

Issue Date: 03/01/2003

PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

I. Purpose

This directive establishes Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy regarding the public affairs management structure.

II. Scope

This directive applies to all DHS organizational elements.

III. Authorities

This directive is governed by numerous Public Laws, such as:

- A. Public Law 93-502 (Freedom of Information Act, as amended).
- B. Public Law 93-579 (Privacy Act of 1974).

IV. Definitions

- A. **Public Affairs Officers (PAOs)**: Employees of DHS whose primary duties involve disseminating information to the public through the mass media. This includes officers and special agents who are assigned either permanently to a public affairs office, or who perform public affairs duties as a collateral responsibility.

V. Responsibilities

The **Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs** is responsible for managing the public affairs duties of DHS. All **DHS public affairs managers and supervisors** are responsible for carrying out the policies and procedures in this directive. All **DHS public affairs employees** are responsible for complying with the Policies and Procedures in this directive.

VI. Policy & Procedures

A. Policy.

1. **General:** It is critically important that public information is released to the public by DHS in a timely, accurate manner. The untimely release of information or the release of inaccurate information to the public from DHS can have significant public safety consequences. This directive establishes a clear management structure to promote rapid internal communications to enable a coordinated public release of information and to establish an immediate response capability for providing information to the public.
2. **Employees of the Office of Public Affairs:** All full time and part time public affairs employees in DHS will be managed and supervised by the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. These employees will report to DHS Headquarters through a management structure approved by the Assistant Secretary and the Secretary. Due to the unique military responsibilities of the Public Affairs component of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) such public affairs component will engage in a dual reporting structure to both their USCG operational chain of command as well as to the Department of Homeland Security Office of Public Affairs. USCG components should follow all relevant DHS MDs including but not limited to the dissemination of press releases, the posting of web content, and the use of internal publications.
3. **Collateral Duty PAOs:** DHS employees who perform PAO duties but are not full-time or part-time public affairs employees, will be supervised by their respective operational chain of command, and receive guidance from the Office of Public Affairs to enable them to carry out their collateral PAO responsibilities. When performing collateral PAO duties and responsibilities, these employees will take their direction from the appropriate manager or supervisor in the Office of Public Affairs.
4. **Administrative and Logistical Support:** The Assistant Secretary will be responsible for direct administrative support of the employees of the Office of Public Affairs. This includes time and attendance, property inventory, and procurement of equipment. Local and regional officials are responsible for providing appropriate office space in accordance with established federal building guidelines, appropriate parking, and general office supplies.

5. **Funding**: The Assistant Secretary is responsible for funding salaries and benefits, travel, contracts and equipment costs for full time and part time public affairs employees. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for travel expenses of collateral PAOs. Local officials are responsible for funding space, overhead (lighting, heating, etc.) and supply costs for field public affairs employees.

6. **Effective Date**: This directive takes effect on October 1, 2003. On March 1, 2003, the Assistant Secretary will assume functional responsibility for all public affairs officers in DHS organizational elements. Funding and administrative support for public affairs will continue to be the responsibility of the organizational elements until the effective date of this directive.

B. Any questions or concerns regarding this directive should be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs.