MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Social Security Numbers (SSN) Exposed on Public Facing and Open Government Websites

References: (a) DTM 07-015-USD (P&R) – DoD SSN Reduction Plan, March 28, 2008
(b) Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-07-16, Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information, May 22, 2007
(c) President’s Task Force on Identity Theft Strategic Plan, April 2007
(d) Section 552a of title 5, United States Code, September 26, 2003
(e) OMB Memorandum M-10-22, “Guidance for Online Use of Web Measurement and Customization Technologies,” June 25, 2010

The Department of Defense (DoD) continuously monitors situations where the exposure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) might pose a threat to an individual’s privacy. References (a) through (e) address requirements to reduce the use of SSNs and where the SSN is necessary to carry out a business process of the Department to apply appropriate safeguards to ensure privacy protections are in place.

It was recently reported that the last four digits of an individual’s SSN were posted on publicly accessible DoD open government Websites. This practice, whether in the
form of the full or partial SSN, presents a situation where an individual’s PII could be used for identity theft.

Effective immediately, the following Privacy Act safeguards shall be strictly observed:

- SSNs shall not be posted, in whole or in part, on any public facing and/or open government Website in any form; and

- When required by executive order or law, release of documents containing PII to third parties shall be accomplished only with agreement of the recipient that this information will not be further posted to their public facing Websites and/or open government sites.

My point of contact for this matter is Mr. Samuel P. Jenkins at (703) 607-2943 or Samuel.jenkins@osd.mil.

Michael L. Rhodes
Senior Agency Official for Privacy