



UNITED STATES
SPACE FORCE



GUARDIAN SPIRIT

Space Force Handbook 1-1

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OF THE AIR FORCE**



SPACE FORCE HANDBOOK 1-1

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This publication supports Air Force Policy Directive 1, *Air Force Culture*. This handbook formalizes the United States Space Force (USSF) values and supports the institutionalization of those values as expressed in the Guardian Commitment. This guidance applies to all USSF Guardians, whether civilian or military. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR), using Department of the Air Force (DAF) Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication; route DAF Form 847 from the field through the appropriate chain of command. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force Instruction 33-322, Records Management and Information Governance Program, and are disposed in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

FOREWORD

The Guardian Spirit is a collective representation of what it means to be a member of the United States Space Force. It describes the most positive attributes of our workforce and distinguishes us as a separate service. Individuals who embody the Guardian Spirit will thrive in the Space Force; those without it will struggle. Our Core Values of *Character*, *Connection*, *Commitment*, and *Courage*, outlined in the Guardian Ideal, form the foundation. This handbook builds upon that foundation and outlines how Guardians put them into practice through three critical roles:

- *Principled Public Servant*. Guardians who exhibit the Guardian Spirit are principled members of the profession of arms who possess *Character* beyond question. Selfless public service is the foundation of our organization and the source of the trust the American people place in the U.S. military.
- *Space-minded Warfighter*. Guardians who exhibit the Guardian Spirit expertly defend the nation, protect its interests, and defeat its enemies. They are *Committed* to mastering their profession and deepening their understanding of space warfighting. They are experts in imagining, fielding, and employing space capabilities against a thinking adversary.
- *Bold and Collaborative Problem Solver*. Guardians who exhibit the Guardian Spirit are bold and collaborative problem solvers. Their *Courage* drives them to engage with, analyze, and debate new ideas and perpetually challenge the status quo. When presented with a problem, their *Connection* brings teams together to experiment, fail, learn, adapt, and innovate. They are primed to seize and exploit the initiative and are comfortable empowering subordinates to act.

Practicing these roles and exemplifying our Core Values require each Guardian to accept accountability for their own journey. It takes work to amplify one's Guardian Spirit and each of us must embrace that work. It also takes leadership. Leadership teams at every level must showcase and reward the Guardian Spirit and suppress activities that undermine it.

This handbook represents an undeniable truth: *Guardians are our most important operational advantage*. As such, the Guardian Spirit is a warfighting imperative.

Our Nation benefits from a strong Space Force and our Space Force is strongest when Guardians thrive. The health and vitality of our organization depends on how well we adhere to our values, meet the expectations outlined here, and amplify the Guardian Spirit.

Semper Supra!



B. Chance Saltzman, Gen, USSF
Chief of Space Operations



Roger A. Towberman, CMSgt, USSF
Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW

Space is the ultimate high ground and a decisive warfighting domain in any future conflict; it sets conditions for success on land, sea, and in the air. Space has become an increasingly contested environment where potential adversaries are aggressively developing capabilities to challenge our freedom of action. Our ability to operate freely in and through space has become a prerequisite for military success, economic prosperity, and for preserving our Nation's way of life.

Guardians are proud members of the Profession of Arms. We have each answered the sacred call to serve the nation. Together we are the United States Space Force, with a purpose and mission greater than any of us individually. As we continue to build our service and its culture, our values—Character, Connection, Commitment, and Courage—must serve as our foundation.

We rely on an inner moral compass, *character*, and *connection* with fellow Guardians as we pursue the mission of the Space Force with *commitment* and *courage*. Our values are our North Star, and much like Polaris, they serve as a guide for daily action as we navigate a complex strategic environment. Values unite us, make us stronger, sustain us as a ready force, and reflect what we believe as a Service. They form the basis of our culture and identity as Guardians.

Character... *above all*

Connection... *toward unity*

Commitment... *to mastery*

Courage... *to be bold*

The Guardian Commitment. The Guardian Commitment (Attachment 1) outlines cultural and behavioral expectations between team members at every level. These expectations are centered on our values and are vital to advancing and reinforcing the team-centric culture necessary to accomplish our mission. The Guardian Commitment is a personalized and action-oriented expression of our values containing three “I will” statements for team members and team leaders for each of the four values. Every Guardian, from the newest recruit to the most seasoned leader, is a team member. These “I will” statements are addressed to Guardians and are a starting point upon which individuals and teams build. As Guardians, we are all accountable to meet these expectations and amplify the Guardian Spirit.

Organization. This handbook has a chapter dedicated to each of the four values which are outlined in the Guardian Ideal. Each chapter of this book contains an explanation and context meant to be used in conjunction with the Guardian Ideal and with the “I will” statements of the Guardian Commitment. Together, these documents provide the framework and focal point for our personal growth and accountability as Guardians.

Chapter 2

CHARACTER

2.1. *Character above all.* We defend the Constitution and serve the nation. Serving the nation presents us with difficult dilemmas daily, and effectively navigating those dilemmas requires us to be principled in our approach. While it can be easy to see when someone is behaving without character or out of character, it is far more difficult to live our lives proactively and consistently with the highest ethical and moral standards. Every day, we are faced with dilemmas large and small—Get it done quickly or get it done correctly? Work late or spend time with family?

Volunteer for something difficult or let someone else be picked? Hit the gym or grab a second slice of Chantilly cake? Continue to serve or find a job that asks less of me for more money?

Whether real or perceived, large or small, character is the framework that helps us navigate these dilemmas and find harmony in our personal and professional lives. The mission must always get done and we must retain a combat credible and ready force with which to execute. There is not an easy or generic answer, we must personalize it. We must put into context what matters today, what matters in the future, what matters for the mission, the team, and each of us individually. Character allows us to navigate these dilemmas in real time and character demands consistently reevaluating them as the environment changes. We will embrace the virtues of integrity, grit, honesty, authenticity, and trustworthiness. We will remain fully accountable for our decisions, actions, and inactions. We honor our obligations to our mission, our fellow Guardians, and the nation we serve. We will always be principled public servants because our great Nation demands no less.

2.2. Context. Character is the first value because it lays the foundation for trust, teamwork, and good order and discipline. Without it, the other three values are diminished—there can be no meaningful *connection*, no faith in the *commitment* of our teammates, nor any hope of *courage* unless *character* exists. People of character remain true to their values and can be trusted to do the right thing regardless of circumstance. Character is the most important standard to which we hold ourselves as Guardians.

2.3. Team Member Statements

2.3.1. I will act with integrity, honesty, candor, and dedication to the team. Integrity and honesty mean being completely truthful. Guardians do not hide truths, present partial information, or misrepresent. Candor should be accompanied by grace and aimed towards improving the team, not judging others. Dedication to the team sets the conditions for building and maintaining trust and cannot be faked. Strong teams genuinely care for each other. These behaviors combine to maximize individual contributions to the Space Force mission and are the minimum expectations for a team member of character.

2.3.2. I will be accountable to you and the team for my decisions and actions. When individuals take personal responsibility for their actions, it builds trust and provides opportunities to learn and grow. Accountability to the team also reinforces the idea that we put the team's interests first.

2.3.3. I will uphold the highest standards and live our values. This is a personal affirmation that each one of us will do our best to maintain high character and live in a manner that generates trust. Guardians with character exemplify the Guardian Spirit and encourage others to do the same.

2.4. Team Leader Statements

2.4.1. I will act with integrity, honesty, candor, fairness, and transparency. Because all team leaders are also team members, everything outlined in the team members statements remains an expectation. Additionally, team leaders will lead with fairness and transparency. Fairness ensures just and equitable treatment without favoritism or discrimination. Transparency is taking steps to ensure everyone understands the process and rationale behind decision-making. Team leaders explain “the why” and create understanding of mission, and do not simply give orders. Healthy team dynamics are the responsibility of the team leader and inseparable from their authorities.

2.4.2. I will be accountable to you and the team for my decisions and actions. Only a person of character, principled in their decision making will be able to make decisions that need to be made despite being at odds with those on their team. “Accountable” in this statement does not place the team “in charge”—it places additional responsibility on the leader and additional expectations the leader must meet. Leaders must embrace this additional responsibility and act with respect and humility in all directions. Effectively navigating these dilemmas requires high character and, when done effectively, directly improves mission and Guardian teams. Finally, leaders must always hold themselves accountable for, and learn from, their decisions, actions, and inactions.

2.4.3. I will uphold the highest standards and live our USSF values. There is no better way to lead than by example. Team leaders will endeavor every day to live our shared values and amplify the Guardian Spirit. Our observable behavior says more to our team than our words and the behavior we model is the behavior we should expect to see from them. The consistency we need to enable their greatness is perhaps the most telling indication of our Character.

Chapter 3

CONNECTION

3.1. *Connection toward unity.* We are connected by a common purpose greater than ourselves: to achieve a difficult and highly complex mission in defense of the nation. We are stronger together than we are individually. The difference between a group of individuals existing in a shared place and a team is the connection the individuals have to one another. The connectedness of a group enables it to benefit from the abilities of its members to achieve success far beyond the capacity of a single person. As the proverb states, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” Because diverse perspectives generate creativity and innovative solutions, and we are routinely faced with situations requiring complex problem-solving, connection allows us to embrace diversity and engage inclusively. Connection uses different perspectives to fuel innovation and find better solutions. Connected teams treat everyone with dignity, empathy, and respect. Connectedness allows us to tap into the best that each person has to offer and allows us to outthink and outperform potential adversaries.

3.2. *Context.* Leadership is a human endeavor. It is a complicated human endeavor. It takes social skills that none of us will master in our lifetime. If leadership is, at its essence, motivating others, then leadership is inherently a social skill and connection is a prerequisite. If leaders cannot connect, it’s impossible to motivate... it’s impossible to inspire. High performing teams are essential to mission success. Guardians must feel like they belong and their contributions are valued. Success depends on Guardians freely offering their ideas, asking hard questions, voicing concerns, admitting mistakes, and trusting each other. Success depends on Connection.

3.3. Team Member Statements

3.3.1. *I will engage everyone with respect, honesty, and authenticity.* Every human deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Team members will leverage openness, vulnerability, and authenticity to build meaningful relationships. Guardians will never be fake and will always endeavor to empathize with their teammates. Team members will remember that everyone's life matters, including their own, extends beyond service. Our loved ones and work-life harmony matter.

3.3.2. *I will encourage my teammates to share their thoughts and talents.* Many people are hesitant to voice their thoughts. Therefore, Guardians must actively encourage others to contribute to the team and value others’ contributions in an open exchange of ideas. Guardians recognize that the experiences and perspective of others are as important as their own and will gracefully ask, listen, and try to understand those experiences and perspectives.

3.3.3. *I will give help when asked and seek assistance when I need it.* Good teammates provide each other mutual support and seek assistance from and aid others. To ask for help is not a sign of weakness; seeking help is a sign of strength and confidence. The team thrives by supporting and enabling its members.

3.4. Team Leader Statements

3.4.1. I will maintain an environment where you can engage and express thoughts without fear. Because all team leaders are also team members, everything outlined in the team members statements remains an expectation. Leaders have further expectations as well, including the responsibility to create and maintain a psychologically safe environment that values the contributions of every member, enabling the team to succeed through maximum collaboration. Team leaders will encourage healthy interaction and debate by facilitating situations where team members share their thoughts, opinions, and talents. Leaders must set the conditions where team members are empowered to engage each other for improved team outcomes. Team leaders must also remember that life beyond service is important and create an environment where they can understand, account for, and address the impact of decisions on team members' loved ones and their work-life harmony.

3.4.2. I will sustain a connection with you based on trust and respect. Every human is entitled to dignity and respect. Leaders at all levels must exercise good judgment, delegating responsibilities appropriate to their subordinates' competence and experience levels. Leaders will show empathy and humility, which are key ingredients to building trust. Leaders will trust their team members to execute their assigned responsibilities and build the shared understanding required to empower them and eliminate the need to provide tasks to be accomplished.

3.4.3. I will build on your strengths, ensuring you feel included and valued for your contributions. Effective leaders know their team members, enable team members to understand their individual strengths and weaknesses, and contribute to their personal and professional development. When making decisions, leaders should take active steps to ensure team members are given opportunities to share their perspective and feel valued for their input.

Chapter 4

COMMITMENT

4.1. *Commitment to mastery.* We are committed to the pursuit of mastery within ourselves, our profession, and our domain, knowing this is a lifelong journey, not a destination. We are dedicated to the enduring missions of deterring hostile action, protecting U.S. interests in space, and defending the nation. We see opportunities where others may see challenges. We will make best use of the diverse talents and unique strengths of our force to move with a speed and agility considered impossible by our adversaries. The commitment to the pursuit of excellence is never-ending because the profession of arms and the strategic environment constantly evolve to account for new threats and new technologies. We also have a never-ending list of things to do; one can get overwhelmed pretty quickly because of how long that list is. Commitment means staying the course and seeing it through to the end. Without Commitment, the journey can be overwhelming. Commitment is understanding a 1,000-mile journey begins with a single step. Commitment means more than just showing up every day—it means showing up every day to make a difference. Guardians are committed to making today a little better than yesterday. We do not let fear of the unknown or new challenges deter us; rather, we commit to these as opportunities to learn, grow, and overcome.

4.2. Context. Every Guardian, civilian or military, takes an oath upon entering service. In fulfilling this oath, we must strive to master ourselves and our profession. Our ability to continuously learn, adapt, and achieve greater levels of mastery will enable us to maintain space superiority. Our nation and joint force require space-minded warfighters who are highly skilled. These skills require constant effort, a growth mindset, and support of teammates and leaders because the cutting-edge technology of today will be obsolete tomorrow. Commitment also allows us to see the tangible results of incremental improvements over time. When meaningful changes take too long, our commitment spurs us on. Commitment, more than any value, keeps our Guardians and our Space Force without equal.

4.3. Team Member Statements

4.3.1. I will work to achieve audacious goals, learning from my experiences. Guardians recognize the challenges and opportunities of an infinite domain. We acknowledge that the costs of failure can be great, but the cost of risk aversion rooted in the fear of failure is great as well. We understand that knowledge, skill, and preparation allow us to manage this tension to meet the needs of the mission in a dynamic environment. Challenging ourselves and reflecting on our experiences is the path to mastery. Guardians will accept constructive feedback with humility and a growth mindset, and hold themselves accountable to grow from lessons learned.

4.3.2. I will offer candid feedback when appropriate to facilitate growth and improvement. Everyone needs the feedback and support of others to become a better version of themselves. Candid feedback is constructive and straightforward; it is not an excuse to judge. A good teammate is always a teammate first, and all feedback will be constructive.

4.3.3. I will embrace challenges and work to be better tomorrow than I am today.

Mastery is measured against oneself, not others. We are in competition with potential adversaries, not our fellow Guardians. We take on challenges with the feedback and support of our teammates to be better people, military professionals, and space professionals. The pursuit of mastery is marked by continuous effort, not isolated events.

4.4. Team Leader Statements

4.4.1. I will connect you with the resources needed to achieve your goals. In addition to being accountable as a team member, team leaders have additional responsibilities. One of those is to provide team members with the resources necessary to be successful. When this is not possible, team leaders will be honest in their effort and transparent in their limitations and expectations. Where resource requirements cannot be met, team goals should be adjusted as necessary. To accomplish the mission, team leaders assess and use the diverse talents, skills, and experiences of their team members. This means identifying unique strengths of individuals and putting together teams of complementary abilities to achieve success.

4.4.2. I will actively seek your feedback to strengthen my leadership abilities and improve the team. As with all pursuits, leadership mastery does not have an end state—it is a journey. Team members may struggle to provide feedback to team leaders for fear that it will not be well received. Team leaders should actively seek and reflect on the feedback, incorporate needed changes, and show appreciation to the individual providing the feedback.

4.4.3. I will support you in your endeavors regardless of outcome, and will work to be better tomorrow than I am today. Team leaders challenge team members to pursue endeavors despite the possibility of failure. Support and approval are not contingent on successfully meeting every goal. If the team and its members set audacious goals, some failure is to be expected. Team leaders should embrace such failure as a learning opportunity. Team leaders must actively model the journey towards mastery.

Chapter 5

COURAGE

5.1. *Courage to be bold.* Guardians do what needs to be done and say what needs to be said because it is right. We are steadfast and hold to our convictions. We have the power to choose regardless of circumstance. We are biased toward action, accepting risk to boldly secure our domain and defend the nation. We act and speak fearlessly, knowing our teammates and leadership are unwavering in their support. Today and into tomorrow, we will continue to deploy some Guardians to austere locations. Locations which require the ability, like John Wayne said, to be scared to death and saddle up anyway. That is always going to be a part of military service. For most Guardians, other types of courage will be more regularly tested. Courage to say something when you know the policy is not right. Courage to tell your boss they are missing something. Courage to put your credibility, your reputation on the line because you believe there is a better way of doing business. We also need the courage to know something could fail and to do it anyway. Those types of things happen every single day in our Space Force. You may not often get the chance to kick the door in, maybe you never will, but your Nation needs you to have the courage of your convictions, to say something is not right, to stand up when something needs to be changed, and to imagine impossible solutions. It takes courage to say “Boss, we need to slow down because we’re not doing this properly.” It takes courage to win, no matter the domain.

5.2. Context. Being a bold problem solver is central to our Guardian Spirit and it is simply not possible without Courage. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The time is always right to do right.” *Courage* completes our values because without it we cannot live up to the ideals of Character, Connection, and Commitment. Guardians draw courage and strength from fellow Guardians. Courage enables Guardians to break through barriers, persevere despite adversity, and take on challenges.

5.3. Team Member Statements

5.3.1. I will be steadfast and stand up for what is right. To be steadfast is to stand firm over matters where right and wrong are clear. This should not be confused with stubbornly holding to an opinion or a personal preference.

5.3.2. I will seek opportunities to innovate and encourage my teammates to do the same. Often there is a valid reason for the things we do and how we do them. In other instances, those reasons have been forgotten or processes are no longer relevant. Guardians must highlight areas that can be improved and encourage their teammates to do the same. Innovation requires a creative environment that challenges the established norms.

5.3.3. I will share thoughts and ideas to help the team and the mission. Each Guardian has an obligation to make the team better by calling into question things that do not make sense and offering potential alternatives. With the support of their teammates, Guardians exercise the courage to overcome fear. Team members will leverage the strengths, insights, and courage of other members to elevate performance and achieve mission success.

5.4. Team Leader Statements

5.4.1. I will be steadfast and stand up for what is right. As with the other values, team leaders are also team members and remain responsible for all team member expectations. When it comes to having the courage to stand up for what is right, team leaders have the additional responsibility to make decisions that need to be made. Leaders do not shy away from their responsibilities and team leaders have the strength to put their reputation and position on the line to do what is right. Team leaders face additional scrutiny and expectations, and should remember they must voice their concerns and stand their ground when appropriate. Your team and fellow Guardians are counting on you.

5.4.2. I will help you develop ideas, and champion those ideas, to strengthen the team and accomplish the mission. Our Guardians have tremendous ideas but sometimes lack the experience or context necessary to make them practical. Transparent communication is at the forefront of innovation; therefore, leaders must provide feedback as to why an idea is or is not pursued. Leaders must champion the best ideas regardless of their personal stake in the matter. The benefit of these practices achieves long-term commitment to the team versus short-term compliance.

5.4.3. I will take smart risks and give you opportunities to explore new ideas. Any change involves risk. Smart risk-taking involves an assessment of the cost against the value of the returns. The mission command concept and command by negotiation approach encourage leadership to make risk-informed decisions and to determine if the potential benefit to the mission is worth the expenditure of effort. Team leaders are accountable to their team and their own leadership for the risks taken and not taken. The United States Space Force employs mission command to encourage leaders at all levels to take the initiative and seize opportunities to advance the mission in line with the commander's intent.

B. CHANCE SALTZMAN, General, USSF
Chief of Space Operations

Attachment 1

THE GUARDIAN COMMITMENT

Figure A1. The Guardian Commitment.

