The *Defense Organizational Climate Survey* (*DEOCS*) is a tool that provides commanders and other Department of Defense (DoD) leaders with important feedback about the current climate within their unit or organization. This document contains a list of frequently asked questions about the *DEOCS*, and is intended to provide survey administrators, commanders/leaders, and supervisors with a high-level overview of the *DEOCS*.[1]

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[1] For more information about the roles different personnel take in the *DEOCS*, click here and under step 1, "Prepare," click on the document titled "User Roles and the DEOCS Process."

General

What is the *DEOCS*?

The *DEOCS* is a survey conducted by the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of People Analytics (OPA) to provide commanders and leaders with information they can use to improve their unit or organizational climate. The *DEOCS* asks questions about an individual's experiences within their unit, organization, Military Service Academy (MSA), or MSA preparatory school. The survey also asks questions about an individual's immediate supervisor, unit commander, organizational leader, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)/Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL), the first cadet or midshipman in their chain of command (MSAs), or the first cadet or midshipman candidate in their chain of command (MSA preparatory schools). The combined responses to these questions provide commanders and other leaders with important feedback about the current climate and help to identify emerging or existing challenges that may negatively impact their unit.

What is a Command Climate Assessment?

Command Climate Assessments (CCA) primarily serve as an organizational development tool to help commanders and leaders build positive organizational climates. CCAs allow commanders and leaders to identify areas for improvement and take appropriate actions to address these challenges within their organization. CCAs also allow decision makers at the strategic level to direct resources to the units, organizations, or locations that are most in need of prevention support.

What does an annual CCA involve?

Annual CCA activities must include administration of a *DEOCS*. All CCA activities must include consideration of multiple sources of information about risk and protective factors and additional data collection such as administrative records, reports, interview data, focus group data, or other existing data, in addition to current and previous *DEOCS* results. Beginning in February 2024, the *Defense Organizational Climate Pulse* (*DOCP*) survey will be available as a supplemental data collection tool.

What does a change of command CCA involve? Do I need to administer a *DEOCS* with a change of command CCA?

Change of command CCA activities should not include a *DEOCS*, provided one has been administered to the organization in the last year. The incoming commander or leader is required to review the previous *DEOCS* results and assess the previous commander's or leader's progress in implementing the Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (CIPP) plan. A *DOCP* survey can be administered if deemed appropriate by the command. A CCA must include additional data collection such as administrative records, reports, interview data, focus group data, or other existing data, in addition to current and previous *DEOCS* and *DOCP* results.

Is my unit or organization eligible to request a *DEOCS*?

The *DEOCS* is available to all Department of Defense (DoD) agencies, however, a unit or organization must have at least 16 individuals, excluding the commander or leader, to request a survey. If a unit or organization has fewer than 16 individuals, the commander or leader is encouraged to instead conduct focus groups to assess their unit or organizational climate. Contact your local Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA), Command Climate Specialist (CCS), Equal Opportunity (EO) Service Headquarters, or Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW) personnel to ensure you are complying with your Service's command climate assessment policy.

How do participants access the *DEOCS*? Do they have to complete the survey in one sitting?

All *DEOCS* must be completed online using a computer or mobile device (such as a smartphone or tablet). Once a registration has been approved, the *DEOCS* system will provide survey invitation e-mails that include a link to the survey. Survey administrators should also distribute the survey link to any unit or organization members who did not have an e-mail listed on the roster. Participation in the survey is voluntary. Participants will be prompted to enter their DoD ID, e-mail address, or phone number before being able to take the *DEOCS*. The survey does not have to be completed in one sitting. Participants will be prompted to create a four-digit personal identification number (PIN) before beginning the survey and this PIN can be used to reenter the *DEOCS*. For participants taking the *DEOCS* for classified rosters, the survey must be completed in one sitting.

Can government contractors participate in the *DEOCS*?

No. Contractors with the federal government are considered members of the public for data collection purposes and are therefore ineligible to take the *DEOCS* according to DoDI 8910.01, Volume 2, *DoD Information Collections Manual: Procedures for DoD Public Information Collections*.

Can foreign nationals participate in the *DEOCS*?

Yes. Previous restrictions have been removed and foreign nationals who are DoD government employees are now eligible to participate in the *DEOCS* according to DoDI 6400.11, *DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders*.

What is the impact of the *DEOCS* switching to a secure login system?

The administration of the *DEOCS* as a confidential survey (i.e., using the secure login system) does not change anything about the survey registration process or the reporting of *DEOCS* results. However, the switch does impact how participants access the survey. Because survey administrators provide a participant roster when registering a survey, with the secure login, if an e-mail address is provided, the *DEOCS* system now

sends invitation e-mails directly to participants. This eliminates the need for survey administrators to send passcode(s) and be the primary survey messenger. In the secure login, participants are now required to match to an active *DEOCS* roster, entering their DoD ID, e-mail, or phone number. This requirement ensures that only individuals on the roster are taking the survey. For more information on the new confidential process, click here and under step 2, "Conduct," select the document titled "Secure Survey Login."

How is a participant's privacy protected when taking the *DEOCS*?

The DoD is committed to safeguarding the information of all participants who take the *DEOCS*. The *DEOCS* system has privacy policies and secure technology in place to protect all personally identifiable information (PII).

All participant answers are protected and kept confidential to the extent that the law permits. Under state and federal law, certain circumstances may require OPA to break confidentiality. For example, if a participant indicates a direct threat to harm themself or others within their responses.

Survey administrators, commanders/leaders, and commander supervisors are able to review response rates, but not see who has completed the survey. If a *DEOCS* included multiple subgroups designated by leadership and only one subgroup did not have enough responses to be reportable, it will be combined with the reportable subgroup that had the lowest number of participants. For example, if subgroups included on a *DEOCS* were Administration with three participants, Operations with six participants, and Logistics with nine participants, the Administration subgroup results would be combined with the Operations subgroup results.

Except for open-ended responses, all data are reported in the aggregate. To further protect participants' privacy, results are only reported for closed-ended questions if at least five participants respond to that question. Results are only reported for open-ended responses if at least 16 participants respond. While open-ended responses are only reported with other comments from people in the unit or organization, they are not edited. Participants are repeatedly urged to make sure they do not use PII in their responses. Additional measures that we encourage participants take to protect their own privacy include being aware of the environment in which they take the survey and not leaving the survey unattended.

For combined reports, if only one subgroup out of the selected had results that were not reportable for a given factor, demographic category, or question, all results for the given item(s) will not be displayed. This protects the one nonreportable subgroup. For example, nine of the 10 subgroups selected for a combined report have reportable results for *Cohesion*, but one has a not reportable result for *Cohesion*. The combined report must exclude results for *Cohesion*.

Moreover, OPA's data security systems have been designed with overlapping layers of security to protect participants' information from cyber-attacks. Response data and PII are encrypted during data collection and stored in a secure network isolated by firewalls

and other security measures; PII is never stored in the same file as *DEOCS* responses. OPA actively monitors all digital traffic and inspects its systems to ensure participants' information stays secure. All systems comply with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Risk Management Framework (RMF) security standards, as required by the DoD.

Registering and Administering the *DEOCS*

Who can register/set up a new *DEOCS*?

The *DEOCS* is available to all Department of Defense (DoD) agencies and is registered by a survey administrator on behalf of a unit's or organization's commander or leader. A survey administrator is typically a trained military EO professional, however, commanders and leaders can authorize any responsible member of their organization to serve in this role.

What is a survey administrator?

The survey administrator is the individual who oversees the entire command climate assessment process. This includes registering a *DEOCS*, adding a customized set of questions if desired, coordinating outreach to participants (i.e., invitation and reminder e-mails), and tracking response rates. This individual also receives the *DEOCS* results and is typically involved with their review and interpretation and the development of a corresponding, tailored action plan. A survey administrator is typically a trained military EO professional, however, commanders and leaders can authorize any responsible member of their organization to serve in this role.

Can there be more than one survey administrator for a unit or organization?

Yes. Survey administrators may share *DEOCS* registrations. If the survey administrator is not available during the *DEOCS* process, they can also designate a proxy administrator. For more information about sharing a *DEOCS* registration or designating a proxy survey administrator, click here and under step 1, "Prepare," click on the document titled "User Roles and the *DEOCS* Process."

Can an EOA/CCS access their unit's or organization's *DEOCS* results?

As of December 2022, on new *DEOCS* registrations, if applicable, the EOA/CCS personnel listed on the registration will now have a *DEOCS* account created for them. This will allow the EOAs/CCSs to view the *DEOCS* registration, monitor the survey while it is in the field, and download results in the Interactive Dashboard. If an EOA/CCS wants to access previous *DEOCS* results, they will need to be individually added as a proxy survey administrator for any *DEOCS* registrations they wish to view. For more information about designating a proxy survey administrator, click here and under step 1, "Prepare," click on the document titled "User Roles and the *DEOCS* Process."

How do survey administrators register a survey?

To register a survey, survey administrators must go to the *DEOCS* Portal website located here.

What is the *DEOCS* Portal?

The *DEOCS* Portal is a comprehensive website where commanders and leaders, their supervisors, and survey administrators can register a *DEOCS* (survey administrators), approve or deny a new *DEOCS* (commanders and leaders), monitor response rates (all), and view and download *DEOCS* results (all). The *DEOCS* Portal is comprised of two major components—the Registration Portal and the Interactive Dashboard. More information about the *DEOCS* Portal, including how to request an account, can be found by clicking here and under step 1, "Prepare," selecting the document titled "How to Request a *DEOCS* Portal Account."

Does the commander or leader receive notification when a survey is registered?

Yes. When registering a survey, the survey administrator is required to enter the commander's or leader's name and e-mail. Once the administrator has submitted the *DEOCS* request, the commander receives an e-mail and must approve or deny the *DEOCS* request. Once approved, the *DEOCS* will begin on the specified start date.

Is a commander or leader's approval necessary to administer a *DEOCS*?

Yes. The commander or leader of the unit or organization requesting the *DEOCS* must approve the survey submitted by the survey administrator. In the *DEOCS* Portal, the survey administrator will be asked to enter the commander or leader's name and e-mail address. The commander or leader will then receive an e-mail asking him or her to log in to the *DEOCS* Portal and approve or deny the *DEOCS* request. Once the commander or leader has done this, the survey administrator will be notified and—if approved—the *DEOCS* will begin on the specified start date.

Why does the commander or leader have to approve the *DEOCS* I registered?

Because the *DEOCS* is an assessment of a commander's or leader's unit or organizational climate, it is necessary for the survey administrator to acknowledge that they have (1) obtained consent from the commander/leader to request a *DEOCS* and (2) obtained consent from the commander/leader to receive the *DEOCS* report. In the *DEOCS* Registration Portal, the survey administrator will enter the commander's /leader's name and e-mail, and an e-mail will be sent to the commander/leader asking them to approve or deny the *DEOCS* request. The commander/leader can either approve or deny the *DEOCS* request in the DEOCS Portal or in the e-mail they receive. Once the commander/leader has approved the request, the survey administrator will be notified and the *DEOCS* will begin on the specified start date.

When is the annual fielding of the *DEOCS*?

The annual fielding window for the *DEOCS* is from August 1st to November 30th. Surveys must be registered, approved by commanders or leaders, and start by October 31st.

Can my survey be conducted outside of the annual fielding window?

It is possible; however, the unit or organization must provide justification for doing so (i.e., deployment, unit/organization training schedule, operational demands). If possible, the *DEOCS* should be administered within the parameters of the annual fielding window. During registration, you can select dates outside of the annual fielding window. If the *DEOCS* is administered outside of this window, you will be asked to provide justification.

How long should the *DEOCS* be made available to my unit's or organization's members?

To help ensure that all members of a unit or organization have ample opportunity to complete the *DEOCS*, we recommend that the survey be made available for at least 20 business days (i.e., four work weeks). However, the survey administrator should closely monitor survey response rates and keep leadership informed so that, should response rates trend lower than desired, the survey end date can be extended (through *DEOCS* Registration Portal) if appropriate. Response rates can be monitored through the *DEOCS* Portal Interactive Dashboard.

How many participants need to complete the *DEOCS* for the results to be meaningful?

OPA does not recommend a specific number of responses for your unit or organization. However, the higher the completion rate, the greater confidence you can have in your unit's or organization's results.

Content of the *DEOCS*

What types of questions does the *DEOCS* ask?

The *DEOCS* contains 73 decisions points, on average, that measure 10 protective factors and 9 risk factors to help unit and organization commanders and leaders, as well as DoD leadership, better understand the current climate within and, in the case of DoD leadership, across units and organizations. Survey administrators, commanders/leaders, and commander supervisors can preview any survey in full using a new functionality in the *DEOCS* Portal. Additional information about the factors measured on the *DEOCS* is below:

Protective Factors	*Risk Factors*
• *Cohesion*	• *Alcohol Impairing Memory*
• *Connectedness*	• *Binge Drinking*
• *Engagement & Commitment*	• *Passive Leadership*
• *Fairness*	• *Racially Harassing Behaviors*
• *Inclusion*	• *Sexist Behaviors*
• *Leadership Support*	• *Sexually Harassing Behaviors*
• *Morale*	• *Stress*
• *Safe Storage for Lethal Means*	• *Toxic Leadership*
• *Transformational Leadership*	• *Workplace Hostility*
• *Work-Life Balance*	

These 19 protective and risk factors are assessed because they are related to the *DEOCS*' six strategic target outcomes (STOs)—personnel issues identified as strategically important to the Department of Defense (DoD). For more information about each of these factors and how they relate to the STOs, click here.

In addition to questions assessing the protective and risk factors, the *DEOCS* contains a subset of questions that are asked only of Military Service Academy (MSA) and MSA Preparatory School participants and focus on Academy life.

Finally, survey administrators also have the option to customize their survey in two ways—by selecting up to ten closed-ended questions (also known as LDQs due to historical naming conventions) and up to five open-ended questions (also known as SAQs due to historical naming conventions)—from a custom question bank.

How is *DEOCS* 5.1 different from *DEOCS* 5.0?

DEOCS 5.1 is a streamlined or shortened version of *DEOCS* 5.0. The total number of survey items has been reduced by nearly 30%, with the average decision points for participants reduced from 101 on *DEOCS* 5.0 to 73 decision points on *DEOCS* 5.1. Along with fewer questions, similar survey questions are now presented together so participants can more quickly and easily respond. These changes reduce survey burden for the roughly one million individuals that take the survey annually. Even

though there are fewer questions, the 19 protective and risk factors are still adequately measured. Furthermore, *DEOCS* 5.0 results can be compared to *DEOCS* 5.1 results except for *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*. The question used to calculate *Safe Storage of Lethal Means* has significantly changed due to feedback from *DEOCS* users and this change is substantial enough so that the 5.0 factor cannot be compared to the 5.1 factor.

How is the *DEOCS* different from other DoD surveys?

The DEOCS is primarily a tool for commanders and other organizational leaders that provides insight into their unit/organization. Although it also informs high-level DoD leadership, unlike many other surveys, its administration is decentralized and tailored to the unit level.

Can I view my survey before it is in the field?

Yes. With the survey preview function, survey administrators and commanders can view a draft of their survey from the Registration Portal before the survey is fielding. This draft incorporates language from the information entered by the survey administrator into the Registration Portal. The draft includes all core *DEOCS* questions, any selected custom questions, and Service-specific questions (if applicable).

Can I write my own questions for an upcoming *DEOCS*?

No. Questions cannot be created by the unit/organization to be included in their survey. For previous versions of the DEOCS, units/organizations were allowed to customize and create their own locally developed questions. However, this has been changed to comply with 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, also known as the Paperwork Reduction Act, which states that all government survey content must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) before a survey is sent to potential participants. Prior versions of the *DEOCS* were granted an exception but *DEOCS* 5.1 is fully compliant with this policy.

However, OPA does have a process for stakeholders to recommend questions for inclusion in the custom question bank. Due to recent changes regarding DoD survey guidance, we can no longer update this question bank on a quarterly basis. Any submissions we receive will be considered for additions, dependent on the outcome and timeline of OMB review.

Do commanders and leaders have a say in what questions are asked on the *DEOCS*?

In a way, yes. In addition to the core questions that are asked of all participants, survey administrators can select up to ten closed-ended questions (also known as LDQs) and up to five open-ended questions (also known as SAQs) from a custom question bank when registering their survey. The questions in the custom question bank are provided

in the *DEOCS* Portal and also posted here (see "Custom Question Bank" under step 1, "Prepare").

Can I add custom questions to my *DEOCS*?

Yes. In addition to the core questions that are asked of all participants, survey administrators can select up to ten closed-ended questions (also known as LDQs) and up to five open-ended questions (also known as SAQs) from a custom question bank when registering their survey. The questions in the custom question bank are provided in the *DEOCS* Portal and also posted here (see "Custom Question Bank" under step 1, "Prepare").

Why have questions on gender and sex changed on the DEOCS?

Self-reported sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data provides valuable insight into the lives of members of the DoD and provides support for evidence-based policymaking. These measures needed to adapt to remain useful for commanders, leaders, and the DoD. On *DEOCS* 5.0, there was a single question that asked participants if they were male or female. On *DEOCS* 5.1, questions cover sex assigned at birth, how participants currently describe their gender, and participants sexual orientation. These updated questions help ensure that no population of military members is overlooked.

Why after completing the *DEOCS* are participants asked to take other DoD surveys?

The DoD collects information from its members across a variety of surveys to understand experiences and identify ways to improve DoD culture and policy. After completing the *DEOCS*, participants can check to see if they are eligible to take other DoD surveys for this purpose. Responses to these other surveys are independent from *DEOCS* responses. For example, if you take the Workplace Gender Relations (WGR) survey from the prompt at the end of the *DEOCS*, your WGR responses will not be included in the *DEOCS* results and will not be provided to your leadership as part of the *DEOCS* report for your unit/organization.

DEOCS Reporting

How quickly will my *DEOCS* results be available?

Reports are typically available within two weeks of the survey end date.

How do I view/access my *DEOCS* report?

The survey administrator, the requesting commander or leader, and their supervisor will receive an e-mail notification when results are available to download in the *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard. Each of these users can download their results. For

instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard, click here and under step 2, "Conduct," click the link titled "How to Use the Interactive Dashboard."

How has the *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard changed?

There have been substantial updates to the *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard for *DEOCS* 5.1. The "Factor Ratings" tab, the "Custom Items" tab, and the "Item Summary" tab are no longer present. *DEOCS* 4.1 reports are no longer available for download on the Interactive Dashboard.

New features include the "Combined Results" tab where *DEOCS* results for different units and organizations can be combined, the "Interpretation Guide" tab that includes information on each *DEOCS* factor, and the ability to create unique subgroup rollup reports in the "Download" tab. Information on combining reports and creating subgroup rollups can be found in the "Combined Results" tab and the "Download" tab of the Interactive Dashboard respectively.

Who can view/has access to the survey results in the *DEOCS* Portal?

Survey administrators, EOAs/CCSs, requesting commanders and leaders, and their supervisors can all access survey results through the *DEOCS* Portal.

As an incoming commander or leader, do I have access to previous *DEOCS* reports?

Incoming commanders and leaders are required to review previous *DEOCS* reports for their unit or organization according to DoDI 6400.11, *DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders*. You can be added to a previous *DEOCS* administration as a proxy user. This allows you access to *DEOCS* registration information and results. For information on being added as a proxy, click here and under step 1, "Prepare," click on the document titled "User Roles and the DEOCS Process."

What does a *DEOCS* 5.1 report look like?

Survey results are presented in the *DEOCS* Reports available in the *DEOCS* Portal. Graphs and tables are used to display results. Factors are organized into two main groups: 1) protective factors and 2) risk factors, with both favorable and unfavorable results for all factors. An "alert" feature calls attention to factors of concern for your unit or organization. Factor results are also displayed by demographic category and tables that show results for each question on the survey are provided. For instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard and download reports, click here and under step 2, "Conduct," click the link titled "How to Use the Interactive Dashboard."

Does the *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard break down results by different subgroups?

Yes. The *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard breaks down survey results for certain demographic categories such as gender and enlisted/officer status, respectively. In addition, if subgroups were identified and the necessary information included in the roster when the survey administrator registered the survey, a breakdown of results by those subgroups will also be provided. Sample surveys are provided here, under step 1, "Prepare."

The presentation of results for different subgroups enables commanders, leaders, and their supervisors to better understand the nuances of their unit's or organization's climate, and identify any noteworthy disparities in their members' beliefs, attitudes, or experiences. To protect individuals' privacy and confidentiality, however, a subgroup must have at least five survey respondents for results to be displayed. If, for example, only four females in a unit respond to the survey, results will not be shown by gender.

Can I combine subgroup reports?

Yes. The *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard allows for subgroups to be combined into one report. This allows for the creation of larger subgroup reports that can be used as a comparison point for individual subgroups in the unit or organization. Detailed instructions on creating combined subgroup reports can be found on the bottom of the "Download" tab in the Interactive Dashboard.

Can I combine multiple *DEOCS* reports from different units or organizations into one report?

Yes. The *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard now allows for reports for multiple surveys to be combined into one report. This combined report calculates factor rating averages and can provide a comparison point for units or organizations. Keep in mind that combined reports can be made only for the units or organizations to which the user has access to in the *DEOCS* Interactive Dashboard. Detailed instructions on creating combined reports can be found at the bottom of the "Combined Results" tab in the Interactive Dashboard.
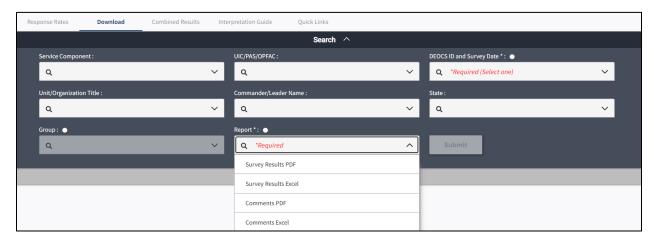
Are trends available in the *DEOCS* Portal Interactive Dashboard?

Yes. The *DEOCS* reports do display trends over time for factor ratings if there are previous *DEOCS* survey results with the same Service component, the same unit identification code (UIC/RUC/PAS/OPFAC), and the same commander/leader. *DEOCS* 5.0 results and *DEOCS* 5.1 results can be trended and compared to one another except for *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*. Additional trending capabilities—such as, viewing results for the same unit or organization over time under different commanders/ leaders—will be built into future iterations of the dashboard, in consultation with stakeholders.

Can I access a previous *DEOCS* report for my unit/organization?

In most cases, yes.

DEOCS 4.1 reports are no longer available for download in the Portal. All reports for *DEOCS* 5.0, first administered January 4th, 2021, are available in the *DEOCS* Portal. *DEOCS* 5.0 reports will be available five years from the end date of the original survey. To download reports, log in to the Portal and navigate to the Interactive Dashboard by clicking on "My Applications" and then "Interactive Dashboard." Next, click on the "Download" tab and use the "Service Component," "UIC/PAS/OPFAC," "DEOCS ID and Survey Date," "Unit/Organization Title," "Commander/Leader Name," "State," "Group," and "Report" filters to identify the survey report you would like to download.

Using the Results of the *DEOCS*

What should I do when I get the final *DEOCS* report?

We urge transparency and recommend that *DEOCS* results be shared with all members of a unit or organization. Moreover, the *DEOCS* is intended to produce actionable results that can be used to effect positive change. There are many resources available here to assist commanders and leaders in improving their unit's or organization's climate.

For instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard, click here and under step 2, "Conduct," click the link titled "How to Use the Interactive Dashboard."

DEOCS Help

Who should survey administrators contact if they have questions about how to register and administer a *DEOCS*?

Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA), Command Climate Specialists (CCS), Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW) personnel, or others in the field with questions about how to register, administer, and use the *DEOCS* Portal should contact the *DEOCS* help desk at:
- 1-833-867-5674
- DEOCS@datarecognitioncorp.com

If you have questions about *DEOCS* content, purpose, or participant privacy, please contact:
- DEOCS_Support@forsmarsh.com

Some of my participants can't access the *DEOCS* Portal and/or the survey. What should I tell them?

Due to certain configuration settings, unit and organization members who attempt to take the *DEOCS* on a DoD computer may have problems accessing it. In such cases, suggest that the participant take the *DEOCS* on a mobile device or on a non-DoD computer.