

Guide for Conducting a Climate Assessment



Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

This publication is available for download at the
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)
website at www.deomi.org.

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

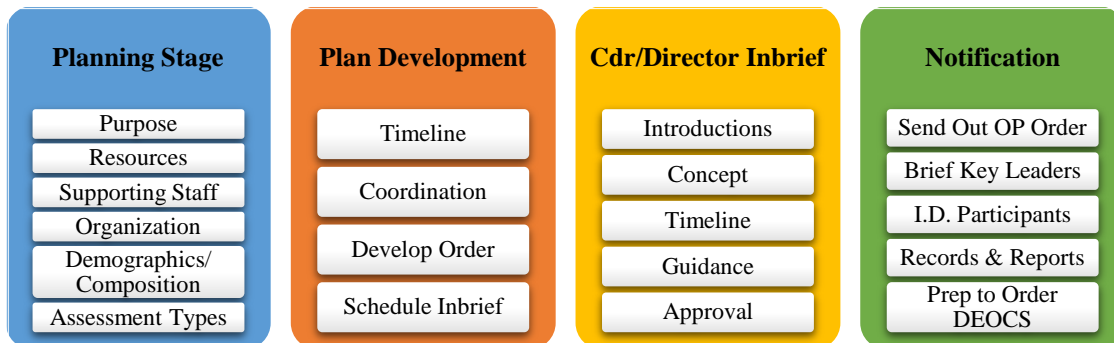
The climate assessment process involves five distinct phases: Prepare, Conduct, Interpret, Develop, and Execute. This guide is designed to assist commanders in understanding and processing Phase 1 (Prepare) from this five-stage process. Leaders should review this guide as well as the additional guides available to them on the four remaining phases to gain a full appreciation for this process.

There are four separate assessment methods that can be used to conduct an organizational assessment. One method, the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is a mandated annual requirement per Under Secretary of Defense memorandum dated 20 November 2014. It is recommended that at least two of the remaining three remaining assessment methods (focus groups/interviews, observations, and/or a records and reports review) be used to complement the survey and verify its indicators to get a complete picture of the unit climate (a comprehensive assessment). Doing so allows leaders to triangulate the data between methods to get a more accurate view of what is going on. Leaders should be familiar with each assessment method, how it relates to other methods, and how their correlated data is used in determining the overall command climate. Leaders should already have an idea which other methods they intend to use to complement the survey as they begin their preparation phase. These other methods can also be used as a stand-alone for a pulse check between annual requirements. Thorough preparation in Phase 1 will facilitate a more accurate assessment and eliminate many of the challenges and potential problems in its implementation.

This guide will provide key information in preparing for your survey and planning considerations for using the other assessment methods. Additionally, in the Assessment to Solutions area of the DEOMI website, www.deocs.net, there is specific information about the DEOCS and its components and how to order one for your unit.

Preparing for the Climate Assessment and Administering the DEOCS

There are four steps in preparing for the climate assessment: planning stage, plan development, commander/director in-brief, and notification. Each provides guidance that integrates and synchronizes planning activities and efforts across the organization. Moreover, preparation leads to the development of a common operating picture amongst senior leaders and increases frequent senior leader interaction to maximize participation in the organization's assessment.

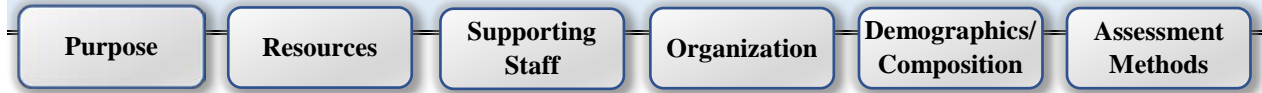


PLANNING STAGE

The planning stage begins at order of the commander/director and is end-state oriented. It requires collaboration and dialogue among leaders. Depending on their involvement this may include the senior commander, senior enlisted advisors, equal opportunity advisor (EOA)/command climate specialist (CCS), equal employment opportunity officers (EEO), and/or inspector general (IG), etc.

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

During the planning stage, clearly define the **purpose** of the assessment, list all **resources** required to administer the assessment, identify **supporting staff** required to execute the organizational assessment, identify the **organization(s)** being assessed, collect organization **demographics and unit composition**, and identify the types of **assessment methods** that will be used during the assessment.



- **Purpose.** Defining the purpose of the climate assessment provides a clear message to members why the unit is conducting an assessment, encourages honest feedback, and increases buy-in. One purpose for a climate assessment may include that it is a mandated annual requirement as directed by Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1350.2, which maintains that leaders will assess their organizations' EO climate on a regular basis and—most importantly—that they are responsible for the EO climate. Other reasons for conducting an assessment include: arrival of a new commander/director, directed by the senior commander/director, event-driven, or simply a commander/director wishing to be proactive to verify the effectiveness of policy and organizational changes that were recently implemented.
- **Resources.** During this stage, the assessment team should identify any resources required to conduct the assessment. These resources may include the use of briefing rooms to brief the commander/director and key leaders, auditoriums to brief participants before and after the assessment, identifying availability of computer rooms for survey administration, areas for conducting interview or focus groups, identifying and coordinating transportation if the assessment team must travel to unit locations, budget support, and any other resources necessary to conduct the organizational assessment.
- **Supporting Staff.** The commander/director is strongly urged to organize a team of experts to plan, coordinate and execute the assessment. It is important to involve the unit leaders and others in the process. Additionally, key staff members may have specific roles or may be required to gather required data/information to support the total assessment. Staff sections that may provide expertise during the assessment include the EOA/CCS, EEO officer/specialist, IG, chaplain, sexual harassment/assault response coordinator, and potentially local support agencies (social services, housing offices, etc.).
- **Organization.** Understanding the unit structure and composition is essential to the planning process and includes identifying the commander and sub elements being assessed. If identified in advance, the DEOCS can provide smaller element breakout reports to better examine smaller unit interactions. Each organization comes with its own operational tempo, cultural differences, unique jargon/language styles, types of work, and work shifts. Understanding these dynamics will ease coordination and execution. Some differences in unit structures that can impact the plan include joint military organizations, civilians (government, host nation, and contractors), detached or geographically distant elements, combat arms, aviation, support, sustainment, or combinations of all the above. Additional coordination may also be required with labor unions or local nation employee relations groups depending on the organizational structure and if these components are involved in the assessment.

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

- **Demographics.** The organization's demographics must be collected and available prior to ordering the DEOCS (which is usually the first assessment method employed - see www.deocs.net under Phase 1 – Prepare, for required information to order the survey). Further, the demographic information will be used later in Phase 3 to compare responses between different groups in efforts to identify negative and positive findings and to determine potential strategies for action plan development in Phase 4.
- **Assessment Methods.** There are four separate assessment methods used to conduct a comprehensive organizational assessment. At least three of these methods should be used to compare data points. Leaders should be familiar with each method, how it relates to the others, and how their correlated data is used in determining their overall command climate. In the Assessment to Solutions area of the DEOMI website, www.deocs.net, administrators have access to detailed information pertaining to the DEOCS, Focus Groups/Interviews, Observations, and a Records and Reports Review.
 - **DEOCS.** The DEOCS is the DoD-mandated, confidential, command-requested organizational development survey focusing on issues of organizational effectiveness, equal opportunity/equal employment opportunity, and sexual assault response and prevention. The DEOCS program is managed and administered by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. To request a DEOCS, survey administrators need to visit deocs.net and review support items in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Leaders should also review the sample survey and report to become familiarized with them as well as review the sample locally developed questions (LDQs) and short answer questions (SAQs). The commander should begin to identify which LDQs and SAQs they wish to add to their survey (if desired) to explore other specific climate areas.
 - **Focus Groups/Interviews.** Individual interviews or focus groups can be conducted to gain key information. A focus group is nothing more than a group interview. Focus groups/interviews are used to clarify opinions or perceptions identified in a survey about a specific area(s). These are excellent methods for clarifying the cause and effect relationship between survey findings and unit practices as you get to ask unit members direct questions to get additional information. They can capture strengths, positive trends, program effectiveness, morale and other key factors affecting the workplace. For more information about how to conduct a focus group, visit deocs.net under Phase 3 to view the Focus Groups video and guide.
 - **Observations** – Observations are a method for viewing unit members performing daily activities in their natural work environment. Some of the difficulties in doing an observation are being focused on the task, being attentive to your surroundings, remaining unbiased, and making note of things for further retrospect and analysis. To gain a better understanding on how to plan and conduct your unit observation visit deocs.net under Phase 3 to view the Observation video and guide.
 - **Records Review** – Records and reports are used by units to document a variety of organizational actions and processes and provide a wealth of information regarding trends and indicators which contribute to the overall health of the organization. Some of the detailed data

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

to review may include EO/EEO complaints, awards (including monetary and nonmonetary), selection for special training, punishments, separations, promotions, etc. For more information on how to correlate this information view the Records and Reports guide and video at deocs.net under Phase 3.



- **Timeline.** The timeline provides a logical sequence of events and assists in planning the assessment around major organizational events that can negatively affect the participation and outcome. Additionally, the time line keeps the assessment team focused on what needs to occur and paves a smooth process for all organizational leaders in the assessment's execution. Sample timelines are located at Appendix A-1 and A-2.
- **Coordination.** It is imperative that continuous coordination occurs among key leaders and staff agencies before, during, and after the execution of the organizational assessment. Initial coordination involves meeting with the officer/manager who controls the organization's master calendar; typically in the operations cell. The master calendar will highlight the best dates to begin and end the assessment based on the organizations operational tempo. Additionally, the operations cell will more than likely control necessary support assets like auditoriums, briefing rooms, buildings, etc. In addition coordinating with other key elements like the IG, EO, EEO, legal, chaplain, human resource offices/operations, commanders and senior enlisted leaders, etc., are important to establishing the assessment team and/or for coordinating for necessary data for the records review.
- **Develop Order.** This step involves the assessment team receiving official approval and authorization to conduct the assessment. It directs the synchronization and coordination with the operations team to de-conflict the use of organizational resources, identifies tasks and details, lays out the commander/director's intent and expectations, and outlines follow-on actions. It can involve the development of an official operations order or be more informal. Additionally, orders tend to prevent resistance and enhance collaboration and cooperation between leaders to support the commander's efforts. Refer to your organization's guidelines and leader's desires on developing planning orders.
- **Develop Inbrief.** Once the assessment team has developed the initial plan and synchronized efforts across the organization, the team needs to develop the initial inbrief for the commander/director. The briefing should focus on the purpose, concept, time line, assessment team members, plan of execution and receiving additional guidance and final approval from the commander/director on the plan of execution.

BRIEFING THE COMMANDER

Now that the assessment team has developed the inbrief, the team needs to brief the commander/director. Begin the briefing by **introducing** the team. Then brief the key points on the **plan concept** and who will be involved. It should discuss the proposed timeline, expectations for completion, and how and when other assessment methods may be employed. At the end of the brief, ask for **additional guidance** and **plan approval**. Once the commander has approved the plan or provided additional guidance, the team is ready to move to Phase 2 “Conduct.”

Introductions

Plan Concept

Additional
Guidance

Plan Approval

- **Introductions.** Begin the briefing by introducing yourself, each team member, and your responsibilities during the assessment.
- **Plan Concept.** When briefing the commander/director, identify the assessment’s purpose (mandated requirement, or commander requested it), plan concept, and key events pertaining to the commander/director (inbrief and outbrief dates, and dates for the commander/director to brief unit members, etc.). Identify which assessment methods you will use (DEOCS, Focus Groups, Records Review, etc.), and layout the timeline from start to finish. Ensure that you are brief and to the point. Anticipate any questions the commander/director may ask and have ready responses.
- **Additional Guidance.** Before closing out the brief, ensure you ask the commander/director for additional guidance and/or make modifications as the commander/director directs.
- **Plan Approval.** Once the brief is complete, clarify any changes and/or guidance the commander/director has provided and make those changes. Once the plan and order have been approved, prepare to notify all participants of the assessment.

NOTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

Once the commander/director has approved the plan and order, prepare to **release the order** in accordance with your organization’s protocol. Next, **brief key leaders** on the plan concept to maximize support and employee participation. Additionally, do not forget to **reconfirm participants** in preparation for Phase 2.

Release Order

Brief Key
Leaders

Reconfirm
Participants

- **Release Order.** Prior to releasing the order, add all additional guidance received from the commander/director. Additionally, recheck all times, dates and locations for accuracy. Finally, ensure the order is released promptly so commanders/directors and key leaders can prepare their staffs to assist in executing the assessment.

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

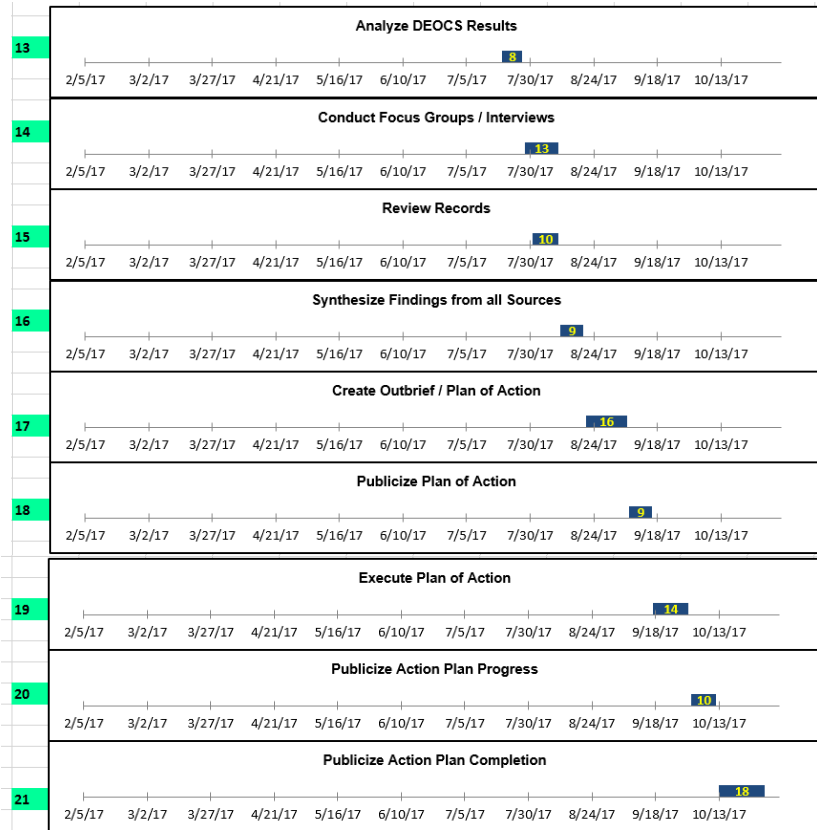
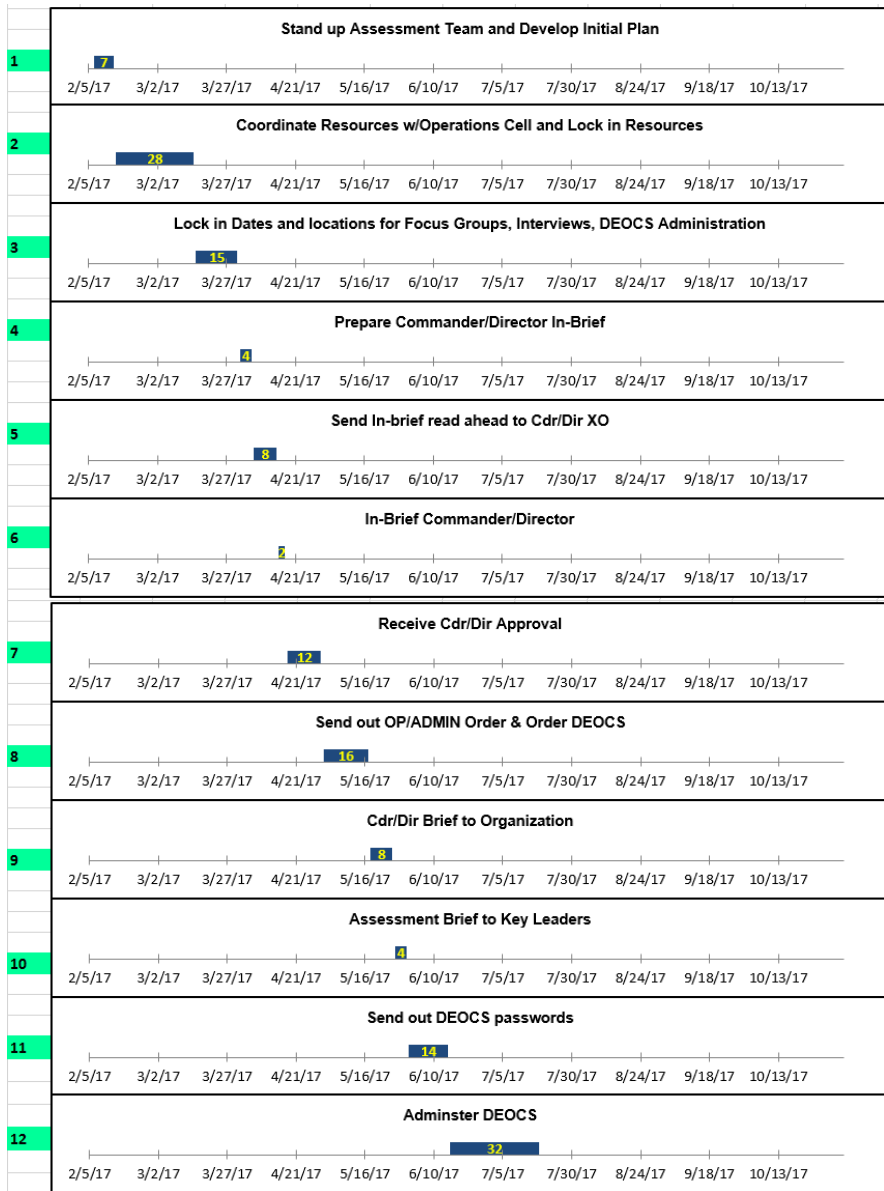
- **Brief Key Leaders.** Briefing key leaders is not mandatory. However, a brief for all key organizational leaders on the plan increases support in the execution of the assessment and is key to maximizing employee participation in providing constructive feedback.
- **Reconfirm Participants.** During this stage, reconfirm all participants that will take the DEOCS to ensure the team has accounted for the correct number of computer passwords and paper surveys (if required). Additionally, identify participants for the focus groups/interviews and ensure participants know the dates, times, and locations of the events.

Now that the assessment team has completed the planning stage, developed the plan, briefed the commander/director and notified all participants about the organizational assessment, the assessment team is ready to move to **Phase 2, “Request and Conduct DEOCS.”**

Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment and DEOCS

APPENDIX A-1

TIMELINE SAMPLE (Using a Pivot Table in Excel)



Guide for Conducting a Command Climate Assessment

APPENDIX A-2 TIMELINE SAMPLE

