

Unit Introduction

You have heard us discuss the importance of "unity of effort" and "speaking with one voice" in relation to public affairs initiatives. The success of any organizational communication effort depends upon these concepts.

If your public affairs office is communicating one set of messages, and your leadership or public affairs office at higher headquarters is saying something completely different, this will hurt the credibility of your organization. This leads to the media playing the two offices off of each other for their news stories. The conflict created by the contradicted accounts will help them sell stories. Your organization will appear confused, creating distrust from the American public on important issues.

Unit Introduction

The best way to eliminate communication problems between commands is to develop written materials that can be used to unify your efforts. Your commands must consistently speak with one voice for as long as the issue remains in the public's consciousness.

In this unit of instruction we will show you how to write public affairs guidance (PAG) to coordinate communication efforts. This is vital to the success of any communication efforts.

Objectives

Given a public affairs scenario, write public affairs guidance that includes all appropriate paragraphs IAW DOD Supplemental PAG Guidance. Upon completion of this unit of instruction, the student will be able to:

- Define public affairs guidance
- Define active public affairs policy
- Define passive public affairs policy
- Define joint information bureau
- Define media pool
- Define military journalist
- Define news media representative
- Define public affairs assessment
- Define public affairs ground rules
- Define security review
- Explain research and staff coordination procedures necessary to generate public affairs guidance
- Write proposed public affairs guidance for a given exercise or operation

Unit Overview

In this unit, we will cover:

- Purpose of public affairs guidance
- Format -- Supplemental Guidance
- Proposed public affairs guidance (PPAG) vs. PAG
- Coordination
- PAG for spokespersons
- Explain research and staff-coordination procedures necessary to generate public affairs guidance
- Write proposed public affairs guidance

Purpose

When working in a joint, combined and unilateral public affairs operation, military public affairs practitioners must be involved in the planning process to produce a communication assessments. Remember, public affairs supports operational efforts and needs to be included in operational planning.

In addition, you must assign public affairs and/or communications objectives, develop public affairs employment concepts, establish command relationships, and provide necessary resources. All of this equates to having a communication plan to coordinate your efforts.

There are no requirements set for who does PAG or how it is formatted or distributed. In this unit, we will provide you with an easy-to-use format. There are two types of written PAG: proposed and approved.

Purpose

Department of Defense approved public affairs guidance (PAG) must be developed and disseminated throughout your command to ensure unity of effort. The PAG will provide commanders and PAOs a common reference for discussion with the news media and others. It is an internal working document that must not be distributed publicly.

Approved guidance is issued by the highest local authority and distributed to subordinate units for an event or issue expected to have broad impact and on which the PAO anticipates queries.

PAG requires updates often. As information changes, so do messages - and the PAG development cycle continues. Continual updates will ensure you are prepared to handle the issue if or when it resurfaces within your command, whether it is weeks, months or years later.

Purpose

PAG is a package of information to support the public discussion of defense issues and operations. Included could be an approved public affairs policy, news statements, answers to anticipated media questions, fact sheets and community relations guidance. It also addresses the method(s), timing, location and other details governing the release of information to the public.

The elements of PAG can vary in style and content, as indicated above. You may be assigned to a command that uses a very informal form of PAG, which is OK. But there is a specific format that must be followed when developing PAG for DOD approval, also known as Proposed PAG (PPAG).

Format

[Department of Defense Instruction \(DoDI\) 5405.3](#), requires a specific format and content processing for PPAG. It is formatted into nine paragraph sections with detailed instructions in each paragraph to guide your spokespersons. DoD Instruction 5405.3 has a description of each paragraph's elements, so we encourage you to read them. [Here](#) you will find a template to draft any PAG you may be asked to write.

[Here](#) is a sample PAG that you can compare the instruction to the practical application of information.

PPAG vs. PAG

PPAG is used to secure DOD concurrence on proposed PAG for significant military exercises. It has rigid formatting, content and processing requirements.

Requirements laid out by DOD Instruction 5405.3, Development of Proposed Public Affairs Guidance, have narrow application because the requirements apply only to significant military exercises and only to the geographical area of responsibility of the unified combatant commanders in which the exercise will take place.

However, the instruction is useful because it gives us a good starting point to make some observations and formulate an approach to developing PAG. The instruction does establish responsibilities, procedures and a format--all fundamental to any PAG at any level.

Familiar and consistent use of the PPAG format develops a professional consistency when writing PAG.

PPAG vs. PAG

Proposed PAG may or may not be a classified document. However, if it involves a number of services or allies, it likely will be classified because it concerns future operations, diplomatic relations or other OPSEC matters.

The idea is for the proposed guidance to say what should be unclassified or otherwise releasable about an event and any [Security, Accuracy, Propriety, Policy](#) (SAPP) considerations associated with it.

Coordination

Another reason for following the PAG format for writing both PPAG and (informal) PAG is for coordination purposes. You want to make sure you coordinate with higher units to establish a history of the situation/incident and to obtain guidance as applicable. Remember that unity of effort is the intended outcome of PAG.

Coordination

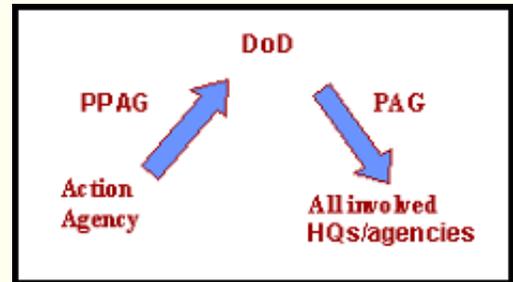
Step 1. The *action agency* staffs, develops and coordinates the PPAG.

Step 2. DOD receives the PPAG, and staffs at its level. DOD can do three things with the PPAG:

- Disapprove
- Amend (with major changes)
- Approve (with minor amendments)

Step 3. Upon final approval, the guidance is sent out as PAG to the exercise participants and anyone else involved.

You also want to ensure that subordinate units are informed and have supporting information that pertains to the issue. Finally, you want to make sure that your own staff is aware of any SAPP concerns and staff judge advocate issues.



PAG for Spokesmen

Informing your staff is important when you are preparing a spokesperson from your command to speak to the public/media. You will get further information about preparing a spokesperson in a later unit. The important thing to note at this time is that PAG is vital to unity of effort within your command. Do not assume the commander is going to be the only 'customer' for your PAG. Who else could use your PAG?

- Staff members
- Subordinate commands
- PAO office staff
- Higher HQ - as notification
- Troops
- Families

Unit Summary

"Unity of effort" and "speaking with one voice" up, down and inside your chain of command is the primary purpose of PAG. Both PAG and PPAG are vital tools for the effective management of issues within your service. Proper use will ensure the best results from communication efforts.