



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Balancing the Force

“We are attracting and retaining the highest quality force we’ve ever had, and these Sailors are increasingly looking at the Navy as a great long-term career choice. To ensure the Navy is positioned to meet future mission requirements, we have to balance the force by retaining Sailors in the right mix of ratings and paygrades.”

- Rear Adm. Donald Quinn, Acting Chief of Naval Personnel

The Navy is experiencing record high retention and low attrition among active duty Sailors, increasing the competition to “stay Navy.” Over the last several years, force management policies have been implemented to balance the force and reduce manning in overmanned ratings, increase manning in undermanned ratings, and stay within congressional manpower limits. Leaders must be intimately familiar with these programs to manage and mentor Sailors.

Leadership Tools

- [Performance Evaluations](#) – The evaluation instruction, [BUPERSINST 1610.10C](#), integrates recent changes including E-5 forced distribution. Honesty in write-ups, rankings based on performance rather than time on board or career milestones, and use of “not recommended for retention” in block 43 if warranted, are among a reporting senior’s tools to influence future retention. Sailors should routinely verify their official military personnel files are up-to-date.

Force Management

- [Fleet Ride/Perform to Serve \(PTS\)](#) – Sailors should have a career development board (CDB) 24 months prior to expiration of activate obligated service (EAOS) or projected rotation date (PRD). Sailors in overmanned ratings should research ratings they are eligible for and take the Armed Forces Classification Test to improve their Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery score and increase rating eligibility. If an in-rate PTS quota is not approved in two to three attempts, Sailors should apply for three ratings they are eligible to convert into. Sailors not awarded a PTS quota will be separated but can still apply for a Selected Reserve quota.
- [Enlisted Retention Board \(ERB\)](#) – In order to stay within end strength controls and to balance the force, the ERB will reduce manning in 31 overmanned ratings. [ERB Phase I](#) begins Aug. 22. The Navy’s intent is to ensure Sailors understand the factors necessitating the board, feel the process has been transparent, and believe they have been treated fairly.
- [Enlisted Early Transition Program “Early Out”](#) – This voluntary program allows qualifying Sailors to separate from the Navy up to 24 months prior to EAOS.
- [Senior Enlisted Continuation Board](#) – This [annual performance-based board](#) reviews active and reserve E7-E9 personnel with greater than 19 years of service. Those not selected to continue must retire.

Active to Reserve Transition

- [Early Career Transition Program \(ECTP\)](#) is a new program that allows active and FTS Sailors to complete their contracts as drilling Reservists. ECTP requests must be received at least three months before desired transition date.
- [Fleet RIDE/Perform to Serve Selected Reserve Option](#) – Sailors leaving active duty can affiliate with the Reserves, maintain Tri-Care benefits, and work toward retirement by applying for a Selected Reserve PTS quota. The [Career Transition Office](#) supports rapid and seamless active-to-reserve transition to encourage a lifetime of naval service.

Key Messages

- Navy missions and capabilities change, altering the required rating mix of the force. Sailors may have to convert ratings or consider Reserves to stay Navy.
- Commanders, career counselors and Sailors must take the responsibility to manage each Sailor’s career.
- Reserve benefits include two-year mobilization deferment, affiliation bonus, base privileges, low-cost medical/dental coverage, and monthly drill paychecks.

Facts & Figures

- The Navy’s end strength dropped by 54,000 Sailors between FY02 and FY10.
- Of 25,000 PTS applications received monthly, 4,000 are approved/1,250 denied, and the remainder are rolled to next month. Commands should strive to ensure all Sailors receive their allotted six reviews.
- Approximately six percent of records will be reviewed by the ERB; one percent of the force will be separated.