



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

5/10/19

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

SUBJECT: 2019 Department of Defense Order of Precedence

This memorandum updates and reissues the Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence (attached). The DoD Order of Precedence is based upon the U.S. Order of Precedence, the only official Order of Precedence for the United States, and requirements in the United States Code. It provides a framework to understand the relative status and stature of the senior most officials of the Department at the Presidentially Appointed, Senate-confirmed; General and Flag Officer; and Civilian Senior Executive levels. The DoD Order of Precedence should not be confused with, or substituted for, the DoD Order of Succession to the Secretary of Defense, which is prescribed by Presidential Executive Order, or military rank.

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, both inside and outside the Department. Simply put, how DoD guests are treated will be directly reflected in how our representatives will be treated externally and abroad.



OSD004597-19/CMD005625-19

The DoD Order of Precedence will be updated periodically to reflect changes to the U.S. Order of Precedence or in law. The point of contact for this memorandum is Mr. Jeffrey Eanes, at jeffrey.w.eanes.civ@mail.mil, (703) 692-3298.



Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting

Attachment:
As stated

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

CODE 2

Secretary of Defense
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense
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 Defense for Research and Engineering (see note 2)
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (see note 3)
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Defense
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
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 the National Guard Bureau (see notes 1 and 4)
Commandant of the Coast Guard (see note 1)
Combatant Commanders (see note 5)
General Counsel of the Department of Defense
Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation
Inspector General of the Department of Defense
Director of Operational Test and Evaluation
Chief Information Officer of the Department of Defense

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 Defense (see notes 4 and 6)
Assistant Secretaries of Defense (see notes 4 and 7)
Chief of Staff to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense
Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force (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 and 4)
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
Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense
Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of Defense
Special Assistants to the Secretary of Defense (see note 4 and 8)
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

CODE 3 (Continued)

Director of Net Assessment

Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense

Directors of Defense Research and Engineering in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (see note 4 and 9)

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

CODE 4

Directors of Defense Agencies (see note 10)

Directors of Department of Defense Field Activities (see note 11)

Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Senior Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense, Principal Deputy Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Principal Deputy Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Principal Deputy Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, and Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer of the Department of Defense (see note 4)

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

Principal Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

Directors of the Office of the Chief Management Officer Directorates, Deputy Chief Financial Officers, Deputy Comptrollers, Directors of Defense Intelligence within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, and Managing Director of the Defense Innovation Unit (see note 4)

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

Deputy General Counsels of the Department of Defense, Deputy Director for Cost Assessment, Deputy Director for Program Evaluation, Deputy Inspectors General of the Department of Defense, Deputy Directors of Operational Test and Evaluation, and Deputy Chief Information Officers of the Department of Defense (see note 4)

Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense and Deputy Assistants to the Secretary of Defense (see note 4)

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

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 12)

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 12)

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 12)

Personnel in Senior Executive Service-equivalent positions (see notes 4 and 13)

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)

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. 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 Defense (DoD), changes address emerging statutory and policy considerations. Despite established lists, there are many situations which can alter the order of precedence 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/governorviriniagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/VA-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 order of precedence for the United States (Office of the Chief of Protocol, <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/>).

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 order of precedence 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 to which appointment is required to be made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate (PAS), 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 are 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 DoD is based upon law and the U.S. Order of Precedence. Specific precedence for certain officials is only ascribed to those officials that are PAS or Principal Staff Assistants (i.e., those who report directly to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense), the Principal Deputies/First Assistants to these officials, and the “first tier” of officials below these officials. All others are afforded precedence by military rank or Senior Executive Service (SES) tier only.

Except as noted herein, the provisions of this memorandum are not applicable to former civilian officials of the Department as they do not retain the precedence associated with their position upon departure from that position. In recognition of their past service in the Department, courtesies and recognition may be extended to them as appropriate. Precedence is retained, however, by former Secretaries of Defense due to their status as Presidential cabinet members, and by retired members of the military since they retain the grade in which they were retired. 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). When participating in some National-level events and ceremonies, the Senior Enlisted Advisors (SEAs) to the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commandant of the Coast Guard may be afforded the precedence of their Principal, if the Principal is in attendance. This applies to the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 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 Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. Additionally, for official visit activities, assignment of government quarters, and seating aboard government aircraft, the SEAs, when not accompanied by their Chiefs, may be afforded precedence immediately after Lieutenant Generals and Vice Admirals.

2. The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering takes precedence after the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Chief Management Officer 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 Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment takes precedence after the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chief Management Officer, and the Under Secretary of Defense 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. The Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense takes precedence before the Senior Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense, regardless of their respective dates of appointment.
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, 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. The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (DUSD) title replaced the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (PDUSD) title. Only individuals appointed pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 137a (i.e., the “First Assistant” to an Under Secretary of Defense) will have the position title of DUSD, and the PDUSD title no longer exists.
7. The current designations of Assistant Secretaries of Defense are (listed alphabetically): Acquisition; Health Affairs; Homeland Defense and Global Security; Indo-Pacific Security Affairs; International Security Affairs; Legislative Affairs; Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs; Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Readiness; Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict; Sustainment; and Strategy, Plans and Capabilities. Only 13 Assistant Secretaries of Defense are authorized pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 138.
8. This category includes the Special Assistants to the Secretary of Defense (SATSD) at the Senior Executive Service (SES) or General Officer/Flag Officer (GOFO) level, regardless of rank or tiering, that report directly to the Secretary of Defense and are designated by the Secretary of Defense explicitly for inclusion in this category.
9. The Directors of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&Es) are those senior most officials within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)). Precedence for other Senior Executive Service (SES) officials in OUSD(R&E) is by SES tiering (shown elsewhere in the order of precedence).
10. The Directors of the Defense Agencies 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 Defense Agencies are listed alphabetically as follows: Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), 1958; Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), 1990; Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), 1965; Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA),

2000; Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), 1990; Defense Health Agency (DHA), 2013; Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), 1960; Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1961; Defense Legal Services Agency (DLSA), 1981; Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), 1961; Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), 2015; Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), 1971; Defense Security Service (DSS), 1972; Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), 1959; Missile Defense Agency (MDA), 1984; National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), 1972; Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA), 2002; Space Development Agency (SDA), 2019.

- 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; DSS, 1972; DLSA, 1981; MDA, 1984; DeCA, 1990; DFAS, 1990; DCMA, 2000; PFPA, 2002; DHA, 2013; DPAA, 2015; SDA, 2019.

11. The Directors and Administrators of the DoD 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 DoD Field Activities are listed alphabetically as follows: Defense Media Activity (DMA), 1977; Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), 2004; Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA), 1985; DoD Education Activity (DoDEA), 1974; DoD Human Resources Activity (DoDHRA), 1993; DoD Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), 2004; Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), 1978; and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), 1977.

- b. The DoD Field Activities, by date of establishment, are as follows: DoDEA, 1974; DMA, 1977; WHS, 1977; OEA, 1978; DTSA, 1985; DoDHRA, 1993; TRMC, 2004; DTIC, 2004.

12. The Department of Defense 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, Senior Executive Service (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 over the subordinate.

13. This category includes Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL), Highly Qualified Experts (HQE), senior executives who occupy Non-appropriated Fund positions, individuals appointed pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 9903 or 10 U.S.C. § 1599h, or equivalent positions under appointment authorities that authorize pay in excess of the General Schedule (GS) 15 level.