



## **DOD Guidance: Relations with Non-Federal Entities**

Areas that continue to generate confusion for leaders of MOAA's councils and chapters are the rules governing access to federal installations and resources and policies governing when federal officials may participate in MOAA-sponsored events. Confusion exists in these areas because the authority to approve access and participation has been delegated to local installations commanders with only general guidance outlining what is authorized and prohibited. In this area of uncertainty, many commanders and their legal and ethics staffs tend to interpret the rules very conservatively to protect the service, installation, and commander from criticism for misusing government resources or allegations of favoritism.

Council and Chapter leaders who are planning events that may require installation access or participation by installation officials need to have a clear understanding of DOD regulations and policies governing relations with Non-Federal Entities (NFEs). There are two documents I believe you will find particularly helpful. The first is the newly-released (May 2018) update to the Ethics Counselor's Deskbook, *Relations with Non-Federal Entities: Official and Personal*; and Secretary of Defense Memorandum, dated December 23, 2014, *Installation Access and Support Services for Nonprofit Non-Federal Entities*. These two documents set out DOD's current rules, regulations, and policies. When planning MOAA events involving participation of active duty military personnel or civilian employees or events involving on-post access or the use of on-post facilities, I encourage you to review these resources and to make every reasonable effort to structure the event so that it falls within DOD's policy guidelines. Also, to the extent you need to obtain official authorization for your event, do not hesitate to bring these resources to the attention of local officials whenever you believe they provide authority for the activities you are sponsoring.

I trust you will find these documents useful as you plan and execute local activities for the military community. Please keep COL Terri Coles, Senior Director, Council and Chapter Affairs, informed of your experience in dealing with local installation authorities so she can share lessons learned with leaders in MOAA's councils and chapters.

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General Counsel  
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