



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

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WHITE LETTER NO. 4-17

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: All Commanding Generals  
All Commanding Officers  
All Officers in Charge

Subj: POLICY FOR TRAVEL TO OFFICIAL CEREMONIES

Ref: (a) Joint Travel Regulations  
(b) DoDM 4500.36 (Acquisition, Management and Use of DoD Non-Tactical Vehicles)  
(c) DoDI 1327.06 (Leave and Liberty Policies and Procedures)  
(d) MCO 1050.3J (Regulations for Leave, Liberty, and Administrative Absence )  
(e) DoDD 4500.56 (DoD Policy on the Use of Government Aircraft and Air Travel)  
(f) MCO P3040.4E (Marine Corps Casualty Procedures Manual)

1. This white letter sets forth Marine Corps policy for travel to official ceremonies. The policy is intended to balance the Marine Corps' interest in official participation in such events with the requirement for good stewardship of government resources. Consistent with the references, travel to official ceremonies will adhere to the guidelines below.

2. Official ceremonies, such as changes of command, funerals, and retirement ceremonies are time-honored customs of the Marine Corps and of military service generally. Such events recognize the selfless service of individual Marines, sailors and civilians to our Nation, and bind together units, as well as communities, both military and civilian. Accordingly, attendance by an official Marine Corps representative is important to our mission, and, when an appropriate local representative would otherwise be unable to attend an official ceremony, travel at government expense may be authorized in accordance with reference (a) and this policy letter.

3. Official Travel. Generally, travel<sup>1</sup> to serve as the Marine Corps' official representative at official ceremonies at government expense is authorized only for those "officially participating" in the ceremony. Official participation includes making presentations, speaking, or being officially detailed to represent the Marine Corps at the event. In some cases, the official representative may be accompanied by an aide, command sergeant major (or similar position), or other essential personnel.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this order, "travel" includes both TAD travel and local transportation by non-tactical vehicle (GOV). Per reference (b), ground transportation via USG-owned/leased vehicles may be provided to military and civilian personnel officially participating in "public ceremonies, military field demonstrations, and parades directly related to official activities." Mere attendance at an official ceremony does not warrant the use of USG-owned/leased vehicles. Mere attendees may ride in a GOV with an official participant on a space available basis.

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a. Changes of Command. Unless detailed as an official Marine Corps representative for a change of command, personnel traveling to attend a change of command are considered to be traveling in an unofficial, personal capacity. Official travel is authorized for commanders and their senior enlisted advisors to attend their units' changes of command.

b. Retirements. Official travel may be authorized when a current command relationship exists between an officer presiding over a retirement ceremony and the individual who is the subject of the ceremony. A past professional relationship with the retiring individual is not sufficient justification for official travel. Pursuant to references (c) and (d), permissive temporary additional duty (PTAD) not to exceed three days may be authorized for an unofficial traveler who will preside over a retirement ceremony. PTAD is limited to one presiding official per retirement ceremony.

c. Funerals. For military funeral honors rendered by units other than Marine Barracks Washington, reference (f) sets forth the optimum number and composition of personnel: six body bearers; a seven person firing detail and a noncommissioned officer in charge; a bugler (or substitute, such as a civilian musician); an officer or staff noncommissioned officer in charge of equal or higher grade than the deceased (if possible) to act as the CMC's representative and present the burial/memorial flag to the next of kin (NOK); and a military chaplain. Ordinarily, personnel attending beyond that number and composition are considered to be traveling in an unofficial, personal capacity.

4. Unofficial Travel. Government funds may not be expended to support unofficial travel. Pursuant to reference (e), an unofficial traveler may accompany a DoD senior official on MILAIR, but the unofficial traveler must reimburse the government at the commercial full-coach fare.

5. Approval Authority. This policy letter provides guidance to approving officials regarding travel to officially participate in ceremonies, where attendance by an official Marine Corps representative is deemed important to our mission, and, when an appropriate local representative would otherwise be unable to attend; it does not provide blanket authorization for official representation at all official ceremonies. The good stewardship requirements of reference (a) require authorization for attendance at government expense to be granted on a case-by-case basis. Accordingly, requests for travel consistent with this policy will only be approved when travel will be conducted in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, which may include scheduling multiple official events during a trip to avoid the requirement for disparate trips. Requests for travel to official ceremonies not clearly contemplated by this policy letter will be routed to the Director, Marine Corps Staff for approval.



Robert B. Neller