

DOCTRINAL PROPONENCY

1. Purpose. To provide information on Marine Corps doctrinal proponency.
2. Definition. Doctrinal proponency assigns the responsibility for the preparation, review, and periodic update of a doctrinal publication to a Marine Corps organization with the required subject matter expertise.
3. Background. The Commandant's Planning Guidance highlighted Marine Corps doctrine as an area requiring immediate and critical attention. To better serve the Marine Corps and the training and education establishment, a method to ensure the production and maintenance of a coherent body of doctrine which is timely, relevant, and compelling was required. The Commandant directed that the resources of the Marine Corps supporting establishment be mobilized, enlisting the assistance of those agencies most closely connected to the daily application of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). MCO 5600.49, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Proponency*, establishes the framework to carry out this requirement.
4. Proponency Assignments
  - a. This Bulletin identifies proponency assignments. In general, an organization with the most comprehensive knowledge of a particular subject was selected in keeping with proponent workload or the need to ensure close coordination for associated publications.
  - b. Proponency assignments will be reviewed on an annual basis. Assignments will be updated through the promulgation of a new MCBul in the 5603 series each year. If an organization feels that it is not best suited to be the proponent for a particular publication, the organization should contact the MCCDC Doctrine Division to discuss the assignment. If another organization would be a better proponent and that organization does not already have a major proponency workload, the current proponent and the Director, Doctrine Division, can coordinate a change of proponent responsibilities with the new proposed proponent and appropriate parent organizations, i.e., Training and Education Command, MCCDC or Marine Corps University.
5. Publication Development Order (PDO) and Publication Review Order (PRO). PDO's and PRO's are comprehensive documents prepared by Doctrine Division for each publication identified for initial development, review, or revision. A PDO is required for those publications identified for initial development. A PRO is required for review or revision of an existing publication. PDO's and PRO's are signed by the Director, Doctrine Division, and contain specific guidance to the proponent organization on the publication being developed or revised. PRO's may also be issued as a message.
  - a. The PDO/PRO defines a publication's purpose, scope, and target audience as clearly as possible. **It establishes the left and right lateral limits to be used in writing or revising a publication.** These elements are dictated by requirements generated through the Expeditionary Force Development System (EFDS) as well as the need to ensure both horizontal and vertical integration of all publications in the doctrinal publications hierarchy.

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b. The intent of the PDO/PRO is to give the proponent organization's publication author a running start on drafting or revising the publication. The proponent must review this information, assemble the reference material, evaluate the existing or draft publication to be revised, and determine what modifications, if any, the author feels should be made to the plan provided in the PDO/PRO.

c. It is possible to recommend minor adjustments to a publication's purpose, scope, and target audience; major changes generally have a significant impact on other publications or on specific doctrinal requirements identified by the EFDS and therefore will have to be carefully considered. Likewise, milestones specified in the PDO/PRO can normally be shifted by a few weeks to accommodate specific needs of individual proponents, however significant changes (especially delays) will probably have an adverse impact on the progress of other publications.

d. The proponent has great latitude in determining exactly what needs to go into a publication and how it is to be organized. The proponent is not only encouraged, but expected to review and modify both the outline and the issues to be addressed in the publication based on their knowledge of the subject matter. The Doctrine Division action officer (AO) and proponent author together must ensure that any adjustments fall within the scope, address the target audience, and provide the right level of detail to meet the intended purpose of the publication.

6. Reviewing Doctrinal Publications. Doctrine is constantly evolving. The information contained in some of our publications is enduring; in others, the TTP may be highly perishable.

a. In developing the PDO/PRO, the Doctrine Division AO has made his best assessment of the changes that are required. However, in many cases, the AO may not have the same depth of knowledge as the proponent. For this reason, **the first thing a proponent author should do upon receiving a PDO/PRO is to thoroughly review the publication and make an honest evaluation of what changes need to be made.**

b. If an evaluation indicates that no changes are required or that there may be no requirement for the publication at all, the proponent author should discuss this with the Doctrine Division AO. In all likelihood, the recommendation of the proponent author will be the course of action taken. At the same time, it will be necessary to thoroughly review the impact of dropping a publication or shifting information from one publication to another before approving such an action. Doctrinal publications are developed in response to specific requirements; before discarding a publication the needs of the ultimate user - the Marine Corps Operating Forces - must be considered.

7. Proponency Categories. To establish priorities, publications are divided into four categories that reflect the priority and level of effort required to write or revise a publication.

a. Category 1 publications are Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications and selected higher order Marine Corps Warfighting Publications (MCWP) that need to be written from scratch or completely revised. They are all assigned to the Doctrine Division, MCCDC.

b. Category 2 publications are new MCWP's or existing, key MCWP's that require major revision. Proponent responsibilities are addressed in paragraph 8.

c. Category 3 publications include the remaining MCWP's that require only a simple review or minor-moderate revision and all Marine Corps Reference Publications (MCRP). Depending on the amount of revision or new work required, proponents may modify the responsibilities in paragraph 8 in coordination with Doctrine Division.

d. Category 4 publications are other Service publications adopted by the Marine Corps. There are three types of category 4 publications: joint, multi-service, and dual-designated.

(1) Joint Publications. These publications are promulgated by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs to provide general principles and procedures directing the activities and performance of military departments, unified commands, and other authorized agencies. To satisfy the responsibilities assigned to the Marine Corps in Title 10, U.S. Code; DoD Directive 5100.1; and Joint Pub 0-2, the Marine Corps develops joint doctrine for landing forces in coordination with other military services. This includes the doctrine, TTP, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations. Proponent responsibilities are addressed in paragraph 9. The Marine Corps is the lead agency for five joint doctrine publications.

(2) Multi-Service Publications

(a) Applicability. These publications contain doctrine and TTP applicable to at least two military services. Multi-service publications guide the employment of forces in coordinating action toward a common objective. Each of the authenticating military services assigns the publication its own doctrinal designation. Proponent responsibilities are addressed in paragraph 9.

(b) Air, Land, Sea Application (ALSA) Center Publications. The ALSA Center is chartered by the four services' doctrine commands and tasked to rapidly develop publications that fill interoperability voids between services, joint forces, and staffs. In most cases, these publications take on the form of multi-service tactics, techniques, and procedures (MTTP) and address operational details often not included in our joint publications. Once signed by CG MCCDC, ALSA publications are given an appropriate MCWP or MCRP designator and placed within the Marine Corps' publication hierarchy. As with non-ALSA dual-designated publications, these MTTPs have the same authority and status as our other Marine Corps doctrinal publications. Although developed by the ALSA Center, ALSA publications must be approved/signed by the individual service doctrine commands.

(3) Dual-Designated Publications. These publications are Army Field Manuals or Naval Warfighting Publications (NWP) that the Marine Corps has adopted as Marine Corps doctrine. Dual-designation permits us to leverage the doctrinal development efforts of the Army and the Navy in areas where we use common TTP. Proponent responsibilities are addressed in paragraph 9.

8. Doctrine Development Process

a. Research

(1) The majority of information contained in MCWP's and MCRP's consists of TTP for how the Marine Corps carries out specific warfighting functions -- exactly the type of expertise that proponent organizations are renowned for. The

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principal intent of the entire proponent program is to tap into this expertise and ensure that the best TTP are captured for use throughout the Corps.

(2) To fully develop the context and issues of an assigned publication, proponents will be required to become familiar with the many sources of information pertinent to a publication's subject and how to access that information. Key sources of information for research are --

- (a) Current Marine Corps doctrinal publications.
- (b) Related joint, naval, and Army doctrinal publications.
- (c) Marine Corps Lessons Learned System information.
- (d) Marine Corps concept papers.
- (e) North Atlantic Treaty Organization standardization agreements, allied joint publications, and allied tactical publications.
- (f) Existing draft work on the subject.
- (g) Personal and professional contacts who may possess subject matter expertise.
- (h) Conference reports, articles from professional journals, and Marine Corps University student research papers, etc., related to the subject.
- (i) AO's at the MCCDC Doctrine Division. Doctrine AO's will assist proponents by providing reference material, arranging contact with key personnel, alerting them to new information, and helping to resolve questions.
- (j) Military professional magazines and journals.

b. Drafting. In most cases, the proponent author will be responsible for reviewing and amending the detailed outline provided by the Doctrine Division AO in the PDO/PRO and producing three drafts of a publication during the writing process. These drafts are the initial, or author's draft (AD), the coordinating draft (CD), and the final draft. As each draft is staffed and reviewed (see paragraph 8c below), accepted comments are incorporated and the writer makes the necessary changes to produce the next draft using the publication comments matrix. The publication comments matrix is a system to assist in tracking all recommended comments and/or changes received by the subject matter expert (SME) throughout the publication development process. Once a publication has been approved and signed, the publication comments matrix will be used as an archive file reference for later updates, reviews, or rewrites of the publication. Some key techniques for the author to consider through the drafting/writing process:

(1) With the assignment fresh in mind, make a simple list of the topics or tasks which should be addressed. Consider questions that have arisen in the field; problems that have been solved intuitively without specific doctrinal guidance or TTP; and areas thought to be weak, confusing, or non-existent in current publications.

(2) Review this list of topics and start sorting them into groups. Arrange the groups into related ideas.

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(3) Consider the groups of items and how each relates to one another. Determine an appropriate sequence to present the ideas. When the groups of ideas are roughly in order, this becomes the publication's working outline.

(4) Compare this outline to the original concept, the outline provided by the Doctrine Division AO in the PDO/PRO, and the task definition of the book. Ensure it fulfills that purpose, supplying the target audience with the appropriate type and amount of information.

(5) Start writing. Try to write something every day. Write down thoughts as fast as possible without going back, and keep on going until energy or ideas or both are exhausted. Put down a good block of copy - 5 or 10 pages or more. Then go back and revise. Revision is at least 50 percent of the writing job. Keep on leap-frogging this way while at the same time reading and researching.

c. Publication Staffing

(1) Doctrinal publications are normally staffed twice before being submitted for CG MCCDC approval. The AD will be staffed on an informal basis to a selected group of SME's. The proponent author and the Doctrine Division AO will determine who should review the AD. This "vetting" enables the author to obtain the unvarnished views and opinions of individuals familiar with the subject. The publication will be circulated within Doctrine Division to ensure consistency with joint, naval, and other related Marine Corps doctrinal publications.

(2) As comments from the review of the AD are received, they will be discussed by the Doctrine Division AO and proponent author to determine how best to address each. Some comments will be relevant and helpful, others may be outside of the publication's scope or conflict with higher-level doctrine. All comments will be considered, but not all need to be included.

(3) When revision of the AD is complete, the proponent forwards the new draft to Doctrine Division. The Doctrine Division AO prepares it for formal staffing. This time the publication is made available Marine Corps-wide. This is the CD. It is the formal staffing version of the publication and is distributed via the Doctrine Division's web site. Each major FMF command is notified via naval message and invited to review and comment. The normal review period for a CD is 45-60 days.

(4) As comments from the formal review are received, they will be handled in the same general manner as comments were during the review of the AD. Comments from the Marine Forces Commanders and major commands in the supporting establishment carry the most weight and will be accommodated unless there are conflicting comments or overriding doctrinal issues. Comments or issues that cannot be reconciled by the proponent and the Doctrine AO will be referred to the Director, Doctrine Division for resolution. It is crucial that both the proponent and the Doctrine AO maintain an accurate record of what comments were received during formal staffing and how they were addressed as a staffing summary is normally included when the publication is submitted for approval. Once the formal staffing process is complete and the proponent and Doctrine AO have agreed on how to handle all comments, the author will prepare a final draft for editing and approval.

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d. Publication Final Production. After submission of the final draft, the Doctrine AO assumes primary responsibility for ensuring the publication is formatted correctly, final work on graphics is accomplished, a terminology review is performed, a distribution list is prepared, and the publication is routed to Doctrine Division Publications Branch for editing, layout, and signature-ready approval.

9. Doctrine Development Process for Category 4 Publications

a. The Marine Corps reviews all joint publications to ensure there are no critical or major unique United States Marine Corps aspects of a particular subject that have not been discussed. The proponent's responsibility for a joint publication is largely one of reviewing and commenting, vice writing or revising.

b. Multi-service publications require the proponent to provide Marine Corps input to the publication author, attend two 3-day working groups, and review the publication in each stage. Although there is not as much writing as an MCWP/MCRP, the proponent will provide the required input to ensure unique Marine Corps aspects of the subject are addressed.

c. Dual-designated publications have the Army or Navy as the lead agency with the proponent providing Marine Corps input. Although there is not as much writing as an MCWP/MCRP, the proponent will provide the required input to ensure unique Marine Corps aspects of the subject are addressed. A few dual-designated publications, primarily NWP's, are developed as a cooperative effort with the Navy. In these cases, MCCDC will follow the process in paragraph 8 by tasking the development of these publications to the proponent in conjunction with a Navy action agency.

10. Logistics

a. Editing and Graphics. During the final draft phase of production, the publication will be edited by Doctrine Division's professional publications staff. The proponent is expected to deliver the final draft in the word processing software format outlined in the PDO/PRO (normally Microsoft Word) and provide graphics in enough detail that information is clear and understandable. The proponent author will be encouraged to participate in the editing and graphic production process although it is anticipated that the Doctrine AO should be able to resolve most issues. With certain technical publications, however, the assistance of the proponent author may be required throughout the entire process.

b. Printing and Distribution. Once the publication has been edited, formatted, and approved, it is sent to USMC Headquarters for reproduction and distributed by Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA through the Marine Corps Publications Distribution System. All costs associated with the staffing, editing, reproduction, and distribution of the publication will be borne by the Doctrine Division. The proponent command is expected to bear the cost of reproduction and circulation of draft publications for reviews internal to their command.

c. Travel and Conferences

(1) In support of the proponent program, Doctrine Division has been allocated a limited amount of funds to support activities such as meetings,

proponent fact-finding travel, and publication working groups. It must be stressed that this is not an unlimited cache of funds, and at any given time it is expected that 30-40 publications will be under development.

(2) Most research and initial publication development can be accomplished without extensive travel. The proponent should use local resources, maximize the computer and communications means at their disposal for liaison and information transfer, and use their informal network of SME's to resolve as many issues as possible.

(3) Working groups are an excellent means of obtaining input to the doctrine development process; however, they are expensive to fund and require the commitment of a number of personnel to be successful. When planning a working group, consider that greater progress is made when a draft document already exists rather than convening a group of SME's simply to discuss issues or review a working outline. Having a 50-60 percent solution at the outset makes for relevant dialog, constructive comments, and productive writing.

(4) Requests for funding of travel for the conduct of working groups will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be discussed with the Doctrine Division AO prior to formal submission to CG MCCDC (C 42). Formal requests should include the objective, planned itinerary, and estimated costs. Travel for research and discussion will normally be limited to attendance at a key conference/working group and/or a visit to one of the MEF's/Marine Forces. Doctrinal working groups will normally only be approved for Category 1 or 2 publications or major revisions to key Category 3 publications.

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