

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DoD ISSUANCES

All supporting documents referenced here (identified in UPPER CASE on first mention in the text) are available from the Issuance Process pages at:

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives> (unclassified)

<http://www.dtic.smil.mil/whs/directives> (classified)

Q. What types of issuances are there?

A. The three primary types of DoD issuances are Directives (policy documents signed by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense – 8 pages or less), Instructions (policy and/or procedures documents signed by the cognizant Head of the OSD Component – 50 pages or less), and Manuals (procedures documents authorized by a Directive or Instruction – no page limit, but Manuals over 100 pages are divided into volumes). (See DoD ISSUANCES DEFINED for detailed information on these and other types of DoD issuances.)

Q. Why should a Directive be changed to an Instruction?

A. To comply with the requirement in DoD Instruction 5025.01, “DoD Directives Program,” that the Heads of the OSD Components that report directly to the Secretary of Defense establish policy within their assigned functional areas. Originally, only Directives could establish policy, but now Instructions also establish policy. Only minor changes typically need to be made to convert a Directive to an Instruction.

Q. What is the purpose of the five stages of the coordination process (development, precoordination, formal coordination, presignature, and posting)?

A. The stages of the coordination process are designed to provide the OSD Components ample opportunity throughout the coordination process (before, during, and after formal coordination) to ensure that issuances are uniform in format and style and are in compliance with the applicable guidance and procedures. The coordination process, especially the formal coordination stage, is intended to allow the DoD Components with equity in an issuance to provide comments and suggestions within a set period of time. (See PROCESSING DoD ISSUANCES for detailed information.)

Q. What are the legal reviews and why are they required?

A. There are three legal reviews in the DoD issuance process: legal objection review (LOR), legal adjudication review, and legal sufficiency review (LSR). The Office of the General Counsel, Department of Defense (OGC) reviews DoD issuances to ensure that they do not contain any information that contradicts U.S. law.

LORs take place after the Directives Division has completed a precoordination review. Components post the request for LOR to the DoD Directives Portal and a response is provided from OGC there.

Legal adjudication reviews take place on an informal basis between the action officer (AO) and the Associate Deputy General Counsel (DGC) who completed the LOR. When adjudicating comments received during formal coordination, the AO may contact the Associate DGC by e-mail to request assistance/advice on any comments from coordinating agencies that are felt to touch on legal issues. Upon completion of adjudication, the AO shall request Associate DGC review of the issuance and all comments submitted. The Associate DGC should provide an e-mail confirming that legal adjudication was completed.

LSRs are processed after the Directives Division has completed the presignature review. Requests for LSR and the OGC response will be accomplished through the portal.

Q. How long should I wait for my legal review to be completed?

A. LORs should be completed within 5-10 workdays (5 for Directives/DTMs; 10 for Instructions, Manuals, and Administrative Instructions). If the AO does not receive an LOR by that time, he or she may get the SD 106 signed and proceed to the formal coordination stage.

If the Associate DGC does not respond to a request for adjudication review in a timely fashion, the AO should prepare documentation indicating his or her efforts to obtain the legal adjudication review and provide the same to the Directives Division upon requesting presignature review.

The timeline for LSR completion is the same as for LORs; however, LSRs MUST be completed in order for the issuance to be signed. AOs should contact their Focal Point first and then the Directives Division in order to receive assistance in obtaining the LSR once the deadline has passed.

Q. What is the portal?

A. The DoD Directives Program Portal is used by the OSD Components to post all requests for external coordination of DoD issuances and by the DoD Components to post all coordinations and substantive and critical coordination comments. It is also used to obtain LORs and LSRs from the OGC.

AOs are required to input coordination tasks to the portal prior to formal coordination. This includes selecting the primary (P) and collateral (C) coordinators on the SD FORM 106, "DoD DIRECTIVES PROGRAM COORDINATION RECORD." The mandatory (M) coordinators are preselected in the portal and do not need to be manually selected. Once the Directives Division (DD) approves an issuance for formal coordination through the portal, the portal

automatically generates an e-mail message to the coordinators selected in the task notifying them of the tasking and the suspense date by which the coordinations are due.

The Components post their coordination responses (signed SD Forms 106 or signed memos) and comments (using SD FORM 818, “COMMENTS MATRIX FOR DoD ISSUANCES”) to the portal task during the formal coordination stage. The portal notifies the action officer by e-mail as each coordination is posted.

For coordinators that do not have access to the portal, such as the Department of Homeland Security (identified as “Other” in block 15 of the SD Form 106), the originating OSD Component distributes the approved SD Form 106 and the issuance to be coordinated to them by mail, e-mail, or facsimile. They in turn send their coordinations and comments directly to the action officer identified on the coordination request.

Access to the portal may be requested by linking to <https://extranet.itis.osd.mil/doddirectives> (<https://extranet.itis.osd.mil.mil> for classified), selecting “Request Account,” and following the prompts. (See PORTAL PROCEDURES for detailed information.)

Q. What is “signature authority” and why is it so important?

A. Only certain positions in the DoD community are authorized to initiate coordination on, coordinate on, and sign DoD issuances. If an SD 106 is submitted for portal release with an unauthorized “Originating Authorizing Official” signature in block 14, the issuance will not be released for formal coordination. If issuances are submitted for presignature review and a DoD Component’s formal coordination has been signed by an unauthorized individual, signature of the issuance may be delayed until an authorized individual signs the response. It is important that action officers are aware of the proper signature authorities to prevent delays in the issuance process. (See the LIST OF SIGNATURE AUTHORITIES for detailed information.)

Q. What actions should be taken if a Component nonconcurs during coordination?

A. Every effort should be taken to resolve nonconcurs. The resolution process is the responsibility of the cognizant Component, including the manner in which conducted. The process should reflect the Component’s best practices in reconciling differences and achieving accord.

If the nonconcurrency is resolved by incorporating the coordinating Component’s required change or removing the offending text, the resolution must be documented on the SD Form 818. If settled through discussion and compromise, written documentation of the Component’s concurrence is required, in the form of a memo or SD 106 signed by the original coordinating authority or an official at a higher level. E-mail is NOT considered official documentation.

If the issue cannot be resolved and the Component’s nonconcur remains, the action memo requesting that the appropriate official sign the issuance must document the Component’s

objections and the efforts to resolve the nonconcur, and provide a justification to the official for signing the document as it is.

Q. How are numbers for new issuances assigned?

A. The action officer selects a 4-digit number from the list in the DoD ISSUANCES NUMBERING SYSTEM that best represents the major subject group of the issuance (first 2 numbers) and subgroup (3rd and 4th numbers). For the last 2 digits following the decimal point, DD assigns temporary letters, such as “aa” or “bb,” for identification while the issuance is processed. Following approval and signature of the issuance, prior to posting, DD assigns a permanent number for the last 2 digits. (See the DoD Issuances Numbering System for detailed information.)

Q. What is the best way to contact and send materials to DD?

A. All UNCLASSIFIED issuance-related materials and questions should be e-mailed to the DD organizational mailbox at DoDDirectives@whs.mil. CLASSIFIED materials should be sent to DoDDirectives@whs.pentagon.smil.mil. DD personnel constantly monitor e-mail correspondence to these accounts to ensure that requests are promptly addressed by the appropriate personnel.

Q. Why does DD make so many changes when editing issuances?

A. The DoD Directives Program has established format and content standards that must be followed for each type of issuance. All Instructions, for example, have the same format, with the same rules for page setup and paragraph spacing. (See the STANDARDS and TEMPLATES by type of issuance for detailed information.)

Q. Why do editors change particular sentences or words when the issuance has been written for a group of experts in the style and vocabulary they are accustomed to?

A. DoD issuances are written for a diverse population and must be understood by as large a group of readers as possible. The issuance writing style and preferred usage have been developed to serve that purpose, including for example the practice of using short simple words and limiting sentences to one thought. Although writing style is not a hard-and-fast rule, the rules of English grammar and basic principles of effective writing must be followed. The rules of usage that are specific to DoD issuances must also be followed, such as using “shall” versus “will” to connote obligation. (See the WRITING STYLE GUIDE AND PREFERRED USAGE document for detailed information.)

Q. Where is all this guidance located? Where can additional guidance be obtained?

A. The DoD Issuances Website is the best place to start. The Issuance Process pages on that site contain an array of useful tools and guidance documents that provide detailed answers to a number of common questions. The Directives Program Focal Point appointed by each OSD Component Head is another great resource for action officers within that Component through all stages of the process. And, of course, the DD editors are there to help keep the process moving in the right direction and can explain why DD made a particular type of change to or comment on an issuance.