

## Guidelines for Using Military Themes or Personnel in Advertising

To protect your brand and ensure compliance with U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) regulations, please review the following advertising restrictions. These rules are especially important when referencing or depicting military members, uniforms, insignia, or anything related to the Armed Forces.

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### What's NOT Allowed

#### 1. No Endorsements by Active-Duty Military

- Active-duty personnel **may not appear in ads** that promote, endorse, or imply endorsement of any product, service, or organization.
- Even off-duty or in civilian clothes, active-duty members cannot participate in commercial promotions.

#### 2. No Use of Military Uniforms for Commercial Purposes

- You **cannot use real military uniforms** or dress individuals to look like active-duty service members in a way that implies official support.
- Using uniforms to suggest affiliation with the U.S. military in an ad **is prohibited without permission**.

#### 3. No Use of Official Military Seals, Emblems, or Insignia

- The official seals and logos of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, or DoD **cannot be used** in advertisements.
- This includes **patches, symbols, branch logos, and unit insignias**.

#### 4. No Military Equipment or Installations

- Ads **cannot include military aircraft, ships, vehicles, or bases** unless proper clearance is granted.
- Even background imagery of military installations can trigger restrictions.

#### 5. No Endorsements Implied by Veterans

- Veterans may be featured, but they **must not imply** that the military endorses your brand or product.
- Their service can be acknowledged, but not in a way that suggests official DoD support.

#### 6. No Quotes or Endorsements Using Rank or Title

- Individuals **cannot be identified by military rank or title** if they're endorsing a commercial product or service.
- Example: "Colonel Smith recommends..." is **not allowed**.

## 7. No Misleading Imagery or Language

- Avoid any design or copy that **suggests military sponsorship, partnership, or approval.**
  - Do not use phrases like “official military partner” unless officially authorized.
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### What Is Allowed

- Featuring **veterans** as part of your story or workforce — as long as there’s no implied endorsement.
- Using **patriotic themes** (e.g., flags, appreciation messages) that do **not depict actual service members or imply affiliation.**
- Including a **disclaimer** when military-related imagery or language is used:

“The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.”

These rules are based on:

- DoD Instruction 5410.20
- Joint Ethics Regulation (DoD 5500.7-R)
- 32 CFR § 705.13 (U.S. Navy regulations on commercial advertising)
- U.S. Department of Defense Intellectual Property Guidelines