



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
HEALTH AFFAIRS**

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TRICARE
MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

TRICARE ACQUISITION PRACTICE (TAP)

**TAP 54-01, Rev. 001
02 July 2007**

SUBJECT: COMMON LETTERS

References: None

1. PURPOSE:

To establish responsibilities and procedures for drafting, coordinating, distributing and logging common letters.

2. APPLICABILITY:

This TAP applies to all **TRICARE Management Activity (TMA)** personnel and functional areas involved in preparation and distribution of common letters for acquisitions emanating from **Acquisition Management & Support**.

3. DEFINITIONS:

3.1. A “common letter” is defined as any written correspondence, to multiple contractors, that has the same content and is used by all **Contracting Officers(COs)** to convey information, data, or request a response. Common letters may or may not be in response to a contractor's inquiry. Common letters primarily address technical and/or administrative information regarding TMA contracts, but are not limited to these areas.

3.2. “Required supporting documentation” for the purpose of this document, is any and all documentation that is required by a reviewer to make a sound decision. Examples of required supporting documentation include, but are not limited to, copies of prior correspondence on the same topic, copies of requisitions, and excerpts from TRICARE manuals.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.1. **The Director, Acquisition Management and Support (AM&S)** or a **CO** are the only individuals authorized to sign a common letter. **The requestor and the individual who signs a common letter are responsible** for the language contained in the letter.

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4.2. The requestor is responsible for preparing a Common Letter package and ensuring adequate levels of review are obtained. There are numerous types of common letters. For the various types of common letters, required review levels and package contents are identified in tables 4.2A and 4.2B below. All common letters must be routed through the Contracting Officers Representatives (CORs).

Each common letter package shall contain a completed Common Letter Routing Sheet (Enclosure 1), a draft common letter in the format provided in the sample entitled Common Letter Example (Enclosure 2), and all required supporting documentation.

Table 4.2A: Review Levels Required for Common Letters

Common Letter Review Coordination						
		COR	Subject Matter Expert (SME)	CO	Change Review Team (CRT)	See Note in Table 4.2B
1	Response to Inquiry			R/A		A
2	Information Only			R/A		B
3	Notification			R/A		C
4	Technical Clarification	R	R	R/A		D
5	Meeting Invite			R/A		E
6	Contract Direction	R		R/A		F
7	Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Request	R		R/A	R	G
8	Changes to draft Common Letter	R	R	R	R	H

R – Review Required
A – Approves

Table 4.2B: Supporting Documentation for Different Types of Common Letters

Note	Common Letter Supporting Documentation
A	Response To Inquiry Letters must include: - Copy of related inquiry letter(s) and response(s)
B	Information Only
C	Notification
D	Technical Clarification should include: - Supporting documentation related to the requirements or manual cites

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Note	Common Letter Supporting Documentation
E	Invitational
	- Purpose of Invitation
	- Date, Time, and Place
	- Reference to TRICARE Requirement or Manuals
F	Contract Direction must include:
	- A funded CONREQ Number and;
	- Supporting documentation related to the upcoming change
	- Must be in the general scope of the contract
G	ROM Request must include:
	- Supporting documentation providing detail to contractor regarding the ROM
H	Changes to Draft Common Letters require:
	- Re-Routing for coordination of all individuals on the routing sheet
<i>Notify individuals on the routing sheet when the common letter is not approved.</i>	

4.3. The AM&S Staff Assistant is responsible for ensuring that all CO changes are made to the letter, preparing the letter for signature, logging the letter in the common letter log, and ensuring that each team's Administrative Assistant distributes the common letter.

4.4. The CORs will determine the necessity for routing common letters through the SMEs at the TRICARE Regional Offices (TROs).

5. **PROCEDURES:**

5.1. A functional area other than AM&S (e.g., Programs Requirements, Medical Benefits & Reimbursement Systems) usually initiates the subject matter and request for a common letter. The requestor shall prepare a common letter package and submit the package for routing to the AM&S Staff Assistant.

5.2. The AM&S Staff Assistant will attend the weekly AM&S Team Lead Meeting to discuss the requestor's package. The AM&S Staff Assistant will provide a copy of the requestor's draft to all attendees. The requestor does not usually attend; however, if there are significant concerns the requestor may participate.

To ensure a letter is reviewed in a timely manner the requestor shall include a suspense date on the routing sheet. When there is a conflict with the suspense date and the next scheduled AM&S Team Lead Meeting, the AM&S Staff Assistant will notify the requestor. If the letter needs to be discussed and distributed before the next scheduled meeting, a special meeting may be called just to discuss the requested common letter.

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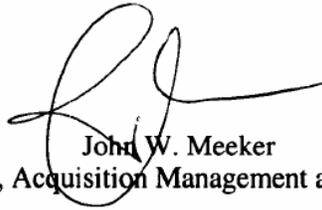
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- 5.3. Meeting participants determine the **final** common letter content, signature level, and need for legal review.
- 5.3.1. If the letter's content is determined to be out of contract scope **or applicable to only one contract**, the letter is not a common letter and it is given to the appropriate **CO(s)** for resolution.
- 5.3.2. If required, a **CO** will **request the AM&S Staff Assistant coordinate legal review**.
- 5.3.3. The common letter language is intended to be finalized in the coordination meeting.
- 5.3.3.1. If a common letter cannot be finalized, it is returned to the requestor for additional information **and/or further coordination**.
- 5.3.3.2. When the requestor returns a revised draft to the **AM&S Staff Assistant**, the revision will be added to the **following week's AM&S Team Lead Meeting agenda** for discussion, or discussed at a **special coordination meeting**, or **coordinated via email**, based on the urgency of the letter. If necessary, the requestor may participate in the **meeting and/or email discussion**.
- 5.4. When the common letter language is finalized, **the AM&S Staff Assistant prepares the final letter for signature**. **This includes pulling a Source Document Number from Documentum, and adding the standard distribution list for each contract**. If required distribution is other than the standard distribution, it should be noted on the **Common Letter Routing Sheet** by the requestor.
- 5.5. The common letter should be issued within two (2) days after **the package has been reviewed and approved by individuals identified on the routing sheet, and final review by AM&S is completed**.
- 5.6. The Director, **AM&S or a CO will sign** common letters that provide clarification or general information. **Only a CO** signs common letters identified as directional.
- 5.7. The **AM&S Staff Assistant ensures each impacted team distributes the common letter**. That **Administrative Assistant for each team distributes the letter and ensures that it is scanned into Documentum**. The **AM&S Staff Assistant should be copied on the letter for tracking purposes**.
- 5.7.1. An original common letter shall be sent to the required contractors, **if the team normally sends original letters**. **Otherwise, all copies will be sent electronically**. Copies shall be sent to those listed as **requestor and reviewer(s) or as otherwise indicated in the required distribution section of the Common Letter Routing Sheet**. Copies shall be placed in the **contract file and common letters central file**.

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5.7.2. A common letter shall be distributed within one (1) working day after **signature by the Director, AM&S or the CO.**

5.8. The **AM&S Staff Assistant** will update the common letter log which lists all common letters issued and is organized numerically by letter number. The log is an Excel spreadsheet located on the shared drive at S:\cm\Common Letters.



John W. Meeker
Director, Acquisition Management and Support

ENCLOSURES

1. **Common Letter Routing Sheet (1 page)**
2. **Common Letter Example (1 page)**