

## DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) directives management policy issued October 21, 1993.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES.** This directive sets forth revised policies and responsibilities for managing and distributing directives under the VA Directives Management System (DMS). VA Directive 6330 contains:

- a. Identification of the three types of media used by the VA DMS to establish mandatory policies, procedures, and other requirements;
- b. Policy statements regarding the numbering system for directives and handbooks, based on function rather than originating office;
- c. A 21-day review/comment/concurrence period (which may be extended upon request) for approving directives, handbooks, and notices;
- d. A stipulation that if a concurrence or non-concurrence is not made within 60 calendar days from the date of assignment, no extensions will be granted. Therefore, a meeting between the originating office and the non-responding reviewing office must take place to resolve any issues, no later than 70 calendar days from the date of assignment;
- e. A requirement to review all directives and handbooks every five (5) years to certify accuracy and currency;
- f. Clarification of regulation requirements; and
- g. Responsibilities for implementing and managing the DMS.

**NOTE:** *The Definitions section of VA Directive 6330 contains terms that are important to a full understanding of the DMS, i.e., "directive" is redefined as a document that contains Department-wide policies only. Whereas, a handbook includes procedures and/or operational requirements.*

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** Assistant Secretary for Information & Technology (005), Office of Information Protection & Risk Management (005R), Office of Privacy & Records Management (005R1), Records Management Service (005R1B).

**4. RELATED HANDBOOK.** VA Handbook 6330, *Directives Management Procedures*.

**5. RESCISSION.** VA Directive 6330, *Directives Management*, dated October 21, 1993.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/  
Stephen W. Warren  
Acting Assistant Secretary for  
Information and Technology

/s/  
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Distribution: Electronic Only



## DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

**1. PURPOSE.** This directive provides Department-wide policy for VA's Directives Management System (DMS). The VA DMS includes directives, handbooks, and notices and is the official means by which Department-wide policies, procedures, requirements, and other information of general applicability will be issued to VA employees. The DMS does not affect the authority of any official to make substantive policy or issue regulations. It affects only the methods, formats, and procedures for ensuring uniformity, orderliness, and completeness in the promulgation and distribution of policy, including regulations where appropriate, internally within the Department. Formatting requirements for the DMS do not apply to regulations. Procedures for implementing the policies in this directive are found in VA Handbook 6330, Directives Management Procedures. Each administration, office of Assistant Secretary, and other key office must adapt the Department-wide formats and structures to their directives management programs.

### 2. POLICY

a. The term "administrative issues" and the publications associated with administrative issues that established mandatory policies, procedures, and other requirements, such as manuals, circulars, numbered letters, and numbered memoranda, is no longer used. The VA DMS uses only three types of formats:

(1) **Directives.** These documents prescribe mandatory Department- or Administration-wide policies. They may be permanent or temporary. If the policies are temporary, e.g., for one-time reports or data collections, an expiration or rescission date must be specified. Text of directives should be limited to emphasize their use as media to convey policy only. However, if it makes sense from the users perspective, short procedures (4 pages or less) may be included as an appendix to the directive.

(2) **Handbooks.** These documents prescribe mandatory Department- or Administration-wide procedures or operational requirements implementing policies contained in directives. Like directives, they may be permanent or temporary. They may be of any length and will be structured to meet requirements. This term will not be used for any other publication.

(3) **Notices.** These documents announce or provide important information involving, or of interest to, more than one Administration, office of Assistant Secretary, or other key office, and make official announcements. Examples include special events, appointments of senior management personnel, and major organizational changes. A notice will carry a rescission date of no more than 6 months.

b. Non-directives. Pamphlets, information bulletins, information letters, and program guides are used to provide information and guidance for informational purposes only; they do not require action or govern conduct or procedures.

**NOTE:** *DMS issues must be coordinated through the organization's respective Directives Management Officer (DMO) and/or Publications Control Officer (PCO).*

c. DMS documents which contain categories of information described in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552(a)(1)) must be published in the Federal Register for public notice when issued, revised, or repealed, as required by that section of the FOIA.

d. Identification and numbering of directives and handbooks will use a classification system based on function (subject) rather than organization. (See VA Handbook 6330, Appendix A.)

e. Documents published by the Administrations, offices of the Assistant Secretaries, or other key offices should not repeat material published in Government-wide or Department-wide documents that are distributed to (or can be economically obtained for) all Department personnel.

f. VA directives, handbooks, and notices must follow established formats and procedures found in VA Handbook 6330.

g. The review of a proposed directive, handbook, or notice requiring comment and/or concurrence outside of the originating office must be completed within 21 calendar days from date of receipt. If concurrence or non-concurrence cannot be provided within this time period, a written request for an extension must be submitted, stating briefly why an extension is necessary and requesting a specific amount of additional time. If an extension is granted, the reviewing office can take no more than 70 calendar days from the date of the approved extension to reply to the originating office.

h. If no reply is received, a meeting must be held between the originating office and the reviewing office (within the 70 days timeframe) to ensure that the directive moves forward. Detailed information concerning review, comment, resolution of issues, and concurrence procedures is found in VA Handbook 6330.

i. If there is a non-response or a non-resolution to a directive, the issue will be forwarded to the Secretary for final action.

j. Directives, handbooks, and notices must be approved and signed in accordance with MP-1, Part I, Chapter 1, Written Communications - Approval Authorities.

k. Directives and handbooks must be reviewed and updated or certified every 5 years to ensure that obsolete material is rescinded using procedures found in VA Handbook 6330.

l. Distribution is accomplished by electronic means only. The documents are posted to the VA Internet and Intranet Directives Web sites.

m. It is VA policy to encourage the development and use of state-of-the-art automation in the preparation, coordination, and dissemination of directives.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Secretary of Veterans Affairs.** The Secretary or Deputy Secretary will:

(1) Ensure that an effective VA DMS is established.

(2) Issue a DMS document when:

(a) There is a change in VA's basic mission, objectives, or policies;

(b) The document itself is used as a mechanism for delegating the Secretary's authority; or

(c) The policies or procedures govern the benefits, rights, or responsibilities of veterans, their beneficiaries, or members of the public.

**b. The Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (AS/OI&T).** The AS/OI&T, as VA's Chief Information Officer (CIO), will certify all Department-wide directives and handbooks. This certification does not necessarily signify that the signer is the official responsible for the policies, procedures, and requirements contained in the document, but that the document is an appropriate VA policy that meets the DMS requirements, and has been reviewed, commented on, and concurred in by appropriate VA elements.

**c. The Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Information Protection and Risk Management (DAS for Information Protection and Risk Management).** The DAS for Information Protection and Risk Management will:

- (1) Ensure Department-wide implementation of the Directives Management System (DMS); and
- (2) Ensure that a Web master is assigned to maintain the Department's DMS Web site.

**d. The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Privacy and Records Management (ADAS/P&RM).** The ADAS/P&RM will:

- (1) Develop policy and procedures for VA's DMS including development of standards and guidelines for writing, coordinating, and formatting directives;
- (2) Issue changes to this directive that are necessary to implement and manage VA's DMS;
- (3) Incorporate automation into every aspect of VA's DMS, including processing and distribution of directives, handbooks, and notices;
- (4) Maintain the official publication Web site for all approved Department-wide directives, handbooks, and notices;
- (5) Maintain official history files for all Department-wide directives, handbooks, and notices approved by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, or Other Key Officials;
- (6) Designate a Department Directives Management Officer (DMO);
- (7) Advise and assist Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials in the preparation of directives, handbooks, and notices, and provide necessary training in directives management;
- (8) Develop and maintain a master schedule for review of directives and handbooks;
- (9) Conduct ongoing Department-wide reviews of directives and handbooks to ensure that DMS policy and procedures are effectively carried out;
- (10) Develop and issue policy and procedures governing the distribution of DMS documents and other publications, and manage, maintain, or change as necessary, an automated distribution system which controls the initial distribution quantities of DMS documents;

(11) Ensure that certified directives, handbooks, and notices are posted to the official publication Web site;

(12) Review new directives and handbooks for compliance with this directive before they are submitted to the Assistant Secretary for OI&T for certification

**e. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials.** Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials will:

(1) Issue only directives, handbooks, and notices when disseminating mandatory policies or procedures;

(2) Establish a DMS for directives under their jurisdiction (including field facilities, if appropriate), under the provisions of this directive, and designate one or more Directives Management Officer(s) (DMO) or Publications Control Officer(s) (PCO) to manage the DMS in accordance with the provisions of VA Handbook 6330;

(3) Obtain concurrences and approve and sign directives, handbooks, and notices solely responsible for the specific program area covered;

(4) Ensure that all directives, handbooks, and notices, developed in their areas of jurisdiction, meet the requirements of the DMS, as set forth in this directive and related handbook unless prior approval has been granted to deviate from the prescribed requirements, format, and concurrence process;

(5) Provide training in directives management by assisting those who prepare, coordinate, or approve directives to apply established policies, requirements, and guidelines;

(6) Plan, organize, and schedule VA directives, handbooks, and notices for publication, review, and certification within their specific program areas;

(7) Maintain the official history file for each directive, handbook, or notice they approve for their respective organizational element. Official history files of Department-wide directives, handbooks, or notices signed by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, or Other Key Officials will be maintained by the Department Records Officer in the office of the DAS/OI&T;

(8) Review, in accordance with an established schedule, all active directives and handbooks for which their organization is responsible, rescind those that are obsolete, and maintain lists of those that are current;

(9) Ensure that all documents are 508 compliant;

(10) Obtain approval from Publications Service on the use of all forms or form letters;

(11) Ensure that the documents do not contain copyrighted materials. (If necessary, a reference or hyperlink can be provided);

(12) Ensure that hyperlinks are accurate;

(13) Maintain an e-mail list for external distributions; and

(14) Ensure that documents are reviewed for 'sensitive information' content.

#### 4. REFERENCES

- a. M-03-1, "Graphics Standards Manual."
- b. MP-1, Part I, Chapter 1, "Written Communications - Approval Authorities."
- c. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 9, "Printing and Reproduction."
- d. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 16, "Distribution and Maintenance of Publications."
- e. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 790, "Services to Employees (General)."
- f. MP-6, Part XIV, Supplement 7.1, "Field Facilities Procedures for Requisitioning Forms and Form Letters."
- g. National Archives and Records Administration Regulations (36 CFR Ch. XII, Pt. 1222).
- h. OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources."
- i. VA Catalog 1-P, "Publications Catalog LOG I."
- j. VA Directive 6320, "Correspondence Management."

#### 5. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Administration.** A generic term used to identify one of the three major VA operational elements, i.e., VHA; VBA; or NCA. When VHA, VBA, and NCA are referred to as a group, the term "Administrations" may be used.
- b. **Department.** A generic reference to the entire Department of Veterans Affairs, which includes VA Central Office and all field facilities.
- c. **Directives.** Documents that prescribe mandatory Department- or Administration-wide policies. They may be permanent or temporary. If the policies are temporary, e.g., for one-time reports or data collections, an expiration or rescission date will be specified. Text of directives should be limited to emphasize their use as media to convey policy only. However, if it makes sense from the users perspective, short procedures may be included as an appendix to the directive.
- d. **Directives Management Officer (DMO).** The individual responsible for maintaining the Directives Management System (DMS) within an organization or other area of jurisdiction.
- e. **Directives Management System (DMS).** The official means by which policies, procedures, requirements, and other information of general applicability are issued within VA. The DMS includes directives, handbooks, and notices, but does not apply to regulations, non-directives, or other written communications issued primarily to and for the public.
- f. **Handbooks.** Documents that prescribe mandatory Department- or Administration-wide procedures or operational requirements implementing policies contained in directives. Like directives, they may be permanent or temporary. They may be of any length and will be structured to meet requirements. This term will not be used for any other publication.

g. **Non- directives.** Pamphlets, information bulletins, information letters, and program guides used to provide information and guidance for informational purposes only; they do not require action or govern conduct or procedures.

h. **Notices.** Documents that announce or provide important information involving, or of interest to, more than one administration, office of Assistant Secretary, or other key office, and make official announcements. Examples include special events, appointments of senior management personnel, and major organizational changes. A notice will carry a rescission date of no more than 6 months. (NOTE: *This term is different from and is not related to the term "Notice" as used by the Office of the Federal Register.*)

i. **Transmittal Sheet.** The first page of a directive or handbook identifying the reason for issue; contents of the issue or major changes; related directives and/or handbooks; responsible office; rescission date, if applicable; any affected rescissions; and filing instructions, if any.