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**COMDTINST 1221.1**  
**MAR 19 2002**

**COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1221.1**

Subj: **COMPETENCIES AND TRAINING FOR YEOMEN ASSIGNED TO COAST GUARD  
LEGAL OFFICES AND STAFFS**

Ref: (a) Enlisted Qualification Codes Manual, COMDTINST M1414.9A, Exhibit 1-D

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction details the training and skill sets required for yeomen assigned to Coast Guard legal offices and staffs. It also establishes qualifications for Legal Technician and Paralegal competencies (formerly qualification codes).
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands and commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure widest dissemination of the Instruction. Internet release authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Enlisted Qualification Codes Manual, COMDTINST M1414.9A.
4. DISCUSSION. Enlisted yeomen are a critical part of the team of legal professionals providing legal counsel and services throughout the Coast Guard. They are assigned to legal offices and staffs in Headquarters, the MLC legal divisions, district legal offices and at several major shore commands. In addition to the standard administrative duties required of the rating, these yeomen perform a variety of specialized legal functions supporting and assisting Coast Guard attorneys. Traditionally, these duties involved support to the military justice program in the form of service as a court clerk and court reporter. Over the past several years however, the legal support skills required of yeomen serving as members of legal staffs have broadened considerably. Further, the requirement for qualification as a court reporter has diminished with the use of civilian court reporting services. In response to this, the Chief Counsel reviewed the competencies required for enlisted legal support staff to insure the training they are provided adequately provides for the skills needed in the modern Coast Guard legal office. The result of this review is a complete revision of the legal qualification codes for yeomen as well as the development of new training courses and methods. This new training and qualification reflect alignment with contemporary standards for legal assistants and paralegals.

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Non-Standard Distribution: \*D:1 (NJS, TJAGSA, AFJAG SCHOOL)

5. COMPETENCIES.

- a. **L1. Informal Title: Legal Technician.** The Legal Technician designation represents “entry level” competencies for yeomen assigned to support Coast Guard attorneys. It reflects skills needed to provide basic legal assistant support in any legal office. Particular attention is given to skills supporting the military justice and legal assistance legal practice areas. Specific skills and competencies for this designation are found in enclosure (1).
  - (1) Eligibility. Assignment to a YN billet in a Coast Guard legal office or staff or otherwise demonstrate a requirement to provide technical legal support to a CG attorney.
  - (2) Required Training. Successful completion of the Coast Guard Legal Technician course at the Naval Justice School, Newport, RI (The Chief Counsel may grant waivers of this requirement if the requestor is deemed to possess an equivalent level of knowledge, skills and ability).
- b. **L2. Informal Title: Court Reporter.** The Court Reporter competency reflects qualification to record and provide verbatim transcripts of military courts-martial or other proceedings where such transcripts are required. This competency is being phased out with reliance on commercial court reporting services to perform these duties. However, since some of our yeomen have received this training, it is appropriate to replace the 02 qualification code recognizing this competency.
  - (1) Eligibility. Successful completion of a formal course of instruction in court reporting offered by one of the DoD JAG schools (or commercial equivalent) and certification by the JAG school or civilian institution.
- c. **L5. Informal Title: Coast Guard Paralegal.** The Paralegal designation represents the highest level of legal skill and competency for a yeomen assigned to the Coast Guard legal program. It reflects the level of skill and experience recognized generally for paralegals and legal assistants in government service or the private sector. Award of this competency code and designation identifies the yeomen as a highly qualified legal professional. A discussion of the skills and competencies for this designation are found in enclosure (2).
  - (1) Eligibility. Earn the L1 Qualification Code and completion of two years in a legal billet. (The Chief Counsel may grant waivers of this requirement if the requestor is deemed to possess an equivalent level of experience, knowledge, skills and ability).
  - (2) Required Training. Completion of a formal course of instruction leading to a paralegal certificate, undergraduate or advanced degree in paralegal studies; or, completion of a DoD JAG Corps program deemed equivalent; or a combination of completion of other training, education and Coast Guard legal experience deemed equivalent by the Chief Counsel.
- d. The L3 and L4 competency codes are reserved for future use.
- e. The existing three legal qualification codes (02/Court Reporter, 03/Legal Clerk, 08/Both) are eliminated.

6. TRAINING.

- a. **Coast Guard Legal Technician Course.** The Legal Technician course is offered annually by the Naval Justice School, Newport, RI. This two-week course of instruction provides basic skills and training needed to meet minimum legal support requirements. Requests to attend this course should be made to the legal program training manager in the Office of Legal Policy and Program Development (G-LPD) via the annual training plan process.
- b. **Court Reporter.** The Coast Guard normally uses contracted civilian court reporting services and not yeomen. However, the Naval Justice School does offer court reporter training. This course is no longer a part of the legal program Class C Training Plan, thus Chief Counsel funding & quotas are normally not provided for this training.
- c. **Paralegal.** There is no CG-specific paralegal training course. Paralegal training is offered by a variety of degree-granting educational institutions and professional certificate programs. Paralegal training is normally pursued by the individual and not formally through the legal program training plan. Coast Guard legal training and experience may often be applied for credit in these programs. Further, tuition assistance and/or training funding may be available for such courses. Legal offices shall endeavor to provide interested yeomen opportunities to attend such programs as funding and workload permit. It is recommended that any paralegal training program pursued be accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA). Assistance in identifying qualifying programs is available from the Office of Legal Policy and Program Development (G-LPD).
- d. **Advanced (Class C) Legal Training.** The legal program training plan includes several advanced courses available for yeomen assigned to legal offices. These are generally given at one of the three DoD JAG Schools: Naval Justice School (NJS), Newport, RI; The Judge Advocate General School of the Army (TJAGSA), Charlottesville, VA; and the Air Force JAG School (AFJAG), Montgomery, AL. Descriptions of the content and applicability for these courses may be obtained from the Office of Legal Policy and Program Development (G-LPD), or from the respective school Internet sites. Requests to attend these courses should be made to the legal program training manager via the annual training plan process.

- (1) Senior Legal NCO Management (TJAGSA)
- (2) Law for Legal NCOs (TJAGSA)
- (3) Chief Legal NCO Course (TJAGSA)
- (4) Law Office Managers Course (AFJAG)
- (5) Legalman Writing Course (NJS)
- (6) Senior Legalman Course (NJS)
- (7) Mid-Career Legalman Course (NJS)
- (8) Navy Legal Clerk Course (NJS)

- e. **Continuing Legal Education.** Various training courses and programs of value to Coast Guard Legal Technicians & Paralegals are available via local bar associations, colleges, paralegal associations, etc. This is particularly true for work in the legal assistance practice area. Legal offices shall endeavor to provide assigned yeomen with opportunities to attend such courses as funding and workload permit. Completion of these programs may often be applied to training and education requirements needed for L5 designation.
- f. **Specialized CG Legal Training.** The Chief Counsel may develop specialized courses for legal technicians that will be available on an occasional basis or via computer based training. The Office of Legal Policy and Program Development (G-LPD) will provide details of these courses.

7. DESIGNATIONS.

- a. **Legal Technician (L1).** Upon graduation from the NJS CG Legal Technician Course, the Chief Counsel will designate graduates as “Coast Guard Legal Technicians.” No application is necessary. Yeomen requesting waiver from the NJS course requirement due to prior experiences and qualification should forward their request via the chain of command to Commandant (G-LPD).
- b. **Court Reporter (L2).** The Chief Counsel will approve the L2 competency upon successful completion of the NJS Court Reporter course. Yeomen requesting waiver from the NJS course due to completion of an equivalent course should forward their request via the chain of command to Commandant (G-LPD). Yeomen possessing the 02 Qualification Code shall be assigned the L2 competency without need for further qualification.
- c. **Paralegal (L5).** Yeomen who have completed a formal course of instruction leading to a paralegal certificate, undergraduate degree or advanced degree in paralegal studies; or who have completed a DoD JAG Corps program deemed equivalent, may request designation as a Coast Guard Paralegal and assignment of the L5 competency. Requests should be made to Commandant (G-LPD), via the chain of command and should provide evidence of a paralegal certification or degree. Yeomen seeking Paralegal certification based on prior training and experience should detail that experience, training, education, etc. in a request to the Chief Counsel, Office of Legal Policy and Program Development (G-LPD). The request will be evaluated using current ABA standards for paralegal certification.

8. ASSIGNMENTS. Designation as a Legal Technician or Paralegal does not guarantee assignment to a legal office or staff, but is intended to reflect skill and experience competencies, which may be considered when assignment decisions are made. These designations reflect legal skill and experience competencies within the traditional yeomen rate.

9. POLICY QUESTIONS. Questions concerning the material in this instruction or recommendations for changes should be directed to Commandant (G-LPD).

ROBERT F. DUNCAN  
Chief Counsel

Encl: (1) Skills & Competencies Required for Legal Technician  
(2) Skills & Competencies Required for Paralegal

**Skills & Competencies Required for Legal Technician Designation and the L1 Competency Code**

Upon completion of the Legal Technician Course, Coast Guard Yeomen shall be able to perform those functions identified in the OPM Benchmark Description for Paralegal Specialist, GS-0950-5 and Coast Guard specific requirements.

Consults prescribed sources of information for facts relating to matters of interest to the program.

Reviews documents to extract selected data and information relating to specified items.

Reviews and summarizes information in prescribed format on case precedents and decisions.

Searches for and extracts legal references in libraries and computer data banks.

Attends hearings or court appearances to become informed on administrative or court procedures and the status of cases, and where necessary, assists in the presentation of charts and other visual information.

Understand the organization and function of the Chief Counsel and CG legal program, including the relationships between different legal staffs and the linkages with principal customers.

Understand the role of the Legal Technician and Paralegal in the CG legal program.

Serve as legal office/staff receptionist, demonstrating appropriate professional “front line” customer service skills and the ability to identify legal issues and direct customers to the appropriate resource.

Demonstrate a basic understanding of the ethical obligations and rules of professional responsibility for the legal profession and model guidelines adopted by the ABA for the utilization of legal assistant services (as generally stated in the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct), and in particular, those adopted guidelines of conduct that are directed to legal assistants and paralegals adopted by the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

Perform basic **legal research**, including:

- a. The ability to describe sources of law (primary and secondary sources) and locate material when given the legal citation.
- b. A general understanding of principle legal references including: case reporters, the United States Code, the Code of Federal Regulations, looseleaf & other subscription services.
- c. Familiarity with the LEXIS electronic legal research system.

Enclosure (1) to COMDTINST 1221.1

- d. Basic familiarity with various legal research resources that can be found on the Internet.
- e. Familiarity with Coast Guard legal program publications such as the Military Justice Manual, Administrative Investigations Manual, Claims Manual, etc.
- f. The ability, under the direction of an attorney or supervising paralegal, to search and extract legal information from relevant sources using law libraries and electronic sources.
- g. Ability to update and determine the currency of previous court decisions (i.e. "Shephardizing").

Understand the organization and function of the CG **Legal Assistance Program** as detailed in Legal Assistance Program, COMDTINST 5801.4 (series), and in particular:

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the CG legal technician in the administration of legal assistance, including the limits of services authorized.
- b. Demonstrate ability to prepare basic wills and other instruments using the DLWILLS software, under the guidance and supervision of a Legal Assistance Attorney.
- c. Demonstrate the ability to prepare General and Special Powers of Attorney, under the guidance and supervision of a Legal Assistance Attorney.
- d. Act as a Notary for legal assistance and other purposes as authorized.
- e. Perform general legal assistance office management functions, including client reception and initial prescreening, appointment scheduling and basic document preparation.

Understand the organization and function of CG **Military Justice** practice as detailed in the Military Justice Manual and in particular:

- a. Demonstrate a basic understanding of military justice including familiarity with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (and in particular the punitive articles), the Manual for Courts Martial, the Military Justice Manual, COMDTINST M5810.1 (series), the CG General & Special Courts Martial Trial Guide, the Military Judge's Benchbook and other relevant publications.
- b. Demonstrate familiarity with the military justice process, including the types of courts, court personnel, nonjudicial punishment (including appeals) and pre-trial confinement.

- c. Serve as a court clerk, demonstrating knowledge of courtroom preparation, court procedure and evidence handling and marking.
- d. Correctly assemble and prepare for review and distribution a Record of Trial.
- e. Demonstrate the ability to prepare basic court martial and other military justice documents such as: charge sheets, records of offenses, subpoenas, etc.

Demonstrate basic understanding of Claims, including relevant references, the ability to identify claims, claims processing procedures, and time limits. Know the role of the various CG legal offices and staffs in the investigation, processing and settlement of claims.

Demonstrate basic understanding of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act, including relevant references the ability to identify requests for information under each act, procedures, and time limits. Know the role of the various CG legal offices and staffs in the handling of FOIA and Privacy Act matters.

Demonstrate basic understanding of Administrative Investigations, including relevant references, procedures, and time limits. Know the role of the various CG legal offices and staffs in the handling of administrative investigations.

Demonstrate knowledge of legal program IT systems and tools, including:

- a. DocuShare. Ability to access, search, post, and edit materials on the DocuShare legal document research system.
- b. Law Manager. Ability to enter case, matter, time, contact and other relevant information; edit information; produce reports.
- c. DLWILLS. Ability to prepare basic wills and other, under the guidance and supervision of a Legal Assistance Attorney.
- d. LegalWeb. Knowledge of the content and ability to access information and resources on the legal program Intranet and Internet systems.
- e. LEXIS/NEXIS. Ability to access and retrieve legal documents and public records on Lexis/Nexis.

**Skills & Competencies Required for CG Paralegal Designation and the L5 Competency Code**

Paralegals are persons who assist attorneys in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training and experience, paralegals have knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law, which qualify them to do work of a legal nature under the supervision of an attorney. Responsibilities most often assigned to paralegals/legal assistants are maintaining client files, drafting correspondence, performing factual research, monitoring deadlines, drafting and investigation and analyzing documents, and acting as liaison with clients and others.

A CG Paralegal independently plans and carries out assignments and coordinates activities with professional legal staff of the office and with staff of other CG offices, units and other Federal or non-Federal activities. Paralegals at this level must use considerable ingenuity to anticipate program or case requirements, develop legal arguments and supporting evidence, resolve conflicting statements, or search for corroborating or contravening precedents. In some assignments, the paralegal also determines the approach to be taken and methodology to be used. The supervisor is kept informed of actions involving potentially controversial issues or issues with far-reaching implications.

Coast Guard Paralegals shall be able to perform all functions identified for L1/Legal Technicians with little or no supervision and those functions generally identified in the OPM Benchmark Description for Paralegal Specialist, GS-0950-9, including (but not limited to):

Practical knowledge of legal principles and concepts to interpret and apply, or explain to others the application of, a body of law, regulations, precedents, and practices covering one or more recurring types of legal actions encountered in the agency.

Knowledge of the principles, concepts, and methods of legal research and reference sources such as agency manuals, directives, issuances, court reports, appellate records, or commercial legal publications sufficient to locate appropriate data such as applicable precedents, legislative history, and commentaries which bear on particular legal issues. Ability to perform extensive and thorough legal research into the legislative history, precedent cases, decisions, and opinions that may be applicable to particular legal matters;

Knowledge of legal techniques and skills necessary to analyze both issues of fact and issues of law in order to prepare digests of case decisions, evaluate the applicability of precedents, or to draft briefs, other litigation papers, advisory opinions, or findings.

Knowledge of formal or informal rules of evidence and skill necessary to evaluate the adequacy and/or admissibility of evidence, to request additional data or further investigation, when needed, or to develop narrative or graphic exhibits to support specified legal arguments.

Ability to independently investigate and become thoroughly familiar with subject matter details involved in a case or legal matter; determine the specific data needed and best approach to obtain this data or to determine the relevance or sufficiency of available legal, technical (e.g., financial, statistical), or other related data.