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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

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Public Affairs

MEDIA OPERATIONS



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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 35-1, *Public Affairs Management*. It provides guidance pertaining to release of accurate and continuous flow of information to the public and guidance for Public Affairs media travel or transportation. It also implements Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5410.15, *Department of Defense Public Affairs Assistance to Non-Government, Non-Entertainment Oriented Print and Electronic Media*; DoDI 5410.16, *Department of Defense Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Motion Picture, Television, and Video Productions*; Department of Defense (DoD) 4515.13-R, *Air Transportation Eligibility (November 1994)*;) DoDI 5435.2, *Delegation of Authority to Approve Travel In and Use Military Carriers for Public Affairs Purposes*; DoDI 5410.15; and DoD Directive (DoDD) 5122.8, *Use of Military Carriers for Public Affairs Purposes*. Read this instruction with Joint Publication 3-61, *Public Affairs*; Air Force Instruction (AFI) 11-401, *Aviation Management*; and AFI 24-101, *Passenger Movement*. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*, and route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. The authorities to waive wing/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier number (“T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3”) following the compliance statement. See AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to SAF/PA for non-tiered compliance items. This publication may be supplemented at any level, but all direct Supplements must be routed to SAF/PAO for coordination prior to certification and approval. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located in the Air Force Records Information

Management System (AFRIMS. This instruction applies to the Air Force Reserve (AFR) and the Air National Guard (ANG), unless otherwise noted.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This instruction has been substantially revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes include: identifies Tiered waiver authorities for wing level, DRU, and FOA requirements; updates the objectives of the Air Force media operations program; clarifies who can serve as official Air Force spokespersons; incorporates guidelines for media travel, previously found in AFI 35-103, *Public Affairs Travel*; and revises the policy on media interviews with military detainees/inmates.

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Chapter 1

MEDIA OPERATIONS

Section 1A—Purpose and Objectives of Media Operations

1.1. Purpose of Media Operations. Media operations are essential for achieving the Public Affairs (PA) core competencies of trusted counsel to leaders, Airman morale and readiness, public trust and support, and global influence and deterrence. Engaging with the media is often one of the most rapid and credible means of delivering the commander's message to a desired audience. Experience shows that working proactively with the media increases trust and two-way communication with the media and the public. Remaining transparent, honest, and accessible to the maximum extent possible normally results in greater accuracy, context, and timeliness in communicating with internal and external audiences. Releasing official information through the media can help create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of national interest and policies, as well as mitigate any adverse effects from unofficial, misinformed, or hostile sources.

1.2. Objectives of the Air Force Media Operations Program.

- 1.2.1. Inform desired audiences with Air Force messages and information to achieve specified effects.
- 1.2.2. Exercise the Air Force's responsibility to "maximum disclosure, minimum delay."
- 1.2.3. Help establish and maintain relationships with key publics through the media.
- 1.2.4. Help build public understanding, trust, and support for Air Force operations, programs, and initiatives.

Section 1B—General Release of Information

1.3. Responsibilities. The Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) director is the coordination authority for all Air Force media activities and issues that have national or international implications, excepting Air Force operations performed in support of joint or combined operations. Senior commanders are responsible for releasing information within their purview. Even though material is unclassified or has been cleared through security and policy review channels, do not give it to the public unless the commander (or the commander's authorized PA representative) approves it for that purpose. See Air Force Policy Directive 35-1, *Public Affairs Management*, for more detailed policy information on authorities.

1.3.1. All military and civilian personnel must comply with the Secretary of Defense's (SECDEF) *Principles of Information* mandate of "maximum disclosure, minimum delay," thereby assuring commanders and PA staffs of rapid, accurate, and continuous flow of information to the public (**T-0**). See DODD 5122.05, *Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs*, for more information. The following are guidelines Air Force PA offices can use to implement this mandate:

- 1.3.1.1. Present Air Force information professionally, simply, and honestly.
- 1.3.1.2. Be accurate, prompt, and factual.

1.3.1.3. Confine the information to field of expertise.

1.3.1.4. Avoid the hypothetical and speculative.

1.3.1.5. Reflect Air Force policy.

1.3.2. Spokesperson Requirements. Formulation and promulgation of Air Force policy is an official responsibility and may be performed only by military or civilian officials of the Air Force. In accordance with DODI 5122.05, *Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs*, PA is the sole release authority to the media for official information and serves as the principal spokesperson on behalf of the commander.

1.3.2.1. Contract PA and non-government employees are not authorized to:

1.3.2.1.1. Act as official Air Force spokespersons, including being interviewed as subject matter experts; or

1.3.2.1.2. Serve as approval authorities for the release of information such as press releases, articles, imagery, or any content published to a publicly available website. Only a government employee can be the approval authority for public release of information.

1.3.3. Classified Information. Do not release classified information. See [paragraph 1.20](#) for circumstances when exposure to sensitive or classified information is allowed. Consult DOD Manual 5200.01, Vol. 1-4 *DOD Information Security Program*; AFI 31-401, *Information Security Program Management*, and AFI 35-102, *Security and Policy Review Process*. These publications tell how to classify, downgrade, and declassify information; who may release and receive certain information; what to do before telling the public about weapons systems; how to challenge the classification of material; and how open publication affects classified material. **(T-0)**.

1.3.3.1. Commanders will inform PA on all significant operational, programmatic, and administrative issues affecting the organization, including any classified aspects. **(T-1)**.

1.3.3.2. Unfavorable information must not be classified or withheld simply to avoid criticism of the Air Force. **(T-0)**.

1.4. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (Title 5, United States Code, Section 552a). Federal law, Department of Defense (DOD) and Air Force policy require prompt and accurate disclosure of information to the public. **(T-0)**. The following documents are important for PA to learn the parameters of the FOIA (Title 5, *United States Code*, Section 552) and Privacy Act in DOD 5400.7-R_AFMAN 33-302, *Freedom of Information Act Program*; Website: <http://www.foia.af.mil/>; DOD 5400.11-R, *Department of Defense Privacy Program*, and AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*. The FOIA directs maximum release of information. According to DOD, the commander, through PA and with the advice of the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA), should provide media-releasable information without forcing news media representatives to go through FOIA channels. Since the implementation of FOIA policy is affected by a number of policy memos and other controlling documents that are updated with greater frequency than the applicable laws and directives, always consult the local SJA, the Privacy Act office, and the DOD policy letters when releasing personal information.

1.4.1. Inspector General Cases. News media requests for IG records will be processed through the FOIA office, IAW AFI 90-301, *Inspector General Complaints Resolution*,

paragraph 1.46. PA is responsible for informing media officials of the proper procedures for obtaining IG records through FOIA channels.

1.4.2. **Withholding of Information that Personally Identifies DOD Personnel.** Release of information on DOD personnel is limited to the names, official titles, organizations, and work telephone numbers for personnel only at the office director level or above, provided a determination is made that disclosure does not raise security or privacy concerns. This requires the SJA to provide advice in a timely manner. However, media representatives can request information under FOIA, completely bypassing PA. FOIA channels take longer than PA due to administrative procedures, and the FOIA office does not provide explanations or answer questions. In cases where news media representatives submit FOIA requests but PA can provide more information in a more rapid timeframe, the FOIA and PA offices should coordinate responses.

1.4.3. **Rights of living relatives and associates of deceased Air Force personnel** should be considered. The Privacy Act and the privacy exemptions of FOIA do not protect the personal privacy of deceased persons. Records about the deceased, however, may be withheld under FOIA or the Privacy Act to protect the privacy of living relatives and associates if the records contain private, personal information about the family or others that would adversely affect a recognized privacy right of living individuals, as defined by the Privacy Act.

1.4.4. The Privacy Act was designed to protect individuals. It may prevent the Air Force from disclosing information to the news media even though an individual may have already chosen to voluntarily discuss Privacy Act matters with reporters. If individuals want the Air Force to assist the news media with a particular matter, they can waive their rights under the Privacy Act by signing a Privacy Act release. On a case-by-case basis, PA should consider the option of contacting the individual to offer a Privacy Act release. This release document must be signed and dated by the individual waiving his or her rights. PA is advised to consult and coordinate the release with the SJA prior to signature, and individuals are advised to consult legal assistance before signing the release.

1.4.4.1. While a Privacy Act release statement can be tailored, an example of a Privacy Act release statement is: "I hereby authorize Air Force officials to disclose any information about me, whether or not protected by the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, or any Air Force directives to [specific news organization or person] in response to [his/her] interest in my case."

1.5. Special Policy. Policies come from the Secretary of the Air Force and Headquarters Air Force, and some special policies govern the release of information. Major commands (MAJCOMs) can provide additional guidance, as needed.

1.6. Published, Released or Cleared Information. Do not assume information about the Air Force has been officially released simply because it appears in the media. Likewise, do not assume a member's personal information, such as home of record or marital status, is releasable because it is posted on the member's social media page. Neither does the appearance of classified information in the public realm mean it is now unclassified, nor can it be used or referred to by Air Force spokespersons. Operational or technical information combined for re-release must meet the same release standards as the original information.

1.7. Air Force People. Occasions may arise when special directives control releasable information about individuals under certain conditions. For additional guidance on the release of casualty information see **paragraphs 1.25** and **2.6**. The following guidelines apply to the release of information (**T-0**):

1.7.1. Address. Home of record, home address and home telephone number generally are not releasable.

1.7.2. Administrative Actions. Administrative discharge boards or aviator flight boards generally are not releasable. Selective early retirement boards and reduction in force boards are boards affecting individuals and are not generally releasable.

1.7.3. Age and Date of Birth. This information is generally not releasable without consent of the member. It is permissible to release ages of deceased Airmen.

1.7.4. Biographies and Photographs of Key Persons. Official photographs and biographies of general officers and key military and civilians maintained according to official biography requirements are releasable. For people other than these individuals, official photographs and biographies generally are not releasable, unless approval from individual is given. In the event of death, family permission should be sought and granted.

1.7.5. Death of Civilian Employee or Military Personnel. See AFI 36-809, *Civilian Survivor Assistance*, for more details on civilian employees. The apparent cause of death (i.e. homicide, suicide) generally is not releasable until the investigation is completed and after consultation with the investigative agency. Any news releases and interviews will not include tentative or speculative conclusions or use terms such as “homicide,” “suicide,” or “self-inflicted.” Comments concerning the death should be limited to, “The cause of death is under investigation (or undetermined).” Release will not be made until 24 hours after next-of-kin (NOK) notification.

1.7.6. Discharges. Information regarding discharge status generally is not releasable. Do not release information about honorable, under honorable conditions (general), or under other than honorable conditions unless the affected person gives written consent. **Note:** If a case has received extensive publicity, this information may be releasable (consult the local SJA or SAF/PA for guidance in this situation.) If the discharge results from a court-martial, the record of trial is a public document. The sentence and subsequent clemency action, if any, are releasable.

1.7.6.1 Establishing and maintaining a professional working relationship with your installation JA office is critical to maintaining situational awareness on courts martial issues that may prove to have significant media visibility. A collaborative PA and JA relationship is essential to ensuring trusted counsel to leaders. Routinely review the AF JA Docket at www.afjag.af.mil for the latest cases pertaining to specific installations.

1.7.7. Duty Location. Current, past, and future assignments are releasable, except sensitive and overseas assignments masked in unit records. Current or future assignments, office and unit address and duty telephone number for personnel or units stationed overseas or for routinely deployable or sensitive units are generally not releasable.

1.7.8. Duty Status. Releasable: active duty, retired, etc. The following information concerning duty status is also releasable: military grade and rank, civilian grade, military

basic pay, civilian gross salary, and all allowances except basic allowance for housing (BAH). Also releasable: duty telephone number, date of rank (DOR), entered active duty date (EAD), pay date, source of commission and promotion sequence number, Air Force specialty code (unless operational security considerations warrant withholding a specific duty description), position title, office, unit address, and professional military education. See AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*, for other items that are releasable, not requiring consent under the Privacy Act Program.

1.7.9. Education. Information concerning civilian educational degrees and major areas of study, school and year of graduation generally is not releasable without written consent of the member.

1.7.10. Employers of Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard Members. Not releasable without the consent of the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard member.

1.7.11. Family Members. Family member information, including number, age, gender, or names of family members, are not releasable.

1.7.12. Gender. Releasable.

1.7.13. General Officer Assignments. General officer assignments are announced by Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OSD/PA) in coordination with the White House and other agencies or departments. *Note:* An assignment within a MAJCOM or Field Operating Agency (FOA) may be announced by the MAJCOM or FOA commander after HQ USAF has published orders on the assignment.

1.7.14. Marital Status. Marital status (single, divorced, married, widowed, etc.) is generally not releasable.

1.7.15. Military Awards and Decorations or Citations. Releasable.

1.7.16. Military Personnel Records. See AFI 36-2608, *Military Personnel Records System*. Personnel board decisions should follow this rule: Actions that affect groups, such as promotion boards or augmentation boards, generally are releasable.

1.7.17. Name. Releasable within guidelines described within this AFI and AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*.

1.7.18. Names of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard (ANG) aircrew members involved in incidents under investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) are generally not releasable during the investigation. Air Force policy is for crewmembers to assist FAA by using their assigned radio call signs. Coordinate responses to such queries with the Operations Group Commander. See **Chapter 2**, Crisis Communication, AFI 91-204, *Safety Investigations and Reports*, and AFI 51-503, *Aerospace Accident Investigations*, for more information.

1.7.19. Prisoners. Base releases about stockade or guardhouse prisoner escapes, unusual incidents, or disturbances in local confinement facilities enhance relations with the general public and the news media. Limit release to information on the Department of Defense (DOD) Form 553, *Deserter/Absentee Wanted by the Armed Forces* except for those blocks specifically prohibited [e.g., blocks 5n (SSN) and 16 (Relatives and/or Persons Known)].

1.7.20. Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA). OSD/PA regulates information release for POW/MIA situations. Since hostilities and conditions of peace vary, information policy changes periodically.

1.7.21. Race or National Origin. Generally releasable.

1.8. Accidents and Safety. See **Chapter 2**, Crisis Communication, and AFI 91-204, *Safety Investigations and Reports*, AFI 51-503, *Aerospace Accident Investigations*, and AFI 51-507, *Ground Accident Investigations*.

1.9. Pre-Trial Publicity. Legal directives provide detailed guidance concerning the types of releasable information before a trial. In all cases, closely coordinate with the installation SJA before releasing information. Serious charges are newsworthy; especially those that directly or indirectly concern the public. These may include flying violations, aircraft accidents, and nonmilitary offenses such as larcenies and assaults allegedly committed by Air Force people in the community. Installation PAs should routinely review the AF SJA Docket at www.afjag.af.mil for current cases. Air Force guidance for releasing information on criminal proceedings is that:

1.9.1. Media representatives, as members of the public, may attend open sessions of Air Force courts.

1.9.2. Cameras, video equipment, and audio equipment are generally not permitted in Air Force courtrooms during court sessions (see *Manual for Courts-Martial* for more guidance).

1.9.3. News releases should convey that military and civilian courts are similar, based on the principle that the accused is presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt..

1.9.4. Releasable material may include:

1.9.4.1. Names of persons charged with crimes, unless the person is a minor.

1.9.4.2. Date and nature of the alleged offense, as shown in the court-martial order.

1.9.4.3. Sentence.

1.9.4.4. Type of punitive discharge (if any) from the Air Force, and whether it was executed, suspended, or remitted.

1.9.4.5. Confinement circumstances or date of release from confinement.

1.9.4.6. Previous convictions or absence of them.

1.9.4.7. Findings of guilty or not guilty.

1.9.5. Avoid sensationalism, exaggeration, and use of the term "criminal." Do not use editorial words prejudicial to the accused before trial, such as hit-and-run driver, deserter, or murderer. Before conviction, releases may say the accused is charged with the crime or alleged to have committed it. Avoid military terms, jargon, clichés, or slang unless in a direct quote.

1.9.6. Media interviews and telephonic communication between media and military detainees/inmates in confinement are authorized IAW DODI 1325.07, *Administration of Military Correctional Facilities and Clemency and Parole Authority*, and AFI 31-205, *The*

Air Force Corrections System, if a determination is made that such interview or communication serves a legitimate public interest or is in the best interest of the military.

1.9.7. Do not release the names of minor children or victims.

1.10. Dissidence. Dissidence and protest activities are rare in the Air Force. They might concern human rights, political activism, or other causes. As a rule, protests arise from local grievances. Problem resolution must stay at that level to be effective. Local commanders are responsible for solving the problem. Consult with installation experts, such as the equal opportunity officer, SJA, and/or chaplain. See **Chapter 2**, Crisis Communication, for more information.

1.11. Investigations or Reports by Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). See AFPD 71-1, *Criminal Investigations and Counterintelligence*; AFI 71-101V1, *Special Investigations*, AFI 71-101V2, *Protective Service Matters*, and AFI 71-101V4, *Counterintelligence*.

1.12. Legal Procedures and Litigation. See AFI 51-301, *Civil Litigation*.

1.13. Force Structure Announcements. As a matter of policy, Force Structure or Base Realignment and Closure announcements are made at HQ USAF level. No public comments should be made until official announcements are made at the headquarters level and congressional notification has been completed. PAs should work closely with the SJA and the manpower and organization experts, as well as higher headquarters (HHQ) PA, to prepare and coordinate questions and answers and news releases before commenting.

1.14. Reduction in Force (RIF). Consult SAF/PA, through the MAJCOM, before releasing any reduction in force information.

1.15. Scientists and Engineers. Significant work by Air Force scientists and engineers can be releasable, but is subject to security and policy review requirements. See AFI 38-203, *Commercial Activities Program*, and AFI 35-102, *Security and Policy Review Process*, for more information.

1.16. Technical Documents. See AFI 61-204, *Disseminating Scientific and Technical Information*, and AFI 35-102, *Security and Policy Review Process*, for more information.

1.17. Contracts and Contractors' Releases.

1.17.1. Unclassified Contracts. Companies or institutions with unclassified Air Force contracts may release information about them unless the contract states otherwise. DOD 5220.22-R, *Industrial Security Regulation*, governs release of information by colleges and universities holding unclassified research and development contracts or letters of intent. The following may be released without further DOD approval:

1.17.1.1. A statement that the contract, letter of intent, or supplement agreement has been received. Certain types of contracts (such as proposals for a new electronic system, a high-altitude research study, etc.) may be released if this information is not limited by the contract.

1.17.1.2. Information of public or professional interest about the work being done, if this information is not limited by terms of the contract.

1.17.1.3. Information previously approved for release.

1.17.2. Classified Contracts. Companies or institutions with classified Air Force contracts prepare initial information announcements relating to new Air Force programs. DOD 5220.22-M, *National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual*, regulates these announcements. The manual is an attachment to DD Form 441, *Department of Defense Security Agreement*. The agreement enables a company to receive classified contracts and the classified information to meet them. This agreement prohibits the contractor from releasing information that pertains to classified contracts or projects until it is approved for this purpose. The contractor usually sends it directly to the Defense Office of Prepublication and Security Review (DOPSR) for approval.

1.17.2.1. The contract may specifically require the contractor to route the proposed release through an Air Force organization. In this case, PA reviews and clears the information for unrestricted publication. PA coordinates the proposed release with the appropriate system program office, security office, and other interested agencies. If a non-DOD agency awards the classified contract or project to the contractor, requests for information release are sent to that agency.

Section 1C—Release of Information on Operational Subjects

1.18. Alert Status. Information concerning changes of alert status or defense readiness condition (DEFCON) may be released only by SAF/PA and only after coordination with OSD/PA. In addition, PA offices at all levels are notified at once by their local command post when there are changes in alert status. The local force protection condition (FPCON) may be released to the general public if conditions affect the local community. For example, if the base will be closed or a security check at the gate will be instituted causing disruption to local traffic patterns, release the information. However, do not release the steps taken during a FPCON except to say that the unit is increasing its vigilance. Consult MAJCOM/PA offices for additional guidance (**T-1**).

1.19. Deployments.

1.19.1. Releasable information. Release guidance from SAF/PA or MAJCOM/PA usually precedes a deployment. However, if it is obvious the unit has departed, confirm the obvious but notify SAF/PA or MAJCOM/PA of the information release. Unless directed otherwise, the following items of information are releasable (**T-1**):

1.19.1.1. Arrival of U.S. units in the commander's area of responsibility once announced by DOD or the combatant command.

1.19.1.2. Date of the unit's departure from home station after the unit has reached its deployed location.

1.19.1.3. Home station.

1.19.1.4. Approximate friendly force strength deployed (multi-squadron, group, wing--not how many people).

1.19.1.5. Approximate friendly casualty and POW figures.

1.19.1.6. Approximate number of enemy personnel detained.

1.19.1.7. Nonsensitive, unclassified information regarding past and present operations.

- 1.19.1.8. In general terms, identification and location of military targets previously attacked and types of ordnance expended, once released by the combatant commander.
- 1.19.1.9. Date, time, or location of previous conventional missions and their results.
- 1.19.1.10. Number of combat air patrol or reconnaissance missions or sorties flown in the operational area.
- 1.19.1.11. Weather and climate conditions.
- 1.19.1.12. If appropriate, allied participation by type of units (ground units, aircraft).
- 1.19.1.13. Conventional operations' unclassified code names.
- 1.19.1.14. Deployed units and locations. Check specific theater PA guidance.
- 1.19.1.15. Type of equipment, including aircraft, unless classified.
- 1.19.1.16. General personal interest stories.
- 1.19.1.17. General stories of training facilities, methods, etc., when not classified and when they would not indicate future operational planning.
- 1.19.1.18. General scope and duration of air training performed.
- 1.19.1.19. Battle damage may be described as "light," "moderate," or "heavy."
- 1.19.2. Not releasable. The following items of deployment information are not releasable:
 - 1.19.2.1. Classified aspects of equipment, procedures, and operations.
 - 1.19.2.2. Name of the operation, until released by the combatant commander.
 - 1.19.2.3. Information placing future operations in jeopardy.
 - 1.19.2.4. Information which could place people's lives at risk.
 - 1.19.2.5. Information that, if released, would violate host nation or allied agreement and sensitivities.
 - 1.19.2.6. Information that would reveal intelligence methods and sources.
 - 1.19.2.7. Information that would reveal intelligence targeting and battle damage assessments.
 - 1.19.2.8. Specific numbers of deployed troop strength, aircraft, weapons systems, on-hand equipment, or supplies available, unless otherwise stated in HHQ PA guidance.
 - 1.19.2.9. Information that would reveal details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or canceled operations.
 - 1.19.2.10. Information or imagery that would reveal specific location of forces.
 - 1.19.2.11. Information or imagery that would reveal the level of security at deployment sites or installations.
 - 1.19.2.12. Datelines showing specific countries when those countries have not acknowledged their participation in the operation.
 - 1.19.2.13. Rules of engagement.

- 1.19.2.14. Details of training of specialized units.
- 1.19.2.15. Details of techniques, results, efficiency, etc., of forces involved.
- 1.19.2.16. Destination, unless initially released by OSD/PA.
- 1.19.2.17. Point of origin for an operational mission for an attack.
- 1.19.2.18. Information on the effectiveness of weapon systems and tactics.
- 1.19.2.19. Specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft while search and rescue operations are ongoing.
- 1.19.2.20. Special operations' unique methods, equipment, or tactics that, if disclosed, could harm mission accomplishment.
- 1.19.2.21. Information on operational or support vulnerabilities.
- 1.19.2.22. Specific methods and tactics, speeds, and formations.
- 1.19.2.23. Information that, in combination, identifies the who, what, and when of a deployment. For example, combining individual names, deployment locations, and deployment dates is not authorized for release.

1.19.3. Movement of Units. As previously mentioned, release guidance from HHQ PA usually precedes a deployment, but if it is obvious that a unit has departed, confirm the obvious but notify the HHQ PA office.

1.19.3.1. Continental United States (CONUS) to Overseas. Information on the movement of Air Force units to overseas areas must be released initially by OSD/PA, unless delegation is authorized. SAF/PA will immediately notify MAJCOM/PA offices that such a release is being made. The time and content of the release must be included in this notification. In addition, guidance on releasing any information subsequent to the initial release must be incorporated. This guidance applies to all commands affected by the move, even if the unit is only passing through. MAJCOM/PA offices will disseminate the guidance immediately to their affected units. Unit PAOs and commanders must comply strictly with the policy outlined in the notification, deviating from it only when specifically authorized by SAF/PA.

1.19.3.2. Within Overseas Areas. Within overseas areas, movement releases are governed by instructions issued by the theater commander.

1.19.3.3. Within CONUS. For unit movements within the CONUS, the following information is releasable:

1.19.3.3.1. Designation of Unit.

1.19.3.3.2. Name and location of new station, assembly point, training area, etc., within the U.S., unless the movement itself or new station is classified.

1.19.3.3.3. Departure date, if routing for training and details of movement are not classified.

1.19.3.3.4. General information necessary for local civic relations, such as housing, recreation, etc.

1.19.3.3.5. On arrival at new station within the United States, resume normal PA activities.

1.20. Access to Sensitive Information. Unit commanders may determine that coverage of a story will involve exposure to sensitive or classified information, but is in the best interests of the Air Force if ground rules can be established to restrict publishing classified information in reporting or discussion. The primary safeguard will be to brief the reporter in advance about what information is sensitive and what the parameters are for covering this type of information. The commander may grant access if the reporter agrees to a security and policy review of the communication product. Agreement to a security and policy review in exchange for this type of access is strictly voluntary; however, if a reporter does not agree, then access to sensitive information may be denied. If a reporter agrees to a security and policy review, it will be conducted solely to ensure that sensitive or classified information is not included in the product.

1.21. Intelligence, Surveillance, or Reconnaissance Activities. News releases may not be made regarding intelligence activities, except as authorized by SAF/PA (T-1).

1.22. Chemical, Biological and Radiological Warfare. Air Force PA material that deals with chemical, biological, or radiological warfare must be cleared by OSD/PA, through SAF/PA (T-0).

1.23. Simulated Employment of Nuclear Weapons on Maneuvers and Training Exercises. The fact that a particular maneuver or exercise will involve the simulated employment of nuclear weapons may be released to news media as the maneuver or exercise commander deems necessary. However, the technique required in the use of any nuclear weapon must not be released (T-0).

1.24. Personnel Wounded in Combat. PA must exercise care in releasing information and photographs of personnel wounded in action or hospitalized for other reasons. See AFI 35-109, para 2.5.3. *Visual Information*, for additional details on imagery release procedures. The governing concerns are patient welfare, patient privacy, and next of kin/family considerations. OSD/PA, unless it delegates authority to the combatant command PA, issues an initial news release acknowledging that combat injuries have occurred. After the initial release, the services may release additional information on casualties, consistent with the Privacy Act.

1.25. Casualties. The term casualty can indicate either injured or deceased personnel. IAW with DoDI 1300.18, *Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures*, no casualty information on deceased military personnel may be released to the media or the general public until 24 hours after notifying the next-of-kin regarding the casualty status of the member (T-0). Information on ill or injured Airmen may not be released without the consent of the individual, unless the release is otherwise authorized by the Privacy Act. In the cases of service members who have been unaccounted for from past conflicts, public release cannot occur until 24 hours after the next of kin accepts the member's identification or 24 hours after the next of kin has been notified that the Armed Forces Identification Review Board has upheld the identification. For more guidance on releasable information, see **paragraph 1.7**.

1.25.1. Medical Care Facilities. Media visits are authorized to medical care facilities. They are approved by the medical facility commander and attending physician, and done without interference to medical treatment. Patients are not to be photographed if they can be identified in the photo, or interviewed, without informed signed consent. Informed signed

consent is also required for medical staff to release information about patients. PA escorts the media while at the medical facilities.

1.25.2. Unit casualties and losses. Information on unit casualties and losses should be described in general terms only, e.g., light, moderate, heavy. The use of percentages, numbers of aircraft damaged or destroyed, buildings, facilities, vehicles, etc., will not be released without approval of the combatant commander, a designated representative, or OSD/PA. **(T-0)**.

1.25.3. Aeromedical Evacuation Flights. Media requests to travel aboard aeromedical evacuation flights will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For more information and request procedures, see **paragraph 1.38.3.2**.

1.25.4. Transfer of casualties to the United States. Media visits to Dover Air Force Base are authorized with primary Next of Kin approval, based upon the Secretary of Defense's March 25, 2009 memo, "DOD Policy Regarding Media Access to Dignified Transfers at Dover AFB." Media visit requests should be coordinated with the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations (AFMAO) PA office.

1.26. Casualty Notification to Next of Kin (NOK). Although not an official part of a casualty notification team, in cases with high potential for media interest, PA has a valuable role in assisting with Air Force casualty NOK notification.

1.26.1. Responsibilities.

1.26.1.1. PA should assess the media climate and, in potentially high visibility cases (combat related, mass casualties, homicides, etc.) or duty status-whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN), missing or captured, advise the commander of the likelihood of news media contacting the family members of the deceased Airman and offer PA support to the family.

1.26.1.2. The local commander or notification officer may request that PA accompany the NOK notification team when there are indications of high media interest and the possibility of news media contacting the deceased's family members directly.

1.26.1.3. The PA representative should travel with the NOK notification team but standby while the official notification is made to the family and remain available if the family requests PA advice or support.

1.26.1.4. After the NOK notification is completed, the notification officer will provide the family an installation-specific PA Media Background Information Paper **(T-3)**. The PA Media Background Information Paper should include the installation PA office contact information as well as a list of services the installation PA office can provide the family if there is media interest. If requested by the family, the PA office will advise the family on interaction with the news media, offer assistance with any public statements, and define the family's preferences on news media requests for information.

1.26.1.5. If the news media is already at the family's residence or calling during the notification, PA should offer to act as the liaison between the news media and the family, in keeping with the family's preferences.

1.26.1.6. Casualty notification officers in remote areas who do not have PA support provide the family contact information for Air Force Personnel Center's Casualty

Services (1-800-433-0048) (T-2). Casualty Services contacts the on-call PA representative if needed.

1.27. Unit Activations, Inactivations, Phasedowns, or Movements. A significant change in unit level of operations is extremely important news for local communities. This change takes place after deliberation at appropriate levels of government. PA personnel should not discuss these subjects without guidance from HHQ PA (T-1).

1.28. Weapon Systems. This category includes aircraft, missiles, munitions, support systems, subsystems, and space vehicles. Information about the existence, characteristics, potential or demonstrated capabilities of new systems, or improvements or modifications of existing ones must be reviewed by SAF/PA before it is released (T-1). The same is true for military applications of nuclear energy, and the following types of warfare subjects: biological, radiological, chemical, electronic, and psychological.

Section 1D—Working with the Media

1.29. General Guidelines. The media's need for rapid, accurate information requires immediate response by Air Force officials. It is important to understand media capabilities, organization, technology, and deadlines.

1.29.1. Access to Installations. Credentialed and authenticated media representatives, bloggers, freelance writers, and photographers may visit Air Force installations. PA must notify the security forces at the main gate or visitor center and escort media at all times when they are on a military installation (T-2).

1.29.2. Adverse News. When adverse news occurs, release it quickly and candidly.

1.30. Exclusive Requests. An exclusive is a reporter's request for information that no other reporter has previously sought. It can involve a minor or major story. The Air Force allows reporters to work on exclusives, but it is obligated to provide the same information to other reporters. Reporters should be made aware of this policy to avoid misunderstandings. Interviews, by their nature, are exclusive in terminology, i.e., quotes and statements, but not in subject if another reporter requests it.

1.30.1. Minor Story. This news is not particularly significant. Protect the reporter's story until a similar request comes from another reporter. If this happens, tell the second reporter that another media representative is already working on it. The second reporter probably won't press the issue. If pressed, provide the same material to the second reporter and inform the first reporter that another individual is also working the story.

1.30.2. Major Story. Do not honor any request for exclusive information on a truly major story. The Air Force must release information on major stories to all media equally. The public's right to significant news transcends the right of a single reporter who first asked for the information. In-depth feature stories on major issues may be treated exclusively until similar queries come from other reporters or major developments require a general release.

1.31. Air Force Reports on News Programs. Air Force members may do regular reports of installation news on local radio or television stations, if the subject matter pertains exclusively to Air Force life and activities. Members will coordinate with the local PA office prior to engaging with the media.

1.32. Review of Material. Do not ask a reporter to send material for review unless security considerations are involved. The primary responsibility for protecting classified information lies with the Air Force, not the reporter, and the reporter can justifiably refuse any requests for prior review. The primary safeguard should be to brief the reporter in advance about what information is sensitive and what the parameters are for covering this type of information.

1.33. Duty Officer. PA offices should brief security forces, operations centers, and telephone personnel on the procedures for contacting the off-duty PA representative. An instruction book should be prepared for the off-duty representative's use. At a minimum, it should contain emergency checklists and off-duty telephone numbers of PA staff members and key unit installation officials. Instruction books must be checked frequently to ensure instructions and officials' names and telephone numbers are current.

1.34. News Releases. The news release is the most common way to deliver information to the media. It may announce news or answer anticipated queries. The news release varies in length, but most often is a page of newsworthy information.

1.35. Classified Answers. If an answer is classified, tell the reporter you cannot provide the information because it is classified. If possible, explain why it's classified.

1.36. Pooling Media. Consider pooling when circumstances such as limited space preclude accommodating all the media wanting to cover a story. Keep in mind most media dislike pool arrangements and prefer to do their own reporting. A news pool involves having a representative from the media (or one representative from the various media, such as print, television, and radio) cover the story and then feed reports to all media taking part in the pool. Use pools only when circumstances absolutely preclude accommodating all interested media. Always let media decide procedures on how representatives are selected and how stories are distributed.

1.37. Air Force Visual Information (VI) Support for Media. The Air Force supports all bona fide print and electronic media (which include traditional and nontraditional media organizations and their accredited representatives) requests to release visual information (which includes combat camera) products when such release meets the responsibility to inform the public and it does not compromise national security. Releasable materials are equally available to all interested media. Previously cleared Air Force stock audiovisual materials or location photography on Air Force facilities are provided to media without charge (DIMOC, DVIDS, etc.) when used for news projects.

1.38. Media Public Affairs Travel.

1.38.1. Media Travel Objectives. Media travel is one of the Air Force's most credible PA tools. Properly planned and coordinated, media travel can dramatically expand a media representative's understanding of the Air Force's mission, equipment, and people. Most media travel requests will be for air transportation. This section will only address policies and procedures related to air transportation. DOD 4515.13-R, *Air Transportation Eligibility*, authorizes media travel aboard DOD-owned aircraft. Do not commit Air Force transportation prior to obtaining approval from proper authorities (T-1).

1.38.2. Specific Approval Authority for Media Travel. See Table 1 (T-1).

Table 1.1 Specific Approval Authority for Media Travel

| Event | Participants | Participation Approval | Operational Approval |
|--|--------------|--|--|
| Local Travel – Local/Regional-level participants ⁽⁶⁾ (CONUS) | News Media | MAJCOM/PA ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ | MAJCOM/CC ⁽¹⁾ |
| Local Travel – National/ International-level participants ⁽⁶⁾ (CONUS) | News Media | MAJCOM/PA Inform: SAF/PA ⁽²⁾ | MAJCOM/CC ⁽¹⁾ |
| Local Travel – Foreign Nationals (CONUS) | News Media | Consult SAF/PA for current procedures. ⁽⁷⁾ | MAJCOM/CC ⁽¹⁾ |
| Non-Local Travel – Local/Regional-level participants (CONUS) | News Media | MAJCOM/PA ⁽²⁾ | MAJCOM/CC |
| Non-Local Travel – National/ International-level participants (CONUS) | News Media | MAJCOM/PA ⁽²⁾ Inform: SAF/PA | MAJCOM/CC |
| Non-Local Travel – Foreign Nationals (CONUS) | News Media | Consult SAF/PA for current procedures. ⁽⁷⁾ | MAJCOM/CC |
| Intertheater Travel – (CONUS to OCONUS) | News Media | OSD/PA ⁽³⁾ , Affected Theater Air Component PAs ⁽⁴⁾ (e.g. AFCENT/PA) | The CC with air asset OPCON, Contact theater PA and AMC/PA for guidance. |

| | | | |
|--|------------|---|--|
| Intertheater Travel (OCONUS to OCONUS) | News Media | OSD/PA ⁽³⁾ , Affected Theater Air Component PAs ⁽⁴⁾ (e.g. USAFE/PA, AFCENT/PA) | The CC with air asset OPCON, most likely AMC/CC. Contact theater PA and AMC/PA for guidance. |
| Intratheater Travel – (OCONUS) | News Media | Theater Air Component PA (e.g. USCENTCOM/PA or AFCENT/PA) | The CC with air asset OPCON, (e.g. C/JFACC for tactical airlifters, AMC/CC for strategic airlifters, C/JSOACC for special operations aircraft). Contact theater PA and AMC/PA for guidance. |

Notes:

1. May be delegated to wing commander via MAJCOM commander memo of delegation authority.
2. MAJCOM/PA will inform higher headquarters.
3. OSD/PA approval portion may be delegated to Service PA (e.g. SAF/PA). Approval must still be obtained from air component public affairs in affected theaters of operation.
4. Theater Air Component approval is obtained through the theater/country clearance process initiated during the Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System (APACS) process.
5. May be delegated to theater air component PA offices (e.g. USAFE, AFCENT, PACAF)
6. May include an intermediate stop at a locally owned and operated but geographically separated training area. Flight must be accomplished within allocated flying hour funding (e.g. training flights authorized).
7. For media requests involving foreign nationals, participants are treated as news media first and foreign nationals second. Established approval levels still apply, but hosting units should contact SAF/PA (via chain of command) to seek additional information on participants. SAF/PA will contact the U.S. State Department, Washington Foreign Press Center, and/or DOD Press Liaison for any relevant information on the news media representative.

1.38.3. Special Considerations for Media Travel.

1.38.3.1. Emergencies, Natural Disasters. Consider providing transportation in the instance of news coverage of an emergency or natural disaster, where the coverage would be impaired or delayed to the serious detriment of the Air Force unless transportation by

DOD-owned or controlled aircraft is provided. SAF/PA is the approval authority, unless otherwise noted (See DOD 4515.13-R, C3.4.5.2 for more information).

1.38.3.2. Aeromedical Evacuation (AE) Flights. Media requests to travel aboard aeromedical evacuation flights are considered on a case-by-case basis. Because these flights involve injured service members from all branches of the DOD, requests are coordinated with the Surgeon General PA for each branch represented. Because AMC normally has Operational Control (OPCON) of AE missions, AMC/PA is the point of contact for all services' SG/PA coordination. Contact AMC/PA, Engagement Division, to route requests. AMC requires a minimum 30-day notice for required AE coverage approvals. A qualified PA escort is required for all media travel aboard AE flights. Patients are not to be photographed or interviewed without informed signed patient consent. Informed signed consent is also required for medical staff to release information about patients. See AFI 35-109, *Visual Information*, for additional details on imagery release procedures. Current consent forms may be obtained from AMC/PA prior to departure.

1.38.3.3. Deployments and major exercises. Instead of processing numerous individual requests for overseas travel for media covering deployments and major exercises, sponsoring MAJCOMs may request one-time blanket participation approval from OSD/PA (unless delegated) through SAF/PA for media travel supporting coverage of the exercise or deployment. All media travel in conjunction with a deployment must receive operational approval from the MAJCOM/CC with operational control of the air assets and be coordinated with the gaining combatant command. Media must have appropriate identification, diplomatic clearances (passport, visas) and equipment.

1.38.3.4. Media Travel Approval Authorities between CONUS and OCONUS (Outside of the Continental United States).

1.38.3.4.1. Command Structure. It is important to distinguish travel between and within theaters. Once public affairs travel leaves the CONUS, it becomes subject to the warfighting structure of command, no longer governed solely by the Air Force chain of command or its policies and procedures. For example, the distinction between "local" and "non-local" airlift may be meaningless under the command of an external Unified/Combatant Commander. Outside the CONUS, command extends across the services, defined either by function (as with USTRANSCOM) or by geographic area of responsibility (as with USEUCOM, USPACOM or USCENTCOM). Below the theater level, forces are broken down again by function. For example, under the warfighting command structure, all air forces -- regardless of service origination -- fall under the Joint or Combined Forces Air Component Commander (J/CFACC), with few exceptions. Therefore, PA travel is governed by a different set of guidelines depending upon which commanders have OPCON of the assets in use or the geographic theater of operations.

1.38.3.4.2. Intertheater Travel. It is necessary to receive operational approval from any affected commander when intertheater media travel is proposed (**T-0**). This is achieved as part of the theater clearance process. See [paragraph 1.38.4.2.1](#) for additional guidance on responsibilities.

1.38.3.4.3. Intratheater Travel. Guidelines for intratheater travel may differ greatly from HAF guidelines for CONUS local and non-local travel, becoming either more or less restrictive. In such cases, it is necessary to communicate with the appropriate theater-specific PA staff to obtain current guidance (**T-0**). In most cases, the theater commander's PA staff will coordinate approvals and airlift requirements within the commander's purview.

1.38.3.4.4. Understanding who has OPCON over Air Assets in Theater. Although the J/CFACC will set guidelines for media airlift within the specified theater of operations, he or she may not have OPCON of all air assets transiting the theater. Strategic airlift assets, such as C-5s and C-17s, generally remain under the OPCON of AMC/CC and not the J/CFACC. Therefore, prior to offering media airlift on strategic assets, it is necessary to obtain operational approval from AMC/CC, coordinating with AMC/PA (**T-1**). This happens primarily when news media request airlift to cover a story only after arriving in the theater of operations via commercial airline. If media arrived via strategic airlift as part of an already approved, Air Force-sponsored media trip, this coordination has already occurred and does not need to be reaccomplished. Tactical airlift assets, such as C-130s, generally fall under the OPCON of the J/CFACC and must only meet those approval requirements set within the theater of operations.

1.38.3.5. Tactical Waivers. A tactical waiver is required for non-aircrew members on Air Mobility Command flights that involve airdrop or any situation where doors will open in-flight IAW AMCI 11-208, *Tanker Airlift Operations*. Tactical waivers must be requested and routed through the requesting unit's base operations, specifically standardization and evaluation, in accordance with MAJCOM-specific operational supplements and military weapon system-specific AFI guidance (**T-1**). Tactical waivers typically require a 12-14 day lead time. PA should ask base operations to route requests with sufficient lead time and check the status of the request daily to ensure a waiver is granted prior to the date of the flight.

1.38.4. Submission Guidelines for Hosting Intertheater Media Travel.

1.38.4.1. General. In accordance with DOD 4500.54E, *DOD Foreign Clearance Program (FCP)*, <https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>, country/theater clearance is required from the host nation and the U.S. Embassy as appropriate, for travel to that country and is granted by the host nation and the U.S. Embassy of the country to be visited. Theater clearance is required for visits to overseas military activities on matters pertaining to the mission of the regional/geographic combatant command and is granted by the regional/geographic combatant command (**T-0**). It generally requires at least 30 days of advanced notice, and travel to some countries may require more time due to host nation process requirements. Many organizations associated with the embassy and combatant command have a vested interest in media travel and will provide clearance input based on real world events and activities.

1.38.4.2. Responsibilities.

1.38.4.2.1. Country/theater clearance requirements are defined in the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG): <https://fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm/>. Prior to requesting clearances the requester should check the FCG for the latest requirements, procedures

and travel restrictions in effect for the location to be visited as well as those for transiting locations. The requesting organization will submit a formal request for country/theater clearance through its MAJCOM/PA using the Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System (APACS) at <https://apacs.dtic.mil>. APACS is mandatory for processing DOD-sponsored official foreign travel in all overseas Combatant Commands.

1.38.4.2.2. Once final operational and participation approval is received, the organization with operational approval authority will provide invitational travel orders/authorization for media members.

1.38.4.2.3. The requesting organization should obtain current guidance on media ground rules from the destination theater PA.

1.38.4.2.4. The requesting organization will ensure travelers obtain passports and visas and sign ground rules and a hold harmless agreement prior to departure (**T-0**). Media members must travel with the protective equipment required for the destination theater of operations. Protective equipment will NOT be provided to News Media Representatives (NMR) by the deployed unit once they arrive in theater. Media members are responsible for carrying their own personal, professional and protective equipment.

1.38.4.2.5. Failure to have the required documentation or any violation of the ground rules may be a basis for terminating a media representative's travel status.

1.38.4.2.6. The unit requesting travel will need to arrange for and fund the PA escort, unless otherwise funded by contingency funds such as those for Overseas Contingency Operations (**T-1**). Once assigned, the escort serves as the primary liaison between the NMRs and the Air Force for purposes of the travel. Contact theater PA staff for guidance on escort requirements and any training needed before travel. Escorts are normally required on all intertheater media flights by AMC aircraft. The destination theater may require that escorts follow certain theater reporting procedures, and can advise escorts on the minimum protective gear required for both the escort and NMRs.

1.38.4.3. Request Procedures.

1.38.4.3.1. The requesting organization should gather the following information required for the travel request: reason for media travel; names, media affiliations, social security numbers (SSN), and passport numbers of each media representative; PAS Code and security clearance level of PA escort; and a proposed itinerary for coverage theater of operations. Ensure that all Personal Identification Information is protected IAW AFI 33-332 *The Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*.

1.38.4.3.2. The requesting organization forward this required information to MAJCOM/PA.

1.38.4.3.3. The MAJCOM/PA of the requesting/hosting unit reviews and submits the country/theater clearance request through APACS in accordance with DOD 4500.54-G, *Foreign Clearance Guide*.

1.38.4.3.4. The MAJCOM/PA of the requesting/hosting unit submits the participation approval request to OSD/PA (unless delegated) with an information copy to SAF/PA.

1.38.4.3.5. The MAJCOM/PA of the requesting/hosting unit submits the operational approval request to the MAJCOM with OPCON of air assets. A copy of OSD/PA participation approval is required to accompany all AMC operational approval requests for non-local media travel.

1.38.4.3.6. The requester (generally the person on the MAJCOM/PA staff and APACS account holder who entered the request) monitors the country/theater clearance status in APACS until approved.

Section 1E—Magazine and Books Support

1.39. Books. SAF/PA and its field offices are the points of contact between the Air Force and book representatives.

1.39.1. SAF/PA Responsibilities. The New York field office generally handles book activities since most publishers have major offices in that city. These responsibilities include:

1.39.1.1. Responding to requests for available material on Air Force subjects.

1.39.1.2. Referring requesters to MAJCOMs, field operating agencies (FOAs), and Air Force record centers and depositories.

1.39.1.3. Coordinating and approving requests from authors with Letters of Intent to interview Air Force personnel, visit bases, and participate in media orientation flights.

1.39.2. MAJCOM Responsibilities. SAF/PA may delegate direct liaison between Air Force and book representatives to the MAJCOM, FOA, or unit level (with MAJCOM or FOA coordination and approval) on a case-by-case basis.

1.39.2.1. Overseas MAJCOMs and FOAs are the liaison with foreign book representatives covering subjects solely within their areas of responsibility. Send all foreign magazine and book representatives' requests for material not available at the overseas location to SAF/PA for coordination, support, or concurrence. Advise overseas-based foreign book representatives who request to visit CONUS installations to contact the press office in their respective U.S. embassies. Appropriate MAJCOMs and FOAs are the Air Force focal points for coordination and support after approval by OSD/PA. PA at every level may support unofficial Air Force authors as they would support civilian writers and may review submissions for policy and technical accuracy, if requested.

1.40. National Magazine Story Ideas. Placement of solid, mission-oriented stories in the national magazine market is a critical part of the PA mission.

1.40.1. Without assigning production goals, MAJCOMs and FOAs should encourage PA offices to develop original story ideas for proposal to national and regional magazines. These include trade, technical, fraternal, consumer group, and industrial publications. Stories receive official support when they satisfy Air Force PA requirements; that is, the

topic must be related to an operational mission on an Air Force organization, or it must directly support Air Force programs.

1.40.2. All PA people are encouraged to write for national publications as part of their official duties. On a voluntary basis, writers may prepare articles while on official duty and be credited in print with a by-line. Air Force people may not accept payment for these articles.

1.40.3. PAs screen story ideas for accuracy, quality, security, and policy. In addition, PA is responsible for quality control to ensure the final product presents a professional image. Contact SAF/PA for assistance in marketing, when appropriate.

1.40.4. PA at all levels may contact or send story ideas or articles directly to national magazine representatives. Inform SAF/PA of national-level media requests.

1.41. Payment and Honoraria for Writing. Air Force military and civilian professionals are encouraged to write for publication. Air Force and civilian professionals are not allowed to receive payment or honoraria for writing produced as part of their official duties. However, they can accept payment and honoraria for writings that are done off duty and are unrelated to their official duties. Consult the servicing staff judge advocate (SJA) for more information, and refer to DOD 5500.7-R.

1.41.1. Air Force people receive the same service from the PA office as all other writers when they write for profit. They must not have access to technical or operational military information not available to all. They must not receive payment for materials their duties require them to provide at no cost.

1.42. Commercial Use of Published Official Air Force Material. Official U.S. Government- and contractor-produced unclassified Air Force manuals, symposium papers, and other documents often provide valuable story material for publishers. Excerpts are frequently reprinted commercially. If a publisher requests Air Force documents for this purpose, contact SAF/PAO.

1.43. Academic Institutions. Guidance in this instruction applies to students and faculty at Air Force academic institutions. Students and faculty interested in discussing academic research, papers, reports, etc. with the media must coordinate with their local PA office in advance. Refer to AFI 35-102 for information on security and policy review requirements if the information is proposed for public release.

Section 1F—Support for Non-Government, Non-Entertainment VI Productions

1.44. The information provided in this relevant to non-government VI productions other than news. These include commercial and nonprofit industrial, institutional, documentary, educational, and commercial enterprise productions. The key is these productions are intended to inform.

1.45. Visual Information Guidance. Per DODI 5410.15, DOD *Public Affairs Assistance to Non-Government, Non-Entertainment-Oriented Print and Electronic Media*, Air Force assistance, access to installations, equipment, and personnel for interviews, photo and video opportunities, and unclassified VI material may be provided when it is considered beneficial to the Air Force and DOD and is in the national interest. See DODI 5410.15 for complete information and guidelines.

1.46. SAF/PA Responsibilities. SAF/PA evaluates and approves support for national-level, non-government, and non-entertainment VI productions. SAF/PA determines if the VI production meets Air Force and DOD policy and coordinates with OSD/PA. Requests are generally supported when they serve the Air Force interest, meet guidelines in Air Force and DOD directives, and are not prohibited by legal or policy restrictions. When a national production involves more than one MAJCOM, SAF/PA coordinates assistance to obtain or produce the VI material. SAF/PA notifies the requester the project is approved, reiterates project restrictions, and arranges for release of stock footage or puts the requester in contact with the right PA POC.

1.46.1. SAF/PA must approve support for VI productions involving Air Force-level contracts.

1.47. MAJCOM Responsibilities. MAJCOMs approve regional and local requests. MAJCOMs review, evaluate, and determine support for VI productions judged as having regional and local impact only. They will withhold approval until support is coordinated with SAF/PA if it is believed interest may expand beyond a regional audience. They also keep SAF/PA apprised of MAJCOM-approved projects.

1.48. Unit Responsibilities. When contacted by a non-government, non-entertainment group (other than news media) seeking VI support, units forward requests through PA channels to MAJCOM PA with a unit recommendation, if appropriate. Provide normal PA assistance in the form of advice or guidance. Take care to ensure no commitment of resources is made without approval.

1.48.1. Units approve requests for assistance from Air Force contractors when the support relates to contract requirements. Contract-associated support should be confirmed with the contract administrator. Requests relating to contractor-sponsored photography outside the scope of the contract must be sent through PA channels to SAF/PA.

1.49. Support Procedures.

1.49.1. Non-Government, Non-Entertainment VI Productions Other Than News. Productions done by organizations outside the federal government which are primarily intended to inform.

1.49.1.1. SAF/PA approves support to national-level, non-government, and non-entertainment visual information productions other than news media. MAJCOMs approve support on the local and regional level. Requesters should submit requests in writing as outlined below:

1.49.1.1.1. Include detailed description of the desired material stock footage or photography (footage format, amount, etc.); desired receipt date (two to four weeks is normal processing time).

1.49.1.1.2. If production support is requested, include anticipated specific support requirements, such as military manpower and equipment and projected production schedule, including filming dates and proposed filming locations.

1.49.1.1.3. Provide a synopsis or explanation of the product in which the Air Force VI material will be used. Include a treatment, outline, script, or storyboard for the project.

1.49.1.1.4. Describe the use of the product to include distribution mode and target audience (e.g., national TV advertisement; 30-minute TV documentary to air nationally on PBS; etc.).

1.49.1.1.5. Include a statement that the requested VI support cannot be reasonably obtained from commercial or private sources.

1.49.1.1.6. Provide a statement that the finished product will not imply Air Force or DOD sponsorship, approval, or endorsement of the organization or company, its products or services, nor will it state or imply Air Force or DOD support of any viewpoint expressed in the product.

1.49.1.1.7. Ensure that SAF/PA (or appropriate level) will be given the opportunity to review the final product before release.

1.49.2. Contractor VI Productions. These are products by Air Force and DOD contractors such as annual reports, corporate in-house training videos, and promotional and marketing productions.

1.49.2.1. Government contracts often include VI productions that address the contract program. Contractors are responsible for seeking approval of their produced print and electronic promotional, marketing, and advertising material before public release. Subjects of material that require OSD/PA and SAF/PA clearance are listed in DODD 5230.9, *Clearance of DOD Information for Public Release*. Material not requiring OSD/PA or SAF/PA clearance will be cleared at the lowest level competent to evaluate the information.

1.49.2.2. Contractors seeking VI material for a production must certify in writing that funding of the production will not be billed to the government unless the production itself is being done pursuant to a government contract that authorizes such costs.

1.49.3. Commercial Advertisements. These are requests by advertising agencies for Air Force materials or assistance in campaigns designed to sell a particular product, service or company.

1.49.3.1. DOD is prohibited from endorsing or appearing to endorse or selectively benefit any particular product, company, or commercial concern. Because of this, the Air Force generally does not support commercial advertising unless the Air Force uses the product or service being advertised. The requester must show a specific tie between the Air Force and the advertised item. Proof can be via valid contract numbers or other verifiable information that shows their company does provide the advertised goods or services to the Air Force. Any request for Air Force support for a commercial advertisement must be coordinated through SAF/PA. In all cases, a proposed advertisement must meet the policy guidelines and the following:

1.49.3.2. Must be factual and in good taste.

1.49.3.3. Must be of some benefit to the Air Force (informational value, enhancement of public understanding, etc.)

1.49.3.4. Must not state or imply Air Force endorsement or preference of one product over another. Such terms as “government approved” or “Air Force certified” must not be used.

- 1.49.3.5. Must not compare the relative merits of current weapons or weapons systems.
- 1.49.3.6. Must not refer to the economic impact of a proposed continuation or cancellation of a defense contract.
- 1.49.3.7. Must not reproduce the Air Force seal or any of its parts, except as authorized by AFMAN 33-326, *Preparing Official Communications*.
- 1.49.3.8. Active-duty Air Force military and civilian personnel may not use their title or position to endorse commercial products, services, or activities; assume responsibility for advertising claims; or obtain personal gain.

Chapter 2

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Section 2A—Purpose, Objectives, and Planning

2.1. Crisis Communication. Clear, concise, accurate and timely communication is critical during a crisis. A crisis is a rapidly developing situation ranging from natural disasters to hostile activities posing a threat to U.S. interests. For OSD/PA, a crisis becomes relevant when it is of a nature that commitment of U.S. military forces and resources is contemplated in order to respond to the situation, or where the situation directly affects military assets. PA must be ready to implement courses of action to provide relevant audiences with accurate, timely, and essential information. PA requires its trained professionals to have the skills to engage the media and to keep a wide range of publics informed during crises.

2.2. Objectives of Crisis Communication.

2.2.1. Establish procedures which prepare PA to handle any crisis communication issue.

2.2.2. Provide PA rules of engagement for the proper release of information during crisis.

2.3. Planning and Preparation. MAJCOMs, FOAs, and wings must prepare comprehensive PA accident plans, or supplements to this instruction, for both nuclear and non-nuclear accidents (**T-1**). These plans must include provisions for adequate personnel, administrative, communication, and logistical support for a nuclear accident or incident Immediate Reaction Forces (IRF). Plans must comply with AFI 10-2501, *Air Force Emergency Management (EM) Program Planning and Operations*, which establishes requirements for local responses and AFI 91-204, *Safety Investigations and Reports*, which describes mishap investigation management after initial response (**T-1**). After the initial mishap response, also consult AFI 51-503 or AFI 51-507 for mandatory guidance governing release of status or substantive information regarding mishaps. MAJCOM, FOA and Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) PAs should coordinate with SAF/PA when activating accident plans. Base-level PA offices should coordinate with the appropriate MAJCOM/PA, which will notify SAF/PA.

2.3.1. Unclassified Information. It is Air Force policy to give the public unclassified information on all activities subject to the guidance in this AFI. Provide accurate and timely release of news--good and bad--to recognized news media. Promptly release unclassified facts about accidents and incidents, including near misses or missing aircraft, consistent with national security considerations and responsibilities (**T-1**).

2.3.2. Classified Information. Federal law and Executive Order 12356, *National Security Information*, require protection of classified information. Air Force people must protect classified information against compromise as required (**T-0**). The incident commander, with the advice of the security forces representative, will provide initial guidance to the PA representative when it is determined classified information is involved (**T-1**). However, there are limits to Air Force authority at an accident site, particularly away from Air Force installations. Civilian police enforce Federal, State, and foreign criminal law.

2.4. Requirements Explained.

2.4.1. Media Operations Center. Establish a centrally located media operations center (MOC), as needed, for news media representatives (T-3). Do not co-locate the media center and the PA office. The MOC should have the appropriate infrastructure to support anticipated media representatives, plus at least one commercial line for PA personnel only. Consider having an additional telephone line to accommodate media requirements in the event cell phone use is limited.

2.4.2. Straight Talk Line. Consider the establishment of a Straight Talk phone line to provide base personnel with an authoritative point of contact for current, accurate information about the status of any disturbance, and the command's actions. In addition to the Straight Talk Line, PA personnel and augmentees should perform such tasks as preparing fact sheets, messages for automatic telephone answering devices (if used), e-mail messages, Straight Talk web page on the intranet, and news articles for online and print installation newspapers. Also, make updated statements available to base telephone operators. PA office should also consider the use of social media to promote the Straight Talk Line as well as means of communicating messages. For more information on the use of social media, please refer to AFI 35-113, *Command Information*.

2.4.2.1. The PA office should publicize the existence of the Straight Talk phone line both before and during an on-base disturbance through the command/internal information program.

2.4.2.2. When available, the PA office should consider the use of answering service systems incorporated into installation telephone exchange facilities for the Straight Talk Line's automatic answering service.

2.4.3. First Responders. PA should be prepared to join other base emergency responders as part of the initial response element as determined by local procedures. These forces—typically fire, medical, and security members—arrive as part of the first responders to manage the incident and coordinate with civil authorities.

2.4.3.1. Emergency Operations Center (EOC). For on-base accidents and incidents, a PA representative should be designated for incident response.

2.4.4. National Defense Area (NDA). A NDA is the temporary establishment in the United States of federal areas for the protection or security of DOD resources (Title 50, *United States Code*, Section 797). If the off-base site is designated as an NDA, PA supports news media representatives in the same way as if they were on a military installation. Brief the media on appropriate, disclosable information during a nuclear accident or incident and the procedures to be followed, such as escort requirements.

2.4.5. Emergency Responders. PA staff members must be prepared to join base emergency responders as part of the follow-on forces as determined by the incident commander. This team provides enhanced command, control, and communication functions at an incident site (T-1).

2.4.6. Jurisdiction. In the United States, PAs must respect the jurisdiction and interests of all concerned government agencies at national, state, and local levels to include additional coordination which may be required with the Departments of Justice and State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (T-0).

2.4.7. Transportation Requirements. Mobility is vital during a disturbance. The PA office must request sufficient vehicles and land mobile radios for on-base internal information program support and vehicles for media through the base disturbance contingency plan. Certify PA personnel to drive these vehicles, preferably prior to an incident (T-2).

2.4.8. Units without a PA office. MAJCOM and FOAs must ensure that commanders of units without a primary duty PAO understand the need to release accident information to the news media on a timely basis and the restrictions on release of certain types of information outlined in Chapter 7 of AFI 51-503 and AFI 51-507 (T-1). The MAJCOM/PA should ensure commanders have established notification procedures between the unit and their supporting PA office.

2.4.9. Crisis Notification. Reports of operational incidents or events use an Event and Incident Report, OPREP-3. Ensure command post procedures exist to notify PA duty officers of known or suspected incidents or events (T-1). To confirm notification, inform the PA duty officer at the next higher level of command of the incident.

2.4.10. Overseas Precedence. When instructions or plans of a combatant command conflict with this instruction in procedural detail (such as naming a release authority for confirming a nuclear accident) or with host nation sensitivities, use the combatant command plan.

2.4.11. Exemption from MINIMIZE. When disturbance contingency plans are implemented, the commander may impose MINIMIZE to reduce the flow of voice and message traffic. Requirements in MINIMIZE instructions must include exemption of limitation of PA voice and message traffic (T-0). These exemptions allow the PA office to meet the rapid response requirements of SAF/PA and OSD/PA.

2.4.12. Briefing Requirement. DODD 5230.16, *Nuclear Accident and Incident Public Affairs (PA) Guidance*, requires commanders to brief military and civil law enforcement, disaster response, nuclear weapons security forces, intelligence and operations officials at least annually. Areas discussed should include security, base plans, policies, and laws. The sensitive nature of nuclear accidents and incidents requires PA, disaster preparedness, and security forces officials to conduct active PA and education programs with their civilian community counterparts. See DODD 5230.16 for details regarding annual briefings and meetings.

Section 2B—Crisis Procedures and Release of Information

2.5. Procedures. In significant weapon system mishaps, PAs should be in place at the PA office, the accident scene, and the installation command post.

2.5.1. PA must ensure unit contingency plans include transportation to the accident site during accidents/incidents (T-3).

2.5.2. Regardless of location, establish communication at once between the on-scene PA representative and those at the installation. This permits PA at the site and those at the PA office to coordinate information for release on a timely basis (T-3).

2.5.3. The installation PA office must establish procedures to notify a tenant unit commander of any follow-on PA actions in accidents involving that commander's resources (T-1).

2.5.4. In accidents or incidents likely to require PA support for extended periods of time, or likely to exceed the capabilities of the responsible PA office, PA should:

2.5.4.1. Ask the next higher PA echelon for additional personnel and equipment, if needed.

2.5.4.2. Set up a 24-hour news media operations center. If other federal, state, and local PA response force officers are on scene, the media center should be a joint operation.

2.5.4.3. Provide Air Force news releases about the accident to state, local, or other officials responsible for informing the public and media, or who need the releases for any other purpose.

2.5.4.4. Anticipate public concerns and issues and produce news releases before such concerns distort public perceptions.

2.5.4.5. Have each PA staff member record media and public queries on AF Form 39, *Response to Query*.

2.5.4.6. Use a central events log to record: Time of accident, important developments, time of releases, guidance received from higher PA echelons and how or when it was implemented, and thumbnail sketches of most significant queries and events.

2.5.4.7. Alert base telephone operators to direct all news media and public calls to the installation PA phone line in the media operations center.

2.5.4.8. Ensure MAJCOM and Defense Media Activity are included as addressees on initial information release and other publicly releasable information and images.

2.6. Release of Personal Information. This section provides guidelines for the release of personal information about victims of accidents, incidents, disturbances, and disasters. Always consult with the local SJA before releasing personal information **(T-1)**. Provisions of AFI 51-503 or AFI 51-507 may prohibit or restrict release of certain information related to aerospace or ground mishaps.

2.6.1. Names of Survivors. Generally, release the names of all survivors as soon as possible in close coordination with the commander, SJA, and the medical community. Make releases quickly, to relieve the fears of people with kin in the accident and also to ease the concern of families and friends of other individuals flying similar aircraft or on similar duty in the vicinity **(T-1)**. PA officers should be in constant communication with the local SJA in these types of instances and releasing personal information.

2.6.1.1. If, in the judgment of the commander, releasing survivors' names would reveal the identity of deceased individuals prior to NOK notification (in the case of crew members known by their families to customarily fly together, for example), the survivors' names may be withheld. Do this only when the potential for the NOK deducing their loss through news stories and rumors on social media/spouse network about the survivors is so strong that the circumstances clearly warrant leaving other families in suspense.

2.6.1.2. Report information on survivors who are believed to be in immediate danger of dying as survived but in critical condition. PA must ensure releases do not invade the personal privacy of the victims or relatives (see AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*) **(T-1)**.

2.6.2. Names of People Aboard Aircraft Missing or Presumed Lost. When an Air Force aircraft, including a contract or charter flight, is officially declared missing or crashes in a remote area, the PA office at the departure base will release the names of passengers and crew to news media individually after the NOK are notified (T-1). This should not delay the announcement that the aircraft is missing.

2.6.3. Names of Persons Admitted to Military Medical Facilities. PA should coordinate responses to query or news releases about the admittance or status of patients with the military treatment facility's privacy officer (each location is required to have an individual acting in this capacity).

2.6.4. Names of Deceased. The responsible installation PA office releases the names of people killed in Air Force accidents according to the following rules:

2.6.4.1. In accordance with DoDI 1300.18, *Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures*, no casualty information on deceased military personnel may be released to the media or the general public until 24 hours after notifying NOK regarding the casualty status of the member (T-0).

2.6.4.2. When a military accident in a civilian community causes significant property damage or civilian loss of life, the commander may release the names of Air Force members killed in the accident before their NOK have been notified. This is only done when, in the judgment of the commander, the needs of the public outweigh any potential distress of the victim's NOK. This may be necessary when civilian authorities need information on the members to identify the accident victims' remains.

2.6.4.3. Releasable information includes gender; Air Force specialty code (AFSC); military grade and rank; civilian grade; military base pay and all allowances except basic allowance for housing (BAH); civilian gross salary; current and past assignments; date of rank (DOR); extended active duty (EAD) date; pay date; source of commission; professional military education (PME); military awards and decorations; duty status, attendance at technical, scientific, or professional meetings; and in the case of key personnel, biographies and photographs.

2.6.4.4. Non-releasable information includes home of record, home address; home telephone number, date of birth; marital status; number and gender of family members; civilian education degree and year of graduation; civilian awards; or race.

2.6.5. Release of Information when more than one Service is involved. In joint exercises or operations, the joint command PA is responsible for all PA actions. In all other cases, if circumstances permit, the parent service of the involved aircraft or vessel makes the initial announcement of the accident. If this is not feasible because of location or time constraints, any other service directly involved may assist media as necessary, including release of facts. The responding service must keep the parent service PA informed. Once an official statement is released by the parent service, other services involved may release a full description of their own participation, such as rescue or disaster relief activities.

2.6.5.1. Release specific casualty information according to the military service's regulations. Names and numbers of casualties are released by the service to which the casualties belong. When time does not permit and facts are obvious to the public, any other service involved in the operation may announce, when queried, only the number of

dead, number of survivors, and number of injured. If possible, release all services' casualty names simultaneously.

2.6.6. Names of Foreign Nationals. When a foreign national (other than a locally hired employee) is an accident casualty while under Air Force auspices, Air Force officials will not release the name without host nation coordination and confirmation that NOK notifications have taken place (**T-1**). When the foreign national is locally employed by a host nation agency, the host nation's agency rules take precedence. Overseas MAJCOMs must develop policy for releasing names of local national U.S. Air Force employees injured on duty.

2.6.7. Key U.S. and Foreign Government Persons. Because of national and international interest and implications, carefully coordinate the release of casualty information concerning key U.S. Government personnel or equivalent rank foreign government visitors. When the following key persons are killed, injured, or listed as missing while on an Air Force installation or traveling in an Air Force vehicle or aircraft, notify OSD/PA press desk for public announcement by the White House Press Secretary:

2.6.7.1. The President of the United States

2.6.7.2. The Vice President of the United States

2.6.7.3. Speaker of the House of Representatives

2.6.7.4. President Pro Tempore of the Senate

2.6.7.5. Members of the Cabinet

2.6.7.6. Foreign visitors of political or royal rank equivalent to the above list of U.S. officials, and chiefs of foreign military services

2.6.7.7. U.S. Senators

2.6.7.8. U.S. Representatives

2.6.7.9. Secretaries of the Military Departments

2.6.7.10. The Joint Chiefs of Staff

2.6.7.11. Commanders of combatant and specified commands

2.6.7.12. Federal Government department heads

2.6.7.13. The installation PA office withholds casualty information on the following officials until OSD/PA approves: all military officers and civilian employees in the grades of Lieutenant General, Senior Executive Service Precedent Priority Code DV4, and above. SAF/PA may authorize releasing casualty information before securing OSD/PA approval if specific by-name queries are received. Only do this when OSD/PA approval is not available in time to meet immediate needs.

2.6.7.14. When it is necessary to telephone OSD/PA directly about releasing casualty information on key personnel, send an immediate confirmation email to OSD/PA, copying SAF/PA and any intermediate headquarters. Coordinate with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to ensure the host government is notified of accidents occurring outside the United States.

Section 2C—Controlling Photography

2.7. On U. S. Military Installations During Crisis. If no classified material is exposed, the commander will permit news media photography (T-2). PA may not release official Air Force accident photographs that show classified information, bodies, or parts of bodies. See Chapter 7 of AFI 51-503 (for aviation mishaps) and AFI 51-507 (for ground mishaps) for guidance on release of official Air Force photographs prior to release of the investigation report. It does not mean the presence of bodies is in itself a reason to prohibit media photography.

2.7.1. Classified Material. If classified information or materials are exposed and cannot be covered or removed immediately, media or visitors will not be allowed to photograph or record in the area. As soon as reasonably possible, the appropriate agency will cover exposed classified objects and information in order to allow escorted media to photograph or record the site. The commander and PA will:

2.7.1.1. Notify media or visitors of any restrictions with regard to what can and cannot be filmed in a given area or activity. Bar or restrict media and visitors from sensitive sites or activities (T-1).

2.7.1.2. Immediately notify security forces of suspected photography of classified material by media or visitors (T-2). Security Forces will confiscate the equipment, complete an AF Form 52 (Evidence Tag) and relinquish to OSI for further processing. Do not detain the media or visitor.

2.7.1.2.1. Coordinate closely with command officials to confirm the existence of classified information on the seized materials, review the coverage, and return all portions that do not contain classified information (T-1).

2.7.1.3. Immediately notify the local Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) for its determination as to whether an AFOSI investigation is warranted if it is determined that:

2.7.1.3.1. The coverage contains classified information and in some cases, AFOSI will develop and review the content and will handle further necessary coordination on processing classified information. AFOSI will review and electronically edit classified information from the media coverage.

2.7.1.3.2. If it appears there was intent to deliberately obtain coverage of classified information for purposes of profit, espionage or to have any other significant adverse impact on national security, the Air Force, base, or command, officials should immediately report the above actions through command channels as well as to OSD/PA through PA channels.

2.8. Appropriate and Professional Photography. PA is responsible for being aware of on- and off-base photography in relation to Air Force activities. Special attention will be placed on photography of prisoners, wounded or killed personnel.

2.9. Control of Photography at an Off-Base Location in the United States and its Territories. The authority of PA personnel, incident commanders (IC), accident boards, and security forces is limited in dealing with media, particularly at an accident site outside an installation, unless it is declared a national defense area (NDA).

2.9.1. The senior Air Force representative at the scene must find out, as soon as possible, if there is any identifiable classified information present.

2.9.2. If no classified information is exposed, or if it has been covered or removed, the senior Air Force representative authorizes media photography. PA representatives will use identified safe routes to escort media to a safe viewpoint of the scene, allow photography, provide statements to media from cleared press releases, and coordinate all media queries, to include interview requests **(T-1)**. If photography of the incident scene is not initially an option, consider as an interim solution allowing media to photograph and report from a checkpoint where emergency responders are entering.

2.9.3. If undetermined whether classified information is exposed, explain that fact to any media photographers at the scene and advise them no photography is authorized. Warn that taking pictures without permission may violate federal law and may identify them for future investigative purposes if they persist.

2.9.4. If classified information is exposed and cannot be covered or removed, the senior Air Force representative must:

2.9.4.1. Explain the situation and ask the media to cooperate **(T-1)**.

2.9.4.2. Explain federal law prohibits photography when official permission is expressly withheld (Title 18, *United States Code*, Sections 795 and 797) **(T-0)**.

2.9.4.3. Do not use force if media representatives refuse to cooperate unless declared an NDA **(T-1)**. If photographs are taken after a warning is issued, Air Force officials must ask civilian law enforcement authorities to stop further photography of the exposed classified information and to collect all materials with that coverage.

2.9.5. If no civilian law enforcement authorities are on the scene and media representatives take unauthorized pictures, do not seize the materials or hold the photographer. Instead, the senior Air Force official at the scene or the responsible Air Force installation commander must:

2.9.5.1. Immediately contact the managing editor or news director of the newspaper, magazine, or television station employing the photographer **(T-2)**.

2.9.5.2. Explain the situation **(T-2)**.

2.9.5.3. Request the return of media coverage having suspected classified information **(T-1)**.

2.9.5.4. Explain failure to return the material to military authorities violates federal law (Title 18, *United States Code*, Sections 793(e), 795 and 797) **(T-0)**.

2.9.5.5. Review media coverage turned over to the Air Force **(T-1)**.

2.9.5.6. Report the action by telephone and follow-up message, when such contact is made, through PA channels to OSD/PA. **(T-1)**.

2.10. Liaison With Media. Accidents occurring off an installation are under state and local authorities' control. Officials often rope off an area to protect the public from injury or to protect government property from further disturbance. When this is done, the OSC must coordinate media access to the accident site with civilian officials **(T-2)**.

2.10.1. If possible, brief the media on safety hazards in the area and the need for preserving the site for investigation and consider escorting media representatives. Air Force personnel do not have authority to physically restrict movement of media representatives.

2.11. Control of Photography Off-Base in a Foreign Country. Air Force officials at the scene must comply with status of forces agreements, the laws of the host nation, and other instructions of the combatant commander responsible for that area (**T-0**). Overseas MAJCOM commanders publish supplements to this instruction that state policy on relations with media at accident sites.

Section 2D—Aircraft, Missile and Space Accidents--Non-nuclear

2.12. Initial News Release. Write a news release and publicly disseminate within an hour after notification of an accident/incident, if possible, or as close to an hour after notification of the accident/incident (**T-1**). The release should include as much of the following information as possible. *Note:* If all the information listed below is not available, release any available information. The news release should be sent to SAF/PAO at usaf.pentagon.saf-pa.list.rss-saf-pao@mail.mil in addition to local and regional media. See AFI 51-503, Chapter 7, for release requirements for information beyond the following subparagraphs before the approval and release of an accident investigation board (AIB) report.

2.12.1. A general description of the type of accident (crash, mid-air collision, space launch mishap, etc.)

2.12.2. The time and location.

2.12.3. The aircraft, space launch vehicles, or missile's departure/launch point and destination or, in the case of satellites, intended orbit (unless that information is classified or foreign country sensitivity precludes release).

2.12.4. The number of crewmembers and passengers aboard.

2.12.5. The type of aircraft, space launch vehicle, satellite or missile. Withhold this information if the aircraft or missile is an experimental type that has not been publicly announced or is on a classified mission and an exact description would reveal the nature of that mission. In these cases, release a general description (for example: "...an Air Force fighter aircraft...").

2.12.6. Release unclassified facts about the mission the aircraft and crew were on when the accident occurred. Describe the purpose of the flight (for example: the specific training being conducted) and give as many facts about the mission as security permits.

2.12.7. A board of officers will investigate the accident. See [paragraph 2.13](#) for guidance on answering queries about the boards' findings and the cause of the accident.

2.12.8. If an accident occurs overseas, ensure U.S. embassy coordination is obtained prior to release (**T-0**).

2.13. Accident Investigations. Commanders and PA representatives must not speculate about the possible causes of the accident, even if the cause seems obvious. If pressed by a reporter, explain, if it is an aerospace accident, that an Accident Investigation Board (AIB) report will be publicly released and include a statement of opinion as to the cause(s) and/or substantially

contributing factor(s); if it is a ground accident, explain that the ground AIB (GAIB) will be publicly released. Explain the processes for the Safety Investigation Board (SIB) and the AIB. The SIB report is not releasable. The AIB report is releasable. Release of AIB reports is governed by AFI 51-503, *Aerospace Accident Investigations*, Chapter 10. Coordinate with MAJCOM/PA for local release (community in which the weapon system and/or personnel were assigned) of the AIB report's Executive Summary.

Section 2E—Disturbances

2.14. On-Base Disturbances. Disturbances, such as protests and marches, due to social, political, or economic unrest, can occur on any Air Force installation. PA must ensure their actions do not aggravate the existing situation. PA also must ensure all PA actions are in close coordination with security forces activities (**T-1**). In overseas areas, ensure PA activities during on-base disturbances conform to policies and directives established by the combatant or specified commander and the country team (**T-0**).

2.14.1. Release Authority. The local commander is the release authority. HHQ may issue PA guidance. See **Chapter 1**, Media Operations, for media guidance.

2.14.2. Commander's Responsibilities.

2.14.2.1. Adequately staff the PA office to provide required support during a disturbance, including authorized augmentation where needed, to assist PA personnel (**T-3**).

2.14.2.2. Meet with internal and external media when needed (**T-3**).

2.14.2.3. Approve a message for the Straight Talk Line's telephone answering machine, e-mail and web site, as applicable (**T-3**).

2.14.2.4. Conduct on-base town hall meetings or other open forums to allay fears and address concerns of non-participants and to help stabilize the situation (**T-3**).

2.14.3. PA Responsibilities.

2.14.3.1. Develop Situation Reports (SITREPs). Send SITREPs to MAJCOM/PA as warranted. In turn, MAJCOM/PAs should forward to HHQ. Continue reporting during emergency conditions using priority precedence (**T-3**). SITREPs include:

2.14.3.1.1. Base facilities involved and how affected.

2.14.3.1.2. Number of military personnel involved, both as participants in the disturbance and as members of the control force or in support of the control forces.

2.14.3.1.3. Number of PA augmentation personnel requested or in place.

2.14.3.1.4. Assessment of impact to on-base personnel, including information about previous similar incidents.

2.14.3.1.5. PA actions already taken and known or anticipated media interest.

2.14.3.2. Deploy to Disturbance Area. PA will deploy a person (or persons) with the on-scene response force to provide liaison between the disturbance area and the PA office (**T-3**).

2.14.3.3. Activate, operate, and update the Straight Talk Line, e-mail and web page as applicable (T-3).

2.14.3.4. Conduct media operations (T-3).

2.14.3.4.1. Activate and operate Media Operations Center, if appropriate.

2.14.3.4.2. Respond to local media. Release information about the crisis as soon as it is available.

2.14.3.4.3. Initial News Release. The initial news release should include the nature and background of the disturbance, numbers of personnel involved, damage or injury estimates, command actions, and a statement that the cause is being investigated.

2.14.3.4.4. Escort Media.

2.14.3.4.4.1. Before taking media representatives to the disturbance area, brief them on the current situation, base organizations involved, and any possible risks of personal harm.

2.14.3.4.4.2. Issue a Media Badge. Coordinate with the security forces to ensure they recognize the badge. Note that media representatives are not allowed beyond the disturbance cordon perimeter, if established, or the edge of the disturbance.

2.14.3.5. After-Action Report. Provide an after-action report to MAJCOM/PA within 7 days after the end of the disturbance (T-3). Report should contain a chronology of PA actions, problems encountered, community and media relations activities, and lessons learned.

2.15. Chemical or Biological Material. If an accident or incident involves chemical or biological material, release information according to AFI 10-2501, *Air Force Emergency Management (EM) Program Planning and Operations*. The release must also comply with more specific instructions given in movement and operations plans or orders and DOD or overseas combatant command policies that apply.

2.16. Terrorism. Because terrorists seek media recognition, media information management must be in the best interest of the hostage (if any) and the situation. PA screens information disseminated to the media to ensure operational security and force protection and provides communication advice and counsel to those in charge. In response to a possible or real terrorist threat, the PA representative may acknowledge, if appropriate, that increased security measures have been taken (without going into specific detail). PA may also confirm the obvious. Requests for coverage of counter terrorism forces will not be approved. In overseas areas, coordinate announcements with the U.S. Embassy and combatant command PA. Queries or requests for information or photography beyond the above guidance are referred to OSD/PA. (T-0).

2.17. Near Mid-Air Collision. In case of a near mid-air collision that is of more than local PA significance, advise HHQ PA of the details and the PA situation. Include any actual or proposed responses to queries. MAJCOMs and FOAs should consider whether SAF/PA should be advised. Responses to news media queries at any level should be coordinated with the appropriate FAA office.

Section 2F—Nuclear Weapons

2.18. Policy for Information Releases After Nuclear Accidents and Incidents. DOD policy is to establish efficient and effective procedures for release of information to the public in the event of nuclear accidents or incidents. However, procedures are consistent with the policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons at any specific location.

2.19. U. S. Initial Public Affairs Responsibility. In the United States and its territories and possessions, OSD/PA retains initial PA responsibility for nuclear weapon accidents and significant incidents at military installations. In overseas areas, combatant commanders, in coordination with OSD/PA, have this responsibility, with the exception of losses, thefts, or seizures **(T-0)**.

2.20. Neither Confirm Nor Deny (NCND). The presence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components at any specified location must not be confirmed or denied **(T-0)**.

2.20.1. Exception for Public Safety. In the interest of public safety in the United States and its territories and possessions, confirmation of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components may be made by any OSC. The deputy director of operations of the National Military Command Center (NMCC) also may invoke this exception to policy before the OSC arrives, based on available information and coordination with the Air Force Chief of Staff or designee. Notify public authorities in a timely, candid manner to enable them to take public safety actions. Notification is required if the public is or may be in danger of radiation exposure or any other danger posed by the nuclear weapon or radioactive nuclear weapon component. Make confirmation promptly when protective action or evacuation of civilians may be required. These actions may include releasing statements to news media to expedite public safety procedures. Advise SAF/PA and OSD/PA as soon as practicable when confirmation is made directly by the OSC or the deputy director of operations of the NMCC **(T-0)**.

2.20.2. Exception To Prevent Public Alarm. To reduce or prevent widespread public alarm in the United States and its territories and possessions, the OSC may issue an official statement of reassurance to the public that confirms or denies the presence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components. Before the OSC arrives, the deputy director of operations of the NMCC may invoke this exception to policy with available information and in coordination with the Air Force Chief of Staff, or designee. An official confirmation should be accompanied by appropriate assurances, such as that the chance of injury from high explosive detonation or potential exposure to radiation is highly unlikely. The confirmation also may state that use of explosive ordnance disposal teams and evacuation of military personnel is only a protective measure to limit the number of personnel at the accident site. A denial should characterize the accident or incident as a non-nuclear event. Notify SAF/PA and OSD/PA in advance if practical, or as soon as practicable thereafter if this exception to policy is initiated to enable OSD/PA and SAF/PA to continue initial PA responsibilities and ensure release of timely, accurate information at the national level **(T-0)**.

2.20.3. Overseas. In overseas areas other than the United States and its territories and possessions, combatant commanders, with concurrence of the host government through the Chief of the U.S. Mission, may officially confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components at the scene of an accident or significant incident in

the interest of public safety or to reduce public alarm. Advise SAF/PA and OSD/PA, in advance if practical, if exception to policy is necessary. Inform civil authorities through the Chief of the U.S. Mission of an accident or significant incident involving nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components in countries where international agreements require this information. Should a nuclear mishap occur in a country that requires public announcement either for public safety or to ease public alarm where PA coordination procedures are not established, the combatant commander or designee coordinates the announcement with the host government through the Chief of the U.S. Mission (T-0).

2.21. Release of Information. Information about any nuclear accident that does not cause a public hazard or undue public alarm must not be released without OSD/PA approval. In event of losses, seizures, or thefts of nuclear weapons, materials, or components by terrorists or other dissident groups, or in the case of seizures of nuclear storage sites or any site or location having a nuclear weapon or nuclear weapon system, release of information must be approved in advance and handled by OSD/PA. However, this does not apply in overseas areas where governmental agreements exist for the release of this information. Terrorist activities on or near an Air Force installation are considered a special case of civil disturbance rather than an accident (T-0). For general policies on release of information, see **Chapter 1, Media Operations**.

2.21.1. Procedures for Release after Nuclear Accidents and Incidents. Within the United States and its territories and possessions, the responsible commander must:

2.21.1.1. Require the on-scene PAO to contact SAF/PA by the most expeditious means. Phone numbers are DSN 225-0640 or commercial (703) 695-0640. During non-duty hours, contact the Air Force Operations Center, DSN 227-6103 or commercial (703) 697-6103 and ask for the SAF/PA duty officer (T-1).

2.21.1.2. If action has not been taken by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Energy (DOE) to establish a joint information center (JIC), establish one near the accident site. Make sure all public information is coordinated at the JIC before release (T-0).

2.21.1.3. Direct the release of basic accident or incident information without reference to nuclear material (T-1).

2.21.1.4. If needed, direct the preparation of a proposed follow-up release that is more specific to the situation that involves nuclear weapons, components, or radioactive materials and any conventional high explosives. If the mishap causes a public hazard or undue public alarm, the responsible OSC issues the release on his or her own authority. If there is no public hazard or alarm, OSD/PA approval is required for confirmation or denial of the presence of nuclear material (T-0).

2.21.1.5. Notify HHQ and obtain OSD/PA approval of the proposed follow-on release. Both telephonic and message notifications are required (T-0).

2.21.1.6. Coordinate all further releases and proposed responses to queries that go beyond the scope of previously approved releases with appropriate members of the JIC or through PA channels to OSD/PA if the JIC has not been formed (T-0).

2.21.1.6.1. Community Emergency Action Team (CEAT). When key local officials and civilian and state officials are informed of an accident or significant incident

where radiation and other hazards may exist, direct a CEAT be formed by the JIC. The CEAT may include PA, medical, legal, security, communications, administrative, logistics, and other appropriate personnel. As these resources become available, they function under the direction of the OSC and are physically located in the JIC to facilitate coordination **(T-0)**.

2.21.1.6.2. Coordinate CEAT activities through the Senior Federal Official (SFO) and with other agency PA activities to ensure a unified approach to working with the community. For military nuclear reactor or radiological accidents, state and local officials may be informed by FEMA in the United States and its territories and possessions **(T-0)**.

2.21.1.7. Acknowledge the presence of nuclear weapons, components or radioactive materials, as soon as possible, if the accident or incident causes a public hazard or undue public alarm **(T-1)**.

2.21.1.8. Avoid talking about nuclear weapons or materials, beyond the scope of the above guidance, unless authorized by OSD/PA. **(T-0)**.

2.21.1.9. Ensure the OSC or PA designee establishes communication with OSD/PA immediately if an accident or incident requires implementing public safety measures. Direct communication between the OSC's PA representative and OSD/PA ensures appropriate coordination of PA policy matters and provides timely, accurate information for public release at the national level until the Air Force Service Response Force (SRF) takes responsibility for PA at the scene. Response task forces are provided by Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) for Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) accidents and all non-ICBM nuclear weapons accidents within CONUS **(T-0)**.

2.21.2. MAJCOM Nuclear Accident Planning. PAs for MAJCOMs possessing, storing, or transporting nuclear weapons, or supporting nuclear-capable units should prepare sample PA annexes that can be tailored by the installation PA office. MAJCOMs and FOAs must guide subordinate units, describing what additional supplements or annexes are needed in support of accident or incident plans.

2.21.2.1. Briefing Requirement. DOD Directive 5230.16, *Nuclear Accident and Incident Public Affairs (PA) Guidance*, requires that certain military and civilian people at or near a nuclear-capable installation be briefed to help them understand Air Force procedures for handling nuclear accidents or incidents **(T-0)**.

2.21.2.1.1. DODD 5230.16 requires commanders to brief military and civil law enforcement, disaster response, nuclear weapons security forces, intelligence and operations officials at least once a year. Areas discussed should include security, base plans, policies, and laws. While face-to-face meetings and briefings are preferred, PAOs have the option, if conditions warrant, to provide the required information through by-name letters, videotapes, or handouts. The sensitive nature of nuclear accidents and incidents requires PA, disaster preparedness, and security forces officials to conduct active PA and education programs with their civilian community counterparts. See DODD 5230.16 for details regarding annual briefings and meetings **(T-0)**.

2.22. Information Collection, Records, and Forms.

2.22.1. Information Collections. No information collections are created by this publication.

2.22.2. Records. The program records created as a result of the processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the AFRIMS RDS located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afrims/afrims/afrims/rims.cfm>.

2.22.3. Forms (Adopted and Prescribed).

2.22.3.1. **Adopted Forms.**

2.22.3.1.1. OPREP-3, *Event and Incident Report*.

2.22.3.1.2. AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*.

2.22.3.1.3. AF Form 39, *Response to Query*.

2.22.3.1.4. DD Form 441, *Department of Defense Security Agreement*.

2.22.3.2. **Prescribed Forms.** No forms are prescribed by this publication.

Kathleen A. Cook, Brigadier General, USAF
Director of Public Affairs

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AE—Aeromedical Evacuation
ACC—Air Combat Command
AFCENT—United States Air Forces Central
AFDW—Air Force District of Washington
AFGSC—Air Force Global Strike Command
AFI—Air Force Instruction
AFMAN—Air Force Manual
AFOSI—Air Force Office of Special Investigations
AFPCC—Air Force Personnel Casualty Center
AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive
AFR—Air Force Reserve
AFRC—Air Force Reserve Command
AFRIMS—Air Force Records Information Management System
AFSC—Air Force specialty code
AFSPC—Air Force Space Command
AIB—Accident Investigation Board
AMC—Air Mobility Command

ANG—Air National Guard
APACS—Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System
BAH—Basic Allowance for Housing
CC—Commander
CEAT—Community Emergency Action Team
USCENTCOM—United States Central Command
CFR—Code of Federal Regulations
CONUS—Continental United States
DEFCON—Defense Readiness Condition
DOD—Department of Defense
DODD—Department of Defense directive
DODI—Department of Defense instruction
DOE—Department of Energy
DOR—Date of Rank
DRU—Direct Reporting Unit
DSN—Defense Switched Network
DUSTWUN—Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown
EAD—Extended Active Duty; Entered Active Duty
USEUCOM—United States European Command
FAA—Federal Aviation Administration
FBI—Federal Bureau of Investigations
FCG—Foreign Clearance Guide
FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOA—Field Operating Agency
FOIA—Freedom of Information Act
FPCON—Force Protection Condition
GAIB—Ground Accident Investigation Board
HHQ—Higher Headquarters
IAW—In Accordance With
IC—Incident Commander
ICBM—Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IRF—Immediate Reaction Force

J/CFACC—Joint or Combined Forces Air Component Commander
JIC—Joint Information Center
MAJCOM—Major Command
MIA—Missing in Action
MOC—Media Operations Center
NCND—Neither Confirm Nor Deny
NMCC—National Military Command Center
NMR—News Media Representative
NOK—Next of Kin
OSD/PA—Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
OCONUS—Outside the Contiguous United States
OPCON—Operational Control
OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility
OPREP—Operational Report
PA—Public Affairs
PACAF—United States Pacific Air Forces
USPACOM—United States Pacific Command
PAO—Public Affairs Office; Public Affairs Officer; Public Affairs Media Operations Division
PME—Professional Military Education
POC—Point Of Contact
POW—Prisoner Of War
RDS—Records Disposition Schedule
RIF—Reduction in Force
SAF—Secretary of the Air Force
SAF/PA—Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs
SECDEF—Secretary of Defense
SFO—Senior Federal Official
SG—Surgeon General
SIB—Safety Investigation Board
SITREP—Situation Report
SJA—Staff Judge Advocate
SRF—Service Response Force

SSN—Social Security Number

USAFE—United States Air Forces Europe

USTRANSCOM—United States Transportation Command

USAF—United States Air Force

VI—Visual Information