



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE
HEADQUARTERS SPACE OPERATIONS COMMAND**

SPOCGM2025-13-01
3 DECEMBER 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: SpOC/CC
150 Vandenberg Street, Suite 1105
Peterson SFB CO 80914-4020

SUBJECT: HQ SpOC Guidance Memorandum (SpOCGM) 13-01, *Concept Guidance*

RELEASIBILITY: There are no releasability restrictions on this publication.

References: (a) SPFI 13-604, *System Acceptance*, 30 August 2023
(b) SPOCMAN13-626, *Combat Force Proponent-Fielding Process*, 2 May 2025

By order of the Commander, Space Operations Command, this SpOCGM establishes interim guidance for the development, validation, and maintenance of Operational & Organizational (O&O) Concepts and Concepts of Employment (CONEMPs).

Compliance with this memorandum is mandatory. To the extent its directions are inconsistent with other SpOC publications, the information herein takes precedence, in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 90-160, *Publications and Forms Management* and Department of the Air Force Manual (DAFMAN) 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*. If this publication conflicts with Department of Defense (DoD) or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) guidance and policy, then those DoD and/or CJCS publications will take precedence.

This SpOCGM may require the collection and/or maintenance of information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, authorized by Title 10 United States Code, Section 9013, *Secretary of the Air Force*. Ensure all records created, as a result of processes prescribed in this publication, are maintained in accordance with DAFI 33-322 *Records Management and Information Governance Program* and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located in the Air Force Records Management System.

Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility using DAF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication, through the appropriate functional chain of command.

Concept development leads will coordinate all waiver and clarification requests through their respective Mission Deltas or HQ SpOC Divisions, who will consult with HQ SpOC/S55 as needed. HQ SpOC/S553 is the OPR for this GM.

SEMPER VENATOR

This memorandum becomes void after one year has elapsed from the date of this memorandum, or upon publication of a new Department of the Air Force Instruction permanently establishing this guidance, whichever is earlier.

DAVID N. MILLER, JR.
Lieutenant General, USSF
Commander

1 Attachment:
SpOCGM 13-01, *Concept Guidance*

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Attachment: SpOCGM 10-01, *Concept Guidance*

1. Purpose and Applicability. This SpOCGM establishes SpOC responsibilities and expectations for the standardized development, validation, and maintenance of two core operational documents: Mission Area Operational Concepts (Ops Concepts) and Concepts of Employment (CONEMPs). These documents serve as critical enablers for capability planning, force design integration, tactical employment, and readiness assessments. This guidance supports SpOC Strategic Plan implementation and aligns with HQ USSF concept development frameworks.

SpOC oversees the creation and maintenance of Ops Concepts and CONEMPs in coordination with Mission Deltas (MDs), Space Systems Command (SSC), and other functional stakeholders. SpOC ensures these documents are aligned with validated Concepts and Concepts of Operations (CONOPS) but does not author those higher-tier documents.

2. Concept Fundamentals. Military concepts, as described in Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Planning*, reflect the application of "ways" – the methods used to apply the "means" (capabilities) to achieve strategic or operational "ends" (objectives). They may describe employment of capabilities at all levels, from individual systems to joint-level missions. Concepts propose innovative or alternative methods to address existing or emerging challenges, informed by doctrine, current operations, and strategic guidance. Concepts are validated through test, experimentation, exercises, and wargames, and should identify required capabilities to inform Doctrine, Organization, Training, materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities and Policy (DOTmLPF-P) solutions.

3. Taxonomy. To ensure unity of effort across USSF, the following taxonomy applies:

3.1. Concept: A hypothesis-driven framework describing innovative methods for applying capabilities to solve military problems. Concepts guide future force development by identifying required capabilities and operational approaches.

3.2. CONOPS: Nominally created by Combatant Commands, a description of how to employ a group of capabilities to achieve mission objectives and enable joint functions. A CONOPS supports organize, train, and equip (OT&E) efforts and informs force development planning. CONOPS may encompass one or more CONEMPs to inform how specific systems of systems operate to achieve mission objectives. Additionally, a single CONEMP may support multiple CONOPS.

3.3. CONEMP: A tactically focused plan detailing the presentation, employment, and operation of a single system or capability. Developed by SpOC divisions in coordination with mission area proponents (Mission Delta Commanders), CONEMPs support investment, planning, and force presentation decisions. They mature alongside system development, require annual review, and are updated every three years if not updated prior.

4. Roles and Responsibilities.

4.1. Space Operations Command.

4.1.1. Ops Concept Development Authority: HQ SpOC/S55 directs, synchronizes, and standardizes all mission area Ops Concept development in collaboration with the MDs and HQ SpOC S35 divisions.

4.1.2. CONEMP Development Authority: Respective HQ SpOC S35 divisions author and serve as Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for the creation of CONEMPs. Directs, synchronizes, and standardizes all system-specific CONEMPs in coordination with the MDs and HQ SpOC/S55.

4.1.3. Validation and Oversight: Ensures alignment with doctrine, force design, and mission planning constructs.

4.1.4. Standardization and Governance: Maintains official templates, update cycles, and document repositories.

4.2. **Mission Deltas.**

4.2.1. Author and serve as OPR for the creation of Ops Concepts.

4.2.2. Collaborate with HQ SpOC/S35 and SSC to author and serve as the Office of Collateral Responsibility (OCR) for the creation of CONEMPs.

4.2.3. Ensure training and force presentation requirements are correctly captured and integrated IAW sections five and six.

5. Ops Concept Document Guidance. Mission Area Ops Concepts define how each MD, as the mission area proponent, will organize, train, equip, and operate over the next five years to deliver combat-credible capabilities. These foundational documents link day-to-day operations with strategic force design. Annual revalidation is required to maintain alignment with operational priorities and SpOC Strategic Plan. Each Mission Area Ops Concept will include, at a minimum:

5.1. Combat Forces Proponent Executive Summary (EXSUM) linking the concept to SpOC Strategic Plan and outlining the operational approach and priority lines of effort.

5.2. Joint Requirement Gaps: A prioritized listing of the current joint requirements for the missing area that are not currently being adequately filled.

5.3. Operating Environment: Description of the future operating environment, developed in collaboration with HQ SpOC/S2.

5.4. Mission Area Operational Concept: Outlines key priority fights that shape the mission area approach, core mission area capabilities and unique contributions to joint force outcomes. Also, must include a summary of core force employment concepts across the joint functions (e.g. intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, information, protection, sustainment, and command and control (tactical BMC3 and operational C2 implications)).

5.5. Mission Area Organization: Includes assigned, attached and collateral USSF, commercial, prototype or demonstration force elements that support and/or execute the mission area operational concept.

5.6. Mission Area Modernization Strategy: Outlines major weapon system transitions, upgrades, fielding timelines, and capability improvements for the next 5-7 years.

5.7. Mission Area Leader Development Strategy: Defines required skills and competencies by grade and lists developmental milestones for officers, enlisted, and civilians.

5.8. Mission Area Concept Required Capabilities (CRC): Identifies minimum essential mission needs across DOTmLPP-P to inform force design.

6. CONEMP Document Guidance. All system-level CONEMPs shall be developed by HQ SpOC S35 divisions in coordination with SSC and MDs. CONEMPs are used to inform planning and investment decisions, as well as Force Generation and Force Presentation. As a program completes critical design review and begins production, or when a software acquisition enters its execution phase, the concept author must provide top-level guidance to the eventual operators on what will be included in the delivery and how the capabilities can be employed to achieve desired effects.

A complete CONEMP provides sufficient information to inform decisions on manning and personnel planning, and/or development of updated tactics, techniques and procedures, technical orders, and/or warfighter CONOPS. At this point in development, many (if not all) of the specifics of the new capability/system are final. The CONEMP author must now expand on the content, showing in concrete terms what specific capabilities are being brought to the fight, and how they will integrate with existing infrastructures/systems. The author also must precisely define specific mission contributions and command relationships. Additionally, the CONEMP must refine the potential future threats/risks to the capabilities, if applicable, and identify specific means to mitigate these threats/risks. They will be revalidated every three years or as needed. Each CONEMP will include, at a minimum, the following sections and subsections:

6.1. EXSUM: One-page summary outlining the system's operational relevance, employment strategy, and alignment with Combat Force 2031.

6.2. Introduction: Purpose, Scope, Background, and Operational Environment.

6.3. System Description: Capabilities, Limitations and Employment Considerations, and Facilities/Operating Locations.

6.4. Force Generation: Task Orientation, Training, Equipment, and Combat Force validation and certification.

6.5. Force Presentation: Ops Criteria, Training and Certification.

6.6. Planning Employment and Operations: Operational Approach, Mission Planning, Tactical Employment, Tactical Integration, Mutual Support Requirements, Command & Control at echelon, and Tactical Execution.

6.7. Appendices: Continuity of Operations, Glossary of References, Terms, and Definitions.

7. Integration with Joint Planning Process (JPP) and Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS).

7.1. All CONEMPs must support Annex A (Task Organization) and Annex C (Operations) of theater-level Operations Orders (OPORDs) and campaign plans.

7.2. O&O documents should inform DOTMLPF-P Integrated Priority Lists (IPL) and serve as a foundational reference for Capability-Based Assessments (CBAs).

7.3. Authors should trace CONEMP mission outcomes to validated Joint capability gaps and CONOPS-level planning assumptions.

8. Concept Lifecycle and Maintenance. HQ SpOC/S55 will maintain a living registry of Ops Concepts and CONEMP documents ensuring version control, approval authority, and dissemination lists.

9. Submission Timelines and Execution Tracking. To ensure standardization and alignment across the enterprise, all Mission Area Ops Concepts shall be updated and submitted to HQ SpOC/S55 no later than 31 December of each calendar year. Likewise, new CONEMPs should be submitted by Milestone B (or appropriate decision point for other acquisition pathways) of the system and reviewed for updates prior to the fielding decision and operational acceptance. Revised CONEMPs shall be submitted no later than 36 months following their signed date in accordance with the triennial cycle or upon a major capability/mission change. For non-material CONEMPs, they must be submitted within six months of the DOTmLPP-P analysis. These deadlines support staffing, validation, and integration into annual planning cycles.

HQ SpOC/S55 will maintain a centralized Plan of Action & Milestones (POA&M) on the SpOC S55 [SharePoint](#) site, detailing annual and triennial deadlines, coordination milestones, and responsible offices by 30 June of each year. Concept authors must use this POA&M as the authoritative timeline for all submissions and validation events.

10. Classification and Sharing. Concepts should be written at the lowest classification level practical to allow maximum dissemination, including to allied partners. If higher classification is necessary, authors should consider producing a releasable base version with classified annexes.

11. POC. POC for this SpOCGM is Col Daniel J. Wheeler, HQ SpOC/S55, please refer any questions to him at 719-554-3079 (DSN 692) or daniel.wheeler@spaceforce.mil. His lead action officer is Mr. Jeffrey D. Hill at 719-554-9829 (DSN 692) or jeffrey.hill.25@spaceforce.mil.