

US Public Health Service – Commissioned Corps
OFFICER BASIC COURSE

Office Basic Course Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

TRAVEL

- When and how will my travel arrangements be made?
 - You will get an email about 2 weeks before your scheduled OBC requesting that you submit your travel information to ESI. ESI is the contractor who will arrange all of your travel. You will, then, get your travel itinerary about 1 week before your OBC. Your CDC travel coordinator should not make any arrangements for you.
- When can I expect to receive my travel orders and itinerary?
 - Please expect your logistics package between the Monday to Thursday prior to your departure. If you have not received the package by the Thursday morning prior to your departure, send an email inquiry to laurens@esi-dc.com.
- I received an email from Govtrip saying my authorization has been created, but I am not able to log on and view it, can you help me sign on?
 - Please disregard all Govtrip emails. Your logistics package will contain all information in Govtrip.
- Who pays for OBC?
 - OCCO pays for all the travel and training costs associated with OBC.
- Where am I going?
 - The OBC training will be held at: The Holiday Inn Gaithersburg, 2 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.
- What airport do I fly into to attend OBC?
 - All flight arrangements will be made to Reagan International Airport.
- Will I have to pay for my luggage when I fly?
 - Check in at the airport with your Uniformed Service ID card. Your baggage fees may be waived. If you are required to pay for your luggage you will be reimbursed by OCCO.
- My flight is arriving at 1500, will this be a problem?
 - ESI staff are aware that you will be arriving at this time; when you arrive at the Holiday Inn please go directly to the room designated for the OBC Course.
- I live over 2 hours from the airport and have an early flight, am I authorized to get a hotel room?
 - Please email laurens@esi-dc.com (ESI) for hotel approval.
- My flight was delayed and I missed Sunday evening activities, where do I report Monday morning?
 - Notify the Logistics Coordinator at 240-744-7060 and she will notify the training officials that you will be arriving late, and will give you further instructions.
- How do I get to the Holiday Inn from the airport?
 - You will receive a logistics packet from ESI about a week before you leave for OBC. Transportation from Airport: All students arriving at Reagan International Airport ***MUST*** travel to the training facility via Metro. When you arrive at the airport, you will follow the signs to the Metro Access. You will have to purchase a Metro Ticket from the machine prior to entering the Metro system. You will board the Yellow Line Train

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in the direction of George Ave-Petworth. At the Gallery Place – Chinatown Station, you will exit the Yellow Line train and proceed to the Red Line and board the Red Line Train in the direction of Shady Grove. You will exit the train at Shady Grove and proceed to the west side of the station. There is a taxi stand located on the west side of the station; there you will await arrival of the complimentary Holiday Inn Shuttle. A Shuttle will arrive approximately every 30 minutes. If a Shuttle does not arrive within 20-30 minutes, you should contact the front desk at 301-948-8900. The hotel shuttle stops running at 10:30 PM. All taxi and shuttle fees will be reviewed and approved for reimbursement by the Director of the Training Academy.

- Where do I report the day of training?
 - When you arrive, you must report to the OBC Registration Check-In Room that is listed in your information packet. In that same room there will be representatives from the National Navy Uniform Shop to assist you with the purchase and alteration of uniform apparel. See below for uniform requirements.

UNIFORMS

- What uniforms are authorized to wear?

Training Day 1 through Training Day 4:

- On the day of arrival you **MUST** have at least 1 full set of Khakis to include appropriate uniform shoes and **SLACKS** for women. It would be beneficial to have everything packed together for quick retrieval from your suitcase.
- You **MUST** check-in between 1300-1500 wearing a **WHITE SHIRT** (No T-shirts), **BLACK PANTS** (No sweat pants), **BLACK SHOES**, and you must have appropriate outdoor/cold weather clothing.
- **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT SUNDAY TRAVELLERS TRAVEL IN THE “BLACK AND WHITE UNIFORM” TO FACILITATE A SMOOTH CHECK IN PROCESS**

Training Day 5 and Training Day 13:

- Khaki Uniform (CNT or poly-wool). Women are required to wear the khaki slacks (Skirts can be worn for Graduation). Officers with previously approved ribbons and badges (if entered in their eOPF) will be able to wear these on their Khaki Uniform. (Berets are not authorized for wear during OBC). Garrison caps are the only authorized cap for OBC.

Training day 6 through Training Day 12:

- Same as for Day 5- Day 13. For the November 2010 OBC, the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) will not be required. At this time, there is a supply problem with BDUs. We hope to have this resolved before the January OBC & will provide more information as it becomes available.

The weather in the DC Metro area has extreme swings in climate depending on the time of year & outdoor activities are planned. It is recommended that officers purchase an optional **REGULATION** coat and/or sweater so they can be prepared for cold or wet weather. Officers should bring outdoor athletic (gym) attire.

- If I already have my uniforms, should I bring them with me?
 - **Yes.** Service khakis only, when authorized to wear. (Beginning Thursday of the first week).

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- *Do not* wear your uniform on the Sunday you arrive. Everyone should be dressed the same, in a white shirt and black pants, until authorized to wear your uniform.
- Will I have an opportunity to order uniforms at OBC if I did not do so before hand?
 - Yes. There will be representatives from the National Navy Uniform Shop on-site the first Sunday to take orders, measurements and provide alterations. Bring a credit card.
 - It is recommended to acquire most if not all of your uniforms before arriving at OBC, as the National Navy Uniform Shop has limited sizes and quantities in stock. Some classes have reported that the Uniform Shop did not have an adequate supply of some sizes and quantities of uniforms on hand (this would include the BDU boots).
- I have a question regarding my uniform.
 - Please refer to your information packet regarding your uniform. If your question is not answered, please refer to your Agency Liaison for uniform related questions.
 - Or, you may contact LCDR Matthew Weinburke at the CDC/ATSDR Commissioned Corps Personnel Office: (404) 498.1803.
- Can I do laundry at the Holiday Inn?
 - Yes. There are coin-operated laundry facilities at the hotel site.
Laundry facilities at the Holiday Inn are located on the 7th floor. On-site detergent is \$0.75, washing machine cost is \$1.50 and dryers cost \$1.50.
 - Dry cleaning services are also available at your cost.
 - Iron and ironing boards are available in all rooms.

FREE TIME

- Will I have any time off?
 - No/Yes. **You will be on duty 24/7** the entire time you are at OBC.
 - You will have very limited free time in the evenings after classes.
 - Saturday and Sunday between the two weeks may be free time for you.
 - Be mindful of your time. You may have limited time to work on any outside work or projects.
- Can I travel over the weekend?
 - No. You cannot travel back home over the weekend. You are required to sleep at the Holiday Inn every night during the two week training. There will be check-ins over the weekend.
 - However, you will be given the opportunity to go into Washington DC for the day, on the weekend with your peers. Travel is at your own cost. You cannot get reimbursed for meals while sightseeing in Washington DC.
- Can I bring my family with me?
 - No. Authorization is required for access to the Holiday Inn.
 - Family will be allowed to attend the graduation ceremony on the Friday of the second week.

HOLIDAY INN FACILITIES

- Will we have internet and email access?

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- Yes. Wireless and hard-line internet access is available in all rooms.
- Should I bring a computer?
 - Internet/Laptop Computer: The training facility has complimentary internet access in each room. It is imperative that you bring a PERSONAL laptop when you report in on Sunday. Agency laptops often have difficulty connecting to the facility's wireless internet. Students will need a computer to complete some of the course work. Also, please charge your computers overnight so they are fully charged for use during the day. Outlets in the training room may be limited.
- Is there good cell phone service at the Holiday Inn?
 - Service may be variable depending upon where you are in the building(s).
- Can I work-out and exercise while at OBC?
 - Yes. You will have some free time in the evening on most days.
 - There is a small exercise room in the hotel.
 - Running trails are accessible near the hotel grounds.
 - You will have an opportunity to take the Physical Fitness Test (for Readiness) with your fellow officers while at OBC.
- What meals are provided at OBC?
 - Breakfast, lunch, and dinner and snacks during breaks while attending classes.
 - Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are also provided on the weekend.
 - The first meal is dinner on the Sunday you arrive. The last meal is breakfast/lunch on the Saturday you depart.
- Will I have my own room?
 - Yes. Each officer will have their own room. It is a small room (like a hotel) with your own bathroom, TV, and internet hook-up. Refrigerators and microwaves may be present in rooms.

REIMBURSEMENT

- Do I get Per Diem while attending OBC?
 - No. Meals are provided everyday while attending OBC at the Holiday Inn.
 - Per Diem is only provided on the two travel days (Sunday and Saturday). Do not submit meal receipts for reimbursement on your travel days.
- What expenses are reimbursable?
 - Please refer to the Directions for the Travel Expense Report document that will be mailed to you in your logistics packet.
- Can I get reimbursed for traveling to/from home to the airport?
 - Yes. A reimbursement form will be provided to list out-of-pocket expenses. Mileage to/from the airport is covered. Parking at the airport is covered.
- My reimbursement voucher has been stamped paid, but I have not seen the posting to my account.
 - Please allow at least a week after the voucher has been stamped paid for your payment to enter your account; if it isn't there after a week, contact your agency liaison for more information. Please do NOT contact Ms. Santiago regarding unpaid vouchers; she has no control over this.

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SCHEDULE

- What is the two-week schedule like?
 - The first week is classroom style. 12-14 hours per day. PowerPoint.
 - DAILY: Start around 6 am - End around 7 pm.
 - The weekend is free-time for participants. However, there may be assignments that need to be completed by Monday morning.
 - The second week is classroom style. 10-18 hours per day. PowerPoint. The second week has a lot of group exercises and projects. Some days will be long and tough. This will involve a lot of extra time and effort. You will be staying up late and getting up early to meet some of your goals. Some activities are held outdoors.
 - DAILY: Start around 6 am. - End around 11 pm.

MISC

- I have a question that is not travel related, who should I contact?
 - Please do not contact ESI for non travel related questions. You may reference the "Officer Letter" included in your packet or speak to your Agency Liaison for clarity regarding other issues.
 - CDC/ATSDR CC officers may contact the Commissioned Corps Personnel Office at (404) 498-1800.
- REQUIRED ITEMS
 - Black socks for your uniform. White socks to work-out.
 - White t-shirts for your uniform.
 - Your uniform devices (if you already have your uniform).
 - Photo ID (Uniformed Service ID card, Drivers License).
- What are some helpful items to bring?
 - Personal laptop. Jump-drive
 - Change for laundry. Pre-measured laundry powder or detergent packets and dryer sheets.
 - NOTE: Laundry detergent is available in vending machines; but it is more expensive at the hotel.
 - Work-out clothes. Gym shoes. Bathing suit, if you wish to swim.
 - MEN – Shaving needs. You will be expected to meet grooming standards everyday while attending OBC.
 - WOMEN – Hair needs (e.g. bobby pins).
 - Extra space in your luggage. If you will be ordering uniforms while at OBC, make sure you have room to take them home with you.
 - Credit card. Cell phone. You will pay out-of-pocket for personal calls made from room phones.
 - Note pad, and pens/pencils.