



## DoD INSTRUCTION 1304.28

### THE APPOINTMENT AND SERVICE OF CHAPLAINS

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<b>Originating Component:</b>	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
<b>Effective:</b>	May 12, 2021
<b>Change 1 Effective:</b>	May 8, 2024
<b>Releasability:</b>	Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at <a href="https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/">https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/</a> .
<b>Reissues and Cancels:</b>	DoD Instruction 1304.28, "Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments," June 11, 2004, as amended
<b>Incorporates and Cancels:</b>	DoD Directive 1304.19, "Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments," June 11, 2004
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**Purpose:** In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02, this issuance:

- Establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and identifies educational and ecclesiastical requirements for appointing chaplains in the Military Departments.
- Establishes requirements, procedures, and responsibilities for religious organizations to endorse religious ministry professionals (RMPs) for the chaplaincy.
- Establishes criteria and provides procedures for the administrative separation and loss of professional qualifications for chaplains of the Military Departments.
- Establishes policy for chaplains on:
  - Meeting the religious requirements and caring for the spiritual needs of Service members and other authorized persons.
  - Advising individuals and commands on religion, morals, ethics, well-being, morale, and spiritual readiness.

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## **SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION**

### **1.1. APPLICABILITY.**

This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

### **1.2. POLICY.**

a. The Military Department chaplaincies:

(1) Advise and assist commanders in discharging their responsibilities to provide free exercise of religion in the context of military service pursuant to the first amendment of the United States Constitution.

(2) Assist commanders in managing religious affairs.

(3) Are principal advisors to commanders for all issues regarding religion’s influence on military operations.

b. Chaplains must be personally capable of meeting all requirements in Paragraph 3.1.

### **1.3. INFORMATION COLLECTIONS.**

a. An ecclesiastical endorsing agent must complete Department of Defense (DD) Form 2088, “Statement of Ecclesiastical Endorsement,” at each change of career status, as defined in this issuance and as defined by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, to re-endorse the qualifications of the chaplain concerned.

b. DD Form 2088 has been assigned Office of Management and Budget control number 0704-0190 in accordance with the procedures in Volume 2 of DoD Manual 8910.01. The expiration date of this information collection can be found on the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs website at <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRASearch>.

### **1.4. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 1.**

The changes to this issuance:

a. Provide clarity concerning spiritual readiness, religious provisions, required experience, and guidance concerning religious organizations that are submitting their first applicant for service as a military chaplain.

- b. Update references for accuracy.

## **SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS.**

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs:

- a. Oversees the implementation of the policies and requirements in this issuance throughout the DoD.
- b. Provides guidance to the Military Departments, as appropriate, for:
  - (1) Appointing chaplains.
  - (2) The professional qualification requirements for chaplains.
- c. Requires religious organizations that are endorsing RMPs to serve as military chaplains to maintain compliance with Section 4.
- d. Recommends, as necessary, policy on the appointment and service of chaplains to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

### **2.2. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.**

The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

- a. Direct their respective Military Services to comply with this issuance and issue necessary implementing policies and guidance as appropriate.
- b. In accordance with Section 533(b) of Public Law 112-239 and Paragraph 1.2.c. of DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1300.17, issue policy to ensure no Service member:
  - (1) Requires a chaplain to perform any rite, ritual, or ceremony that is contrary to the chaplain's conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs.
  - (2) Discriminates or takes any adverse personnel action because of the chaplain's refusal to perform a rite, ritual, or ceremony contrary to the chaplain's conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs.
- c. Implement a chaplain candidate program in accordance with their respective Military Department's specific policies and regulations.

## **SECTION 3: REQUIREMENTS FOR CHAPLAINCY**

### **3.1. CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS.**

Chaplains:

- a. Meet the religious requirements and care for the spiritual needs of Service members and other authorized persons.
- b. Advise individuals on religion, morals, ethics, well-being, morale, and spiritual readiness.
- c. In accordance with DoDI 1300.17, have a primary role in providing for the free exercise of religion and other religious requirements associated with the free exercise of religion that the U.S. Government would be otherwise unable to provide to Service members and other authorized persons.
- d. Are RMPs able to personally meet the religious requirements of persons in their assigned military units, potentially in isolated or combat environments. Chaplains belong to religious-endorsing organizations and conduct religious ministry activities consistent with the tenets of their respective religious-endorsing organizations.
- e. Advise Combatant Commands, commanding officers, and organizations, as appropriate, on religion, morals, ethics, well-being, morale, and spiritual readiness in the unit, including religion's impact on military operations.
- f. Facilitate meeting the religious needs and requirements for those persons to whom they cannot directly minister. A chaplain may:
  - (1) Connect the person with a different chaplain, or an RMP of the person's faith, who can directly provide for their needs;
  - (2) Equip the person with the tools or materials necessary to meet their own needs;
  - (3) Coordinate the appointment of faith group-specific religious lay leaders; or
  - (4) Offer information on how to draw from local, civilian, or other resources.
- g. Are authorized by their respective religious-endorsing organizations to address issues of spirit, conscience, well-being, or spiritual readiness that may not be exclusively ministerial in nature or defined by their religious-endorsing organization. Such care and counseling are rooted in ethics and morality and may or may not be faith based at the person's request. The individual needs of the person receiving such services will always receive the highest priority.
  - (1) A chaplain's tasks include, but are not limited to:
    - (a) Visiting workspaces.

- (b) Counseling on military life.
- (c) Providing crisis prevention and response.
- (d) Conducting memorial observances.
- (e) Maintaining confidentiality.
- (f) Providing religious training and education.
- (g) Advising on Religious Accommodation requests.

(2) When delivering care, chaplains demonstrate a dedication to the dignity of all humans and honor the dead.

(3) If a chaplain is unable to support a specific request because of their religious-endorsing organization's teachings, the chaplain must offer referral to another chaplain or professional. Such referrals are accomplished respectfully, professionally, and in a reasonable period of time, in accordance with the policies of the Military Department concerned.

### **3.2. CHAPLAIN APPOINTMENT CONSIDERATIONS.**

To be considered for appointment to serve as a chaplain, an RMP must receive an endorsement from a qualified religious-endorsing organization verifying that the RMP:

a. Is a fully qualified RMP of a religious-endorsing organization and further meets this issuance's administrative requirements:

(1) An RMP's application must include a DD Form 2088 endorsing the person's ecclesiastical credentials.

(2) If a religious organization has not previously endorsed military chaplains, it must file the administrative documents required by Section 4, along with endorsing its first fully qualified, active duty RMP's application.

(3) In accordance with DoDI 5120.08, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) will accept the required documents only when the applicable Military Department has determined the RMP being considered for appointment as a chaplain is fully qualified in all ways other than ecclesiastical endorsement. The AFCB will notify the Military Departments of religious organizations that have filed the necessary documents and whose packets are administratively complete.

(4) The Military Departments may evaluate potential chaplains from religious organizations that are submitting the administrative filing requirements for the first time. The Military Departments must consult with the AFCB to determine if the administrative requirements are pending acceptance in such cases.

- b. Will abide by Paragraph 3.1., is willing to function in a pluralistic environment, and directly and indirectly supports the free exercise of religion by all Service members, their family members, and other persons authorized to be served by military chaplains.
- c. Has at least 2 years of religious ministry experience, as defined by the Military Department concerned, for an Active Component appointment, or has the religious ministry experience prescribed by the Military Department concerned for a Reserve or National Guard Component appointment. This experience must be compatible with RMPs' duties in their respective religious organizations and relevant to the settings of military chaplaincy.
- d. Is educationally qualified to be a chaplain.

(1) The RMP must have a baccalaureate degree with at least 120 semester hours (180 quarter hours) from a qualifying educational institution as described in Paragraph 3.3. The applicant must also possess a post-baccalaureate graduate degree in the field of theological or related studies from a qualifying education institution. A qualifying graduate degree program must require at least 72 semester hours (108 quarter hours) of graduate-level work.

(2) Related studies may include graduate courses at a qualifying educational institution in pastoral counseling, social work, religious administration, and similar disciplines when half of the earned graduate credits include topics in general religion, world religions, the practice of religion, theology, religious philosophy, religious ethics, or the foundational writings of the applicant's religious tradition.

### **3.3. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.**

A qualifying RMP-producing educational institution is:

- a. An accredited college, university, or school of theology listed in either the:
  - (1) United States Department of Education's "Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs;" or
  - (2) United States Department of Education's lists of Institutional and Programmatic Accrediting Agencies and relevant supplements.
- b. An unaccredited institution that either:
  - (1) Provides to the applicable Military Service chaplaincy certifications from registrars at three accredited educational institutions stating that their respective educational institution would have accepted at least 90 percent of the RMP's credit hours for courses leading to a post-graduate degree in theological or related studies for that graduation year; or
  - (2) Provides the AFCB with certifications from registrars of three accredited educational institutions that maintain programs for preparing RMPs.



(a) Each registrar must certify the list of the major areas of study for which their educational institution would accept at least 90 percent of the credit hours earned by a student pursuing a post-graduate degree in theological or related studies at the unaccredited educational institution.

(b) A designated qualified RMP-producing educational institution may certify an unaccredited educational institution for a period of up to 5 years. The unaccredited educational institution must submit the required documentation to the AFCEB before the beginning of the academic year if it seeks qualifying designation for future years. Applications for renewal of this status must be for periods of fewer than 5 years.

(c) Unaccredited educational institutions requesting designation as a qualifying educational institution for prior school years may submit applications containing the required documentation at any time.

### **3.4. DD FORM 2088.**

A new DD Form 2088 is required every time a chaplain's career status changes, as defined in this issuance and by the Military Department concerned, to re-endorse the qualifications of the chaplain concerned.

### **3.5. CHAPLAINCY APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.**

In addition to the requirements in Paragraphs 3.1. and 3.2. and any required by the Military Department concerned, there are several additional requirements for applicants for the chaplaincy associated with their appointment as commissioned officers in the military:

a. Chaplain applicants must meet physical standards in accordance with Volume 1 of DoDI 6130.03 and be qualified to serve as commissioned officers in accordance with Section 532 or Section 12201 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.).

b. Applicants will be appointed as chaplains in accordance with Sections 531 and 12203 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1310.02. Applicants will be awarded entry grade credit in accordance with Sections 533 and 12207 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1312.03.

c. Applicants must affirm that, if appointed, they will abide by applicable laws and policies of the DoD and of the Military Department concerned.

### **3.6. ADMINISTRATIVE SEPARATION OF CHAPLAINS UPON LOSS OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.**

If a chaplain in the Active or Reserve Component loses ecclesiastical authority to function as an RMP or has an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain withdrawn, the appropriate religious-endorsing organization must provide written notification to the Military Department concerned. Processing for separation in accordance with Section 643 or Section 14901 of

Title 10, U.S.C. will begin immediately after such notification. This issuance does not prevent separation in accordance with other regulations of the Military Department concerned (e.g., when separation for reasons other than loss of ecclesiastical endorsement is appropriate).

a. When a separation action is initiated in accordance with this issuance, the chaplain will be notified in writing that:

(1) The chaplain has lost ecclesiastical endorsement.

(2) The chaplain may:

(a) Consult with military counsel or, at their own expense, with civilian counsel.

(b) Submit statements in response to the notice.

(3) Under conditions established by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, the chaplain may:

(a) Seek another ecclesiastical endorsement in the time frame allotted by the Military Department concerned.

(b) Apply for non-chaplain duties with the understanding that, if approved, the officer will be discharged voluntarily as a chaplain on one day and appointed in a non-chaplain capacity on the next day.

(c) Apply for voluntary retirement, if eligible, or tender a voluntary resignation.

b. If a request in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.a.(3) is not submitted, or if such a request is disapproved, the chaplain will be separated with an appropriate characterization of service.

(1) The chaplain will receive a reasonable period of time to respond to the notice in accordance with the policies of the Military Department concerned. If the chaplain requests action in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.a.(3), the chaplain will receive in writing the date and manner by which such request will be submitted.

(2) If the chaplain does not respond to the notice in a reasonable period of time, in accordance with the policies of the Military Department concerned, separation processing must be completed in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.c.(5).

c. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may:

(1) Approve a request for a new ecclesiastical endorsement for a serving chaplain submitted in accordance with this issuance;

(2) Approve a voluntary resignation, if tendered, and direct an appropriate discharge;

(3) Approve a voluntary retirement if requested by an eligible applicant;

(4) Approve a request for assignment to non-chaplain duties through voluntary resignation and re-appointment in accordance with Chapter 36 of Title 10, U.S.C.; or

(5) Direct an appropriate discharge if an action in Paragraph 3.6.a.(3) is either not requested or not approved.

### **3.7. CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE PROGRAM.**

The chaplain candidate program exists in the Military Departments to familiarize graduate students of religion with religious support activities in the military environment. Program participants are commissioned officers in the Military Departments' Reserve Components. Chaplain candidates are not authorized to serve as, or in place of, chaplains.

a. Upon successful completion of their academic and religious training, participants in the chaplain candidate program may seek appointment as chaplains. Participants will be appointed as chaplains in accordance with Sections 531 and 12203 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1310.02. Applicants will be awarded entry grade credit in accordance with Sections 533 and 12207 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1312.03.

b. Applicants and participants in the chaplain candidate program must, at minimum:

(1) Be approved by a religious-endorsing organization able to provide ecclesiastical endorsements for chaplains in accordance with this issuance.

(2) Be enrolled in a graduate-level degree-granting religious studies program of a qualified educational institution. Such programs and institutions must comply with the requirements in Paragraph 3.3.

(3) In accordance with DoDI 1304.26, be able to complete education, ecclesiastical, and professional experience requirements for appointment as a chaplain before reaching the age limitation for such appointment, as established by the Military Department concerned.

(4) Be able to meet all other appointment eligibility criteria of the Military Department concerned.

### **3.8. CHAPLAINCY PARTICIPATION RULES.**

Any individual, ecclesiastical endorsing agent, or religious-endorsing organization must be removed from, or rejected for, participation in the chaplaincy if they:

a. Have been convicted of a terrorism-related offense or other offense threatening national security.

(1) Should an ecclesiastical endorsing agent or a religious-endorsing organization currently participating in the chaplaincy be indicted for a terrorism-related offense or other

offense threatening national security, the organization's ability to endorse new chaplains or participate in the chaplaincy will be suspended until disposition of such charges.

(2) If a religious-endorsing organization is removed from the chaplaincy because of such a conviction, all of the organization's ecclesiastical endorsements will be withdrawn. Serving chaplains endorsed by that organization will have their endorsements revoked in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.

b. Appear on the annual Department of State list of foreign terror organizations or the Department of the Treasury list of specially designated nationals. The Executive Director of the AFCB, with each of the Service Chiefs of Chaplains' support, will annually review the Department of State list of foreign terror organizations and Department of the Treasury list of specially designated nationals to ensure all current ecclesiastical endorsing agents and applicants and their religious organizations are not on these lists.

## **SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATIVE FILING REQUIREMENTS FOR RELIGIOUS-ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING RMPs FOR THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY**

### **4.1. RELIGIOUS-ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN MILITARY CHAPLAINCIES.**

Religious-endorsing organizations participating in the military chaplaincies must recognize that the chaplaincies of the Military Departments serve a religiously diverse population and military commanders must provide comprehensive religious support to all authorized individuals in their areas of responsibility. Religious organizations participating in the military chaplaincies must express willingness for their RMPs to perform their professional duties as chaplains in coordination with chaplains from other religious traditions.

- a. Chaplains will wear the appropriate insignia in accordance with uniform regulations of their respective Military Services.
- b. The religious organization must complete and maintain compliance with this issuance's administrative requirements before being able to endorse applicants for the chaplaincies.
- c. Chaplains will comply with policies and requirements in Paragraph 3.1.

### **4.2. DOCUMENT SUBMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING AN RMP.**

a. Religious organizations desiring to provide an RMP to serve as a chaplain in the Military Departments must meet this issuance's administrative filing requirements and maintain the required information with the DoD. The religious organization must submit the required documentation to the AFCB in the format specified in Section 5.

b. The religious organization must submit documents to the AFCB verifying that:

(1) The religious organization is an entity functioning primarily to perform religious ministries to a non-military lay membership and currently holds an exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a church, integrated auxiliary of a church, or convention or association of churches for Federal tax purposes, in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

(a) The IRS uses "church" not to denote a belief system but to distinguish churches from other types of religious organizations. IRS regulations specify that the organization's religious beliefs or creeds are truly and sincerely held and that the practices and rituals are not illegal or contrary to clearly defined public policy.

(b) To determine whether a religious organization has properly received and currently maintains an IRS tax-exempt status and does not engage in practices illegal or contrary

to public policy, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will, with the DoD Components and other Federal agencies, determine compliance with these requirements.

(2) It possesses ecclesiastical authority to grant and withdraw initial and subsequent ecclesiastical endorsement for ministry in the Military Services.

(3) It will provide chaplains who will:

(a) Function in a pluralistic environment.

(b) Directly and indirectly support the free exercise of religion by all Service members, their families, and other persons authorized to be served by the military chaplaincies.

(4) It agrees to follow applicable DoD issuances, Military Department regulations and policies, and other guidance on the qualification and endorsement of RMPs for service as military chaplains.

(5) Chaplains endorsed for military service will comply with Paragraph 3.1. of this issuance and any similar requirements prescribed by the Military Department concerned.

c. A religious organization may submit the required documents through secure and verified electronic media to the AFCB. The religious organization will be able to submit documents to permit endorsement of chaplains for the first time only when it is endorsing a fully and professionally qualified, active duty applicant not currently endorsed by another religious organization, without needing waivers of the standards specified by the applicable Military Department.

#### **4.3. RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION AGENTS.**

The religious organization must supply the name, title, mailing address, phone number, e-mail, employer identification number assigned to the organization by the IRS, and the telephone number of the endorsing agent authorized to represent the religious organization to the Military Departments and grant and withdraw ecclesiastical endorsements. This agent may not be a military chaplain currently serving on active duty or in active service in the National Guard or Reserve.

#### **4.4. AFCB NOTIFICATIONS.**

A religious organization must immediately notify the AFCB, by letter or e-mail, if changes occur in the IRS status of the organization or if there are changes to its designated endorsing agent or to the organization's contact addresses and telephone numbers.

#### **4.5. RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION REVERIFICATION PROCESS.**

A religious organization must re-verify that it meets the requirements in Paragraph 4.2.b.(2) when its endorsed chaplains are unable to gain re-endorsement at times of change of career status.

#### **4.6. RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION RMP ENDORSEMENT.**

a. Religious organizations that are currently able to endorse RMPs for military service as chaplains may continue to endorse RMPs as long as they continue to meet the requirements in effect when they originally began to endorse RMPs. Such organizations must affirm in writing to the AFCB by **January 31<sup>st</sup>** of each year stating that they continue to meet such requirements.

b. The provision in Paragraph 4.6.a. applies equally to:

(1) Religious organizations that endorse chaplains directly to the DoD through an embedded endorsing organization.

(2) Religious organizations that, in accordance with previous versions of this issuance, were extended the privileges of endorsing chaplains through representation by external endorsing organizations.

(3) Larger organizations that acted on behalf of member religious organizations.

#### **4.7. ENDORSEMENT LIST DEADLINE.**

By **January 31<sup>st</sup>** of each year, each religious organization will provide a complete list of chaplains endorsed for military chaplaincy to the AFCB. Chaplains will be listed alphabetically by full name (Last, First, Middle) for each applicable Military Department.

#### **4.8. FAILURE TO MEET REQUIREMENTS.**

a. In accordance with DoDI 5120.08, the AFCB must, in writing, inform a religious organization that endorses chaplains when the AFCB determines that the organization no longer meets the administrative requirements in Section 4 and, as a result, may no longer endorse chaplains for military service.

(1) Before taking such action, the AFCB must provide written notice to the religious organization stating the reasons for its lack of compliance and allow the religious organization a reasonable opportunity to provide a written reply that will be carefully considered in making a final decision.

(2) Review of a religious-endorsing organization's administrative compliance may begin if:

(a) The religious organization fails to respond to requests by endorsed chaplains for assistance or re-endorsement at times of change of career status; or

(b) The AFCB cannot contact the religious organization in a timely manner.

b. A religious organization informed that it may no longer endorse chaplains due to a lack of administrative compliance with applicable requirements may resubmit required documents. The AFCB will not re-review a religious organization's compliance if the religious organization satisfies all applicable administrative requirements. If a religious organization is no longer able to endorse chaplains in accordance with this issuance, all ecclesiastical endorsements issued by that organization will be considered withdrawn. Serving chaplains endorsed by that organization will have their endorsements revoked.

c. In accordance with DoDI 5120.08, the AFCB may submit recommendations in writing to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, through the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, for the removal of a religious-endorsing organization for consistently endorsing chaplains who systemically are unable to meet the requirements in Paragraph 3.1.

#### **4.9. VISITS BY ENDORSING AGENTS.**

Visits of agents to military installations to enhance the spiritual welfare of Service members and other authorized persons are encouraged, particularly at seasons of special religious significance.

a. Visiting endorsing agents will keep the religious-endorsing organization aware of the ministry of the organization's chaplains and the military community's spiritual and religious activities.

b. Such visits will be at the discretion of the commanding officer concerned.

c. Endorsing agents who visit installations to represent their religious-endorsing organizations will do so at their own expense. The ecclesiastical endorsing agent will receive protocol privileges appropriate for those of a General Schedule grade-15 civilian employee.

d. The Military Departments may establish procedures governing endorsing agents' visits to installations. The AFCB may provide administrative assistance in arranging such visits on request, including assistance in obtaining travel clearances for visits to overseas installations.



## **SECTION 5: FORMAT FOR ENDORSING CHAPLAINS TO THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS**

Religious organizations desiring to endorse RMPs as military chaplains will forward written notification of such intent to the AFCB in accordance with Paragraph 4.2.

a. The religious organization must submit written notification through either of two means:

- (1) As a hard copy on the organization's letterhead.
- (2) Through an official electronic account capable of a secure electronic signature.

b. The written notification must at least include a statement that meets the requirements of Paragraph 4.2.b. and information in this order:

- (1) The organization's name.
- (2) The organization's address.
- (3) The designated endorsing official's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail contact information.
- (4) A statement verifying the designated endorsing official's ability to endorse and withdraw endorsement of candidates and chaplains.
- (5) A statement agreeing to immediately notify the AFCB when changes occur in the status of the organization, designated endorsing agent, or the contact addresses and telephone numbers of either.
- (6) The signature of the responsible official with authority to make such statements on behalf of the organization.
- (7) As enclosures:
  - (a) Verification of the religious organization's current status as a tax-exempt organization in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and Paragraph 4.2.a. of this issuance.
  - (b) The IRS-designated employer identification number.
  - (c) All other enclosures supporting this status.

## **SECTION 6: FORMAT FOR ENDORSING RMPs AS CHAPLAINS TO THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS**

Religious organizations submitting required documentation of their first fully qualified RMP to a specific Military Department will forward the applicant's documentation in accordance with Paragraph 3.2. The written documentation must include:

- a. An appointment application, including, as the case may be, Department of the Army Form 61, "Application for Appointment"; Air Force (AF) Form 24, "Application for Appointment as Reserve of the Air Force or USAF Without Component"/Addendum; or Navy: NC1100/11.
- b. An application for active duty, including, as the case may be, Department of the Army Form 160, "Application for Active Duty"; AF Form 125, "Application for Extended Active Duty with the United States Air Force"; and an employment authorization document application for AF Reserve/Guard or Navy Reserve Recall: NP1131/5.
- c. An application letter requesting appointment by the applicant. For a Navy application, the applicant must include a motivational statement if it is not included in NC1100/11.
- d. An official copy of each undergraduate and graduate school transcript.
- e. A statement verifying the date of the latest national agency check or check in progress and a copy of a completed Standard Form 86, "Questionnaire for National Security Positions."
- f. DD Form 2808, "Report of Medical Examination"; certified true copies of DD Form 2807-1, "Report of Medical History"; and DD Form 2807-2, "Accessions Medical History Report."
- g. DD Form 368, "Request for Conditional Release," if required by the Military Department concerned.
- h. DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty;" National Guard Bureau Form 22, "National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service;" and all military performance and fitness reports (e.g., officer evaluation report, officer performance report, enlisted performance report).
- i. A birth certificate and driver's license.
- j. A credit check via AF Recruiting Service Form 1325-AF, "Financial Status of Applicant" for applicants to the Air Force Chaplaincy.
- k. Chaplain Interview-Army, Air Force, Navy: NC1100/13, with at least three reference letters for the Navy.
- l. A family member information document typed on plain bond paper and a current biography or resume.
- m. A certificate of ecclesiastical endorsement and an ordination certificate, or equivalent.

## GLOSSARY

### G.1. ACRONYMS.

ACRONYM	MEANING
AF	Air Force (form)
AFCB	Armed Forces Chaplains Board
DD	Department of Defense (form)
DoDI	DoD instruction
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
RMP	religious ministry professional
U.S.C.	United States Code

### G.2. DEFINITIONS.

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>career status changes</b>	Includes, but is not limited to, initial application for the chaplaincy, change from reserve to active status or the opposite, and extension of active duty beyond the initial obligated period of service. This term is further defined by the various Military Departments and Services. A career status change requires endorsement or re-endorsement by the religious organization endorsing the chaplain.
<b>chaplain</b>	A commissioned officer of the Chaplain Corps of the Army or the Navy or a commissioned officer in the Air Force designated for duty as a chaplain.
<b>counsel</b>	A lawyer qualified in accordance with Section 827 of Title 10, U.S.C., or a civilian lawyer retained at no expense to the U.S. Government.
<b>ecclesiastical</b>	The forms and practices related to religious organizations.
<b>ecclesiastical endorsement</b>	Written documentation from a religious organization that complies with the administrative requirements of this issuance stating that an applicant for the military chaplaincy is fully and professionally qualified and endorsed to perform all offices, functions, sacraments,

<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
	ordinances, and ceremonies required of an RMP for that religious organization and is capable of ministering and authorized to minister as required within a pluralistic environment.
<b>endorsement</b>	The internal process that religious organizations use when designating RMPs to represent their religious organizations to the Military Departments and confirm the ability of their RMPs to conduct religious observances or ceremonies in a military context.
<b>endorsing agent</b>	An individual authorized to provide or withdraw ecclesiastical endorsements on behalf of a religious organization.
<b>entry grade credit</b>	The amount of prior commissioned service credit and constructive service credit awarded at the time of original appointment.
<b>pluralistic environment</b>	A descriptor of the military context of ministry. A plurality of religious traditions exists side by side in the military.
<b>religious-endorsing organization</b>	An entity that is organized and functions primarily to perform religious ministries to non-military lay members and meets the religious purposes test of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and holds current status as a Section 501(c)(3) Schedule A organization. Religious organizations possess ecclesiastical authority to endorse and withdraw endorsement for RMPs serving under their authority.
<b>religious requirements</b>	Shared, organized, and outward rites, rituals, and behaviors such as following a specific diet; wearing specific clothing; observing specific holy days; devotional activities; prayer; and participating in sacraments, ordinances, and worship services.
<b>RMP</b>	An individual endorsed to represent a religious organization and to conduct its religious observances or ceremonies. An RMP is a fully qualified member of the clergy for those religious organizations that have a tradition of professional clergy or their equivalents. The religious organization's endorsement verifies that an RMP is professionally qualified to serve as a chaplain in the military and meets the graduate education and religious leadership requirements of this issuance.
<b>separation</b>	Discharge or retirement from military service.

## REFERENCES

- DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008
- DoD Instruction 1300.17, “Religious Liberty in the Military Services,” September 1, 2020
- DoD Instruction 1304.26, “Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction,” March 23, 2015, as amended
- DoD Instruction 1310.02, “Original Appointment of Officers,” March 26, 2015
- DoD Instruction 1312.03, “Entry Grade Credit for Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers,” December 28, 2018
- DoD Instruction 5120.08, “Armed Forces Chaplains Board,” April 24, 2024
- DoD Instruction 6130.03, Volume 1, “Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction,” May 6, 2018, as amended
- DoD Manual 8910.01, Volume 2, “DoD Information Collections Manual: Procedures for DoD Public Information Collections,” June 30, 2014, as amended
- Public Law 112-239, Section 533(b), “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013,” January 2, 2013
- United States Code, Title 10
- United States Constitution
- United States Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3)
- United States Department of Education, “Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs”<sup>1,2</sup>
- United States Department of Education, “Institutional Accrediting Agencies”<sup>1,2</sup>
- United States Department of Education, “Programmatic Accrediting Agencies”<sup>1,3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Located at <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>

<sup>2</sup> Located at [https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg3.html#RegionalInstitutional](https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg3.html#RegionalInstitutional)

<sup>3</sup> Located at [https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg4.html#National\\_Institutional](https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg4.html#National_Institutional)