

VA ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** This directive prescribes the goals, policies, roles, and responsibilities and major requirements for Administration and staff office environmental management systems (EMS) within the Department.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:** This directive outlines the principles, policies, and other key elements necessary to facilitate the continual improvement of VA EMSs.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Assistant Secretary for Management (004), Office of Asset Enterprise Management (044), Green Management Program Service (044E).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 0057, Environmental Management Program.
5. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 0064, Environmental Management Systems.
6. **RECISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

1. PURPOSE

a. The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans. The goal of the Green Management Program Service within VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM) is to lead the Department in becoming sustainable. This supports the mission by making more resources available for Veterans' care and optimizing VA stewardship of public resources. The purpose of this directive is to support and expand the programmatic policies of VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management Program; VA Directive 0062, Environmental Compliance Management Program; and VA Handbook 0062, Environmental Compliance Management Program. This directive establishes VA policy and roles and responsibilities, with respect to environmental management systems (EMS) in support of the mission and goal.

b. This directive establishes policies for Administrations and staff offices for implementing the EMS requirements of VA Directive 0057. This directive is also designed to facilitate the development of uniform internal procedures across the Administrations and staff offices. Specific procedures may be found in VA Handbook 0064, Environmental Management Systems.

2. SCOPE

The provisions of this directive apply to all administrations and staff offices, including those located in leased space. Each administration and staff office shall ensure that all subordinate organizations are aware of and comply with this handbook.

3. POLICY

VA entities shall implement an EMS at all appropriate facilities and at all appropriate organizational levels as the primary management approach for addressing environmental compliance and the environmental aspects of VA's operations and activities, including the environmental aspects of energy and transportation functions. All VA facilities should be covered by an EMS (either a facility EMS, a multi-site EMS or an organizational EMS), unless the organization requests and receives authorization from the Senior Sustainability Officer to exclude specific facilities.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

VA recognizes that the responsibility for a successful environmental program lies with every VA employee. VA is actively working to ensure that every person is aware of their role in the success of this effort. This section outlines the responsibilities and business processes for specific key offices/officials.

a. Assistant Secretary for Management. The Assistant Secretary for Management establishes the overall policy and guidelines to implement environmental programs within the Department, and is responsible for:

(1) Establishing a strong expectation that documented EMSs continue to be implemented and maintained at all appropriate facilities and organizational levels to meet the goals of this policy; and

(2) Ensuring that formal business practices are implemented and maintained to implement an EMS and meet Departmental goals.

b. Director of OAEM. The Director of OAEM is responsible for:

(1) Serving as the VA Senior Sustainability Officer;

(2) Signing the Department's EMS policy statement;

(3) Overseeing the development and implementation of procedures and processes related to EMS and reporting;

(4) Working with counterparts in other VA organizations to ensure EMS issues are addressed in all programs; and

(5) Resolving policy differences among organizations regarding EMS issues, strategies, or procedures.

c. Director of the Green Management Program Service. The Director of the Green Management Program Service provides policy guidance and oversight regarding the development and implementation of an EMS at the Department level, which includes the following duties:

(1) Developing and issuing guidance to ensure Department-wide compliance with EMS policies and procedures;

(2) Ensuring facility-level/multi-site EMSs developed through Administration and staff office programs reflect the EMS elements and framework found in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001:2004(E);

(3) Serving as the primary point of contact for, measuring, and reporting EMS conformance within the Department;

(4) Preparing Departmental EMS reports in accordance with applicable Federal environmental laws, regulations, executive orders, and VA directives; and

(5) Conducting oversight activities to ensure that VA implements an effective EMS program and makes continual improvements to that program.

d. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Directors of Staff Offices. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and directors of staff offices are responsible for the following:

- (1) Providing policy, guidance, and oversight regarding the development and implementation of an EMS within their Administration or staff office;
- (2) Ensuring that facility-level/multi-site EMSs are developed and implemented within their respective Administration or staff office to reflect the EMS elements and framework found in the ISO 14001:2004(E) standard, applicable EOs, and VA Directive 0057;
- (3) Informing the Director of OAEM, through the Director of the Green Management Program Service, of the status of the Administration's or staff office's EMS compliance and any additional information required for inclusion in the EMS Annual Report;
- (4) Supporting EMS training programs for Administration or staff office personnel;
- (5) Ensuring that each newly designated appropriate facility be covered by a facility-level or multi-site EMS;
- (6) Informing suppliers and contractors of relevant features of the Administration's or staff office's EMS; and
- (7) Performing an annual management review of the Administration's or staff office's EMS.

5. REFERENCES

a. Environmental Laws and Regulations

There are a multitude of environmental regulations and requirements that apply to facilities, operations, and locations within VA. A complete listing of all the applicable environmental regulations is too expansive to enumerate here. Federal laws and regulations are available through web-based resources such as Government Printing Office (GPO) Access, <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=%2Findex.tpl>. Most environmental-related regulations will be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 29, Labor; Title 40, Protection of the Environment; and Title 49, Transportation. Hardcopy is available from the GPO. State and local regulations are typically available through state and local environmental agencies.

b. Executive Orders

The Executive Orders with significant implications to environmental management in effect at the time this handbook was drafted are EO 13423 and 13514. A complete list of all environmental EOs can be found through the National Archives accessible at: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/disposition.html>.

c. VA Environmental Directive

VA Directive 0057, Environmental Management Program, establishes VA environmental policies. Its purpose is to set forth a comprehensive Department-wide environmental

management policy to comply with Federal mandates and achieve internal goals. It is intended to provide direction to Administrations and staff offices developing and administering their specific environmental programs. The directive establishes policy in the areas of environmental compliance, green purchasing, chemicals management and pollution prevention, electronics stewardship, waste prevention and recycling, and environmental management systems. It also includes reporting requirements and roles and responsibilities.

d. International Standard Organization (ISO) 14001, 2004 Ed, Environmental Management Systems

The ISO 14001, 2004 Ed Environmental Management Systems standard exists to help organizations (a) minimize how their operations (processes etc.) negatively affect the environment (i.e. cause adverse changes to air, water, or land); (b) comply with applicable laws, regulations, and other environmentally oriented requirements, and (c) continually improve in the above.

6. DEFINITIONS

a. **Appropriate Facility or Organization.** Any Administration or staff office facility, site, multiple-site/facility, or organization that can have a significant impact on the environment (directly or indirectly, individually or cumulatively) due to the operations of that facility's or organization's mission, processes, or functions.

b. **Environmental Aspects.** Elements of Administration or staff office facility activities, products, or services that interact, or may interact, with the environment.

c. **Environmental Impact.** Any change (complete or partial) to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, resulting from an Administration's or staff office's functional mission or activities.

d. **EMS.** A set of processes and practices that enable an organization to increase its operating efficiency, continually improve its overall environmental performance, and better manage and reduce its environmental impacts. This includes impacts due to those environmental aspects related to energy and transportation functions. EMS implementation shall reflect the ISO 14001:2004(E) International Standard, which incorporates accepted quality management principles based on the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" methodology – a standard process to identify and prioritize current activities, establish goals, implement plans to meet the goals, evaluate progress, and make improvements to ensure continual improvement.

e. **EMS Policy Statement.** A statement of an Administration's or staff office's commitment to EMS that includes a policy appropriate to nature, scale, and environmental impacts of its activities, products, and services; a commitment to continual improvement; a commitment to prevention of pollution; and a commitment to comply with environmental legislation, regulations, Executive Orders (EO), and organization requirements. The policy should be documented, implemented, maintained, communicated to all employees, made available to the public, and signed by a representative of the most senior management within the defined facility or organizational scope of the EMS.

f. **Facility.** Any building, installation, structure, land, and real property that is owned or operated by, or constructed or manufactured and leased to, an administration or staff office.

This term includes a group of facilities at a single or multiple location(s) managed as an integrated operation, as well as government-owned contractor-operated facilities.

g. **Sustainable.** Pertaining to the implementation and maintenance of conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, permitting the fulfillment of social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.