns when received, it cannot issue related refunds before mid-February. The IRS expects the earliest EITC/ACTC related refunds to be available in taxpayer bank accounts or on debit cards starting on Feb. 27, 2018, if they chose direct deposit and there are no other issues with the tax return.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that they should keep copies of their prior-year tax returns for at least three years. Taxpayers who are using a tax software product for the first time will need their adjusted gross income from their 2016 tax return to file electronically. Taxpayers who are using the same tax software they used last year will not need to enter prior-year information to electronically sign their 2017 tax return. Using an electronic filing PIN is no longer an option. Taxpayers can visit [IRS.gov/GetReady](https://www.irs.gov/GetReady) for more tips on preparing to file their 2017 tax return.

### April 17 Filing Deadline

The filing deadline to submit 2017 tax returns is Tuesday, April 17, 2018, rather than the traditional April 15 date. In 2018, April 15 falls on a Sunday, and this would usually move the

filing deadline to the following Monday – April 16. However, Emancipation Day – a legal holiday in the District of Columbia – will be observed on that Monday, which pushes the nation’s filing deadline to Tuesday, April 17, 2018. Under the tax law, legal holidays in the District of Columbia affect the filing deadline across the nation.

The IRS also has been working with the tax industry and state revenue departments as part of the [Security Summit](#) initiative to continue strengthening processing systems to protect taxpayers from identity theft and refund fraud. The IRS and Summit partners continued to improve these safeguards to further protect taxpayers filing in 2018.

### Refunds in 2018

Choosing e-file and direct deposit for refunds remains the fastest and safest way to file an accurate income tax return and receive a refund. The IRS expects more than four out of five tax returns will be prepared electronically using tax software.

The IRS still anticipates issuing more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days, but there are some important factors to keep in mind for taxpayers.

By law, the IRS cannot issue refunds on tax returns claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit before mid-February. This applies to the entire refund — even the portion not associated with the EITC and ACTC.

IRS expects the earliest EITC/ACTC related refunds to be available in taxpayer bank accounts or on debit cards starting on Feb. 27, 2018, if those taxpayers chose direct deposit and there are no other issues with the tax return. This additional period is due to several



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factors, including banking and financial systems needing time to process deposits.

After refunds leave the IRS, it takes additional time for them to be processed and for financial institutions to accept and deposit the refunds to bank accounts and products. The IRS reminds taxpayers many financial institutions do not process payments on weekends or holidays, which can affect when refunds reach taxpayers. For EITC and ACTC filers, the three-day holiday weekend involving Presidents' Day may affect their refund timing.

The [Where's My Refund?](#) tool on IRS.gov and the [IRS2Go](#) phone app will be updated with projected deposit dates for early EITC and ACTC refund filers in late February, so those filers will not see a refund date on Where's My Refund? or through their software packages until then. The IRS, tax preparers and tax software will not have additional information on refund dates, so Where's My Refund? remains the best way to check the status of a refund.

### IRS Offers Help for Taxpayers

The IRS reminds taxpayers they have a variety of options to get help filing and preparing their tax return on IRS.gov, the official IRS website. Taxpayers can find answers to their tax questions and resolve tax issues online. The [Let Us Help You](#) page helps answer most tax questions, and the [IRS Services Guide](#) links to these and other IRS services.

Taxpayers can go to [IRS.gov/account](#) to securely access information about their federal tax account. They can view the amount they owe, pay online or set up an online payment agreement; access their tax records online; review the past 18 months of payment history; and view key tax return information for the current year as filed. Visit [IRS.gov/secureaccess](#) to review the required identity authentication process.

In addition, 70 percent of the nation's taxpayers are eligible for IRS Free File. Commercial partners of the IRS offer free brand-name software to about 100 million individuals and families with incomes of \$66,000 or less.

The online fillable forms provide electronic versions of IRS paper forms to all taxpayers regardless of income that can be prepared and filed by people comfortable with completing their own returns.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) offer free tax help to people who qualify. Go to IRS.gov and enter "free tax prep" in the search box to learn more and find a nearby VITA or TCE site, or download the IRS2Go smartphone app to find a free tax prep provider. If eligible, taxpayers can also locate help from a community volunteer. Go to IRS.gov and click on the Filing tab for more information.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that a trusted tax professional can provide helpful information and advice. [Tips for choosing a return preparer](#) and details about [national tax professional groups](#) are available on IRS.gov.

### Coast Guard Support Offers Online Tax Filing & Consultation

CG SUPRT offers free online tax filing through H&R Block online. You must go through the CG SUPRT website in order for your online tax filing to be free.

#### Taxes may be filed for free through H&R Block by clicking here.

- **CG SUPRT** also provides free, confidential professional consultations for taxes and other financial matters, as well as personal money coaching to help you reach your financial goals.

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To access these services, call toll free 855-CG SUPRT (248-8778), or go to Request Services from the CG SUPRT website.

### Reminders

- Access the H&R Block online tax filing through the link provided on the CG SUPRT website.
- Wait until you receive all of your W-2s and other tax documents before you file your return. Otherwise, you may have to amend your tax returns.
- If you used the tax services last year, have your Adjusted Gross Income and Electronic Filing Pin from your 2016 tax return before you start your return. You can reset your pin [here](#).
- The tax service is free when accessing the H&R Block online from the CG SUPRT website. If you are prompted for payment by H&R Block, please call CG SUPRT for assistance (toll-free 855-247-8778).
- Each user can submit 1 federal and up to 3 state tax returns on the CG SUPRT/H&R Block free e-file system.
- Read Frequently Asked Questions [Here](#)

### Eligibility

Eligible members include Coast Guard active duty members, civilian employees, members of the selected reserve, and their dependent family members.

### Questions?

If you have questions about this tax service or about your own tax returns, please call toll free 1-855-CG SUPRT (247-8778). If you are experiencing financial difficulty or need other advice on money matters, please contact CG SUPRT to work with a Personal Money Coach. CG SUPRT services are free and confidential, within the limits of the law.

## Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rates

Effective 1 January 2018, the MALT (monetary allowance in lieu of transportation) rate per authorized POC (privately owned conveyance) is \$0.18 (eighteen cents) per mile. This rate is effective for all PCS travel that commences on or after 1 January 2018 (i.e., the initial travel is started).

TDY mileage rates changed on 01 January 2018. The new TDY rates are:

POC:		
\$0.545	-	Automobile (if no GOV is available)
\$0.18	-	POC use instead of a government furnished vehicle (if a GOV is available) when use of a government furnished vehicle is to the government's advantage.
\$0.515	-	Motorcycle
\$1.21	-	Airplane

Current and previous PCS & TDY mileage rates are posted at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/other ratesMile.cfm>.