

# DoD Plain Writing Act Compliance Report — April 13, 2018

This report outlines the progress towards implementing the Plain Writing Act of 2010 within the DoD. Please check back for updates.

## I. Senior Agency Official

Michael L. Rhodes, Director of Administration, Office of the Chief Management Officer (OCMO) of the Department of Defense, is the DoD Senior Official for plain language. The Washington Headquarters Services, Directives Division, oversees implementation and administration of the DoD Plain Language Program through the plain language point of contact. The point of contact may be reached at [whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil](mailto:whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil).

## II. Using Plain Language

DoD received no plain language amendment requests in 2017.

DoD Agencies took many actions to implement plain language requirements in 2017:

- DoD
  - Writing style guides and plain language resources on the DoD Plain Language Website are available to action officers who write policy documents.
  - The DoD Plain Language Committee met to share ideas and information.
- Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA)
  - DCAA's Contract Audit Manual (CAM) was revised in 2017 in accordance with plain language principles and published on the Agency's website ([www.dcaa.mil](http://www.dcaa.mil)). The CAM prescribes auditing policies and procedures and provides guidance in auditing techniques.
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)
  - DTRA's correspondence website is continually updated to reflect the latest administration changes and correspondence templates are revised accordingly.
- Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)
  - DLA required procedural writers to process documents through StyleWriter4 Professional Editorial software to ensure compliance with plain language guidelines.
  - DLA procedural writers were required to review and practice using plain language concepts.
- DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO)
  - The DoD CIO Correspondence Control Office (CCO) prepared or reviewed

all official communications for clarity and ease of understanding. These official communications included DoD CIO correspondence, Facebook posts, articles, videos, letters, and email content for public release, and DoD CIO internal, external, and public-facing web content.

- The DoD CIO Policy Focal Point and analysts use plain language guidelines when reviewing and revising publications that establish and implement DoD and DoD CIO policy. DoD CIO published 21 new or revised DoD issuances incorporating plain language in 2017.
- The DoD CIO CCO maintains an extensive online library of resources containing DoD and government references, standards, plain language and writing style manuals, and templates for OSD/DoD correspondence and issuances. These resources are available in the DoD Action Officer Standard Operating Procedures folder on the DoD CIO Internal webpage/portal: <https://dodcio.sp.pentagon.mil/sites/DCIOs/FO/aosop/Forms/AllItems.aspx>
- Office of the Director of Administration, OCMO
  - Staff and issuance compliance analysts in the Directives Division use plain language guidelines when reviewing and revising publications that establish and implement DoD policy. The Division published 459 new or revised DoD issuances incorporating plain language in 2017.
  - The standards and templates for DoD issuances were reviewed and updated as needed to encourage action officers to use plain language when writing issuances.
  - The Directives Division conducted 6 classes on writing DoD issuances in 2017 that included basic principles of plain writing and referred class attendees to available plain writing training.
  - The Directives Division maintains the DoD Plain Language Training Course online video on its website and provides links to schedule available in person training. In 2018 we also provided the video to iCompass for inclusion in the Washington Headquarters Services training database.
- Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense (DoD OIG)
  - All DoD OIG report writers are required to use the DoD OIG style guide and editorial guide, which emphasize the use of plain language for all official publications.
  - Use of plain language is required for all DoD OIG documents and websites.

### **III. Communicating Requirements**

Communication about the Act's implementation, plain language guidelines, and compliance requirements is provided to the DoD workforce through:

- Publication of the DoD Plain Writing Act implementation plan, known as DoD Instruction 5025.13. It is available on the DoD Issuances website at

<http://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

- Distribution of memorandums from the Office of Management and Budget and OSD.
- Meetings of the DoD Plain Language Committee, which consists of representatives from different organizations within the DoD.
- Training and helpful resources available on the DoD Plain Language Website and individual agency websites.
- Notices placed in various public forums such as:
  - DoD newspapers
  - DoD newsletters
  - Mass electronic information systems

#### **IV. Training**

- DoD
  - A plain language training course is available to all DoD personnel on the DoD Plain Language Website.
  - DoD organizations that already have internal training available will incorporate plain language guidance in those programs.
  - DoD organizations that do not have internal training will use the DoD plain language training and the other resources available on the DoD Plain Language Website.
- DCAA
  - DCAA provided plain language training to approximately 650 new employees in 2017.
- DLA
  - DLA conducted 8 in-house courses to communicate plain writing guidelines to Agency personnel.
  - DLA added the Skype for Business software application as a media to train employees located outside the DLA Headquarters.
  - DLA trained 78 civilian employees and contractors who write policy or procedural documents intended for Agency personnel and public audiences.
  - DLA incorporated plain language techniques in materials used for the DLA Action Officers Skill Course.
- Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)
  - DTIC provided plain language training through webinars/online.

- DTRA
  - DTRA held 4 quarterly meetings with Agency personnel who directly receive and process Agency correspondence actions to discuss various topics and provide standard guidance and refresher training to ensure consistency across official correspondence.
- Missile Defense Agency
  - MDA provided plain language training in-house and through <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>.
- Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
  - The Joint Staff Training Program facilitated an active responsive writing program as part of formal action officer and Division Chief introductory training. The responsive writing point of contact also facilitated formal individual and group training for select Joint Staff personnel.
  - A total of 1157 Joint Staff personnel received formal writing instruction in 2017.
  - Responsive writing instruction will continue to be an integral part of the existing Joint Staff Training Program. This instruction appropriately supports the mission of the Joint Staff and ensures that senior leaders receive the timely and accurate decision products necessary to perform their advisory and leadership roles and responsibilities.
- DoD CIO
  - The DoD CIO CCO conducts bi-weekly meetings with administrative support staff and action officers, providing critiques and feed-back on written products routed for review, editing, and signature. Attendees are regularly referred to available training through the DoD Plain Language Website, the DoD Action Officer Course, and to courses that cover the DoD issuance process and development.
- Office of the Director of Administration, OCMO
  - Plain language is emphasized in training classes offered to DoD action officers that cover the development of DoD issuances and the DoD issuances process.
- Office of the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E)
  - DOT&E provided plain language training in-house.
- DoD OIG
  - Plain language training is required, and readily available, for all DoD OIG writers and editors.

## V. Ongoing Compliance/Sustaining Change

The DoD is working towards full compliance with the Act and has fulfilled requirements such as:

- Publishing the DoD Plain Writing Act Implementation Plan, DoD Instruction 5025.13.
- Maintaining the DoD Plain Language Website.
- Designating a senior official for plain language.
- Encouraging feedback from the public and stakeholders to identify communications that require improvements.
- Publishing the annual compliance report on the DoD Plain Language Website.

**VI. Website:** <http://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/plainlanguage/>

**VII. Customer Satisfaction**

We want your input. Feedback is critical to help us know whether we have been successful in providing information that is clear and well-organized for its intended audience.

Comments, questions, and concerns may be sent to [whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil](mailto:whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil).