

Plain Writing Act Compliance Report — April 13, 2012

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

Michael L. Rhodes, Director of Administration and Management, is the Senior Official for plain language and will lead our efforts towards compliance with the Act. Oversight of implementation and administration of the DoD Plain Language Program is handled by the Washington Headquarters Services, Directives Division through the plain language point of contact, who may be contacted at DoDPlainLanguage@whs.mil.

II. Using Plain Language

The Plain Writing Act ensures that information is presented in a way that is clear, well-organized, and easy for its intended audience to understand. The Federal Plain Language Guidelines and training resources available at www.plainlanguage.gov have been shared with the DoD workforce. Internal organizations are each doing their part to make sure plain language will be used during the development and distribution of all new communications. For example:

- Directives Division
 - Staff and editors use plain language guidelines when reviewing and revising publications that establish and implement DoD policy.
 - Writing style guides and plain language resources on the DoD Plain Language Website are offered to action officers that write policy documents.
 - Plain language is emphasized in training classes offered to DoD action officers and the link to the Plain Language Guidelines is provided in class and on the DoD Plain Language Website.
- Defense Logistics Agency
 - Employees are provided with guidance, tools, and training. Peer reviews of all new documents are encouraged.
 - A plain language e-mail distribution list allows the agency to receive and respond to public comment and information created for the website is reviewed by a strategic communications team.
 - An article to communicate the requirements of the Act will be published on the agency's internal network site.
- Defense Security Service. An on-line training course allows employees to learn how to write clearly and concisely by using short, familiar words, specific language, and best practices for organizing content.
- Defense Contract Audit Agency. Employees are trained on principles of plain language through two courses which address basic grammar skills, writing requirements practice, and effective report writing in order to ensure communication is appropriate for the intended audience.
- Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. Writing tips and plain language guidelines are provided in a guide to the staff and in the monthly correspondence training course.

III. Communication of Requirements

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

- Distribution of memorandums from the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.
- Meetings with representatives from different organizations within the DoD.
- Training and helpful resources available on the DoD Plain Language Website.

IV. Training

DoD employees who regularly write or edit documents will be required to take plain language training.

- DoD organizations that already have internal training available will incorporate plain language guidance in those programs.
- DoD organizations that do not have internal training will use the resources available on the DoD Plain Language Website.

V. Ongoing Compliance/Sustaining Change

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

- Maintaining a plain language section of 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.

Plain Language representatives within each of the internal DoD organizations have been identified and will communicate requirements and ensure compliance within their organization. These representatives are meeting to develop policy dedicated solely to the DoD Plain Language Program. The policy will assign responsibilities and describe procedures to implement requirements and oversee compliance efforts.

VI. Website: <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/plainlanguage.html>

Information about the Act and its requirements; implementation plans and compliance resources, and compliance reports may be found on the DoD Plain Language Website. The site also provides an easy way for the public to contact the DoD should they have questions or request the revision of documents that are not in plain language. Any input received through the site will be considered and identified documents will be reviewed and revised, if necessary.

VII. Customer Satisfaction

We want your input. Feedback is critical to help us know whether or not 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 DoDPlainLanguage@whs.mil.