

Office of Communications (OC) – Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

TAR Utilization

Purpose. To establish the policy and procedures for utilizing the Tasking, Assignments, and Requirements (TAR) system. The TAR has evolved into a work accountability system, which stores and audits "what we do," "when we do it," and "how we do it."

Scope and Responsibilities. Office of Communications (OC) staff, to include contract personnel, is required to utilize the TAR system to account for tasking and time associated with tasking. Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) staff and program managers (PM) are highly encouraged to utilize the TAR system.

Procedures.

TAR Basics

- All requirements/requests need to be submitted through the TAR system for time accountability and auditing purposes. Requests that come in via email should be added to the TAR. Managers will be using the TAR system to accurately distribute workload amongst team members.
- When responding to or updating a TAR, ensure details are added to the appropriate assignment of a TAR. If you have details related to a specific assignment, update the assignment and not the main body TAR. The TAR system automatically copies details from an assignment into the main body TAR.
- All TAR posts are sent to Gary Collins, Beth Riffle, Stephanie Nordhoff, Scot Greber, and the Helpdesk. As a result, there is no need to include any of the names previously mentioned in the notification list of any TAR. Unlike email, which is point to point, a TAR submittal may be read by many and, as a result, allows for multiple people to comment and help. The names listed above ensure that the Content Team, Technical Team, Helpdesk, and Management see, and are aware of, every post.
- If you create a TAR, add your name to the notification list. If you do not, you will not be notified of any posts to your TAR.
- If appropriate, add your name to the content liaison, email and phone box.
- When adding email addresses, verify your entries and ensure multiple entries are separated by a semi-colon.
- Multiple files can be zipped (using a utility like WINZIP) and added as a single attachment to a TAR update.
- When appropriate, time entered while working on a TAR should be entered in 15 minute increments (.25 = 15 mins, .5 = 30 mins, .75 = 45 mins, 1 = 1 hour).

What should be included in the TAR?

- Record all information related to a task to include questions and/or clarification. As much as possible, refrain from using both the TAR and email as this becomes redundant. Tasks/information outlined in email can fall through the cracks or be missed.

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- Record all conversations/meetings/emails with PMs when they relate to a TAR or provide significant information that may be used later. This does not need to be verbatim, but should include significant information. For email messages from PMs that include a tasking, approval related to a tasking, or other significant communication, cut and paste the email into the TAR or PDF the message and add it as an attachment with a one sentence synopsis in the TAR.

Deadlines

- Deadlines are tracked and managed.
- All requests for work to be performed must have an associated deadline. If one is not assigned by the requester or PM, then a standard deadline of two weeks will be assigned for larger projects or two business days for smaller requirements.
- A Deadline report has been added to the TAR system (Reports Tab) allowing users to monitor deadlines.
- If a deadline passes without conversation with your manager, update the TAR with a complete explanation. If an inappropriate deadline is set when an assignment is created (it conflicts with other more pressing requirements, it is not reasonable given the scope of the assignment, etc.), please discuss it with your manager immediately.

Assignments

- When creating an assignment, ensure the Task Description is brief. Additional details can be added to the assignment, after it is created.
- When an assignment is created, the person assigned will automatically receive notifications as the assignment is updated. However, if the person assigned is not on the overall TAR notification list and the main body TAR is updated, the assignee will NOT receive notifications.
- Make all updates that have to do with an assignment in that assignment, NOT the main body TAR.
- Once the assignment is complete and if it does not require approval/verification, close out the assignment.

Approval and Review:

This SOP was approved by the OC Deputy Director on October 23, 2009 and remains in effect until superseded. OC management staff shall review this SOP annually at the start of each fiscal year or as needed for updates.