

ACTION OFFICER'S
CORRESPONDENCE STYLE GUIDE
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FINANCE
CENTER

CEFC-L
Revised July 1999

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALL TEAM MEMBERS, USACE FINANCE CENTER

SUBJECT: USACE FINANCE CENTER CORRESPONDENCE

1. Reference:

- a. AR 25-50, Preparing and Managing Correspondence, 21 November 1988
- b. OM 25-1-50, Correspondence, 1 October 1993

2. We are forging new territory at the USACE Finance Center. CEFMS fielding and the consolidation of all USACE operating finance and accounting functions has improved our business processes. Communication, particularly written communication, with our customers and higher headquarters is paramount to our effectiveness. As policy and procedure continue to change our customers rely on us to guide them through the complexities affecting their resource management mission. More than ever, you are challenged to step out of the traditional accountant role. Effective writing skills must be honed to meet the future needs of the organization as well as enhance your personal professional development.

3. To help you prepare correspondence IAW Army, USACE and UFC policy we have assembled a style guide to coach you through the most common correspondence products applicable to the UFC mission. Please print this document and make it an active desk reference in your daily routine. While this guide does not address every type of military document you may need to initiate, the references cited in paragraph 1 provide a complete compendium of military correspondence. My POC for this document is Beth Kraus, x48412.

STANLEY N. WRENN
Director, USACE Finance Center

QUICK TIPS AND REFERENCES

- **Signature Blocks**
USACE Finance Center

STANLEY N. WRENN
Director, USACE Finance Center

THOMAS L. BROCKMAN, JR.
Deputy Director, Accounting Operations

TOMMY E. POND
Deputy Director, Financial Systems Development
& Maintenance

ROGER C. WOLFE
Deputy Director, Accounting Quality

BETH KRAUS
Deputy Director, Administration

JAMES R. GREENE
Deputy Director, Resource Management

HQ USACE

JOE N. BALLARD
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding [Chief of Engineers]

RUSSELL L. FUHRMAN
Major General, USA
Deputy Commander [Deputy Chief of Engineers]
[Chief of Staff]

MILTON HUNTER
Major General, USA
Deputy Commander for
Military Programs

WILLIAM A. BROWN, SR., P.E.
Deputy Director for
Military Programs

JONATHAN A. JACOBSEN
Colonel, EN
Executive Director
For Military Programs

STEPHEN COAKLEY
Deputy Chief of Staff for
Resource Management

KATHERINE THOMPSON
Acting Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff
for Resource Management

- **Address Lines**

All Activities:
COMMANDERS/DIRECTORS, ALL MAJOR
SUBORDINATE COMMANDS, DISTRICT
COMMANDS, FIELD OPERATING
ACTIVITIES AND LABORATORIES
OR
COMMANDERS/DIRECTORS, ALL USACE
COMMANDS

NOTE: You may use attention lines (i.e., ATTN: Resource Managers, Finance & Accounting Officers) but remember, only the Director or designated Deputy Directors have the authority to sign outgoing correspondence.

- **Letterhead**

Use letterhead when writing to anyone outside the USACE Finance Center. Use plain bond paper when writing to internal offices or Deputy Directors.

- **Capitalization**

Signature Blocks. Depending on the desires and norms of The Command, capitalization of signature blocks is normally in upper case.

For Military – The 1st and Second Lines are in Uppercase, i.e.,

For Civilians – The 1st line is in uppercase, the 2nd line is in lower case.

Address lines may be either upper case or lower case.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

The following guidelines apply to formal and email correspondence

- Only the Director may sign external correspondence (correspondence to outside customers and activities).
- Only the Director can respond negatively to a Commander or customer;
- Only the Director can sign congressional inquiries/responses.
- In rare cases, when correspondence is of an administrative or routine nature, the UFC Director will delegate signature authority to the Deputy Directors for their respective area with the following provisions:

Signature authority cannot be delegated below the Deputy Director level;

Since the Deputy Director is signing for the Director, the Signature block must contain the authority line, "FOR THE DIRECTOR:" In such cases the Deputy Director will ensure:

Correspondence is reviewed and cleared by the UFC Director;

Correspondence, operational guidance and Standing Operating Procedures are staffed with all UFC Directorates; Staffing will be annotated on an OF41, Routing and Transmittal Slip. All Directorates will be given an opportunity to comment on the correspondence prior to the Director's review.

SITUATIONAL EXAMPLES OF ACTION OFFICER WORK REQUIRING DIRECTOR/DEPUTY DIRECTOR SIGNATURE.

Technical correspondence to the field
Clarification guidance (SOPs) to the field
Routine correspondence to Higher Hqs
Technical correspondence to external organizations such as DFAS, OMB, DOE, GAO, AAA
Follow-Up on delinquencies

NOTE: Action Officers may send correspondence to peers within the F&AO community; however such communications should not be tasking in nature.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FINANCE CENTER
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON TENNESSEE 38054-5005

S: SUSPENSE DATE

CEFC-L (MARKS NUMBER)

DATE (ie., 1 Jan 99 or 1 January 1999)

1

2

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION,
 SOUTH ATLANTIC

1

SUBJECT: Preparing a Memorandum

1

2

1. This example shows how to prepare a memorandum. Allow one inch for the left and right margins. Use Times New Roman 12-pitch type.

a. Type the OFFICE SYMBOL at the left margin two lines below the seal. Type the MARKS number, in parentheses, two spaces after the office symbol.

b. Stamp or type the DATE (After signature) on the same line as the office symbol, ending at the right margin. If there is a SUSPENSE DATE, type it on one line above the office symbol line ending as close as possible to the right margin.

c. Type MEMORANDUM FOR on the third line below the office symbol. Begin the single address one space following MEMORANDUM FOR. If the MEMORANDUM FOR address extends more than one line, begin the second line under the third letter of the first word after MEMORANUM FOR. Addresses may be in upper and lower case type or all upper case type.

d. Type the SUBJECT of the memorandum on the second line below the last line of the address.

e. Begin the first paragraph of the TEXT at the left margin on the third line below the last line of the subject.

2. When used, type the AUTHORITY LINE at the left margin on the second line below the last line of the text.

3. Type the SIGNATURE BLOCK on the fifth line below the authority line or the last line of the text beginning at the center of the page. Identify enclosures, if any, flush with the left margin beginning on the same line as the signature block.

4. Leave at least a 1 to 1-1/2 inch margin at the bottom of the first page

5. When continuing a memorandum on another page, use plain bond paper. Type the OFFICE SYMBOL at the left margin on the eighth line from the top edge of the paper.

6

7

OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Preparing a Memorandum

1

2

6. Type the SUBJECT of the memorandum at the left margin on the third line below the office symbol.

7. Begin with continuation of the TEXT at the left margin on the third line below the subject. When continuing a memorandum:

a. Do not divide a paragraph of three lines or less between pages. At least two lines of the divided paragraph must appear on each page.

b. Include at least two words on each page of any sentence divided between pages.

c. Avoid hyphenation whenever possible.

d. Do not hyphenate a word between pages.

e. Do not type the AUTHORITY LINE and the SIGNATURE BLOCK on the continuation page without at least two lines of the last paragraph. If a paragraph or subparagraph has only one line, place it alone on the continuation page with the authority line and signature block.

8. Center the page number approximately 1 to 1-1/2 inches from the bottom of the page.

1

FOR THE DIRECTOR:

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2 Encls

1. AR 25-50

2. OM 25-1-50

BETH KRAUS

Deputy Director, Administration

6

7

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS NUMBER)

DATE

1

2

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, USACE FINANCE CENTER

1

SUBJECT: Format – For Decision

1

2

1. PROBLEM. To clarify correspondence procedures within the UFC.

2. RECOMMENDATION. That the Director approve the correspondence procedures at signature tab.

APPROVED _____ SEE ME _____ OTHER _____

3. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

a. Address all decision staff papers to the Director, UFC. Sign and date after coordination is completed.

b. Paragraph 1. PROBLEM - Give reason for preparing the decision paper. Be brief and direct.

c. Paragraph 2. RECOMMENDATION – Use this paragraph to recommend specific action(s). For each recommended action, enter an approval line where the approving authority may validate each action.

d. Paragraph 3. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION – Use this paragraph to further discuss above recommendations. Introduce any document(s) used to support the recommended action(s), summarize key points, and attach supporting documents as tab(s).

e. Paragraph 4. IMPACT – Discuss any impact this action(s) will have on manpower or resources.

f. Paragraph 5. COORDINATION – Indicate coordination, CONCUR or NONCONCUR. Enter coordinating officer(s) by name and date of coordination as shown. If coordinating (CONCUR/NONCONCUR) statements accompany the decision staff paper, identify them as tabs in the next paragraph. If faxing or emailing staff copies to other locations, type in the CONCUR/NONCONCUR position and keep backup documentation.

g. Paragraph 6. COORDINATION STATEMENT. Use this paragraph as necessary to correlate coordinating statements with tabs, as shown in paragraph 6 below.

h. Decision papers must be approved by the staff principal or deputy director and will normally be signed by one of these officials.

i. Two spaces below the signature block enter the action officer's name and telephone number.

4. IMPACT. Resources:

5. COORDINATION. Submit the original package with the concur/nonconcur indicated with the coordinators printed name, initials and date. Do not submit dated initialed copies for each coordinating office. Comments are inserted as tabs.

CEFC-AD **CONCUR**/NONCONCUR () (N. Clower/initials) (Date)
CEFC-AO **CONCUR**/NONCONCUR () (G. Porter/initials) (Date)
CEFC-Q **CONCUR**/**NONCONCUR** (Tab A) R. Wolfe/initials) (Date)

6. COORDINATING STATEMENT. Nonconcurrency statement from CEFC-Q is at TAB C. Consideration of nonconcurrency is at TAB B.

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Encl

JAMES R. GREENE
Deputy Director, Resource Management

1

Action Officer's Name/Phone Number

6

INFORMATION PAPER

1

2

CEFC-L (MARKS NUMBER)

(DATE)

1

2

SUBJECT: The Subject Goes Here – INFORMATION PAPER (Also referred to as
FACT SHEET, READ AHEAD, POINT PAPER, ISSUE PAPER)

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2

1. Purpose. To provide a standardized INFORMATION PAPER format for use Army wide.

2. Facts.

a. Fact should be supportable statement, not assumptions or conclusions.

b. Fact should be written in clear, concise English prose.

c. Fact should be developed in an orderly and logical order/sequence.

d. Each fact will be sequentially numbered.

e. Final paragraph should indicate current status of the issue or action.

f. Information Papers should be limited to one page with enclosures being held to a minimum. When enclosures are used, use TAB A, TAB B, etc., to identify enclosures.

3. An INFORMATION PAPER will be prepared as follows

a. It will be typed single space on a plain 8-1/2 x 11 inch, white bond paper, with the same margins and paragraphing as a memorandum.

b. The words INFORMATION PAPER will be centered on the 6th line from the top of the page. The heading, typed on the third line below the words INFORMATION PAPER, will include the office symbol or names of the organization of the action officer and the date the Information Paper was prepared – all will be prepared as shown on this example. The SUBJECT LINE will be typed on the third line below the date.

c. The INFORAMTION PAPER will be submitted in one copy only, unless otherwise directed.

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ACTION OFFICER/PHONE NUMBER



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FINANCE CENTER
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON TENNESSEE 38054-5005**

January 1, 1999

Travel Branch

Mr. John A. Doe
1234 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Anywhere, Texas 38881

1

Dear Mr. Doe:

1

- Single-space the body of a letter with double spacing between paragraphs.

- Use single spacing when a letter contains only one paragraph. Effective paragraphs should not contain more than 10 lines.

- Do not number or letter paragraphs of a non-military letter. Avoid subparagraphs when possible. If you have more than one subparagraph, use letters of the alphabet (a, b, c, and d) to indicate subparagraphs. Indent subparagraphs four spaces and begin typing on the fifth space. Don't use more than four subparagraphs. If you only use one subparagraph, indicate that subparagraph by a hyphen as shown below.

- Indent four spaces, type the hyphen on the fifth space, space twice, and begin typing as shown.

1

2

Sincerely,

1

2

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4

Stanley N. Wrenn
Director, USACE Finance Center

1

Enclosure



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FINANCE CENTER
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON TENNESSEE 38054-5005**

1
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4

Honorable Bob Graham
United States Senator
Post Office Box 3050
Tallahassee, Florida 32315

1
Dear Senator Graham:

1

Thank you for your letter of October 24, 1998, on behalf of Mr. Fred T. Mehr regarding withholding State income tax.

Maritime employees who meet the tax exempt criteria under Section 11108 of Title 46, United States Code are not required to have State taxes withheld from their pay. Mr. Mehr's direct deposit of his next pay reflects that no State taxes were withheld. I hope this information is helpful.

1

Sincerely,

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4

Stanley N. Wrenn
Director
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Finance Center

1
Enclosure

1

CF:

1

Name of Congressional Aide
(Senator Graham's Office)

ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

- **These types of letters require immediate action. Normally, 72-hour suspenses are given in Department of the Army and Headquarters, USACE.**
- **Always state the facts/findings of your research.**
- **Stick to the issue. Do not give additional explanations.**
- **Cite appropriate statute when applicable.**
- **Find out where correspondence should be directed. Congressmen and Senators maintain two offices (One in Washington, DC and the other in their home state). You may want to call either office and ask where to address correspondence.**
- **Always CF the Senator or Congressman's aide in all correspondence.**
- **Maintain a copy of congressional actions for your files and future follow-up actions.**
- **Congressional responses are never signed below the Director level.**
- **Addressing correspondence to a U.S. Senator**

**Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

Dear Senator (Surname)

Sincerely,

Or

**Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senator
(Local Address)**

Dear Senator (Surname)

Sincerely,

- **Addressing correspondence to a Congressman/Representative**

**Honorable (Full Name)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515**

Dear Mr. (Surname)

Sincerely,

Or

**Honorable (Full Name)
Representative in Congress
(Local Address)**

Dear Mr. (Surname)

Sincerely,

Style and Preferences for use in preparing correspondence: Whenever referring to Congressmen in his letters use their full names with first name in the familiar form. For example:..I am sending similar letters to Senator Bob Graham and Congressman Cliff Stearns.

Do not use one-sentence paragraphs. Check letters carefully (especially Letters going to several members of congress with a standard template for the body of the letter).

Do NOT use "This is in response to your letter of ..." to open a letter. Instead, use "Thank you for your letter of May 25, 1998, (supporting) (regarding) (seeking information on) the end of the star dredging project." Close letters with something nice like "Thank you for your letter and interest in this matter" or some equivalent.



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MILLINGTON TENNESSEE 38054-5005

CEFC-L (MARKS NUMBER)

DATE

1

2

MEMORANUM THRU Deputy Director, Resource Management

1

FOR Director, USACE Finance Center

1

SUBJECT: A Single-Addressed "Thru Memorandum"

1

2

1. Use a "THRU" memorandum to keep the THRU addressee informed or to give the opportunity to comment or approve. Prepare a single addressee THRU memorandum as shown in this figure.

2. If no comment is made, the THRU addressee will line out the THRU address and place his/her initials and the date to the right of the appropriate address. The THRU addressee may write "concur", "noted," or other short remarks by their address.

3. When more than one THRU address is needed, refer to AR 25-50, figure 2-12.

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BETH KRAUS
Deputy Director, Administration

NOTE: If a Deputy Director signs a "thru" outside of the UFC, FOR THE DIRECTOR authority line will be used.



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FINANCE CENTER
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON TENNESSEE 38054-5005**

CEFC-L (MARKS FILE NUMBER)

DATE

1

2

MEMORANDUM FOR

1

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND COMPTROLLER

ASSISTANT DCSOPS FOR FORCE DEVELOPMENT

1

SUBJECT: Request for Exception for COB Submission

1

2

1. As part of Public Law 104-206, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop a plan for reorganization to reduce the number of operating divisions.

2. A plan to implement this directed reorganization was approved by the Secretary of the Army and the law requires the Corps to begin implementation of this plan on 1 Apr 97.

3. Request to be exempted from the annual Command Operating Budget Submission during this time. A late submission will be prepared after reorganization.

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STEVEN COAKLEY
Deputy Chief of Staff for
Resource Management

HELPFUL HINTS IN CREATING CORRESPONDENCE

- **Use Spell Check and have a co-worker help proof your document.**
- **Always assume your reader knows nothing about the subject matter. This will help bring clarity to instructions.**
- **Staff your guidance.** Our writing is a reflection of who we are. As a team, we can enhance our professionalism by producing quality work.
- **Review the Timeless Writing Guide Principles:**
 - **Organize your writing** – Write short disciplined sentences.

Practice Natural Writing – Use personal pronouns and watch your tone.

Write Compactly – Prune wordy expressions and free smothered verbs.

Avoid Passive Voice – Learn to spot passive voice and substitute active verbs.

HQUSACE OFFICE SYMBOLS

Effective 1 Jul 99

CURRENT TITLE	NEW TITLE	ABBREVIATION	OFFICE SYMBOL
Executive Office			
Commanding General / Chief of Engineers	No change	CG / COE	CECG / DAEN-ZA
Deputy Commanding General / Deputy Chief of Engineers / Chief of Staff	No change	DCG / DCOE / CS	CEDC / DAEN-ZB / CECS
Deputy Commanding General for Reserve Components	No change	DCG-R	CEDC-R
Command Sergeant Major	No change	CSM	CESM
Command Chaplain	No change	Chaplain	CECG-C
Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations / Chief, Security, Plans, and Operations	No change No change	DCSOPS ⁴ SPO	CECS-O CECS-O
Deputy Chief of Staff for Support	No change	DCSSPT	CECS-S
Secretary of the General Staff ³	No change	SGS	CECS-X
Protocol Office	No change	Protocol	CECS-XP
Office of Congressional Affairs	No change	OCA	CECS-C
Commander's Planning Group	No change	CPG	CECPG
Office of the Chief of Engineers	No change	OCE-P	DAEN-ZC
Office of the Engineer Inspector General	No change	IG	CEIG
Directorate of Civil Works	Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works	DCGCW	CECW
Directorate of Military Programs	Deputy Commanding General for Military Programs	DCGMP	CEMP

CURRENT TITLE	NEW TITLE	ABBREVIATION	OFFICE SYMBOL
Directorate of Real Estate	<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Real Estate</i>	<i>DCSRE</i>	<i>CERE</i>
<i>Directorate of Research and Development</i>	<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development</i>	<i>DCSRD</i>	<i>CERD</i>
<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Resource Management</i>	No change	DCSRM	CERM
<i>Directorate of Human Resources</i>	<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Human Resources</i>	<i>DCSHR</i>	<i>CEHR</i>
<i>Office of the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting</i>	No change	PARC	CEPR
<i>Office of the Chief Counsel</i>	No change	CC	CECC
Directorate of Information Management	<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Corporate Information</i>	<i>DCSCI</i>	<i>CECI</i>
Office of Interagency & Intergovernmental Support	<i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Planning & Business Development⁵</i>		
Directorate of Logistics	Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics	ACSLOG	CELO
Office of Public Affairs	No change	PAO	CEPA
Office of Small Business	No change	SB	CESB
Office of Equal Employment Opportunity	No change	EEO	CEEO
Audit Office	Internal Review Office	IR	CEIR
Safety and Occupational Health Office	No change	SO	CESO
Office of History	No change	HO	CEHO

Notes:

1. **Bold** – General Officer; *Italics* – Senior Executive Service
2. Not included – Boards, Commissions, and field organizations (e.g., Mississippi River Commission, Coastal Engineering Research Board, Board of Contract Appeals, MSCs, 249th Engineer Battalion, HECSA, FOAs, etc.)
3. SGS includes staff action control, protocol, admin services to Executive Office.
4. DCSOPS is dual-hatted as Chief, Security, Plans, and Operations, which includes Security & Law Enforcement, USACE Operations Center (UOC), and Plans & Doctrine.
5. CESP to be established upon fill of DCSSP position; CESP includes former CECS-I and CERM-S
6. DDCW and DDMP will retain former titles (i.e., Deputy Director for Civil Works); all other Deputy Directors are re-titled as Assistant Deputy Chiefs of Staff

Appendix A – HQUSACE Office Symbols