USNA INSTRUCTION 1730.3B

From: Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY WEDDINGS

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1730.7E
(b) OPNAVINST 1730.1F
(c) COCINST 5351.1
(d) USNAINST 11100.7B CH-1
(e) 10 U.S.C.
(f) USNAINST 5141.1A

1. Purpose. To update the overarching policy for conducting weddings in the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) Chapels. This instruction is a major revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. USNAINST 1730.3A.

3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to USNA Chapel authorized users and those engaged in conducting weddings on USNA property or within the USNA Chapels.

4. Policy

a. USNA chapels are historically and aesthetically unique sacred spaces within the Department of the Navy and support the free exercise of religion (references (a), (b), and (c)). Sacred spaces are further defined in reference (c).

b. USNA chapels enable the USNA Command Religious Program to meet religious requirements of the Brigade of Midshipmen, active duty Service Members, civilian staff assigned to USNA, and other authorized users in accordance with references (a), (b), and (d).

c. Pursuant to reference (a), chaplains and religious program specialists will prioritize the delivery of religious ministry to midshipmen above all other duties.

d. The availability of USNA chapel spaces for all activities and ceremonies is determined by the USNA Master Training Schedule. The USNA Master Training Schedule prioritizes faith group-specific ministry for midshipmen over all other USNA Chapel scheduling.
e. Wedding ceremonies held within the USNA chapels must be approved and scheduled in advance. Additionally, all weddings at USNA must be coordinated by the Naval Academy Business Services Division (NABSD) Wedding Coordinator.

f. All wedding ceremonies are normally limited to 60 minutes in length. The 60-minute time window also includes wedding party recessional, exiting of all guests from the chapel, the removal of personal items, and any other activities held on USNA chapel premises. Alterations or modifications to USNA Chapels are not authorized. Weddings held in Miller Chapel may exceed the 60-minute time window with authorization from the Jewish chaplain.

g. The USNA Wedding Coordinator is the only entity authorized to coordinate weddings on the premises of USNA and is authorized to charge a fee for their services. NABSD is a nonappropriated fund instrumentality that provides a myriad of products and services that are essential to USNA life.

h. Since the State of Maryland only authorizes civil marriage ceremonies in Circuit Court Chapels, all wedding ceremonies at USNA chapels are considered religious ceremonies and will only be officiated by approved wedding officiants, hereafter referred to as officiants. All officiants must meet the eligibility requirements as established by the Department of Defense Armed Forces Chaplains Board prior to officiating a wedding within a USNA chapel.

i. All officiants must abide by all USNA instructions and requirements regarding, but not limited to: appropriate music, the 60-minute wedding window, and appropriate ceremonial conduct. All military chaplains must also follow all departmental and service policies and regulations. Per paragraph 4.f, timing of Jewish weddings in Miller Chapel is established by the Jewish chaplain.

j. Eligibility for use of a USNA Chapel does not obligate a USNA chaplain to preside over the wedding. Pursuant to Chapter 53 of reference (e), military chaplains may not be required to perform any rite, ritual, or ceremony that is contrary to the conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs of said chaplain.

k. Applicants are responsible for arranging their own officiant in all instances if a USNA chaplain is unavailable.

l. Eligibility Criteria. The following authorized users, hereafter referred to as applicants, are eligible to use USNA chapels for weddings, in order of precedence:

(1) Naval Academy alumni requesting a wedding ceremony.

(2) Naval Academy alumni requesting a renewal of vows ceremony or a Catholic marriage blessing for wedding anniversaries.

(3) All active duty Service Members currently assigned to the USNA; Naval Support Activity, Annapolis; and Naval Medical Clinic, Annapolis; and their eligible dependents.
(4) All active duty Service Members assigned to units not listed in subparagraph 4.1(3), all active Reserve Service Members, and their eligible dependents.

(5) All faculty and staff currently assigned to USNA; Naval Support Activity, Annapolis; and Naval Medical Clinic, Annapolis; and their eligible dependents.

(6) Other authorized users as determined by the USNA Superintendent.

(7) Applicants from subparagraph 4.1(1) and 4.1(3) through 4.1(6) who are already married. Based on the religious organization's tenets, Roman Catholic applicants from this subparagraph are ineligible.

(8) The NABSD Wedding Coordinator will determine if an alternative venue is available to support those applicants not able to conduct their ceremony in a Naval Academy chapel.

m. All applicants seeking marriage in the state of Maryland must possess a valid Anne Arundel County marriage license prior to the commencement of their wedding ceremony. Additional information for obtaining an Anne Arundel Country marriage license may be obtained at https://www.circuitcourt.org/clerk-circuit-court/marriage-licenses.

n. Applicants requesting a wedding ceremony within a USNA chapel that are already married outside of the State of Maryland must possess a marriage license, certificate or other credentials recognized by the U.S. government. Marriage credentials from foreign countries must be translated into English.

o. All costs associated with wedding ceremonies including NABSD fees, remuneration for civilian religious wedding officiants, musicians, music, and other approved vendors are the responsibility of the applicant.

p. USNA will not be responsible for preparing, ordering, or printing programs or bulletins for wedding ceremonies or any other associated activities.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a. USNA Command Chaplain will:

(1) Pursuant to reference (a), manage all Religious Ministry onboard USNA.

(2) Verify the professional qualification for all visiting wedding officiants prior to authorizing them to conduct weddings within the USNA chapels.

(3) Coordinate other required wedding related service support with NABSD.

b. NABSD will:

(1) Provide scheduling, rehearsal, vehicle access guidelines, and other wedding related service support, as coordinated with USNA Command Chaplain.
(2) Inform applicants of the NABSD coordination fee and ensure those funds are remitted to NABSD Accounting prior to the scheduling of a wedding.

c. All applicants must:

(1) Submit USNA 1730/8 USNA Wedding Application, no later than 12 months prior to the desired ceremony date for ceremonies in the Brigade of Midshipmen and St. Andrew’s Chapel and 6 months prior desired date for Miller Chapel. Reservations are only considered firm once the USNA Wedding Coordinator has officially confirmed the exact date and time to the applicant via email.

(2) Pay NABSD the wedding coordination fee within two weeks of the initial request for payment. Failure to pay the coordination fee on time may result in the loss of the wedding date tentatively scheduled.

(3) Provide the officiant’s contact information to the USNA Wedding Coordinator no later than four months prior to requested ceremony date for chapel weddings being officiated by non-USNA chaplains.

(4) Present the NABSD Wedding Coordinator a valid wedding license or marriage certificate no later than the wedding rehearsal.

(5) Use only vendors currently under contract with NABSD to support wedding ceremonies at USNA.

(6) Notify the USNA Wedding Coordinator in writing if the wedding or application needs to be canceled or rescheduled. Refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

d. The USNA Wedding Coordinator will:

(1) Perform all administrative functions pertaining to wedding ceremonies to include, but not limited to: scheduling, liaison with approved vendors, and administrative processing of installation access for wedding guests.

(2) Schedule all weddings for Christian applicants or Christian officiants in the Brigade of Midshipmen Chapel unless authorized elsewhere.

(3) Schedule all weddings with Jewish applicants or Jewish officiants in Miller Chapel unless authorized elsewhere.

(4) Provide applicants confirmation of application status throughout the application and approval process.

(5) Provide a confirmation email to applicants confirming date and time of their weddings.

(6) Provide the USNA Command Chaplain visiting officiant’s contact information.
(7) Provide eligible applicants a list of approved officiants, musicians, and other approved vendors upon request.

e. The USNA Director of Chapel Music will:

(1) Pursuant to reference (f), verify all music selections as appropriate for sacred ceremonies.

(2) Evaluate special requests for music and/or musicians.

6. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the DON Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at https://portal.seanva.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local records custodian or the USNA Records Manager.

7. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, the USNA Command Chaplain and the Director, NABSD will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of the effective date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction.

8. Forms. USNA 1730/8 USNA Wedding Application can be found at the USNA official forms issuance website at https://www.usna.edu/AdminSupport/FormsProgram/USNAOfficialFormsList.php or obtained from the USNA Wedding Coordinator at weddings@usna.edu. All forms should be submitted to the USNA Wedding Coordinator for processing at weddings@usna.edu.

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Releasability and distribution:
This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via USNA Issuances website, https://www.usna.edu/AdminSupport/Inst/.