Plain Writing Act Compliance Report — April 1, 2024

This report outlines the progress towards implementing the Plain Writing Act of 2010 within the Department of Defense. Please check back for updates.

I. Senior Agency Official

As the Performance Improvement Officer and Director of Administration and Management, Jennifer C. Walsh is the DoD Senior Official for plain language. The Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Services Directorate, Directives Division (WHS/ESD/DD), oversees the implementation and administration of the DoD 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 DoD received one plain language amendment request in 2023 regarding DoD 7000.14-R. This request was forwarded to the plain language representative (PLR) for the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Department of Defense for resolution, and negotiations between the Service member and OSD Component are ongoing.

The DoD received a request for clarification regarding plain language use in Army specifications and request for the Army PLR's contact information. Both the clarification and contact information request were forwarded to the Army's PLR. The Army did not file their DD Form 2960 for 2023 with WHS/ESD/DD, so resolution of the request for clarification is unknown.

DoD agencies took many actions to implement plain language requirements in 2023.

- Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA)
    - In 2023, DCAA provided plain language training to over 500 newly hired personnel and interns.
    - The DCAA's public website was regularly updated with the latest guidance for contractors and contracting officials, and they revised the "How to Request an Audit Guide" to simplify that guidance. As the DCAA implements more electronic tools for its customers and defense contractors, plain language, accessibility, and usability are key considerations. Currently, the DCAA has one public facing tool, the Contractor Submission Portal. Several other tools are in the early stages of development.
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)
    - 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.
    - From a training perspective, DFAS provided a related training course offering, providing key principles of the Plain Writing Program – Business Grammar: Business Writing for Executives. In 2023, 26 DFAS employees successfully complete that course.
    - DFAS' Corporate Communications Office continued to provide plain language training for agency newsletter editors.
- Defense Media Activity (DMA)
    - DMA continued to provide plain language training to personnel responsible for writing policy and senior executive correspondence.
- Washington Headquarters Services (WHS)

- WHS oversees the DoD Plain Language and DoD Issuances programs. In 2023, the WHS/ESD/DD:
    - Performed 928 editorial reviews for issuances in progress and published 136 new and revised issuances. All reviews included evaluation for plain writing compliance.
    - Hosted the annual DoD Plain Language Committee meeting.
  - Maintained the DoD Plain Language Website, collecting plain language requests for resolution and posting the annual Plain Writing Act Compliance Report.

III. Communication of Requirements

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

- Publication of the DoD Plain Writing Act implementation plan, known as DoD Instruction 5025.13. It is available on the DoD 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 Defense.
- Meetings of the DoD Plain Language Committee, which consists of representatives from the DoD and OSD Components.
- Training and helpful resources available on the DoD Plain Language Website and individual agency websites.
- Notices placed in various public forums such as:
  - DoD newspapers
  - DoD newsletters
  - Mass electronic information systems

IV. Training

- Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA)
    - DCAA provided plain language training through webinars and online.
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)
    - DFAS provided plain language training in-house.
- Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)
    - DLA provided plain language training in-house, through www.plainlanguage.gov, and via webinars and online.
- Defense Media Agency (DMA)
    - DMA provided plain language training through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)
    - DTIC provided plain language training through 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.
- 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)

    o NORAD and USNORTHCOM provided plain language training in-house and through www.plainlanguage.gov.
- <u>Washington Headquarters Services (WHS)</u>
    o WHS provided plain language training on iCompass. It also maintains a plain language training video on the DoD Plain Language Website at https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/plainlanguage/.

V. Ongoing Compliance and Sustaining Change

The DoD is working towards full compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 and has fulfilled requirements such as:

- Publishing the DoD Plain Writing Act implementation plan, DoD Instruction 5025.13.
- Maintaining the DoD 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 DoD 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.