

Style Guide Last Updated on Friday, July 12, 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 abbreviations and hyphenations.

Visual Style Guides

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

Program Content Guides

Make sure you have 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

Use the following resources for additional information and assistance in matters related to style and formatting Military Community and Family Policy content.

- 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, usage and capitalization guidance that this guide does not define or address.
- The [Defense Technical Information Center Style Guide](#) provides guidance for developers of Defense Department policy documents including directives, instructions and manuals.
- MilLife Learning is a web-based training site that provides self-directed, user-focused courses on quality of life topics for military families as well as 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](#).
- The three-course [Creating Accessibility Series](#) helps third-party content creators and MC&FP staff learn how to produce Section 508-accessible PDFs, PowerPoints and videos.

Editorial Style Update

Updated Terms A-Z

advisor – Not adviser.

active duty, active-duty – 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*. Do not hyphenate when the modifier is not already hyphenated in a cited title: *In the "2021 Active Duty Spouse Survey," PCS-related stress was reported as a significant factor*.

USTRANSCOM – Acceptable for second and subsequent references when referring to the U.S. Transportation Command for internal audiences within the DOD. For public-facing products and on MC&FP digital properties, refer to the Defense Personal Property Management Office or other appropriate specific resource. Do not use USTC in place of USTRANSCOM in client- and public-facing content.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Writing for the Web — Understand that readers tend to skip over paragraphs that are too long. To make content more accessible:

Strive to create paragraphs that are no longer than three lines in a Word document. Paragraphs with four lines should be the absolute maximum and used sparingly. Break longer paragraphs into shorter paragraphs or lists for easier scanning. Avoid pages and articles that are excessively long. While the content might be valuable, if an article is not easy to scan, many users may not read it in full. Review content to see if it's covered in other locations to help decrease the length of articles and pages.

For half-width content or content that occupies a smaller width area, such as verbiage placed next to an action card, paragraphs may extend to four to five lines. In a Word document, the content would take

up two or three lines only. Published content with six or more lines, even shorter lines, appears too long to the user. The reader may skip the content.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Writing for Social Media — Use *no cost* instead of *free* in Facebook posts. Due to its algorithms, use either *no cost* or a variation of “take advantage of your benefit.”

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Branding and Logos for MC&FP and Support Programs – 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 MC&FP Style Guide provides. Of note, **the DOD logo and the DOD seal are not interchangeable.**

Follow these usage guidelines:

In keeping with brand standards, the DOD logo may be used in all communications across all media platforms. The DOD seal has very restricted usage. The DOD seal’s use is restricted to official DOD top leader correspondence, legal documents, reports, memoranda, ceremonial booklets, certificates and awards. The DOD and military seals may not be used on flyers or other promotional materials. These seals may be used only by the military departments for official purposes.

View more updates on the [Branding and Logos](#) page.

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Approval Process – When submitting a document for review, ensure that it meets all requirements in this online style guide and use the following file-naming convention when saving a file:

MODES-Program-Product-Title-Date-Initials-Status

Contract name abbreviation (e.g., MODES)

Program name (e.g., TRANSCOM, FAP, SECO)

Product type (e.g., FactSheet, Flyer, PPT, TalkingPoints)

Title (e.g., TaxTips, TransitionAssistance)

Date (e.g., 5July2023)

Initials of staff member submitting document (e.g., jad, LS, LL)

Status (e.g., ForPMReview, ForOORReview, For508Approval, FINAL)

Examples:

Add your initials for projects in progress:

MODES-MyCAA-Article-MilitarySpouseSupport-5Oct2022-SKL-ForEditMODES-FAP-Poster-KeepFamilySafe-2Feb2023-WF-ForDesign

Remove your initials from the final version or for files going to the government for review:

MODES-CYF-FactSheet-SafeSleep-20Aug2023-ForPMReviewMODES-MWR-Article-DODMWRLibrariesSummerReadingProgram-6July2023-ForOOReview

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

Use of Shortcut URLs – Typically, 301 redirects are used for expired pages, after URLs have moved, and when consolidating duplicate content. It also makes sense to use 301 redirects for shortcut URLs that will always go to the same destination URLs.

MilTax vanity URL: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/miltax>

MilTax landing page absolute URL: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/taxes/miltax-military-tax-services/>

Editorial Style Update

Updated Terms A-Z – Visit the following pages for new and updated terms

[Terms P](#), [Terms R](#), [Terms S](#), [Terms T](#), [Terms V](#), [Terms W](#), [Terms X](#)

MC&FP Editorial Style Update

New Visual Style Guides – [Visit the Visual Style Guide Page](#) to view new guides for DOD Logo and Seal Usage, Plan My Deployment and Plan My Move.

Editorial Style Update

MC&FP Mission Statement – Quality of life policies and programs that help our service members, their families and survivors be well and mission ready.

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 direction in this portion of the guide, including instructions on capitalization, spelling, preferred usage and so on, along with many examples. Under [Use of Terms A-Z](#), you’ll find more specific instructions, with military-specific terms, acronyms, titles and so on listed 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 readers. Every piece — whether a news story, blog post or brochure — needs to tell readers:

- 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 MAIN idea.
- Focus on what your reader needs.
- Be descriptive, but use short words and short sentences.
- Spell out action explicitly (i.e., "Find Your School Liaison").
- Keep your lists parallel.
- Ensure content does not assume a specific season.

Know your readers. It's the only way they will understand you.

- **Who?** What are the readers' educational backgrounds, ages, genders, attitudes? What are the benefits and risks for readers?
- **When?** When will the readers read your message? How much time will they spend on it? When do readers have to act?
- **Where?** Where are readers in the chain of command? Where do readers 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 are readers in the arrival of your message? How will readers feel about it?
- **Why?** Why are you writing? Why should readers respond?

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Brevity Codes

Write for your readers. Avoid alphabet soup. Never use abbreviations for Military Community and Family Policy program names unless otherwise noted in their [program content guides](#). 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.
- Once a term is spelled out in its first mention, you can use its abbreviation, acronym or brevity code thereafter. (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.

- These commonly known abbreviations and acronyms are acceptable upon first reference without introduction (although there may be occasions when fully writing out the terms would be preferable):
 - **AAFES** 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.)
 - **DMDC** for Defense Manpower Data Center
 - **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
- 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 or different accordion features, 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 Defense Department on first reference, then use DOD or the department.
- 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.
- Understand that readers tend to skip over paragraphs that are too long. To make content more accessible:
 - Strive to create paragraphs that are no longer than three lines in a Word document. Paragraphs with four lines should be the absolute maximum and used sparingly.
 - Break longer paragraphs into shorter paragraphs or lists for easier scanning.
 - Avoid pages and articles that are excessively long. While the content might be valuable, many users may not read it in full because the article is not easy to scan.
 - Review content to see if it's covered in other locations to help decrease the length of articles and pages.
- For half-width content or content that occupies a smaller width area, such as verbiage placed next to an action card, paragraphs may extend to four to five lines. In a Word document, the content would take up two or three lines only. Published content with six or more lines, even shorter lines, appears too long to the user. The reader may skip the content.
- 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 or .gov websites. You can submit link requests for government review and for linking on websites through the [Link Vetting Application](#). Contact your operations manager or CMS team member for assistance with LVA requests.

- 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 App

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 capitalization, 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.

My MilLife Guide style:

- Follow the My MilLife Guide template when creating a new guide. Include the 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 55 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:”.

Capitalization

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

- For the capitalization of specific terms, see the [Use of Terms A-Z](#) 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” or “reserve component.”
- For headings and composition titles, capitalize all words except prepositions less than four letters long, "to" in infinitives, coordinating conjunctions, and articles (unless they are the first or last words in the header or title).
- 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 names of regulations 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.*

Lists

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

- Use bullets rather than numbers unless sequential order is important. If numbers are used, 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:
 - *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 one through nine; use numerals for 10 and above.
- Spell out numbers when they are the first word in a sentence.
- Always use numerals for ages and for percentages, except when they are the first word in a sentence.
- Use the percent 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 I).
- 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, 2023.
- Include the year in the date if it will help the reader in any way or if the event spans more than one calendar year.
- When it is clear that an upcoming event does not extend into the following calendar year, do not include the year. Examples:
 - *The Military Community and Family Policy applications will be undergoing maintenance from 9 a.m. EDT Saturday, Oct. 9, to 5 p.m. EDT Sunday, Oct. 10.*
 - *The event runs from March 15-July 15.*
 - *The event runs from March 15 to July 15.*
 - *The event runs from 9 a.m. EDT March 15 until 5 p.m. EDT March 16.*
 - *The event runs from 9 a.m. EDT Tuesday, March 15, until 5 p.m. EDT Wednesday, March 16.*
 - *The event runs from Feb. 10-20.*
 - *Learn about virtual careers at MSEP partner VAUSA at 1 p.m. EDT on Thursday, Oct. 7.*
- Once you introduce the year and the time period is clear, do not repeat the year within the same document: *The 2023 Domestic Violence Awareness Month campaign is designed to promote the idea that preventing domestic abuse is a shared community responsibility that starts with a message of support for victims. The campaign runs from Oct. 1-31.*

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 Military OneSource 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 are connected by 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 DOD MWR Libraries 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 and no spaces]
- Date range: *I will be here from Oct. 14, 2022, to Jan. 18, 2023.* [Use a comma after the year and before “to.”]
- Date range without year: *I will be here from Oct. 14 to Nov. 25.* [Do not use a comma.]
- Date range: August – November [en dash (not em dash) with one space on either side of the dash for month range]
- Date range: Aug. 14-Sept. 29 [hyphen and no space]
- 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.
- Use numerals with the percent sign (%) in tables, charts and graphs.
- Abbreviations, acronyms and brevity codes are acceptable in tables, charts and graphs only if space is an issue, however, not on first mention. Ideally, the term is spelled out prior to the table, chart or graph if the abbreviation, acronym or brevity code appears in the table, chart or graph. Spell out Defense Department 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.
- Depending on the product and the target audience, first or third person may be appropriate in limited circumstances, for certain guides, Military OneSource articles and educational, promotional, or training materials. Be sure to address this with the project supervisor prior to beginning content development.

Writing for Social Media

Writing for social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and X, formerly known as Twitter, requires a specialized style of writing. Short, direct sentences are essential. Audiences must easily and instantly understand messages. The social media environment is noisy. 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 posts with a 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.* However, "please" is acceptable in blogs, as appropriate. Outreach Operations must approve all other exceptions.
- Due to its algorithms, use either *no cost* or a variation of "take advantage of your benefit" on Facebook. Do not use free.

Below 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 guidelines, preferred language and terms, and relevant glossaries for content developers and editors. Select the program name below to access its content guide.

- [Casualty, Mortuary Affairs and Military Funeral Honors](#)
- [Chaplains](#)
- [Child and Youth Advocacy](#)
- [Child and Youth](#)
- [Crisis and Prevention](#)
- [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#)
- [Defense-State Liaison Office](#)
- [Deployment Assistance](#)
- [Family Advocacy](#)
- [K-12 Education](#)
- [Legal Assistance](#)
- [MilLife Learning](#)
- [Military Family Readiness Program](#)
- [MilTax Tax Service](#)

- [Morale, Welfare and Recreation, and Resale Policy](#)
- [Non-medical Counseling](#)
- [Office of Special Needs](#)
- [Personal Financial Management](#)
- [Personal Property Office - USTRANSCOM](#)
- [Relocation Assistance](#)
- [Sexual Assault](#)
- [Specialty Consultations](#)
- [Spouse Education and Career Opportunities](#)
- [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 MC&FP Style Guide provides.

MC&FP Mission Statement

Quality of life policies and programs that help our service members, 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 MillLife

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. Of note, **the DOD logo and the DOD seal are not interchangeable**. Follow these usage guidelines:

- The DOD logo may be used, in keeping with brand standards, in all DOD communications across all media platforms.
- The DOD seal has very restricted usage. The DOD seal's use is restricted to official DOD top leader correspondence, legal documents, reports, memoranda, ceremonial booklets, certificates and awards.
- The DOD and military seals may not be used on flyers or other promotional materials. These seals may be used only by the military departments for official purposes.

To prevent the perception of a Defense Department endorsement, the logos and seals are not available for use outside the department. Where there is a partnership agreement, use of the logo 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:



MILITARY
ONE**SOURCE**

DOD Logo and Seal Usage Guide

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using the DOD logo and how the DOD seal is no longer used in combination with the Military OneSource logo or promotional products. Visit [Defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov) for the complete [Defense Department Brand Guide](#).



Educational and Developmental Intervention Services

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



Exceptional Family Member Program

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



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.

MILITARY STATE POLICY SOURCE

Military State Policy Source

This guide contains important brand usage information, guidelines and policies for using, referencing or linking to Military State Policy Source.



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 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 & CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

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

MC&FP Program Logos

Logos for MC&FP programs will be posted 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 system](#).



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

Visual Style Guide: [PDE](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

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

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

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

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

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](#)

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/EFMP/EFMP-and-Me-Logos.zip) <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/EFMP/EFMP-and-Me-Logos.zip>



MILITARY
IN LASTING TRIBUTE

Military In Lasting Tribute

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#)

<https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/MilitaryInLastingTribute-Logos.zip>



Educational and Developmental Intervention Services

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#) https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/EDIS-logos.zip



Military Community and Family Policy

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](#)

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Style%20Guide/Military%20Community%20and%20Family%20Policy.zip>

PLAN MY DEPLOYMENT

Plan My Deployment

Visual Style Guide: [PDF](#)

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

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 Counseling

Branding Logo Style Guide: [PDF](#)

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://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MSEP_DOD_logos.zip) https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MSEP_DOD_logos.zip



MyCAA

Visual Style Guide: [PDE](#)

Downloadable Versions:

PNG

JPG/JPEG:

GIF:

All Versions: [Zipped Archive](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/Portal/Program_logos/MyCAA_logos.zip)
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 file-naming convention when saving a file:

MODES-Program-Product-Title-Date-Initials-Status

1. Contract name abbreviation (e.g., MODES)
2. Program name (e.g., TRANSCOM, FAP, SECO)
3. Product type (e.g., FactSheet, Flyer, PPT, TalkingPoints)
4. Title (e.g., TaxTips, TransitionAssistance)
5. Date (e.g., 5July2023)
6. Initials of staff member submitting document (e.g., jad, LS, LL)
7. Status (e.g., ForPMReview, ForOOReview, For508Approval, FINAL)

Examples:

Add your initials for projects in progress:

- MODES-MyCAA-Article-MilitarySpouseSupport-5Oct2022-SKL-ForEdit
- MODES-FAP-Poster-KeepFamilySafe-2Feb2023-WF-ForDesign

Remove your initials from the final version or for files going to the government for review:

- MODES-CYF-FactSheet-SafeSleep-20Aug2023-ForPMReview
- MODES-MWR-Article-DODMWRLibrariesSummerReadingProgram-6July2023-ForOOReview

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)
- 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 a dash instead of a 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-15Aug2023.pdf*. Do not use underscores in file names.

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 or .mil, you can use it in your writing.
- If a URL does not end in one of the 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 can check to see if the link has been previously approved. If not, 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 the .gov or .mil approved endings, consider providing the necessary information without directly linking to the site.

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 or .mil addresses.
- Embed a hyperlink within concise, descriptive text rather than writing out the complete URL in the text. This enables a screen-reader user to easily understand where the link leads without waiting for the reader to pronounce every character of a URL.
 - **Accessible:** The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) is a web resource and 24-hour help line for survivors of domestic violence.
 - **Not accessible:** The <https://www.thehotline.org/>website is a web resources and 24-hour help line for survivors of domestic violence.
- When creating a hyperlink, do not link single words. A user may overlook the link. Hyperlink several words or an entire phrase when possible. The linked text should be concise yet descriptive. Avoid nondescript link text such as "click here." Avoid linking to excessively long text or sentences. Longer links are more likely to break across lines and cause difficulty for the reader.
 - **Accessible (concise and descriptive):** Check out the [Preparing for Your Move fact sheet](#) for more information.
 - **Not accessible (too long):** [You can find more information by accessing the Preparing for Your Move fact sheet on Military OneSource.](#)

- o **Not accessible (nondescript):** [Click here](#) for more information about moving.
- Writers contributing content for MC&FP [websites and applications](#) will most often use hyperlinks when referencing Defense Department 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.
 - o 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 Defense Department's Office of General Counsel is necessary.
- When hyperlinking email addresses, write out the full email address and hyperlink the entire address *if the email address does not contain personally identifiable information*.
 - o **Accessible:** 97AMW.PA@us.af.mil
 - o **Not accessible (does not indicate that the text contains an email address):** [Air Mobility Wing](#)

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 "Link" from the menu that appears (or use the keystrokes Ctrl and K to pull up the "Insert Hyperlink" 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

While all webpages on Military OneSource have an absolute URL, some pages also have shortcut URLs, also known as vanity URLs. These URLs are shorter versions that redirect to the full, absolute URL.

The purpose of the shortcut URL is to make it quick and easy for users to type the URL into their browser or for a call center representative to read a URL to the user over the phone. This is in contrast to a full-length absolute URL that contains folders and paths, representing the location in which the page lives on the website.

Users who type in a shortcut URL may notice their browser will be redirected to the absolute URL 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 the destination URL of <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-pcs/plan-to-move/pcs-and-military-moves/>.

If a shortcut URL will change its destination regularly, for example to redirect to the newest eNewsletter online version, it should be a temporary 302 redirect URL. 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 of the different redirects.

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:

Typically, 301 redirects are used for expired pages, after URLs have moved, and when consolidating duplicate content. The 301 redirects also make sense to use for a shortcut URL that will always go to the same destination URL.

- MilTax vanity URL: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/miltax>
- MilTax landing page absolute URL:
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/taxes/miltax-military-tax-services/>

About the Style Guide

Military Community and Family Policy is the Defense Department 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, social media, conference materials and print products (such as guides or brochures). 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 this style guide provides supersedes the AP Stylebook when there are differences between the two.

This guide is for the development of communications materials and content only and does not apply to writing insurances or official [Defense Department 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 a 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 (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 on 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

- **ID or military ID** instead of "identification card" or "military identification card," respectively
- **JAG** for judge advocate general
- **LES** for Leave and Earnings Statement
- **MCX** for Marine Corps Exchange
- **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 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 – 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.* Do not hyphenate when the modifier is not already hyphenated in a cited title: *In the "2021 Active Duty Spouse Survey," PCS-related stress was reported as a significant factor.*

advisor– Not adviser.

Air Wing – 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 the aircraft name (Tomcat, Hornet, etc.). For news service story submissions, use regular text (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 the full name of the squadron on first reference. In subsequent references, abbreviate 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 a noun: *He called all hands to the meeting.* Hyphenate as an 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), as 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

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

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 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 their full name and rank.

capital, capitol – Lowercase *capital* when referring to the city or location that is the seat of government, including the national capital or state capital, or when describing money, equipment or property that a business or corporation uses: *They went to the capitol to put up capital for the deal.* Lowercase *capitol* when referencing state capitols in general (i.e., the buildings where legislative activity takes place). Uppercase *Capitol* when referencing the building in Washington and the surrounding area: *the Capitol, the U.S. Capitol* and *Capitol Hill*, or a specific state's capitol building, such as the *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.*

Centcom – Lowercase for all but the first letter 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, but 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.

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.

civilian titles – Use full name and title or job description on first reference. Capitalize the title or job description, but 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*.

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 only to the president. Use it only in context and not as a routine synonym for president. Applying the term to the president when he is acting in a nonmilitary capacity uses the term out of context. An example of using the term out of context: *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 Defense Department directives, instructions and service publications (for example, *JCS Pub 1, "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States"*) as well as titles of articles, webinars, podcasts, books, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, albums and songs, radio and television programs, 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.

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 on 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.

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 the first reference when a woman specifically requests it: Mrs. Smith or Ms. Smith. Also see *military titles*.

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

cutlines/photo captions – 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. Youshauna Gunn.

D

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

Department of Defense/Defense Department – "U.S. Department of Defense" and "Department of Defense" to refer to the proper name and legal entity of this cabinet-level government department. Reserve these for use in formal and official correspondence, documents, reports and testimony. **In all other cases, use "Defense Department" on first reference.**

The correct acronym for "Defense Department" is "DOD," with an uppercase "O" in the center; use on second reference after "Defense Department," or when the stand-alone acronym suffices depending upon use. Do NOT use "DoD" except when otherwise directed.

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."* Also see composition titles.

Department of Defense seal and logo use – The Department of Defense seal and DOD logo are not interchangeable. Do NOT use the DOD seal, as it has restricted usage and is limited to official DOD leader

correspondence, legal documents, reports, memoranda, ceremonial booklets, certificates and awards. There is no substitute for the DOD seal, and there is no optional graphic that represents the DOD.

Do NOT use service seals for products, as those seals have restricted usage limited to the individual services.

The DOD logo consists of the Pentagon icon and is typeset in Crimson Text Regular. It should be used for the majority of MC&FP and Military OneSource print and digital content. When applying the DOD logo to existing or new Military OneSource signatures (i.e., brand, properties and program marks), always position the DOD logo to the left.

For more information, consult the [DOD logo and DOD seal usage guidelines](#).

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

dial – Use "dial" when asking the user to dial a number that requires pressing additional numbers for specific options after making the call: *Dial 800-xxx-xxxx, then select 1 for Independent Living support services.*

Use "call" when asking the user to call a direct number that takes the user to the intended support service and does not require selecting any additional options once the call is made: *Call 800-xxx-xxxx.*

diversity – All the different characteristics and attributes of individuals from varying demographics that are consistent with the core values of the Defense Department, 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.

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.

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

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.

DOD MWR Libraries – Formerly offered through Military OneSource as the MWR Digital Library, the updated DOD MWR Libraries resides at DODMWRLibraries.org. Because this is a service-wide integrated library, treat the title as a collective noun that takes a singular verb. Use DOD MWR Libraries on first reference, as this is the formal title. When referring to eResources, the library, libraries or digital library is acceptable on second and subsequent references.

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

E

e – No hyphen for *eNewsletter*, *ePublication* and *eBlast*, according to Military OneSource style. When using hyphenated terms at the beginning of a sentence, cap the "e." *E-readers are now in use in schools.*

For nonhyphenated 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*.

emergency room – In the U.S.: *emergency room*; overseas: *emergency care facility*.

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

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 Defense Department 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. Abbreviation acceptable in all references.

Exceptional Family Member Program Resources, Options and Consultations – EFMP ROC is a specialized area of Military OneSource where families with special needs can 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!*).

F

first lady – Capitalize as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in other uses. With regard to First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, use her academic title, Dr., as opposed to Ms. or Mrs.

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

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

Gold Star and Surviving Family Member Representative – Always capitalize this when initially speaking about the representative. Use lowercase *representative* on second reference.

Gold Star Lapel Button and the Next of Kin of Deceased Lapel Button – Capitalize these button titles in all references. Note that the preferred term is button, not pin.

Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, Gold Star Spouses Day – This is the correct way to write these observed recognition days.

gold star survivors – Lowercase *gold star* when describing these surviving family members. For example, do not capitalize *gold star parents*.

guardian – An individual who serves in the U.S. Space Force is a guardian. The plural form is guardians. Lowercase in all uses.

H

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.

I

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.

installation names – In running text, fully write out the name of an installation 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.

J

K

L

life cycle – Two words, not *lifecycle*.

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. Also, [see the lists section](#).

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.*

An example of when 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 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.

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 the part of the day that is ending, not the one just beginning.

Mil – Abbreviation for "military" that is 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 counseling 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 in direct quotes.

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

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:

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

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.

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 it 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

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.

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.

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

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

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

SPACE FORCE

Space Force members are referred to as guardians. Commissioned officer ranks and abbreviations follow the same system as the Army. The Space Force does not have warrant officer ratings.

Enlisted Personnel

- chief master sergeant of the Space Force – Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force
- command chief master sergeant of the Space Force – Command Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force
- chief master sergeant – Chief Master Sgt.
- senior master sergeant – Senior Master Sgt.
- master sergeant – Master Sgt.
- technical sergeant – Tech. Sgt.

- sergeant – Sgt.
- specialist 4 – Specialist (preferred term); Specialist 4 (also acceptable)
- specialist 3 – Specialist (preferred term); Specialist 3 (also acceptable)
- specialist 2 – Specialist (preferred term); Specialist 2 (also acceptable)
- specialist 1 – Specialist (preferred term); Specialist 1 (also acceptable)

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 per week.*

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

N

National Guardsman – When referring to an individual in a National Guard unit, use *National Guardsman*. Lowercase *guardsman* when it stands alone.

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.

no cost – Use this term only 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*.

nonappropriated

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 such as 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*.

O

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

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 an example of using the lowercase term: *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.

order of precedence for the military services – Use this order:

- 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
- Defense Department service provider
- Defense Department Expeditionary Civilian workforce

When referring to the National Guard and the reserves together, the National Guard comes first.

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 anywhere other than the 50 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."

P

page numbers – Follow AP guidelines, but note there is one exception to those: *It's a Page One story*.

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 *PCSe* 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, spell it out on first reference and use the acronym sparingly on subsequent references.

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.

podcasts – Capitalize podcast when it is part of the title of a podcast, such as *Military OneSource Podcast* or the *Office of Special Needs EFMP Podcast series*. Lowercase podcast when used in a general context.

post-traumatic stress disorder – Always lowercase and hyphenate except if written differently as part of a proper name. For example: *National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*.

president – Use the first and family name on first reference; use only the last name in subsequent references.

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.

privacy – Do not identify juveniles under the age of 18 who are accused of crime, even if the news media has 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.

Q

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

R

reserve – Lowercase.

- Individual Ready Reserve – Uppercase.
- ready reserve – Lowercase.
- 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). Lowercase. Example: *The reserve components face a cut of more than \$3.5 billion in the next federal budget.*
- reservist – Lowercase.
- selected reserve – Lowercase.
- standby reserve – Lowercase.

S

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

same-sex couple – Refer to the [MC&FP Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Guide](#). Use couple, partner or spouse as the preferred wording to keep content inclusive. Use spouse when writing about programs available only to married spouses of service members. When referring to policy, use the official terminology, *couple*, NOT *same-sex couple*.

When referring specifically to Defense Department policy, use the official term *domestic partner*.

same-sex domestic partner – Refer to the [MC&FP Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Guide](#). Use *domestic partner* or *spouse* as the preferred wording to keep content inclusive. Use spouse when writing about programs available only to married spouses of service members. When referring to the policy, use the official terminology, *domestic partner*, NOT *same-sex domestic partner*.

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. Lowercase in other uses.

secretary of defense – Capitalize as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in other uses. With regard to the secretary of defense under President Joe Biden, always use Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III. Do not use Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III.

series – Lowercase. This is sometimes used to describe podcast series that include the Military OneSource Podcast and the Office of Special Needs EFMP Podcast. Both podcasts have a series of episodes about a variety of military-life topics. Example: *Military OneSource Podcast series*.

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 spokesperson* – 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
- Army Reserve
- Navy Reserve
- Marine Corps Reserve
- Air National Guard
- Air Force Reserve
- Coast Guard Reserve
- Defense Department service provider
- Defense Department Expeditionary Civilian workforce
- When referring to the National Guard and the reserves together, the National Guard comes first.
- 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*.

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: 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*.

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

T

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

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

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 2023, Daylight Saving Time started Sunday, March 12, and ended Sunday, Nov. 5. On Sunday, March 12, at 2 a.m., clocks turned forward one hour to 3 a.m., as daylight saving time (EDT, CDT, MDT, PDT). On Sunday, Nov. 5, at 2 a.m., clocks were turned back one hour to 1 a.m., as local standard time (EST, CST, MST, PST). In 2024, Daylight Saving Time will begin Sunday, March 10, and end Sunday, Nov. 3. In 2025, Daylight Saving Time will begin Sunday, March 9, and end Sunday, Nov. 2.

TRICARE – TRICARE is the Defense Department's premier health care program, serving 9.6 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*.

24/7 – Written as shown.

Twitter; X – On first reference, refer to the platform as *X*, *formerly known as Twitter*. Use *X* after that. The term *tweet* remains acceptable as a noun and a verb. However, continue to use the blue bird logo instead of using the *X* logo.

U

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

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

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, such as fact sheets, information cards, trifolds and other PDFs, use the complete URL including <https://> or <http://>. The only exception to this rule is the URL for the Military OneSource website, which can be written in any of the following ways for printed or downloaded documents:

- Uppercase and lowercase letters — www.MilitaryOneSource.mil
- All lowercase letters — www.militaryonesource.mil
- Without www — MilitaryOneSource.mil or militaryonesource.mil

For printed or downloaded documents, always hyperlink the URL so it can be used for both web and print purposes.

Do not spell out URLs in emails where the URLs will be hyperlinked. Hyperlink a word or phrase in the paragraph similar to content in Military OneSource articles, as the URL will display after the hyperlinked text once the email has been sent. For example: "Use **Plan My Move** to organize your next move" will

appear as "Use Plan My Move <https://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/> to organize your next move" once the email has been sent.

U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, U.S. Coast Guard – Also Army, Marines, Navy, 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 the DOD. For public-facing products and on MC&FP digital properties, refer to the Defense Personal Property Management Office or other appropriate specific resource. Do not use USTC in place of USTRANSCOM in client- and public-facing content.

V

veterans affairs – Capitalize when referring to the *Department of Veterans Affairs* and use lowercase *veterans affairs* as a topic. VA is the accepted abbreviation for this department. Do not use VA as an abbreviation for veterans affairs in a general sense. Do not use an apostrophe in veterans affairs; however, singular vs. plural and apostrophe vs. no apostrophe is at the writer's discretion for other terms or phrases related to veterans.

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 Kamala Harris*, *Vice Presidents Mike Pence and Dan Quayle*. Use lowercase in all other references: *The vice president said today that he is running for president*. Use the first and last name on the first reference; in subsequent references, use only the last name.

W

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. Use periods in *D.C.* Use *DC* only in a postal address.

Washington (state) – Specify *Washington state* or *state of Washington* (or some variation) on first reference if there is a chance readers could confuse the state with Washington, D.C.

weapons – Contrary to the AP Stylebook, 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.

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

wife, husband – Refer to the [MC&FP Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Guide](#). Use *partner* or *spouse* as the preferred wording to keep content inclusive. Use *spouse* when writing about programs available only to married spouses of service members. When referring to policy, use the official terminology, *spouse* or *marriage*, NOT *same-sex spouse* or *same-sex marriage*.

with – Capitalize in a heading or title.

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

X; Twitter – On first reference, refer to the platform as *X, formerly known as Twitter*. Use X after that. The term *tweet* remains acceptable as a noun and a verb. However, continue to use the blue bird logo instead of using the X logo.

Y

yule, yuletide

Z