

Quiz: Do you know about OPT-IN requirements for promotion?

Question: Who is required to OPT-In for promotion consideration?

1. All Officers
2. No one, you just get looked at when your number comes up
3. New Accessions who are In-Zone with less than one year on Active Duty

Correct Answer: Choice #3. If you are a New Accession or work with New Accessions, continue reading to learn the details of this requirement and process.

Who must OPT-IN for promotion consideration? This applies to individuals who are In-Zone for promotion but who have been on Active Duty for less than one year at the time the promotion board is held. In the Medical Corps community, we most often see this situation for our Lieutenants who have been in a reserve status (i.e., HPSP) while completing medical school and then go on to complete a long residency under the Navy Active Duty Delay for Specialist (NADDS) program. Typically, the residency must have taken at least 4 years to complete. This amount of time means the individual may now In-Zone for promotion consideration.

Why must the individual OPT-IN for promotion consideration? Officers in this category are automatically DEFERRED from promotion consideration. This is the Navy's method of protecting the Officer from a Failure to Select for promotion. Because they have been in the Navy for such a short time, their Navy personnel record does not contain much information and the individual may not compete well against his/her peers for promotion. The record likely will contain only one FITREP dtd 31 January (covering approximately 6 months after reporting for Active Duty). In order to be considered for promotion, the individual must OPT-IN.

How is the individual informed of this need to OPT-IN? All new accession orders contain verbiage directing the individual to determine their promotion eligibility status and what steps to take to OPT-IN. The verbiage reads as follows:

“- INFORM MEMBER THAT PLACEMENT ON THE ACTIVE DUTY LIST MAY HAVE RENDERED THE MEMBER ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION IN-ZONE OR ABOVE-ZONE FOR A PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD WITHIN ONE YEAR OF ENTERING ACTIVE DUTY, IN WHICH CASE MEMBER WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DEFERRED FOR PROMOTION CONSIDERATION UNDER SECNAVINST 1420.1B, UNLESS MEMBER SPECIFICALLY REQUESTS TO BE CONSIDERED. POINT OF CONTACT IS PERS-802 DSN 882-4537 OR COMMERCIAL (901) 874-4537.”

How do I find out if I am In-Zone for promotion? Annually, in December, the Navy will release a NAVADMIN detailing the promotion zones. Officers should go to the Navy Personnel Command NAVADMIN library website and check to see if given their lineal number, they are In-Zone for promotion. Officers should feel free to contact their respective Detailer for assistance.

NAVADMIN Library Link:

<https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/messages/NAVADMINS/Pages/default.aspx>

How to Find your Lineal (Precedence) Number:

1. Log in to NSIPS.
2. Select View Personal Information.
3. Select Member Data Summary.
4. Look at the bottom of the page for your “Precedence Number.”

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How would the officer OPT-IN for promotion consideration? Remember this is rare and only applies to a few individuals. Officers with less than one year of Active Duty service, once determining they are In-Zone or Above-Zone should call PERS-802 to request to be considered at this phone number (901) 874-4537.

Possible outcomes and considerations for accepting the deferment. Officers who accept the deferment (by taking no action) will simply not be considered for promotion. Their records will not be reviewed by the promotion board. Their record will NOT reflect any failure of selection. At the following year's board, the officer will be considered for promotion and if selected, will likely pin on rank earlier than peers because they will have more senior lineal numbers and be considered to have been Above Zone. While Medical Corps officers generally perform well at LCDR selection boards, officers may want to accept the deferment if they have not been able to update their personnel record, did not receive a very strong fitrep, or would like more time to strengthen their record.

Possible outcomes and considerations for OPTing-IN for promotion consideration. Officers who call PERS-802 and OPT-IN for promotion will be considered amongst the peer group. If selected, they will pin on the higher rank according to the promotion phasing plan. If not selected, their record will be marked as a "Failure to Select" and they will again be considered for promotion at the following year's board. In the event, they fail to select a second time, the officer may be either processed for resignation or retained on Active Duty to complete education/training obligations.

In general, Medical Corps officers do very well at a LCDR promotion board. Historically, the promotion opportunity has been 100% meaning, all eligible officers may be offered promotion. The precept historically instructs the board to promote all fully qualified officers. Officers who are able to update their records, and who have received a strong fitrep may want to consider Opting-In for promotion consideration.

How should an officer engage their senior leadership? Officers should discuss whether or not to OPT-IN with their senior leadership. If deciding to OPT-IN, ensure your leadership is aware and can work to write your FITREP in the strongest possible way that reflects your true performance and potential. Discuss with your leadership, Detailer, and mentors about whether or not you want to consider writing a letter to the board given the paucity of information in your record.

What should senior leaders do? Know the careers of the officers working for you. Remember, these are officers with approximately 6 months in the Navy, they likely do not understand the ins and outs of this Navy policy and promotion boards in general. Identify new accessions who may fall into this category of automatic deferment. Ensure they are educated on the situation and are informed about which decision to make. If the officer decides to opt-in pay careful attention to the details of the FITREP, it will likely be the only FITREP the board has available. Remember, these officers have done exactly what the Navy instructed them to do; that is, complete a residency and then report to Active Duty as a staff physician. Their records are compared against individuals who have done the same career track only through completion of a Navy residency and therefore have years of FITREPS on file. Other peer individuals under consideration have completed GMO/FS/UMO and likely have a robust record documenting performance.

As always, for any concerns regarding promotion or career management, officers should feel free to contact their Detailer.