

later than 90 days after each application for enlistment is made.

(c) The Military Services shall ensure the confidentiality of criminal history record information obtained for recruiting purposes. Personnel who have access to this information may not disclose it except for the purposes for which obtained (10 U.S.C. 520a).

(d) The DIS shall provide additional background information to the Military Services as needed to determine the suitability of applicants for enlistment and for participation in special programs. This additional background information shall be provided by Entrance National Agency Checks (ENTNACs) and other investigations as directed by DoD 5200.2-R.

PART 97—RELEASE OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION IN LITIGATION AND TESTIMONY BY DoD PERSONNEL AS WITNESSES

Sec.

- 97.1 Purpose.
- 97.2 Applicability and scope.
- 97.3 Definitions.
- 97.4 Policy.
- 97.5 Responsibilities.
- 97.6 Procedures.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 10 U.S.C. 133.

SOURCE: 50 FR 32056, Aug. 8, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 97.1 Purpose.

This directive establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures for the release of official DoD information in litigation and for testimony by DoD personnel as witnesses during litigation.

§ 97.2 Applicability and scope.

(a) This directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS), the Unified and Specified Commands, and the Defense Agencies (hereafter referred to as "DoD Components"), and to all personnel of such DoD Components.

(b) This directive does not apply to the release of official information or testimony by DoD personnel in the following situations:

(1) Before courts-martial convened by the authority of the Military Departments or in administrative proceedings conducted by or on behalf of a DoD Component;

(2) Pursuant to administrative proceedings conducted by or on behalf of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), or pursuant to a negotiated grievance procedure under a collective bargaining agreement to which the Government is a party;

(3) In response to requests by Federal Government counsel in litigation conducted on behalf of the United States;

(4) As part of the assistance required pursuant to DoD Directive 5220.6, "Industrial Personnel Security Clearance Program," December 20 1976; or,

(5) Pursuant to disclosure of information to Federal, State, and local prosecuting and law enforcement authorities, in conjunction with an investigation conducted by a DoD criminal investigative organization.

(c) This Directive does not supersede or modify existing laws or DoD program governing the testimony of DoD personnel or the release of official DoD information during grand jury proceedings, the release of official information not involved in litigation, or the release of official information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, or the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, nor does this Directive preclude treating any written request for agency records that is not in the nature of legal process as a request under the Freedom of Information or Privacy Acts.

(d) This Directive is not intended to infringe upon or displace the responsibilities committed to the Department of Justice in conducting litigation on behalf of the United States in appropriate cases.

(e) This Directive does not preclude official comment on matters in litigation in appropriate cases.

(f) This Directive is intended only to provide guidance for the internal operation of the Department of Defense and is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural,

Office of the Secretary of Defense

§ 97.6

enforceable at law against the United States or the Department of Defense.

§ 97.3 Definitions.

(a) *Demand.* Subpoena, order, or other demand of a court of competent jurisdiction, or other specific authority, for the production, disclosure, or release of official DoD information or for the appearance and testimony of DoD personnel as witnesses.

(b) *DoD personnel.* Present and former U.S. military personnel; Service Academy cadets and midshipmen; and present and former civilian employees of any Component of the Department of Defense, including nonappropriated fund activity employees; non-U.S. nationals who perform services overseas, under the provisions of status of forces agreements, for the U.S. Armed Forces; and other specific individuals hired through contractual agreements by or on behalf of the Department of Defense.

(c) *Litigation.* All pretrial, trial, and post-trial stages of all existing or reasonably anticipated judicial or administrative actions, hearings, investigations, or similar proceedings before civilian courts, commissions, boards (including the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals), or other tribunals, foreign and domestic. This term includes responses to discovery requests, depositions, and other pretrial proceedings, as well as responses to formal or informal requests by attorneys or others in situations involving litigation.

(d) *Official information.* All information of any kind, however stored, that is in the custody and control of the Department of Defense, relates to information in the custody and control of the Department, or was acquired by DoD personnel as part of their official duties or because of their official status within the Department while such personnel were employed by or on behalf of the Department or on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces.

§ 97.4 Policy.

It is DoD policy that official information should generally be made reasonably available for use in Federal and State courts and by other governmental bodies unless the information is

classified, privileged, or otherwise protected from public disclosure.

§ 97.5 Responsibilities.

(a) The *General Counsel, Department of Defense*, shall provide general policy and procedural guidance by the issuance of supplemental instructions or specific orders concerning the release of official DoD information in litigation and the testimony of DoD personnel as witnesses during litigation.

(b) The *Heads of DoD Components* shall issue appropriate regulations to implement this Directive and to identify official information that is involved in litigation.

§ 97.6 Procedures.

(a) *Authority to act.* (1) In response to a litigation request or demand for official DoD information or the testimony of DoD personnel as witnesses, the General Counsels of DoD, Navy, and the Defense Agencies; the Judge Advocates General of the Military Departments; and the Chief Legal Advisors to the JCS and the Unified and Specified Commands, with regard to their respective Components, are authorized—after consulting and coordinating with the appropriate Department of Justice litigation attorneys, as required—to determine whether official information may be released in litigation; whether DoD personnel assigned to or affiliated with the Component may be interviewed, contacted, or used as witnesses concerning official DoD information or as expert witnesses; and what, if any, conditions will be imposed upon such release, interview, contact, or testimony. Delegation of this authority, to include the authority to invoke appropriate claims of privilege before any tribunal, is permitted.

(2) In the event that a DoD Component receives a litigation request or demand for official information originated by another Component, the receiving Component shall forward the appropriate portions of the request or demand to the originating Component for action in accordance with this Directive. The receiving Component shall also notify the requestor, court, or other authority of its transfer of the request or demand.