



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Defense Contract Management Agency

INSTRUCTION

Policy Program

Corporate Support Directorate
OPR: DCMA-DSP

DCMA-INST 501

New ‘*policy on policy*’ provides consistency, establishes formats

B.R. Brown | DCMA Public Affairs

Policies and procedures are the rules which govern the day-to-day operations of an organization.

In an agency with more than 10,500 employees and service members dispersed throughout the globe, having current policies in place is crucial to ensure mission accomplishment.

Over the last several years, DCMA has experienced leadership transitions, personnel changeovers, and reorganization of the agency. Kimball Brown, DCMA Policy and Correspondence Control director, said these changes present the Policy Program Office with the challenge of maintaining consistency and quality in the formats, content and publication of DCMA policies.

“The Policy Program Office’s goal is to implement an effective and efficient Policy Program which is organized and user friendly,” Brown said.

In order to be effective, policies must

be reviewed and updated. Recently, one of the policies reviewed was the policy on policy itself. Brown said this policy, signed in May, established formats consistent with the Department of Defense and set forth processes for generating, coordinating, and maintaining policies in a way which will provide better support to our workforce. The official title is DCMA-INST 501, “Policy Program.”

Brown said the goal is to convert DCMA’s approximately 250 policies over the next year into one of three new formats: instructions, handbooks, and director’s policy statements.

“Most of DCMA’s work focuses on implementing higher-level policy and regulations (such as the FAR, DFARS, and DOD Directives),” he said. “As such, the new policy program will use the instruction format as the basic document type for establishing agency-level policy,

roles, and responsibilities. The instruction may also set forth detailed processes or procedures for carrying out the policy.”

The handbook is not used to establish general policy, but to provide implementing guidance or procedures. The handbook is used primarily for convenience, when having a single reference or guide is preferable to combining such guidance with an instruction. This might be the case, for example, when an overarching instruction governs several separate processes, each with its own handbook.

The director’s policy statement is used to communicate brief statements of agency policy applicable to the workforce generally or to the public, usually posted in public areas and pertaining to general workplace practices, such as Equal Employment Opportunity statements, and workforce safety policies.

Although ultimately, the director of

DCMA owns all agency policy, individual component heads are responsible for maintaining the currency of the policies within the scope of responsibility of their components. Brown said the Policy Program Office manages the approved agency policies. The component within the agency determines the need for a policy or change to existing policy based on guidance from higher authority such as the DOD.

When a policy is created or changed, the Policy Advisory Board, which is comprised of senior representatives from each component, reviews the policy to ensure the appropriate working-level coordination and cross-functional integration of policies have been conducted prior to the formal coordination.

According to Brown, the new policy program was designed to facilitate both the writing of policy, and the use of the policy among the workforce. Now, agency policies will be created and maintained in Microsoft Word, and published as PDF documents, rather than as HTML web pages.

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Brenda Spain, DCMA Policy program manager, explained some of the benefits of this approach: “Policy writers no longer need to learn how to develop web pages in order to write policies. This removes a big hurdle in the policy development process.”

In addition to facilitating development, Spain said publishing the policies as signed PDFs facilitates both online and printed access, and establishes the authenticity of the document, something that the previous format lacked.

One of the new features of the policy is the use of “resource pages.”

“Each policy will have an accompanying resource webpage, linked from within the policy, which will contain any training, tools, forms, references, points of contact and any other resources which the proponent can provide to help the workforce carry out the policy,” Spain explained. Components will be able to update these resources on their own, rather than going through multiple layers of coordination and processing.

Spain said the Policy Program Office will announce training opportunities in a future tasking memo. This training will give policy writers hands-on experience with the new formats and templates. The Policy Program resource page is another available tool. The resource page, located on the DCMA Instructions webpage under Policy Program, contains the references and the templates, which can be downloaded for use.

For more detailed information, contact the Policy Program Office at policyprogramoffice@dcma.mil. 



Brenda Spain, Defense Contract Management Agency Policy program manager, and Kimball Brown, DCMA Policy and Correspondence Control director, look over proposed policy at the agency's headquarters in Fort Lee, Va., May 15. (Photo by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)