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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 35-108

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Public Affairs

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS



COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 35-1, *Public Affairs Management*, and AFPD 32-70, *Environmental Quality*. It provides guidance to establish responsibilities and procedures for organizing and administering an effective and legally sufficient Environmental Public Affairs program. Read this instruction with AFI 32-7061, *The Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, and AFI 32-7020, *The Environmental Restoration Program*. Records Disposition. 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). Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication, and route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. The authorities to waive wing, Direct Reporting Unit (DRU), and Field Operating Agency (FOA) requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier (“T-0,” “T-1,” “T-2,” “T-3”) number following the compliance statement. See AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority or to the Publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items. This instruction applies to the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and the Air National Guard (ANG) unless otherwise noted.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

When a requirement is mandated for compliance at the Wing level throughout this Instruction, the requirement is tiered, signifying the appropriate waiver authority to the requirement and is indicated in parentheses (T-0, T-1, T-2, or T-3) following the sentence/paragraph that drives the requirement, in accordance with AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*.

1. Purpose. The Air Force develops and executes public engagement programs to build sustained public understanding, trust and support for Air Force people and missions. An active public affairs program is a cornerstone of the Air Force's environmental program and supports the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The focus of PA activities is to inform and involve audiences during critical decision-making windows in various Air Force Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health (ESOH) programs. The objective of the ESOH program is to develop and implement innovative, integrated, and comprehensive solutions that enhance the Air Force's ability to project air, space, and cyberspace power globally. The primary Air Force ESOH priorities are to comply with all ESOH legal obligations, reduce risk by ensuring availability of workforce, natural and manmade resources by effectively managing ESOH risks, and continuously improving by instilling a culture of continuous ESOH improvement. This AFI establishes responsibilities, guidance, and procedures for organizing and administering an effective Air Force Environmental PA program.

2. Objectives. PA provides specific and general support to environmental program objectives by communicating the Air Force commitment to public involvement (PI) and environmental excellence.

3. Public Affairs Roles. As a member of the interdisciplinary ESOH management team, the Public Affairs officer (PAO) should ensure all members of the PA staff have appropriate training, are kept current on applicable local, national, and international Air Force-related environmental issues, and support PA requirements for release of information to the public. As with any public communication, PA ensures news releases, newspaper display ads, social media material and media and public responses to queries are properly coordinated with the ESOH management team and, as needed, operations, legal, security, medical, safety, logistics, and other appropriate agencies or organizations before releasing environmental information (**T-3**). This is implied throughout this instruction where public release of information is discussed.

3.1. The Air Force Civil Engineer Center Center Public Affairs team is a resource PA staffs can use for reach-back support for all environmental issues. AFCEC/PA can provide technical assistance, guidance, products and resources, up to and including PA representation, depending on the scope and duration of the environmental action.

3.2. PA personnel should communicate all pertinent aspects of the environmental program and activities that have an impact on the public with the goal of transparency. PA will prepare public releases regarding mishaps or negative impacts in coordination with appropriate agencies, such as safety, environmental, legal, CE and installation commanders. Wing PA should coordinate releases with AFCEC/PA and MAJCOM/PA, who in turn should inform SAF/PAO if information may reflect negatively on the AF or may result in national or international media attention or congressional interest.

3.3. PA can support environmental programs via community relations activities such as the speaker's bureau program, educational outreach to local schools, and the installation tour

program. PA should also assist project officers and planners with installation Earth Day and other environmental awareness events and activities.

4. Public Affairs Responsibilities

4.1. PA offices shall (requirements):

4.1.1. Serve as the Air Force point of contact for public and media queries. **(T-2)**.

4.1.2. Review all environmental documents that are intended for release to the public. **(T-0)**.

4.1.3. Promote the Air Force environmental program through communicating success stories to external audiences. **(T-2)**. SAF/PAO is the central point for coordinating and communicating environmental successes to national and international audiences and works with AFCEC/PA to communicate overarching environmental information for the programs AFIMSC centrally manages. Installation and Major Command (MAJCOM) PA offices communicate environmental successes to local, state, and regional audiences and forward local news releases and news clippings to SAF/PAO for consideration in the national program.

4.1.4. Place newspaper display ads (usually in coordination with the installation's civil engineer environmental office and installation leadership) and issue news releases at decision points and other significant milestones in environmental projects. **(T-0)**.

4.2. PA offices should:

4.2.1. Prepare communication plans and/or talking point papers, depending on the depth of information involved, that address PA activities, supporting PA products, timelines, milestones, and legal requirements of environmental activities **(T-3)**.

4.2.2. Ensure notification of local community, political, health, and environmental leaders prior to public release of information, if appropriate **(T-3)**.

4.2.3. Be familiar with the content of the U.S. EPA "Final Report of the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee" (FFERDC) and the Environmental Restoration Program.

4.2.4. Review and ensure all documents intended for release to the public, particularly the executive summaries, are written in non-technical language that is understandable to target audiences **(T-3)**.

4.2.5. Release all public announcements on ESOH issues no later than the first day of the public comment period when the action involves a comment period **(T-3)**.

4.2.6. Coordinate all public meetings on ESOH issues and serve as the point of contact upon request **(T-3)**.

4.2.7. In coordination with program offices, keep internal audiences informed through command channels on environmental issues and community concerns **(T-3)**.

4.2.8. Maintain a complete record of all news releases made, public meetings held, queries answered, and media articles published concerning environmental programs. Provide any needed support to the applicable environmental program office to ensure

they have the Public Information documents and activities required for their record-keeping.

4.2.9. Notify civic leaders, spokespersons for local interest groups, and other interested parties of proposed program actions with advance coordination through the relevant program office (**T-3**). This may include inviting these stakeholders to appropriate meetings, encouraging them to contribute ideas, and informing them of decisions.

4.2.10. Train and maintain a list of qualified AF subject-matter expert speakers to address public stakeholders, and in coordination with appropriate unit/environmental office leaders, arrange for community engagements as appropriate and/or required.

4.2.11. Coordinate on the release of any contacts, messages, reports, documents, and letters to the public or local legislators in response to inquiries, upon PA's own initiative, or as deemed necessary or advisable by the affected program (**T-3**). In each case, such release should not occur without the coordination of the affected program office(s) at the appropriate levels. Draft reports or documents are solely for internal review and comment and generally are not releasable; advance copies of final reports also generally are not releasable. Requesters of the document should be provided the release date and location.

4.2.11.1. The Secretary of the Air Force Office of Legislative Liaison Programs and Legislation Division (SAF/LLP) will participate in preparation of materials for Congress and will handle congressional distribution.

5. Environmental Justice. Executive Order (EO) 12898 directs each Federal Agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs on minority populations and low-income populations, including tribal populations. The Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) directs adherence to the EO for community involvement activities in areas that may have environmental justice impacts. In working with the environmental team to conduct public outreach activities, PA should help ensure a cross section of the populace is meaningfully involved in the process.

6. Consultation. PA should consult with legal advisors and the ESOH management team to ensure PA products, activities and responses, are cleared in accordance with local, state and federal environmental laws, regulations, instructions, and otherwise comply with applicable legal or policy requirements.

7. Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP).

7.1. As mentioned earlier, community involvement is central to the NEPA process. The Air Force fulfills this legal requirement through the EIAP. Therefore, PA should be aware of and involved with the EIAP at the earliest stages of and throughout a proposed action or project. All documents released to the public will be made available in information repositories such as installation websites, public libraries and city halls by the Environmental Planning Function. For classified documents and per CFR Title 32 Section 989.26, EIAP "public review and comment" is generally accomplished by representatives who have proper security clearances from appropriate regulatory agencies; they review and comment in lieu of the general public.

7.2. There are three levels of EIAP analysis, each of which will result in PA supporting activities: a categorical exclusion or CATEX; Environmental Assessment (EA) leading to a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); and the EIS itself.

7.3. EIAP PA Responsibilities. PA actions include:

7.3.1. EIAP Document Reviews. PA must participate in the review of EAs and EISs developed by the proponent and the environmental team to ensure that they address concerns raised by the public. **(T-0)**.

7.3.2. EIAP Public Notification. Notifying the public on the availability of a FONSI, or with a record of decision for an EIS, must be made via display advertisement (not a legal ad), and can be one sixteenth of a page (approximately 4x5 inches in size) in a local, state, or regional general circulation newspaper. **(T-0)**. A news release will also be sent to local media. **(T-0)**. The display ad is a paid newspaper advertisement, funded by the project's proponent, typically the Major Command. It should appear in a prominent section of general circulation newspapers rather than legal columns of papers. If there is a specific state requirement to use a legal advertisement for public notification of NEPA activities, then the legal advertisement should be used in conjunction with, not instead of, a public notice display advertisement. When determining how much Public Information is appropriate (how many news releases, display ads, or meetings should be completed), PA should consider the following:

7.3.2.1. The size of the proposal and the degree to which the public may be affected by the action.

7.3.2.2. The anticipated level of public interest or controversy.

7.3.2.3. The size of the area affected (geography and population).

7.3.2.4. Past controversy associated with similar activities (e.g., air space reconfiguration, forestry management plans or timber cuts, and increased night operations or training).

7.3.2.5. Whether the proposed action is one of national concern, is unprecedented, or normally requires an EIS.

7.3.2.6. The degree of any associated environmental controversy.

Figure 1. Public Affairs Actions for EIAP Actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION	PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES
Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)	No PA coordination required
Environmental Assessment (EA)	PA coordination of publicly releasable information, drafting/sending of news releases, support for briefings and/or public meetings (where applicable, such as serving as interface with community, providing media escort and arranging interviews, and helping develop handouts and/or display materials)
FONSI and Final EA	PA coordination of publicly releasable

	information, review of display ad, and drafting/sending news release
Environmental Impact Statements	
Notice of Intent (NOI)	PA coordination includes assistance with preparation of Qs & As; review of NOI published in the Federal Register; review of display advertisement announcing notice of intent (NOI); support of public meetings (see EA section above for potential activities) and drafting/sending news release
Scoping	PA coordination of publicly releasable information, review of display ad, support of public scoping meeting(s) (see EA section above for potential activities), and drafting/sending news release
Draft EIS	PA coordination on information submitted to Federal Register, preparation of Qs & As, review of display ad announcing notice of availability (NOA), support of public hearing(s) (see EA section above for potential activities and Appendix C of 32 C.F.R. Part 989), and drafting/sending news release
Final EIS	PA coordination of publicly releasable information, review of display ad, and drafting/sending news release
Record of Decision	PA coordination of publicly releasable information, review of display ad, and drafting/sending of news release

8. Installation Restoration Program Cleanup. The Installation Restoration Program (IRP) is a comprehensive effort to identify, investigate, evaluate, and restore contaminated areas (hazardous disposal sites, landfills, storage facilities, and operational areas) on property owned by, leased to, or otherwise possessed by Air Force within the United States, including sites where contamination has migrated off of such property. At the installation, MAJCOM, and air staff levels, the civil engineer (environmental manager) is the OPR for the IRP. The program office is OPR for community involvement activities in support of the IRP with PA support.

8.1. General IRP PA Responsibilities. In cases where there may be no PAO assigned to an installation, such as a government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) facility, the responsible command should provide and ensure a PA specialist or appropriate on-site representative supports the relevant public participation activities. AFCEC/PA is available for reach-back support in such instances. MAJCOMs should also maintain copies of documents and materials accomplished by the installation-level PAO (or selected on-site representative) in support of the IRP, such as community relations plans (CRPs), environmental updates, mailing lists, Information Repository indexes, news releases, and fact sheets. As a minimum, PA should:

8.1.1. Coordinate or assist in the coordination of Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) activities, including the initial community interest assessment process, and advise the base commander and/or RAB co-chairperson of PA objectives pertaining to development, participation, and support of the RAB and other required Public Information activities. The RAB is a community-based advisory body designed to act as a focal point for the exchange of information between the Air Force and the community regarding environmental restoration (cleanup) activities. The RAB members include representatives from the community; interested groups; local, state, and federal regulatory agencies; and the Air Force. RAB meetings are open to the public. At GOCO facilities, the PA specialist selected by the MAJCOM or reach-back provided by AFCEC/PA will work with GOCO personnel, regulatory agencies for that region, and community members to support RAB activities and implement PA operations as appropriate and applicable to that community and situation.

8.1.2. Establish and maintain liaison with higher headquarters PA offices and concerned base agencies on all IRP PA and/or community involvement matters. Depending on the action itself or the stage of the IRP, PA may elect to coordinate with other agencies, local governments, or special interest groups on news releases, responses to media queries, or briefings after coordinating with the relevant program office. Because demographic conditions vary widely, PA should fully evaluate their local situations (to include stakeholders surrounding GOCO facilities) to ensure all concerned entities are in the communication channel.

8.1.3. Assist restoration personnel in creating a CRP. CRP goals include identifying issues of possible community concern, providing a basis for communication between the facility and the community, outlining how the public can participate in the decision-making process, and serving as a public record of community involvement during the investigative and remedial programs.

8.1.4. Review all IRP reports and other environmental documents intended for public release for effective risk communication language and possible community concerns.

8.1.5. Develop products that provide regular updates on IRP activities. These products may include, but are not limited to, progress reports, fact sheets, news releases, and public notices designed to increase the community's understanding and involvement in the IRP.

8.1.6. Announce the availability of appropriate documents by display advertisement when they are placed in the Information Repository or Administrative Record. Display advertisements will be placed in a prominent section of the local paper of general circulation. All public notifications should be a minimum of a 1/16-page ad (some state or regional EPA offices require a larger advertisement). More than one event can be included in the advertisement. For example, the same advertisement can discuss the contents of the proposed plan, public comment period, and public meeting information. Ads are funded through the Environmental Restoration Account.

8.1.7. Support restoration personnel communications to ensure internal/installation audiences are fully informed of IRP progress through websites, social media, commander's calls, staff meetings, town hall meetings, emails, etc.

8.1.8. Assist restoration personnel in satisfying PI guidelines for removal actions. Such actions generally fall within three categories: emergency, time-critical, or non-time-critical, which have different PI activities.

8.1.9. Help program personnel prepare for any public meetings throughout the IRP. Also assist program personnel in obtaining public comments where desired at other stages of the cleanup process. This could involve helping gather comment cards at public meetings, providing an area on the public website that links to the comment page or email, and sending out press releases seeking public comment or including information in related releases about how the public can comment.

8.1.10. Assist in preparing and editing restoration success stories in support of the Defense Environmental Program Annual Report to Congress or any other communications intended for release to the public or to agencies outside of DoD. This may, at times, include coverage of mishaps or negative indications. PA must disclose issues truthfully and with transparency IAW with PA guidance. Public responses to potentially negative elements must also be prepared, and coordinated through appropriate channels.

9. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The ATSDR was created by Congress to implement the health-related sections of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended. ATSDR is part of the Public Health Service within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to prevent or mitigate adverse human health effects resulting from exposure to hazardous substances in the environment.

9.1. Public Affairs Responsibilities. Risk communication is at the center of all interactions with ATSDR. ATSDR may issue news releases regarding site visits, public meetings, and public availability sessions. PA at the installation assists the relevant Air Force program offices and ATSDR in identifying key community contacts, and obtaining a copy of the community relations plan. PA will also assist in reviewing ATSDR-generated documents, through the program office. The installation medical group and/or Bioenvironmental Engineering Office (BEE) is the main point of contact for the Air Force's working relationship with ATSDR.

10. Community Involvement Program (CIP). The CIP is a component of the Community-Based ESOH Program within SAF/IEE (the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Environment, Safety, and Infrastructure). SAF/PAO is part of the interdisciplinary team that develops and guides the Community-Based Environmental Protection (CBEP) management policies.

10.1. CIP Purpose. The purpose of the CIP is to ensure the community has the opportunity to participate in environmental issues that may affect the community or that are of high interest to the community.

10.2. CIP PA Responsibilities. PA organizations should expand on already established partnerships with civilian leaders and organizations to include base-level organizations, working in coordination with the applicable environmental program offices.

11. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). RCRA provides a "cradle-to-grave" system of rules regarding the generation, transportation, treatment, disposal, and clean-up of

hazardous wastes. Many installations have interim status or Part B RCRA permits to treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste. RCRA's main objectives are to protect human health and the environment, conserve energy and natural resources, and reduce or eliminate the generation of solid and hazardous wastes.

11.1. Public Affairs Responsibilities. Community involvement plays an important role in RCRA permitting and permit modifications. The permitting agency, defined as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or state environmental regulators, is typically responsible for community involvement activities during the permitting process. However, some public hearing and public notification activities may be conducted at the installation. PA also plays a role in communicating local RCRA procedures to work centers and base residents to ensure they're aware of their responsibilities.

12. Emergency Planning and Community-Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA). The EPCRA was enacted in 1986 to help protect public health and safety from discharges of toxic substances to the environment by increasing community awareness of chemical hazards and requiring organizations to account for their specified use of toxic substances.

12.1. Public Affairs Responsibilities for Toxic Release Inventory (TRI). While there is no prescribed way to present information to the public on TRI, PA's role is to notify the public of TRI reports when they are released and to explain the significance of the data in coordination with the applicable environmental program office. Communication includes a public notice explaining EPCRA, an announcement of availability of the report and its location. Information accompanying the report should help the public understand the chemicals and their related risks and how the installation uses the hazardous substance. PA should work closely with bioenvironmental engineers, legal advisors, security advisors, and environmental managers to explain the health, safety, and emergency response plans implemented to protect the community in the case of a chemical mishap. It is also important to communicate to the public that the military has aggressively sought and implemented pollution prevention measures that have reduced hazardous waste and is constantly seeking alternate, less hazardous chemicals.

13 Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ). The goal of the AICUZ program is to promote compatible land-use development around military installations, to promote public health and safety in areas adjacent to installations, and to sustain the operational capabilities of the installation. The program identifies runway clear zones, accident potential zones, and noise zones, and recommends land-use guidelines for achieving compatible land use in these areas. See Air Force Instruction 32-7062, *Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Program*, for program requirements and responsibilities and AF Handbook 32-7084, *AICUZ Program Manager's Guide*.

13.1. The base community planner generally manages the AICUZ program. The planner collects and revalidates data and prepares an AICUZ report or amendment for public release.

13.2. Public Affairs Responsibilities. Once approved by the MAJCOM, the wing commander makes the decision to release the AICUZ report or amendment. PA should assist base community planners and the base and/or MAJCOM environmental team to prepare for public meetings, and will release relevant information on official AF websites and distribute as appropriate. (T-3).

14. Noise Complaints. PA should handle noise complaints or queries directly and as completely as possible. PA should not refer callers to other bases or commands regardless of the aircraft origin or type. PA should provide timely, responsive, and factual answers to aircraft noise complaints in order to maintain positive media and community relations. PA should attend relevant installation meetings which are conducive to presenting the complaints, such as the Air Operations Board Meeting. Refer all claims to the installation office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

KATHLEEN A. COOK, Brigadier General, USAF
Director of Public Affairs

Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

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Title 42, United States Code 4321-4347 - Public Health and Welfare, 2 Jan 2006

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Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 11 Feb 1994

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 1980

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National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 1969

Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA), 1976

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), 1986

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) Directive 9230.0-3C, January 1992

Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 Apr 2001, as amended through 17 Oct 2008

Annex J of Air Force Program Action Directive 07-13

AFDD 1-2, *Air Force Glossary*, 11 Jan 2007

AF Handbook 32-7084, *AICUZ Program Manager's Guide*, 1 Mar 1999

AFI 32-7020, *The Environmental Restoration Program*, 7 Feb 2001

AFI 32-7061, *The Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, 12 Mar 2003

AFPD 32-70, *Environmental Quality*, 20 Jul 1994

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

AFI 33-360, Publications and Forms Management

Adopted Forms

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFPD—Air Force policy directive

AICUZ—Air Installation Compatible Use Zones

ATSDR—Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

CATEX—categorical exclusion
CBEP—Community-Based Environmental Protection
CERCLA—Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
CIP—Community Involvement Program
CONUS—continental United States
CRP—community relations plan
DOD—Department of Defense
DODD—Department of Defense directive
DODI—Department of Defense instruction
DRU—Direct Reporting Unit
EA—Environmental Assessment
EIAP—Environmental Impact Analysis Process
EIS—Environmental Impact Statement
EO—Executive Order
EPA—Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA—Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (SARA Title III)
ESOH—Environment, Safety and Occupational Health
ESOH CAMP—Environmental Safety and Occupational Health Compliance Assessment and Management Program
FFERDC—Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee
FOA—field operating agency
FONSI—Finding of No Significant Impact
GOCO—government-owned/contractor-operated
IAW—in accordance with
IRP—Installation Restoration Program
MAJCOM—major command
NEPA—National Environmental Policy Act
NOA—notice of availability
NOI—notice of intent
OPR—office of primary responsibility
OSWER—Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
PA—Public Affairs, preliminary assessment
PAO—Public Affairs Office, Public Affairs officer

PI—public involvement

RAB—Restoration Advisory Board

RCRA—Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

RDS—Records Disposition Schedule

SAF—Secretary of the Air Force

SARA—Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

SG—Surgeon General

TRI—toxic release inventory