



# DoD INSTRUCTION 7050.01

## DoD HOTLINE PROGRAM

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<b>Approved by:</b>	Glenn A. Fine, Acting Inspector General of the Department of Defense

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**Purpose:** In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5106.01, this issuance establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for the DoD Hotline Program. The DoD Hotline provides a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report fraud, waste and abuse, violations of law, rule or regulation, mismanagement, and classified information leaks involving the DoD. The detection and prevention of threats and danger to the public health and safety of the DoD and the United States are essential elements of the DoD Hotline mission.

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## **SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION**

**1.1. APPLICABILITY.** This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense (OIG DoD), the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

**1.2. POLICY.** It is DoD policy that:

- a. Preventing and detecting fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in DoD programs and operations promotes efficiency, economy, and effectiveness.
- b. DoD personnel are required to report suspected fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other matters of concern to DoD without fear of reprisal.
- c. The OIG DoD maintains the DoD Hotline Program.

## SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1. INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (IG DOD).** In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the IG DoD:

- a. Maintains the DoD Hotline Program, directs its implementation across the DoD Components, and establishes the means to contact the DoD Hotline while ensuring inquiries from allegations are conducted in accordance with applicable laws, DoD regulations, policies, and professional standards.
- b. Receives complaints and investigates or refers and oversees cases concerning allegations, including instances related to:
  - (1) Violations of laws, rules, or regulations.
  - (2) Fraud, waste, or abuse of authority.
  - (3) Mismanagement.
  - (4) Threats to homeland security or national security.
  - (5) Leaks of classified information.
  - (6) Trafficking in persons.
  - (7) DoD related substantial and specific dangers to the public health and safety.
  - (8) Reprisal against whistleblower(s).
- c. Initiates, conducts, oversees, and coordinates such audits, investigations, evaluations, and inspections within the DoD, including the Military Departments, as appropriate.
- d. Ensures DoD Hotline cases are appropriately referred to DoD Components for investigation and potential action and response.
- e. Conducts quality assurance reviews (QARs) of DoD Component hotlines to ensure they comply with quality standards for hotlines (see Section 4).
- f. Maintains an active DoD Hotline publicity campaign. Implements public awareness education initiatives to encourage employees to identify and report allegations of concern to the Department, including those detailed in Paragraph 2.1 b.
- g. Issues implementing guidance that specifies:
  - (1) Quality standards for the DoD Hotline and supporting DoD Component hotlines.
  - (2) Procedures to ensure that all cases referred are appropriately evaluated and acted upon.

(3) Requirements to protect the identity of sources requesting anonymity or confidentiality.

**2.2. DOD COMPONENT HEADS.** DoD Component heads:

a. Establish DoD Component policies to ensure the DoD Hotline Program is fully implemented and effective within their respective organizations.

b. Ensure cases referred for action by the DoD Hotline are investigated and reported back to the DoD Hotline via a completed Hotline Completion Report (HCR) in the current DoD Hotline approved format in Section 6 of this issuance.

c. Ensure cases referred for information by the DoD Hotline resulting in substantiated allegations are reported back to the DoD Hotline via an HCR.

d. Designate a DoD Hotline Coordinator for their DoD Component as the single point of contact to interact with the DoD Hotline and perform the duties described in Paragraph 3.3.

(1) The DoD Component's DoD Hotline Coordinator must be either a government employee or Service member and is responsible for referring cases within the DoD Component for appropriate response and corrective action.

(2) In DoD Components with military criminal investigative organizations, the DoD Component head designates a separate DoD Hotline Coordinator for direct criminal referrals.

e. Establish programs, to support the DoD Hotline, that adhere to the quality standards for hotlines in Section 4. Ensure the DoD Hotline and DoD Component hotline investigators have quick and unrestricted access to all necessary DoD Component records and information.

f. Ensure appropriate corrective action is taken in response to substantiated allegations.

g. Establish and maintain a direct link on the homepage of the website of the DoD Component hotline for individuals to report allegations.

(1) Individuals reporting via the direct link established in accordance with this paragraph will not be required to provide personally identifiable information.

(2) All complaints submitted via this website will be secure sockets layer.

h. Maintain a public awareness campaign ensuring that the current DoD Hotline fraud, waste, and abuse hotline poster, prepared by the DoD Office of the Inspector General, is displayed in common work areas.

**2.3. DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE COMPONENT IGS (DEFENSE IC IGS).**

a. Pursuant to Sections 2 and 8G of the IG Act of 1978, as amended, the Defense IC IGS consist of the IGs of the:

- (1) National Security Agency.
- (2) National Reconnaissance Office.
- (3) Defense Intelligence Agency.
- (4) National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

b. The Defense IC IGS:

(1) Are responsible for implementing DoD Hotline Programs for their respective DoD Components, to include responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2.

(2) Provide the IG DoD support or information necessary for the IG DoD to satisfy his or her duties and responsibilities assigned in this instruction.

(3) Coordinate with the IG DoD on matters of common interest to avoid potential conflicts arising from overlapping statutory responsibilities.

## SECTION 3: HOTLINE PROCEDURES

### 3.1. DOD HOTLINE.

a. The DoD Hotline will comply with the quality standards for hotlines in Section 4. For instructions on how to file a complaint with the DoD Hotline, see Paragraph 5.3. DoD Hotline personnel refer cases as either referrals for action or referrals for information. These cases, as appropriate, are referred to the DoD Components through the DoD Component's Hotline Coordinator.

(1) DoD Hotline Coordinators conduct timely inquiries of referrals for action and submit completed HCRs to the DoD Hotline.

(a) DoD Hotline personnel refer cases to DoD Hotline Coordinators according to the following priorities:

1. Priority 1 – Emergency. These cases require immediate action. They usually involve an immediate threat to life, physical harm to a person, significant property damage, or an immediate threat to national security. These cases are worked to the exclusion of everything else until the case is referred to and received by the proper authority. Priority 1 Emergency cases require prompt initial feedback from the DoD Hotline Coordinator to the DoD Hotline within a suspense established by the DoD Hotline at the time of the referral. The suspense is established based on the urgency of the matter.

2. Priority 1 – Expedited Referral. DoD Hotline personnel notify the proper authorities and refer the case within 1 workday of receipt. An expedited referral case may, for example, involve a danger to public health or safety.

3. Priority 2 – Prompt Referral. DoD Hotline personnel notify the proper authorities and refer the case within 3 workdays of receipt. A prompt referral case may, for example, involve allegations of whistleblower reprisal, senior official misconduct, or other matters of heightened concern to the department.

4. Priority 3 – Routine. DoD Hotline personnel refer the case within 10 workdays of receipt.

(b) Unless superseded by specific statutory or regulatory requirements, HCRs must be submitted within 1 year for criminal investigations and audits, and 6 months for all other hotline inquiries. The HCR due date is based on the date the DoD Hotline transmits the referral to the DoD Hotline Coordinator. Requests to extend the time limit must be in writing and will include the reason for the delay and estimated completion date.

(2) Upon receiving a referral for information, the DoD Component Hotline Coordinator will review the referral for information and determine whether an inquiry is warranted. An HCR is not required unless the DoD Component Hotline Coordinator conducts an inquiry based on the information referral and an allegation is substantiated.

b. The DoD Hotline staff conducts HCR oversight review of cases assigned to the DoD Components. When conducting reviews the DoD Hotline staff:

(1) Reviews and analyzes all HCRs to determine whether all aspects of the complaint were addressed fully, appropriate corrective action was taken based on the stated findings and conclusions, and the HCRs were prepared using the appropriate format.

(2) Notifies the DoD Hotline Coordinator of deficiencies in HCRs that require correction.

c. Requests for DoD Hotline records will comply with the following procedures:

(1) Official use requests must:

(a) Be submitted in writing on agency letterhead, signed by the requester, and addressed to: DoD Hotline, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1900.

(b) Describe the specific records requested (e.g., type of document; hotline case number; date of complaint or investigation; name of the complainant, subject or investigator; and name of investigative organization).

(c) Provide the requester's name, duty title, and organization.

(d) Include a statement that the requester requires the records in performing his or her official duties and an explanation of the specific official purpose for which the records are required.

(2) Organizations requesting DoD Hotline records will not have full and unrestricted access to DoD Hotline and DoD Component hotline records and databases. When a project is announced, the reviewing organization may submit an official use request for data that is reasonably within the scope of the audit or inquiry and does not compromise the identity of sources protected in accordance with Appendix 3, Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), also known and referred to in this issuance as the "Inspector General (IG) Act of 1978."

(3) The DoD Hotline does not respond to requests for information from the public, to include complainants. All requests for DoD Hotline records made pursuant to Sections 552 and 552a of Title 5, U.S.C. (also known and referred to in this issuance as "the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)" and "the Privacy Act of 1974," respectively) are submitted to the OIG DoD FOIA Requester Service Center. Go to the IG DoD website at: [www.dodig.mil/foia](http://www.dodig.mil/foia) for information on how to submit a FOIA request for IG records.

### **3.2. DOD COMPONENT HOTLINES.**

a. DoD Component hotlines are required to comply with the quality standards for hotlines in Section 4.

- b. When applicable, DoD Component hotlines are required to comply with:
  - (1) Government Auditing Standards.
  - (2) Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), “Quality Standards for Investigations.”
  - (3) CIGIE “Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations.”
- c. DoD Hotline Coordinators will accept action and information referrals from the DoD Hotline, and will ensure action referrals are completed and HCRs submitted in a timely manner.
- d. All requests for DoD Component hotline records made pursuant to FOIA are submitted to the appropriate requester service center.
- e. DoD Component hotlines will assist in conducting QARs as described in Section 7.

**3.3. DOD COMPONENT HOTLINE COORDINATORS.** The DoD Component Hotline Coordinators:

- a. Establish written procedures within their DoD Components for promptly receiving, prioritizing, processing, controlling, investigating, independently and objectively reviewing, and reporting all cases referred by the DoD Hotline.
- b. Receive and process all DoD Hotline action and information referrals from the DoD Hotline.
- c. Notify the DoD Hotline, as soon as possible, of DoD Component actions taken in response to a Priority 1 Emergency referral.
- d. Examine DoD Hotline information referrals to determine if an inquiry is warranted.
- e. Track all DoD Hotline cases by the DoD Hotline case tracking number.
- f. Assign DoD Hotline referrals to the appropriate organization within the DoD Component.
- g. Ensure that all hotline personnel protect the personal identity of and information provided by individuals participating in a hotline process from unauthorized disclosure.
  - (1) Will not disclose the identity of an individual providing the hotline a complaint or information unless:
    - (a) The individual consents to such disclosure;
    - (b) The DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director has determined the disclosure is unavoidable to address the matter raised by the individual or is otherwise authorized by proper authority;

(c) It is necessary to address an emergency situation; or

(d) The complainant has made it known outside IG channels that they are the person who submitted the complaint.

(2) Hotline personnel will not forward a complaint or information that clearly identifies an individual as the source of the complaint or information to a DoD Component organization outside the hotline unless one of the circumstances detailed in Paragraph 3.3.g.(1) of this issuance is met.

(3) DoD Components will not forward DoD Hotline cases outside their DoD Component. In instances where DoD Components believe the matter should be referred to another DoD Component, the DoD Hotline Coordinator will return the case to the DoD Hotline, recommending the DoD Hotline refer the matter elsewhere.

h. Monitor the status of all DoD Hotline action referrals and information referrals warranting inquiry, and ensure DoD Component organizations prepare HCRs using the approved format.

i. Provide the DoD Hotline the HCR by the suspense date on the referral document. If the suspense cannot be met, provide the DoD Hotline a written extension request, before the suspense date, stating the reason for the delay and the expected completion date.

j. Comply with the QAR requirements in Section 7.

k. Ensure completed hotline case files are maintained in accordance with applicable DoD Component record retention standards or a minimum of 10 years after the case is closed by the DoD Hotline, whichever is greater.

#### **3.4. OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATION (OCO) HOTLINE COMPLAINT REPORTING.**

a. When the IG DoD is serving as Lead IG for an OCO, DoD Hotline Coordinators will report OCO-related complaints to the DoD Hotline. The DoD Hotline Coordinator will forward OCO-related complaints by email to the DoD Hotline within 5 workdays. To ensure proper accounting the correspondence will include:

(1) “OCO” plus the name of the contingency (e.g., OCO OIR [Operation INHERENT RESOLVE], OCO OFS [Operation FREEDOM SENTINEL], or OCO OUA [Operation UNITED ASSISTANCE]) and the abbreviated organization name.

(2) In the body of the email, include the organization-unique case identifier (e.g., OCO OIR IGMC Case XXXXX).

b. The DoD Hotline Coordinator will respond to DoD Hotline requests for additional information within 5 workdays.

## SECTION 4: QUALITY STANDARDS FOR HOTLINES

### 4.1. GENERAL.

a. The quality standards for hotlines are developed from:

- (1) CIGIE “Quality Standards for Offices of Federal Inspectors General.”
- (2) Government Auditing Standards.
- (3) CIGIE “Quality Standards for Investigations.”
- (4) CIGIE “Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations.”

b. Hotlines will operate by these standard operating procedures:

(1) Establish standard operating procedures that implement the policy, procedures, and standards in this issuance.

(2) Establish procedures to promptly receive, prioritize, process, control, inquire, independently and objectively review, and report on all allegations received by the hotline.

c. Hotline personnel whose duties include receiving or investigating complaints will attend the IG training courses to provide them the knowledge, skills and abilities to adhere to the quality standards for hotlines outlined in Section 4. Individuals should complete this training before the initial assignment to the hotline but not later than 120 days after assignment.

d. Hotline staff will be trained in and knowledgeable about the mission and programs of the organization they serve in order to determine the potential impact of complaints and information referenced in Paragraph 2.1; and to quickly refer, to the correct office, complaints that are not appropriate for the hotline. Hotline staff must have security clearances commensurate with the classification level of the materials they handle.

**4.2. PROTECTING THE IDENTITY OF HOTLINE SOURCES.** All hotline personnel have a duty to protect from unauthorized disclosure the personal identity of and information provided by individuals participating in a hotline process. Hotline personnel have a duty to maintain confidentiality as they execute DoD Hotline duties and responsibilities.

a. Hotline personnel will not disclose the identity of an individual providing the DoD Hotline a complaint or information unless one of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The complainant consents to such disclosure;
- (2) The complainant has made it known outside OIG DoD channels that he or she submitted the complaint;

(3) The DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director has determined the disclosure is unavoidable to address the matter raised by the complainant or is otherwise authorized by proper authority;

(4) It is necessary to address an emergency situation; or

(5) When transferring the matter outside DoD to an IG named in the IG Act of 1978, as amended, who has a duty to maintain confidentiality.

b. The DoD Hotline may transfer cases to local law enforcement or other authorities outside the DoD in instances where the recipient has jurisdiction over the matter or where complainants appear to be a danger to themselves or others or appear in need of assistance by local health officials. In such instances, the hotline will provide a Privacy Act Notice to the complainant informing them where and why their identity was disclosed (unless the privacy notice may jeopardize safety or compromise an investigation).

#### **4.3. OFFICE SPACE.**

a. Whenever possible, hotlines will not share office space with non-hotline personnel due to the risk of unauthorized disclosure of hotline information.

b. Hotline offices will be located in areas where service members, civilians, and others will not be conspicuous when entering the hotline office (resources permitting). This increases confidentiality and reduces the potential for reprisal.

**4.4. IMPAIRMENTS TO INDEPENDENCE.** Personnel who manage DoD Hotline cases and conduct inquiries must be free, both in fact and appearance, from possible conflicts of interest. This standard places the responsibility for maintaining independence upon the DoD Hotline and DoD Component staffs so that decisions used in prioritizing, processing, investigating, reviewing, and reporting on hotline complaints will be impartial and will be viewed as independent.

a. Whenever possible, hotline positions will not be combined with other positions within the organization.

b. Hotline personnel will not be assigned additional duties that interfere with their responsibility as fair and impartial fact-finders or that could potentially create a conflict of interest.

**4.5. COMPLAINT PROCESSING PRIORITIES.** DoD Hotline personnel and DoD Hotline Coordinators refer cases based on the priorities listed in Paragraph 3.1a(1)(a).

#### **4.6. FILE MAINTENANCE AND DOCUMENTATION.**

a. The hotline case file must contain documentation that supports the findings and conclusions contained in the HCR. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) DoD Hotline referral or complaint made to the DoD Component.
- (2) The HCR.
- (3) Actions taken to determine the facts and make findings.
- (4) The complete identity of all witnesses, their contact information, and the date of and information relayed during interviews.
- (5) Specific details and locations of all documents reviewed during the inquiry.
- (6) A description of any other actions taken by the DoD Component or other legal authority as a result of the hotline inquiry.
- (7) Evidence relied upon in making the final determination including:
  - (a) Documents gathered during the inquiry.
  - (b) Transcripts or summaries of interviews conducted.
  - (c) Investigative reports.
  - (d) Final legal reviews.
  - (e) Full and complete results including corrective actions taken.

b. Hotline personnel will:

- (1) Mark, control, and protect unclassified hotline records as “For Official Use Only” in accordance with Volume 4 of DoD Manual 5200.01.
- (2) Mark, control, and protect classified hotline records in accordance with Volumes 2 and 3 of DoD Manual 5200.01.
- (3) Ensure electronic records management systems meet the cybersecurity requirements in DoD Instruction 8500.01.

**4.7. ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD.** Hotline personnel will promptly report all allegations of fraud to the appropriate Defense Criminal Investigative Organization in accordance with DoD Instruction 5505.02.

**4.8. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST DOD SENIOR OFFICIALS.** Hotline personnel will promptly report allegations against senior officials of the DoD to the OIG DoD in accordance with DoDD 5505.06.

**4.9. WHISTLEBLOWER REPRISAL COMPLAINTS.** Hotline personnel who receive a complaint of whistleblower reprisal will:

a. Promptly report to the OIG DoD complaints of reprisal for making disclosures protected by statute consistent with:

(1) Sections 1034, 1587, and 2409 of Title 10, U.S.C., as implemented by DoDDs 7050.06 and 1401.03.

(2) Section 2302 of Title 5, U.S.C. and the IG Act of 1978, as amended.

(3) Presidential Policy Directive 19 as implemented by Directive-type Memorandum 13-008.

b. Provide a copy of the written complaint to the OIG DoD ensuring that classified materials are submitted through appropriate channels.

**4.10. QUALITY STANDARDS FOR HOTLINE INQUIRIES.** All hotline inquiries subject to oversight by the DoD Hotline will meet the quality standards for hotline inquiries in Section 8.

**4.11. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.** Hotline personnel will use a case tracking system that allows the effective retrieval, reference, and analysis of complaint and case data in order to facilitate reporting requirements.

**4.12. PERFORMANCE METRICS AND TREND ANALYSIS.** Hotline personnel collect and analyze data to:

a. Identify opportunities to improve the management of hotline complaints from receipt to resolution.

b. Identify trends that will help DoD decision makers combat fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in DoD Component programs and operations more effectively.

**4.13. ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH MANAGEMENT.** Hotline personnel meet regularly with senior OIG DoD or DoD Component managers and staff to identify, review, and discuss areas of weakness and vulnerability in DoD Component programs and operations, on subject matter listed in Paragraph 2.1.b.

**4.14. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.** Hotline personnel engage in education and outreach efforts to raise the profile of the hotline and its purpose and scope.

**4.15. RECORDS MANAGEMENT.** Hotline personnel ensure that completed hotline case files are maintained for at least 10 years after the case is closed by the DoD Hotline.

## SECTION 5: FILING A DOD HOTLINE COMPLAINT

**5.1. WHO MAY FILE A COMPLAINT.** The DoD Hotline accepts complaints and information from all sources, including third parties.

**5.2. WHAT TO REPORT.** Information on specific matters that should be reported to the DoD Hotline is located online at <http://www.dodig.mil/hotline>. In general, individuals may report allegations listed in Paragraph 2.1.b.

**5.3. HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT.** Complaints may be filed online, by facsimile, and by mail or commercial delivery service. The DoD Hotline does not accept complaints via email. Additional information on filing a complaint is available online at <http://www.dodig.mil/hotline>.

**5.4. MATTERS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE DOD HOTLINE.** Information on matters that are not appropriate for the DoD Hotline is available at <http://www.dodig.mil/hotline>.

a. The DoD Hotline does not conduct inquiries into complaints that are not connected to the DoD.

b. To avoid duplication, the DoD Hotline or DoD Component hotlines generally do not accept complaints for which other channels to address the matter have been established by law, rule, or regulation.

### 5.5. COMPLAINANT ACCESS TO THE HOTLINE AND LIMITING ACCESS.

a. Complainants can:

(1) File a complaint without going through their supervisory chain.

(2) File a complaint without fear of reprisal.

(3) File an anonymous complaint.

(4) Withhold consent to disclose their identity outside the DoD Hotline. However, the DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director may:

(a) Dismiss the complaint if disclosing the complainant's identity is needed to take further action on the complaint.

(b) Disclose the complainant's identity as described in Paragraph 4.2.a. of this issuance.

(5) File a complaint on behalf of another individual as a third-party complainant.

(6) Request withdrawing their complaint in writing; however, the DoD Hotline may still act on the complaint.

b. The DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director may dismiss a complaint or limit a complainant's access to the DoD Hotline under one or more of the following conditions:

(1) The complaint is not filed in a timely manner and an inquiry would not be a prudent use of government resources.

(2) The complainant does not respond to requests for information necessary to investigate the complainant's allegations.

(3) False or misleading statements or concealment of a material fact from the DoD Hotline.

(4) Absent new evidence, the DoD Hotline does not reinvestigate matters previously investigated.

(5) Facts that, if true, would not constitute a violation of a standard, whether defined by law, rule, or regulation.

(6) The complainant uses harassing, vulgar, or threatening language when communicating with the DoD Hotline, unless the gravity of the matter outweighs the abusive behavior.

(7) Illogical complaints that are not easily understood.

## SECTION 6: DoD HCR FORMAT

**6.1. GENERAL.** DoD Components will use the format in this section for all HCRs. However, DoD Components that share the same case management system with DoD Hotline may not need to submit an HCR because their case data would be stored in the same system.

### 6.2. REPORT FORMAT.

- a. DoD Hotline case number.
- b. DoD Component case number.
- c. Allegation.
  - (1) Name, rank, and organization of the subject.
  - (2) Description of the violation.
  - (3) Date when the violation occurred.
  - (4) Where the violation occurred.
  - (5) Law, rule, or regulation violated.
  - (6) Findings. State “substantiated” or “not substantiated” only.
  - (7) Analysis. Describe how the evidence supports the findings.
  - (8) Corrective actions. Include disciplinary actions, judicial actions, recoveries, regulatory or procedural changes, and management actions taken, as applicable.
- d. Security clearance actions. Report whether the subject of a substantiated allegation has a security clearance. If so, report actions taken to notify the Central Adjudication Facility of the substantiated allegation.
- e. Location of report of inquiry or working papers.
- f. Investigating officer identification data. Name, rank, organization, duty location, telephone number, and email address.
- g. Investigator’s statement. This statement will use the format: “I certify that I complied with the Quality Standards for Hotline Inquiries in DoD Instruction 7050.01.” The investigating officer will sign and date the form.
- h. DoD Hotline Coordinator’s identification data, to include name, rank, organization, duty location, telephone number, and email address.
- i. Information security requirements.

(1) Mark unclassified HCRs “For Official Use Only,” in accordance with Volume 4 of DoD Manual.

(2) Mark classified HCRs in accordance with Volume 2 of DoD Manual 5200.01.

## SECTION 7: QARS

**7.1. GENERAL.** The DoD Hotline conducts QARs to verify compliance with the quality standards in Section 8 and includes cases referred to the DoD Component by the DoD Hotline and those received directly by the DoD Component hotline.

### 7.2. PROCEDURES.

a. These procedures apply to QARs of cases closed 12- to 18-month before the QAR.

(1) Announcement Memorandum. The DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director will provide a memorandum announcing the QAR to the first senior official in the chain of command above the DoD Component hotline, and provide copies to the DoD Hotline Coordinator and other officials, as deemed appropriate by the Deputy Inspector General for Administrative Investigations.

(2) QAR Team. The QAR team is led by a DoD Hotline Senior Investigator and comprised of DoD employees with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and security clearances needed to perform the review.

(3) Selecting Cases and Case Files.

(a) The DoD Hotline Coordinator must provide the DoD Hotline a list of DoD Component hotline cases closed during the previous 12 to 18 months. The list must include cases closed at every echelon within the DoD Component that conducts inquiries in response to complaints received by the DoD Component hotline. The list must contain sufficient information for the QAR team to determine the nature of the allegations and the results of the inquiry.

(b) The QAR team selects the cases to be reviewed from two sources:

1. The DoD Component-provided list

2. A DoD Hotline-generated list of completed cases closed 12 to 18 months before the QAR.

(c) The DoD Hotline Coordinator must provide the complete case files of the inquiries selected for QAR to the DoD Hotline by the date stated in the announcement memorandum. Electronic or paper copies of original case files are acceptable if all documents contained in the original file are copied and placed in the same location as in the original file. This includes memorandums, notes, and all other documents in a file.

(4) Entrance and Exit Briefings. The QAR team provides entrance and exit briefings, either in-person or by telephone, to the first senior official in the chain of command above the DoD Component hotline, DoD Hotline Coordinator, and other officials agreed upon by the QAR team and DoD Hotline Coordinator.

(a) The entrance briefing provides the QAR objectives and allows the QAR team to answer the questions and concerns of the DoD Component.

(b) The exit briefing provides preliminary QAR results and recommendations for correcting any noted deficiencies. The DoD Component may comment on the preliminary QAR results and have its comments included in the final QAR report.

(5) QAR Reports. The DoD Hotline Director or Deputy Director provides a written report of the QAR findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the first senior official in the chain of command above the DoD Component hotline, with a copy to the DoD Hotline Coordinator.

(6) Follow-up. The DoD Hotline must follow-up on corrective actions taken based on the recommendations in the QAR report.

b. After the final report is issued, the QAR team will return any original records provided by the DoD Component. The DoD Hotline must retain copied case files, along with notes and files generated by the QAR, for 10 years after the date of the QAR report.

## SECTION 8: QUALITY STANDARDS FOR HOTLINE INQUIRIES

**8.1. GENERAL.** This section establishes the minimum quality standards for hotline inquiries conducted in response to DoD Hotline referrals to the DoD Hotline Coordinators and complaints made directly to DoD Component hotlines.

a. Hotline inquiries conducted in accordance with this issuance will meet applicable DoD regulatory standards for quality for all investigations, audits, inquiries, criminal investigations, inspections, and evaluations.

b. Nothing in this section supersedes the “Government Auditing Standards,” published by the Government Accountability Office that are applicable to DoD audit organizations or criminal investigative standards applicable to the Defense Criminal Investigative Organizations and other DoD law enforcement organizations.

### 8.2. INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS.

**a. Qualifications.** The organization conducting the hotline inquiry must ensure that the activities are conducted by personnel who collectively possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and security clearances to perform the required tasks.

**b. Independence.** In all matters relating to investigative work, personnel and organizations conducting the inquiry must be independent, both in fact and appearance. Individuals assigned to conduct and review the hotline inquiry must be:

(1) Outside the immediate chain of command (as established under DoD Component regulations) of both the individual submitting the allegation(s) and the individual(s) accused of wrongdoing; or

(2) At least one organization higher in the chain of command than the organization of the individual submitting the allegation and the individual or individuals accused of wrongdoing.

**c. Due Professional Care.** All cases must be handled with due professional care, including preparing HCRs and resolving matters contained in hotline referrals. This standard requires:

(1) Thoroughness. All cases must be handled in a diligent and complete manner, and reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that relevant matters are sufficiently resolved; and to ensure that all appropriate criminal, civil, contractual, or administrative remedies are considered.

(2) Legal Requirements. Hotline inquiries conducted under this section must be:

(a) Initiated, conducted, and reported in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations; applicable guidelines from the Department of Justice and other prosecuting authorities; and internal DoD Component policies and procedures.

(b) Conducted with respect for the rights and privacy of those involved.

(3) Appropriate Techniques. Specific methods and techniques used in each case must be appropriate for the circumstances and objectives.

(4) Impartiality. All cases must be handled in a fair and equitable manner, with the perseverance necessary to determine the facts.

(5) Objectivity. Evidence must be gathered, analyzed, and reported in an unbiased and independent manner in an effort to determine the validity of an allegation. This includes inculpatory and exculpatory information.

(6) Standard of Proof. The preponderance of evidence is the standard of proof used to substantiate or not substantiate allegations.

(7) Ethics. The actions of hotline personnel and the investigative organization must conform to all applicable standards of ethical conduct.

(8) Timeliness. Hotline inquiries must be conducted and reported within the timelines established in Paragraph 3.1.a.(1)(b). This is especially critical given the impact inquiries have on the lives of individuals and mission of a DoD Component. Therefore, the effectiveness of an inquiry depends, in part, on the promptness of finished work products.

(9) Accurate and Complete Documentation. The case file must contain documentation that supports the findings and conclusions contained in the HCR. This includes:

(a) DoD Hotline referral or complaint made to the DoD Component hotline.

(b) The HCR.

(c) Actions taken to determine the facts and make findings.

(d) The complete identity of all witnesses, their contact information, and date of and all information relayed during interviews.

(e) Specific details and locations of all documents reviewed during the inquiry.

(f) A description of any other actions taken by the DoD Component or other legal authority as a result of the hotline inquiry.

(g) Evidence relied upon in making a final determination, including:

1. Documents gathered during the inquiry.

2. Transcripts or summaries of interviews conducted.

3. Inquiry reports.

4. Final legal reviews.

### **8.3. HCR STANDARDS.**

- a. HCRs must be prepared using the DoD Hotline format in Section 6.
- b. HCRs must be accurate, complete, clear, concise, impartial, timely, and well-organized. DoD Components should present facts in straightforward, grammatically-correct language and avoid jargon, redundancy, ambiguity, and obscurity.

**8.4. MANAGING INFORMATION.** Information obtained during hotline inquiries must be stored in a manner that allows effective retrieval, reference, and analysis, while ensuring the protection of sensitive data (i.e., personally identifiable, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information or materials).

## GLOSSARY

### G.1. ACRONYMS.

CIGIE	Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency
DoDD	DoD directive
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
HCR	DoD Hotline Completion Report
IG DoD	Inspector General of the Department of Defense
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operation
OIG DoD	Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense
QAR	Quality Assurance Review

**G.2. DEFINITIONS.** Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

**abuse.** Intentional wrongful, or improper use of government resources, position or authority.

**allegation.** A statement of wrongdoing or impropriety and generally includes one or more of the following elements: who, what, when, where, how or why. Allegations may be made against persons or processes. Allegations are resolved by inquiries and result in findings of substantiated or not substantiated.

**case.** Cases are opened in response to complaints that the hotline has determined require further inquiry. Cases include allegations and are named by a specific reference number for hotline tracking purposes. Cases may be referred for action or information. Cases are closed when an inquiry is complete; findings have been approved; corrective actions have been addressed; and the review process is complete.

**complaint.** A communication made to the DoD Hotline concerning instances related to:

Violations of laws, rules, or regulations.

Fraud, waste, or abuse of authority.

Mismanagement.

Threats to homeland security or national security.

Leaks of classified information.

Trafficking in persons.

DoD related substantial and specific dangers to the public health and safety.

Whistleblower reprisal.

**corrective action.** Actions, not necessarily punitive, taken in response to inquiries to include changes in regulations or practices, administrative disciplinary actions, remedial actions, indictments, convictions, recoveries, restitutions, fines, settlements, suspensions and debarments, and savings to the government.

**Defense Criminal Investigative Organization.** U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Defense Criminal Investigative Service.

**fraud.** Any intentional deception designed to deprive the United States unlawfully of something of value or to secure from the United States a benefit, privilege, allowance, or consideration to which a person or entity is not entitled. Such practices include, but are not limited to:

Offering to make a payment or accepting bribes or gratuities;

Making false statements;

Submitting false claims;

Using false weights or measures;

Evading or corrupting inspectors or other officials;

Deceiving either by suppressing the truth or misrepresenting material fact;

Adulterating or substituting materials;

Falsifying records and books of accounts;

Arranging for secret profits, kickbacks, or commissions; or

Conspiracy to do any of the above.

**inquiry.** Refers to, and is interchangeable with, the terms “audit,” “investigation,” “inspection,” “examination,” or any other type of review used to ascertain the facts in response to a DoD Hotline or Component hotline referral.

**mismanagement.** Wrongful or arbitrary and capricious actions that may have an adverse effect on the efficient accomplishment of the agency’s mission

**preponderance.** More likely than not or greater than a 50 percent probability that the wrongdoing occurred.

**referral for action.** Allegations that will be resolved by a DoD Component. Referrals for action may indicate a systemic problem within the DoD Component or may have been determined through the DoD Hotline review process to require DoD Component attention. In response to an allegation referred for action, the DoD Component will conduct an inquiry and provide a DoD HCR (described in section 6.2 of this instruction) to the DoD Hotline.

**referral for information.** Complaints or disagreements that do not require a DoD Component inquiry but should be brought to the DoD Component's attention. Referrals for information do not require a DoD HCR unless the DoD Component decides to conduct an inquiry and that inquiry substantiates an allegation(s).

**waste.** The extravagant, careless, or needless expenditure of government funds, or the consumption of government property that results from deficient practices, systems, controls, or decisions.

## REFERENCES

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- Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency “Quality Standards for Offices of Federal Inspectors General,” August 2012
- DoD Directive 1401.03, “DoD Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality (NAFI) Employee Whistleblower Protection,” June 13, 2014
- DoD Directive 5106.01, “Inspector General of the Department of Defense (IG DoD),” April 20, 2012, as amended
- DoD Directive 5505.06, “Investigations of Allegations Against Senior DoD Officials,” June 6, 2013
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- DoD Manual 5200.01, Volume 4, “DoD Information Security Program: Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI),” February 24, 2012
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- United States Code, Title 5
- United States Code, Title 10