

COLLECTIVE TERMS FOR LEADERSHIP IN DoD ISSUANCES

In DoD issuances, the general terms you will see that collectively describe DoD leadership are “DoD Component heads,” “OSD Component heads,” and “Principal Staff Assistants.”

WHAT ARE THE DoD COMPONENTS?

- Office of the Secretary of Defense
- Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff
- Combatant Commands
- Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense¹
- Military Departments
- Defense Agencies
- DoD Field Activities
- Other organizational entities, which includes the National Guard Bureau

This is all covered in the standard DoD issuance applicability statement in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Standard Applicability Statement

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 Department of Defense (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

WHO ARE THE DoD COMPONENT HEADS?

In DoD issuances, think of the DoD Component **heads** as the leaders of those organizations (the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Directors of the Defense Agencies, etc.). By law, the Deputy Secretary of Defense is the head of the DoD Component “OSD.” Therefore, if you assign responsibilities to the DoD Component heads, the responsibilities you give to OSD are being assigned **only to** the Deputy Secretary.

It’s your job to assign responsibilities to relevant OSD officials clearly and directly. If you need the OSD leadership collectively to carry out those responsibilities, this is where the term “OSD Component heads” comes into play.

¹ The **Office** of IG DoD is an independent and objective unit of the Department of Defense, even though the IG DoD is statutorily part of OSD and under the general supervision of the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

WHO ARE THE OSD COMPONENT HEADS?

If you need to collectively refer to high-level officials within OSD, call them the “OSD Component heads.” The OSD Component heads, who are also Principal Staff Assistants,² are:

- Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
- Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency
- Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
- Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer
- Director of Administration and Management
- Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation
- Director of Net Assessment
- Director of Operational Test and Evaluation
- DoD Chief Information Officer
- General Counsel of the Department of Defense
- Inspector General of the Department of Defense
- Under Secretaries of Defense

If OSD Component heads have the same responsibilities as DoD Component heads, they can be combined in one paragraph: “OSD and DoD Component Heads.” If you need to refer to the Assistant and Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense under these OSD Component heads, you can just say “Assistant Secretaries of Defense” and/or “Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense.”

WHEN SHOULD I USE THE TERM “PRINCIPAL STAFF ASSISTANTS”?

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict has been designated a Principal Staff Assistant for matters pursuant to responsibilities provided in Section 167(f) of Title 10, United States Code. However, they are **not** an OSD Component head. If they must be included in your responsibilities, use the term “Principal Staff Assistants.”

HOW DO I COORDINATE WITH THE DoD COMPONENT HEADS?

Military Departments. Select them on the DD Form 106.³

Combatant Commands. Select the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the DD Form 106.

Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities. Select the individual under whose authority, direction, and control the Defense Agency or DoD Field Activity is organized. These relationships can be found on Page 3 of the DD Form 106.

² Note the Assistant Secretary that is **not** an OSD Component head; see info on Principal Staff Assistants.

³ You can find the DD Form 106 at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/forms/dd0001_0499/DD106/.