

Style Guide Last Updated on Thursday, April 11, 2024

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Welcome to the MC&FP Style Guide

Together we can help build recognition and trust with our audience through written and visual consistency of the Military Community and Family Policy brand.

This site provides editorial and visual guidance to staff and contractors who support MC&FP and related programs.

Ready to get oriented? Try our online intro and skills assessment.

[Learn More »](#)

Use of Terms A - Z

Answer your editorial questions through this list of commonly used terms. You will find everything from definitions to using hyphens.

Visual Style Guides

Build a cohesive brand by using consistent colors, fonts, and correct logo placement.

Program Content Guides

Make sure you have this program-specific context and accurate terminology when writing for a specific MC&FP program.

Logos

Download the logos for MC&FP and related programs.

Resources

For additional information and assistance in matters related to style and formatting for Military Community and Family Policy content, use the following resources:

- ***The Associated Press Stylebook*** provides guidelines on editorial style and publishing practices that this style guide does not cover. The MC&FP Style Guide supersedes the AP Stylebook when there are differences between the two.
- ***Webster's New World College Dictionary*** addresses spelling, use and capitalization guidance that this guide does not define or address.
- The **Supplement to *The Associated Press Stylebook*** provides Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) writing guidelines.
- The [Defense Technical Information Center Style Guide](#) provides guidance for developers of Department of Defense policy documents including directives, instructions and manuals.
- The Military Community and Family Policy [Information and Resources Portal](#) provides online resources including specific Department of Defense and MC&FP information. It includes rosters, distribution lists, office locations, a global calendar, graphics, administrative tools and much more.
- MilLife Learning is a web-based training site that provides self-directed, user-focused courses on quality-of-life topics for military families and useful information for the service providers who support them. It's accessible 24/7, anywhere with an internet connection. Visit [MilLife Learning](#) to view the latest course offerings, including the [MC&FP Style Guide training course](#)

Editorial Style Update

Contractors are required to adhere to all Department of Defense policies, instructions and guidance surrounding military service uniforms and personal appearance regulations. This guide provides standard sources containing up-to-date information. [Download Military Service Uniform Guidance](#)

Editorial Style Update

Use “flyer” versus “flier” for those who fly and for handbills: She is a frequent flyer; the flyers showcase installation events. Use flier in “take a flier,” which means to take a big risk. For more style guidance, see our style guide or the AP Stylebook.

Editorial Style Update

Use the percent symbol – % – when pairing with numerals instead of spelling out “percent.” For more style guidance, see our style guide or the AP Stylebook.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Abbreviation/acronyms are acceptable on second reference. Spell out Exceptional Family Member Program on first reference, for example. For all other references, use EFMP.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Use “free” when the target audience is the military community (service members and family members) but use “no cost” when the audience is leadership. The only exception to the rule is for Facebook: Due to its algorithms, use either “no cost” or use a variation of “take advantage of your benefit.”

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Do not use “please” in article content, social media or collateral material. The MC&FP Outreach team will have to clear any exceptions to the rule.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Spell out Department of Defense on first reference. It is then acceptable to use DOD.

Writing Best Practices

This Style Guide provides writers with general principles and specific guidance for developing content for Military Community and Family Policy websites and applications, eLearning modules, print products such as guides or brochures, and conference materials. These guidelines follow those established by The Associated Press Stylebook and Webster’s New World College Dictionary. They also support the consistent use of Military OneSource’s brand voice in all communications.

You’ll find general guidance in this portion of the guide, including instruction on capitalization, spelling, preferred usage and so on, along with many examples. Under **Terms A-Z**, you’ll find more specific instruction alphabetically. When preparing to write any document, remember that our readers lead busy lives and many other resources and outlets compete for their time. Consider the following writing tips:

Write for your reader. Every piece – whether a news story, blog post or brochure – needs to tell the reader:

- What’s in it for them
- What you want them to do
- Why they should read it in the first place
- Why they should read it NOW
- Why they should read your piece instead of someone else’s

Use some basic techniques. Your readers are busy people seeking information. Use their time wisely.

- Open with your main point.
- Stick to one BIG idea.
- Focus on what your reader needs.
- Be descriptive, but use short words and short sentences.
- Spell out action.
- Keep your lists parallel.
- Ensure content does not assume a specific season.

Know your reader. It’s the only way they will understand you.

- **Who?** What is the reader’s educational background, age, gender, attitudes? What are the benefits and risk for the reader?

- **When?** When will the reader read your message? How much time will they spend on it? When does the reader have to act?
- **Where?** Where is the reader in the chain of command? Where do they do their work – in an office, in the field, at home? Where are they receiving the message, and on what type of device or platform?
- **How?** How interested is the reader in the arrival of your message? How will the reader feel about it?
- **Why?** Why are you writing? Why should the reader respond?

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Brevity Codes

Write for your reader. Avoid alphabet soup. Never use abbreviations for Military Community and Family Policy program names unless otherwise noted in their data dictionaries. Spell out all other commonly abbreviated organizational names and terms on first reference. Thereafter, if a sentence can do without the associated abbreviation, acronym or brevity code, do not use one. For example: *The Exceptional Family Member Program serves military families with special needs. The program ensures that a family member's educational or medical needs receive consideration during the assignment coordination process.*

- Do not begin a sentence with an acronym or abbreviation, unless it is the second reference or later.
- The fact that an acronym exists does not necessarily mean the words of the spelled-out version should be capitalized. For example, PCS stands for permanent change of station, not Permanent Change of Station. In spelled-out versions of such terms that will appear later as acronyms or abbreviations, capitalize only the words that are proper nouns or that begin a sentence.
- After you establish the abbreviation, acronym or brevity code by spelling it out, you can use the short form on subsequent instances. (Example: Use Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program the first time and then SECO afterward.) Interspersing “the program” or another similar identifying term in the copy is acceptable to avoid alphabet soup.
- The commonly known abbreviations and acronyms that follow are acceptable upon first reference without introduction (although there may be occasions when fully writing out the terms would be preferable):
 - o **AAFES** for Army and Air Force Exchange Service
 - o **CGX** for Coast Guard Exchange
 - o **CONUS** for continental United States
 - o **DEERS** for Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System
 - o **DIMS** for Defense Installation Messaging System (This acronym would appear only in documents and communications with installation DIMS managers.)
 - o **EFMP** for Exceptional Family Member Program
 - o **JAG** for judge advocate general

- o **LES** for Leave and Earnings Statement
 - o **MCX** for Marine Corps Exchange
 - o **military ID** instead of “military identification card”
 - o **MWR** for Morale, Welfare and Recreation
 - o **NEX** for Navy Exchange
 - o **OCONUS** for outside the continental United States
 - o **PCS** for permanent change of station
 - o **PT or PRT** for physical training or physical readiness training
 - o **PTSD** for post-traumatic stress disorder
 - o **PX** for Post Exchange
 - o **Space-A** for space-available flights or travel program
- When writing a guide or publication that is broken into chapters or sections, spell out the abbreviation, acronym or brevity code on first use within each chapter.
 - When writing content for a website, reintroduce the abbreviation, acronym or brevity code on each page of content. If the reader is going to have to click through more than one screen, reintroduce it on each screen.
 - Abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes disrupt readability. Avoid most uses when developing content for a PowerPoint presentation or eLearning module.
 - Spell out Department of Defense on first reference, then use DOD.
 - Refrain from including abbreviations, acronyms or brevity codes in headers, chapter titles, table of contents, etc.
 - Abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes are acceptable in tables and charts only if space is an issue. Ideally, the term is spelled out prior to the table or chart if the abbreviation, acronym or brevity code appears in the table or chart.

Writing for the Web

Writing for the web varies significantly from writing for journals, newspapers or other print media. People visiting websites tend to scan pages for information pertinent and useful to them. If they do not find it quickly, they often move on to another site.

Here are some basic guidelines to help structure and organize content written for [Military Community and Family Policy websites and applications](#):

- Brevity is essential. Avoid forcing readers to scroll down through text when possible – you risk losing them.
- When text on a single page requires scrolling, use clear, concise headings and subheadings to help readers quickly find the content they need.

- Use bulleted lists when possible and appropriate.
- Never underline text. Underlining generally indicates a hyperlink on a website. Other underlining may be confusing for the reader.
- Unless you have prior permission, hyperlinks must direct readers to government websites such as .mil, .gov, or Fed.us websites. You can submit link requests for government review and for linking on websites through the [Link Vetting Application](#).
- Do not use “please” in content for Military Community and Family Policy digital properties, including websites, applications and social platforms. This includes website articles, collateral material and social posts. For example, **do not say**, “Please visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.” Instead, **say**, “Visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.” “Please” is acceptable, however, in blogs and correspondence, as appropriate. Outreach Operations must approve all other exceptions.

Writing for My Military OneSource

Content developed for the My Military OneSource app should generally follow the MC&FP Style Guide and the Associated Press Stylebook. The list below provides specific guidance about capping, use of acronyms and character count limits.

General app style:

- Title cap names of benefits and MilLife guides.
- Use “&” as opposed to “and” for category buttons.
- Spell out terms on first reference and then use commonly known acronyms in subsequent references within the same benefit description or MilLife guide.

MilLife Guide style:

- Follow the MilLife guide template for new guides, including guide introduction text, four related articles, at least one related website/tool, at least one related benefit and at least two examples in the expert section.
- Do not exceed 50 characters for guide names.
- Do not send users to an article or page on the Military OneSource website when linking to related websites/tools. The only exception to this is if the user is being directed to a specific product in the Products section.
- Start the content for the Connect With Our Experts section with “Military OneSource is here for you when you are ready – to help you understand and get connected to the resources and benefits available to you. Here are a few:”.

Benefits style:

- Follow the benefits template for new benefits, including the benefit name, a short description, a long description and a link to more information.
- Do not exceed 75 characters for benefit names.

- Make benefit names clear and informative. For example, name the MWR Digital Library benefit “Kanopy Library of Films & Documentaries” instead of “Kanopy.”
- Do not exceed 130 characters for the short description of benefits. Text must be limited to three lines in the app. Do not repeat the benefit name in the short description; the short description content displays right under the name in the app.
- Use of acronyms upon first reference in the short description is permitted, if necessary, to meet character count limits.
- Make the intended audience or beneficiary clear in both short and long descriptions of benefits.
- Keep the long descriptions concise. Many users will access this information on a mobile device. There is no character count limit for the long descriptions.
- Do not assume that users will read both the short and long descriptions of benefits. Some places on the app send users directly to the long description instead of sending to the short description first. It is important that each benefit’s short and long descriptions are informative and accurate as stand-alone content.
- The benefits links connect users to more information. The links do not have to take users to a Military OneSource website, but they must go to a .mil/Department of Defense site.

Capitalization

Capitalization errors and mistakes can be easy to overlook. See the guidelines below to ensure proper use of capitalization rules when writing for Military Community and Family Policy:

- For the capitalization of specific terms, see the **A - Z Terms** section at the end of this guide.
- If creating or working on a glossary, capitalize the first word of the term being defined only if it is a proper name, for example: **child abuse** – *This refers to any physical injury, sexual maltreatment, emotional maltreatment, deprivation of necessities, lack of supervision or combinations of these actions or omissions toward a child by an individual responsible for the child’s welfare.*
- Do not capitalize “services,” “service member” or “service provider.”
- Always capitalize the names of the U.S. military services: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, National Guard, Army Reserves, Marine Corps Reserves and Navy Reserves. Do not capitalize “reserves.”
- For headings and composition titles, capitalize all words except articles (unless they are the first or last words in the header or title), prepositions less than four letters long, “to” in infinitives and coordinating conjunctions.
- For subheaders within an article, only capitalize the first word and proper nouns.
- Military titles, such as “commander,” are capitalized only when used as part of a title.
- Directives, instructions or any other name of a regulation should be capitalized only if they are being used to describe a *specific regulation*. Note: If you are looking for instructions or directives, the [Defense Technical Information Center](#) has a comprehensive database. DOD Directive 6400.1 addresses the Family Advocacy Program.

- Specific programs and services available to service members should be capitalized, but general services should not be: The Family Advocacy Program is one of several advocacy services available to service members on an installation.
- For a hyphenated word in a heading or composition title, capitalize the first letter of the second word: “*The Star-Spangled Banner.*” *No-Cost Services Available to Military Families.* The exception to this is *Non-medical Counseling.*
- The order of precedence for the military services (and their respective seals) is:
 - Army
 - Marine Corps
 - Navy
 - Air Force
 - Space Force
 - Coast Guard
 - Army National Guard
 - Army Reserve
 - Navy Reserve
 - Marine Corps Reserve
 - Air National Guard
 - Air Force Reserve
 - Coast Guard Reserve
- When referring to the National Guard and the reserves together, the National Guard comes first.

Lists

Lists are a great way to organize ideas visually and enhance readability. When using lists:

- Use bullets rather than figures unless sequential order is important. Align the list by the last digit of the highest numeral. If you have more than five bullets, you have too many for a reader’s quick look. Reconsider how you are displaying the information.
- Each bullet in a list should have parallel structure. For example, if one bullet begins with a verb, all bullets should start with a verb.
- Capitalize the first word of the bulleted content, and finish with a period only if it is a complete sentence.
- Bulleted lists should have at least two items. If there is only one, it can most likely be added to the sentence before it.

- Use a colon after introductory text:

Services for new parents include the following:

- *New Parent Support Program*
- *Parenting classes*
- *Child care*

Numbers and Dates

See the guidelines below for proper use of numbers and dates in content for Military Community and Family Policy:

- In running text, spell out whole numbers below 10; use numerals for 10 and above. Spell out numbers when they are the first word in a sentence.
- Don't begin a sentence with a numeral.
- Always use numerals for ages and for percentages, except when they are the first word in a sentence.
- Use the percentage sign – % – when pairing with a numeral.
- Use Arabic numerals with the exception of the sequence of wars, people or animals, which take Roman numerals (World War II, Queen Elizabeth 1).
- When labeling figures, tables, slides, modules, chapters, etc., use numerals: Slide 3 instead of Slide Three.
- Dates should take the following order: month, day, year: Sept. 7, 2020.

Parallel Construction

For reading ease, use parallel structure. By using the same pattern of words when expressing more than one idea, you enhance reader comprehension.

Headings, listed items and items in a series need parallel structure. For example, if one item in a list starts with a verb, all items in the list should start with a verb as shown below:

Military leaders are encouraged to consider the following recommendations when deciding how to appropriately respond to an incident:

- *Treat victims with respect and compassion, and listen to their concerns without judgment.*
- *Ensure that victims are made aware of available support services both on and off of the installation.*

Punctuation

Use proper punctuation for clarity and reading ease.

- Do not use a comma before a conjunction in a simple series: *The flag was red, white and blue.*

- Use a comma before a conjunction in a complex sentence: *Military OneSource provides information for military leaders, service and family members, and service providers.*
- Place a comma between two independent clauses that connect with a coordinating conjunction such as *and, so, but, nor, yet and or*: *Department of Defense Education Activity schools within the United States may open enrollment to other children, but it will be on a space-available basis.*
- Use a comma to set off introductory elements: *For more information on requirements for Department of Defense Education Activity schools, contact your local school.*
- Place periods and commas inside of closing quotation marks: *Use the words “website,” “email” and “text.”*
- If a web address is at the end of a sentence, follow it with a period.
- Do not use exclamation points when writing for Military Community and Family Policy, unless it’s part of an official name such as the Department of Defense-Morale, Welfare and Recreation Summer Reading Program, *Reading Takes You Everywhere!*

Punctuate dates and date ranges as follows:

- Month, day, year: Sept. 7, 2018
- Date range: Nov. 10-15 [hyphen]
- Date range: *I will be here from Oct. 14, 2020, to Oct. 18, 2020.* [Use a comma after the year and before “to.”]
- Date range: August – November [en dash (not em dash) with one space on either side of the dash]
- To indicate someone’s lifetime: May 1, 1921, to Aug. 16, 1974 [no hyphen or dash, use “to”]

Tables, Charts and Graphs

- Label pictures, illustrations and charts below the figure.
- Label tables above the table.
- When labeling figures, tables, slides, modules, chapters, etc., use numerals: *Slide 3* instead of *Slide Three*.
- The % sign is acceptable for use in tables, charts and graphs.
- Abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes may be used only if space is an issue, however, not on first mention. Spell out Department of Defense on first reference, then use DOD.

Point of View

The type of writing you are doing will determine the appropriate point of view for your work. See the guidelines below:

- Generally, content for Military Community and Family Policy communications products should be in second person: *You should contact the Family Advocacy Program if you have concerns regarding domestic abuse involving active-duty service members.*
- Write blogs using the first person point of view: I want to describe my life as a military spouse.
- Use direct language. Avoid passive voice construction.
- In limited circumstances, for certain guides, Military OneSource articles and educational, promotional or training materials, use of the first or second person may be appropriate depending on the product and the target audience. Be sure to address this with the project supervisor prior to beginning content development.

Writing for Social Media

Writing for social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram requires a specialized style of writing. Short, direct sentences are essential. Audiences must easily and instantly understand messages. The social media environment is noisy, and our messages must cut through the noise or they will be lost.

- Be platform specific. The share copy for a social post should get people's attention, make sense for the platform it's on and include a call to action.
- Use active language. An active voice and action verbs will make sure your copy is direct and clear to your audience.
- Use your text and headlines to lead your reader. In a social post, the share copy and headlines should work together.
- Lead social post with call to action when possible. Depending on your post, this may include requests to click on a link, comment on the post or take a different specific action.
- Don't be afraid of abbreviations, symbols and a conversational tone. Abbreviations are appropriate and acceptable in titles. Social media is more casual in nature; therefore, a light, friendly, conversational tone is appropriate. The use of symbols such as the hashtag (#) and percent sign (%) is consistent with the quick communication in social media.
- Do not use "please" in social posts for Military Community and Family Policy social platforms. For example, **do not say:** *Please visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.* Instead, **say:** *Visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.* "Please" is acceptable, however, in blogs, as appropriate. Outreach Operations must approve all other exceptions.

Here are some examples of lingo, emoji and hashtags we use to communicate with the military audience.

Resilience and strength:





Topic-based or awareness days:



Emotion and lifestyle:



Avoid emoji that are inappropriate or imply the appearance of vulgarity or impropriety, for example::





Examples of military lingo:

- Time for some mandatory fun.
- OCONUS PCS? No sweat. We've got your six.
- 15 minutes prior to 15 minutes prior. It's never too early to start planning for...
- On the double
- Stay strong on the homefront.
- Operation file taxes
- Battle buddy
- Rack (bed)
- Rack time (sleeping)
- DFAC or Chow Hall (food)
- Top (first sergeant)
- Hooah! (Army), oorah! (Marines), ooyah! (Coast Guard)
- Oscar-Mike (on the move)
- As you were (return to what you were doing)

Military OneSource and product hashtags:

- #MilitaryOneSource (never #Military1Source), #BlogBrigade, #LoveEveryDay

Military community and events hashtags:

- #MilitaryLife, #MilLife, #Military, #ArmedForces, #LoveFromHome, #MilBox, #MilitaryMonday, #RedFriday, #SupportOurTroops

Military family hashtags:

- #MilSpouse(s), #MilitarySpouse(s), #[Branch Name]Spouse(s), #MilFam, #MilKid(s), #MilParent
- #Army, #MarineCorps, #Navy, #AirForce, #USSF, #NationalGuard, #USMC, #Marines, #SemperFi, #Veterans
- #VeteransDay, #DayoftheDeployed, #MemorialDay, #FourthofJuly, #VeteranWife, #VetVerify, #AskRobyn, #MilitaryFamilyMonth

Jobs and job search hashtags:

- #Hiring, #TweetMyJobs, #HR, #JobOpening, #Employment, #Recruiting, #JobSearch, #JobListing, #HireMe, #LinkedIn, #Resume, #CV, #JobTips, #Career, #HotJobs, #Job, #HomeBusiness, #Entrepreneur, #WomenOwned, #MyVetBiz (Small Business Administration), #SmallBiz

Education hashtags:

- #Education, #College, #Tuition, #BacktoSchool

Health and lifestyle hashtags:

- #LifeHack, #AttitudeofGratitude, #PayitForward, #Kindness, #StressBusters, #Stress, #SpecialNeeds, #Nutrition, #Blogger, #HealthyParenting, #Parenting, #MilParenting

Financial hashtags:

- #Money, #Savings, #Finances

Moving and housing hashtags:

- #MilMove, #PCS, #Deployment, #DeploymentTips, #PCS, #PCSing, #MilitaryRelocation, #Moving

Recreation and travel hashtags:

- #MWR, #SpaceATravel, #MilitaryTravel, #Travel, #DODMWRLibraries

Finally, here is an extensive list of social media-friendly military terms:

- **activation:** Order to active duty (other than for training)
- **active duty:** Full-time duty in the active military service — includes members of the reserve components serving on active duty or full-time training duty but does not include National Guard duty
- **advance force, advance guard:** Small force sent ahead for reconnaissance, minesweeping, preliminary site seizure, air support, etc.
- **check:** Term meaning "yes," "affirmative" or "I agree"
- **chit:** Any piece of paper authorizing something
- **commission:** To put in or make ready for service or use, as to commission an aircraft or ship; a written order giving a person rank and authority as an officer in the armed forces; or the rank and the authority such an order gives
- **deployment:** Leaving the normally assigned duty area, usually as a unit, to temporarily serve in another area
- **exercise:** Military maneuver or simulated wartime operation involving planning, preparation and execution for the purpose of training and evaluation
- **expedition:** A military operation an armed force conducts to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country
- **fall in:** To assemble in formation
- **forward observer:** An observer operating with frontline troops and trained to adjust ground or naval gunfire and pass back battlefield information
- **forward operating base:** An airfield the military uses to support tactical operations without establishing full support facilities. Use may occur for an extended time period. A main operating base must provide backup support for a forward operating base.

- **forward operating location:** Similar to a forward operating base but without the in-place infrastructure, primarily used for counter-drug operations
- **friendly:** A contact with positive identification as friendly
- **general orders:** Permanent instructions, issued in order form, that apply to all members of a command, as compared with special orders, which affect only individuals or small groups; general orders usually concern matters of policy or administration
- **situation report/SITREP:** A report giving the situation in the area of a reporting unit or formation
- **special operations:** Operations by specially organized, trained and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas. These ops differ from conventional ops in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and assets.
- **task force:** A temporary or semi-permanent grouping of units, under one commander, to conduct a specific operation or mission
- **theater of operations:** a subarea within a theater of war defined by the geographic combatant commander required to conduct or support specific combat ops. Different theaters of operations within the same theater of war will normally be geographically separate and focus on different enemy forces. Theaters of operations are usually of significant size, allowing for ops over extended periods of time.
- **troops:** A collective term for uniformed military personnel, usually not applicable to naval personnel afloat
- **alpha unit:** Marine's spouse
- **blast:** The first parachute jump after parachutist jump school
- **cherry blast:** The sixth jump a parachutist makes after jump school
- **master blaster:** Parachutist with master parachutist badge
- **Hollywood blast:** A parachute jump for pay purposes
- **check six:** Look directly behind you; twelve o'clock means directly in front
- **exercise the landing gear:** To walk
- **eyewash:** Superficial improvements or additions
- **hop:** A mission or flight

Program Content Guides

Program content guides are available for each program area. They contain and guidelines, preferred language and terms, and relevant glossaries for content developers and editors. Select the program name below to access its content guide.

- [Casualty Assistance](#)
- [Chaplains](#)
- [Commissaries and Exchanges](#)
- [Crisis and Prevention](#)
- [Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [Deployment](#)
- [Defense-State Liaison Office](#)
- [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#)
- [K-12 Education Program](#)
- [Office of Special Needs](#)
- [Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Legal Assistance](#)
- [Morale, Welfare and Recreation](#)
- [Non-medical Counseling Program](#)
- [Personal Financial Management](#)
- [Relocation Assistance Program](#)
- [Sexual Assault Program](#)
- [Specialty Consultations](#)
- [Spouse Education and Career Opportunities](#)
- [USTRANSCOM](#)
- [Voluntary Education](#)
- [Wounded Warrior](#)

Branding and Logos for MC&FP and Support Programs

In fulfilling its mission to contribute to force readiness, Military Community and Family Policy provides quality-of-life programs that advance the well-being of the military community. Military OneSource plays a critical role in fulfilling that mission. It does this by providing a continuum of support and connecting service members and families to the resources and benefits they need to live their best MilLife.

Approved versions of MC&FP branding and program logos are available here along with complete instructions for using them. Users must meet the guidance this section of the Style Guide provides. MC&FP staff may use all logos and seals. To prevent the perception of Department of Defense endorsement, they are not available for use outside the department. Where there is a partnership

agreement, use of the logo or seal must be by permission when the Office of General Counsel and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) allow it.

MC&FP Mission Statement

Quality of life policies and programs that help our guardians of country, their families and survivors be well and mission ready.

Communicating the Mission Through Our Brand Voice

Brand voice is the style of language MC&FP uses to communicate Military OneSource's mission to the military community. For the brand voice to be effective, we need to express it in clear, consistent language that the people we are talking to can easily understand, whether it is service members or their families.

Military OneSource's brand voice is:

- Knowledgeable
- Confident
- Conversational
- Positive
- Empowering
- Understanding
- Supportive

This brand voice assures our audience members that they can count on us to help them succeed in their careers and personal lives. It is in our promise to the military community:

- To be the ONE SOURCE that stands ready to assist as you master military life
- To give you expert support and information that is always true
- To be there, day and night, wherever you are, when you need a trusted voice, private and confidential
- To have answers you can depend on in pursuit of your best goals and your best MilLife

Visual Style Guides for MC&FP and Support Programs

Visual style guides help define how to properly use logos, and which fonts and colors to adopt in designed products and communication. Having a consistent brand helps build trust and instant recognition with our audience.

Make sure you've clearly identified whether the work you're doing should have MC&FP branding or that of one of its support programs. That will help you determine which style guide(s) and logo(s) to use. If you're not sure, check with your government contact to specify which visual and written styles to follow.

[View MC&FP Visual Style Guides »](#)

Logos for MC&FP and Support Programs

MC&FP and its program logos are official graphical identifiers for exclusive use on official products, websites, reports, etc. Therefore, make sure to use logos with care, and refer to the Visual Style Guides for information regarding the appropriate use of each. MC&FP staff may use all logos and seals. To prevent the perception of a Department of Defense endorsement, they are not available for use outside the department. Where there is a partnership agreement, use of the logo or seal must be by permission when the Office of General Counsel and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) allow it.

If you have questions about the artwork or its use, submit them via our [support system](#).

[View MC&FP Logos »](#)

Visual Style Guides

The visual identity of Military Community and Family Policy programs is the outward expression of MC&FP. Each MC&FP program has a unique and distinctive set of visual logos, colors and usage that sets it apart from other organizations and programs. See each program's visual style guide below for more information to build a cohesive brand by using consistent colors and fonts and correct logo placement.

Make sure you've clearly identified whether the work you're doing should have MC&FP branding or that of one of its support programs. That will help you determine which style guide(s) and logo(s) to use. If you're not sure, check with your government contact about which visual and written styles to follow.

MC&FP Visual Style Guide



Military Community and Family Policy

MC&FP is directly responsible for programs and policies for service members and their families. When in doubt, follow the visual guidance on fonts, colors and logo usage for MC&FP.

Program-Specific Visual Style Guides



Military OneSource

These guides contain important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to Military OneSource and the Military OneSource website.

For website CSS and user interface:



DOD Logo and Seal Usage Guide

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using the DOD logo and seal in combination with the Military OneSource logo. Visit [Defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov) for the complete [Defense Department Brand Guide](#).



Educational and Developmental Intervention Service

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the Educational and Developmental Intervention Program.



Exceptional Family Member Program

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the Exceptional Family Member Program.



EFMP & Me

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the EFMP & Me website.



MILITARY
IN LASTING TRIBUTE

Military In Lasting Tribute

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the Military In Lasting Tribute website.

MILITARY
INSTALLATIONS

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS website.



Military Spouse Employment Partnership

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to the Military Spouse Employment Partnership.



MilLife Learning

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to MilLife Learning.



The My Career Advancement Account Scholarship

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to My Career Advancement Account, or MyCAA, Scholarship.

PLAN MY DEPLOYMENT

Plan My Deployment

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to Plan My Deployment.

PLAN MY MOVE

Plan My Move

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to Plan My Move.



Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to Spouse Education and Career Opportunities.

MC&FP Program Logos

Logos for Military Community and Family Policy programs will post here as they become available. Refer to the Visual Style Guide PDFs for information about logo file types and their appropriate use. If you have questions about the artwork or its appropriate use, submit them via our [support function](#).



Exceptional Family Member Program

Visual Style Guide: [PDE](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/EFMP/EFMP-Logos.zip) <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/EFMP/EFMP-Logos.zip>



Military State Policy Source

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/msps-) <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/msps->

logos.zip



SPOUSE EDUCATION & CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Spouse Employment and Career Opportunities

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/SECO-Logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/SECO-Logos.zip



MilLife Learning

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MilLifeLearning-Logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MilLifeLearning-Logos.zip

MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/military-installations-logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/military-installations-logos.zip

PLAN MY MOVE

Plan My Move

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/pmm-logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/pmm-logos.zip



EFMP & Me

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/EFMP/EFMP-and-Me-Logos.zip) <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/EFMP/EFMP-and-Me-Logos.zip>

PLAN MY DEPLOYMENT

Plan My Deployment

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/Plan-My-Deployment-Logos.zip) https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/Plan-My-Deployment-Logos.zip



MILITARY & FAMILY LIFE COUNSELING

Military & Family Life Counselor Program

Downloadable Versions:

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MFLC-Logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MFLC-Logos.zip



Military OneSource

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Website Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/Military-OneSource-logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/Military-OneSource-logos.zip



Military OneSource Alternate

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Website Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#)

https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/Military_OneSource_stacked_logos.zip



Military Spouse Employment Partnership

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#)

https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MSEP_logos.zip



MyCAA

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#)

https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MyCAA_logos.zip

Approval Process

Military Community and Family Policy is a diverse organization with multiple offices and support staff across the globe. That means there is a strong reliance on electronic means of communication for development and review of routine documents, online content, print products, and electronic newsletters and publications. When submitting a document for review, ensure that it meets all requirements in this online style guide and use the following naming convention when saving a file:

- Name of file
- Date
- Initials of staff member submitting document

- example: *MYOM-Parenting-20Aug2010-LS.doc*

Some files will go into a database and be linked from online sources, so limit file names to the following:

- Letters
- Numbers
- Dashes (use in place of spaces)
- Underscores (use in place of spaces)
- Periods

You may submit any documents for official MC&FP policy or program review via the [Tasking Assignments and Reporting system](#). When submitting documents in the TAR, follow all naming conventions above. If spaces remain in a file name, a %20 will appear in each space when you save the file. This will cause your file name to appear as *MOS%20versionDahlgren%2015Aug2020.pdf*

By adding an underscore to each space, no additional characters will appear in the file name once you save it. This ensures the file will correctly open, once it uploads to the database and incorporates into a hyperlink, as *MOS_ versionDahlgren_ 15Aug2020.pdf*.

Visit the [Military OneSource media page](#) for information on the review process if you are outside MC&FP. You may also submit questions via our **customer support system**.

MC&FP Websites

When developing content for Military Community and Family Policy websites and applications, there is an additional set of guidelines to follow. Web writers should follow style guidelines for general MC&FP writing. They should also note the following suggestions for using hyperlinks and URLs and writing appropriately for the web.

It is important to be aware of the standards and guidelines for URL approval. Not all URLs are acceptable. Follow the guidelines below:

- If a URL ends in .gov, .mil or Fed.us, you can use it in your writing.
- If a URL does not end in one of the three approved endings above, ask yourself: Is this link required to fulfill the mission and intended purpose of this document? If the answer is no, do not use the link. If the answer is yes, you will have to submit the link for approval before using it.
- Please note that all URLs that do not meet the criteria above must go through the link vetting process. You can submit a link via the [Link Vetting Application](#).
- If the URL does not end in one of the three approved endings, consider providing the necessary information without directly linking to the site.

Below is a list of approved URLs for your use:

Military OneSource:<https://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Plan My Move:<https://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil>

Plan My Deployment:<https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil>

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS: <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil>

Military State Policy Source: <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil>

Education Directory for Children With Special Needs:

<http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/efmp/directory>

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities: <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil>

Military Spouse Employment Partnership: <https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/msep/>

My Career Advancement Account Scholarship Program: <https://mycaa.militaryonesource.mil/mycaa>

Millife Learning: <https://millifelearning.militaryonesource.mil>

Blog Brigade: <https://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil>

Department of Defense Education Activity: <http://www.dodea.edu>

Defense Commissary Agency: <https://www.commissaries.com>

Army and Air Force Exchange Service: <https://www.shopmyexchange.com>

Marine Corps Exchange: <https://usmc-mccs.org/services/retail/marine-corps-exchange>

Navy Exchange: <https://www.mynavyexchange.com>

Armed Forces Retirement Home: <http://www.afrh.gov>

Creating Hyperlinks

A hyperlink is a word or phrase in an electronic document that, when clicked, immediately takes the reader to another page or document on the internet with related content. When using and creating hyperlinks, follow these guidelines:

- Unless otherwise directed, writers should link to only federal, state or service websites - .gov, .mil or Fed.us addresses.
- Use hyperlinks rather than writing out the complete URL in the text: *The National Domestic Violence Hotline is a web resources and 24-hour help line for victims of domestic abuse seeking resources and support.*
- Writers contributing content for MC&FP [websites and applications](#) will most often use hyperlinks when referencing Department of Defense or military service policies and regulations, or when they want to direct the reader to another resource, such as another website.
- Do not use links to content that has no government origin or is in the public domain. Nongovernmental resources may be acceptable for use in rare circumstances and must have permission of the author or publisher.
 - In addition, prior to posting, the content use must receive approval from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs); in some instances, approval by the Department of Defense's Office of General Counsel will also be a requirement.
- When creating a hyperlink, hyperlink several words or an entire phrase when possible. Avoid non-descriptive link text such as "click here."

For more information on MC&FP link policy, visit [Military OneSource](#).

Follow these steps to create a hyperlink in Microsoft Word documents:

1. Highlight the text that will become the hyperlink.
2. Right click on your mouse and select “Hyperlink” from the menu that appears (or use the keystrokes Ctrl and K to pull up the same menu and select the same option).
3. A window labeled “Insert Hyperlink” will appear on the screen with an address box at the bottom in which you can enter the URL (web address) for the hyperlink.
4. Either type or copy and paste the URL directly from the website into the address box in the “Insert Hyperlink” window.
5. Once you enter the complete URL in the box, click “OK” at the bottom of the “Insert Hyperlink” window.
6. The hyperlink text should now appear in underlined blue font in the document.
7. Click on the hyperlink to confirm that it directs the reader to the correct webpage or document.

Use of Shortcut URLs

Some content pages on Military OneSource, as well as Military Community and Family Policy products and offline content, also have shortcut URLs.

The purpose of the shortcut URL is to make it quick and easy for users to type the URL into their browser. This is in contrast to an absolute URL that contains folders and paths, representing the location in which the page on the website lives.

Users who type in a shortcut URL will receive a redirection to where the content resides within a website or application so they can access the most current information.

For example, the shortcut URL www.militaryonesource.mil/pcs redirects users to <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-housing/moving/pcs>.

If a shortcut URL will change its destination regularly, for example to redirect to the newest eNewsletter content, it should be a temporary (302) redirect. If the shortcut URL will likely always send to the same destination URL, such as an article, it should be a permanent (301) redirect URL. See below for examples.

302 Redirect:

- Military OneSource eNewsletter shortcut URL:
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/epublications>
- Military OneSource eNewsletter destination URL:
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDODMILITARYONESOURCE/bulletins/1fa552b>

301 Redirect:

- My Training Hub legacy URL before the MilLife Learning rebranding launch:
<https://myhub.militaryonesource.mil>

- MilLife Learning new URL: <https://millifelearning.militaryonesource.mil>

About the Style Guide

Military Community and Family Policy, or MC&FP, is the Department of Defense office that addresses quality-of-life issues to help service members and their families live their best military lives. MC&FP offers a suite of programs, tools and services – including Military OneSource – that connect those in the military community to resources they can use every day, from relocation planning and tax services to confidential non-medical counseling and spouse employment.

This online style guide is for those who develop communications and outreach content in support of MC&FP programs. Its purpose is to encourage consistent expression of the Military OneSource brand in look, feel and tone. This includes content developed for MC&FP websites and applications, ePublications, eLearning modules, print products (such as guides or brochures), social media and conference materials. All grammatical guidelines in this document follow those of [The Associated Press Stylebook](#).

All content for MC&FP must follow the guidance in this application to ensure consistency across communication efforts. Users must submit requests to deviate from this guide to the Office of Military Community Outreach. The guidance that this style guide provides supersedes the AP Stylebook when there are differences between the two.

This guide is for the development of only communications materials and content and does not apply to writing insurances or official [Department of Defense correspondence](#).

Submit questions or comments about the content of this guide via our [Support](#) link.

Note: Italics are used in this guide for emphasis only. The *AP Stylebook* does not allow the use of italics.

MC&FP Style Guide Training Course

Visit MC&FP's MilLife Learning platform and take the [MC&FP Style Guide training course](#). MilLife Learning is a web-based training site that provides self-directed, user-focused courses on quality-of-life topics for military families and useful information for the service providers who support them. It is accessible 24/7, anywhere with an internet connection.

Note: You will receive a prompt to log in with your Common Access Card or Military OneSource account.

Terms A-Z

Use of Terms A-Z

Military Community and Family Policy writing guidance aligns with The Associated Press Stylebook with a few exceptions. Definitions of military-specific terms appear below, along with editorial guidance for certain commonly used words for MC&FP and our programs. See additional writing guidance in the [Writing Best Practices](#) section. Find program-specific guidance in the [Program Content Guides](#) section.

A

abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes - In general, avoid abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes unless readers can easily recognize and understand them. Spell out on first reference,* but do not follow with brevity code in parentheses or set off by dashes. Abbreviations and acronyms are acceptable in subsequent references

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase to represent the complete form: USMC (the United States Marine Corps). Abbreviations differ from acronyms because users pronounce each individual letter.

An acronym is a word formed from the first letters of a series of words: scuba (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus). An abbreviation is not an acronym.

A brevity code is a code that has as its sole purpose the shortening of messages for use in military and other communications: Divert (Proceed to alternate mission/base).

*The commonly known abbreviations and acronyms that follow are acceptable upon first reference without introduction (although there may be occasions when fully writing out the terms would be preferable):

- **AAEFS** for Army and Air Force Exchange Service
- **CGX** for Coast Guard Exchange
- **CONUS** for continental United States
- **DEERS** for Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System
- **DIMS** for Defense Installation Messaging System (This acronym would appear only in documents and communications with installation DIMS managers.)
- **EFMP** for Exceptional Family Member Program
- **JAG** for judge advocate general
- **LES** for Leave and Earnings Statement
- **MCX** for Marine Corps Exchange
- military ID instead of “military identification card”
- **MWR** for Morale, Welfare and Recreation
- **NEX** for Navy Exchange
- **OCONUS** for outside the continental United States
- **PCS** for permanent change of station
- **PT or PRT** for physical training or physical readiness training
- **PTSD** for post-traumatic stress disorder
- **PX** for Post Exchange
- **Space-A** for space-available flights or travel program

aboard vs. on board – The two terms mean nearly the same thing and in some uses are interchangeable. *Aboard* is the preferred usage. Use *on board* as two words, but hyphenate as an adjective. *Aboard* means on board, on, in or into a ship. For example: *The crew is aboard the ship. An on-board medical team uses the on-board computer.*

active component – Lowercase.

active duty, active-duty – Use lowercase in all references. As a noun, use two words: *Military personnel serve on active duty.* As an adjective, hyphenate: *All active-duty personnel must participate.*

Air Wing – Use as two words.

aircraft – Acceptable characterization of military aviation platforms. Do not refer to military aircraft as airplanes or planes.

aircraft designations – Always use a letter(s) followed by a hyphen and number: *SH-60B*. Note: For print publications, italicize aircraft name (for example, *Tomcat*, *Hornet*, etc.) For News Service story submissions, use regular text (for example, *Tomcat*, *Hornet*, etc.).

air base – Use two words and do not abbreviate. Spell out the name of the base on first reference: *Lackland Air Force Base*. In subsequent references: *the Air Force base*, *the air base* or *the base*.

aircraft squadrons – Spell out full name of squadron on first reference. In subsequent references, use abbreviation and hyphenate.

aircrew, aircrew member – One word in each instance per Webster's.

airman, airmen – An individual who serves in the U.S. Air Force is an *airman*. The plural form is *airmen*. Lowercase in all uses.

all hands, all-hands – Two words as noun: *He called all hands to the meeting.* Hyphenate as adjective/compound modifier: *They attended the all-hands call.*

allowances/pays – Capitalize the various types of allowances and pays when referencing them in tables, running text or social media posts. For example: *Basic Allowance for Housing* or *Temporary Lodging Expense*.

anchors aweigh – Not anchors away.

anti-aircraft, anti-submarine – Hyphenate.

App – The use of the word “app” (vs. “application”) is appropriate on first use (and preferred).

armed forces – Capitalize only as a proper name (*Armed Forces Day*), part of a title or following U.S., as in *U.S. Armed Forces*. Lowercase as a noun (the *armed forces*) or adjective (an *armed forces member*).

B

Bagram Airfield – Use this spelling for the U.S. base in Afghanistan.

battalion – Capitalize when combining with a figure to form a name: the *1st Battalion*, the *3rd Maintenance Battalion*. Use numerals in unit names, and do not hyphenate: *NMCB 4* (not *NMCB FOUR*).

battle group – Do not use *battle group*. Instead, use *carrier strike group* or *expeditionary strike group*.

boats, ships – A *boat* is a watercraft of any size but generally used to describe a smaller craft. A *ship* is a large, seagoing vessel. Use *boat* to describe a submarine. Do not use to describe a ship.

boot camp – Use as two words.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America – Use "&" when writing out the full name of the organization. The name may also be shortened to *Boys & Girls Clubs*. Lowercase "club" or "clubs" when referring to individual club events or programs. For example, "Each year, one exceptional club member is selected to be the National Youth of the Year."

building – Lowercase the word in running text unless referring to a specific building with "building" in the proper name. Capitalize the word or abbreviation (Bldg.) when used in addresses.

burial at sea – Do not hyphenate.

C

call signs – Do not refer to individuals by call signs. Use full name and rank.

cannon, canon – A *cannon* is a weapon; a *canon* is a church law or rule or a musical composition.

canvas, canvass – *Canvas* is a durable fabric used for items such as tents and sails. *Canvass* is both a noun and a verb for survey.

capital, capitol – Lowercase *capital* when referring to the location of a seat of government or describing money, equipment or property that a business or corporation uses: They went to the *capital* to put up *capitol* for the deal. Capitalize titles of buildings and places: the *U.S. Capitol*, *Capitol Hill*, *New York State Capitol*.

carrier strike group – Capitalize when using with the name of a ship. It is acceptable to precede the name of strike group with "the": *The Enterprise Carrier Strike Group arrived in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations Dec. 9.*

cease-fire, cease-fires – These are the forms for the noun and adjective. The verb form is *cease fire*.

Centcom – Down style is acceptable in headlines and in subsequent references to U.S. Central Command, a unified combatant command with headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

chaplain – Capitalize when using with a name, lowercase in other uses. For military chaplains, the rank goes in parentheses in first-reference-with-name style: *Army Chaplain (Maj.) Joseph T. Smith*. Use a chaplain's religious affiliation only if it's relevant to the story.

child care – Use as two words, and never include a hyphen.

civilian titles – Use full name and title or job description on first reference. Capitalize the title or job description, and do not use a comma to separate it from the individual’s name when it comes first: *Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense John Smith attended the graduation ceremonies*. Lowercase and use commas when titles follow the name: *John Smith, deputy assistant secretary of defense, attended the graduation ceremonies*.

cities/datelines – For cities that stand alone, use the list of datelines in the AP Stylebook. Because of their strong Navy ties and frequent reference in news stories, Great Lakes, Norfolk, San Diego and Pearl Harbor can stand alone, without states.

coalition – Do not capitalize: *U.S. and coalition forces took part in the event*.

Coast Guard – Capitalize when referring to this branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, a part of the Department of Homeland Security: *the U.S. Coast Guard, the Coast Guard, Coast Guard policy*. Do not use the abbreviation USCG except in quotes. Use lowercase for similar forces of other nations.

Coast Guardsman – Capitalize as a proper noun when referencing members of a U.S. Coast Guard unit: *He has spent his career as a Coast Guardsman*. Lowercase *guardsman* when it stands alone.

commander in chief – Do not hyphenate. Once used both as the title for the president in the context of his authority over the armed forces and for commanders of the unified commands, it now applies to only the president. Use it only in context and not as a routine synonym for *president*. To apply the term to the president when he is acting in a nonmilitary capacity uses the term out of context. For example: *The commander in chief asked Congress to ratify the treaty*. An example of using the term in context: *Using his authority as commander in chief, the president relieved the general of his command*.

commanding officer – Do not capitalize unless using as a title preceding a name: *Commanding Officer Capt. Tom Jones welcomed the distinguished visitors to the base. The commanding officer of the cruiser, Capt. Mary Smith, announced the ship would make a port visit to Key West, Florida*.

composition titles – Apply the guidelines listed here to Department of Defense directives, instructions and service publications (for example, *JCS Pub 1, “Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States”*) and titles of articles, webinars, podcasts, books, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, albums and songs, radio and television programs, and lectures, speeches and works of art.

The guidelines:

- Capitalize principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Capitalize articles — the, a, an — or words of fewer than four letters if they are the first or last word in a title.
- Put quotation marks around names of works that fall into the categories above. Exceptions include the Bible, reference materials — such as almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers and handbooks — and software titles such as Windows.

comradery – Not camaraderie or comraderie.

counter – AP *prefix rules* apply, but in general, no hyphen: *counteract, countercharge, counterspy*.

courtesy titles – Refer to both men and women by first and last name, without courtesy titles, on first reference: *Susan Smith* or *Robert Smith*. Refer to both men and women by last name, without courtesy titles, in subsequent references. Use the courtesy titles *Mr.*, *Miss*, *Ms.*, or *Mrs.*, only in direct quotations or after first reference when a woman specifically requests it: *Mrs. Smith* or *Ms. Smith*. See also *military titles*.

CONUS (continental U.S.) – Refers to the 48 continental, or contiguous, states and the District of Columbia. It excludes Alaska and Hawaii. It is acceptable to use CONUS upon first reference when writing for service members, families, service providers and leaders. If writing for an audience not as likely to be familiar with the term, for example the broad audience of the Friends & Family Connection eNewsletter, write it out fully upon first reference and use the acronym sparingly on subsequent references.

crew member – Use two words, consistent with *service member*.

cutlines – Write in historical-present tense, identifying recognizable people left to right with full name and title, and including the year in dates. Include the date the photographer took the image, the location (city, state and country, if outside the U.S.) and what is happening. Use a colon at the beginning of the lead sentence or commas in the body of the sentence to indicate a person's relative position in the photo.

The form: *Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, left, meets with Australian Defense Minister Stephen Smith during U.S.-Australia Ministerial Consultations in San Francisco, Sept. 15, 2011. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey*

Left to right: Army Staff Sgt. Eric Anton, Spc. Leigh Clarke and Col. David Thiele of the North Dakota National Guard judge a Memorial Day weekend duck-calling contest on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, May 30, 2010. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Yoshauna Gunn

cyberspace, cybersecurity – Follow the general rule for prefixes. No hyphen for *cyberattack*, *cyberbullying*, *cybersecurity*. Use *Cyber Monday* and *cyber* as a separate modifier: e.g., *cyber shopping*.

D

Dallas – The city stands alone in datelines.

dates – Always use Arabic figures, and do not use st, nd or th. See the AP Stylebook for guidance on months. Punctuate dates and date ranges as follows:

- Month, day, year: Sept. 7, 2018
- Date range: April 24-28 (hyphen)
- Date range: I will be here from Oct. 14, 2020, to Jan. 18, 2021. (comma after the year and before “to”)
- Date range: August – November (dash, en not em, with one space on either side of the dash)
- To indicate someone's lifetime: May 1, 1921, to Aug. 16, 1974 (no hyphen or dash, use “to”)

day care – Two words, never takes a hyphen.

DeCA – Acceptable for second and subsequent references for the Defense Commissary Agency. Note the lowercase "e" which is part of the acronym but doesn't stand for a separate word.

defense spending – Military spending is the preferred term.

department – See the AP Stylebook for the full listing of all government departments for first and subsequent references. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms when possible. A phrase such as *the department* is preferable in subsequent references because it is more readable and avoids alphabet soup. Lowercase *department* in plural uses but capitalize the proper name element: *the departments of Labor and Justice*. Lowercase the *department* whenever it stands alone and do not abbreviate department in any usage.

Department of Defense – Spell out on first reference. It is then acceptable to use DOD.

DODDS – Acceptable for second and subsequent references to Department of Defense Dependents Schools. Note the plurals and lack of apostrophe. DODDS and DOD Dependents Schools refer to the school system. Use Defense Department dependents school or schools when referring to any of the system's schools in constructions that don't use a formal name.

DODEA – Acceptable for second and subsequent references to Department of Defense Education Activity.

Department of Defense publications – When referencing Department of Defense publications, including directives, instructions and service publications, cite the publication number and the document title. Put quotation marks around the title. *For example, JCS Pub 1, "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States."* See also **composition titles**.

dependent – Use *family member* unless usage is in conjunction with a formal description of military benefits.

diversity – All the different characteristics and attributes of individuals from varying demographics that are consistent with the core values of the Department of Defense, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve. When creating content for Military Community and Family Policy, writers, designers and other team members should consider diversity and ensure that content represents a diverse audience in terms of age, race, differing abilities, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Djibouti – The name of this East African country and city stands alone in datelines.

DMDC – Appropriate for all references to the organization formerly known as the Defense Manpower Data Center. Due to their broadening business, the agency shortened its name to DMDC.

Domestic Violence Prevention Month – MC&FP's official name for this recognition.

"don't ask, don't tell" – This 1993 policy, which barred gays from openly serving in the military, was overturned in 2011.

duffel

E

e – Abbreviation for electronic. Use hyphen for terms such as *e-commerce*, *e-reader*, etc. However, no hyphen for email, eNewsletter, ePublication and eBlast, according to Military OneSource style. When using hyphenated terms at the beginning of a sentence, cap the "e" initial: *E-readers are now in use in*

schools. For non-hyphenated terms, do not cap the “e” at the beginning of a sentence: *eBlasts are scheduled to go out every Monday at 8 a.m. EST*.

eBlast – A term used in marketing to describe the distribution of electronic messages to a large group of recipients. The preferred style is without the hyphen and capped as written, *eBlast*. When used at the beginning of a sentence, do not cap the “e”: *eBlasts are scheduled to go out every Monday at 8 a.m. EST*.

eLearning – The use of electronic media, information and communication technologies in education and instructional systems design. The preferred style is without the hyphen, *eLearning*.

embassy – An *embassy* is the official office of an ambassador in a foreign country. It handles relations between nations. A *consulate* is the office of a consul in a foreign city. It handles business and personal needs of citizens of the appointed country. Capitalize with the name of a nation; use lowercase without it: *the British Embassy, the U.S. Consulate, the embassy, the consulate*.

emergency room – U.S.: emergency room; overseas: emergency care facility.

eNewsletter

equity – The impartial treatment, equality of opportunity and advancement, and fairness in access to information and resources for all people. Equity also refers to the process of identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. When creating content for Military Community and Family Policy, writers, designers and other team members should seek to further the goal of promoting justice, impartiality and fairness across Department of Defense programs, services and systems.

Exceptional Family Member Program – This program supports military family members of all ages with special medical and educational needs. When referencing the three main components of the program, capitalize them to read *EFMP Family Support, EFMP Identification and Enrollment and EFMP Assignment Coordination*. Always capitalize *Exceptional Family Member Program* when writing it out fully in headers or running text.

Exceptional Family Member Program Resources, Options and Consultations – EFMP ROC is a specialized area of Military OneSource where families with special needs go for online resources, options and consultations, in addition to those already available on military installations. EFMP ROC provides comprehensive information on every aspect of military life for family members with special needs. There is no cost to active-duty, National Guard and reserve service members, their families and survivors.

exclamation point – Avoid excessive exclamation points when developing content for MC&FP. This guidance applies to social media, blogs and other communication avenues. Do not use exclamation points when writing for Military OneSource unless they are part of a title (example: Purple Up!).

executive branch – Lowercase in all uses.

executive director – Lowercase except when using before the name of someone with a formal corporate or organizational title.

Executive Mansion – Lowercase except when referring to the White House.

F

federal – Lowercase.

first family – Always lowercase.

First Lady – As an exception to the *AP Stylebook*, capitalize as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in other uses.

fiscal, monetary – *Fiscal* applies to budget matters while *monetary* applies to money supply.

fiscal year – This is the 12-month period that governmental or corporate bodies use for bookkeeping. In writing, use *fiscal* followed by the year, rather than *FY20*. For example: *The federal government's fiscal year starts three months prior to the calendar year – fiscal 2021, for example, runs from Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021.*

fleet – Use figures and capitalize for proper names: the 7th Fleet. Lowercase when it stands alone.

flyer, flier – *Flyer* is the preferred term: *She is a frequent flyer. The flyers showcase installation events.* Use *flier* in “*take a flier,*” which means to take a big risk.

fort – Spell out for cities or military installations: *Fort Myers, Fort Belvoir.*

Four-H Club – *4-H Club* is preferred. Members are 4-H'ers.

Fourth of July – *Independence Day* is also acceptable.

free – Use *free* when the target audience is the military community, service members and family members. *Free* is easily understood and preferred when writing content for service and family members and service providers and should be used instead of *no cost*. However, when writing content for leaders pertaining to Military OneSource policy or the Military OneSource contract, use the term *no cost*. Facebook is the only exception to the rule. Due to its algorithms, use either *no cost* or a variation of “*take advantage of your benefit.*”

G

GI, GIs – This term describes military personnel. Its origins include its use as an abbreviation for government issue and similar terms. *Soldier* is the preferred term when describing a service member in the Army, *Marine* is preferred for those in the U.S. Marines, *sailor* is preferred for those serving in the Navy and *airman* is preferred for service members (regardless of gender) in the Air Force. Note that unless the term is at the start of a sentence, lowercase *soldier*, *sailor* and *airman* but capitalize *Marine*.

government – Always lowercase and spell out: federal government, state government, U.S. government.

H

half-mast, half-staff – Flags fly at *half-mast* on ships and at Naval stations on shore. Elsewhere on shore, flags fly at *half-staff*.

hangar, hanger – A *hangar* is an enclosed space, such as those for aircraft repair and storage. A *hanger* is something that hangs, such as a clothes hanger.

hashtag – The use of a number or hash sign (#) in a tweet to convey the subject a user is writing about so that it can be indexed and accessed in other users' feeds. If someone is writing about the Super Bowl, for example, *#superbowl* could be an appropriate hashtag. There is no space between the hashtag and

the accompanying search term. Hashtags are sometimes used on social networks other than Twitter, such as Instagram.

he/she, he or she, his/her, his or her – Avoid the perception that your writing is gender-biased, but never use "he or she" or "his or her" except in quoted matter. Writing in third-person plural avoids the need to use gender-specific pronouns or the temptation to mix plural pronouns with single antecedents.

In most cases, a plural pronoun should agree in number with the antecedent. For example, "The children love the books their uncle gave them." They/them/their is acceptable in limited cases as a singular and/or gender-neutral pronoun, when alternative wording is overly awkward or clumsy.

In content about people who identify as neither male nor female or ask not to be referred to as he/she/him/her, use the person's name in place of a pronoun, or otherwise reword the sentence, whenever possible. If they/them/their use is essential, explain in the text that the person prefers a gender-neutral pronoun. Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person.

homefront – One word.

homepage – One word.

hotline – No hyphen.

House of Representatives – Capitalize only when referring to a specific government body: *The U.S. House of Representatives, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.*

Humvee – This is the trademark for the four-wheeled vehicle that AM General Motors built (HMMWV – high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle).

hurricane – Capitalize as part of the name forecasters give to a storm: *Hurricane Andrew.* But use only *it* and *its* in pronoun references. Lowercase in plural uses: *hurricanes Andrew and Katrina.*

husband, wife – *Husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. It is acceptable to use *spouse* or *partner* is acceptable on request or to be gender-neutral. Use *same-sex couple* or *partner*, when applicable, when developing web content. When referring to the policy, use official terminology: *same-sex domestic partner.* In direct quotes, regardless of sexual orientation, *husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. *Spouse* or *partner* is acceptable to use on request.

I

improvised explosive device – An *IED* is a homemade device incorporating destructive, lethal noxious, pyrotechnic or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass or distract. It may incorporate military materials, but is normally devised from nonmilitary components. The term is applied to a variety of explosive devices, such as bombs and mines. The term *IED* is acceptable in subsequent references, but only if the available facts are detailed enough to allow avoiding use of the jargon term entirely; opt for *the homemade bomb, roadside bomb* or the appropriate plain-English term.

Inauguration Day – Capitalize only when referring to the total collection of events that include the inauguration of a U.S. president. Lowercase in all other uses: *Inauguration Day is Jan. 20. The inauguration day for the change has not been set.*

inclusion – A set of behaviors (culture) that encourages service members and civilian employees to feel valued for unique qualities and to experience a sense of belonging. Inclusive diversity is the process of

valuing and integrating each individual's perspectives, ideas and contributions into the way an organization functions and makes decisions, enabling diverse workforce members to contribute to their full potential in collaborative pursuit of organizational objectives. When creating content for Military Community and Family Policy, writers, designers and other team members should be as inclusive as possible and avoid making assumptions based on age, race, differing abilities, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Individual Ready Reserve – Uppercase.

infant – Use for children through 12 months old.

installation names – In running text, fully write out the name of an installation each time it appears to facilitate reader comprehension. For example, use *McConnell Air Force Base* on each reference as opposed to *McConnell AFB*. For the purposes of search engine optimization, installation names may include acronyms or be written out fully, whichever yields better search results, in URLs, metadata and in H1 for each installation page on the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS website.

internet – Lowercase. Note: The web is a subset of the internet and the terms are not interchangeable.

J

judicial branch – Always lowercase.

K

Korean War – Uppercase. *Korean conflict*, however, is lowercase.

kudos – To give credit or praise for an achievement.

L

life cycle – Two words, not *lifecycle*.

line numbers – Lowercase and use figures when naming word lines in individual lines of a text: *line 1, line 2*. But: *the first line, the 10th line*.

lists – Use a colon after introductory text before a bulleted list. Lists should contain parallel structure. Capitalize the first word of the bulleted content, and finish with a period only if it is a complete sentence. See [lists](#) section also.

login, logon, logoff, log in – *Login, logon* and *logoff* are all nouns. Two words create the verb form.

loan locker, lending locker, loan closet, lending closet – When referring to this program or service in general, lowercase the term. Capitalize the term when referring to a specific program or service on a specific installation. For example: *Lending lockers (also known as loan lockers, or lending or loan closets) allow service and family members to borrow basic household goods while they await arrival of their own personal household goods after a PCS*. For an example where you would capitalize the term: *The Marine Corps Base Quantico Loan Locker allows service members, family members and DOD civilians to borrow basic household items for a period of up to 30 days while they await the arrival of their household goods*. Note: The need to refer to installation-specific programs and services most commonly arises on the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS website.

long term, long-term – Hyphenate as a compound modifier: *They are focusing on the long term. Her unit has a long-term overseas assignment*.

M

Marine – Capitalize references to U.S. forces: the *U.S. Marines*, *the Marines*, the *Marine Corps*. Do not use *USMC*. Uppercase when referring to a member of the U.S. Marines: *She met a fellow Marine*. Use "U.S." before service names only when the context is unclear without it.

mental disorder – Not mental condition.

mental health – Not behavioral health. Do not use interchangeably with behavioral health.

midnight – Do not put a 12 in front of it. It's part of the day that is ending, not the one just beginning.

Mil – Abbreviation for "military" usually combined with other words to create customized terms such as MilLife, MilSpouse, MilKid, etc. Always capitalize the first letter of Mil and the first letter of the associated word.

Military and Family Life Counseling Program – Use this complete term and capitalize as shown when referring to the program. When referring to the service or the individual counselors, lowercase: *You can learn more about military and family life counseling by visiting your Military and Family Support Center*.

Military and Family Support Center – Capitalize as shown.

Military Community and Family Policy digital properties – These are all MC&FP websites, applications, assets and resources, including the MilitaryOneSource.mil online platform and website.

Military Family Readiness System – The Military Family Readiness System is the network of programs, services, people and agencies, and the collaboration among them, that promotes the readiness and quality of life of service members and their families. Capitalize this term in all uses.

Military Funeral Honors Program – Capitalize as shown when referring to the program, which establishes procedures for requesting and rendering military funeral honors.

Military In Lasting Tribute — Capitalize the first letter of each word in this title. Use Department of Defense (not Defense Department) when writing about this official online memorial. Note that this is referred to as an online memorial and not a digital memorial, website or application.

military life, military lifestyle – When referring to life as a military service or family member, use the preferred term *military life*. Avoid the term *military lifestyle* except for direct quotes.

Military OneSource – Always capitalize as shown. Never abbreviate as MOS; always write out the full term. This is the program, inclusive of call center, specialty consultations, non-medical counseling, and online platform.

Military OneSource online platform – This encompasses all websites, applications and resources that have MilitaryOneSource.mil in the URL, to include all eNewsletters and social media platforms.

MilitaryOneSource.mil – When referring to the Military OneSource website and not the program, use the URL and the term "site" or "website" when appropriate to do so. There are several acceptable ways to write the website address for printed or downloadable documents. These include:

- Upper and lower case letters – www.MilitaryOneSource.mil

- All lowercase letters – www.militaryonesource.mil
- Without www – MilitaryOneSource.mil or militaryonesource.mil

military service uniform – As per Department of Military Affairs policy, uniform names should only be capitalized if you are using the formal name. For example: *Army Combat Uniform “Scorpion”* or *Marine Corps Dress Blues*. Informal names could be: *combat uniform, service uniform, dress whites, summer whites*, etc. For a directory of photographs of military service uniforms and their formal names, review this [Military Service Uniform Guide](#).

military titles – Capitalize military ranks only when using as a formal title before a person’s name. On first reference, use the appropriate title before the full name of the service member. In subsequent references, use only the last name. Spell out and lowercase a title when using in the place of a name: *Capt. James Smith gave the order. The general travels on Monday*. For plurals, add s to the principal element: Majs. Smith and Jones. The following are abbreviations, with ranks in descending order:

ARMY

Commissioned Officers

- general – Gen.
- lieutenant general – Lt. Gen.
- major general – Maj. Gen.
- brigadier general – Brig. Gen.
- colonel – Col.
- lieutenant colonel – Lt. Col.
- major – Maj.
- captain – Capt.
- first lieutenant – 1st Lt.
- second lieutenant – 2nd Lt.

Warrant Officers

- chief warrant officer five (CW5) – Chief Warrant Officer 5
- chief warrant officer four (CW4) – Chief Warrant Officer 4
- chief warrant officer three (CW3) – Chief Warrant Officer 3
- chief warrant officer two (CW2) – Chief Warrant Officer 2
- warrant officer (W01) – Warrant Officer

Enlisted Personnel

- sergeant major of the Army – Sgt. Maj. of the Army
- command sergeant major – Command Sgt. Maj.

- sergeant major – Sgt. Maj.
- first sergeant – 1st Sgt.
- master sergeant – Master Sgt.
- sergeant first class – Sgt. 1st Class
- staff sergeant – Staff Sgt.
- sergeant – Sgt.
- corporal – Cpl.
- specialist – Spc.
- private first class – Pfc.
- private – Pvt.

NAVY, COAST GUARD

Commissioned Officers

- admiral – Adm.
- vice admiral – Vice Adm.
- rear admiral upper half – Rear Adm.
- rear admiral lower half – Rear Adm.
- captain – Capt.
- commander – Cmdr.
- lieutenant commander – Lt. Cmdr.
- lieutenant – Lt.
- lieutenant junior grade – Lt. j.g.
- ensign – Ensign

Warrant Officers

- chief warrant officer – Chief Warrant Officer

Enlisted Personnel

- master chief petty officer of the Navy – Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
- master chief petty officer – Master Chief Petty Officer
- senior chief petty officer – Senior Chief Petty Officer
- chief petty officer – Chief Petty Officer
- petty officer first class – Petty Officer 1st Class

- petty officer second class – Petty Officer 2nd Class
- petty officer third class – Petty Officer 3rd Class
- seaman – Seaman
- seaman apprentice – Seaman Apprentice
- seaman recruit – Seaman Recruit

MARINE CORPS

Commissioned officer ranks and abbreviations follow the same system as the Army. Warrant officer ratings follow the same system as the Navy. There are no specialist ratings.

Enlisted Personnel

- sergeant major of the Marine Corps – Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps
- sergeant major – Sgt. Maj.
- master gunnery sergeant – Master Gunnery Sgt.
- first sergeant – 1st Sgt.
- master sergeant – Master Sgt.
- gunnery sergeant – Gunnery Sgt.
- staff sergeant – Staff Sgt.
- sergeant – Sgt.
- corporal – Cpl.
- lance corporal – Lance Cpl.
- private first class – Pfc.
- private – Pvt.

AIR FORCE

Commissioned officer ranks and abbreviations follow the same system as the Army. The Air Force does not have warrant officer ratings.

Enlisted Personnel

- chief master sergeant of the Air Force – Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force
- chief master sergeant – Chief Master Sgt.
- senior master sergeant – Senior Master Sgt.
- master sergeant – Master Sgt.
- technical sergeant – Tech. Sgt.
- staff sergeant – Staff Sgt.

- senior airman – Senior Airman
- airman first class – Airman 1st Class
- airman – Airman
- airman basic – Airman

Retired officers – Use a military rank on first reference before the name of an officer who has retired if it is relevant. Do not use the military abbreviation Ret. Spell out retired and use it in the same way as former would appear before a civilian title: *They asked retired Army Gen. Robert Jones to speak.*

Firefighters, police officers – Use the abbreviations in this section when using military-style titles before the name of a firefighter or police officer outside a direct quote. Add *police* or *fire* before the title as needed for clarity: *police Sgt. Wendy Smith, fire Capt. Lee Williams.* Spell out titles such as *detective* that do not appear in the lists for armed forces.

military treatment facility – Use this term instead of medical treatment facility.

more than/over – Use *more than* instead of *over* to indicate greater numerical value. *Paychecks went up more than \$100 a week.*

My Military OneSource – This is the appropriate way to refer to the Military OneSource application.

N

names – Spell out on first reference and use only the last name in subsequent references. Continue to use the first and last name to distinguish between people who use the same last name, such as married couples or family members. Refer to juveniles age 16 and older by last name in subsequent references, and by first name if they are 15 or younger. Exceptions include juvenile athletes, entertainers and those charged with serious crimes.

national anthem – Lowercase, but uppercase “The Star Spangled Banner.”

National Guard – Capitalize references to U.S. or state-level forces, or foreign forces using that formal name: the National Guard, the Guard, the California National Guard, National Guard troops, the Tunisian National Guard. Use *the guard* in subsequent references, the guard. When referring to an individual in a National Guard unit, use *National Guardsman*. Lowercase guardsman when it stands alone.

nautical mile – It equals 1 minute of arc of the earth or 6,076.11549 feet. To convert to approximate statute miles, multiply the number of nautical miles by 1.15.

naval, navel – Use *naval* when writing about the Navy. A *navel* is a depression, such as a belly button, in a central point.

Navy – Capitalize references to U.S. forces: the *U.S. Navy, the Navy, Navy policy*. Do not use *USN*. Lowercase when referring to naval forces of other nations: *the French navy*. Use “U.S.” before service names only when the context is unclear without it.

eNews or eNewsletter – Write as one word and do not hyphenate.

nobody

no cost – Use this term when communicating to a leadership audience about Military OneSource services for eligible individuals. Specifically, use when writing content for leaders pertaining to Military OneSource policy or the Military OneSource contract. Hyphenate when using as an adjective (*no-cost services*). When writing about Military OneSource services for service and family members and service providers, use the term *free*.

non – Prefix rules apply, but in general, do not hyphenate compound words with no special meaning that are easily understood when *not* precedes the base word. Do use a hyphen before a proper noun or in awkward combinations, such as *non-nuclear*.

nonappropriated

noncombat, noncombatant

Non-medical counseling – Confidential non-medical counseling is available through both Military OneSource and the Military and Family Life Counseling Program for prevention of the development or exacerbation of lifestyle conditions that may compromise military and family readiness. It addresses issues such as improving relationships at home and work, stress management, adjustment issues (returning from a deployment), marital problems, parenting, grief and loss issues, and other military-related topics. Non-medical counseling is short-term and solution-focused. Note: When using in titles, capitalize as follows: *Non-medical Counseling*.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization – NATO is acceptable in all references.

O

oceangoing

OCONUS (outside the continental U.S.) – Refers to any place outside of the 48 continental, or contiguous, states and the District of Columbia. It includes Alaska and Hawaii.

office – Capitalize *office* when it is part of an agency's formal name: *Office of Management and Budget*. Lowercase in all other uses, including phrases such as *the office of the attorney general*, *the U.S. attorney's office*.

offices and centers – When referring to an installation office or center (such as a legal office or child development center), lowercase the term when using it in a general sense. Capitalize the term when referring to a specific office or center on a specific installation. For example: *Child development centers generally offer child care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years*. For an example where you would capitalize the term: *The Fort Bragg Legal Office is open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday*. Note: The need to refer to installation-specific offices and centers most commonly arises on the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS website.

offline – No hyphen.

off-site – Use the hyphen, also on-site.

online – One word in all cases for the computer connection term.

order of precedence for the services – Use this order: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Department of Defense service provider,

Department of Defense Expeditionary Civilian workforce. Use “U.S.” before service names only when the context is unclear without it.

ordinal numbers – *Ordinal* numbers indicate order. Spell out first through ninth and then use figures: *first, third, 10th, 101st*. Ordinal numbers should not be superscript; the font size of the letters should match the font size of the number. Correct: *10th*. Incorrect: 10th.

over/more than – *Over* generally refers to spatial relationships, as opposed to *more than*, which is used to indicate greater numerical value. *The plane flew over the city. Pay went up more than \$100.*

overseas – Refers to any place other than 50 United States and the District of Columbia. The term includes U.S. territories and possessions, and foreign countries. When referring to foreign countries, MC&FP describes them as “outside of the United States and outside of the U.S. territories and possessions.”

Oval Office – The White House office of the president.

P

page numbers – Use figures and capitalize *page* when pairing with a figure. When adding a letter to the figure, capitalize it but do not hyphenate: *Page 1, Page 13, Page 13C*. There is one exception: *It’s a Page One story*.

parentheses () – Use sparingly except for around logos in datelines. Example: MIAMI (AP). Parentheses are jarring to the reader and impact text readability. View them as a clue, when writing, that the sentence is becoming too bulky. Try to reword the sentence. If it must contain incidental material, commas and dashes are frequently much more effective.

PCS (permanent change of station) – Acceptable on first reference when writing for service members, families, service providers and leaders. Also acceptable in verb form, such as PCSed and PCSing. If writing for an audience not as likely to be familiar with the term, for example the broad audience of the Friends & Family Connection eNewsletter, write it out fully upon first reference and use the acronym sparingly on subsequent references.

percent – Use the % sign, with no space, when pairing with numerals: *1%, 60%*. For fractions, use decimals: *2.5%*. For a range: *10% to 15%*; for amounts less than 1%, precede the decimal with a zero: *The interest rate dropped 0.5%*. Avoid starting a sentence with a percentage. If you cannot avoid it, spell out both the numeral and percent: *Sixty percent of the service members attended*.

phone numbers – Use figures. Use hyphens, not periods. For readability, keep phone numbers on one line of text. The form: *212-555-1234*. For international numbers use *011*, the country code, the city code and the telephone number: *011-44-20-7535-0000*. The form for toll-free numbers: *800-342-9647*. If an extension number is needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: *212-621-1234, ext. 53*.

Pinterest – Users of this social network collect and share web images in themed collections known as pinboards or boards, sharing or pinning images known as pins.

please – Do not use *please* in content for Military Community and Family Policy digital properties, including websites, applications and social platforms. This includes website articles, collateral material and social posts. For example, **do not say**, “Please visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.” Instead, **say**, “Visit MilitaryINSTALLATIONS when planning your next move.” *Please* is acceptable,

however, in blogs and correspondence, as appropriate. Outreach Operations must approve all other exceptions.

post-traumatic – Always lowercase and hyphenate except if written differently when used in a proper name (for example, *National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*).

post-traumatic stress disorder – Always lowercase and hyphenate except if written differently when used in a proper name (for example, *National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*).

preexisting

president – Capitalize only when using as a formal title before one or more names: *President Abraham Lincoln, Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton*. Lowercase all other uses. Use the first and family name on first reference; use only the last name in subsequent references.

presidential – Lowercase except when part of a proper name.

Presidents Day – No apostrophe for this term, which some federal agencies, states and local governments use to jointly recognize the contributions of Presidents Washington and Lincoln, both born in February.

preventive – Never preventative

primary care manager – Refers to an assigned health care professional who provides all routine, non-emergency and urgent health care to those enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Young Adult Prime. Lowercase. Use acronym in subsequent references.

primary care provider – Refers to an assigned health care professional who provides all routine, non-emergency and urgent health care to those enrolled in the US Family Health Plan. Lowercase.

prisoner(s) of war – Spell out on first reference. In subsequent references, *POW(s)* is acceptable. Hyphenate as compound modifier: *A prisoner-of-war memoir*.

privacy – Do not identify juveniles under the age of 18 who are accused of crime, even if other news media have done so. Do not identify, through text or images, juveniles who have been witnesses to crimes. Do not identify, through text or images, those who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they voluntarily identify themselves. There may be exceptions in extraordinary cases. For imagery guidelines, consult with MCO Outreach Operations staff.

privately owned vehicle – Always lowercase and never hyphenated. *POV* is acceptable on second reference.

PT boat – Acceptable in all references for *patrol torpedo boat*, a fast-attack vessel the U.S. Navy used in WWII.

Q

Q-and-A format – Use *Q-and-A* in the body of a story.

quotations in the news – Never alter quotations. That includes correcting minor grammatical errors or word usage. Do not use (*sic*) to indicate misspellings and other errors. On rare occasions and using

extreme caution, ellipses can replace casual minor errors. Avoid fragmentary quotes. Remember that context is sometimes key to avoid misquoting speakers.

R

ready reserve – Lowercase.

reserve – Capitalize when referring to the U.S. Armed Forces: *Army Reserve*, *Navy Reserve*, *Marine Corps Reserve*, *Air Force Reserve*. When referring to the reserve component, use lowercase. Capitalize *Individual Ready Reserve*, but lowercase *ready reserve* and *selected reserve*. Lowercase the plural form *reserves* in all uses.

reserve component – Refers to all reserve forces of the United States, including the National Guard (and, technically, the ROTC, though this rarely is intended by the user/speaker). Not capitalized. Example: The reserve components face a cut of more than \$3.5 billion in the next federal budget.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps – ROTC is acceptable in all references. When the service is specific, use *Army ROTC*, *Navy ROTC*, or *Air Force ROTC*. Do not use *AROTC*, *NROTC* or *AFROTC*.

reservist – Use lowercase in all references except when starting a sentence.

resume – Use this term without the accents when referring to a work history summary.

S

sailor – Use lowercase when referring to a member of the U.S. Navy.

SAM, SAMs – Acronym for *surface-to-air missiles*; acceptable after the first reference.

same-sex couple – When developing content for MC&FP websites, applications and ePublications, such as the Military OneSource eNewsletter, this term is appropriate as are the terms *partner* or *partners*. When referring specifically to Department of Defense policy, use the official term *same-sex domestic partner*. In direct quotes, regardless of sexual orientation, *husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. *Spouse* or *partner* is acceptable on request.

same-sex domestic partner – When referring specifically to Department of Defense policy, use the official term *same-sex domestic partner*. When developing content for MC&FP websites, applications and ePublications, such as the Military OneSource eNewsletter, it is acceptable to use the softer term *same-sex couple* or *partners*. In direct quotes, regardless of sexual orientation, *husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. It is acceptable to use *spouse* or *partner* on request.

school liaison – Use lowercase. Do not use the term “school liaison officer.”

Second Lady – As an exception to the *AP Stylebook*, capitalize Second Lady as a formal title when using before a name.

secretary-general – Use a hyphen. Capitalize as a formal title before a name.

secretary of state – Capitalize as a formal title before a name.

selected reserve – Lowercase.

Senate – Capitalize all specific references to governmental legislative bodies.

service affiliation – As a general rule, put service affiliation before rank. Do not use when it is obvious: *Gen. John T. Smith, commander of the Air Force Space Command*. However, always use it for people in unified combatant commands – *Marine Corps Maj. John D. Smith, a U.S. Central Command spokesman* – and in any other case where the affiliation would not be obvious to people with little knowledge of the military rank structure or the service in general. Use the service even with ranks used only in that service such as *lance corporal, gunnery sergeant, sergeant first class*, etc. While the person’s service affiliation would be obvious to people with that level of knowledge, MC&FP stories should be clear to any reader.

service, services – Lowercase all references to *service* or *services*. When referencing a specific military service, capitalize the term and use this order of precedence: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Department of Defense service provider, Department of Defense Expeditionary Civilian workforce. Use “U.S.” before service names only when the context is unclear without it.

serviceman, servicewoman, servicemen, servicewomen – One word; use lowercase in all references, but *service member*.

service member – Written as two words, use lowercase in all references. One exception is if the term “servicemember” is part of an official title such as the *Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or the Office of Servicemember Affairs*.

Skype – This service allows users to communicate by voice, video and instant message over the internet. Skype is an informal verb for using the service, especially for communicating via video.

slash – Acceptable in descriptive phrases such as 24/7/365 or 9/11, but otherwise confine use to special situations such as fractions or denoting the ends of lines in poetry.

soldier – Lowercase when referring to a member of the U.S. Army.

Space Force – Capitalize references to U.S. forces: the U.S. Space Force, the Space Force. Do not use USSF. Use this order of precedence for the Space Force and its seal: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard. Use “U.S.” before service names only when the context is unclear without it. Space Force service members are referred to as “guardians.”

spam, Spam – Use *spam* in references to unsolicited commercial or bulk email. *Spam* is a trademark for a canned meat product that is made in Minnesota and very popular in Hawaii.

special needs – Use the phrase *family member with special needs* as opposed to *special needs family member*. The needs do not define the individual.

state – Lowercase. As in *state law*.

state names – Spell out the names of the 50 United States. Use the two-letter U.S. Postal Service abbreviations only with full addresses, including ZIP code. Place one comma between the city and the state name and another comma after the state name except at the ending of the sentence.

stealth – When using together with military aircraft, ships and vehicles, this means they are masked from electronic-detection methods. Always lowercase without quotation marks, as with *cruise missile*.

T

Taps – Uppercase without quotation marks for the bugle call sounded for *lights out* and at military funerals.

TAPS – Is an acronym for the military service organization, *Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors*.

telephone numbers – Use figures. Use hyphens, not periods. For readability, keep phone numbers on one line of text. The form: 212-555-1234. For international numbers use 011, the country code, the city code and the telephone number: 011-44-20-7535-0000. The form for toll-free numbers: 800-342-9647. To add an extension number, use a comma to separate from the main number: 212-621-1234, ext. 53.

territories – The federal government administers these geographic locations, which are not U.S. states. U.S. territories include American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

theater – Lowercase and use this spelling for general uses. Uppercase proper names, using *Theatre* when applicable: The Globe Theatre, Apollo Theater. Uppercase descriptions of specific theaters of operations, such as the *European Theater*, but lowercase when using only the word *theater*.

time element – Use the days of the week and not the generic *today* or *tonight* in print copy. Use *Monday, Tuesday*, etc., before or after the current date. Avoid redundancies such as *last Tuesday*.

time of day – Use an exact time of day only if it is critical to the story. Use clock time and always use Eastern time followed by *EDT* or *EST*. Use time zone abbreviations, *EST, CDT, PST*, etc., after a clock time if it is likely to affect the readership. Avoid use of the 2400-hour clock (military time); use only when part of a quote. Use lowercase and with periods for *a.m.*, and *p.m.*

times – Use figures except for *noon* and *midnight*: *1 a.m., 10 p.m.* Separate hours from minutes with a colon: *11:30 a.m.*

time change – In 2021, Daylight Saving Time starts on Sunday, March 14, and ends on Sunday, Nov. 7. On Sunday, March 14, at 2 a.m., clocks turn forward one hour to 3 a.m., as daylight saving time (*EDT, CDT, MDT, PDT*). On Sunday, Nov. 7, at 2 a.m., clocks are turned backward one hour to 1 a.m., as local standard time (*EST, CST, MST, PST*). In 2022, Daylight Saving Time will begin Sunday, March 13, and end Sunday, Nov. 6.

time sequence – Spell out: 20 hours, 50 minutes, 17 seconds.

time zones – Capitalize the full name of the time in place in a particular zone: Eastern Standard Time, Eastern Daylight Time, Central Standard Time, etc. Use lowercase only the region in short forms: *the Eastern time zone, Mountain time*, etc. The abbreviations *EST, EDT*, etc., are acceptable on first reference in stories for the continental United States. Spell out when referencing locations outside the contiguous United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.

titles – Limit capitalization to formal titles directly before individual names. Lowercase when using after names and in subsequent references: *The admiral spoke at the ceremony*.

TRICARE – TRICARE is the health care program for 9.5 million service members, retirees and their families around the world. It provides military health benefits and health care support to ensure mission readiness. Do not refer to TRICARE as “health insurance” since it is an entitlement. Instead, say “health benefit.”

troop, troops, troupe – Use sparingly and with caution. Per *AP*, a *troop* the singular form means a group of people, often military, or animals. The plural, *troops*, means several such groups: *The troops assembled*. When the plural appears with a large number, however, it is understood to mean individuals: *30,000 troops*. The more formal *service member* is preferred. Use *troupe* when referring to an ensemble of performers.

U

U-boat – A German submarine. Use *submarine* unless directly referring to a German vessel of World War I or World War II vintage.

Uncle Sam

undersecretary – One word, lowercase unless preceding a name in a title.

underway – One word in all uses: *The Navy's maneuvers are underway.*

Uniform Code of Military Justice – Spell out on first reference, then use *UCMJ*.

United Service Organization – *USO* is acceptable in all references.

United States – Refers to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Use the abbreviation *U.S.* in texts and *US* in headlines.

URL – Acceptable in all references to Uniform Resource Locator. When the URL doesn't fit on one line, break into two or more lines without a hyphen or other punctuation. In printed or downloaded documents, use the complete URL including <https://> or <http://>. The only exception to this rule is for the Military OneSource website, which can be written any of the following ways for printed or downloaded documents:

- Upper and lower case letters - www.MilitaryOneSource.mil
- All lowercase letters - www.militaryonesource.mil
- Without www - MilitaryOneSource.mil or militaryonesource.mil

For printed or downloaded documents, if the URL is overly long or complicated, content creators may use the [Go.USA.gov link shortener](#).

U.S. – The abbreviation is acceptable as a noun or adjective for the *United States*. Use *U.S.* in texts and *US* in headlines

USA – No periods or spaces in the abbreviation for the United States of America.

U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, U.S. Coast Guard - or Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Space Force or Coast Guard. Capitalize in all uses when referring to U.S. forces.

USTRANSCOM – Acceptable for second and subsequent references when referring to the U.S. Transportation Command for internal audiences within DOD. For public facing products and on MC&FP digital properties, refer to the Defense Personal Property Management Office or other appropriate specific resource.

USS – Use *USS* when it precedes the name of a *United States Ship, Steamer* or *Steamship: the USS Nimitz*.

V

Veterans Affairs – Formerly the Veterans Administration. It became a full Cabinet level in 1989 with the full title the *Department of Veterans Affairs*. Use *VA* (no periods) in subsequent references.

vice – Use two words, *vice admiral*, *vice chairman*, *vice consul*. Capitalize in titles when using before a name.

vice president – Capitalize vice president only as a formal title before one or more names: *Vice President Mike Pence*, *Vice Presidents Dan Quayle and Gerald Ford*. Use lowercase in all other references: *The vice president said today that he is running for president*. Do not drop the first name on the first reference; in subsequent references, use only the last name.

W

war – Capitalize in names of specific conflicts: *the Civil War*, *the War of 1812*.

Washington D.C. – Never abbreviate Washington when referring to the nation’s capital. Use Washington, D.C., or District of Columbia when the context requires distinction between the state and federal district.

weapons – Contrary to the *AP Stylebook* change, gun is NOT an acceptable term for any firearm. In military parlance, the word gun refers to artillery. Use the specific form: rifle, pistol, mortar, artillery, etc. See the *AP Stylebook* for treatment and definitions for all other weaponry terms.

weather – See the *AP Stylebook*.

web – Lowercase.

web address – If a web address is at the end of a sentence, follow it with a period.

website – Lowercase, and do the same with *the web*, *webcam*, *webcast*, *webfeed*, *webmaster*, *webpage*.

wife, husband – *Wife* or *husband* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. *Spouse* or *partner* is acceptable for use on request. For same-sex couples, when developing web content, use *same-sex couple*, or *partner*. When referring to the policy, use the official terminology, *same-sex domestic partner*. In direct quotes, regardless of sexual orientation, *husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage. *Spouse* or *partner* is acceptable for use on request.

with – Initial cap in a heading or title.

WMD – An acceptable subsequent reference for *weapons of mass destruction*.

women – Women should receive the same treatment as men in all areas of coverage. Do not use sexist references, demeaning stereotypes or condescending phrases. Use the same standards for men and women when deciding to include specific mention of personal appearance or marital and family situation.

X

Y

years – Use figures, without commas: 2020. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas: *Oct. 8, 2025, is the target date*. Use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: *the 1980s*, *the 1900s*. Years are the lone exception to the general rule of not

starting sentences with numerals: *1971 was a very good year*. If a date appears in body copy, it is not necessary to indicate the year if it is the same as the current year.

YouTube

yule, yuletide

Z

ZIP code – Use all caps for *ZIP* for *Zone Improvement Plan*, but always lowercase *code*. Do not use a comma in the five digits or between the state name and ZIP code: *New York, NY 10020*.