



# Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 4120.15E  
November 29, 2004

---

---

USD(AT&L)

SUBJECT: Designating and Naming Military Aerospace Vehicles

- References: (a) DoD Directive 4120.15, "Designating and Naming Military Aerospace Vehicles," May 2, 1985 (hereby canceled)
- (b) DoD 4120.15-L, "Model Designation of Military Aerospace Vehicles," May 12, 2004
- (c) DoD Directive 5101.1, "DoD Executive Agent," September 3, 2002

## 1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive reissues reference (a), updates policies and responsibilities to promote clarity and consistency throughout the Department of Defense in referencing military aerospace vehicles, and continues to assign an Executive Agent to publish a joint regulation governing the designation and naming of these vehicles and a single DoD-wide source document containing approved designators and popular names.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments (including their National Guard and Reserve components), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities in the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to collectively as the "DoD Components").

### 3. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

3.1. Each military aerospace vehicle shall be assigned a unique mission-design series (MDS) designator. Only approved MDS designators and popular names shall be used in referencing these aerospace vehicles in official documents and public statements.

3.2. To ensure consistency and uniformity of compliance with this policy, the Secretary of the Air Force continues as the DoD Executive Agent in accordance with DoD Directive 5101.1 (reference (c)).

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) shall monitor the designation and naming of military aerospace vehicles.

4.2. The Secretary of the Air Force, as the DoD Executive Agent shall:

4.2.1. In coordination with the other DoD Components, publish a joint regulation governing the designating and naming functions for aerospace vehicles.

4.2.2. Assign MDS designators to all military aerospace vehicles, coordinate the assignment of popular names to all aerospace vehicles, and publish and update a list of approved MDS designators and names for aerospace vehicles in a single DoD-wide source document.

4.2.3. Publish the DoD-wide source document annually and update the applicable joint regulation, as required.

4.3. The Heads of the DoD Components shall:

4.3.1. In coordination with the Executive Agent, assign popular names to their military aerospace vehicles consistent with this Directive and the joint regulation noted in subparagraph 4.2.1. To ensure public suitability of popular names, the Executive Agent shall obtain the coordination of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) before public announcement of the selected popular name for each aerospace vehicle.


4.3.2. Forward suggested changes to the joint regulation and the DoD-wide source document to the Executive Agent to facilitate preparation, coordination, and revision, as appropriate.

4.3.3. Disseminate the DoD-wide source document published by the Executive Agent as a reference for the names and MDS designators of military aerospace vehicles.

4.3.4. Coordinate with the Executive Agent, before referencing in official documents and public statements, aerospace vehicles in the planning or predevelopment stage that do not have approved MDS designators or names.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.

  
Paul Wolfowitz  
Deputy Secretary of Defense