



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

SECNAVINST 5050.6A  
DON/AA (PID)  
20 Oct 2022

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 5050.6A

From: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Ref: (a) DoD Conference Guidance Version 4.0  
(b) 5 CFR 410.404  
(c) SECNAV M-5214.1  
(d) DoD 5500.07-R, Joint Ethics Regulation  
(e) Joint Travel Regulations

Encl: (1) Responsibilities  
(2) Conference Approval Authority Table  
(3) Submission of Conference Requests  
(4) Reporting Requirements and Exemptions  
(5) Standards of Conduct

1. Purpose. This instruction establishes Department of the Navy (DON) policy for conference management in accordance with references (a) through (e).

2. Cancellation. SECNAVINST 5050.6.

3. Applicability. This instruction applies to the Offices of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), all U.S. Navy (USN), U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) installations, commands, activities, field offices, and all other organizational entities within the DON.

4. Policy

a. Pursuant to references (a) through (e), this instruction establishes the DON framework for proper administration and oversight of all conferences to include those hosted by the DON and those not hosted by the DON, but attended by DON personnel. A conference is defined by references (a) and (e), and includes training activities covered by reference (b).

b. All DON personnel must remain committed to the oversight of conference activities—those we host and those we attend. The

DON will remain a good steward of taxpayer dollars by keeping cost levels to the minimum necessary to accomplish the mission.

5. Responsibilities. See enclosure (1). See enclosure (2) for a table summarizing conference approval authorities. Conference submission instructions regarding conferences with unique circumstances are outlined in enclosure (3).

6. DON-hosted Reporting Requirements. See enclosure (4).

7. Exemptions. See enclosure (4).

8. Standards of Conduct. See enclosure (5).

9. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned according to the records disposition schedules found on the Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page:

<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction contact your local Records Manager or the DRMD program office.

10. Information Management Control

a. Forms. SECNAV 5050/2, Conference Request Form and conference lists can be found on the DON/AA portal page:

<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/CPDM/SitePages/DON%20Conference%20Management.aspx>.

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b. Information Collections. The reporting requirements contained in enclosure (1), enclosure (3), and enclosure (4) are exempt from information collection control, per reference (c), Part IV, paragraph 7j and 7p.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ERIK K. RAVEN', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ERIK K. RAVEN  
Under Secretary of the Navy

Distribution:

Electronic only, via Department of the Navy Issuances Website:  
<https://www.secnave.navy.mil/doni/default.aspx>

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The SECNAV and the Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV). SECNAV and UNSECNAV are accountable for all DON conference related activities, including DON conference policies, controls, and the conduct of conferences hosted by the DON and its Military Services or attended by DON personnel.

2. The Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA). DON/AA will support and advise the SECNAV and UNSECNAV on all conference related activities.

a. DON/AA will provide guidance and general operating procedures where required to implement Department of Defense (DoD) and DON policies and accountability standards. DON/AA will also provide specific support and guidance as needed to manage conference related activities within the Office of the SECNAV (Secretariat).

b. DON/AA will use the following criteria to publish a Blue, White, and Yellow List of conferences on the DON/AA SharePoint site whose address is provided in paragraph 10, and periodically update them based on DON data.

(1) "Blue List". Conferences listed on the "Blue List" are non-DoD-hosted or sponsored conferences that have historically exceeded \$500K or are at risk for exceeding \$500K, and must be approved by a Tier 1 approving official unless DON/AA determines that the conference falls below \$500k and therefore, can be approved by a single Tier 2.

(a) DON/AA shall be the lead for obtaining approval of conferences on the "Blue List," including compliance with all administrative requirements unless DON/AA designates another official as the lead. If designated, DON commands are responsible to meet all administrative and reporting requirements, including: conduct the data call; complete the approval package with one approval form for all DON attendees and forward a copy to DON/AA for publication on the DON/AA SharePoint site; communicate limitations of the approval to all attendees; and monitor registrations to ensure cost limits are not exceeded. Absent such designation, DON/AA will initiate a data call to compile DON attendance requests and submit one approval package.

(b) For DON/AA initiated data calls, the Director of Navy Staff (DNS) and Director of Marine Corps Staff (DMCS) will send Conference Request forms with consolidated participation data (to include requesting commands, number of attendees, and total cost to those commands) to DON/AA. Negative responses are required.

(2) "White List". Conferences listed on the "White List" are non-DoD-sponsored or hosted conferences that have historically exceeded \$100K. Conferences listed on the "White List" require Tier 1 or Tier 2 approval depending on total costs. If costs are expected to exceed \$500k, approval will be processed in the same manner as "Blue List" conferences for Tier 1 approval. If costs are not expected to exceed \$500k, Tier 2 approval authorities may approve for personnel under their cognizance who will be attending. Accordingly, there may be multiple Tier 2 approvals for "White List" conferences.

(3) "Yellow List". Conferences listed on the "Yellow List" are DON-hosted or sponsored conferences and require Tier 1 or Tier 2 approval depending on total costs to the DoD.

(a) Conferences hosted or sponsored by the DON with estimated costs exceeding \$500K must include a paragraph stating that exceptional circumstances exist, and hosting the conference is the most cost-effective option.

(b) Hosting organizations must report any conference with costs over \$20K, as outlined in enclosure (1).

(c) DON-hosted or sponsored conferences with costs exceeding \$100K will be publically posted on the DoD website as part of the Annual DoD Conference Report.

(d) Commitments to vendors and/or obligation of funds prior to appropriate conference approval are prohibited.

(e) New conferences that meet the definition of a yellow list conference are required to follow procedures as outlined above.

3. The CNO and the CMC. CNO and CMC are accountable for all conference-related activities of their respective Service. CNO

and CMC will provide Service guidance and general operating procedures where required to implement the DoD and DON policies and accountability standards.

#### 4. Conference Approval Authorities

a. Tier 1 Approval Officials. SECNAV and UNSECNAV are the DON's only Tier 1 approving officials, per reference (a). Within the DON, Tier 1 approval is required for any conference with a total cost exceeding \$500K. Conference requests requiring Tier 1 approval should be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the start of the conference.

b. Tier 2 Approval Officials. Within the DON, Tier 2 approval is required for conferences less than \$500k or on the DON/AA "White List." Tier 2 approval officials include: CNO; CMC; Vice Chief of Naval Operations; Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; DNS; DMCS; DON/AA; two-star or higher Flag Officer (FO), General Officer (GO), or Senior Executive Service (SES, 2-star or higher equivalents) commanders of USN and USMC commands; and, FO/GO/SES commanders designated in writing by DNS, DMCS, or UNSECNAV.

(1) Tier 2 authority may not be delegated further, but may be exercised by a FO/GO/SES designated as "Acting" in a designated Tier 2 position.

(2) Tier 2 conference approval authorities may designate subordinate organization FO/GO/SES as approving officials to host conferences with costs of \$100K or less. This designation must be in writing and a copy forwarded to DON/AA.

c. Other approval officials. Attendance at non-DoD-sponsored or hosted conferences with costs of \$100K or less and not on the "White List" may be approved by supervisors with normal travel (Temporary Duty/Temporary Additional Duty (TDY/TAD)) approval authority, consistent with organizational guidelines. If costs exceed \$3,000 per person or \$600 per person per day, then attendance must also be approved one level above the supervisor and must be at least an O-5 or GS-14.

5. DON commands and activities are not required to approve conference attendance for their members to attend DoD-sponsored or hosted conferences. The DoD sponsor (i.e., DoD, Army, Air

Force, or DON approval authority) is responsible for seeking proper approval of all DoD attendees. Attendees must coordinate with the hosting component's conference point of contact for accounting and reporting purposes. The authorizing or approving official should upload documentation of such coordination into the Defense Travel System for each traveler to ensure auditability. Attendees may require TDY/TAD and attendance approvals pursuant to local instructions.

6. See enclosure (2) for a table summarizing conference approval authorities. Conference submission instructions regarding conferences with unique circumstances are outlined in enclosure (3).

**CONFERENCE APPROVAL AUTHORITY TABLE**

<u>Type of Request</u>	<u>Total Cost Threshold</u>	<u>Approval Authority</u>
<b>Non-DoD-sponsored or -hosted conferences listed on "Blue List" (High Risk)</b>	>\$500K	Tier 1
	<\$500K	After consultation with DON/AA, <u>single</u> Tier 2 can approve
<b>Non-DoD-sponsored or -hosted conferences listed on "White List"</b>	>\$500K	Tier 1
	>\$100K up to \$500K	Tier 2 (multiple)
	<\$100K	Tier 2 (multiple)
<b>DON-hosted or -sponsored listed on "Yellow List"</b>	>\$500K	Tier 1
	>\$100K but <\$500K	Tier 2
	\$100K or less	Commander or head of the hosting DON organization, or if delegated by the commander or head, to any FO/GO and SES within the hosting organization
<b>Non-DoD-sponsored or -hosted conferences <u>not</u> listed on a DON conference list ("Blue" or "White" List")</b>	\$100K or less total cost and <i>less than</i> \$3,000 per person and <i>less than</i> \$600 per person per day	Supervisors with normal TAD approval authority or if more than 3K/person or \$600/person/day then must be approved one level above supervisor at O-5 or GS-14 level



### **SUBMISSION OF CONFERENCE REQUESTS**

1. DON-Hosted or Sponsored Conferences. Commands and organizations planning to host a conference must submit a SECNAV 5050/2 to the appropriate conference approval authority. Only one approval is required for each DON-hosted conference. At a minimum, the request must contain the following:

a. Completed SECNAV 5050/2, expected Return on Investment (ROI) to the DON, alternatives to hosting the event, and how the conference will advance the mission of the DON. Requests forwarded to DON-hosted approving authorities must be signed by a FO/GO/SES or a Commander/Officer in Charge.

b. Draft agenda.

c. Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement if co-sponsoring with a Non-Federal Entity (NFE). Co-sponsorship agreements should be reviewed by legal counsel prior to submission.

2. Non-DoD-Hosted Conferences or Sponsored Conferences. Commands and organizations requesting to attend a non-DoD-hosted conference must submit a SECNAV 5050/2 to the appropriate conference approval authority. Where multiple DON organizations may participate or attend, a single DON command or organization may be designated as lead. At a minimum, the request must contain the following:

a. Completed SECNAV 5050/2, expected ROI to the DON, alternative means for obtaining that ROI without physical attendance, and how it will advance the mission of the DON.

b. Draft agenda.

3. Recurring Conferences. Conference approval authorities are authorized to provide one-time approval for recurring DON-hosted or sponsored conferences within the limits of their approval authority. Such approvals may remain valid for no longer than three years.

a. One-time approvals must identify control conditions for continued approval, e.g., cost limits, attendance limits, duration limits, and location restrictions.

b. Each conference event is subject to the reporting requirements identified in enclosure (1) of this instruction.

#### 4. Conferences with Unique Circumstances

a. DON-hosted or sponsored virtual conferences. DON-hosted or sponsored virtual conferences that result in any cost to the DON must follow guidance set forth in paragraph 1 of this enclosure.

b. Non-DoD-hosted or sponsored virtual conferences. All Non-DoD-hosted or sponsored conferences that are entirely virtual where only registration fees are charged and there are no other costs to the DON, are exempt from the conference approval process, but still require supervisory approval. However, participation in virtual conferences that require attendee travel, and meet the reference (e) definition of a conference are subject to conference approval requirements.

c. Hybrid conferences. Conferences where both in-person and virtual attendance are offered will account for all conference costs and obtain approval at the appropriate level that accounts for all attendees.

d. Local conferences. Based on reference (e) definition of a conference, local conferences generally are not subject to this policy, even if they involve reimbursable local travel costs (such as parking or local mileage). Participants that attend local conferences at no cost to the DON, except for local travel costs, may file local travel vouchers through the Defense Travel System with appropriate supervisory approval. However, local conferences with registration or other similar fees are subject to this policy.

e. Zero Cost conferences. Any conference resulting in zero total cost to the DON does not require conference approval.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND EXEMPTIONS

1. All DON organizations who host conferences with costs in excess of \$20K must report the conference in the DoD Conference Report Tool (Tool). The Tool can be found on the following website:

<https://apps.sp.pentagon.mil/sites/DoDConferenceTool/DoDConferenceToolHome/home.aspx>. To obtain access to the Tool, please visit the website and click on "Request Site Access" under the "Getting Started" menu. DON organizations must enter each conference, and its actual costs, no later than 15 days after the last day of the conference.

a. DON organizations must upload the conference approval memorandum in the Tool for all DON-hosted conferences with costs exceeding \$100K.

b. Per reference (a), the DON will make information on any conference with costs exceeding \$20K available to the DoD Inspector General.

2. Conferences approved by SECNAV/UNSECNAV. For conferences approved by SECNAV/UNSECNAV, DON organizations must submit the actual costs to DON/AA within 15 days of the last day of the conference using SECNAV 5050/2, which is found at the link provided in paragraph 10.a of this instruction. DON/AA Programs and Integration Division will report and validate these conferences. All other reporting and validation is the responsibility of the DON conference host.

### 3. Exemptions

a. Per reference (a), if an event is determined to be exempt from conference approval requirements, such determination must be approved by a FO/GO/SES in writing with advice of their servicing legal advisor. Exempting organizations will maintain their determinations in accordance with the document management requirements of Section III-5 of reference (a).

b. All DON organizations should use the "Formal Classroom Training" exemption judiciously, restrictively, and sparingly in application. DON organizations regularly and collectively come together to discuss topics, ideas, and best practices. However, this does not constitute formal training and does not fall within this exemption.

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

1. Enhanced Scrutiny. Accountable officials and approval authorities will ensure that conference activities comply with references (a), (b), and (e), and all applicable laws, regulations and policy, e.g., Federal Acquisition and Joint Travel Regulations. When a conference activity involves a NFE, approval officials must ensure that no prohibited conference expenses are involved, and that the conference circumstance do not create the appearance of impropriety. Such events require enhanced scrutiny, and approval officials should seek advice from their servicing legal advisor (i.e., military or civilian).

2. Limited Logistical Support. Per section 3-211 of reference (d), the DON may provide limited logistical support to NFEs in certain circumstances. Such support must be limited in nature, and may not be used to promote or endorse an NFE or non-DoD event. Use of DON or DoD facilities, resources or speakers, official emblems, government information, and participation by NFE exhibitors must be carefully assessed based on the totality of the circumstances.

3. Co-Sponsorship. When all the requirements of section 3-206 of reference (d) are met, the DON may co-sponsor events with an NFE in certain circumstances. In such cases, the event is considered an official DON event, and must comply with all rules applicable to DON-hosted conferences. If co-sponsorship is appropriate, DON organizations must execute a written agreement that meets the requirements of reference (d). Agreements should be reviewed by servicing legal advisor counsel prior to submission. DON approval authorities must coordinate with their cognizant ethics official when DON speaker support exceeds 50 percent to determine whether a co-sponsorship agreement under 3-206 of reference (d) is required. Speaker support includes individual presenters, panelists, and moderators or chairs. Approval officials must also assess other logistical support (e.g., facilities, funding, audio/visual assets, administrative staff, etc.) based on the totality of the circumstances, from the perspective of the public.

4. Contemporaneous, but Separate and Independent Conferences. In lieu of co-sponsorship, a DON activity may host a conference, and an NFE may sponsor a separate and distinct event. These two events may be held at the same time, and co-located at the same facility, but may not use the same physical space. The DON

event must comply with DON conference policies, and may welcome attendees of the NFE conference under the same conditions as all other DON attendees. Conference approving officials must document FO/GO/SES approval in writing with advice of their servicing legal advisor.

5. Prohibited Conference Expenses. Examples of prohibited conference expenses include: entertainment-related expenses such as hiring musicians or entertainers, extraneous promotional items, decorations, or other goods and services for participants that are unrelated to the purpose of the conference, tickets to recreational activities outside of the conference setting, or using funds to produce non-substantive audio/visual materials. Common sense and good judgement must be used throughout the conference planning process. Conferences require enhanced scrutiny, and approval officials should seek advice from their servicing legal advisor.