

**United States Forces–Iraq (USF-I)
Combined Press Information Center
International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq**

As of: 01 January 2010

**NEWS MEDIA GROUND RULES (IAW DoD Directive 5122.5 dated 5 Sept 2008)
Ground Rules Agreement and Waiver of Liability/Reimbursement**

The following is a listing of ground rules that have been developed to protect members of the Armed Services from the release of information that could potentially threaten their security or safety during all operations. These ground rules recognize the inherent right of the media to cover combat operations and are in no way intended to prevent release of embarrassing, negative, or derogatory information. During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives will not be reported. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by the operational unit or United States Forces– Iraq.

Acceptance of these ground rules is an agreement between you and United States Forces- Iraq. You agree to follow the ground rules and the command will provide support, access to service members, information, and other privileges. Violation of ground rules may result in the revocation of your credentials.

These ground rules apply to media reporting with USF-I.

(1) All interviews with Service Members will be on the record unless otherwise stated by the designated PAO. Initials _____

(2) At USF-I tactical or field locations and encampment, an escort may be required because of safety, security, and mission requirements as determined by the host commander. Media will remain with military escorts and follow instructions regarding their activities at all times, until released. Initials _____

(3) Media must be physically fit and able to carry their own equipment/gear. If, in the opinion of the commander, a media representative is unable to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate with the forward deployed forces, he/she will be medically evacuated out of the area. Initials _____

(4) Possession of weapons while embedding or reporting is not authorized. Initials _____

(5) Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages while embedded or reporting is not authorized. Initials _____

(6) Possession of pornographic material while embedded or reporting is not authorized. Initials _____

(7) Filming of security badges or security checkpoints is not authorized. Initials _____

(8) While in transit to and from an embed or unit, the media cannot act in a news gathering capacity. Filming, interviewing, or photographing on any installation or transportation assets is not authorized unless approved and escorted by a public affairs officer or authorized command representative responsible for that area. Initials _____

(9) Reporting inside of the International Zone is not authorized without approval by CPIC and escort by authorized personnel, to include interviews, news gathering, filming, and photographing. Initials _____

(10) Media pool products will be made available to all accredited media (U.S. and others) on an equitable, no-fee basis. Media pool coordinators and bureau chiefs will be responsible for distributing media pool products. Initials _____

(11) Media will not be prohibited from covering casualties provided the following conditions are adhered to: Initials _____

(a) Names, video, identifiable written/oral descriptions or identifiable photographs of wounded Service Members will not be released without the Service Member's prior written consent. If the Service Member later becomes a KIA, Rule 11(b) applies. Initials _____

(b) DoD will release names of KIAs. In respect for family members, names or images clearly identifying individuals "killed in action" will not be released

prior to notification of next of kin and in accordance with current legislation. Names of KIAs may be released after the DoD announcement has been made – journalists may check the Defenselink.mil website for those announcements. Initials_____

(12) Light discipline restrictions will be followed. No visible light source, including flashlights, camera flashes, etc..., will be used when operating with forces at night unless specifically approved by the on-scene commander. Initials_____

(13) While covering an USF-I unit, reporters may inadvertently be exposed to classified material. Security at the source is the primary method of maintaining operational security and is the responsibility of unit commanders. It is incumbent on the unit commander to identify to the reporter which material is classified. The media will adhere to the following guidelines to ensure operational security. Initials_____

(a) Media who are inadvertently exposed to classified information during the process of covering stories shall be informed immediately by the chain of command of the restrictions on the use or disclosure of such classified material. Initials_____

(b) A ban may be imposed to protect operational security and future operations. Initials_____

(c) If a reporter gains access to classified material, the media will ensure no classified information is inadvertently released. Initials_____

(d) Disagreements shall be referred to the next level of command. Initials_____

(14) The following categories of information are not releasable by the media since the publication or broadcast of such information could jeopardize operations and endanger lives. Initials_____

(a) Any specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapon systems, equipment, or supplies to include amounts of ammunition or fuel moved. Unit size may be described as “company sized,” “multi-battalion,” “naval task force,” or, “carrier battle group.” Number or amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms such as “large,” “small,” or “many.” Initials_____

(b) Information that reveals details of future and/or ongoing operations. Initials_____

(c) Information, photography, or imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments. Initials_____

(d) Details of rules of engagement or force protection measures. Initials_____

(e) Information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods, and results. Initials_____

(f) During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions, to include unit designations, names of operations, tactics, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by the appropriate general officer level command. Initials_____

(g) Location of mission aircraft points of origin, other than “land based” or “carrier based.” Number and type of aircraft other than “many,” “few,” “fighters,” or, “fixed wing.” Initials_____

(h) Information on effectiveness of enemy techniques, tactics, and procedures including camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, security measures, electronic warfare, and improvised explosive devices. Initials_____

(i) Information on missing or downed aircraft or missing ships while search and rescue operations are planned and underway. Initials_____

(j) Information on Special Operations units, to include their operations, methodology, or tactics. Initials_____

(k) Information on operational, tactical, or support vulnerabilities that could be used against USF-I, to include improvised explosive devices. Initials_____

(l) No photographs or other visual media showing detainees’ or prisoners’ recognizable faces, nametags, or other indentifying features or items. Initials_____

(m) No demeaning photographs or visual media will be taken of detainees in a manner that makes the individuals an object of public curiosity or subject to public ridicule. Initials_____

(n) No interviews with detainees are authorized.
Initials _____

(o) Any tactics, techniques and procedures witnessed during operations unless released by a field grade commander, to include improvised explosive device (IED) defeating tactics, techniques, and procedures.
Initials _____

(15) Additional guidelines and/or ground rules may be imposed by the local command to protect tactical security. Initials _____

(16) An approved embed may be cancelled or rescheduled at any time due to security, changes in unit mission, or a change in unit's ability to facilitate the request. Initials _____

(17) All embeds must be approved by the CPIC and applicable public affairs office before media representative may arrive on location for requested embed. Initials _____

Agreement of Reimbursement

1. I understand that covering combat and other military operations may require that I be provided certain items not locally available or convenient due to combat conditions. These items may include, but are not limited to, meals, lodging, and air travel into and within the theater of operations.

2. I agree to reimburse the United States Forces– Iraq (USF-I) for any items it may provide me while I am in the area of operations (if deemed necessary).

3. I understand that my agreement to this statement is a condition of being credentialed to cover USF-I military operations and receiving assistance for that coverage.

4. I agree to reimburse the United States Forces– Iraq (USF-I) for any medical services rendered that were not a direct result of injuries sustained while on mission while embedded with US forces.

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

Hold Harmless/Release From Liability Statement

1. I realize that covering security and security operations carries with it certain inherent risks to life, limb, and equipment.

2. I recognize that USF-I forces, in pursuing successful accomplishments of their missions, cannot guarantee my personal safety or the safety of my equipment.

3. In my capacity as an authorized representative, I understand and agree that I, and the business, company, or enterprise that I represent, will indemnify, defend, and hold harmless and release, acquit and forever discharge the USF-I of any liability for any injuries I may suffer or any damage to any equipment that may occur as a result of my presence in the Iraqi theater of operations.

Name _____ Job Title _____

Employer _____

I have read the aforementioned media ground rules and policies and agree to abide by them. I also understand that violation of these ground rules may result in suspension or revocation of my USF-I media credentials and expulsion from USF-I operational areas and installations. I further understand that if I violate these terms, the media organization I am representing may be held accountable for my actions, which could include forfeiting the privilege of sponsoring media for USF-I press credentials in the future. In the event I lose my CPIC credentials, and enter a US military facility in a news gathering capacity or to utilize base services, I will be considered trespassing and subject to arrest and removal from the theater of operations at my own expense.

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____