



## DoD INSTRUCTION 5120.20

### AMERICAN FORCES NETWORK PROGRAM

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<b>Originating Component:</b>	Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
<b>Effective:</b>	January 18, 2023
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<b>Reissues and Cancels:</b>	DoD Instruction 5120.20, "American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)," October 18, 2010, as amended
<b>Approved by:</b>	Christopher Meagher, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

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**Purpose:** In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5122.05, this issuance:

- Establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for the American Forces Network (AFN) Program, in support of the mission function of the Defense Media Activity (DMA) as established in DoD Directive 5105.74.
- Changes the issuance title from "American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)" to "American Forces Network Program" in accordance with the disestablishment of American Forces Radio and Television Service as a separate entity within DMA.

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## SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

### 1.1. APPLICABILITY.

This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD.

### 1.2. POLICY.

a. DoD, through the AFN Program, uses U.S. commercial programming as a vehicle to provide command information to authorized DoD-affiliated audiences, and others, which include:

(1) Land-based personnel stationed outside of the United States, its territories, or its possessions.

(2) Personnel aboard U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and Military Sealift Command ships using AFN programming materials when they are underway outside the range of terrestrial American broadcast signals.

(3) U.S. Government employees serving at Department of State diplomatic posts in direct support of the Chief of Mission.

(4) The National Science Foundation United States Antarctic Program.

b. The AFN Program will:

(1) Provide U.S. commanders with a unique means to communicate command information to authorized audiences.

(2) Communicate command information messages and themes from senior DoD leaders (e.g., Secretary of Defense, Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Service Chiefs, Combatant Commanders), as well as other leaders in the chain of command to:

(a) Promote situational awareness.

(b) Sustain readiness.

(c) Provide immediate force protection information.

(d) Enhance morale, quality of life, and well-being of the authorized audience.

(3) Only be used to support command information initiatives.

(4) Provide English-language U.S. commercial news, information (e.g., editorial and interview programs), and entertainment programming, based upon broadcast quality, industry ratings and critical acclaim, and subject to the availability of resources and licensing.

c. The AFN Program will not:

(1) Compete for audiences with any host-nation government or commercial broadcast service or organization.

(2) Be used by U.S. Government personnel to create political news, editorials, commentary, or political analysis or to engage in investigative reporting or propaganda.

(3) Withhold, edit, or censor any programming based upon personal preference of U.S. Government personnel.

(4) Endorse any non-Federal entity or commercial product or service, in accordance with Section 2635 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. Mentioning brand names in command information products to inform the audience of health and safety issues (i.e., product recalls) is not considered an endorsement.

## SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1. ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs establishes policy and objectives for the AFN Program and oversees development of DoD policy guidance and implementation.

### 2.2. DIRECTOR, DMA.

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the Director, DMA:

- a. Oversees the implementation of the AFN Program, informs the development of DoD policy, and distributes supporting guidance.
- b. Operates and authorizes land-based manned facilities supporting the command information needs of U.S. commanders to:
  - (1) Maintain and enhance situational awareness.
  - (2) Sustain readiness.
  - (3) Provide immediate force protection information.
  - (4) Enhance morale, quality of life, and well-being of the authorized audience.
- c. Publishes DMA implementation guidance for operation of the AFN Program, as required, for the effective and efficient management and operation of the AFN Program worldwide, to include:
  - (1) Operating standards.
  - (2) Program selection criteria.
  - (3) Acquisition and management of program licensing and distribution rights.
  - (4) Content and platform security.
  - (5) Negotiating agreements with host countries authorizing the establishment and continuance of AFN stations.
  - (6) Signal distribution methods.
- d. Oversees AFN Program compliance with host-country rules and regulations governing radio, television, and Internet broadcasts.

- e. In coordination with Commanders of Unified Combatant Commands with geographic areas of responsibility, negotiates agreements with host countries authorizing the use of over-the-air broadcast frequencies.
- f. Oversees compliance with negotiated AFN Program content distribution rights.
- g. Evaluates AFN Program performance in coordination with supported commanders and the authorized audience.

### **2.3. COMBATANT COMMANDERS.**

The Combatant Commanders:

- a. Coordinate with the Director, DMA, to ensure that AFN Program products and services are available to the authorized audience.
- b. Ensures plans comply with the requirements of the AFN Program.
- c. Provide a list of subjects, if applicable, to the Director, DMA that are considered sensitive to host countries and which may jeopardize the use of over-the-air broadcast frequencies.
- d. Support the Director, DMA, in the negotiation of local or regional inter-service support agreements or memorandums with host military installations and commands authorizing the establishment, continuance, and support of the AFN Program, in accordance with DoD Instruction 4000.19.
- e. Help the Director, DMA, obtain host-government approval for broadcast frequencies in countries in which the AFN Program operates.

## GLOSSARY

### G.1. ACRONYMS.

ACRONYM	MEANING
AFN	American Forces Network
DMA	Defense Media Activity

### G.2. DEFINITIONS.

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>AFN Program</b>	A program that provides command information to the authorized audience serving outside of the United States, its territories, or its possessions.

<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>authorized audience</b>	<p>The authorized audience for the AFN Program includes:</p> <p>Active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, including those medically retired.</p> <p>American citizen DoD civil service employees and nonappropriated fund employees, excluding civil service and nonappropriated fund retirees.</p> <p>National Guard or Reserve members on active duty.</p> <p>Retired members of the Reserve Component of the uniformed services, including those medically retired, regardless of pay status.</p> <p>DoD contractors who are U.S. citizens.</p> <p>Surviving spouses of deceased active duty or retired Service members who have not remarried.</p> <p>Medal of Honor recipients.</p> <p>Disabled veterans with a 100 percent disability rating and immediate family members living with their sponsors.</p> <p>Active duty and retired members of the U.S. Coast Guard, including those medically retired.</p> <p>Certain non-DoD-affiliated U.S. Government employees who are U.S. citizens and are serving at an American diplomatic post in direct support of the Chief of Mission.</p>
<b>command information</b>	<p>Defined in the DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.</p>
<b>propaganda</b>	<p>Defined in Paragraph 2.b.(4) of Chapter I of Joint Publication 3-61.</p>
<b>terrestrial</b>	<p>Land-based transmission of broadcast signals by radio waves to receivers using an antenna to receive the signals.</p>



## **REFERENCES**

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Section 2635

DoD Directive 5105.74, "Defense Media Activity (DMA)," December 18, 2007, as amended

DoD Directive 5122.05, "Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ATSD(PA)),"  
August 7, 2017

DoD Instruction 4000.19, "Support Agreements," December 16, 2020

Joint Publication 3-61, "Public Affairs," November 17, 2015, as amended

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated  
Terms," current edition