**PERSONNEL AND
READINESS**

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
            DEFENSE
            SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
            CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
            UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
            CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
            GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
            DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
              EVALUATION
            INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
            DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
            CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
              DEFENSE
            ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE
              AFFAIRS
            ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
              AFFAIRS
            DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT
            DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
            DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT:    Directive-type Memorandum (DTM)-20-001 – "Policy Revisions for the Disability
Evaluation System (DES)"

References:    DoD Directive 5124.02, "Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
           (USD(P&R))," June 23, 2008
           DoD Instruction 1332.18, "Disability Evaluation System (DES)," August 5, 2014,
             as amended
           DoD Manual 1332.18, Volume 1, "Disability Evaluation System (DES) Manual:
             General Information and Legacy Disability Evaluation System (LDES) Time
             Standards," August 5, 2014
           DoD Manual 1332.18, Volume 2, "Disability Evaluation System (DES) Manual:
             Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)," August 5, 2014
           United States Code, Title 10

Purpose.  In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02, this DTM:

- Establishes policy and implements DES business process improvements
developed under the guidance of the Medical Personnel Executive Steering
Committee as approved on May 3, 2019.

- Supersedes any inconsistent guidance in DoD Instruction 1332.18 and Volumes 1 and 2 of DoD Manual 1332.18.

- This DTM is effective February 12, 2020; it will be incorporated into DoD Instruction 1332.18, and Volumes 1 and 2 of DoD Manual 1332.18. This DTM will expire effective February 12, 2021.

Applicability. This DTM 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 the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense.

Definitions. See Glossary.

Policy. It is DoD policy that:

- The requirement to offer an appeal of the recommendation of the Formal Physical Evaluation Board is eliminated from the DES process for all cases referred after March 1, 2020. This change applies to both the Legacy DES (LDES) and Integrated DES (IDES) processes. This change does not affect a Service member's ability to appeal the Formal Physical Evaluation Board decision to the Board for the Correction of Military/Naval Records of the Military Department concerned.

- A multi-disciplinary briefing (MDB) should be completed prior to the Service member meeting individually with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Service Coordinator or within 10 days of referral into the LDES. The MDB will:

  o Establish Service member expectations.

  o Prepare Service members for each stage of the DES process.

  o Inform Service members of what is expected of them during the DES process.

- The MDB must be included for all cases referred after March 1, 2020. This change applies to both the LDES and IDES processes.

- The Military Departments will determine Service member fitness. In parallel, the VA will assign ratings to all referred and claimed conditions and provide the recommended ratings to the Military Department upon completion. This process change applies only to the IDES and will be implemented incrementally, reaching full implementation by December 31, 2020.

Responsibilities.

- Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.  Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs:

  o Provides the minimum standards for the MDB.

  o Collaborates with the Under Secretary for Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs, to provide detailed guidance regarding parallel processing implementation.

- Secretaries of the Military Departments.  The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

  o Develop and utilize a standardized briefing based on, but not limited to, the minimum requirements for the MDB.

  o Develop and implement the necessary procedures to implement parallel processing.

Releasability.  Cleared for public release.  Available on the Directives Division Website at https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/.

Matthew P. Donovan
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
    Defense for Personnel and Readiness

GLOSSARY

PART I.  ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DES                       Disability Evaluation System

IDES                      Integrated Disability Evaluation System

LDES                      Legacy Disability Evaluation System

MDB                       multi-disciplinary briefing

VA                        Department of Veterans Affairs


PART II.  DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

DES.  The DoD mechanism for determining fitness for duty, separation, or retirement of Service members because of disability in accordance with Chapter 61 of Title 10, United States Code.

IDES.  The joint DoD-VA process by which DoD determines whether ill or injured Service members are fit for continued service and DoD and VA determine appropriate benefits for Service members who are separated or retired for disability.

LDES.  A DoD-only disability evaluation mechanism to assess ill or injured Service members' fitness for continued military service and, if unfit, the appropriate disability disposition.  Service members processed through the LDES must be afforded the opportunity to apply for veterans' disability benefits through the VA pre-discharge Benefits Delivery at Discharge program.

MDB.  A briefing that establishes Service member expectations, prepares Service members for each stage of the DES process, and informs Service members of what is expected of them during the DES process.