Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

VHA DIRECTIVE 2006-005

February 3, 2006

EXTERNAL BUSINESS PARTNER CONNECTION APPROVAL PROCESS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy and procedures for VHA components to request and obtain approval to establish or maintain external business partner connections with non-VA entities other than through One-VA Internet gateways and Wide Area Networks (WANs).

2. BACKGROUND

a. With establishment of the Enterprise Cyber Security Infrastructure (ECSIP) and Telecommunications Modernization projects (TMP), Internet services are provided to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) field stations and VA Central Office programs via centrally-deployed and managed Internet gateways. While these gateways provide the appropriate level of Internet-based connectivity to external business partners for the majority of VHA, there may be instances where specialized programs or services cannot be met through the One-VA Internet gateways.

b. For those facilities with special business partner communication requirements, a suitable business case may exist to warrant the establishment of (or continued operation of existing) business partner connections by dedicated, non-VA and non-Internet network pathways. Examples of "business partners" are: affiliated universities, contracted clinics, medical schools, other government agencies such as Department of Defense (DOD) medical treatment facilities. In many cases, the communication between the VHA facility and the business partner may require high bandwidth circuits or pass large volumes of data on a frequent basis. In some situations, it is advantageous to VA to keep these communications separate from the One-VA WAN backbone.

c. Data communication pathways from the VA network to non-VA business partners that do not pass through the One-VA Internet gateways present information security issues that must be addressed in a manner consistent with VA policy.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that the continued operation of existing external business partner connections or establishment of new external business partner connections must be approved by the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management; VA Form 10-0437, External Connection Request Worksheet, must accompany each request (see Att. A).

4. ACTION

a. **VISN CIO.** The VISN CIO is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that a VHA facility request for a business partner connection template is

THIS DIRECTIVE EXPIRES FEBRUARY 28, 2011

completed and has been through an appropriate VISN-level review of business case and compliance with both VISN and VHA security requirements. This review needs to include, but not be limited to, the local facility CIO or Chief, Information Resource Management (IRM) Service, the facility Information Security Officer (ISO) and the Echelon II ISO.

(2) Submitting the VISN-level approved request to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N), through the VHA CIO (19).

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N).** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) is responsible for:

(1) Reviewing the request for business case analysis and approving the request.

(2) Submitting an approved request to the Director, VA Office of Cyber and Information Security (005S3) for a review of existing security configuration, initiation of the appropriate certification and accreditation (C&A) process, and other actions necessary to approve and authorize the facility to activate the requested external business partner connection.

(3) Returning non-approved requests to the originating facility for further information (if appropriate).

(4) Returning approved requests to the originating facility for implementation.

c. **VHA CIO (19).** The VHA CIO (19) is responsible for:

(1) Reviewing the request to ensure compliance with VA Information Technology (IT) policy.

(2) Forwarding the request to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) for VHA-level business case review and approval or denial.

5. REFERENCES

a. VA Memorandum dated May 3, 2002, from Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, "ECSIP Internet Gateways – Migration Plans and Locations."

b. VA Memorandum dated November 3, 2003, from Acting Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, "Decommissioning Legacy Remote Access Systems and Virtual Private Network (VPN) Services."

c. VA Memorandum dated February 25, 2004, from Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) to Deputy Chief Information Officers, "Decommissioning of Legacy Internet Gateways, Remote Access Systems (RAS), and Virtual Private Network (VPN) Services."

d. VA Memorandum dated September 3, 2004, from Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, "Decommissioning Legacy Remote Access Systems and Virtual Private Network (VPN) Services."

e. VA Memorandum dated December 22, 2004, from Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005) to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials, "Decommissioning Legacy Remote Access Systems and Virtual Private Network (VPN) Services."

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The VHA Chief Information Officer (19) is responsible for the material contained in this Directive. Questions may be addressed to (610) 380-4380.

7. RECISSION: None. This VHA Directive expires February 28, 2011.

S/ Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP
Under Secretary for Health

Attachment

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ATTACHMENT A

VA FORM 10-0437, EXTERNAL CONNECTION REQUEST WORKSHEET

Below is an embedded copy of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Form 10-0437, External Connection Request Worksheet. The fillable version of VA Form 10-0437 can be found on the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Forms website at: http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms

You should use the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader to view this form.

VA Form
10-0437-fill.pdf

Department of Veterans Affairs

EXTERNAL CONNECTION REQUEST WORKSHEET

PART I - BUSINESS ANALYSIS

VA FACILITY #	NAME AND LOCATION (CITY, STATE)

POINT OF CONTACT	TELEPHONE

EXTERNAL BUSINESS PARTNER

POINT OF CONTACT	TELEPHONE

VA BUSINESS REQUIREMENT FOR EXTERNAL CONNECTION

IF THIS IS AN EXISTING CONNECTION IN SUPPORT OF BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS, PROVIDE DETAILS ON CURRENT TYPE AND METHOD OF CONNECTIVITY

DESCRIBE THE VA APPLICATION(S) UTILIZING CONNECTION

MISSION CRITICAL	DATA SENSITIVITY	ANTICIPATED TRAFFIC VOLUME
◯ YES ◯ NO	◯ HIGH ◯ MEDIUM ◯ LOW	

ARE THERE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAS) OR OTHER REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CONNECTION?	IF YES, PROVIDE DETAIL
◯ YES ◯ NO	

C&A STATUS FOR BUSINESS PARTNER SYSTEM	C&A STATUS OF VA SYSTEM AND NAME SYSTEM

DESCRIBE WHY THIS BUSINESS REQUIREMENT CANNOT BE MET THROUGH THE USE OF THE ONE-VA ECSIP INTERNET GATEWAYS OR VPN SERVICES

PART II - TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

VA FACILITY NETWORK CONFIGURATION

VA AUTONOMOUS SYSTEM (AS)

ACCESS LINE #1 CONNECTS TO

PVC SIZE

VBR/UBR CONFIGURED ◯ YES ◯ NO

ACCESS LINE #2 CONNECTS TO

PVC SIZE

VBR/UBR CONFIGURED ◯ YES ◯ NO

EXTERNAL BUSINESS PARTNER FIREWALL MODEL / OS

EXTERNAL BUSINESS PARTNER VPN ROUTER MODEL / OS

CONNECTION REQUIREMENTS (FOR FIREWALL RULES)

IP ADDRESS	PORT	PROTOCOL	INBOUND	OUTBOUND	COMMENT

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION AT BUSINESS PARTNER LOCATION AND LOGICAL DATA FLOW

ATTACH DIAGRAM OF PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION AT BUSINESS PARTNER LOCATION