

How-To Guide for Airmen Taking DSD Package Photos

1. Purpose

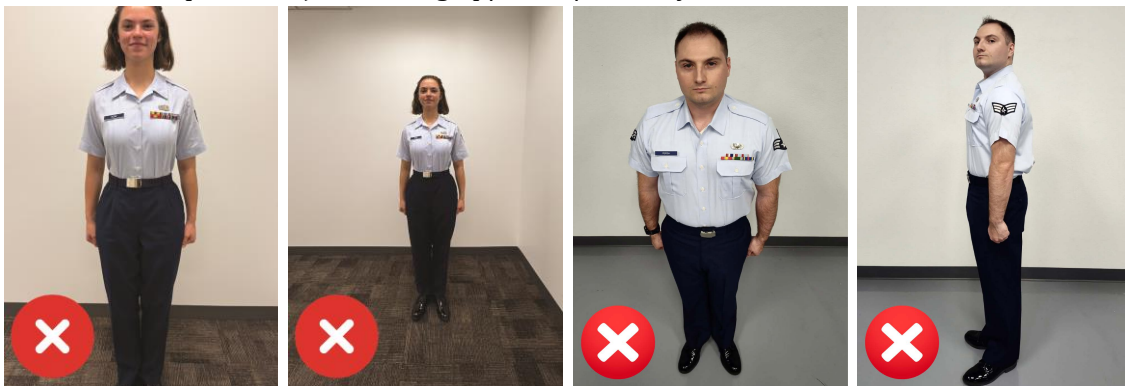
Provide clear guidance for Airmen on how to take proper Developmental Special Duty (DSD) photos that meet standards and avoid common mistakes.

2. Photo Requirements



Framing & Orientation

- **Do:** Centered, full body visible, straight-on, level
- **Don't:** Cut off head or feet, leave too much empty space, stand too close or too far, tilt camera, capture subject looking up/down/sideways



Head and feet cut off

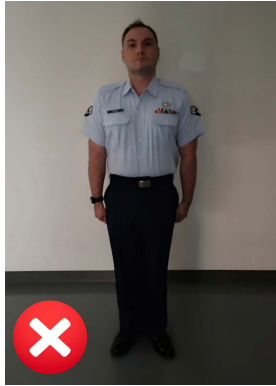
Too much empty space

Camera tilt

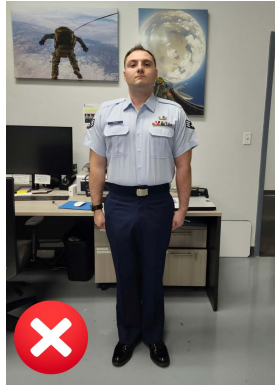
Incorrect pose

Background & Lighting

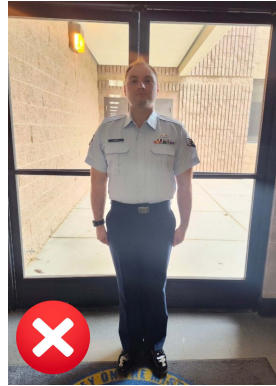
- **Do:** Plain and neutral colored wall with natural, even lighting
- **Don't:** Busy, patterned, cluttered, items in background, windows or filters



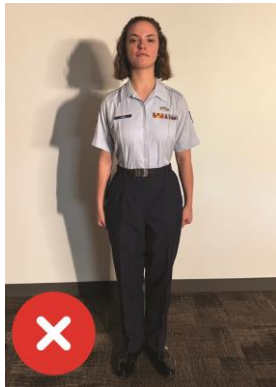
Too dark, has shadow



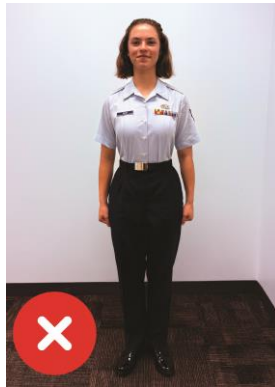
Distracting background



Window



Uneven lighting, shadow



Filter used



Cluttered Background

Appearance

- **Do:** Uniform neat and pressed, grooming standards met, neutral expression
- **Don't:** Smile broadly, hat/cover on, hair obstructing face

3. Step-by-Step Instructions

Set the Scene

- Choose a plain, uncluttered wall as your background.
- Make sure the wall is in a place with good, even lighting.
- Position the subject so the light falls on their face and uniform, not from behind (Avoid standing in front of a bright window or light source).

Prepare the Subject

- Ensure proper uniform and grooming.
- Remove accessories (sunglasses, hats, etc.).
- Subject should be 1-2 steps from the wall.

Camera Position

- Hold camera vertically.
- Place camera at subject's chest level.
- Stand ~6-8 feet from subject.
- Ensure full body is in frame, leave space above head and feet.

Take the Shot

- Hold camera steady (If available, rest it on a table, tripod, or other solid surface).
- Set camera to standard photo mode (do not use zoom, portrait mode or filters).
- Take one test photo and review.
- Take multiple photos to ensure at least one meets standards.

Review

Check that the photo is:

- Clear and in focus (not blurry).
- Well lit (no shadows or glare on uniform or face).
- Centered (subject's head in the middle of the frame, shoulders evenly spaced).
- Against a plain background (no clutter or distractions).

4. Upload the photo

- Email the photo to your .mil email account (NIPR).
- If email doesn't work, use [DoD Safe](#) to transfer the photo securely to a .mil email address.
- Ensure file ends in .jpg (most phones do this automatically).
- Upload photos to PDF (make sure this PDF is downloaded, so that you are able to click to insert).

Troubleshooting

Photo looks too dark

- Move the subject closer to a window or light source.
- Turn on additional lights in the room.
- Avoid standing directly under a single overhead light (it can cause shadows).

Photo looks too bright / washed out

- Step back from direct light or window.
- Use curtains or blinds to soften harsh sunlight.
- Avoid using the camera's flash if possible - use natural or steady light instead.

Photo is blurry

- Hold the camera steady or rest it on a solid surface.
- Ensure lens is clean.
- Ask the subject to remain still.
- Tap the subject's face on the screen (if using a phone) to help the camera focus.

Subject looks off-center

- Make sure the subject's head is in the middle of the frame.
- Keep shoulders visible and evenly spaced on both sides.
- Use the phone's grid lines (if available) to line up the subject.

Background looks cluttered

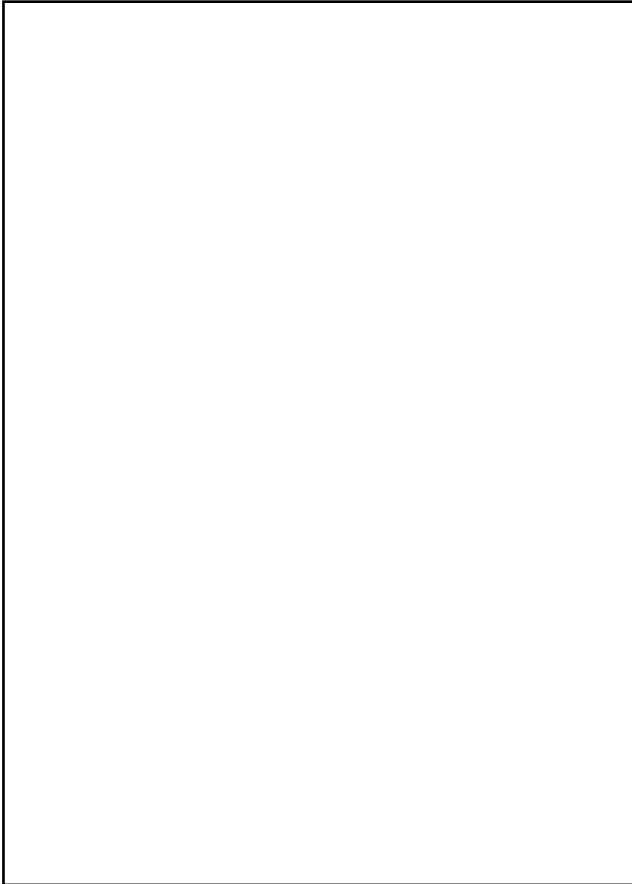
- Move the subject in front of a plain wall.
- Step closer to exclude distractions.
- Hang a plain white sheet as a backdrop if no blank wall is available.

Nominee Photo

Provide front and side photo in Service Blue Uniform (Class B) with all accouterments in accordance with AFI 36-2903. Member is required to be in short sleeve shirt with open collar (no princess cut), pants, low quarters shoes and no cover. Member will be at the position of attention with empty background. Photos may be taken with personal (i.e. cell phone or SLR, DSLR) camera or at the local Public Affairs photo studio.

Click in each box below to import photo (optimized for 5x7 ratio)

Front



Side

