

**BY ORDER OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

**AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 38-501**

**12 MAY 2010**

**Manpower and Personnel**

**AIR FORCE SURVEY PROGRAM**



**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

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OPR: AFMA/MAPP

Supersedes: AFI 36-2601, 1 February  
1996

Certified by: HQ USAF/A1M  
(Mr. William H. Booth, SES)

Pages: 14

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This instruction implements AFPD 38-2, *Manpower, Mar 2, 1995*, and DoDI 1100.13, *Surveys of Department of Defense Personnel, Nov 21, 1996*. This instruction applies to individuals at all levels who prepare, manage, review, certify, approve, and/or disseminate, official attitude and opinion surveys to members of the Air Force, which includes the Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. It provides guidance on approving and conducting surveys within the Air Force. The program's objective is to assess the attitudes, opinions, and intentions of Air Force military and civilian members, their families, and retired members, using questionnaires, polls, and interviews. The program is structured to ensure individual responses are confidential and no adverse actions will result from an individual's response to an official Air Force survey. Do not issue supplements without advance approval of the Air Force Manpower Agency, Performance Management Division, AFMA/MAP, 550 E Street East, Randolph AFB TX 78150, and in accordance with AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR), using the AF IMT 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF IMT 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af61a/afirms/afirms/>.

## Chapter 1

### SCOPE OF PROGRAM

**1.1. Scope of the Program.** The Air Force Manpower Agency (AFMA) controls and provides all attitude and opinion surveys, polls, questionnaires, and telephone interviews to Air Force members.

1.1.1. Controls, conducts, and approves survey research and program evaluation at the Air Force level.

1.1.2. Provides oversight by ensuring surveys meet mission requirements and fulfill the information needs of functional authorities.

1.1.3. Issues Survey Control Number (SCN) for approved survey requests submitted by Air Force organizations, contracted individuals, or organizations.

## Chapter 2

### RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1. Responsibilities.** All personnel shall maintain strict confidentiality concerning the identity of individual survey respondents. Do not communicate, either verbally or in writing, information that could reasonably allow identification of individual survey respondents to any individual or agency, either within or outside the Air Force. Do not take any adverse or administrative action against an individual as a result of his or her responses to an official Air Force survey.

**2.2. Survey Participants.** Provide responses to surveys accurately and honestly to provide the best possible data for analysis. Classified information, however, may not be included in any response to a survey. Survey participation is voluntary and personnel should be encouraged, but not directed, to complete surveys.

**2.3. HQ USAF/A1M, Director Manpower, Organization and Resources.** Develop policies for the Air Force Attitude and Opinion Survey Program within the scope of this instruction.

**2.4. HQ USAF/A1PF, Director Force Management Division.** Approve and conduct surveys to support selection, classification and Force Management analysis.

**2.5. MAJCOMFOADRU/A1M.** Provide survey support to AF Survey Office such as marketing, collection of data and distribution of final results.

**2.6. AFMA/MAPP, AF Survey Office.**

2.6.1. Develop and implement procedures for survey operations, including Department of Defense (DoD) surveys conducted within the Air Force under DoDI 1100.13, *Surveys of DoD Personnel*.

2.6.2. Plan, approve, evaluate, coordinate, and provide oversight of attitude and opinion surveys.

2.6.3. Develop and administer attitude and opinion surveys.

2.6.4. Analyze and report survey findings in appropriate formats as requested by HQ USAF functional authorities.

2.6.5. Advise Air Force organizations on survey administration, processes, and analysis.

2.6.6. Represent the Air Force on the Inter-Service Survey Coordinating Committee IAW DoDI 1100.13, *Surveys of DoD Personnel*.

2.6.7. Inform survey requesters that all survey data collected may be releasable to the public under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and to consider OPSEC implications (paragraph 5.2.6).

2.6.8. Provide advisory oversight on issues, such as over-surveying certain populations and creating possible survey fatigue.

2.6.9. Review requests for surveys and, where appropriate, issue a SCN.

2.6.9.1. Refer surveys in psychological assessment category to HQ USAF/A1PF for further action.

2.6.9.2. Refers activities that could constitute research with human subjects to an AF Research Reviewer or an AF Institutional Review Board (IRB), as appropriate, for further action prior to initiation. See paragraph 4.3.1.

## **2.7. Installation and Unit Commander.**

2.7.1. Approve administration of local surveys at his/her base, providing the commander has the authority to change the survey topics addressed. If the survey includes questions about policy or procedures mandated by HQ USAF and above, such as satisfaction with pay, benefits, or retention issues, etc., then forward the survey to the AF Survey Office for review and approval. If there are questions concerning the appropriateness of a survey, commanders should consult with the installation public affairs officer and/or the AF Survey Office.

2.7.2. Coordinate surveys that include Air Force civilians with the Civilian Personnel Office to determine union impact.

2.7.3. Disapprove requests from private individuals or organizations without federal funding or other support to conduct a poll, survey, or interview within his/her command, unless specific authorization is granted from the AF Survey Office. Exceptions are listed under paragraph 3.11.

**2.8. Mission Support Squadron/Force Support Squadron Commander (FSS/CC).** Utilize the Manpower and Organization Section of the Manpower & Personnel Flight for survey support.

## Chapter 3

### SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

**3.1. Guidelines.** The following guidelines are provided to assist survey requestors in developing survey projects.

**3.2. Pre-Development.**

3.2.1. Survey requestors should discuss survey plans with the AF Survey Office before developing a survey to avoid expenditure of monies and duplication of survey projects and to coordinate timelines/ schedules between survey efforts.

3.2.2. All survey collection tools administered via the commercial internet (.net, .com, etc) must be in accordance with AFI 33-129, Web Management and Internet Use, Section 3.7.4.1. To maintain the security, integrity, and accountability of Air Force information on the Web, most public web sites are managed through the Air Force Public Information Management System and private Air Force Web sites through the Air Force portal. Any Air Force Web site hosted on a commercial server (outside the .mil community) requires SAF/XC approval.

**3.3. Survey Utility.** To ensure effective survey research, surveys should:

3.3.1. Contribute significantly to the study of relevant Air Force policy or program issues.

3.3.2. Not merely gather information to meet requirements for award of an academic degree or serve as a springboard for future research.

3.3.3. Result in expected benefits to the Air Force clearly outweighing the potential costs (e.g., negative publicity, damage to morale or readiness, time burden on respondents).

3.3.4. Contain questions and issues of an appropriate length to avoid survey fatigue. In addition, certain populations (e.g., deployed members) tend to be surveyed more; therefore, surveys of those populations may be disapproved for that reason.

**3.4. Respondent Anonymity and Confidentiality.** Use administrative procedures that protect participant's responses and identity IAW AFI 33-332, *Privacy Act Program*.

**3.5. Target Population.** Identify demographics of the targeted population and calculate the appropriate sample size from which to capture survey responses (i.e., military, civilian, skill sets, rank, grade, etc.)

3.5.1. Determine if survey-sampling techniques can be used to provide valid and reliable information at greatly reduced costs and time burdens on Air Force personnel. Surveys that include all members of a target population are discouraged.

3.5.1.1. Select an appropriate sample size to ensure survey results represent the attitudes and opinions of the target population.

3.5.1.2. Sample the minimum number of respondents necessary to reasonably achieve a satisfactory confidence interval.

3.5.2. Exclude participation of contract employees, which is not authorized for government-sponsored surveys.

3.5.3. Notify the Civilian Personnel Office at each participating Civilian Personnel Element, Manpower & Personnel Flight, for labor union notification prior to releasing an approved survey to civilian employees. For surveys of civilians at more than one base, HQ AFPC/DPIECC, Air Force Program Management and Evaluation, must be notified.

### **3.6. Survey Questions.**

3.6.1. Should not be of a sensitive nature, objectionable, or in bad taste.

3.6.2. Should not require a lot of time and effort to respond.

3.6.3. Should be grammatically correct and easily understood by the respondents.

3.6.4. Do not include survey questions not intended for public release. Treat each survey question as though results will be released to the public. Consider the potential impact of public release on the following groups: Active duty personnel and their families; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members; Civilian employees; Service academy members; Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and auxiliary; Retired military personnel and their families; Community organizations (including civic, trade, industrial, veterans, youth, ethnic, women, religious, environmental, and educational groups); The Congress; Local, state, and Federal Government officials; Professional organizations (e.g., partnerships, associations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, organized groups of individuals); and Civic leaders.

### **3.7. Questionnaire Package, Format, and Structure.**

3.7.1. Cover letter or instructions should contain a statement that the survey is anonymous and that individual responses will be kept confidential, but summarized responses may be released to the public.

3.7.2. If copyrighted scales, subscales, or questions are used, the requester must have permission from the author(s) (if required) and cite the author(s) in any subsequent report or summary. Questions concerning copyright issues can be directed to AFLOA/JACQ, Rosslyn, Virginia.

3.7.3. Each topic area should be covered adequately.

3.7.4. Questions should be in a logical sequence.

3.7.5. Questionnaire should present a neat, professional appearance.

3.7.6. Obtain approval and endorsement on all survey requests from HQ USAF functional authority (minimum three-letter office). This ensures effective research is conducted across the Air Force while reducing duplication of similar efforts. Survey requests will not be approved without this endorsement.

### **3.8. Response Scales**

3.8.1. When using response scales, they must be balanced (e.g., when positive and negative responses are called for, there should be equal numbers of responses on both sides of the neutral point, whether the neutral point is explicit or implied).

3.8.2. Response scales should be complete, covering the full range of possible answers. An "I don't know," "None of the above," "N/A," or "Neither/Nor" response may be necessary.

3.8.3. Responses should be mutually exclusive and when covering a continuous variable such as time, weight, etc., they should be all-inclusive as well.

**3.9. Prohibited Survey Topics.** Surveys that might prove harmful to mission accomplishment if the results are disclosed to the public, or surveys covering areas of possible intelligence value are prohibited.

**3.10. Inappropriate Survey Topics.** Surveys on the following topics are normally prohibited and will only be approved on a case-by-case basis.

3.10.1. Political views.

3.10.2. Knowledge or skill assessments.

3.10.3. Opinions about specific individuals or their job performance.

**3.11. Survey Projects Exempt or Not Supported.**

3.11.1. Occupational surveys which are assigned an Air Force Personnel Test number and controlled according to AFI 36-2623, *Occupational Analysis*.

3.11.2. Internal reporting requirements, including statistical, summary, or status information which must be licensed and approved with a Reports Control Symbol (RCS) number in accordance with AFI 33-324, *Management and Control of Information Reports Requirements*.

3.11.3. Surveys of course graduates, administered on-site, if the sole purpose is to ask about the course. Surveys administered after completion of course, and mailed to graduates or their supervisors, are subject to requirements outlined in Chapter 4.

3.11.4. Post-audit surveys conducted by the Air Force Audit Agency, when the purpose is to obtain feedback on the official audit.

3.11.5. Surveys requiring Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. Surveys directed to the general public (non-Federal Government employees) require OMB approval. OMB guidance is located at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/omb/inforeg/statpolicy/standards\\_stat\\_surveys.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/omb/inforeg/statpolicy/standards_stat_surveys.pdf) and [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/pmc\\_survey\\_guidance\\_2006.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/pmc_survey_guidance_2006.pdf).

3.11.6. Inspector General organizations completing surveys under the purview of United States Code Title 10, Sec 8020, *Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Inspector General* and its implementing AF instructions are exempt from the control measures of this AFI but may utilize the AF Survey Program when appropriate.

3.11.7. Single-base surveys initiated by the installation or unit commander only on issues under his or her control (see paragraph 2.5.).

3.11.8. All surveys submitted by non-Federal employees and that have no Federal funding or other support will be returned without action.

3.11.9. Surveys administered on non-dot mil web sites without SAF/XC approval in accordance with AFI 33-129, Section 3.7.4.1 will not be supported.

## Chapter 4

### SURVEY REQUESTS

#### 4.1. Survey Request Categories. Survey projects may be submitted in two categories.

4.1.1. Survey fully developed in all phases and requires an SCN.

4.1.2. Survey not developed requiring partial or full-phased survey support.

4.1.2.1. AF Survey Office will periodically announce a data call for survey projects requiring full-phased support. This ensures AF survey project efforts are not duplicated and minimizes survey overload on AF members.

#### 4.2. Procedures.

4.2.1. Submissions must follow the Survey Development Guidelines in Chapter 3 of this AFI and include the following:

4.2.1.1. Written endorsement must be submitted from HQ USAF functional authority (three-letter office). For surveys that cross functional areas, endorsement must be obtained from each three-letter functional authority.

4.2.1.2. Formal request for approval must:

4.2.1.2.1. State the purpose, justification, and benefits of conducting the proposed research.

4.2.1.2.2. Indicate how the results will be used (e.g., develop training, publication of results, policy implementation, or program evaluation).

4.2.1.2.3. Specify a point-of-contact, e-mail address, and telephone number.

4.2.1.3. Provide a copy of the proposed survey instrument, interview protocol, questionnaire, or other format, which contains at least one attitude/opinion question.

4.2.1.4. Provide written coordination from SAF/XC regarding survey collection tool on non-dot mil website in accordance with AFI 33-129, Section 3.7.4.1

4.2.1.5. Provide an analysis plan to identify population of survey participants (pilots, engineers, etc.), size of the proposed sample, and sampling strategy.

4.2.1.6. Provide target confidence level and error rate.

4.2.1.7. Indicate mode of data collection (e.g., computer administered, telephone interview, or face-to-face interview).

4.2.1.8. Indicate statistical procedures employed in the analysis of results.

4.2.1.9. Provide a reporting format (e.g., briefing, publication, slide presentation), and a plan for release of survey results.

4.2.1.10. Provide project timeline containing milestones for significant research events (e.g., data collection start and end dates, release of findings).

4.2.1.11. Send the completed submission to the AF Survey Office, [af.surveys@randolph.af.mil](mailto:af.surveys@randolph.af.mil).

**4.3. Processing Time.** Sufficient time should be allowed for the survey review process.

4.3.1. Attitude and opinion survey requests must first be submitted to the AF Survey Office. Certified research reviewers will make a determination if the submission meets the criteria for human subject research and requires additional review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Criteria for IRB approval is established by 32 CFR 219, directed by DoDD 3216.02, *Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD-Supported Research*, and implemented IAW AFI 40-402, *Protection of Human Subjects in Research*. Forward the submission to an IRB if approval is necessary.

4.3.2. AFMA approval is required prior to assignment of a SCN.

4.3.3. AF Survey Office will process all requests promptly, depending on previous requirements and workload. Incomplete packages may result in additional processing time.

## Chapter 5

### RELEASING SURVEY FINDINGS

**5.1. Survey Results.** All requests for survey results will be submitted IAW DoD 5400.7-R, *DoD Freedom of Information Act Program*, and released if request meets all requirements.

5.1.1. AFMA does not release record-level data.

5.1.2. Requested survey results are released as aggregate data only.

**5.2. Survey Results Not Released.**

5.2.1. Identifies individuals based on their response(s).

5.2.2. Survey results may be released IAW DoD 5400.7-R, *DoD Freedom of Information Act Program*, AFI 33-332, *Privacy Act Program*, and AFI 10-701, *Operations Security (OPSEC)*.

**5.3. Commander Surveys.** Commanders who conduct a survey may release the survey instrument or results to the public or media by forwarding them through the unit Public Affairs office. Unless requested and approved under the criteria of DoD 5400.7-R, *DoD Freedom of Information Act Program*, commanders are not required to release surveys or survey results.

**5.4. OPSEC Information.** Any critical information or classified information as defined by AFI 10-701, *Operations Security (OPSEC)*, will not be released.

## Chapter 6

### UNAUTHORIZED SURVEYS

**6.1. Unauthorized Surveys.** An unauthorized survey is a non-local survey (e.g., non-government organization or individual) that has been sent to an official Air Force address/email, or through other forms of communication, and does not have a current AF Survey Control Number, a RCS, or an OMB number. Personnel receiving an unauthorized survey should notify the AF Survey Office to request further instructions.

**Chapter 7****PRESCRIBED AND ADOPTED FORMS**

**7.1. Prescribed Forms.** None.

**7.2. Adopted Forms.**

AF IMT 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication.*

RICHARD Y. NEWTON III, Lt General, USAF  
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**Attachment 1****GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFI 10-701, *Operations Security*, 18 October 2007

AFI 33-129, *Web Management and Internet Use*, 3 February 2005 (w IC-2 30 October 2008)

AFI 33-324, *Management and Control of Information Reports Requirements; Controlling Internal, Public, and Interagency Air Force Information Collections*, 1 June 2000

AFI 33-332, *Privacy Act Program*, 29 January 2004

AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, 11 Jun 2009

AFI 36-2601, *Air Force Personnel Survey Program*, 1 February 1996

AFI 36-2623, *Occupational Analysis*, 25 May 2006

AFI 40-402, *Protection of Human Subjects in Research*, 5 May 2005

AFI 90-201, *Inspector General Activities*, 17 June 2009

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

AFPD 38-2, *Manpower*, 2 March 1995

DoD 5400.7-R, *DoD Freedom of Information Act Program*, 11 April 2006

DoDD 3216.02, *Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD-Supported Research*, 24 April 2007

DoDI 1100.13, *Surveys of Department of Defense Personnel*, 21 November 1996

The President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, *Quality Standards for Investigations*, December 2003

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFI**— Air Force Instruction

**AFMA**—Air Force Manpower Agency

**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive

**AFRIMS**—Air Force Records Information Management System

**DoD**—Department of Defense

**DoDD**—Department of Defense Directive

**DoDI**—Department of Defense Instruction

**FOIA**—Freedom of Information Act

**IG**—Inspector General

**IMT**—Information Management Tool

**IRB**—Institutional Review Board

**OMB**—Office of Management and Budget

**OPSEC**—Operational Security

**PCIE**—President’s Council on Integrity and Efficiency

**RDS**—Records Disposition Schedule

**ROTC**—Reserve Officer Training Corps

**RCS**—Reports Control Symbol

**SCN**—Survey Control Number