

# Local Supplement to the Department of the Navy Correspondence Manual





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY  
121 BLAKE ROAD  
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-1300

USNAINST 5216.1Q  
28/Flag Sec  
22 May 2017

USNA INSTRUCTION 5216.1Q

From: Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: LOCAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

Ref: (a) SECNAV M-5216.5  
(b) OPNAV M-5215.1  
(c) SECNAV M-5210.2  
(d) Writing Style Guide and Preferred Usage for DoD Issuances

1. Purpose. Establish correspondence procedures for the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) in addition to procedures established in references (a) through (d).
2. Cancellation. USNAINST 5216.1P.
3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to all personnel and subordinate unit identification codes that report to the Superintendent.
4. Policy. Personnel preparing correspondence and directives should follow the guidelines contained in references (a) and (b) without exception. This instruction provides details applicable to USNA correspondence and directives.
  - a. Correspondence Manager. The Superintendent's Flag Secretary is designated as both the Correspondence and Directives Manager.
  - b. This instruction is divided into three chapters:
    - (1) Chapter 1: Correspondence Policies
    - (2) Chapter 2: Delegation to Sign "By Direction" and Letterhead
    - (3) Chapter 3: Correspondence Formatting
    - (4) Chapter 4: Standards and Style
5. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media or format, shall be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

6. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, the Flag Secretary will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its effective date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will automatically expire 5 years after the effective date unless reissued or canceled prior to the 5-year anniversary date, or an extension has been granted.

7. Forms. USNA Form 5216/3 Briefing Sheet can be obtained on the USNA website, <http://intranet.usna.edu/AdminSupport/chop-sheets.php>, on the official USNA Forms List at <https://www.usna.edu/AdminSupport/FormsProgram/USNAOfficialFormsList.php>, and on Naval Forms Online.



W. E. CARTER, JR

**Releasability and distribution:**

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via USNA's Intranet Web site, <https://www.usna.edu/AdminSupport/Inst/>.

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CHAPTER 1  
CORRESPONDENCE POLICIES

1. Guidelines for Superintendent's Signature. Unless specifically delegated, the Superintendent will sign all Congressional responses and any correspondence or directive that determines broad policy or is required by law or regulation.
2. Reply Promptly
  - a. Routine correspondence will be completed within 10 working days.
  - b. Congressional replies, unless otherwise specified, should be answered within 5 working days. If a reply cannot be prepared in 5 working days, USNA will send an interim reply.
3. Briefing Sheet. Every folder delivered to Larson Hall for the Superintendent or Chief of Staff will include USNA 5216/3 Briefing Sheet printed on blue paper.
  - a. USNA 5216/3, or "Blue Blazer," provides an executive summary and confirms that the appropriate chains of command and cost center heads have reviewed and edited the correspondence or directive.
  - b. Complete all required sections of USNA 5216/3. The name and phone number of the person drafting the document, not the name of the office, is required. If the correspondence is self-explanatory, type "Recommend signature" in the briefing portion. The sheet must contain the initials of reviewers through the chain(s) of command and applicable cost center head(s).
  - c. Indicate the numerical chop order on the "Routing Order" section. Individuals chopping shall include the date initialed in the date column.
  - d. Complete the "Originating Office" and "Date" portion in the lower left-hand corner.
4. Folder Assembly. Folders delivered to Larson Hall for the Superintendent or Chief of Staff will be 9"x12" pocket folders with the USNA crest centered on the front of the folder.
  - a. Do not include intra cost center routing sheets. Folders are color coded as follows:
    - (1) Blue: General correspondence
    - (2) Red: Personnel matters
    - (3) Green: Supply and financial
  - b. Assemble the folders as follows:

(1) On the outside, upper right hand corner of each folder, attach an Avery 5160 label and write or type the subject and originating office.

(2) Left side: Place USNA 5216/3 on top of any tabbed reference material and, if necessary, completed envelopes.

(3) Right side: Place drafted documents requiring review and signature.

c. Privacy. If the folder contains personal identifiable information, add an additional label directly below the subject label on the front of the folder, on which is stamped or typed in red "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY - PRIVACY SENSITIVE." Any misuse or unauthorized disclosure may result in both civil and criminal penalties."

5. Delivery. For all documents delivered to Larson Hall for the Superintendent or Chief of Staff, provide a hard copy to the administrative assistant on the second deck of Larson Hall and e-mail an electronic copy to admin-routing@lists.usna.edu.

6. Subordinate Review Guidelines

a. Before documents are forwarded to Larson Hall for the Superintendent's signature, one or more members of the Senior Leadership Team will review and indicate approval by initialing the Briefing Sheet.

b. For correspondence within their areas of responsibility, the following will also review correspondence and indicate approval by initialing the Briefing Sheet.

(1) Comptroller. All documents governing:

(a) The financial management of USNA funds for Operations and Maintenance, Navy; Other Procurement, Navy; gifts to USNA and the Museum; Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation; and reimbursable money from outside sources.

(b) Financial programming, budgeting, accounting, or allocation.

(c) Commercial activities studies.

(d) USNA manning requirements.

(e) Inter-service support agreements and memos of understanding and agreement.

(f) The travel program including the Government Travel Charge Card, Unit Travel Card, and Centrally Billed Accounts.

(g) The Government Commercial Purchase Card.

(h) USNA cost reports including Cost Per Graduate, Cost of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, and Annual Institutional Profile.

(i) Minor and Plant Property management.

(j) Payroll, time, and attendance.

(2) Staff Judge Advocate (SJA). As the Superintendent's principal uniformed legal advisor, the SJA will review all legal documents related to military personnel including administrative and disciplinary actions and interpreting laws and regulation. As the Command Ethics Advisor, the SJA will review all documents relating to ethics and standards of conduct. The SJA and Command Counsel coordinate legal issues internally as appropriate.

(3) Command Counsel. As the Superintendent's principal civilian legal advisor, the incumbent will review all legal documents related to or impacting USNA's civilian workforce or business activities (contracts, fiscal law, etc.). The Command Counsel and SJA coordinate legal issues internally as appropriate.

(4) Personnel Officer. All documents concerning officer and enlisted personnel matters including awards, fitness reports and evaluations, endorsements, all requests for specific Navy or Marine Corps programs, retirement, resignation, augmentation, and change of designator.

(5) Public Affairs Officer. All documents involving the media or USNA personnel likely to cause public interest.

(6) Security Manager. All documents containing or pertaining to classified information.

(7) Senior Marine Corps Representative. All documents regarding Marine Corps matters.

7. Documents for Higher Headquarters. Documents for signature or review of any higher headquarters will be prepared per reference (a).

a. The originator will include draft copies of all required documents when routing to Larson Hall.

b. The complete package will be entered into the appropriate tasking system by the Superintendent's administrative office.

c. Once documents have been signed by the Superintendent, the Administrative Office will e-mail a scanned copy to the originator.

CHAPTER 2  
DELEGATION TO SIGN “BY DIRECTION” AND LETTERHEAD

1. By Direction. Certain billets are authorized to sign “By direction” for routine official naval correspondence and directives addressed “From: Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy”, utilizing the “United States Naval Academy” letterhead. Personnel designated to sign “By direction” are given this authority due to the position they occupy and only for correspondence germane to their position. Individuals other than those specified herein must be appointed, in writing, by the Superintendent. Personnel authorized to sign by direction are:
  - a. Academic Dean and Provost (signs as Academic Dean and Provost)
  - b. Administrative Officer for Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act matters (signs as Privacy Act or Freedom of Information Act Officer)
  - c. Chief Diversity Officer
  - d. Chief of Staff (signs as Chief of Staff on all documents unless applicable regulations prohibit delegation of signatory authority. Major policy changes and strategic institutional documents should still be prepared for signature by the Superintendent).
  - e. Command Chaplain
  - f. Command Climate Specialist
  - g. Command Counsel
  - h. Command Evaluation Officer
  - i. Commandant of Midshipmen (signs as Commandant of Midshipmen)
  - j. Deputy Commandant of Midshipmen (signs in absence of Commandant of Midshipmen)
  - k. Deputy Commandant for Leadership and Character Development
  - l. Deputy Commandant for Professional Development
  - m. Comptroller
  - n. Dean of Admissions (signs as Dean of Admissions)
  - o. Deputy for Finance and Chief Financial Officer (signs as Deputy for Finance or Chief Financial Officer)

- p. Deputy for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
- q. \*Director of Athletics
- r. Director, Government Affairs
- s. Director, Human Resources
- t. Director, Naval Academy Business Services Division
- u. Director, Research and Scholarship
- v. Director, U.S. Naval Academy Band
- w. Director, Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership
- x. Enlisted Personnel Officer (signs in absence of Personnel Officer for enlisted personnel matters only)
- y. Executive Director for Strategy
- z. Personnel Officer
- aa. Public Affairs Officer
- ab. Registrar
- ac. Security Manager
- ad. Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Manager
- ae. Staff Judge Advocate

\*All USNA policy and directives pertaining to faculty, staff, or midshipmen shall be cosigned by the Military Deputy Director of Athletics.

2. Signing on Letterhead. Except for the Academic Dean and Provost, Administrative Officer, Chief of Staff, Commandant of Midshipmen, Deputy for Finance, and Dean of Admissions, individuals authorized to sign “By direction” will not address or sign standard letters on USNA letterhead to activities or offices outside USNA using their billet title.

3. Letterhead Stationery

- a. “United States Naval Academy” letterhead is only used for standard letters, memos, and

other official business coming from the Superintendent. Only the Superintendent and those delegated to sign “By direction” of the Superintendent, listed above, can sign on this letterhead.

b. “USNA Office of the Superintendent” letterhead is only for business letters, letters of a personal nature, and letter to members of Congress. Only the Superintendent signs on this letterhead.

c. Other authorized USNA Letterhead Stationery. Below are the only other authorized USNA letterhead stationery:

Office of the Commandant of Midshipmen  
Office of the Academic Dean and Provost  
Director of Athletics  
Office of the Dean of Admissions  
Deputy for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer  
Deputy for Finance/Chief Financial Officer  
Naval Academy Business Services Division  
Nimitz Library  
Museum  
Office of the Command Chaplain  
Senior Marine Corps Representative  
Chief Diversity Officer

(3) Only the heads of the departments listed above are authorized to sign on their respective letterhead.

(4) The head of the department may designate personnel to sign “By direction” on their respective letterhead by memo or designation letter.

(5) If you are not a head of one of the above departments or have designated “By direction” authority, you are not authorized to sign on any version of USNA letterhead.

d. Letterhead Procurement. Offices are not permitted to electronically generate their own letterhead. All approved letterhead stationery shall be purchased through the Defense Automated Printing Service, Annapolis.

e. Routing Letterhead for Superintendent’s Signature. Route all correspondence needing the Superintendent’s signature on plain white bond paper to Larson Hall and send an electronic copy to [admin-routing@lists.usna.edu](mailto:admin-routing@lists.usna.edu). After the correspondence is checked for accuracy, the Superintendent’s administrative office will print it on the correct letterhead for signature.

CHAPTER 3  
FORMATTING

1. General

a. Use Times New Roman font, pitch 12 (pitch 13 for action and info memos) for all correspondence and directives.

b. Margins will be 1 inch for top, bottom, left, and right on each page.

c. Left justify text.

2. Sender's Symbols. Sender's symbols have three parts and will be included on all standard naval letters, business letters, endorsements, memos, and directives signed by the Superintendent or Chief of Staff. Note, some of the Superintendent's executive correspondence will only include the date in civilian format.

a. Standard Subject Identification Code (SSIC). An SSIC is a four- or five-digit number categorizing a document's subject and is required on most USNA correspondence, directives, forms, and reports. Refer to reference (c) for the appropriate SSIC.

b. Originator Code. Correspondence will include an originator code preceded by "Ser" and followed by a slash and the three-digit serial number. For example, "Ser 4/010". See paragraph five for a list of USNA originator codes.

c. Date. Date a letter for the day it will be signed; if unknown, leave the date blank.

(1) Use the abbreviated date format (DD Mos YY) when corresponding with other military organizations and the civilian format (Month DD, YYYY) when corresponding with Congress, civilian agencies and businesses, and individuals.

(2) Do not use a zero preceding the numerals 1 through 9 when the day is a single digit.

d. The longest line of the sender's symbols is right justified and the other two lines are aligned to the left edge of the longest line. The sender's symbols should reflect the following.

1531  
Ser 28/001  
4 Feb 17

3. "From" Line. For standard letters, the "from" line should read as:

From: Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy

4. Signature Block. Start all lines of the signature block at the center of the page—not centered on the page—beginning on the fourth line below the text. Note that the period is omitted after “Jr” in the Superintendent’s signature.

a. For standard letters, memos, and endorsements:

W. E. CARTER, JR

G. E. LANG, JR.  
Chief of Staff

b. For business letters:

W. E. CARTER, JR  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Superintendent

G. E. LANG, JR.  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Chief of Staff

c. The signature block for individuals authorized to sign “By direction” of the Superintendent is:

F. M. LAST  
By direction

5. Originator Codes. The following identify the office preparing the correspondence:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Division or Department</u>
1	Commandant of Midshipmen
2	Academic Dean and Provost
3	Dean of Admissions
4	Deputy for Finance and Chief Financial Officer
5	Institutional Research
6	Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
7	Division of Professional Development
8	Division of Mathematics and Science
9	Division of Engineering and Weapons
10	Division of Humanities and Social Sciences
11	Unassigned
12	Candidate Guidance
13	Physical Education Department
14	International Programs Office
15	Diversity Office
16	Division of Leadership Education and Development
17	Command Chaplain
18	Naval Academy Museum
19	Library

- 20 Director of Athletics
- 21 Midshipman Supply Department
- 22 Safety Officer
- 23 Archives
- 24 Human Resources
- 25 Naval Health Clinic, Annapolis
- 26 Command Climate Specialist
- 27 Director, Naval Academy Sailing
- 28 Superintendent's Office (Administrative Officer, Personnel, Staff Judge Advocate,  
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and Command Master Chief)
- 29 Character Development and Training
- 30 Public Affairs Office
- 31 Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership

CHAPTER 4  
STANDARDS AND STYLE

1. Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity

a. The strongest letter highlights the main point in one sentence at the beginning. Put requests before justifications; answers before explanations; conclusions before discussions; and summaries before details.

b. Use short paragraphs, roughly four or five sentences; long paragraphs swamp ideas. Cover one topic completely before starting another and let a topic take several paragraphs if necessary.

c. Generally, use the active voice whenever possible. Passive voice sentences often use more words, can be vague, and can lead to a tangle of prepositional phrases. In an active voice sentence, the subject performs the action; in a passive voice sentence, the subject receives the action.

(1) A verb in the passive voice uses any form of “to be” plus the past participle of a main verb: am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been. Common solutions:

(a) Put a doer before the verb:

1. Passive: The class was taught by Professor Jones.

2. Active: Professor Jones taught the class.

(b) Change the verb:

1. Passive: Letter formats are shown in the Correspondence Manual.

2. Active: Letter formats appear in the Correspondence Manual.

d. Avoid “It is” and “There is.” These words stretch sentences, delay meaning, hide responsibility, and encourage passive verbs.

e. Avoid “the –ion of” and “the –ment of.” Most words ending in “ion” and “ment” are verbs turned into nouns. Whenever the context permits, change these words to verb forms:

Instead of

For the assumption of  
For the development of  
For the preparation of

Use

To assume or assuming  
To develop or for developing  
To prepare or for preparing

For your consideration of	Consider or considering
Make a determination	Determine
Responsible for the management of	To manage
The administration of	To administer or administering
The operation of	To operate or operating
Through the implementation of	By implementing

f. Do not use the following long-winded phrases:

<u>Instead of</u>	<u>Use</u>
As a basis for	For
As a means of	To
As a result of	Because
At the present time	Presently, now
Due to the fact that	Due to, since, because
For a period of	For
For the purpose of	For, to
Going into detail about	Detailing
In accordance with	Per, by, following, or under
In order to	To
In the amount of	For
In the event of	If
In the performance of	Performed or performing
Make provisions for	Provide
No later than	By
The use of	Use or using
Until such time as	Until

2. Capitalization

a. Unless referring to an individual, “midshipman” will be lower cased. For example, Midshipman Calvin is a first class midshipman.

b. Titles, to include military titles, and positions are not capitalized unless preceded or followed by a name. The terms such as “commanding officer,” “officer in charge,” “command master chief,” will be lower-cased unless used with an official title or name (e.g., Commanding Officer, Naval Station, Annapolis). The only exceptions are titles that indicate preeminence, such as Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chief of Naval Operations, or Superintendent.

c. Ranks and rates, e.g., “captain,” “commander,” “chief petty officer,” will be lower-cased unless being used with an official title or name. “Chief Petty Officer Murphy” is capitalized, however the term “chief petty officer” used alone is not.

- d. “Sailor,” “Marine,” and the “S” in “Service member” are capitalized.
- e. Do not capitalize “naval” unless part of a proper noun, such as “Naval Air Systems Command.” When referring to the U.S. Navy, “Navy” used alone is capitalized.
- f. When referring to the Federal Government, capitalize both “Federal” and “Government.” However, “U.S. Government” is preferred when referring to the Federal Government of the United States.
- g. When using “Service” to refer to the Military Services, the “S” in “Service” is capitalized.

### 3. Acronyms and Abbreviations

- a. Avoid excessive abbreviating. If an abbreviation appears infrequently, spell out the term every time. Do not use an acronym if it is not cited more than three times throughout the document.
- b. Unless used as a noun, “United States” is abbreviated as “U.S.” when used as an adjective. For example, the U.S. Navy is essential for defending the coasts of the United States. Note that there is no space between the letters.
- c. Note the difference in the abbreviations for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of the Navy (DON).
- d. Abbreviate midshipman as “MIDN.”

### 4. Punctuation

- a. Two spaces always follows periods (“.”) and colons (“:”), and one space follows semicolons (“;”) commas (“,”), and right, end parentheses (“)”).
- b. Serial or Oxford comma. Although media and public affairs guidance differ, DON documents will use a comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series of three or more. For example, USNA’s mission is “to develop midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty in order to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government.”

5. Numbers

- a. Eliminate the “.00” when writing money amounts with no cents. For example, use “\$175” instead of “\$175.00.”
  - b. Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) for numbers greater than nine.
  - c. Measurements, time, and money are not spelled out—use figures even if less than 10 (e.g., 2 feet by 1 foot 8 inches, 3 days, 5 years). However, do not begin sentences with a numeric number. In this instance, the figure must be spelled out (e.g., instead of “4 years ago, the...”, the sentence must start as “Four years ago, the...”).
  - d. For phone numbers, use the format (xxx) xxx-xxxx (e.g., “(123) 456-7890”).
6. Virgules (Slashes) and “and/or”. Per reference (d) and the Federal Plain Language Guidelines, do not use virgules (“/”) when they can be replaced with “and” or “or.” Further, using “and/or” is ambiguous in documents, therefore, to avoid confusion, do not use it. In the few instances where it can be truly used, write out “either A, or B, or both.”
7. Echelon. The term “echelon” for Navy echelons is not capitalized, unless at the beginning of a sentence, and echelon levels are identified with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3), not Roman numerals (I, II, III) (e.g., “echelon 4,” not “Echelon IV”).
8. Open all letters of reply with: "Thank you for your letter of (month day, year) concerning..." Limit replies to one page if possible.