

## **ENGINEER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EPAC) CHARTER**

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# **THE ENGINEER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EPAC) CHARTER**

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On October 25, 1962, the Surgeon General approved the establishment of an Engineer Career Development Program in the United States Public Health Service (PHS) and authorized the formation of an Engineer Career Development Committee (ECDC), through which the Program operated. The Surgeon General also designated the Chief Engineer as professional and administrative advisor to the Program. The original charter, dated March 1963, was revised in March 1977. On September 6, 1983, the Surgeon General revised the name and objectives of the PHS Career Development Committees and recommended a set of standard operating principles to be used by the Committees. Effective January 1, 1988, the Surgeon General revised some policies regarding professional advisory committee (PAC) operations. This Charter incorporates the standard operating principles of the model PAC Charter and implements them for the Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC).

## **(I) MISSION**

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) provides advice and consultation to the Chief Engineer and, through that individual, to the Surgeon General on issues relating to the professional practice and the personnel activities, civil service (CS) and commissioned corps (CC), of the Engineer Category. Throughout this document, the term “engineer” also connotes “architect.” The EPAC provides similar advisory assistance to the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and, upon request, to the Agency and/or Program Heads of the Public Health Service (PHS), and to non-PHS Programs that routinely use PHS personnel.

## **(II) RELATIONSHIP OF THE EPAC TO THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (USPHS)**

In carrying out its’ responsibilities, the EPAC operates in a staff capacity. It does not substitute for line management or in any way exercise the prerogatives of the respective operating programs. While EPAC members are chosen from the respective PHS Agencies and organizations, they neither represent Agency management nor speak for the Agency. They are knowledgeable professionals who represent a cross section of the interests, concerns, and responsibilities of the professionals in Agencies and organizations staffed by PHS personnel.

## **(III) OBJECTIVES**

The EPAC serves in a resource and advisory capacity to assist in the development, coordination, and evaluation of activities related to the professional discipline(s) it represents in the PHS with the specific objectives of:

1. Identifying and facilitating resolution of issues of concern as they relate to the engineer category and related civil service professional disciplines.
2. Assessing PHS personnel needs and assisting in meeting these needs through activities in recruitment, training, utilization, and recognition of officers in the engineer category and related civil service professional disciplines.
3. Developing position papers, statistical reports, and/or guidelines where appropriate, in order to advise and comment on matters relating to the personnel issues and professional practice of the engineer category and related civil service professional disciplines.
4. Promoting the development and utilization of engineers by the PHS and other Government programs.
5. Promoting cooperation and communication among engineers and other health professionals.
6. Promoting all aspects of the engineer category and related civil service professionals throughout the Agencies and Programs of the PHS.
7. Providing liaison among professional disciplines within and among PHS components, and providing advice and consultation to the Agency Heads and operating programs upon request.

#### **(IV) FUNCTIONS**

In carrying out its' broad mission and objectives, the functions of the EPAC shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide general professional advice and recommendations:
  - a. Review and comment on issues referred to the EPAC by the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officer, Agency Heads, and/or Program Heads.
  - b. Deliberate issues, develop findings, and present recommendations to the Surgeon General and/or Chief Engineer.
  - c. Provide advice on the professional aspects of the engineering category, i.e., new technologies, regulations, curricula, roles, etc.
  - d. Provide advice on ethical and professional standards issues.

- e. Review and provide recommendations concerning proposed or needed changes to appointment standards and professional requirements, e.g., licensure required to maintain high quality staff.
2. Act as primary resource for career development:
- a. Advise on CC and CS practices concerning career development.
  - b. Advise on operating practices concerning the appropriate/optimum use of personnel designed to best meet PHS needs and the needs of the individual.
  - c. Advise on issues related to PHS promotion practices and, for commissioned officers, assimilation into the Regular Corps for the engineer category.
  - d. Formulate criteria for the selection of candidates for training and/or other career development options.
  - e. Identify both continuing and long-term intramural/extramural education needs of the engineering category, and identify and recommend training and/or experience opportunities designed to meet these needs.
  - f. Maintain and evaluate the PHS Engineer Mentor Program.
3. Provide advice and assistance on engineer staffing issues:
- a. Assess and project need for the engineer category staffing levels, both CC and CS, throughout the PHS.
  - b. Provide advice on the goals, objectives, and procedures designed to meet the PHS staffing needs.
  - c. Provide guidance for recruitment to the short-term student affiliation programs (COSTEP, summer students, etc.).
  - d. Develop, and/or review and critique, engineer category-specific PHS recruitment materials, procedures, and programs.
  - e. Help establish networks of current, as well as former, PHS professionals, who can assist and facilitate recruitment activities.
  - f. Provide guidance to approved PHS recruiters concerning the recruitment of qualified candidates to the engineering category and related civil service professional disciplines.



**(V)**

**MEMBERSHIP**

1. **Basic Eligibility Requirements:** Members must be full-time CC or CS personnel, at the time they are nominated and appointed to the EPAC, and meet the eligibility requirements for initial appointment to the engineer category and personnel systems. In addition, all CC Personnel must meet the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) basic readiness standards at the time they are nominated and appointed to the EPAC and throughout their term of service on the EPAC.
2. Staff from the Office of the Secretary (OS) and the Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS) may serve on a PAC providing that they recuse themselves from voting on issues and decisions that may have the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to their duty assignments.
3. **Size of the PAC:** The EPAC shall have no fewer than 7 and no more than 20 voting members.
4. **Organizational Representation:** In order to provide the range of experiences and perspectives necessary for addressing issues before the EPAC, every effort must be made to have the broadest representation possible among all agencies that are routinely staffed by Commissioned Corps Officers of the engineer category.
5. **Geographic Considerations:** The EPAC will have, as voting members, at least two individuals whose regular duty station is geographically removed by a distance of 75 or more miles from the Washington Metropolitan Area.
6. **Gender and Minority Representation:** The EPAC will make a concerted effort to include both men and women and racial and ethnic minorities in the composition of its membership.
7. **Personnel System:** The EPAC will not consist entirely of CC or entirely of CS personnel.
8. **Professional Seniority:** The EPAC will have as a voting member a minimum of one individual who at the time of appointment to the EPAC has less than 5 years of professional experience.
9. **Professional Discipline Composition:** Cognizant of the fact that the EPAC is structured around the PHS Commissioned Corps defined professional categories which encompass more than one major professional discipline, to the extent possible the EPAC should contain at least one voting member who possesses the requisite credentials for each of the respective sub-disciplines that make up the category, i.e., at least one engineer and one architect. Diversity among the engineering disciplines representing the EPAC is also desired. Upon request by the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG), or recommendation by the Chief

Engineer or the EPAC, the EPAC may provide information and/or representation to related professional disciplines which are not specifically represented by other PACs. This may be done through voting or ex-officio membership for a member of that related profession, or by other means selected by the EPAC.

10. Ex-Officio Members (non-voting): The Chief Engineer is an ex-officio member of the EPAC [see IX (1)]. The former chair may serve 1 additional year as an ex-officio member of the EPAC [see VIII (3)]. The EPAC may identify other individuals and request that they serve as ex-officio members.
11. Liaison Members (non-voting): The EPAC may identify individuals to serve in a liaison capacity to provide information or assist with activities, e.g., staff from the OSG or DCP.

## **(VI) NOMINATION PROCESS**

1. Annually, the EPAC will solicit, through newsletters and other appropriate means, nominations for vacancies on the EPAC from all individuals in the engineer category and represented civil service professional disciplines. Self-nominations will be solicited. The names will be transmitted by the CPO to the nominee's respective Agency Head who may endorse the nominee(s) or provide alternate or additional nominations meeting the general representation requirements demonstrated by the original nominees. The Agency Head's response will be reviewed by the EPAC and CPO who will identify, by name, those highly qualified to fill anticipated vacancies. A final list of nominees will be sent by the CPO to the Surgeon General for selection and approval.
2. This nomination process shall be conducted so that the final nomination package is available for the Surgeon General's consideration no less than 60 calendar days prior to the expiration of the regular term of the member.
3. Should the need arise to fill an unexpired term, a similar process used for regular term appointments will be followed, except that the nomination package will be conveyed to the Surgeon General as soon as possible for action.

## **(VII) TERM OF APPOINTMENT**

1. Terms will be staggered so that approximately one-third of the members' terms will expire annually. The EPAC operational year will begin January 1.
2. Once a member has accumulated a lifetime total of 6 years of service on the EPAC, they are not eligible for reappointment. Terms of office may be served consecutively at the discretion of the EPAC.
3. Alternates: Cognizant of the demands of the member's primary work responsibilities and the EPACs need to conduct business, the EPAC has the option of establishing procedures to allow each voting member to appoint, and

inform the Chairperson of, a single individual who can serve as his/her alternate. The Chief Engineer must concur with the selection of the alternate. Such alternates shall have voting privileges when serving in the place of the primary member. It is the responsibility of the primary EPAC member to keep the alternate fully informed and knowledgeable of the EPAC's activities. Any Agency clearance or approval requirements for travel/per diem will have to be handled within the Agency by the primary EPAC member. Service as an alternate to a voting member will not be included in these service calculations, but a member who has completed six years of service may not become an alternate during the following three years.

Attendance: Any member of the EPAC who frequently misses meetings (e.g., two consecutive meetings or four meetings in a year) without just cause can, at the discretion of the EPAC, be asked to voluntarily resign from the EPAC, or the EPAC can initiate a request to the Surgeon General to terminate said membership and so inform the Agency Head. Provision of an alternate by an EPAC member does not solely constitute just cause in fulfilling the attendance requirements.

#### **(VIII) CHAIRPERSON, CHAIR-ELECT**

1. The Chairperson will be elected by the voting membership of the EPAC.
2. Term of the Chairperson: The Chairperson will serve a 1-year term.
3. Term of appointment: If the term of the Chairperson coincides with expiration of that individual's membership on the EPAC, they may serve 1 additional year as an ex-officio member of the EPAC provided the Agency Head is informed and concurs with the extension, unless reappointed as a regular member per the provisions of Section (VI).
4. The Chair-elect will be elected by the voting membership of the EPAC.
5. Term of the Chair-elect: The Chair-elect will serve a 1-year term as Chair-elect followed by a 1-year term as Chair.

#### **(IX) CHIEF PROFESSIONAL OFFICER (CPO)**

1. EPAC Membership: The Chief Engineer shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the EPAC.
2. Relationship with the EPAC: All output of the EPAC, be it correspondence, reports, minutes of its proceedings, or other, must be transmitted through the CPO who, as he/she may deem appropriate, may provide concurring or non-concurring comments but may not stop or unduly delay such transmittals.

#### **(X) OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

1. The EPAC shall develop its own internal operations and procedures (e.g. bylaws). These shall include, at the minimum provisions covering the following:
  - a. Operational year: Determine the day and month chosen as the beginning of its operational year.
  - b. Frequency of meeting: Meetings will be held once per quarter at a minimum.
  - c. Agenda: A meeting agenda and appropriate background material is to be made available to the members.
2. Records and Reporting:
  - a. Minutes of each EPAC meeting will be developed by the Executive Secretary and approved by the EPAC members.
  - b. Minutes and reports of the EPAC will be distributed in accord with Item IV (5) (cC) FUNCTIONS.
  - c. The EPAC must establish a system to maintain a permanent file of the official minutes and reports of the EPAC.
3. Executive Secretary: The Executive Secretary must be a member of the category but is not required to be a voting EPAC member. The Executive Secretary is appointed by the Chairperson. If the Executive Secretary is not a member of the EPAC, he or she will be considered an ex-officio member.
4. Quorum: A Quorum consists of at least 50 percent of the EPAC voting membership. An alternate attending in lieu of the member shall be counted in determining the quorum requirement.
5. Voting: Where voting is required or appropriate (e.g., election of the Chairperson), action will be determined by the simple majority of those voting members present.
6. Subcommittees: Where the EPAC elects to establish standing or ad hoc committees, said membership may include non-EPAC members provided that the chairman of the committee is a voting member of the EPAC.

(XI) CHARTER UPDATE AND APPROVAL

1. The EPAC's charter must be reviewed and approved by the Surgeon General.
2. Subsequent modifications also require the review and approval of the Surgeon

General.

3. The EPAC is required to review and, if required, update its charter at least every three years.

The initial charter was recommended February 12, 1963, by the Engineer Career Development Committee (ECDC). This is the ninth revision of the charter recommended by either the ECDC or its successor, the EPAC.

Recommended revisions were previously made in:

March 1977  
October 1983  
May 1986  
March 1988  
August 1988  
October 1991  
May 1994  
October 1997