



**COMMANDER'S GUIDE  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE  
KWAJALEIN MISSILE RANGE  
YUMA PROVING GROUND  
DUGWAY PROVING GROUND  
ABERDEEN TEST CENTER  
NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER  
ELECTRONIC PROVING GROUND**

**NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WEAPONS DIVISION  
NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER AIRCRAFT DIVISION  
NAVAL UNDERSEA WARFARE CENTER DIVISION, NEWPORT  
PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY  
NAVAL UNDERSEA WARFARE CENTER DIVISION, KEYPORT**

**30<sup>TH</sup> SPACE WING  
45<sup>TH</sup> SPACE WING  
AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER  
AIR FORCE AIR ARMAMENT CENTER  
ARNOLD ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
BARRY M. GOLDWATER RANGE**

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## PREFACE

The mission of the Range Commanders Council (RCC) is to serve “the technical and operational needs of U.S. test, training, and operational ranges.” The Sustainability Group (SG), founded in 2000, is one of many RCC workgroups. The SG meets twice each year to review and discuss the latest issues affecting the ability of installations and ranges to sustain their missions and shares tools for proactively addressing these concerns. SG efforts focus on outreach, land use, urban sprawl and other sustainability areas.

The purpose of this document is to provide Commanders the information they need to work with the community to protect their mission. Effective stakeholder involvement is key in maintaining a military activity’s current and future mission. This document provides a brief overview and is not meant to be an exhaustive resource. For more information please contact the RCC SG.

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# Commander's Guide Community Involvement

## Introduction

An effective Community Involvement Program is essential to protect the ability of an installation, range and/or operating area to test and train. One key aspect relative to the future capability of a military activity to perform its current and future mission is the prevention of encroachment into the areas of critical concern. Encroachment can take many forms: urban development, environmental restrictions, height obstructions, radio frequency usage, etc. The activity must take a proactive approach in working with the civilian community to preclude mission degradation from encroachment. Lack of an effective Community Involvement Program will shut you down.

This document provides the installation or Range Commander with useful information and tools in addressing encroachment issues. **The most important tool in this effort is YOU.** The Commander sets the example by being proactive and positive. The vision of your Community Involvement Program should be to develop an aggressive public awareness and outreach program to inform the command's workforce and the public about:

- The current and future missions of the installation, range, or operating area
- On-going proactive environmental stewardship programs
- Economic impact
- Partnerships with the surrounding communities

Equally important, your Community Involvement Program must focus on learning about issues important to the community and establishing two-way communications with community opinion leaders.

## Commander's Action

1. Proactiveness. The Commander is the focus of the Community Involvement program along with the support of a Mission Sustainability Committee. Membership should include operator/war fighter, public affairs, environmental, legal, airspace and range, community planning, and land use experts. The Commander must support the sustainability team's interaction with the local community and must also interact on a personal level.
2. Team Leadership. The Commander must ensure that the activity's entire sustainability team is involved in the program and presents one viewpoint.
3. Consistency. The Commander must ensure the activity's message is consistent over the long term. The civilian community's challenge is to plan long range (10-20 years), and the military must strive to do the same. If new requirements cause a change in the message to the community, ensure the community knows about the change in a timely

manner and the Commander proactively seeks the support of the local community for the change.

4. Honesty. Honesty and candidness in dealing with your local community are the cornerstones to success. If the classification of an issue prevents full disclosure, say that openly.
5. Timeliness. When the community asks for information, get a response back quickly. In those cases where you cannot respond quickly, tell the community when you will respond.
6. Education. Ensure the community understands the activity's mission, the importance to military readiness, homeland defense, and national security and the activity's contributions to the community. Tell the community who the team members are and define their roles so that the community can better understand their military counterparts.
7. Communication. Provide a single point of contact for the community, then listen and respond to community concerns. Speak in a "language" the community understands. Avoid the use of acronyms and buzz words.
8. Credibility. **Without this, the program will not work.**

### **Community Stakeholders**

1. Involvement. Get involved in the community: Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. Commanders frequently are hesitant to actively interface with the community. When Commanders are actively involved in the community it builds trust and credibility. These are essential when difficult issues surface.
2. Decision Makers. Learn the players. Who are the local "movers and shakers" whether in the government, business, or not. Set up a "turn over" file for your replacement.
3. Supporters. Learn who the military supporters are and those who need more information to help turn them into a supporter. Military supporters typically remain constant.
4. Advocates. Identify and seek support of advocacy groups for your issues. Understand that they will change based on the issue of the moment.
5. Adversaries. Identify and engage adversary groups early. Do not ignore them. They will not go away. Some will never be swayed. You need to understand their issues. Use adversary input to your benefit to strengthen your position, and be prepared for their challenges.

## **Community Involvement**

1. **Dialogue.** Establish a positive continuous dialogue. Ensure your staff interfaces with their community counterparts one on one and provides feedback to you.
2. **Involvement.** Encourage your staff to participate in Community Planning & Zoning Commissions, Boards of Adjustment, Neighborhood Boards, local outreach initiatives, etc.
3. **Inform.** Don't surprise community leaders in a public forum. Advise community leaders prior to any public announcement or formal response. Allow sufficient time for them to draft an appropriate response. Provide explanation to maintain credibility and open lines of communication.
4. **Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP).** Force Protection issues bring some challenging aspects associated with Community Involvement. AT/FP issues tend to work against openness and active engagement with the local community, which they may not understand. AT/FP may also affect access to military facilities. You cannot hide behind AT/FP classification aspects, and must seek a balance.
5. **Educate.** Determine who in the community needs what information. Ensure the community knows the mission of the activity, its chain of command, and how decisions are made and by whom. Stress difference between simulators and live training and testing. Examples - 16 yr old learning how to drive in a simulator and then turned loose on LA freeways or buying an experimental car that hasn't been tested.
6. **Commitment.** If the activity makes a commitment to the community, ensure you follow through.
7. **Data.** When providing data to the community, the activity must ensure it is:
  - a. Accurate and timely, including any limits and restrictions.
  - b. Presented in language the community understands, i.e., with economic impacts.
  - c. Focused on the positive aspects but does not hide or ignore negative information.
  - d. Complete. Include economic input for Reserves and retirees. Incorporate your activity's entire sphere of influence.
8. **Benefits.** Provide good news stories about the activity and its community support.
9. **Economic Impact:** Describe your activity's economic contribution to its sphere of influence and compare it to other industries and businesses.
10. **Stewardship:** Discuss the actions your activity takes to improve the environment such as endangered species protection, energy conservation, and recycling and pollution control actions.

11. Volunteerism: Address the community actions your activity's personnel are engaged in: mentoring actions in local schools, local cleanup efforts, etc.
12. Mutual Assistance: Publicize to the local community the various support your activity provides to civilian agencies, i.e., fire fighting, local police using military small arms ranges, search and rescue efforts, explosive ordnance disposal, disaster recovery, etc.

### **Community Needs**

1. Information. The community needs accurate and timely information on military compatible use requirements and long range plans.
2. Compatible Use. Determine what types of uses are compatible with the mission. Be realistic. Working with your sustainment team, gather data, determine your position and present it to the right decision-makers in the community. Then ask the right questions to focus the discussion.
3. Planning. Share the activity's long-range strategic plan with the community. Ensure it is current and identifies future requirements. Include the utility and infrastructure requirements.

### **Local Governments**

1. Type. Determine the type of city, county, and state government structures in your area and how decisions are made and by whom. A strong city manager may have more effective power than elected officials. Knowing this is critical to achieving success. This situation can differ significantly among communities.
2. Multiple Jurisdictions. Be aware that the jurisdictions may not have the same system of government and they may also be in competition with each other.
3. Structure. Know the planning and zoning process in your community. Understand the timelines for decision points in the process so the military can insert its concerns in the right place at the right time.
4. Presentations. Know the leadership and learning styles of local officials. Ensure presentations emphasize the positive aspects of your activity's operations.
5. Dialogue. Keep an open dialogue with all key players.

### **Local, State, and Federal Elected Officials**

1. Directives. Be familiar with DoD and service instructions on lobbying. If in doubt, consult your lawyer.

2. Rights. The military, as a landowner, has rights. Know those rights and be proactive. Do not be afraid to speak out when an opportunity to articulate the military's key needs presents itself.
3. Coordinate. Ensure your efforts at the state and national level are coordinated with those of other DoD activities in your region.
4. Legislation. Establish a tracking method for following draft, pending, or new legislation.
5. Respond. Answer questions in a timely fashion - decision makers need information to make fully informed decisions.

## **Media**

1. Proactive. Engage media on a broad scale and often. Don't wait for something to happen. Form ongoing relationships with the local military reporters and have them come to the installation or range for tours and briefings.
2. Positive. Work with the media to provide the community positive stories about your activity.
3. Bad News.
  - a. Honesty. Be open and honest with the community.
  - b. **ALWAYS TELL YOUR OWN BAD NEWS!** When someone else tells it, you are automatically put on the defensive.
  - c. Quick Response. Control content of the initial news release by being the first to identify the issue. Clear the media package rapidly through your chain of command. You want to reach the media before they come to you.
  - d. Brief key local opinion makers. Privately call the key local opinion makers on the bad news and tell them what you are doing before it hits the media. If you do this well, these people may be staunch supporters during difficult times.

## **Public Meetings**

1. Training. Ensure your personnel are trained in conducting public meetings and in risk communications.
2. Format. Whenever possible, have a poster session or workshop rather than a town hall type meeting. This format allows for more interaction and does not make a target out of DoD speakers behind a podium.
3. Audience. Know your audience. Tailor your presentation or comments to the audience. Work to get the right people from the community there.
4. Issues. Know the issues in the local community. Make sure that your people know the issues and are able to articulate your position.

## Outreach

The Community Involvement Program should not be focused on just the civilian communities located outside the gate. To be effective, you must interact with a number of different “communities.”

1. Your Activity.
  - a. The chain of command must have situational awareness of sustainability issues.
  - b. The workforce must understand the issues so they communicate with the same voice, to include family members.
  
2. Regional DoD Installations/Activities.
  - a. All Service activities within the same geographical region must speak with a common voice on encroachment issues to those outside DoD.
  - b. Germane DoD acquisition and training community personnel must understand key sustainability issues. These issues need to be considered by the acquisition community as they develop new weapons systems that ultimately will be tested/used in training/operations on your installation, range and/or operating areas.
  
3. Other Federal Agencies.
  - a. Some of these agencies have regulatory authority over your activity’s operations, e.g., Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS).
  - b. Some of these agencies have common interests with DoD, e.g., land and air space management.
  - c. Some of these agencies have competing interests with DoD, e.g., natural resource extraction (mining) and grazing rights.
  - d. Department of Justice litigators will represent your activity in court. They need to know the war fighting essentials of your activity.
  
4. State Government.
  - a. Some state government departments might have regulatory authority over your installation or range, e.g., State Historic Preservation Office, State Environmental Quality Office, and Coastal Commissions.
  - b. Know the State Senator and Legislator(s) that represent your activity’s district. Keep an open dialogue with them.
  
5. Military Support Groups.

Many communities have groups whose mission is to support their military activities. These groups can be very helpful with many issues.

6. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
  - a. American Indian Nations/Tribes. Treat all American Indian groups with utmost respect. Tribal interaction must be treated as government to government. Get a copy of the DoD Indian Policy and be familiar with the requirements for consultation. Learn the politics of the relationship between the Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
  - b. NGOs exist on the national level (Center for Bio-Diversity and Sierra Club), the regional level (Southwest Defense Alliance and Friends of Cabeza Prieta) and the local level (rod & gun clubs and veterans groups). Environmental NGOs should not be perceived as enemies, but as organizations with a mission. Understand their missions and look for ways to partner where DoD has mutual interests, e.g., open space protection.
  - c. Think outside the box to rally all of your supporters and opposition.