



IG Newsletter



VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1

October-December 2002

Thoughts from the IG

By LTC Christopher Hatley

I want to make a pitch for support I can provide to commanders in the area of unit assessment. On a routine basis, I stay abreast of all requests for assistance my office receives from soldiers, family members, government civilians, and military retirees. If I identify spikes in any particular area and/or unit, I inform the appropriate person. In addition to this, I can also offer a means for commanders to gain an assessment of their unit's status. I am referring to soldier morale, issues they have, recommendations soldiers have to improve the unit, problem areas, etc. We can gain insights for commanders at all levels.

We can gather information at the company/battery/troop level using a standard, computer based series of questions. This is our command climate survey. The command climate survey provides data which is pretty sanitary, but it can be beneficial to a commander. There isn't much else we can offer, in addition to the data, because we administer the command climate survey and the associated software automatically compiles the results. It's a "on a scale of one to ten" type of deal.

Another option for battalion/squadron level commanders is a sensing session. These can be very informative and eye-opening for a commander. An added benefit of a sensing session is our interaction with the soldiers and our discussions.

Nothing anyone says in a sensing session will be attributable to any one person. One exception, we report anything criminal. The commander is the only person who receives our sensing session report. It isn't by name, but we do report out according to the rank groupings. This can be very revealing because the perspectives and comments can be very divergent between the lower ranking soldiers and the senior NCOs, etc.

This all seems geared for our tactical units, but we can provide the same support to any organization. We can conduct sensing sessions with our civilian employees and we can also administer a prepared survey. I recommend the session sessions though.

I know there are other resources commanders can choose to tap the type of support I can provide. Let me say I can and will give you a war fighting focus and no kiddin' honest feedback. I am not a "touchy feely" kinda guy. We don't coddle and console people. We are warriors on a mission. It just so happens, the mission is to gather meaningful feedback for the appropriate leader, so they can improve their organization.

In closing, here's what I ask from commanders who want us to help them. We request sessions with the following groups of soldiers: PV1-SPC, SGT-SSG, SFC-MSG (or we can split this group), LTs, CPTs, and then MAJs. At a minimum, it is best to have 20-25 folks per group. And don't just send the people with nothing better to do. Send us a representative sample or the feedback won't be reliable. I find that the school solution of 12-15 isn't sufficient. The closer you can get to 25 per group the better. It comes down to the reliability of the data we collect.

One last consideration. I am aware of the six-month lock-in. I don't require that lead time. We are here to support this entire post and everybody in it. If you have a desire to use us to help you, call me and we will work something out.

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Can I use my Fort Polk Government Vehicle GSA/TMP to get Food, Stop at the Bank, or Look at Cars in the Lemon Lot, if I Just Came from a Meeting and it's on the Way to my Office?

By SFC James Jacks, Assistant IG

NO. You cannot use a government vehicle like it is your own. There are exceptions if you are TDY. IAW DoD 4500.36-R, Army Regulation 58-1, Management, Acquisition, and Use of Government Motor Vehicles, 28 January 2000, and 31 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1349, the following rules apply to use of government vehicles:

DoD 4500.36-R states the following is NOT official use:

"(1) Transportation to and from your place of residence unless "Home-to-Work" transportation is approved.

(2) Government vehicles may not be used for transportation to, from, or between any location for the purpose of conducting personal business or other personal activities by military or civilian personnel, their family members, or others. DoD 4500.36-R, para. 2-5c."

AR 58-1, Management, Acquisition and Use of Motor Vehicles, 28 January 2000, states,

"a. Vehicles will not be provided when the justification is based solely on reasons of rank, position, prestige, or personal convenience.

b. Official motor vehicle transportation requirements do not include: transportation to private social functions; personal errands or side trips for unofficial purposes; transportation of dependents or visitors without an accompanying official; or in support of non-DOD activities unless specifically approved under the provisions of Army Regulation(s).

c. Government vehicles must not be used for transportation to or be parked at commissaries, post exchanges (including all concessions), bowling alleys, officer and noncommissioned officer clubs, or any nonappropriated fund activity unless personnel using the vehicles are on official Government business or temporary duty travel (TDY)."

31 U.S.C. 1349 states, "(a) An officer or employee of the United States Government or of the District of Columbia government violating section 1341(a) or 1342 of this title shall be subject to appropriate administrative discipline including, when circumstances warrant, suspension from duty without pay or removal from office.

(b) An officer or employee who willfully uses or authorizes the use of a passenger motor vehicle or aircraft owned or leased by the United States Government (except for an official purpose authorized by section 1344 of this title) or otherwise violates section 1344 shall be suspended without pay by the head of the agency. The officer or employee shall be suspended for at least one month, and when circumstances warrant, for a longer period or summarily removed from office."

Other regulations that apply to use of government vehicles may be obtained by consulting Ethics Counselors, Mr. White or CPT Dillon, Administrative Law Division, SJA, JRTC and Fort Polk.



Can my commander make me donate to his daughter's elementary school so they can buy computers?

By SFC James U. Jackson, Assistant IG

No, according to DoD Directive 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation, paragraph 3-210, which states, "[E]xcept as provided in subsections 3-211 of this regulation, DoD Components shall not officially support and DoD employees shall not officially participate in membership drives or fund-raising for any non Federal entity except the following organizations which are not subject to the provisions of subsection 3-211 of this regulation below:

- (1) The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
- (2) Emergency and disaster and relief appeals approved by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
- (3) Army Emergency Relief (AER)

Other organizations composed of DoD employees or their dependents when fund-raising among their own members for the benefit of welfare funds for their own members when approved by the head of the DoD Component command or organization."

What is the Policy for Conducting Quarters Inspections in the Housing Area for Subordinate Soldiers?

By SFC Vermantha Ausborne, Assistant IG

JRTC and FP Reg 210-4, Military Housing Occupant Handbook, paragraphs 3-1 and 3-2, state:

"3-1. Policy. While preservation of health and sanitation is ultimately the responsibility of the sponsor, the government has a valid interest in preventing hazardous health, unsanitary conditions, and deterioration of government quarters. The Chief, Housing Division, or his delegated representative, reserves the right to conduct inspections of family or bachelor housing to ensure that housing areas provide a healthy, sanitary environment for all occupants residing in government-controlled housing."

"3-2. Responsibilities. a. Commanders are responsible for all aspects of health and sanitation of soldiers of their command who reside in government controlled housing and mobile home parks. A commander who receives a complaint of a health hazard, unsanitary conditions, in the mobile home park or damages in government-controlled housing, will report that complaint to the Chief, Housing Division. The commander, or his representative, will accompany the assigned Housing Agent to the soldier's quarters. b. The Medical Department Activity (MEDDAC) Preventive Medicine Activity will provide a representative to attend an announced or unannounced health and sanitation inspection of government controlled quarters and mobile home park space."



The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the Department. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or of the command, but wherever possible, are supported by referenced Army regulations, policies, or procedures.

Who has Priority for Housing, Someone PCSing in, or Someone Moving from Other Quarters on Post who has Been Offered a Set of Quarters?

By SFC M. Elena McClelland, Assistant IG

The service member living on post who has already been offered a set of quarters has priority over service members who are PCSing to Fort Polk.

Soldiers already living on Fort Polk who are moving into another set of quarters, also on post, are conducting an intra-post move. JRTC & Fort Polk Regulation 210-4, Installation Housing Occupant Handbook, paragraph 2-3a, states, "Priority is given to those military family members who are permanent change of station (PCS) to the installation and without quarters." Given this standard, if a soldier making an intra-post move has already been offered quarters, does that mean the family that just PCSed to Fort Polk gets priority over the intra-post move family?

No. If housing already made a verbal or written offer to the intra-post move soldier, Army Regulation 210-10, paragraph 3-8n, states, "Sponsors who have been given a firm (oral or written) commitment for housing will not be displaced by arriving families added to the waiting list."



LEADERS!! Did You Know? Free Training Aids and Information!!!

Great information for all leaders!! You can get FREE training material (TAPES and CDs) at the following site <http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/>. Go to the "Select Central DOD Production Databases@DAVIS/DITIS. This site allows you to search for material on drivers training, environmental, weapons, safety, equipment models for maintenance training and many others. This could be a valuable site for establishing a good reference/training library.

Are there Rules for Holiday Gift-Giving at Work?

By CPT Valerie N. McKnelly, Deputy IG

Yes, and it's very important you follow those rules and guidelines. The regulations governing the giving and acceptance of gifts by DoD employees include DoD 5500.7-R, [Joint Ethics Regulation \(JER\)](#), Change 4, effective August 6, 1998, Chapters 2 (Standards of Ethical Conduct) and 4 (Travel Benefits), and 5 [Code of Federal Regulations](#) (C.F.R.) § 2635.

To determine whether or not a gift is acceptable, try this three-part analysis, found in the Ethics Counselor's Deskbook:

1. **Is the item actually a gift?** 5 C.F.R. § 2635.203(b), states, "The term "gift" is broadly defined and includes any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary value. It includes services as well as gifts of training, transportation local travel, and lodgings and meals."

Not included as gifts: "Coffee, donuts, and similar modest items of food and refreshments when offered other than as part of a meal; greeting cards and items with little intrinsic value, such as plaques, certificates, and trophies intended solely for presentation; rewards and prizes in contests open to the public; commercial discounts available to the general public or to all Government or military personnel; loans from banks and other financial institutions on terms generally available to the public; anything paid for by the Government or secured by the Government under Government contract."

2. **Does an exception apply?** The following are common exceptions, found in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204, under which government employees may accept a gift:

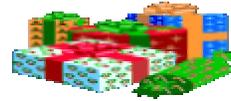
"a. Unsolicited gifts with a market value of \$20 or less per source, per occasion, so long as the total value of all gifts received from a single source during a **calendar** year does not exceed \$50. Employees may decline gifts to keep aggregate value at \$20 or less, but may not pay differential over \$20 to retain gift(s).

b. Gifts based on a personal relationship, such as a family relationship or personal friendship rather than the position of the employee."

3. **Would using the exception undermine Government integrity?** "If a gift falls within one of the exceptions, acceptance of the gift will not violate any of the basic obligations of public service set forth in 5 C.F.R. §

2635.101(b), including the principle that employees shall avoid creating even the "appearance" of an ethics violation. However, it is never inappropriate and frequently prudent to decline a gift offered by a prohibited source or given because of one's official position."

In any case, if you are unsure about accepting or giving a gift, contact your local Ethics Counselor *before you give or receive*.



Can My Unit Purchase Holiday Decorations with the Government Purchase Card (GPC)?

By CPT Valerie N. McKnelly, Deputy IG

Yes, your unit may purchase seasonal or holiday decorations with appropriated funds, using the Government Purchase Card (GPC), according to [Department of State & General Services Administration--Seasonal Decorations](#), B-226011, 67 Comp. Gen. 87 (1987), which found it's acceptable for an agency to "purchase decorative items **if** they are consistent with work-related objectives and not for personal convenience or enjoyment." Certain rules apply to these decorations, however. The decorations should be secular (i.e., a menorah or a crucifix would not be appropriate), they should be reusable, (i.e., no live trees, wreaths of natural pine, or disposable or one-use decorations), and they must be designated for the entire organization, not for the use of an individual employee. Again, if you have questions about appropriateness of decorations, call your Ethics Counselor.

Must a 'no' entry in part IV, Army Values/NCO Responsibilities in the NCOER be justified by bullet comments?

By SFC Joseph Pipes, Assistant IG

Yes. IAW AR 623-205, [Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System](#), dated 17 December 2001, paragraph 3-10e, "Mandatory specific bullet comments are required for all "no" entries. Base each entry on whether the rated NCO 'meets' or 'does not meet' the standard for each particular value. Bullet type comments are used to explain any area where [a] rated NCO is particularly strong or needs improvement."