



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 5720.2N  
CHINFO  
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 5720.2N

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: EMBARKING CIVILIANS IN UNITED STATES NAVAL VESSELS

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5720.44C  
(b) OPNAVINST 6000.1D  
(c) NAVPERS 15555D  
(d) SECNAVINST 5030.8C  
(e) NETCINST 1560.3  
(f) OPNAVINST 5760.5D  
(g) OPNAVINST 5761.1  
(h) SECNAVINST 5510.30B  
(i) OPNAVINST 5700.7J  
(j) SECNAVINST 5510.36A  
(k) JAGINST 5800.7F  
(l) OPNAVINST 5726.8B

1. Purpose. To delineate coordination procedures and approval authorities to embark civilian workers and guests in United States Naval Vessels including United States Ships (USS), United States Naval Ships (USNS), combatant craft, and support craft, collectively referred to in this instruction as U.S. Naval Vessels, during an underway period. Major changes to this instruction are outlined in subparagraphs 1a through 1d.

- a. realigns the definition of naval vessels to align with reference (d);
- b. removes the definition of U.S. Navy technician and the requirement for civilian contractors to be designated as such prior to embarkation;
- c. aligns with policy contained in Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 5410.19 which does not allow civilian guests to operate any U.S. naval vessel or other items of military equipment;
- d. aligns with reference (c) policy that burials at sea will not be conducted while civilian guests are embarked; this is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 5720.2M.

3. Background. Reference (a) provides policy for embarkation and passage of civilian guests in U.S. Naval Vessels. The occasional embarkation of guests in U.S. Naval Vessels facilitates a greater understanding of the roles and mission of the Navy and contributes to crew morale by allowing crew members to demonstrate first-hand what can only be experienced in an at-sea environment.

4. Policy

a. Routine requests to embark civilians from any source may be recommended by commanding officers and approved by the fleet commanders, the numbered fleet commanders, or type commanders, as set forth in this instruction, so long as such embarked civilians do not interfere with shipboard operations and safety, or require unacceptable adjustments to operating schedules.

b. Civilians will be embarked without regard to gender. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide separate accommodations, limited only by the need to maintain combat readiness, safety, and crew habitability. Consistent with reference (b), female civilians who are pregnant will be considered for embarkation up to the 20th week of pregnancy and, if authorized to embark, must be advised of the hazards to themselves and their unborn child from the shipboard environment.

c. The unified combatant commanders have the authority to embark civilians, other than news media representatives, onboard assigned or attached U.S. Naval Vessels for non-local public affairs purposes. Such requests will be coordinated with the appropriate Navy component commander.

d. Civilian guests, including Federal, state, or local government employees, are prohibited from operating any U.S. Naval Vessel, military aircraft, crew-served weapon system, or other items of military equipment when such operation could cause, or reasonably be perceived as causing, a safety risk.

(a) This policy is in effect regardless of how closely military personnel supervise the civilian guests.

(b) Civilian guests may observe, sit in, ride on, and similarly access military equipment within the bounds of law and applicable regulations.

e. Burials at sea must not be conducted while civilian guests are embarked, per reference (c).

f. Nothing in this instruction limits the authority of the senior officer present or senior officer present afloat, acting pursuant to U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990, to embark civilians in U.S. Naval Vessels when the circumstances so warrant. Likewise, this instruction does not limit

the authority of the commanding officer of a U.S. Naval Vessel under U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990, to approve or deny the embarkation of any civilian, or direct the removal of any civilian so embarked, for mission accomplishment, safety, or other reasons within the sole discretion of the commanding officer.

5. Scope and Applicability

a. For the purpose of this instruction, the term “U.S. Naval Vessels” includes all combatant ships, auxiliary ships, combatant craft, and support craft listed in enclosures (1) through (4) of reference (d).

b. This instruction applies to all civilians who may occasionally embark or take passage in U.S. Naval Vessels, including:

(1) Civilian Workers

(a) U.S. Government civilian employees, including morale welfare and recreation afloat recreation and fitness specialists (fun and fit bosses), and deployed resiliency counselors.

(b) Non-government employees engaged in construction, testing, maintenance or operation of a ship or its embarked aircraft or for scientific research and surveys.

(c) Civilian educational and Navy College Program personnel described in reference (e).

(2) Civilian Guests

(a) State police or highway patrol officers participating in the At-Sea Traffic Safety, At-Sea Crime Awareness and Prevention, or similar programs.

(b) Relatives and civilian guests of naval personnel participating in tiger cruises or other friends and family visits.

(c) Civilian guests participating in Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, Leaders to Sea program, and other community outreach or orientation programs.

(d) News or media representatives covering military operations.

(e) Members of Congress, congressional staff members, and congressional committee staff members who have been invited to embark for the purposes of orientation or to witness certain operations or demonstrations.

c. This instruction does not apply to:

(1) Civilian youth groups described in reference (f), which are authorized to embark under the directives listed in subparagraphs 5c(1)(a) through 5c(1)(d).

(a) Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets on training cruises and visits in support of objectives of the Reserve Officer Training Corps Vitalization Action of 1964, Public Law 99-647 (see reference (g)).

(b) Naval Sea Cadet Corps personnel on training cruises and visits in connection with Naval Sea Cadet Corps activities approved by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) (see reference (f)).

(c) National Scouting Program participants (see reference (f)).

(d) Navy Science Awards Program participants (administered by the Chief of Naval Research).

(2) The embarkation of special agents of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is authorized by standing directives issued by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa; Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command; or Commander, Military Sealift Command (COMMSC).

(3) Foreign nationals, including foreign military personnel not in an exchange, liaison, or loan status (see references (g) and (h)).

(4) Foreign military personnel in an exchange, liaison, or loan status (see reference (i)).

## 6. Responsibilities and Action

a. The fleet commanders (Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Naval Forces Africa; Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command; Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command) may approve the embarkation of all civilian workers and guests described in subparagraphs 5b(1) and 5b(2) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under their administrative control (ADCON) or command.

b. The numbered fleet commanders (excluding Commander, U.S. TENTH Fleet) may approve the embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraph 5b(1)(c) and all civilian guests described in subparagraph 5b(2) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under their command.

c. The surface, air, and submarine type commanders; Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command; and Commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, may approve the

embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraph 5b(1)(c) and all civilian guests described in subparagraph 5b(2) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under their respective ADCON.

d. Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command; and Commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, may approve the embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraph 5b(1)(c) and all civilian guests described in subparagraph 5b(2) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under their respective ADCON.

e. COMMSC may approve the embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraphs 5b(1)(a) and 5b(1)(b) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under COMMSC ADCON, including USNS vessels, with the concurrence of the commanding officer or master of the vessel.

f. The Oceanographer of the Navy (OPNAV N2N6E) may approve the embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraphs 5b(1)(a) and 5b(1)(b) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels under COMMSC ADCON, including USNS vessels, but only for technical purposes directly related to research functions sponsored by the Naval Oceanographic Office, and subject to the concurrence of the commanding officer master of the vessel. The Oceanographer of the Navy may further delegate this authority to the Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command.

g. The systems commanders (Commander, Naval Air Systems Command; Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command; Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command; Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command; and Commander, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command) may approve the embarkation of civilian workers described in subparagraphs 5b(1)(a) and 5b(1)(b) aboard U.S. Naval Vessels, subject to the concurrence of the commanding officer or master of the vessel.

## 7. Embarking Civilian Workers

a. When the services of civilian workers are required aboard U.S. Naval Vessels, the commanding officer or master will submit an embarkation request through the administrative or operational chain of command, as appropriate. The embarkation request will detail the services required and the availability of berthing and heads for civilians of either gender.

b. The approving authority is responsible for determining the need for the embarkation and will inform the civilian's employing agency or activity of the services required and facilities available. If facilities are not available for both genders or there are other limiting factors that would adversely affect embarking civilians, then the approving authority will inform the employing agency or activity of the denial.

8. Embarking Civilian Guests. Embarking civilian guests in U.S. Naval Vessels furthers public awareness of the U.S. Navy and its mission. Occasionally embarking family and friends contributes to morale and instills a sense of pride in the Navy and its commands.

a. Requirements for Embarking Civilian Guests

(1) The embarkation must be conducted within the framework of regularly scheduled operations.

(2) The nomination of guests and assignment of embarkation seats cannot be sold or bartered in any way; embarkation invitations will not be used as a reward or to promote an organization or individual.

(3) The embarked civilian will not be allowed to access classified information unless a separate approval is requested and approved. If civilian guests require access to classified information, then the sponsoring activity will ascertain the security clearance level required and will comply with procedures contained in references (h) and (j) to obtain the necessary disclosure authority.

(4) Guests must be in good health, due to the inherent physical demands of moving about a naval vessel. Guests must be capable of moderately strenuous, daylong activity. Approval of individuals for embarkation is not recommended for those with medical ailments that may preclude them from aircraft flight, walking or climbing ladders aboard a ship, who are pregnant, under the age of 12, or over the age of 75. The commanding officer has final denial authority.

(5) Death or personal injury to any civilian aboard a U.S. naval vessel, except Federal civilian employees in the performance of their duties, is an admiralty incident. Follow the procedures outlined in reference (k) if a civilian guest is injured while embarked. The steps outlined relate to investigation and reporting requirements. The affected command is to contact Office of Judge Advocate (OJAG Admiralty and Maritime Law Division (Code 11)) immediately to either report or ascertain whether an incident is reportable by naval message, phone, e-mail, or FAX. This report is in addition to others that may be required (i.e., OPREP 3).

b. Embarkation of Civilians for Orientation and Public Community Outreach. Orientation and public community outreach embarkation programs afford community, industry, and education leaders the rare opportunity to view their Navy in action through direct interactions with Sailors and demonstrations of the Navy's unique capabilities. Civilian guests embarking for orientation and public community outreach must complete OPNAV 5720/11 Distinguished Visitor (DV)/Friends of the Navy (FON) Embark Request and OPNAV 5720/12 Distinguished Visitor Medical Registration prior to being approved to embark. Civilian guests embarking for orientation and public community outreach purposes generally embark as part of one of the programs detailed in subparagraphs 8b(1) through 8b(4).

(1) Leaders to Sea. The Leaders to Sea Program is designed to bring individuals who are active and influential in their community, business, or government. Participants include presidents or chief executive officers of corporations and businesses, presidents or deans of colleges and universities, influential civic and community leaders, government officials,

educators, news media owners or publishers, and leaders of significant, broad-based organizations who have not had prior exposure to naval operations. These at-sea embarkation programs provide a unique opportunity to foster citizen awareness and understanding of the role, mission, and need for the Navy in general, while highlighting the training required to keep Navy forces ready for any contingency. Those invited to a Leaders to Sea embarkation must submit a complete OPNAV 5720/11 to participate. Reference (1) directs how many Leaders to Sea embarks must be conducted each year and how the seats are allocated.

(2) Congressional Orientation Visits. Members of Congress, their staffs, or representatives of a congressional committee embark naval vessels to better understand the Navy to help them discharge their duties. The Office of Legislative Affairs coordinates these visits.

(3) Joint Civilian Orientation Conference. Participants of the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference are guests of the Secretary of Defense and are influential leaders in their professions, organizations, and communities with little or no direct exposure to the Department of Defense.

(4) Media Visits. Members of the media embark naval vessels primarily to become familiar with a unit's missions observing operations and training or conducting interviews as part of their reporting. Media generally will be embarked separately from any participants described in subparagraphs 8b(1) through 8b(3), so they are able to obtain information and report their stories. The command's public affairs officer will provide escorts and supervise all embarked media. The public affairs offices of either U.S. Fleet Forces Command or U.S. Pacific Fleet (or the Navy Office of Information (CHINFO) if national media are involved) must approve embarks of management-level media representatives as part of the Leaders to Sea Program prior to extending an invitation.

c. Embarkation of Family and Friends of Naval Personnel. Relatives and civilian guests of crew members of naval vessels may embark naval vessels sailing on cruises of short durations. For the purposes of this subparagraph, naval personnel include civil service mariners employed by MSC and civilian mariners serving aboard MSC-controlled and contract-operated ships bearing USNS designation. Subparagraphs 8c(1) through 8c(5) apply.

(1) The commanding officer of a naval vessel may authorize an embarkation during daylight hours without reference to a higher authority when the vessel remains within the confines of the harbor or port, such as when shifting berths.

(2) Relatives and civilian guests may embark on port-to-port, round-trip overnight within the continental United States (CONUS), between CONUS and overseas ports, or between proximate overseas ports when the duration of the embarkation does not exceed the transit time between the authorized ports. Intermediate foreign port visits generally will not be authorized.

(3) Relatives and civilian guests of either gender are permissible on ships with accommodations identified for the exclusive use of individuals of each gender.

(4) Spouses and family members of crew members may be embarked during cruises between ports within CONUS, between CONUS and Hawaii, or between outside the continental United States (OCONUS) ports and CONUS when such cruises are scheduled incident to a homeport change or scheduled overhaul period. Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces and Commander, Pacific Fleet may further delegate this authority.

(5) Spouses of embarked crew members will not embark overnight on their spouse's vessel without a justifiable reason for doing so. In the event a spouse is embarked overnight, he or she will be provided separate accommodations from his or her spouse. Embarked crew members include ship's company, embarked air wings, and flag staffs.

d. Civilian Youth Groups. Requests to embark youth groups not under Navy sponsorship as described in reference (f) will be forwarded to the Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Marketing and Advertising (NAVCRUIT N9) and the Public Affairs Office.

9. Embarkation and Debarkation of Passengers OCONUS. Navy military personnel, civilian employees, and employees of the Department of Defense or Navy contractors embarked on naval vessels who will enter or exit an area under foreign government control to embark or debark, must obtain area or country clearance following the Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Guide. Relatives and civilian guests who will embark or debark in a foreign country are responsible for obtaining their own passports and visas.

## 10. 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 Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at <https://portal.secnav.navy.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 the local records manager or the DON/AA DRMD program office.

11. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, CHINFO will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance 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. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year



anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

12. Forms and Information Management Control

a. Forms

(1) OPNAV 5720/11 Distinguished Visitor (DV)/Friends of the Navy (FON) Embark Request is available for download from Forms OnLine <https://forms.documentservices.dla.mil/order/>.

(2) OPNAV 5720/12 Distinguished Visitor Medical Registration will be provided by e-mail upon completion of OPNAV 5720/11.

b. Information Management Control. The data collection contained within this instruction has been assigned OMB RCS 0703-0060 (OMB Pending).



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Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/>