

Plain Writing Act Compliance Report — April 1, 2026

This report outlines the progress towards implementing the Plain Writing Act of 2010 within the Department of War (DoW).

I. Senior Agency Official

As the Director of Administration and Management, Robert G. Salesses is the DoW Senior Official for plain language. In accordance with DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5025.13, “DoD Plain Language Program,” the Directives Division of Washington Headquarters Services’ Executive Services Directorate (WHS/ESD/DD) oversees the implementation and administration of the Plain Language Program through the plain language point of contact. The point of contact may be reached at whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil.

II. Using Plain Language

The DoW received one request for a plain language review of an issuance to provide a clearer definition for the term “visual information” that was being updated in DoDI 5040.02. WHS/ESD/DD provided an alternate definition for the term “visual information” in March 2025.

DoW agencies took the following actions to implement plain language requirements in 2025.

- Army Publishing Directorate (APD)
 - As in previous years, the APD remained dedicated to supporting the Plain Language Program. Its team of editors, forms analysts, publishing technical designers, data collectors, program analysts and managers, and leaders:
 - Referred to the DoW Plain Language Website for guidance on clear and concise writing.
 - Promoted the use of select publications, style guides, and DoW plain language resources to revise and develop publications and correspondence content.
 - Tasked skilled editors to stay on top of upgrades and updates to publishing software and tools that searched for missing or inappropriate punctuation, misuse of acronyms, completeness of parts or document structure, and more.
 - Reviewed and edited all departmental administrative policy and procedural publications with emphasis on understandable and concise writing. Ongoing projects included review and discussion of the Army’s leading publishing policy, procedural publications, and website accessibility for everyone.
 - Conducted multiple publishing champion and publishing champion officer training sessions to update the publishing community on changes in publishing policy and contact information.
 - Enforced strict standards for maintaining metadata in the Department of the Army Publications Index, resulting in another year of improved searches on the APD Website.
 - Performed quarterly website reviews, which validated that the APD Website continues to be accessible to all and easy to navigate.
 - Used specialized language depending on the intended audience.
 - Ensured that editors formatted documents making them easy to read and understand, wrote sentences with 20 words or less that contained a single thought, and included details that were directly relevant to the main point.
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)
 - In 2025, DFAS took several actions to continue the Plain Writing Program. From a communications perspective, DFAS continued to have its Corporate Communications Office prepare and review all official customer communications for message clarity and ease of

understanding. This included Facebook posts, articles, videos, letters, e-mail content for public release, and web content. The DFAS Corporate Communications office continued to provide plain language training for agency newsletter editors.

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- Department of War Information Activity (DWIA)
 - The Defense Media Activity was redesignated as "DWIA" on February 9, 2026.
 - DWIA received a request from a Stars and Stripes reader requesting removal of her name in articles related to a child abuse story. DWIA rejected this request because the Stars and Stripes legal review determined that the information was published following all editorial guidelines.
- United States Central Command (USCENTCOM)
 - USCENTCOM Secretary of the Joint Staff's publications branch briefs the staff officer's course on a weekly basis, concentrating on DoW issuances and preferred usage guide with the command's supplement. This training ensures that action officers are apprised of their responsibility to communicate in plain language and create content that people can easily understand. The audience is receptive and appreciate the initiative of the command takes to ensure the writers have tools to express content in a clear and concise manner, and that information complies with the Plain Writing Act.
 - In the past 2 years, USCENTCOM has reconstructed its internal SharePoint web portals to ensure content is communicated to the command.
- Washington Headquarters Services (WHS)
 - WHS oversees the DoD Plain Language and DoW Issuances programs. In 2025, the WHS/ESD/DD:
 - Provided the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of War for Public Affairs with an alternate definition for the term "visual information" in March, citing DoDI 5040.07.
 - Performed 1,582 editorial reviews for issuances in progress and published 153 new and revised issuances. All reviews included evaluation for plain writing compliance.
 - Hosted the annual DoD Plain Language Committee meeting. Among other topics, attendees discussed the recent Secretary of War's direction to use "secondary titles" and how this impacts clarity in DoW publications. Consultation with DoW Component legal teams or the Office of the DoW General Counsel was recommended when changing organizational names or programs whose name is directed by law.
 - Reissued DoW Instruction 5025.01, "DoW Issuances Program," which requires issuances be written in accordance with the plain language requirements in DoDI 5025.13.
 - Maintained the DoW Plain Language Website, collecting plain language requests for resolution and posting the annual Plain Writing Act Compliance Report.
 - Reviewed the DoD Plain Writing Act Implementation Plan, DoDI 5025.13, "DoD Plain Language Program," for currency and completeness.

III. Communication of Requirements

Communication about the Plain Writing Act of 2010's implementation, plain language guidelines, and compliance requirements is provided to the DoW workforce through:

- Publication of DoDI 5025.13. It is available on the DoW Issuances Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.
- Distribution of memorandums from the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the Secretary of War.

- Meetings of the DoD Plain Language Committee, which consists of DoW and OSW Component representatives.
- Training and helpful resources available on the DoW Plain Language Website and individual agency websites.
- Notices placed in various public forums such as:
 - DoW newspapers
 - DoW newsletters
 - Mass electronic information systems

IV. Training

- Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA)
 - DeCA provided plain language training through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- DFAS
 - DFAS provided plain language training in-house.
- Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)
 - DISA provided plain language training in-house.
- Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)
 - DTIC provided plain language training through webinars and online.
- Defense Prisoner of War/Missing-in-Action Accounting Agency (DPAA)
 - DPAA provided plain language training through www.plainlanguage.gov, webinars, and online.
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)
 - DTRA provided plain language training through webinars and online.
- Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E)
 - DOT&E provided plain language training in-house.
- DWIA
 - DWIA provided language training through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- Missile Defense Agency (MDA)
 - MDA provided plain language training in-house and through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)
 - NORAD and USNORTHCOM provided plain language training in-house and through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA)
 - PFPA provided plain language training through www.plainlanguage.gov, webinars, and online.
- USCENTCOM
 - USCENTCOM provided plain language training in-house.
- Office of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (OUSW(A&S))
 - OUSW(A&S) provided plain training through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- WHS
 - WHS provided plain language training on iCompass. It also maintains a plain language training video on the DoW Plain Language Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/plainlanguage/>.

V. Ongoing Compliance and Sustaining Change

The DoW is in compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 and has fulfilled requirements such as:

- Publishing the DoD Plain Writing Act implementation plan, DoDI 5025.13.
- Maintaining the DoW Plain Language Website.
- Designating a senior official for plain language.
- Encouraging feedback from the public and stakeholders to identify communications that require improvements.
- Publishing the annual compliance report on the DoW Plain Language Website.

VI. Website: <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/plainlanguage/>

VII. Customer Satisfaction

We want your input. Feedback is critical to help us know whether we have been successful in providing information that is clear and well-organized for its intended audience.

Comments, questions, and concerns may be sent to whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.dod-plain-language@mail.mil.