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Law

**APPOINTMENT TO AND ASSUMPTION OF
COMMAND**

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OPR: HQ USAF/JAG (Maj Doug Murdock)

Certified by: HQ USAF/JAG
(Mr. H. Gordon Wilder)

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This instruction implements AFPD 51-6, *Civil Law for Organizational Activities*. It explains appointment to and assumption of command and tells how to determine command responsibility of and for Air Force military personnel. It applies to members and organizations in the Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard when in federal service.

This instruction requires maintaining information subject to the Privacy Act of 1974 authorized by 10 U.S.C. § 8013 and Executive Order 9397. System of records notice F036 AF PC C, Military Personnel Records System, applies.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.

This revision clarifies the rules for and authority of active duty officers to command Air Force organizations; further explains that civilian employees may not command; clarifies eligibility criteria for appointment to and assumption of command; extends delegation of appointment authority to commanders of Air Force components in a joint force, and clarifies the rules pertaining to appointment authority within a joint force; reinstates provisions implementing statutory restrictions on exercise of command authority by medical, dental, veterinary, and medical service officers and nurses; and provides revised guidance on the completion of AF Form 35, *Request and Authorization for Assumption of/Appointment to Command*. Word changes and reordering and renumbering of certain paragraphs have been made to clarify the text. A bar (|) indicates revisions (other than minor word changes or paragraph renumbering) from the previous edition.

1. Command Authority:

1.1. Command is exercised by virtue of office and the special assignment of officers holding certain military grades and who are thereby eligible by law to exercise command.

1.2. An officer may command an organization to which he or she is assigned or attached, in which he or she is present for duty, and for which he or she is otherwise eligible and authorized to command.

1.2.1. An officer is assigned to duty in an organization for considerations of command through permanent-change-of-station (PCS) orders or permanent change of assignment (PCA) orders, and may be attached to an organization for considerations of command by temporary duty (TDY) orders or detail if such is specifically ordered by competent authority. Temporary duty with or detail to an organization does not entitle an officer to assume command unless competent authority specifically appoints the officer to command.

1.2.2. An officer need not be physically present to be “present for duty” for the purposes of command. An officer may command so long as the officer is assigned to the organization, has properly assumed or been appointed to command, and is in reasonable communication with the organization. Being in a leave status and/or temporarily away from the unit commanded does not automatically result in loss of command authority.

1.3. In addition to the traditional principles governing appointment to and assumption of command as established by law, regulation, custom, and policy, a basic responsibility exists for all officers to assume command temporarily in an emergency or when essential to good order and discipline.

1.4. An officer who is assigned to duty in a unit which he or she is eligible to command but which is commanded by another officer of the same grade, but of lower rank, is subject to the command authority of the officer of lower rank. However, an officer cannot command another officer of higher grade, who is otherwise eligible to command, whether by assumption or appointment.

1.5. The Senior Air Force Officer (SAFO) of a unified command, combined task force, or activity outside the Air Force is a commander for purposes of imposing nonjudicial punishment on those Air Force members assigned to that organization even if the Air Force element of that organization has not been formally designated as a unit and the SAFO has not formally assumed or been appointed to command.

1.6. The officer serving as the Commander, Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR) for a given contingency operation exercises command authority over those Air Force members deployed in support of that contingency, to include nonjudicial punishment authority.

1.7. Enlisted members cannot exercise command.

1.8. Although they may hold supervisory positions and provide work direction, civilians cannot command Air Force units.

1.9. A retired officer has no right to command except when on active duty (10 U.S.C. § 750).

1.10. With the exception of paragraph **5.1.1.** below, only Air Force officers may command Air Force organizations. This restriction addresses Air Force organizations only; it is not intended as a limitation on the rules governing joint service commands.

1.11. Frocked officers have no legal authority by virtue of their frocked grade (10 U.S.C. § 777). Command succession questions must be resolved using the frocked officer’s permanent grade, not his or her frocked grade.

2. Succession to Command. An officer succeeds to command in one of two ways: (1) By assuming command, or (2) By appointment to command.

2.1. Assumption of and appointment to command can be either permanent or temporary.

2.2. Assumption of command is a unilateral act taken under authority of law and regulation.

2.3. Appointment to command occurs by an act of the President, the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF), or by his or her delegee(s) (See paragraph 2.6.).

2.4. Assumption of Command. When not otherwise prohibited by superior competent authority, command passes by operation of law to the senior military officer assigned to an organization who is present for duty and eligible to command. The authority to assume command is inherent in that officer's status as the senior officer in both grade and rank. The term "grade" equates to the office held (Captain, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, etc.). The term "rank" is generally used to denote seniority within a grade, although it also refers to the relative precedence among the different grades. [See 10 U.S.C. § 101(b)(7) and (8)].

2.4.1. Assumption of command ensures that there is no break or vacancy in the command of an Air Force unit, even absent official action by superior competent authority.

2.4.2. An officer can assume command only of an organization to which that officer is assigned by competent authority (except under circumstances described in paragraph 1.6.).

2.4.3. When an officer is assigned to a subordinate organization, that officer is assigned to all superior organizations of which the subordinate organization is a component.

2.5. Appointment to Command. An officer assigned to an organization, present for duty, eligible to command the organization, and senior or equal in grade to all other officers in the organization may be appointed to command the organization. An officer may also be appointed to command any organization to which he or she is attached for purposes of command by TDY orders or detail, is otherwise eligible to command, and is physically able to command. These latter situations occur when an officer is sent TDY to command a unit, is detailed elsewhere on an installation to command a unit, is to be dual-hatted, will undertake the command duties of the gaining unit before being relieved from duty in a losing unit, and in those situations where an officer may be directed to command two different units, only one to which he or she is formally assigned.

2.5.1. If one or more officers senior in grade (but not necessarily rank), eligible to command and present for duty, are assigned to an Air Force unit, superior competent authority may not appoint another officer of lower grade to command that unit and thus the officer(s) of higher grade. Superior competent authority must reassign from the unit any officer senior in grade, present for duty, and eligible to command to whom command will not be extended.

2.5.2. When two or more officers of the same grade are on duty in an organization and are eligible to command, and they are senior in grade to any other officer assigned to that organization, present for duty and eligible to command, the President, the Secretary of the Air Force, or his or her delegee(s) (See paragraph 2.6.) can appoint to command, without regard to rank in that grade.

2.5.3. An officer cannot command another officer of higher grade who is present for duty and otherwise eligible to command.

2.6. Delegation of Authority to Appoint to Command. Acting for the President, the Secretary of the Air Force delegates the authority to appoint an officer to command to the following personnel:

- 2.6.1. Commanders of MAJCOMs, field operating agencies, direct reporting units, numbered air forces, air divisions, wings, groups, and equivalent organizations for subordinate organizations under their command.
 - 2.6.2. The Chief of Staff and Vice Chief of Staff.
 - 2.6.3. Deputy Chiefs of Staff, United States Air Force (USAF) and other Air Staff Office Chiefs for field operating agencies under their supervision.
 - 2.6.4. The Inspector General (SAF/IG) for organizations under The Inspector General's supervision.
 - 2.6.5. The Surgeon General (USAF/SG) for medical and allied facilities or organizations under the Surgeon General's supervision.
 - 2.6.6. The Judge Advocate General (USAF/JA) for the Air Force Legal Services Agency.
 - 2.6.7. The appropriate state's Adjutant General for units of the Air National Guard.
 - 2.6.8. The SAFO, or Air Force officer appointed to command the Air Force component if not the SAFO, in a unified command, joint task force, combined task force, coalition force, or activity outside the Air Force for the purpose of appointing the Air Force commander of a subordinate Air Force component command or element properly designated as an Air Force unit by regulation or other authority, or for purposes of appointing an Air Force element section commander for the element(s) falling within the SAFO or commander's area of responsibility.
 - 2.6.9. The COMAFFOR, for purposes of appointing commanders of Air Force units operating under his or her command authority.
 - 2.6.10. The commander of an Air Force element, if a lieutenant colonel or higher grade, for the purpose of appointing that element's section commander.
 - 2.6.11. The commander of a large functional unit (squadron or above), if a lieutenant colonel or higher grade, for the purpose of appointing that unit's section commander.
- 2.7. Further Delegation of Authority to Appoint to Command. Delegated appointment authority may be redelegated to commanders for organizations under their command, and to staff officers for organizations under their supervision. Redelegation, however, must be to a colonel or higher (except as noted in paragraph 2.6. above in relation to the appointment of section commanders).
- 2.8. Officers cannot appoint themselves to command. Commanders cannot appoint their own successors.

3. Permanent and Temporary Succession to Command:

- 3.1. Permanent succession to command, by assumption or appointment, remains in effect until superseded by a subsequent assumption or a subsequent appointment.
- 3.2. Temporary succession to command, by assumption or appointment, is the appropriate succession mechanism when the commander being replaced is only temporarily absent or disabled.
 - 3.2.1. When the temporarily absent or disabled commander returns, if he or she is equal or senior in grade to any other officer then present for duty, assigned to the organization, and eligible to command, he or she regains command automatically without regard to precedence of rank in grade.

3.2.2. The returning commander needs no new assumption or appointment orders.

3.2.3. If, during the permanent commander's temporary absence, another officer senior in grade who is eligible to command is assigned, or attached for purposes of command, to the organization, then the returning commander may not resume command while the officer senior in grade remains assigned, or attached for purposes of command.

3.3. Assumption of or Appointment to Command Because of Death, Prolonged Absence, or Disability of Commander:

3.3.1. In the event of death, prolonged absence, or disability of the commander, the next senior officer assumes command until relieved by proper authority. Alternately, the appropriate superior competent authority can appoint an officer to command.

3.3.1.1. Prolonged Absence or Disability. It is not possible to establish a rule or advance determination as to what is a prolonged absence or disability justifying assumption of or appointment to command of another officer. The expected length of the absence or disability, the types of command actions and decisions that will be necessary during the absence or disability, and the communication vehicles available for use during the commander's absence or disability are factors affecting the determination of whether an interim commander is necessary.

3.3.2. An officer who succeeds to command assumes responsibility for all orders in force at the time and for all public property and funds pertaining to that command or duty.

3.4. Command During Short Absences:

3.4.1. Absence or disability of the commander for short periods of time does not incapacitate that commander from discharging the functions of command and, except under unusual circumstances, does not warrant assumption of command by another officer.

3.4.2. During shorter absences or disability of the commander which, by common sense, do not warrant an assumption of command, the commander's designated representative acts for the commander in the commander's name, as is routinely done when the commander is present, unless precluded by paragraph 6.4.2.

3.4.3. Except in urgent cases, an officer in temporary command may not change or cancel the standing orders of the permanent commander, without authority from that permanent commander or a higher level commander.

4. Special Rules and Limitations to Command:

4.1. Special rules exist for positions designated under 10 U.S.C. § 601 for the grade of lieutenant general or general.

4.1.1. Officers assigned to positions which have been designated by the President to be positions of importance and responsibility in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 601 become eligible to attain the grade of lieutenant general or general by virtue of their service in those positions (although they need not necessarily carry that grade to serve in that position). If the President nominates an officer to carry the three or four star grade associated with the particular position and the Senate consents to the nomination, then the officer may assume that grade. Because these officers retain their grade only as long as they serve in their appointed positions, any act removing them from

their position will effectively vacate their grade and they will revert to their former permanent grade unless one of three narrow exceptions applies. (See 10 U.S.C. § 601 for the list of exceptions). Consequently, three and four star generals serving in command positions must always remain in command until relieved by superior competent authority, even during lengthy absences. No other officer may temporarily assume or be appointed to command in the absence of the incumbent unless first authorized by the appropriate superior competent authority and coordinated with AFGOMO, the Air Force General Officer Matters Office.

4.1.2. In the event a three or four star commander is disabled or will be absent for a prolonged period, notify AFGOMO as soon as possible.

4.1.3. Until official instructions arrive, the commander's designated representative continues to act for the commander in the commander's name, as is routinely done when the commander is present.

4.1.4. In the absence of a commander appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. § 601, command in positions designated as positions of importance and responsibility follow the normal rules for appointment to and assumption of command. Command of an Air Force organization must continue. The commander so succeeding will carry the title of commander and have the incidents of authority associated with command; however, that commander will not be entitled to the increased grade bestowed by virtue of appointment under 10 U.S.C. § 601.

4.1.5. Officers assigned to three and four-star command positions assume command in the normal manner if they are the senior officer in that command at the time of accession to command, and regular assumption of command orders will be published. If appointment orders will be required, contact AFGOMO for guidance.

4.2. Officers Restricted in Command:

4.2.1. Officers assigned to HQ USAF cannot assume command of personnel, unless competent authority specifically directs.

4.2.2. An officer quartered on an Air Force installation, but assigned to another organization not charged with operating the installation, cannot assume command of the installation by virtue of seniority.

4.2.3. Chaplains cannot exercise command (10 U.S.C. § 3581). They do have the authority to give lawful orders and exercise functions of operational supervision, control, and direction.

4.2.4. Judge advocates can exercise command only with the express authorization of The Judge Advocate General; or as the senior ranking member among a group of prisoners of war; or under emergency field conditions such as described in paragraph 1.7.

4.2.5. An officer designated as a medical, dental, veterinary, medical service, or biomedical sciences officer, or as a nurse, cannot exercise command except of those organizations and installations whose primary mission involves health care or the health professions (10 U.S.C. § 8579).

4.2.6. Only officers designated as a medical, dental, veterinary, medical service, or biomedical sciences officer, or as a nurse, can command organizations and installations whose primary mission involves health care or the health professions (10 U.S.C. § 8067).

4.2.7. Students cannot command an Air Force school or similar organization.

4.2.8. Reserve Component officers who are not on extended active duty orders cannot command organizations of the Regular Air Force. For purposes of this instruction, extended active duty is defined as a period of 90 days or more during which the Reserve Component officer is on active duty (other than for training) orders. This means only that the officer's active duty orders be for a period of 90 days or more, not that the officer have actually served for 90 days. Thus, an officer called to active duty for a 90-day period or more may be placed in command of a Regular Air Force unit on the first day of his or her period of active duty service.

4.2.8.1. Exception: The COMAFFOR or delegee may authorize Reserve Component officers not on extended active duty to command Regular Air Force units operating under the COMAFFOR's authority. This authority may be delegated to no lower than the commanders of Aerospace Expeditionary Wings (AEWs) for expeditionary units operating under their authority.

4.2.8.2. This restriction does not preclude Reserve Component officers from exercising command over Reserve Component units or personnel called to active duty under proper statutory authority.

4.2.9. Regular officers and Reserve officers on extended active duty cannot command organizations of the Air Force Reserve, unless HQ USAF/RE approves.

4.2.10. Officers prohibited to command by competent authority cannot assume command.

4.2.11. An officer who succeeds to command assumes responsibility for all orders in force at the time and for all public property and funds pertaining to that command or duty.

4.2.12. Officers restricted from command under the above provisions retain the power to give lawful orders and to exercise all the other normal incidents of officership.

5. Command of Flying Organizations. Flying organizations have as their primary mission flying manned aircraft, or planning and directing the employment of manned aircraft.

5.1. Only Line of the Air Force crewmembers occupying active flying positions can command flying organizations.

5.1.1. Exception: Officers from other military departments who have USAF-equivalent crewmember ratings or certifications can command consolidated flying training organizations in accordance with appropriate interservice agreements. For purposes of military justice administration, commanders of consolidated flying training units are subject to the same restrictions applicable to joint commanders under the provisions of paragraph [2.2.](#), AFI 51-202.

5.2. These officers must hold a currently effective aeronautical rating or crewmember certification, and must be qualified for aviation service in the currently effective aeronautical rating or crewmember certification.

5.3. Organizations with Multiple Missions. Certain types of organizations, such as air base wings or groups, have multiple missions that include responsibility for controlling and directing flying activities or clearing aircraft for flight. These organizations are considered non-flying units; therefore, non-flying officers eligible to command can command such organizations provided that:

5.3.1. The commander of a subordinate flying organization (such as a base operations squadron) or a director of operations and training is delegated responsibility for the flying portion of the mission. If this authority is vested in a director of operations and training, that person must meet the

eligibility requirements for command of a flying organization. Delegate this authority only by special orders.

5.3.2. Any Air Force officer eligible to command can command missile organizations and organizations where the employment of aircraft is a support function or corollary to the organization's primary mission. Unless the commander meets the eligibility requirements for command of a flying organization, consolidate flying activities under the supervision of an officer who meets such eligibility requirements.

6. Command and Staff. Fully recognize and follow the principles of command and staff. A commander exercises control through subordinate commanders.

6.1. Vice commanders and deputy commanders, while acting as such, are staff officers. Staffs have no command functions. They assist the commander through advising, planning, researching, and investigating. Issue all directives in the commander's name.

6.2. The commander can designate subordinates, including civilians, who are authorized to sign or act in the commander's name. Any officer can be assigned to staff positions at any organizational level, except by policy those positions directly concerned with the operation of manned aircraft or where flying is a necessary additional duty, or except under law those functions in the Air Force requiring other special training or experience such as chaplains, judge advocates, or medical officers (See 10 U.S.C. § 8067).

6.3. There is no title or position of "acting commander." The term "acting commander" is not authorized.

6.4. Delegation of Duties: Delegation of duties and authority is generally authorized.

6.4.1. Except as stated in section **6.4.2.**, commanders should delegate administrative duties or authority to members of their staff or subordinate commanders as much as possible. However, delegating duties incident to the discharge of responsibilities does not relieve the commander of the responsibility to exercise command supervision.

6.4.2. Do not delegate the following duties:

6.4.2.1. Duties specifically imposed on commanders by law, such as those specified under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, appropriations acts, and other statutory provisions.

6.4.2.2. Duties that, by direction of higher headquarters, are not delegable.

6.4.2.3. Duties that should not be delegated because of their obvious importance or because of special existing local conditions.

7. Announcement of Command. Use written orders to announce and record command succession, unless precluded by military exigencies.

7.1. Command Documentation. Units prepare, coordinate, publish, distribute and maintain G series orders, including official record sets, to formally document succession to command of the unit. Units identify orders by organization and G series number. Number orders sequentially, beginning with the calendar year, and designate a G series number that reflects the year and sequence, such as "GO 93-1." Above the heading of the first order of a year, cite the number of the last order published the previous

year. If no orders were published during the preceding year, state that “no orders were published in this series in (year).”

7.2. Request and Authorization for Assumption of or Appointment to Command. You may use AF Form 35, *Request and Authorization for Assumption of/Appointment to Command*, to document such orders. See **attachment 2** for instructions. Orders may also be published in memorandum format. Consult AFI 33-328 for uniformity of orders formats and general order publishing guidance.

7.3. Publication of Command Assumption or Appointment:

7.3.1. You need not publish assumption of command or appointment to command orders for an officer who originally held the command position when he or she resumes command after a temporary absence.

7.3.2. Orders published when another officer temporarily assumed command, or was temporarily appointed during a temporary absence of the commander, are automatically rescinded when the permanent commander returns to duty.

7.3.3. The following examples illustrate wording for assumptions of command published in memorandum format:

Permanent assumption of command: "Under the provisions of AFI 51-604, I assume command of the 366th Wing, vice Colonel JAMES D. JOHNSON, 000-00-0000, effective 1 November 1998."

Temporary assumption of command: "Under the provisions of AFI 51-604, I assume command of the 366th Wing, during the temporary absence of Colonel JAMES D. JOHNSON, 000-00-0000, effective 1 November 1998."

Format when an official other than the commander signs the order: "Under the provisions of AFI 51-604, Colonel RICHARD R. BOLLING, 000-00-0000, assumes command of the 366th Wing, vice Colonel JAMES D. JOHNSON, 000-00-0000, effective 1 November 1998."

7.3.4. A commander delegated authority to appoint commanders without regard to seniority in rank announces these appointments in orders. Include the following items in the orders:

A statement that the officer is appointed commander by direction of the President

Unit the officer will command

Effective date

Authority

Temporary nature of assumption or appointment, if applicable

7.3.5. The following examples illustrate appropriate wording to announce appointments to command published in memorandum format:

Permanent appointment to command: “By direction of the President, Colonel JAMES N. WHITE, 000-00-0000, is appointed Commander, 76th Wing, AMC, Andrews AFB, MD, effective 1 November 1998. Authority: AFI 51-604.”

Temporary appointment to command: "By direction of the President, Colonel JAMES N. WHITE, 000-00-0000, is appointed Commander, 76th Wing, AMC, Andrews AFB, MD, effective 1 November 1998, during the temporary absence of Colonel RICHARD R. BOLLING, 000-00-0000. Authority: AFI 51-604."

8. Appointing Squadron Section Commanders, Detachment Commanders, Element Commanders and Element Section Commanders on Orders. Appoint squadron section commanders, detachment commanders, element commanders, and element section commanders on orders when they must perform command actions. Authority for such actions is contained in AFI 38-101 and AFI 51-604 (reference paragraph **2.6.** for delegation of appointment authority). If this is not done, they are considered staff officers and cannot impose nonjudicial punishment under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (See AFI 51-202).

9. Form Prescribed. AF Form 35, *Request and Authorization for Assumption of/Appointment to Command*. See **attachment 2** for instructions on form completion. Its use is optional.

WILLIAM A. MOORMAN, Maj General, USAF
The Judge Advocate General

Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

Title 10, United States Code, Section 101(b)(7)&(8)

Title 10, United States Code, Section 601

Title 10, United States Code, Section 750

Title 10, United States Code, Section 777

Title 10, United States Code, Section 3581

Title 10, United States Code, Section 8067

Title 10, United States Code, Section 8579

AF Instruction 33-328, Administrative Orders

AF Instruction 38-101, Air Force Organization

AF Instruction 51-202, Nonjudicial Punishment

Attachment 2**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF AF FORM 35**

Use of this form is optional to record assumptions and appointments to command. Failure to use it or fill it out correctly does not invalidate an otherwise valid assumption or appointment to command.

NOTES (generally):

1. Do not publish orders when the regular commander returns from an absence if assumption of or appointment to command of an interim commander was temporary. The permanent commander's return automatically rescinds temporary assumption of and appointment to command orders.
2. Depending on the incoming commander's status and the type of unit he or she will command, fill in the appropriate block.

If the individual is the senior officer in both grade and rank in the unit, he or she can assume command (use item 5 or 6, although item 11 or 12 would also be appropriate if accomplished by the next higher organizational command level commander).

If the officer is junior in rank to another officer assigned to the unit, present for duty, and otherwise eligible to command, the next higher organizational command level commander must use an appointment to designate him or her to command (use item 7 or 8).

If the officer is attached to an organization for purposes of command by TDY orders or by detail, the next higher organizational command level commander must use an appointment to designate him or her to command (use item 7 or 8, or alternatively, 11 or 12).

If the officer is in a headquarters squadron section, detachment or element command, use blocks 9 or 10, respectively.

Use blocks 11 and 12 for other appointment actions as described in the note following items 11 and 12.

3. Command positions held by three and four star general officers are subject to special rules (See paragraph 4), and those commanders may not relinquish their commands even temporarily without the advance approval of superior competent authority.)

ITEMS 1, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 24 -- Self-explanatory.

ITEM 2--Enter the grade, name (last, first, middle initial (all upper-case)), and Social Security Number (SSN) of the individual assuming or appointed to command.

ITEM 3--Enter the individual's unit of assignment (all upper case).

ITEM 4--Enter the name and location of the individual's permanent duty station, including zip+4 (all upper case).

ITEM 5--Enter complete unit designation of the organization the individual will command; the grade, name (last, first, middle initial, all upper case), and SSN of commander relinquishing command, and effective date.

ITEM 6--Enter complete unit designation of the organization the individual will command; the grade, name (last, first, middle initial, all upper case), and SSN of absent commander; and effective date.

NOTES (for Item 6):

1. When the individual proposed to take command will meet, at least temporarily, the criteria in AFI 51-604, then assumption to command is appropriate at all command levels. (EXCEPTION: Command positions held by three and four star general officers are subject to special rules (See paragraph 4), and those commanders may not relinquish their commands even temporarily without the advance approval of superior competent authority.)

2. Do not publish orders when the regular commander returns from an absence if assumption of command was temporary. The permanent commander's return automatically rescinds temporary assumption of command orders.

ITEM 7--Enter complete unit designation of the organization the individual will command and the effective date.

NOTE (for Item 7):

Appointment to command under this block is necessary when the individual taking command cannot meet the assumption criteria in AFI 51-604, or there is the possibility of conflict with the assumption criteria under AFI 51-604, for example, when the new or interim commander is equal in grade, but junior in rank,

to another officer of the same organization or the previous commander, of equal grade but senior in rank, will remain assigned to the organization for some time after the change of command.

ITEM 8--Enter complete unit designation of the organization the individual will command; the grade, name (last, first, middle initial, all upper case), and SSN of absent commander, and effective date.

NOTES (for Item 8):

1. Temporary appointment to command under this block is necessary when the individual taking command cannot meet the assumption criteria in AFI 51-604.
2. Do not publish orders when the regular commander returns from an absence if the appointment to command was temporary. The permanent commander's return automatically rescinds orders for temporary appointments to command.

ITEM 9--Enter complete unit designation of the squadron section or element section individual will command and effective date.

NOTE (for Item 9):

The next higher organizational command level commander (if a delegated appointment authority) appoints squadron section commanders, except as provided in paragraph 2.6. Use this block only.

ITEM 10--Enter complete detachment or element designation of the organization the individual will command and effective date.

NOTE (for Item 10):

The next higher organizational command level commander (if delegated appointment authority), SAFO, or Air Force officer appointed to command the Air Force component if not the SAFO appoints detachment or element commanders. Use this block only.

ITEM 11--Enter complete unit designation of organization individual will command and effective date.

ITEM 12--Enter complete unit designation of organization the appointed individual will command; grade, name (last, first, middle initial) all upper case, SSN of commander who is absent, and effective date.

NOTES (for Items 11 and 12):

1. Items 11 and 12 are normally for use in situations not covered by items 5-10, e.g., when an officer is appointed to command a unit to which he or she is not formally assigned and for which he or she cannot assume command even though he or she might otherwise be the senior officer in the organization were he or she assigned to it. This circumstance occurs in some dual-hatting situations or when the commander will undertake the command duties of the gaining unit before being relieved from duty from a losing unit. It is also used in situations when one individual is to command two different units.

2. Item 11 or 12 may also be used for the initial appointment of an organizational commander where the next higher level headquarters commander wishes to appoint a commander and the provisions of item 7 or 8 do not apply.

ITEM 14--Enter the complete name, grade, and title of the DP official who reviewed the proposed order. The DP review should verify the individual's assignment to the unit and his/her grade and date of rank in that grade. This information should be used to determine whether assumption or appointment is the correct command succession mechanism.

ITEM 17--Enter the complete name, grade, and title of the JA official who reviewed the proposed order. The JA review examines the order for legal sufficiency and compliance with the criteria of AFIs 51-604 and 38-101. The JA reviewing official should determine which of the command succession mechanisms is appropriate in the specific situation, i.e., permanent or temporary assumption or appointment.

ITEM 20--Enter the complete name, grade, and title of the individual authorized to direct, order, or effect this command action.

NOTES (for Item 20):

1. For assumptions, this individual is the assuming commander.
2. For appointments, the next higher level of command commander (with delegated appointment authority) must sign, except as noted in paragraph 2.6. Some examples are as follows:

Wing commanders

Numbered air force commanders

MAJCOM and equivalent organization commanders

3. For commanders of wings, or whenever the signature of an appointing authority not on the base is required, process the order as follows:

The requesting installation or wing prepares the form order, obtains local DP/JA coordination, and forwards it to the appointing official for signature. The official signs the order and sends it to the unit for publication and distribution.

If this is not possible or is not the preferred process, the requesting activity sends a message or calls the appropriate member of the appointing authority's staff who will prepare the order. The appointing authority's DP and JA officials coordinate, after confirming the action with the requesting base's DP or JA. They can confirm the action by calling the requesting base's DP or JA or from the message request. The appointing official signs the order after DP/JA coordination.

Unit officials will reproduce and distribute the order.

ITEM 22--Use this block to include any comments pertinent to the proposed action, such as references to letters or messages that direct the command action or publication of the order, to document the fact of an earlier VOCO (voice or verbal communication) assumption or appointment, to document that exigencies of the service precluded earlier recording, or to explain when the dates of the orders are effective, and so on. You may use this block to make any other necessary comments, e.g., those required by AFI 33-328.

ITEM 23--Enter the publishing headquarters, its location, and zip+4.

ITEMS 25 and 26--The unit completes this section after items 13-21 are completed.