



Military and Naval Affairs


KATHY HOCHUL
Governor
Commander-in-Chief

RAYMOND F. SHIELDS, JR.
Major General
The Adjutant General

October 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governor Kathy Hochul

FROM: Major General Ray Shields, The Adjutant General 

SUBJECT: Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA) Transparency Plan

This memorandum is in response to the Secretary to the Governor, Karen Persichilli Keogh's memorandum, subject: Government Transparency Initiative, dated September 20, 2021.

The DMNA is the State's executive agency responsible to the Governor for managing New York's military forces of nearly 19,000 members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia, and the New York Guard. The DMNA/New York National Guard (Army and Air) have a unique federal and state dual status, in that our Commander in Chief is the Governor, until such time as the National Guard is mobilized under Title 10 authority of the President.

The DMNA and the State's military forces are led by The Adjutant General, who is responsible for the agency's administration as well as personnel, equipment, training, and facility readiness. The Army National Guard and the Air National Guard are federal combat reserves of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. Therefore, the vast majority of their funding is federal, along with regulations pertaining to their readiness and availability to support the nation's war fighting requirements. The Naval Militia and the New York Guard are non-federal, state military defense forces and can be used only under State Active Duty.

The DMNA utilizes a broad array of communication tools to provide transparency. Because of the sensitive nature of military operations, some of our readiness related information is sensitive and not generally available to the public. Much of our transparency efforts are focused internally for our service members and civilian employees.

The DMNA/New York National Guard does not hold public meetings as defined by state law or as referenced by the Executive Chamber. Public meetings are necessary

when an agency has statutory requirements to notify the public of the time, date and place of executive board or commission hearings related to the agency's or authority's code enforcement, code enactment, rulemaking, public permit granting, etc.. DMNA does not have these types of statutory requirements.

The DMNA does have a robust public facing program designed to provide transparency and inform the public, our service members, and our civilian employees regarding DMNA and the State's military forces' missions and agency operations. The following transparency/communication tools are electronic and available to the public, our service members, and civilian employees:

1. The DMNA maintains a public facing website, www.dmna.ny.gov, which provides information to military members, state employees, families, public and local communities, to access a variety of current information about the agency, the National Guard and the State's military forces.
2. The DMNA maintains a FLICKR and YouTube imagery archive which publishes imagery of New York National Guard events and operations; www.flickr.com/photos/nyng and www.youtube.com/nynationalguard.
3. The New York Army National Guard maintains a social media presence allowing for public inquiry and response, utilizing Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to provide a variety of stakeholders information about the Army National Guard, highlighting our Soldiers and their activities: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalguardny>, <https://twitter.com/NationalGuardNY> and <https://www.instagram.com/officialnyng/>. Subordinate elements of the New York Air National Guard maintain individual social media sites for public engagement, including the 105th Airlift Wing at <https://www.facebook.com/105thAirliftWing/>, the 106 Rescue Wing at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064292425345>, the 107th Attack Wing at <https://www.facebook.com/107ATKW/>, the 109th Airlift Wing at <https://www.facebook.com/109thaw>, the 174th Attack Wing at <https://www.facebook.com/174thAttackWing/> and the Eastern Air Defense Sector at <https://www.facebook.com/EADSRomeNY/>.
4. Current information regarding benefits and a public "ask a question" portal is also available on the New York Army National Guard application for cell phones. The "ask a question" portal receives hundreds of questions and suggestions annually. Our goal is to reply to each within 24 hours with the information they requested or to acknowledge their suggestion.
5. Public reports regarding the operations, expenditures and the economic impact of the agency for communities around the state, are found on the agency website: <https://dmna.ny.gov/NYNG-Economic-Impact/>.

6. The Adjutant General's Annual Report, <https://dmna.ny.gov/annual/>, provides the public with a summary of all operations, facilities, equipment fielding and State partnership efforts over the past year.

7. The agency site is also the portal for public inquiry regarding noise abatement, particularly in the Adirondack Park.
https://dmna.ny.gov/community/adk_aircraft/.

8. All public announcements of agency operations, activities or member achievements are available through Merit Pages, <http://readme.readmedia.com/new-york-state-division-of-military-naval-affairs>, where member accomplishments are published: <https://dmna-ny.meritpages.com/?host=app.meritpages.com>.

9. A professionally published quarterly news magazine (Guard Times) is mailed to each service member's home and is also available for the public to view at <https://dmna.ny.gov/gt/>. There is also a comprehensive archive of all official public information stories and images found at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/nynng>.

10. Members of the organization or the public are welcome to inquire about issues with the agency's Inspector General's (IG) office at <https://dmna.ny.gov/ig/>. This office is a federal IG headed by a Title 10 officer, making their findings and recommendations independent from The Adjutant General and other leaders. The staff provides The Adjutant General a continuing assessment of matters relating to the state or organization, efficiency, morale, esprit de corps, and readiness of units and activities assigned to the New York National Guard.

11. Family members of the organization and community stakeholders interested in volunteering or supporting members of the agency have a portal for information and guidance at <https://dmna.ny.gov/family/>.

12. Public inquiries regarding the presentation of state or federal awards is provided through a public portal found at <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/>, including information that supports the State Division of Veterans Services.

13. Since most of DMNA's Army National Guard facilities are State owned property, the Office of General Services is our design and contracting agent. Contractors and vendors can track the status of DMNA building projects through the New York State Contract reporter: www.nyscr.ny.gov.

14. Public requests for information related to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) are readily found online at <https://dmna.ny.gov/foil/>. The DMNA generally does not experience a backlog in FOIA or FOIL requests.

15. In support of the New York National Guard's commitment to environmental protection and sustainment, environmental actions, assessments and compliance documents are available for public view at <https://dmna.ny.gov/environmental/>.

16. The Adjutant General's Policy Memorandums pertaining to the operation of the DMNA/New York National Guard are published online at the DMNA website: <https://dmna.ny.gov/otag/policies/>.

17. Contact information for the DMNA/New York National Guard key leaders is also available on line along with their biographies at: <https://dmna.ny.gov/otag/>.

18. Information about the key New York Army National Guard commands and New York Air National Guard wings is published with a facility locator which denotes the locations of units across the state: <https://dmna.ny.gov/units/>.

19. Information about civilian and military employment opportunities with the DMNA/New York National Guard, and the process for applying for both state and federal jobs, is available on the Job Zone section of the DMNA website: <http://dmna.ny.gov/jobs/>. The Job Zone is also a channel for employers to list job vacancies intended particularly for the attention of military members of the National Guard or their families.

20. Information about federal contracts and expenditures for the New York Army and Air National Guard can be found on the web in the section about the United States Property and Fiscal Office, the entity which disperses federal dollars to the New York National Guard. This includes cooperative service agreements between the state and federal government and vendor contract information: <http://dmna.ny.gov/uspfo/>.

21. The DMNA regulations and forms are available for public view on the website: <http://dmna.ny.gov/forms/>.

22. Information about the state defense force elements, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard, is available to the public at: <https://dmna.ny.gov/#StateForces>.

23. Information about how to join the Army and Air National Guard is available to the public on the DMNA website: <http://dmna.ny.gov/forms/#Join>.

24. The New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, maintained by DMNA in the Saratoga Springs Armory, is open to the public free of charge and provides an overview of New York's military history from the Revolutionary War to the present. The museum maintains a website with online access to innumerable historical records, photographs, videos, and documents: <https://museum.dmna.ny.gov/>.

25. The process by which the public can request military support for events, such as parades, fairs and sporting events, is spelled out online at: <https://dmna.ny.gov/#Community>. The public can request marching units, color guards, speakers, and military aircraft flyovers. All are subject to availability, training time, and in the case of military aircraft flyovers, they must be approved by the U.S. Army or the U.S. Air Force in advance.

Internal transparency for our service members and civilian employees starts with regular communications through e-mail and town hall meetings (subject to COVID restrictions) with the force by The Adjutant General and other senior leaders. Specific examples of internal transparency include:

1. In accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, "right to know," issues dealing with hazardous materials are clearly posted within our facilities using signage, bulletin boards and training for employees.

2. The New York National Guard is routinely inspected by the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, and the National Guard Bureau to ensure we are complying with the regulations governing the management of the National Guard. These inspection results are shared throughout the organization to ensure compliance.

3. The DMNA and New York National Guard take issues of sexual assault and harassment seriously. The Adjutant General holds a monthly meeting with all of our Brigade level and Wing level Commanders and senior leaders of the DMNA/NYNG to discuss (as appropriate) where action is being taken. As part of our transparency program, the New York National Guard was the first National Guard (nationally) to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Police which requires all unrestricted reports of sexual assault to be reported to and investigated by the New York State Police. This agreement ensures that criminal investigations are conducted by the State Police and keeps National Guard leaders out of the process, thus providing reassurance to the victims and maintaining trust within the organization.

4. The DMNA prepares a bi-annual report on disciplinary actions taken by the National Guard against service members who violate the New York State Code of Military Justice (similar to the Uniform Code of Military Justice). These reports don't identify the offenders, but do provide a short description of the offense and the punishment. It is shared throughout the force and helps refute the perception of favoritism or that officers are treated differently from enlisted personnel.

5. Promotion Boards:

The New York Army National Guard's promotion boards for enlisted personnel are conducted by senior officers and non-commissioned officers to ensure fair and consistent rankings for promotions. These boards are conducted with the procedures and evaluation criteria distributed to the entire force. This helps build

confidence in the enlisted promotion process and to dispel “it’s who you know” perceptions regarding promotions.

The New York Air National Guard’s promotion boards for enlisted personnel are conducted by each New York Air National Guard wing in accordance with established wing procedures to ensure a fair and consistent process. Special boards are overseen by the State Command Chief and approved by the Assistant Adjutant General – Air.

6. Units publish a monthly newsletter for their service members. This document is designed to provide information for upcoming military training activities and other service member requirements.

7. The DMNA maintains a suggestion box where submissions are used to gauge the issues and concerns affecting the organization. While most are anonymous, all are read and responded to as appropriate – mainly through town hall meetings or mass e-mail.

8. The New York National Guard utilizes an electronic transmittal action workflow program which provides visibility on status and disposition for military personnel actions.

9. The DMNA has bulletin boards throughout our facilities as another means of providing transparent information to our workforce and members of the New York’s Military Forces.

10. The Division of Military and Naval Affairs maintains regular and routine engagements with news media outlets across every community in New York State, providing both announcements of National Guard achievements and invitations to report on agency operations. In the past calendar year, the agency provided 124 media releases for events and 93 achievement announcements, achieving almost 2,500 news media mentions in print or broadcast across the state by 915 news outlets.

Some additional ways in which the DMNA/New York National Guard are transparent include:

1. Throughout the course of the year, the New York National Guard hosts “open houses”, “boss lifts”, and “Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve” events. We participate in local and county fairs, and other community based outreach. All of these are designed to increase the public’s awareness of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs and the New York National Guard’s mission.

2. Working with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, the New York National Guard provides personnel to instruct at the State’s Citizen Preparedness Corps program. Since the COVID crisis, these events have been limited to the New York State Fair, but we expect them to resume statewide in the future.

These training sessions highlight the National Guard and provide the public with helpful information allowing them to be more prepared for emergencies.

3. The New York Counterdrug program provides "Civil Operators" throughout the State designed to assist community based coalitions in confronting substance abuse in New York's at-risk communities.

The DMNA and the New York National Guard are always working to improve our openness and transparency within the confines of operational security while building trust with the public, our service members, and our civilian employees. Any direction or suggestions you might have are most welcome.