



# LETTERS OF COUNSELING, ADMONISHMENT, AND REPRIMAND FOR OFFICERS

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1. **INTRODUCTION:** This handout is designed to give you some basic information about your rights with respect to receiving letters of reprimand (LORs), letters of admonishment (LOAs), letters of counseling (LOCs), unfavorable information file (UIFs), and being placed on a control roster (CR).
  - a. **Definition:** LOCs, LORs, and LOAs are administrative disciplinary measures available to commanders and supervisors under AFI 36-2907. They can be written or verbal. Reprimands are more severe than admonishments.
  - b. **When used:** These actions are intended to improve, correct, and instruct subordinates who depart from standards of performance, military bearing, integrity, for conduct either on duty or off duty, and whose actions degrade the individual and unit mission. These actions need not state an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). If you receive a written LOC, LOR or LOA, the letter must state:
    - 1) What you did or failed to do, citing specific incidents and their dates.
    - 2) What improvement is expected.
    - 3) That further deviation may result in more severe action.
    - 4) That you have three duty days to submit documents for consideration, which will become part of the record.
  - c. **Who can give it:** Any commander, supervisor or person in authority can take these actions.
  - d. **How to respond:** You have three duty days from the day you receive the action to respond. This is your chance to document your side of the story. It's always to good idea to do a response to the action if you feel the letter doesn't accurately reflect what happened. If you do not believe you did anything wrong, and then explain why you believe that. If it's a misunderstanding, then clear it up in your written response. If you know you did the behavior described in the LOC/LOR/LOA, apologize for it. Follow the sample format provided at the end

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of this handout to provide a written response. The response does not have to be written, but it is highly recommended. You will want to write a brief but thorough explanation of the incident and attach any supporting documents you have. Whatever you do, do not make excuses; it will hurt you. Take responsibility for your own actions. Your response will be attached to the original LOC/LOR/LOA. If you do not respond within three days, you generally forfeit your right to submit a statement unless your commander extends the time limit for good cause.

- e. **Appeal:** There is technically no appeal to an LOC/LOR/LOA. The only way it can be “thrown out” is for the commander to rescind the action. Commanders do consider how long ago a LOC/LOR/LOA was given and your behavior from that time forward. If your behavior has improved significantly, the LOC/LOR/LOA can be destroyed. The inspector general or equal opportunity treatment office may be able to help you if you feel there has been discrimination or that the action is grossly unfair.

2. **AF POLICY ON ADVERSE ACTIONS ON OFFICERS:** Effective 1 Feb 96, the CSAF and SAF implemented new guidance on “Accountability” and “Personnel Policy” for nonjudicial punishment (Article 15s) and administrative and personnel actions for Air Force officers. This policy was then modified 1 May 98 by Commanders’ NOTAM 98-2. The primary concern was to provide commanders with specific guidelines that would link disciplinary and personnel actions, while protecting command prerogative. The changes were intended for commanders to use when dealing with officers who do not meet Air Force standards. A summary of these changes with regards to Letter of Reprimand (LORs), Letter of Counseling (LOCs), Letters of Admonishment (LOAs), Unfavorable Information Files (UIFs), and Control Rosters (CR) follows.

- a. **PRIMARY REQUIREMENTS:** LORs (as well as Article 15s and court-martial convictions) are mandated for file in an officer’s UIF. The documents will remain on file for a period of two years or a PCS move plus one year, whichever occurs later. The Wing Commander or issuing commander (whichever is higher in rank) can remove documents from a UIF early, if they deem appropriate. LOAs and LOCs are optional for file in a UIF. However, if they are not filed in the UIF, they are mandatory for file in the Personnel Information File (PIF). They will remain in the PIF until the officer’s PCS move. The issuing commander can remove documents from the PIF early.

- b. **COLLATERAL EFFECTS:**

- 1) **OPR Impact:** Raters “must consider” making comments on OPRs when an officer receives an action such as an Article 15, LOR, LOC, or LOA. OPR comments and/or referral OPR are “strongly recommended” if an officer is placed on a CR during the reporting period.

- 2) **PRF Impact:** Commanders, raters and senior raters are required to review both the UIF and PIF prior to completion of an officer’s promotion recommendation form (PRF). Commanders must “carefully consider” making

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PRF comments for officers who have received an Article 15, LOR, LOC, or LOA. Commanders are “strongly encouraged” to make PRF comments for officers on a CR.

3) **OSR Impact:** Commanders should also consider filing these actions in the officer’s selection record (OSR). If filed in the OSR, it will remain for one primary zone promotion eligibility. An officer may request removal of the Article 15 or LOR through an appeal process after the board.

4) **Assignment Impact:** AFPC will be furnished with copies of officer UIF summaries (AF Form 1137) for use in the assignment process. Gaining commanders will now be notified through their respective MAJCOMs of officers with active UIFs within five days of the assignment being finalized. This change is designed to allow gaining commanders time to initiate an appeal of the assignment. Losing commanders will review both the UIF and PIF prior to making a commander’s involvement program (CIP) recommendation on an officer’s assignment.

5) **Decoration Impact:** Decoration RIPs (DÉCOR 6) will be flagged to show if an officer has an active UIF. Additionally, commanders will review the UIF and the PIF, and then certify review of the UIF on the DÉCOR 6 when making a decoration nomination.

3. **CONCLUSION:** This fact sheet was intended to give you an overview of your options concerning adverse actions and the impact of adverse action of officers. If you should have any further questions, you should review AFI 36-2907. If you still have any further questions, please schedule an appointment with the Area Defense Counsel at 618-256-3246. Since an LOR is an administrative action and there is no right to an attorney, you will be seen time and resource permitting.

## SUGGESTED LOR RESPONSE FORMAT

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR (Name or Office Symbol of Person Who Signed LOR)

FROM: (Your Rank and Full Name)

SUBJECT: Response to Letter of Reprimand, dated .....

1. Use the following introductory paragraph: *This statement concerns the letter of reprimand I received on (date) for (offense). I respectfully request that you consider the following information.*
2. If you believe you did not commit the offense, explain why:
  - Point out discrepancies in the version of events in the LOR
  - Clarify incorrect statements made in the LOR
  - Briefly state what happened in your own words
  - Were your actions misinterpreted? By whom?
  - Were you authorized to do as you did? By whom?
  - Do you have any other explanation? If so, describe
3. If you know you committed the offense:
  - Admit it and apologize
  - Briefly describe any circumstances which explain your actions
  - Avoid making excuses or blaming others
  - Accept responsibility
  - Stress that you have no intention of repeating the offense again
4. Ask for consideration of your background and duty performance so that your unit can realize that you are an asset to the Air Force, such as:
  - Specialized training
  - What your job is and what you like about it
  - Any special honors, awards, or achievements you've earned
  - Letters of Appreciation, nominations (CGO of the Quarter)
  - Good OPRs or character statements attached
5. *In conclusion,*
  - Apologize for the incident in your own words, if you can (which is usually the best thing to do)
  - *Based on (evidence submitted and/or good character and/or excellent duty performance, etc.) I respectfully request you do not give me this LOR*
  - *Regardless of what you decide I can assure you I will give the Air Force 100 percent*
  - *Thank you for taking the time to review this response.*

(Sign above your signature block.)  
FULL NAME, Rank, USAF

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