



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG - 4 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Ethical Standards for All Hands

Those entrusted by our nation with carrying out violence, those entrusted with the lives of our troops, and those entrusted with enormous sums of taxpayer money must set an honorable example in all we do.

I expect every member of the Department to play the ethical midfield. I need you to be aggressive and show initiative without running the ethical sidelines, where even one misstep will have you out of bounds. I want our focus to be on the essence of ethical conduct: doing what is right at all times, regardless of the circumstances or whether anyone is watching.

To ensure each of us is ready to do what is right, without hesitation, when ethical dilemmas arise, we must train and prepare ourselves and our subordinates. Our prior reflection and our choice to live by an ethical code will reinforce what we stand for, so we remain morally strong especially in the face of adversity.

Through our example and through coaching of all hands, we will ensure ethical standards are maintained. Never forget, our willingness to take the Oath of Office and to accept the associated responsibilities means that even citizens who have never met us trust us to do the right thing, never abusing our position nor looking the other way when we see something wrong.

I am proud to serve alongside you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "John M. Mattis", is positioned to the right of the text "I am proud to serve alongside you." The signature is written in a cursive style.

cc:
Deputy Secretary of Defense





SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

8/19/19

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Reaffirming Our Commitment to Ethical Conduct

All of us in the Department of Defense enjoy the highest trust and confidence of the American people because we live by core values grounded in duty and honor that influence how we think and act. The decisions that we make every day must reaffirm our commitment to ethical conduct – doing what is right, without hesitation.

The threats we face, the character of warfare, and the way the Department conducts business are evolving. Our National Defense Strategy focuses our efforts in an increasingly complex global security environment, and ethics is integral to our three lines of effort. Ethical leadership that builds principled, self-disciplined teams strengthens readiness and improves lethality. Our shared ethical values strengthen alliances and attract new partners. Ethics-based standards and accountability are fundamental to business reforms, and to keeping faith with our Service Members and their families.

A commitment to exemplary ethics must be a personal creed. I expect every member of the Department to continue to aim beyond compliance with basic standards. As leaders, teammates, and colleagues, we must inspire each other by setting an example, rejecting any sense of personal entitlement, and never abusing our position or our privilege of service. We must be willing to choose the harder virtue over the easier vice.

Each of us takes a solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution. The Department's mission imparts a special responsibility on each of us to serve with the utmost integrity and be vigilant in protecting the duties and confidences with which we have been entrusted.

To ensure we are ready to do what is right when ethical dilemmas arise, we must train and prepare ourselves. As such, I expect Department leaders to be personally involved in training their organizations. Talk about examples of ethical decision-making, good and bad. Make these conversations a natural part of your meetings and engagement with your personnel. Create an open, transparent environment that reinforces values-based decision-making and action. And always treat everyone with dignity and respect.

I am proud of the great work our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen, and civilians do each and every day around the globe. Stay focused on your mission, remain steadfast in your pursuit of excellence, and always travel the honorable path. Together, we will remain the most ready and capable military force that our Nation expects and deserves.

Mark T. Esper