WRITING STYLE GUIDE AND PREFERRED USAGE FOR DOD ISSUANCES

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SECTION 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES. Write DoD issuances clearly and concisely, applying the following general principles of effective writing.

    a. When drafting your document, use an outline. This will help you organize your issuance and keep it focused and on track.

    b. Use short, simple words. Limit sentences to one thought and keep them brief (an average of 20 or fewer words).

    c. Use the correct words. (See Sections 2 and 3 for the glossary of preferred usage and a list of hyphenated modifiers used in DoD issuances.)

    d. Write in the active voice instead of the passive voice; name an actor with the action being taken immediately after the noun. See Table 1 for characteristics and examples.

Table 1. Characteristics and Examples of Passive and Active Voice

PASSIVE VOICE	ACTIVE VOICE
Frequently omits the doer of the action.	**Identifies the doer.**
An information copy of the board meeting minutes must be forwarded to the members.	The Chair must forward an information copy of the board meeting minutes to the members.
A military chaplain of a particular religious organization may be appointed as a consultant.	The Board may appoint a military chaplain of a particular religious organization as a consultant.
Frequently is longer and less direct; frequently includes a "by" phrase.	**Gets to the point.**
A written agreement will be executed by the parties.	The parties execute a written agreement.
Implementing instructions will be issued by the DoD Components.	The DoD Components issue implementing instructions.

    e. Use parallel construction (i.e., the same grammatical structure for similar or related ideas). See Table 2 for examples.

    f. Avoid long, rambling paragraphs. If a paragraph is longer than 10 lines, it should probably be restructured to include subparagraphs.

    g. Organize the material. Where the issuance templates don't provide a specific structure, organize sections and appendices so that earlier paragraphs serve to make later paragraphs clear. When possible, use paragraph headings to highlight important concepts so the reader can see at a glance what the paragraph is about.

Table 2. Examples of Parallel Construction

EXAMPLE 1
Not Parallel 1.1. The physical review of the ID card must verify that the identification matches the beneficiary, the correct entitlement dates, whether medical care for the beneficiary is authorized, and that no one has tampered with the card. **Parallel** 1.1. The physical review of the ID card must verify that the identification matches the beneficiary, the entitlement dates are correct, the beneficiary is authorized to receive medical care, and the card hasn't been tampered with.

EXAMPLE 2

Not Parallel
 	
This instruction:
    a. Reissues DoD Directive 1234.56 to establish policy and assign responsibilities for the authorization and support of private organizations located on DoD installations.
    b. DoD Manual 9876.54 is hereby cancelled.
    c. DoD Instruction 2345.67 will continue to be authorized to establish procedures that implement this instruction.
 	
Parallel
 	
This instruction:
    a. Reissues DoD Directive 1234.56 to establish policy and assign responsibilities for the authorization and support of private organizations located on DoD installations.
    b. Cancels DoD Manual 9876.54.
    c. Continues to authorize the publication of DoD Instruction 2345.67 to establish procedures to implement this instruction.

1.2. RULES SPECIFIC TO DOD ISSUANCES.

a. Referencing and References.

(1) Citing Authorities. **Always** reference:

(a) The issuance that provides the purpose of (i.e., reason for) the issuance being drafted and any other issuances that inform its content.

(b) For issuances approved by anyone other than the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the instrument that provides that position the authority to sign it. This is

typically the chartering DoD directive of the OSD Component head or Principal Staff Assistant approving the issuance.

(2) Copying, Quoting, Paraphrasing. **Don't** copy from, quote from, or paraphrase material in a reference. Do explain the relationship between the issuance and each reference cited; e.g., (emphasis added):

(a) "All proposals to construct new or modify existing DoD urban training facilities must be evaluated **in accordance with** DoD Instruction 1322.27."

(b) "Civilian manpower requirements must be sourced and designated **in accordance with** the manpower policy and procedures in DoD Instruction 1100.22."

(c) "The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security will serve as the Domestic Crisis Manager among other defense-wide crisis management responsibilities **assigned in** DoD Directive 3020.44."

(3) Referring to and Referencing Volumes in Multi-volume Issuances.

(a) Within the text itself, you will always say "...this volume" if you are just referring to the volume itself. If you use the phrase "...this [instruction/manual]," you are referring to the entire work (i.e., all the volumes).

(b) Cite each volume(s) individually in References (e.g., if you cite Volumes 2000 and 2003 of DoD Instruction 1400.25, they will both be included in References, rather than simply listing DoD Instruction 1400.25). This will make the subject of the volume(s) immediately clear to the reader rather than requiring him or her to go to the Directives Division Website. The complete instruction or manual will only be referenced if you are referring the reader to the document as a whole.

b. **Helping Verbs.** Use the following helping verbs as necessary to clarify the actor's level of obligation.

(1) Use "must" to denote a mandatory action.

(2) Use "will" to denote a required action in the future.

(3) Use "may" or "can" to denote an optional action that the actor is authorized to perform (a right, privilege, or power that the actor may exercise at his or her discretion).

c. **Generic Pronouns.** Don't use "he" or "she" or "his" or "her" separately as generic (possessive) pronouns; use "he or she" or "his or her." If possible, avoid gender specificity by using "they" or "their."

d. **Personal Pronouns and Point of View.** Don't use the personal pronouns "I," "we," and "you." Always write in the third person, using "he or she," "it," and "they."

e. Abbreviations and Acronyms. Write terms out the first time they appear in the text and place the abbreviation or acronym in parenthesis following it. Use the acronym consistently thereafter: don't repeat the term. A glossary of acronyms and abbreviations is mandatory for issuances over 2 pages using acronyms other than "DoD," "OSD," or "U.S." In accordance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010, consider not using acronyms if the term is used infrequently in your issuance. Do not establish acronyms if the term would be used fewer than three times in the issuance, not including items in the table of contents or reference list.

(1) Acronym as Adjective Only. The acronym "U.S." may be used in the adjective form only. Spell out "United States" when using the noun form.

(2) Acronyms That Don't Need to be Established. The acronyms "DoD," "OSD," and "U.S." don't need to be established upon first use.

(3) Combatant Command Acronyms.

(a) The Combatant Commands are legally named "United States Central Command," "United States European Command," etc. The acronyms are: USAFRICOM, USCENTCOM, USCYBERCOM, USEUCOM, USINDOPACOM, USNORTHCOM, USSOCOM, USSOUTHCOM, USSPACECOM, USSTRATCOM, and USTRANSCOM.

(b) The abbreviation for "Combatant Command" is "CCMD" – **not** "COCOM." See the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*; "COCOM" refers to "(combatant command) command authority" and not to the Combatant Command itself.

(c) According to the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, the abbreviation for "Combatant Commander" is "CCDR."

(4) Military Terms. Use the approved abbreviations and acronyms in the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

(5) Article Usage Use of the articles "the," "a," and "an" before abbreviations and acronyms will be determined by basic rules of grammar. The use of "a" and "an" depends on the *sound* of the acronym that follows, not on the first letter. For example, the vowel sound at the beginning of the acronym "MP" (pronounced "em-pea") requires that "an" be used. However, "a" is used before "MOOTW," since the acronym is pronounced "moo-twah."

f. Footnotes, Endnotes, and Use of the Term "Note." Don't use the term "NOTE" in DoD issuances. Don't use endnotes in DoD issuances. Use footnotes only to indicate in the References section where the reader may obtain a reference that isn't readily available on a government website.

g. Use of the Term "See" and of Parenthetical Remarks. When the term "see" is used as directional material, place the phrase in parentheses at the end of the sentence as a stand-alone sentence, as in the following parenthetical remark. (See Paragraph 1.2.f. for use of the term "note.") Avoid the use of other parenthetical remarks. If the information's important to the issuance, incorporate it into the appropriate sentence or paragraph.

h. Use of Directional Terms. Don't use directional terms or phrases (e.g., "above," or "below") when referring to a part of the issuance. Refer to the paragraphs being discussed by number.

i. Names of Ships, Exercises, and Operations. Always use all caps for the names of ships (e.g., "USS AGILE," "USNS IMPECCABLE" – not "USS Agile," "USNS Impeccable") and military exercises and operations (e.g., "Operation SOUTHERN WATCH" – not "Operation Southern Watch").

j. Address Blocks in DoD Issuances. In accordance with DoD issuance standards, mailing addresses are the exception to the rule for paragraph numbering and indentation; they may stand alone outside of a figure or table. The address block will be indented from the left margin equal to the first line indent of the paragraph to which the address block belongs; e.g., if an address block followed this paragraph, each line would be .25" from the left margin.

1.3. RESOURCES FOR WRITING DOD ISSUANCES. Use the resources in priority order below when you have questions on English usage, writing style, format, content, and organization of DoD issuances.

    a. DoD Issuance Website

        (1) Issuance Standards.

        (2) This guide.

        (3) Frequently Asked Questions.

        (4) Common Mistakes.

        (5) DoDM 5110.04, "DoD Manual for Written Material."

        (6) The *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

    b. Other Resources

        (1) *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* (current edition including supplements), available online.

        (2) *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (current edition), available online.

        (3) *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

SECTION 2: PREFERRED USAGE FOR DoD ISSUANCES

This section provides preferred capitalization, terminology, wording, and use of abbreviations and acronyms for DoD issuances to ensure they are written simply, clearly, and consistently. For military terminology, use the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. For questions about usage not answered in this glossary or the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, consult the resources in Section 3.

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
A	
a great deal of	much
a minimum of	at least
a number of	some
abrogate	abolish, cancel
accelerate	speed up, hasten
accompanied by	with
accompany	go with
accomplish	do
accorded	given
according to	**Don't** use when citing a reference. Use "pursuant to" when the action being taken is authorized or required by your reference. Use "in accordance with" if the action being taken is consistent with this particular reference, but the reference neither requires nor forbids the action. "Under" should generally only be used to cite the authority of an individual.
accordingly	so, then
accrue	increase, collect
activate	start, drive, turn on
active duty	Not capitalized. Includes active duty for training. To exclude the training, use "active duty (other than for training)."
Active Component	Capitalized
active service	Not capitalized. Use when referring to military experience that may be credited toward promotion or retirement. Don't use "active duty."
adjacent to	next to
advantageous	helpful

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
affect, effect	Often used incorrectly. The verb "affect" means "to influence" and is used with an object. Don't use the word "affect" as a noun. The verb "effect" means "to bring about, accomplish, make happen." The noun "effect" means a "result" or "consequence" of an action.
affix	put, attach
afford an opportunity	allow, let
AFRICOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USAFRICOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
after the conclusion of	after
agency	Capitalized only when part of a proper noun.
aggregate	total, sum
all of	all
ambassador	Use lowercase, except when referring to a specific person.
ameliorate	improve
antedate	precede
antithesis	opposite, contrast
any of	any
any place	anywhere
apparent	clear, plain
appendix	plural = "appendices"
appreciable	many
approximately	about, close, near
are in receipt of	received
armed forces	In lowercase, a generic term for the military forces of a nation or a group of nations.
Armed Forces of the United States; U.S. Armed Forces	Use "Military Services" for consistency throughout DoD issuances. All three terms denote collectively all components of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and Space Force.
Armed Services	Use "Military Services."
arrived at a decision	decided
as a basis for	for
as a matter of fact	in fact
as a means of	to
as a result of	because

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
as of	by
as prescribed by	pursuant to
as to whether	whether
ascertain	find out, learn
assignment	Use to refer to an order to a particular duty, organization, or station for a long or indefinite time.
assist	help, aid
assure	ensure
at all times	always
at an early date	soon
at the present time	now
at the time of	during
attached hereto	attached
attains the age of ...	becomes # years old
attempt	try
augment	raise, expand, add to, extend, enlarge, increase
B	
based on the fact that	because
be cognizant of	know
before-mentioned	Avoid using this term as it's usually redundant.
benefit	help
biannual, biennial	"Biannual," like "semiannual," means twice a year. "Biennial" means every 2 years.
bimonthly	Means every 2 months. Use "semi-monthly" (or "twice a month") to express twice monthly.
businessman or businesswoman	business executive, manager, entrepreneur, business owner
by means of	by, with
by virtue of	by, under
C	
calculate	compute
can	Use if an action is optional/conditional.
cease	stop

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
CENTCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USCENTCOM (See the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*)
chairman or chairwoman	chair or chairperson
close proximity	near
COCOM	**Don't** use as an acronym for "Combatant Command." Use "CCMD."
Code of Federal Regulations	Capitalized; correct abbreviation is "CFR."
cognizant of	aware of, knows, understands, comprehends
coincidentally	at the same time
Combatant Command	Correct abbreviation is "CCMD."
Combatant Commander	Correct abbreviation is "CCDR."
combine	join
comes into conflict	conflicts
Commander-in-Chief	Use **only** when referring to the President of the United States.
commence	begin
compare	Use "compare to" when discussing similarities between objects that are different; use "compare with" when discussing similarities or differences between objects that are the same.
concerning	about, on
conclude	end, close
concur	Use "concur with" when concurring with a person; use "concur in" when concurring in an idea, proposal, document, or recommendation.
Congressman or Congressperson	Use "Member of Congress" or "Congressional Representative."
consummate	complete, bring about
contained in	in
contain	has
contiguous	next to
continuously, continually	Often used incorrectly. The first word means "without interruption;" the second, "intermittently at frequent intervals."
contribute	give
councilman	council member

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
course of time	time
crewman	crew member
criterion	standard, norm
D	
daughter or son	child, children
decision maker, decision making	Hyphenated only when used as an adjective: "decision-making abilities."
deem	consider
defense	Capitalized only when referring to an OSD Defense Agency (go to "DoD and OSD Component Heads" on the DoD Issuances Websites for a listing of the OSD Defense Agencies) or when part of a proper noun.
Defense Agency	Capitalized when referring to the OSD Defense Agencies.
demonstrates	shows
depart	leave
dependent	Avoid using this word except when required by law; e.g., use of the word "dependent" may be required to satisfy explicit statutory requirements about entitlement to benefits or privileges. Instead, use such terms as "family member," "spouse," "parent," "unmarried child," or "beneficiary."
depict	describe, show
deprivation	loss
despite the fact that	although, though
detail	Use to define a particular duty, organization, or station as temporary.
determine	decide, find
discontinue	drop, stop
disseminate	issue, circulate, send out
downward adjustment	decrease
due to the fact that	because, since, due to
during periods when	when
during such time	while
E	
echelons	levels

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
effect, affect	Often used incorrectly. The verb "effect" means to "bring about, accomplish, or make happen." The noun "effect" means a "result" or "consequence" of an action. The verb "affect" means "to influence" and is used with an object. Don't use the word "affect" as a noun.
effect an improvement	improve
e.g. and i.e.	Often used incorrectly. The abbreviation "e.g." means "for example" (describing one of many examples). The abbreviation "i.e." means "that is" (only the items mentioned apply). **Neither** of these terms can be used with "etc."
elementary	simple, basic
elicit	draw out, bring out
eliminate	cut, drop, end
elucidate	explain, clarify
e-mail	Hyphenate; don't use "email."
emphasize	stress
employ, employed	use, used
enclosed herewith	enclosed
encompass	enclose, include
encounter	meet
encourage	urge, persuade
endeavor to ascertain	find out
enlisted man or woman	enlisted member, enlistee
ensure	Use "insure" only when referring to monetary insurance. Avoid use of "ensure" when assigning responsibilities or describing procedures in DoD issuances as it's passive and difficult for the individual or agency responsible to measure success or failure. Use more active verbs (oversee, direct, require).
enumerate	count, list
equitable	fair
equivalent	equal
EUCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USEUCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
evident	clear
exacerbate	make worse
Executive Branch	Capitalized

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
Executive Order	Capitalize when citing number; e.g., "Executive Order 12334." Only capitalize "Executive" when the meaning's general; e.g., "those Executive orders," and you are referring to the orders issued by the President. Correct abbreviation is "E.O."
Executive Department	Capitalized
Executive Secretary, OSD	Executive Secretary of the Department of Defense
exercise care	be careful
expedite	hasten, speed
F	
fabricate	construct, make, build, invent
facilitate	ease, help
failed to	didn't
father or mother	Use "either parent" or "parent."
feasible	possible, practical
federal, federally	Not capitalized; **but** when writing about the Federal Government in its official capacity using the term as an official title, you should capitalize both Federal and Government.
female or male	Use "person" or "individual."
finalize	complete, finish
fireman	firefighter
for the month of…	for
for the purpose of	for
for the reason that	because, since
foreman	supervisor, manager
forfeit	give up, lose
formulate	make, devise, prepare
fullest possible extent	as much as possible
functional Combatant Commands	United States Cyber Command; United States Special Operations Command; United States Space Command; United States Strategic Command; United States Transportation Command
fundamental	basic
furnish	give, supply, send
G	
generally	Avoid using this word unless contrasted with "specifically."

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
geographic Combatant Commands	United States Africa Command; United States Central Command; United States European Command; United States Northern Command; United States Indo-Pacific Command; United States Southern Command
give consideration to	consider
give encouragement to	encourage
government	The designation "government" is capitalized only if used as a part of a proper name, as a proper name, or as a proper adjective. For example, "U.S. Government," but "government" (in general sense), "European governments." It may be used to refer to State, local, or foreign governments. If you intend to refer only to the Federal Government of the United States, use "U.S. Government."
grade and rank	Use "grade" to designate pay grade; e.g., "O-1" or "E-2." Use "rank" to refer to the order of precedence or seniority within a grade.
grandfather or grandmother	Use "grandparent" or "grandparents."
H	
has the capability to, of	can
have need for	need
have the effect of	effect
he, him, his; she, her, hers	Avoid gender-specific language; if possible, use "they" and "theirs." If not, use "he or she" instead of he; "him or her" instead of him; "his or hers" instead of his.
held a meeting	met
henceforth	from now on
heretofore	until now, up to now
husband or wife	spouse
I	
identical	same
i.e. and e.g.	Often used incorrectly. The abbreviation "e.g." means "for example" (describing one of many examples). The abbreviation "i.e." means "that is" (only the items mentioned apply). **Neither** of these terms can be used with "etc."
illustrate	show
impede	block
imperative	urgent

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
implement	carry out
in a case in which	when, where
in a situation in which	when
in addition	also, besides, too
in an effort to	to
in case	if
in accordance with	Use "in accordance with" if the action being taken is consistent with this particular reference, but the reference neither requires nor forbids the action. Use "pursuant to" when the action being taken is authorized or required by your reference. "Under" should generally only be used to cite the authority of an individual.
in connection with	by, in, for
in coordination with / in conjunction with	The term "in coordination with" is used when the main party must consult with other parties, but those parties are not necessarily an equal voice in the process. "In conjunction with" is used when two or more parties are equally involved, and the task cannot be accomplished without the involvement or consent of all.
in lieu of	instead of, in place of
in order that	so that
in regard to	about
in relation to	related to, for
in spite of the fact that	though, although
in the amount of	for
in the case of	when, where
in the course of	during, in, while
in the event of	if
in the majority of cases	usually
in the near future	soon
in view of	since, because
inception	start
incorporate	merge, join
indicate	show
initial	first
initiate	begin, start

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
INDOPACOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USINDOPACOM (see the former "USPACOM" in *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
innate	basic, native, inborn
insure	ensure, unless referring to monetary insurance
integrate	combine
inter-Service	Use only when referring to the Military Services.
is authorized and directed	will
is authorized to	may
is cognizant of	knows
is dependent upon	depends on
is directed	will
is entitled to	may
is responsible for selecting	selects
it is obvious that	clearly, obviously
it is the responsibility of...to	will

J	
journeyman	trainee, beginner
justify	prove

K	

L	
last and latest	"Last" means final; "latest," most recent.
least and less	Use "least" when more than two persons or things have been mentioned; use "less" when only two have been mentioned.
Legislative Branch	Capitalized when referring to the U.S. Government.
lengthy	long
like	Never use "like" to introduce a subject and its verb; e.g., "He wrote as (not "like") he spoke."
locate	find

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
M	
magnitude	size
mailman	mail carrier
make a decision	decide
make a determination	determine
make application	apply
make every effort	try
make inquiry regarding	inquire, ask
make provisions for	provide
male or female	Use "person" or "individual."
man or woman	person, human, human being, individual
manhour	work hour, staff hour
mankind	humanity, human beings, humankind
manmade	artificial, synthetic, manufactured
manned	staffed
manpower	human resources, workforce, labor force
manufacture	make
Marine Corps and Navy, U.S.	Although they are in the same Military Department and under the same Secretary, the Marine Corps and the Navy are separate Military Services. Therefore, the term "Navy" doesn't include the Marine Corps.
maximize	increase
maximally	to the maximum extent possible
may	Use if an action is optional/conditional.
memorandum	plural = "memorandums"
military and naval	**Don't** use. The term "military" includes "naval."
Military Departments	The Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and the Department of the Air Force, including the Reserve Components, which include the Army and the Air National Guards of the United States.
Military Secretaries	When referring to the Secretaries of the three Military Departments and the Secretary of Homeland Security (for the U.S. Coast Guard when it isn't operating as a Service in the Navy), use "the Secretary concerned." When referring only to the Secretaries of the three Military Departments, use "the Secretary of the Military Department

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
	concerned," "the Secretary of each Military Department," or "the Secretaries of the Military Departments."
	Don't use "the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force," or "the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force."
Military Service Chiefs	Use when referring to the heads of the six branches of the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force). Also referred to as "Service Chiefs." If you mean to delegate responsibility to the highest level of authority, you should do so to the Secretaries of the Military Departments rather than to the Service Chiefs.
Military Services	The branches of the Armed Forces of the United States, established by an act of Congress, in which persons are appointed, enlisted, or inducted for military service, and which operates and is administered within a Military or Executive Department.
	The Military Services are the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and Space Force. The term "Military Services" includes the Reserve Components, which include the Army and the Air National Guards of the United States.
minimal	least, lowest, smallest
minimally	at a minimum
minimize	reduce
mitigate	lessen, ease
modification	change
monitor	check, watch
mother or father	"either parent" or "parent"
must	Use if an action is mandatory.
<u>N</u>	
Nation	**Don't** use. Refer to the United States by name. When referring to another governmental state, use "nation."
national	Capitalized only when part of a proper noun.
National Command Authorities	**Don't** use. Refer to the President or the Secretary of Defense.
National Guard	Take special care with the National Guard. The State organizations, which are the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard, must be distinguished from their federal counterparts, which are the Army National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States.

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
	Taken together, the State organizations make up the "National Guard." The federal organizations, however, cannot be taken together because the Army National Guard of the United States is a component of the Army, while the Air National Guard of the United States is a component of the Air Force.
	The National Guard, together with the Navy Militia, make up the organized, federally-recognized militia of the 50 States. When members of the National Guard enter active service, they are "called into federal service." Once on duty, they are "in federal service."
Navy and Marine Corps, U.S.	Although they are in the same Military Department and under the same Secretary, the Navy and the Marine Corps are separate Military Services. Therefore, the term "Navy" doesn't include the Marine Corps.
necessitate	cause, need, require
negligible	small, trifling
nevertheless	however, even so, but
normal, normally	Avoid using these words unless contrasted with "not normal" or "not normally."
NORTHCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USNORTHCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
not infrequently	often
not later than	by, before
not often	seldom
numerals	Use Arabic numerals for units of measurement, time, and money. Otherwise, use an Arabic numeral for the number 10 or more; for a number smaller than 10, write the number out.
numerous	many, most
O	
obtain	get
obviate	prevent
officer	Don't refer to a civilian official as an "officer." Refer to a civilian official as a "person," "employee," or "official."
on account of	because
on and after July 1, 1990	after June 30, 1990
on behalf of	for
on his or her own application	at his or her request

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
on the occasion	when, on
originate	start
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense. Use acronym only. Acronym doesn't need to be established.
ought	should
over	Use "more than" when referring to a number; e.g., "There were more than (not "over") 500 people at the meeting."
owing to the fact that	since, because
P	
parameters	limits, boundaries
parenthetical expressions	Avoid placing phrases in parentheses when they are stronger as part of the sentence.
participate in	take part
party	Avoid using when referring to a person.
per	Don't use this word for the English article "a." Avoid the Latin terms "per annum" and "per day." Instead, use "a year" and "a day." Don't use this word for "in accordance with" or "pursuant to."
percentum	percent
perform	do
permit	let, allow
person	If referring to a member of a Military Service, use "Service member," "member," "officer," or "enlisted member."
	If not a member of a Military Service, refer to him or her as a "person."
pertaining to	about, of, on
Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution	If you're referring to the specific process of the DoD - the major program that is a cornerstone of DoD's mission - then it is capitalized. If you are simply referring to the acts of planning, programming, budgeting, etc., it's lowercase.
policeman	police officer
portion	part
possess	have
practicable	possible, workable
practically	Vary this overused word with "virtually," "almost," and "nearly."
preclude	prevent

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
predicated	based
predominant	dominant, main, chief
preeminent	chief, outstanding, foremost, first
prepared	ready
prevail upon	persuade
prevalent	widespread
preventative	preventive
previous	past
previously, previous to, prior to	before
Principal Staff Assistant	Capitalized
probability	chance, likelihood
process of preparation	being prepared
promulgate	issue, publish
prototype	first or original, model
provided, provided that	if
provides guidance for	guides
providing	Don't use when the meaning is "if" e.g., "Providing low-cost houses is a problem, but the problem will be solved if the builders get supplies."
provisions of	Avoid using this term as it's usually redundant.
public law	Capitalize when citing section and number (e.g., "Section 456 of Public Law 98-176"). Use lowercase when the meaning's general (e.g., "those public laws"). Correct abbreviation is "PL."
purchase	buy
pursuant to	Use "pursuant to" when the action being taken is authorized or required by your reference. Use "in accordance with" if the action being taken is consistent with this particular reference, but the reference neither requires nor forbids the action. "Under" should generally only be used to cite the authority of an individual.

Q

R

reach a decision	decide

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
reason is because, reason is that	because
recipient of	gets, got
reflect	show
Reserve Components	Capitalized
retain	keep
retirement pay	retired pay
rudiments	first steps, basics
S	
Service	Used as an adjective when referring to the Military Services; e.g., "Service member," "Service-level". When used as a noun, use "Military Service(s)."
Service Chiefs	Use when referring to the heads of the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force). Also referred to as "Military Service Chiefs." If you mean to delegate responsibility to the highest level of authority, you should do so to the Secretaries of the Military Departments rather than to the Service Chiefs.
shall	Must, will; or use the applicable active verb only (e.g., "The DoD Component heads approve nominations").
should	Action is required unless justifiable reason exists for not doing so.
so as to	to
SOCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USSOCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
solicit	ask for
some of	some
son or daughter	child, children
SOUTHCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USSOUTHCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
SPACECOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USSPACECOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
specified (as in mentioned or listed)	named
Specified Command	**Don't** use. Use "Combatant Command" or name the specific command.
spokesman	spokesperson
State	Capitalize when referring to one or more of the United States.

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
STRATCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USSTRATCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
subsequent	later, after, next
subsequent to, subsequently	next, later, following, then, after
successfully completes or passes	completes or passes

T	
terminate	end
terrible disaster	disaster
terms to avoid	Avoid using pairs of words having the same effect, such as those below. Instead, use the broader or narrower term, as the meaning requires. "any and all" "authorized and directed" "authorized and empowered" "by and with" (except for Senate confirmation cases) "desire and require" "each and all" "each and every" "final and conclusive" "full and complete" "full and adequate" "full force and effect" "means and includes" "necessary or desirable" "null and void" "order and direct" "over and above" "sole and exclusive" "terms and conditions" "type and kind" "unless and until"
that and which (to begin restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses)	"That" introduces a restrictive clause; "which" introduces a nonrestrictive clause. A test of whether a clause is one or the other is to omit it. If the omission changes the meaning, results in a statement that doesn't make sense, or is incomplete, the clause is restrictive. If the clause can be omitted without changing the meaning, it's nonrestrictive. A restrictive clause isn't set off by commas; e.g., "The fish that I caught is a pike." A nonrestrictive clause is set off by commas; e.g., "The talks, which ended Monday, concerned export equipment."
the following	this, these

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
the question as to whether	whether
there is no doubt that	doubtless, no doubt
this date	today
thus	so
to the extent that	as far as
transcend	go beyond
TRANSCOM	**Don't** use. Approved acronym is USTRANSCOM (see the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*).
transmit	send
transpire	happen, occur
U	
under	"Under" should generally only be used to cite the authority of an individual. When citing a document as your authority (reference), use "pursuant to" when the action being taken is authorized or required by your reference. Use "in accordance with" if the action being taken is consistent with this particular reference, but the reference neither requires nor forbids the action.
unified command	**Don't** use. Use "Combatant Command" or name the specific command.
uniformed services	Not capitalized. The uniformed services are the Army; the Navy; the Air Force; the Marine Corps; the Coast Guard; the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and the United States Space Force (USSF). Proposed issuances that apply to the Commissioned Corps of DHHS and NOAA, must be coordinated with those organizations.
uniformed Service member	If intended to refer to a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, or Space Force, recommend you **not** use this term as it will cause confusion with the term "uniformed services," which, as defined in the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, applies to the U.S. Public Health Services and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as well as the Military Services. Suggest using either "Service member in uniform" or, if you must use the term "uniformed Service member," it must be clearly defined in your Glossary as **not** including USPHS or NOAA members.

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
United States, U.S.	Use the abbreviation only as an adjective; spell the term out when used as a noun. Abbreviation doesn't need to be defined upon first use or included in the glossary.
	When the definition exceeds the continental limits of the United States, use "the United States, its territories and possessions, and all waters and airspace subject to its territorial jurisdiction."
United States Armed Forces	See "Armed Forces of the United States."
United States Code	Capitalized; correct abbreviation is "U.S.C."
until such time as	until
upon	on
U.S. Government	Capitalized; used to refer to the Federal Government of the United States.
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USCYBERCOM	United States Cyber Command
USEUCOM	United States European Command
USINDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
USNORTHCOM	United States Northern Command
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSPACECOM	United States Space Command
USSTRATCOM	United States Strategic Command
USTRANSCOM	United States Transportation Command
utilize, utilization	use
V	
validate	confirm
value	cost, worth
verbatim	word for word, exact
viable	workable
virgule (/)	Use "and," or "or," depending on the meaning; e.g., instead of "production/deployment," use "production and deployment," "production or deployment." Occasionally use of "and/or" may be appropriate, but it should be restricted to avoid confusion.
W	

Term	Preferred Usage or Comment
website, Website	When referring to a website in general, it will be lowercase. When referring to a website by name, e.g., "DoD Issuances Website," it must be capitalized.
whenever	when
whereas	since, while
whereby	by which
wherein	in which, where
whether or not	whether, if
which (to begin a nonrestrictive clause)	"Which" introduces a nonrestrictive clause. A test of whether a clause is nonrestrictive is to omit it. If the clause can be omitted without changing the meaning, it's nonrestrictive. A nonrestrictive clause is set off by commas; e.g., "The talks, which ended Monday, concerned export equipment."
widow or widower	surviving spouse
wife or husband	spouse
will	Use if an action is required/required in the future.
with a view to	to, for
with reference to	on, about
with regard to	on, about
with respect to	on, about
with the exception of	except for
with the purpose of	to
workman	worker
workman's compensation	worker's compensation
X	
X-ray	**Don't** use as a verb. Use "examine," "treat," or "photograph with X-rays."
Y	
Z	

SECTION 3: LIST OF HYPHENATED MODIFIERS USED IN DoD ISSUANCES

built-in

cargo-handling
case-by-case
combat-ready
common-use
computer-based
container-handling
cost-effective

cross-country

day-to-day
decision-making
DoD-appropriated
DoD-associated
DoD-established
DoD-incurred
DoD-wide

double-spaced

energy-related
exclusive-use

first-class
first-rate
flag-raising
full-scale
full-time
general-purpose
government-controlled
government-owned

high-level
high-speed
in-depth
intelligence-related

joint-interest
joint-Service

land-based

large-scale
life-cycle
live-in
long-distance
long-haul
long-range
long-term

military-controlled

minimum-essential

off-base
off-campus
off-duty
off-the-shelf
on-board
one-time

part-time
personnel-intensive
point-to-point
post-development

retail-level
record-keeping
roll-on, roll-off

security-related
self-propelled
self-sustaining
Service-unique
shipboard-installed

short-term
single-Service
single-source
single-user
stand-alone
State-owned

tax-exempt
technology-sharing

theatre-specific
time-phased
two-person

well-informed
work-sharing

X-ray