

FORMS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This handbook establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) forms management procedures that implement the policies contained in VA Directive 6310, Forms, Collections of Information, and Reports Management.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook provides procedures for implementing the Forms Management Program, including requirements for form letters, pattern or guide letters, postal cards and stationery specifications formerly contained in H-70-1, VA Correspondence Handbook 1991, rescinded April 14, 1997, by VA Directive 6320, Correspondence Management.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Information Management Service (045A4), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 6310, Forms, Collections of Information and Reports Management.
- 5. RESCISSION:** MP-1, Part II, Chapter 4, Forms Management, dated October 1991.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
John A. Gauss
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

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Distribution: RPC: 0724
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FORMS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

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FORMS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

1. **PURPOSE.** This handbook describes procedures for recommending, creating, managing, monitoring, and eliminating forms used in the Department. This handbook supplements the policies and responsibilities prescribed in VA Directive 6310, Forms, Collections of Information, and Reports Management. Together, the handbook and the directive outline the necessary tools required to accomplish an effective VA Forms Management Program.

2. GENERAL

a. **Types of Forms.** All forms used within VA (i.e., VA standardized - those developed for Central Office and field facility use; field facility - those developed for field facility use only; standard and optional forms - those forms common to most Federal agencies; and other government agency forms).

b. **Annual Usage.** All forms having an annual usage in excess of 100 will be part of VA's Forms Management Program. This will include forms requiring collections of information; internal, administrative and operational forms; standard, optional, and other government agency forms.

c. **Restrictions.** No change to the intent or content (e.g., no change of lines or information) of any form may be made without specific approval of the appropriate program office within VA, or promulgating agency other than VA, having jurisdiction over that form.

d. **Approval Requirements.** The following categories of forms require approval from the appropriate Forms Officer prior to use:

- (1) Forms originating in Central Office and VA field facilities.
- (2) Forms originating in one activity that affect functions under the jurisdiction of another program office.
- (3) Forms that are subject to intra-agency use; i.e., standard forms.
- (4) Forms that are beyond the composition or reproduction capacity of field facilities or those that must be produced by special sources, such as carbon-interleaved or other specialty forms.
- (5) Forms that are electronically generated to ensure current version.

e. **Clearance Procedures for Exceptions.** When a standard, optional, or other agency form no longer serves VA's purpose, the Publications Control Officer (PCO) will assist the program official in completing SF 152, Request for Clearance or Cancellation of a Standard or Optional Form or Exception. The PCO will submit the SF 152 through the appropriate Forms Officer to

the Director, Information Management Service. Information Management Service will then seek an exception from the promulgating agency and will advise the PCO of the action taken on the SF 152.

f. **Initial Distribution.** The initial distribution will be made of all new forms and superseded revisions. The PCO will assist the program official in completing VA Form 7225, Distribution Instructions for Printed Matter and VA Form 7225a, Distribution Instructions for Printed Matter (Continued). The PCO will forward VA Form 7225 to the appropriate Forms Officer. Each user will be furnished, as a minimum, a sufficient number of forms for the first three months of use. The Service and Distribution Center in Hines, Illinois will provide two copies of each new or revised form, as instructed by the appropriate Forms Officer, to the Director, Information Management Service.

g. **Local Reproduction.** Forms with an anticipated or actual annual use of 5,000 or less VA-wide, and having a user base of more than 50, are authorized for local reproduction. The following statement must appear at the bottom of the form: "AUTHORIZED FOR LOCAL REPRODUCTION." These forms should accompany the prescribing regulation or directive to be made available to the users. Authorized forms, including those that are not promulgated by VA; e.g., standard forms, optional forms and other agency forms, should be reviewed by the appropriate Forms Officer requiring the use of the form to ensure the current version prior to its use.

h. **Overprinting.** The data contained on the form may not be eliminated or revised without specific prior approval from the appropriate program office having jurisdiction over the form. It must be determined that the savings will more than offset the cost for overprinting repetitive fill-in data.

i. **Replenishment of Stock.**

(1) The VA Service and Distribution Center initiates VA Form 7700c, Stock Replenishment Request, for all forms stocked in the Center and forwards the request through the appropriate Forms Officer to the PCO for coordination and action. Upon completion, VA Form 7700c is returned to the appropriate Forms Officer for action and submitted to the VA Central Office, Publications Staff.

(2) The program office initiates VA Form 7700, Request for Reproduction Services, for forms stocked within the respective service or field facility. The form should then be forwarded to the appropriate PCO within Central Office who will complete the required information prior to forwarding it to the appropriate Forms Officer for processing and submission to the VA Central Office, Publications Staff.

j. **Transfers.** Program officials must coordinate the transfer of forms from one organization to another with the PCO and the appropriate Forms Officer.

k. **Discontinuance.** Program officials will promptly report obsolete and nonessential forms to the appropriate PCO. The PCO will report such forms to the appropriate Forms Officer who

will notify the Center. The field facilities will be notified of any discontinuance through the Forms, Form Letters, and Publications Control and Standardization Bulletin. Forms replaced or superseded by new or revised forms will be reported by the appropriate PCO on VA Forms 559, Request for New or Revised Field Facility Form or Form Letter, or 559a, Request for New or Revised Form or Form Letter (for Central Office use).

1. **Listing and Bulletin.** A combined listing of forms (Standardized Forms and Form Letters) for all organizational elements is compiled and issued by the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management, Publications Service. This listing is updated through the information provided by the Forms Officers as needed and is published in the Forms, Form Letters, and Publications Control and Standardization Bulletin, that is distributed by the Service and Distribution Center.

3. **PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A NEW OR REVISED FORM.** When a program official determines that a form is needed for VA operations, the following procedures will be followed for manual (or paper) and electronic (print images of the form that reside on magnetic or optical media) forms:

a. Contact the appropriate PCO and the Forms Officer who will assist in determining if a form exists.

b. If it is determined that a form exists, and modification is required to serve the purpose, coordination is necessary between the PCO and the appropriate Forms Officer to revise the existing form.

c. If a form does not exist, the appropriate Forms Officer will assist the PCO in the application of established policies and procedures and will help to determine essentiality, design, and specifications for the new form.

d. When a new or revised form is applicable to VA operations, the PCO will assist the program official in preparing VA Form 559 or VA Form 559a. A draft copy of the proposed form will accompany this request. Requests will be routed to the appropriate Forms Officer to avoid duplication of procurement and stocking, and to ensure that there is a central reference point for information concerning use of the form. Upon receipt of the request, the Forms Officer will take the appropriate action to design or obtain the form. (See subparagraph 2f for distribution instructions.)

e. The PCO will maintain a temporary history file for each form or form letter sponsored by their organization.

f. Forms Officers, upon receiving all necessary concurrence for the printing of a new or revised form, will prepare VA Form 4204, Request for Printing of Form and Form Letter. Special attention should be given to the category "Standard Pack" to avoid the waste of unnecessary printed stock. Submit VA Form 4204, along with a VA Form 7700 and VA Form 7225, if necessary, to the VA Central Office Publications Staff for action. Ten copies of each new or revised form should be sent to the VA Forms Officer, Information Management Service for post audit review.

4. GENERATION OF ELECTRONIC FORMS

a. Organizational elements creating electronic forms or modifying existing forms must obtain approval from the appropriate Forms Officer and the office of primary responsibility to ensure that the form is accurate, remains current, and is in compliance with procedures and guidelines set forth in this handbook. In addition, each form must comply with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for ease of interpretation, completion, transmittal, processing, and retrieval by persons with disabilities.

b. Electronic versions of standard and optional forms must be the current version and contain the entire wording, punctuation, instructions, and identifying information. The specific parameters and cautions regarding electronically designed forms are contained in the General Services Administration (GSA) Information Resources Management Technical Guide, Electronic Forms Systems Analysis and Design (stock number is PB 95250239/LP) and may be ordered through the appropriate PCO. (Also see paragraph 5 of this handbook for additional requirements.)

c. Exceptions to standard and optional forms must be requested from the promulgating agency through VA's Forms Officer, Information Management Service.

d. Electronic standard and optional forms with unique characteristics (e.g., forms that are accountable) must be cleared by GSA under the exception process.

e. Specific guidelines for electronic VA forms are as follows:

(1) An electronic reproduction must be complete, containing all the wording and punctuation of all items in the original. Instructions, questions, and any other identifying information must match exactly.

(2) No data elements may be added or deleted.

(3) The sequence for each item on the form must match the sequence in the original.

(4) Whenever possible each item must print on the page in approximately the same location as it appears on the equivalent page of the original form.

(5) Forms printed front and back on the original may be printed on single sheets provided each page is identified with the form number, page number and the date the form was issued.

(6) Multiple part sets may be printed as single sheets.

(7) All blocks must remain approximately the same size and lines must remain approximately the same length to the highest degree possible.

(8) Private businesses or companies that are creating electronic versions of VA forms or form letters must incorporate or place on the bottom of the face page, near the form number, the software name and vendor or producer. Customers must have a way to identify electronic versions of forms from printed versions that are not produced by VA.

(9) Those with Internet access will find images of some VA and other government agency forms that may be of interest to internal and external VA customers. The Internet address is as follows: <http://www.va.gov/forms/index.htm>.

5. FORM DESIGN AND SPECIFICATIONS. The following design specifications will apply to all VA forms, including recurring, nonrecurring and test. **NOTE:** Eliminate carbon-set forms whenever possible particularly when converting from impact to non-impact or laser printing systems.

a. All forms requiring name, address, and other identifying information will follow this standard order: last name, first name, middle initial; number and street or post office box; city, State, and ZIP code; Social Security Number, military identification number, or any other identification. Exceptions may be made to accommodate design format.

b. Box design will be used to ensure the best use of space and ease of data entry.

c. Captions (upper left or centered) will be arranged in a logical sequence to ensure ease and accuracy of entries to and transcription of information from a form.

d. "Check boxes" will be used to the maximum extent possible.

e. Machine spacing will be the controlling factor in determining horizontal and vertical spacing of all entries.

f. Each form will have a distinguishing title that is a concise description of its function. The title will be located at the top of the form unless filing or other equipment requirements dictate otherwise.

g. A VA signature band, consisting of the logo and the words "Department of Veterans Affairs" will be placed on each form. Exceptions to this provision are permitted on items too small to accommodate the band; where use of the band would require continuation of a form to the reverse side or additional page; where use of the identifier is deemed inappropriate in the overall design; or where use of electronic printing systems will not allow a satisfactory image to be obtained.

h. Forms will conform to paper sizes determined by standard sheet sizes, or by fixed requirements such as capabilities of processing machines or the size of filing equipment.

(1) Forms will be printed using the smallest practicable standard size paper necessary to collect the information and to allow space for margins. The minimum weight and the most economical grade of paper will be used.

(2) White paper and black ink will be used. Exceptions for colored paper or colored inks must be justified.

(3) Forms that will be filed using fastener folders or loose-leaf binders will be punched for the predominant filing method at the time of printing.

i. Instructions for completing an internal VA form that exceed a quarter of a page will not be printed on the face of the form. Such instructions will appear on the reverse side of the form or in the corresponding Department handbook. Instructions for one-page forms that exceed a quarter of a page will be printed on the reverse side or on a separate page.

j. Forms used to collect information as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) will be developed in accordance with the guidelines outlined in VA Handbook 6310.2, Collections of Information Procedures.

k. Forms requesting an individual's Social Security Number or any information about the individual that will be retrieved by the individual's name or other identifier will be developed in accordance with VA Handbook 6300.4, Procedures for Processing Requests for Records Subject to the Privacy Act.

l. Use of specialty forms, i.e., marginally punched, continuous, special construction, Optical Character Recognition, Magnetic Imaging Character Recognition, and forms printed on security paper, will be limited to applications where the added cost is clearly justified in terms of direct savings to VA. The minimum quantities for each type of specialty form that can be economically procured will be a first consideration in determining if the use of such a form is justified.

m. Form letters will be developed in accordance with the guidelines and specifications for the preparation of letters and letterhead stationery. (See paragraph 7 of this handbook.)

n. The procedures for requesting a new or revised form and design standards for forms printed by conventional printing methods will be followed for those produced by electronic printing systems. (See paragraphs 3 and 4 of this handbook.)

6. **NUMBERING SYSTEM.** The following guidelines are for standard identification of forms:

a. VA standardized forms will be identified by a numerical prefix as they relate to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). **NOTE:** Some Office of Management forms (4-prefix) have been transferred to VBA and the former Office of Construction Management forms (8-prefix) have been transferred to VHA, due to reorganizations.

b. Numerical prefixes will not be assigned to Department-wide forms that are classified as “general administrative” forms as they are developed, revised and/or replenished.

c. Field facility form numbers will be assigned by local PCOs and will include the station number in parentheses following the basic number (e.g., VA Form 10-14(528)).

d. Central Office form numbers will be assigned by the appropriate Forms Officer.

e. Form numbers will appear at the lower left margin of the document unless a design for specialized equipment, length of text, or filing considerations require the numbers to appear elsewhere.

f. Numbers on closely related forms will be assigned an alphabetical suffix (e.g., VA Form 26-6416 and VA Form 26-6416a).

g. Form issue dates will be designated by the first three letters of the month in that the form is printed, and will appear in all capital letters without punctuation (e.g., JAN 2000). The issue date will be changed to reflect each successive revision in content or design.

h. **Revisions.** An appropriate replacement or supersession notice (centered at the bottom of the form) will be included to indicate that the previous edition of a form will not be reprinted but existing stock will be used until exhausted (e.g., “Existing Stock of VA Form 10-1234, DEC 1997, Will Be Used”).

i. **Supersession Notice.** A supersession notice (centered at the bottom) will be included to indicate that as soon as the supply of a new or revised form is received and distributed, the old edition will no longer be used and existing stocks will be recycled in accordance with current instructions (e.g., “Supersedes VA Form 10-4567, DEC 1997, Which Will Not Be Used”).

7. FORM LETTERS, PATTERN OR GUIDE LETTERS, AND POSTAL CARDS

a. Use a form letter or a pattern or guide letter when the subject matter is routine and repetitive. Use a postal card for short acknowledgments when the message will not contain personal information.

b. Form Letters

(1) A form letter is a letter (or other correspondence, including VA memorandum for internal Department use) that is reproduced, and stocked in advance of its actual use. It may contain blank areas or spaces to be filled in at the time it is used. A form letter is used to respond to correspondence on recurring subjects and to simplify and speed the production of repetitive correspondence.

(2) Use of a form letter is economical when:

The monthly usage* is:

and the line count is:

30 or more

5

20 or more

10

15 or more

15

10 or more

20 or more

* Based on three months sample.

(3) The same writing standards and style practices are used in form letters and individually prepared letters.

(4) Do not use form letters if it would be in poor taste because of the personal nature of the message, or if the language is inappropriate.

(5) When drafting a form letter, keep handwritten fill-ins to a minimum.

(6) Form letters will be printed on standard VA letterhead stationery.

(7) Proposed form letters will be submitted to the respective PCO of the organization in Central Office for review prior to printing.

(8) Each form letter developed in Central Office or by a field facility will be assigned a form letter number, and issue date. Only PCOs are authorized to assign numbers to form letters under their jurisdiction. Refer to VA Directive 6310, Forms, Collections of Information, and Reports Management.

(9) Form letters may be designed in different styles to suit a variety of needs.

(10) Paragraph 8, Stationery Specifications, of this handbook provides additional guidance on preparing form letters.

c. Guide or Pattern Letters

(1) A guide letter or pattern letter is correspondence that has been drafted in advance as a model for repetitive use. It may be drafted in its entirety, or as pattern paragraphs that are selected for inclusion in final correspondence. Each final letter is individually prepared as needed. The difference between a form letter and pattern letter is appearance. A pattern letter usually looks individually composed; a form letter may appear to be mass-produced.

(2) Develop a pattern letter when:

(a) A form letter is impractical because of the variation in subject matter.

(b) A form letter seems inappropriate because of the sensitivity of the subject matter.

(c) A response is needed to correspondence on recurring subjects, but the subject recurs infrequently (less than 10 times a month).

(d) It is important to simplify and speed the production of repetitive correspondence.

(3) The same writing standards and style practices are used in pattern letters and individually prepared letters and memoranda:

(a) Use of word processors and other computer devices to create and store paragraphs.

(b) Print pattern letters on approved VA stationery.

(4) Pattern letters do not have a printed identification number and issue date.

d. Postal Cards

(1) Use postal cards, when appropriate, for short acknowledgments and other messages to addressees outside VA when the message will not contain personal information. Operating officials must decide the extent to which the use of postal cards is feasible.

(2) VA Form Letter 22, Postal Card, Blank, is available from the VA Service and Distribution Center in Hines, Illinois.

8. STATIONERY SPECIFICATIONS

a. VA stationery will be of a uniform format that properly reflects the dignity and mission of the Department. The use of specialized stationery not described in, nor approved in accordance with this handbook and VA Directive 6310, Forms, Collections of Information, and Reports Management, is discouraged.

b. All general-purpose and individualized letterhead stationery must be 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches. Individualized personal-size letterhead stationery must be 7-1/4 inches by 8-1/2 inches. Personal-size letterhead stationery and envelopes are stocked in the office of the official named on the stationery. See VA Directive 6310, paragraph 2j, for policy on the use of personal-size letterhead stationery.

c. All letterhead stationery will be printed on 20-pound, white, 25 percent rag bond, or equivalent paper. Form letters reproduced centrally, multiple-addressee letters, and other communications reproduced locally from preprinted offset plates (paper masters) will also be printed on substance of 20 pounds or equivalent white writing paper.

d. Preprinted headings on letterhead stationery will be in blue ink (PMS-280). Headings on form letters will be in black ink. Specifications for preprinted information are as follows:

(1) The VA identifier, consisting of a replica of the VA seal and the Department name, must be preprinted on all formal VA letterhead stationery. On 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches letterhead stationery, the replica of the VA seal must be 7/8 inch in diameter, positioned 1/2 inch from the top of the page (the 8-1/2 inch edge) and 1/2 inch from the left side of the page (the 11 inch edge). The Department name, "Department of Veterans Affairs," must be centered left to right, 5/8 inch from the top of the page, in upper case letters; initial upper case letters will be in 12-point univers bold type font; other letters will be in 10-point univers bold type font.

(2) On field facility letterhead, the title and address of the facility, including the complete station address and ZIP Code as shown in the Consolidated Address and Territorial Bulletin 1, will be preprinted, centered left to right below the Department name. All printing will be in upper and lower case 10-point univers bold type font. The name of the facility will be on the line immediately below the Department name. The return address will be on lines following the facility name, including number and street, or other mail delivery address information, such as box number, unless the facility has an assigned unique ZIP Code; and city, State, and ZIP Code. Building numbers, room, or floor numbers will not be preprinted on letterheads. At the discretion of the Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, or Deputy Assistant Secretaries, preprinted telephone numbers may be placed in the masthead of the letterhead. There will be no punctuation in the city-State-ZIP Code line, unless it aids in delivery, and there will be two spaces between the two-position State abbreviation and the ZIP Code. The 9-digit ZIP Code of the facility may be used as part of the return address on letterhead stationery, envelopes, and other mailing materials.

(3) On field facility letterhead for combined facilities (e.g., Healthcare Systems, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Regional Counsels, etc.), the consolidated addresses will be positioned 2-1/4 inches from the 8-1/2 inch top of sheet and 1-1/8 inches from right hand side of 11 inch sheet.

(4) For Central Office letterhead stationery only, the title of the Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials or Deputy Assistant Secretaries will be preprinted, centered left to right, immediately below the Department name, in upper case; initial upper case letters will be 10-point univers bold type font and other letters will be 8-point univers bold type font. The third line will contain the city, State, and ZIP Code, e.g., Washington DC 20420."

(5) The reference caption "In Reply Refer To:" is mandatory for VA letterhead stationery, including form letters, used by field facilities, but is not used on Central Office letterhead. The reference caption is located on a single line, flush right to a margin of 2-1/2 inches from the right edge of the sheet, and 2 inches from the top of the sheet. The reference caption will be in upper and lower case 8-point type font with initial upper case letters. When using general-purpose letterhead stationery for field facilities, the reference caption will be inserted on the 13th line.

(6) When it is necessary to preprint an additional reference caption, such as "Claim Number:" or "File Number," the colon in the additional caption will be positioned immediately below the colon of the caption "In Reply Refer To:." Additional captions will be positioned with the first letter of the caption immediately below the "I" in the caption "In Reply Refer To:."

(7) The address registration dot is preferred but not mandatory on letterhead stationery used by VA field facilities, including form letters, but is not used on Central Office letterhead. The dot will be located 1 inch from the left edge and 2-1/6 inches from the top of the sheet. The address registration dot sets the top and left limits of the first line of the address for use with a window envelope. Any other dots, dashes, or marginal marks for any other purpose are prohibited.

d. General-purpose letterhead stationery for Central Office (VA Letterhead 1040) and for field facilities (VA Letterhead 1050) must be 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches in size, and contain the Department identifier (replica of the VA seal and the Department name). A return address must be added by machine (e.g., computer) or rubber stamp.

e. Continuous-feed marginally punched letterhead stationery contains the Department's identifier, but it does not contain the office title or facility name and address. The preprinting of office title or facility name and address on continuous-feed marginally punched letterhead stationery is prohibited. This information should be printed automatically at the same time the text of the letter is printed. Orders for the 1-part (Stock No. F00113), 2-part (Stock No. F00111), 3-part (Stock No. F00112), and 4-part (Stock No. F00114) continuous-feed marginally punched letterhead stationery may be submitted to the Service and Distribution Center.

f. Special slogans or graphics will not be used on Department letterhead stationery or form letters, unless approved in accordance with paragraph 9 of this handbook.

g. Printing requests for Central Office letterhead stationery will be sent through the Office of Information Management Service to ensure compliance with the Joint Committee on Printing specifications.

h. Memorandum stationery, VA Form 2105, Memorandum, will be used for internal correspondence. This stationery is 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches in size.

9. **REQUESTS FOR EXCEPTIONS.** Requests for exceptions from VA stationery standards must be submitted in writing through the respective PCOs to the Director, Information Management Service. Requests should include the name and telephone number of a person to contact, a statement of justification, pertinent specifications, and, if appropriate, a sample or scaled drawing showing the proposed design(s).

10. **OVERSIGHT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.** The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology will conduct periodic reviews of the Forms Management Program to determine the adequacy and effectiveness in controlling waste and abuse.

a. Annual Report on the Forms Management Program

(1) The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (OI&T) is required to provide consolidated statistical data on the Forms Management Program to the Secretary. In support of this requirement, the Under Secretary for Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Materiel Management must provide annual reports on their Forms Management Programs to OI&T, Attention: Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Program Assistance (ADAS/P&PA). Reports Control Number (RCN) 72-0406 is assigned to this report. Reports for the year ending September 30 of each year should reach the ADAS/P&PA no later than the 10th workday of October. The Department report will be compiled by October 31st of each year.

(2) The report will separately identify VA standardized and field facility forms (not including form letters, tags, labels, contract clauses, instruction sheets, notices, placards, handbooks, and posters), and will provide information on:

- (a) The total number of forms in use at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- (b) The number of new forms.
- (c) The number of forms revised.
- (d) The number of forms eliminated.
- (e) The number of forms transferred in and out.
- (f) The total number of forms in use at the end of the fiscal year. A statement explaining any increase greater than two percent in the combined total of forms in use is required.
- (g) Provide a separate total for the number of forms that are available in electronic media for tracking purposes.

11. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Electronic Form.** A category of machine-readable forms in which the information is represented by electronic impulses or a magnetic medium, such as magnetic tape, disk, or diskette, and which requires the use of specialized equipment to convert the information to human-readable.
- b. **Form.** A fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for entering and extracting prescribed information, including Federal Information Processing Standards (any organized combination of equipment that is used in automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission or reception, of data or information) forms, regardless of media. The forms may be categorized as: internal, created by and used within VA; interagency, used to collect information by VA from one or more other Federal agencies; information collection, used for gathering information from 10 or more members of the public or “persons” (individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, organized groups of individuals, and States, U.S. Territories, and local governments or their components); standard, forms prescribed by a Federal agency and approved by GSA for mandatory use throughout the Federal Government; optional, developed for use in two or more agencies and approved by GSA for non-mandatory use.
- c. **Form Letter.** A letter or other correspondence, regardless of media, that is reproduced and stocked in advance of its actual use. It may contain blank areas or spaces to be filled in at the time it is used.
- d. **Forms Officer.** The person assigned responsibility by the Administration head for overseeing its forms management program in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the Department’s Forms Officer.
- e. **Internal Form.** Standardized, electronic, and field facility forms used solely within VA.
- f. **Nonrecurring Form.** Forms that are issued one time only and used for a specific purpose for a limited period of time.
- g. **Overprinting.** The printing of pertinent identical entries (e.g., Department name and address) captioned on a form.
- h. **Optional Form (OF).** Forms applicable in the operations of two or more agencies or establishments that are approved by GSA for optional use on a Government-wide basis.
- i. **Recurring Form.** Forms that may be reissued until replaced or discontinued.
- j. **Standard Form (SF).** Forms approved by GSA for mandatory use by government agencies or establishments, unless a specific exemption is obtained.

k. **Test Form.** Forms that are used for a trial period, usually for the purpose of testing a proposed procedure at selected locations.

12. REFERENCES

a. GSA Information Resources Management Technical Guide, Electronic Forms Systems Analysis and Design (Stock Number PB 95250239/LP).

b. VA Handbook 6300.4, Procedures for Processing Requests for Records Subject to the Privacy Act.

c. VA Handbook 6310.2, Collections of Information Procedures.