



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON  
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MCO 1500.61  
C 461

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1500.61

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE CORPS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Ref: (a) Marine Corps Manual, 1980  
(b) MCDP-1  
(c) Marine Corps Leadership Development website:  
<https://www.mcu.usmc.mil/sites/leadership/>  
(d) MARADMIN 162/10  
(e) NAVMC DIR 5040.6H  
(f) MCO 1553.4B  
(g) MCRP 6-11D  
(h) MCO P1610.7F  
(i) NAVMC 2795  
(j) MCO 1754.6C  
(k) MCO 1754.9A  
(l) MCWP 6-11  
(m) MCRP 6-11B  
(n) MCO 1320.11F  
(o) SECNAV M-5210.1  
(p) SECNAVINST 5211.5E

Encl: (1) Active Component Minimum Coaching/Counseling  
Guidelines  
(2) Reserve Component Minimum Coaching/Counseling  
Guidelines

1. Situation

a. The Marine Corps makes Marines, wins battles and ultimately returns quality citizens back to society. This Order builds on that legacy and the objective of Marine Corps leadership as stated in the Marine Corps Manual: "to develop the leadership qualities of Marines to enable them to assume progressively greater responsibilities to the Marine Corps and society" (reference (a)).

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b. The process of making Marines begins at entry-level training. This is a life-changing, transformative event built upon tough training and guided by quality leaders. The transformation is sustained by individual leaders who sacrificially invest in the development of Marines and Sailors. While particular resources and methods vary over time and must be adapted to the individual and the situation, the spirit in which leaders prepare their people for future challenges was captured by our 13th Commandant, Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune, who likened the senior/subordinate relationship to that of a teacher and scholar or even a father and son.

c. Our commitment to making Marines is inextricably linked to our warfighting philosophy as described in reference (b). Maneuver warfare places a high priority on decentralized execution and exploiting opportunities in the absence of explicit orders. It requires leaders of high moral character and professional competence who demonstrate sound and timely judgment in all situations. This method of warfighting depends on mutual understanding, implicit communication and commands characterized by discipline, trust, and esprit de corps.

2. Cancellation. NAVMC DIR 1500.58 and MCO 1500.58.

3. Mission. Equip commanders and subordinate leaders with the training and resources to develop their Marines and Sailors personally and professionally for future success.

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent

(a) Purpose. To provide a framework for developing leaders from within who are equipped for a life of service to our Corps and Country.

(b) Method. This Order requires commanders to implement a deliberate plan for developing Marines and assigned Sailors. It directs commanders to existing leadership resources at the unit, local, and Service level and places a priority on regular coaching and counseling designed to cultivate each Marine's potential.

(c) Endstate. Leaders at all levels regularly engage in the personal and professional development of their Marines and Sailors to prepare them to assume greater responsibilities throughout their careers and lives. This commitment to leader development results in more effective warfighting organizations and strengthens the leadership fabric of the Marine Corps.

(2) Concept of Operations

(a) Marine Corps leaders mature over the course of their careers through a combination of training, education and on-the-job experience. Formal training and education form an important foundation; however, Marines primarily learn leadership by serving in billets and environments where they must lead. For this reason, this Order is devoted primarily to facilitating the process of developing leaders in our regiments, groups, battalions and squadrons. Commanders, leaders and every individual Marine and Sailor have important roles in this process.

(b) Functional Areas of Leadership Development. The following six functional areas ensure a comprehensive approach to leader development and provide a focus of effort for conducting training and coaching/counseling sessions. Reference (c) contains a more detailed description of each functional area and supporting resources.

1. Fidelity. Addresses Marine Corps and unit heritage, core values, ethics and Marine Corps leadership traits and principles.

2. Fighter. Addresses professional and career development, including Professional Military Education (PME), Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)/Navy Enlisted Code (NEC)/Navy Officer Billet Classification (NOBC) skills, Marine Corps Common Skills, interpersonal communication skills and on- and off-duty education.

3. Fitness. Addresses the areas of mind, body, spirit, and social.

4. Family. Addresses relationships, marriage, parenting and family readiness.

5. Finances. Addresses fundamentals of personal finance to include budgeting, saving, debt management and investing.

6. Future. Addresses goal-setting, time management and transitioning back to society.

b. Subordinate Element Missions

(1) Commanding Officers (Lieutenant Colonel and above)  
(Main Effort)

(a) Establish a command MCLD program and publish a command MCLD order.

(b) Incorporate the six functional areas of leadership development into unit activities, such as training events.

(c) Identify and assign (as required) command "key leaders" to act as advisors and instructors for leadership development training as described in paragraph 4c(4).

(d) Maintain a repository of unit-specific, MCLD-related documents, forms, templates, orders and references. Be prepared to present said material during inspections. Commanding Officers may elect to assign a MCLD Coordinator to coordinate and manage MCLD efforts within the command.

(e) Follow minimum coaching/counseling guidelines and ensure documentation is maintained on assigned Marines and Sailors in accordance with paragraph 5b of this Order. Additionally, ensure regulations regarding storage and transfer of personally identifiable information (PII) are in accordance with reference (d) and (p).

(2) Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC)

(a) Ensure the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities (DOTMILPF) associated with this Order support and align with other leadership initiatives.

(b) Develop and maintain a MCLD Functional Area Checklist and coordinate with Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC) for implementation. Develop and maintain MCLD website and leadership resources.

(3) Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Ensure appropriate resources are provided to support unit MCLD programs.

(4) Commanders, Marine Corps Installations Command, and Marine Forces

(a) Provide direction and support to subordinate unit MCLD programs and initiatives.

(b) Assess the quality and effectiveness of unit MCLD programs through the Commanding General's Inspection Program (CGIP).

(5) IGMC

(a) Integrate a MCLD Functional Area Checklist into the CGIP.

(b) Inspect MCLD during command and unit inspections per reference (e).

c. Coordinating Instructions

(1) Definitions

(a) Coaching. Coaching is a process of on-going observation and encouragement of a Marine's personal and professional growth. As an integral function of day-to-day leadership, coaching provides feedback, often on an informal basis. It also involves documented goal setting, which plays an important role in helping Marines and Sailors achieve their full potential.

(b) Counseling. Counseling is a process of two-way communication between a senior and junior to help achieve or maintain the highest possible level of performance. Counseling reinforces good performance, corrects deficiencies, transmits guidance/standards and provides direction to subordinate development.

(c) Mentoring. Mentoring is a less formal process than coaching and counseling. It involves a voluntary, developmental relationship between a person of greater and lesser experience and is characterized by mutual trust and respect. Mentoring relationships often occur outside the chain of command and can be initiated by either a senior or subordinate. Such relationships often endure beyond a single tour of duty and provide an important source of encouragement and perspective. Commanders are encouraged to assist Marines and Sailors in the process of mentorship.

(2) PME. PME and professional reading are critical components of leadership development, as outlined in reference (f). Individually, Marines and Sailors benefit when they pursue PME with the same vigor as physical training.

(3) Transitions. Throughout their careers, Marines and Sailors undergo transitions such as, permanent change of station moves, assignment to temporary additional duty and eventual return to civilian life. The transition a first-term Marine or Sailor makes from entry-level training to MOS/NEC/NOBC school to their first unit is particularly critical and often sets the tone for the rest of their career. Reference (g) identifies check-in as a critical factor affecting transformation. Leaders need to focus on transitions as "danger areas" and assist Marines and Sailors in negotiating them successfully through proactive engagement. To help mitigate the risks associated with check-in to a new unit, consideration should be made to ensure that upon arrival and prior to the first non-duty day if possible, new joins are adequately integrated into the unit.

(4) Key Leaders. Key leaders are Marines, Sailors or professionals within the unit or from external agencies/commands who have particular skill sets, experience, certification and/or personal desire to serve their command in the area of leadership development. Regardless of their background, it is essential that all unit key leaders be individuals of high character and professionalism approved by their Commanding Officer. Their contributions may be in the form of advice or actual execution of unit training in his or her area of expertise. Commanding officers are encouraged to appoint unit key leaders in writing and reporting seniors (RS) shall ensure that Section B of the fitness report reflects the responsibilities associated with this billet in accordance with reference (h).

(5) Assessments. Commanders will utilize surveys, formal inspections and other methods to assess the success of leadership development in their units. Reference (c) contains examples of assessment best practices.

(6) Recognition for Achievement. Recognition for individual and unit excellence in the area of leadership and leadership development through awards and other methods are highly encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, Marine Corps Association and Foundation (MCA&F) Ground Awards, Marine Corps Aviation Association Awards, MCA&F Ground Logistics Awards, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and Navy League Sea Service Awards. Reference (g) contains additional examples.

(7) Best Practices. Share best practices with your chain of command and the Marine Corps University via reference (c). Submissions are encouraged not only by units, but by individuals as well.

(8) Coaching and Counseling Intervals. Enclosures (1) and (2) delineate minimum coaching/counseling intervals for active and reserve components.

(9) Civilians. This Order is not mandatory for Civilians, with the exception of the requirement for civilian supervisors to provide their Marines coaching/counseling at the intervals delineated in enclosures (1) and (2). Of note, Civilians are not restricted from voluntarily participating in individual or unit activities discussed in this Order and are encouraged to do so.

## 5. Administration and Logistics

a. Resources. Reference (c) organizes a wealth of web-based resources and leadership best practices throughout the Marine Corps. References (i) through (n) are excellent resources in the areas of Marine Corps leadership and leadership development.

### b. Documentation and Records Management

(1) An important factor in both coaching and counseling is documenting important aspects of a session. A coaching/counseling jacket provides the means to record past performance, document guidance and provide reference points for subsequent

sessions. An MCLD tab shall be created within the training jacket for each Marine as defined in the unit's MCLD order.

(2) Records created as a result of this Order shall be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration approved disposition SSIC 1610, which states "Destroy when 2 years old or when purpose is served, whichever is earlier," per reference (o) to ensure proper maintenance, accessibility, and preservation regardless of format or medium.

(3) This Order does not specify or mandate the use of certain forms in documenting coaching and counseling; however, reference (c) contains sample forms that align with the spirit and intent of the Order.

(4) The generation, collection or distribution of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), and management of privacy sensitive information shall be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, per reference (d) and (p). Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited.

c. Support. MCLD support is available from the Marine Corps University. Website: reference (c); commercial phone: (703) 432-4688.

## 6. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.

Robert B. Neller  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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## ACTIVE COMPONENT MINIMUM COACHING/COUNSELING GUIDELINES

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Subsequent</b>
Pvt-LCpl	Within 30 days of joining unit	Within 60 days	Every 30 days
Cpl-Gen	Within 30 days of joining unit	Within 90 days	Every 180 days

## Notes:

1) Coaching/counseling for all ranks (Private through General) will begin with a first session within 30 days after the start of the senior/subordinate relationship. For those Marines receiving a fitness report, the RS and the Marine Reported On shall establish and formalize the MRO's billet description during this first session in accordance with reference (h), paragraph 4004.2.c (Marine Corps Performance Evaluation System (PES)).

2) Second and subsequent coaching/counseling intervals generally align with NAVMC 2795 (USMC User's Guide to Counseling). NAVMC 2795 requires intervals for Private-Colonel. The MCLD order expands this to include all Marines (including General Officers).

3) Coaching/counseling may occur more frequently if necessary.

4) Refer at-risk Marines needing assistance to the next level of support via the command's Force Preservation Council (FPC). MARADMINS 647/11, 240/11, and 363/10 govern the FPCs.

## RESERVE COMPONENT MINIMUM COACHING/COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Frequency	First	Second	Subsequent
Pvt-LCpl	Within 2 duty status days of joining unit when both senior and subordinate are present	Within 90 days	Every 90 days
Cpl-Gen	Within 2 duty status days of joining unit when both senior and subordinate are present	Within 90 days	Every 180 days

## Notes:

1) Coaching/counseling for all ranks (Private through General) will begin with a first session within two days after the start of the senior/subordinate relationship. Both individuals must be in a duty status. For those Marines receiving a fitness report, the RS and the MRO shall establish and formalize the MRO's billet description during this first session in accordance with reference (h), paragraph 4004.2.c (Marine Corps PES).

2) Second and subsequent coaching/counseling intervals have been modified from NAVMC 2795 (USMC User's Guide to Counseling) in order to accommodate the reserve component.

3) Coaching/counseling may occur more frequently if necessary.

4) Refer at-risk Marines needing assistance to the next level of support via the command's Force Preservation Council (FPC). MARADMINs 647/11, 240/11, and 363/10 govern the FPCs.